



Commentary on the Ten Articles of Faith of the New Apostolic Creed

Preliminary note

The first three Articles of Faith of the New Apostolic Creed correspond largely to the “Apostolicum”,¹ i.e. to the profession highly esteemed by the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches.

Even as Christianity spread increasingly throughout the Roman Empire, many Christians remained, at least in part, rooted in their previous religious or philosophical views. The fusion of these views with Christian doctrine brought about heresies, which unsettled the believers. To counter this development, endeavours were made to formulate professions of faith which were intended to be binding for the congregations and thus also for the individual believer. Its conformity to the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles served as a criterion used to decide whether a statement about God’s being and activity should find its way into the professions of faith.

A Roman baptismal profession from the 2nd century provided the basis of the Apostolicum. Essential statements of the Apostolicum are based on the sermon preached by the Apostle Peter in the house of Cornelius (cf. Acts 10: 37-43). Thus its content points to early Christianity and to the proclamations of the first Apostles.

A further basis of the New Apostolic Creed is the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed,² which is regarded with equal authority among all Christian churches.

In 325, the emperor Constantine summoned the Council of Nicea. Christianity’s unity was jeopardised due to quarrels over the person and nature of Christ. The emperor sought the formulation of a binding statement that would be accepted by all concerning the relationship between God, the Father, and God, the Son. At the Council of Nicea, it was finally expressed that Jesus Christ is “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father”. At the Council of Constantinople (381), this statement of faith was also extended to the Holy Spirit. The “Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed” is based on the statements of these two first councils. In light of this, this creed is also one of the basic texts of the Christian faith today. The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed expresses the binding belief in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in accordance with the witness of the New Testament.

Our ten Articles of Faith are not intended to replace or attenuate the creeds of the ancient Church, but rather to appropriately express the New Apostolic faith.

Each of the ten Articles of the New Apostolic Creed begins with the words “I believe”, thus making it clear that this is also the personal creed of a New Apostolic Christian.

¹ See Appendix

² See Appendix

Commentary

— The First Article of Faith

I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth.

The first Article speaks of God as the Creator, the Father. The Old and New Testament bear witness that God is the Creator. Creation includes heaven and earth, namely – as it is stated in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed – “all things visible and invisible”. The physical and the spiritual exist because of God’s creative act: God is the Creator of all reality and it testifies to Him.

God is not only omnipotent with reference to His work of creation, but is eternally the Almighty One. The omnipotence of God is also shown by, among other things, the fact that He is the unconditional Author of creation: everything that exists is created from nothing by an act of God’s free will (“creatio ex nihilo”, cf. Hebrews 11: 3).

Although God, the Father, is described as the Creator in the first Article, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit are also involved in the act of creation. The Triune God is the overall Creator, as is suggested in Genesis 1: 26, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”. In John 1: 1 and Colossians 1: 16 explicit reference is made to the Son of God as Creator.

— The Second Article of Faith

I believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, entered the realm of the dead, rose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from where He will return.

The second Article speaks of Jesus Christ, who is the foundation and substance of the Christian faith. Every statement in this Article has its direct point of reference in the New Testament. Already the designation “Jesus Christ” is a profession, namely that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah expected by Israel (Anointed, Greek: Christ). Jesus is not only the Messiah, but also “the only begotten Son of God” (cf. John 1: 14 and 18). This wording articulates the essential relationship between God, the Father, and God, the Son. The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed makes clear what is meant by the wording “only begotten Son”: the Son is “begotten of the Father before all worlds (æons), God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father”. This “only begotten Son” is “our Lord”. In the Old Testament, “Lord” is a designation for God. In the New Testament this is transferred

to Jesus in order to make clear His divine nature. Here “Lord” also signifies that Jesus Christ reigns over heaven and earth (cf. Philippians 2: 9-11).

The following statements refer to the divine origin of the human being called Jesus and His miraculous birth. Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 1: 35; Matthew 1: 18), not by a man through natural means, for Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus (cf. Luke 1: 27). The virgin birth must not be considered negligible or an ancient myth, but is a fundamental Christian belief. The fact that Mary is mentioned in the Gospels shows that Jesus was true Man and had a mother.

The historicity of Jesus becomes even clearer in that “Pontius Pilate” is mentioned. Between A.D. 26-36, he was the Roman governor of Palestine, i.e. Jesus’ sufferings took place in the time of his governorship (cf. John 18: 28ff.).

The Article then mentions three crucial events concerning Jesus: He was “crucified, died, and was buried”. This makes clear once again the true humanity of Jesus: He had to suffer an ignominious death, namely death on a cross. He died and was buried; thus He shared the common fate of mankind. Exceptional, however, is the third event. He “rose again from the dead on the third day”. This is something which far surpasses anything within human experience, something which can only be stated and understood by faith. This wording harkens back to a profession already mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15: 3-4, “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”. The double reference “according to the Scriptures” shows that these were not just random events, but rather necessities within the context of the history of salvation. Jesus Christ “rose again from the dead”, His resurrection is both a prerequisite for and promise of the general resurrection of the dead.

In the Apostolicum, there is, however, inserted between “died” and “rose again from the dead on the third day” the passage “entered the realm of the dead”. The New Testament reference to this is to be found in 1 Peter 3: 19. Here it is mentioned that, after His death on the cross, Jesus “preached to the spirits in prison”.

The profession “rose again from the dead” is followed by the statement that Jesus Christ “ascended into heaven” (cf. Acts 1: 9-11). Jesus’ life on earth as well as His direct presence as the Risen One had thus come to their conclusion. The reception of the Risen One in heaven signifies His return to the Father and His exaltation. The exaltation of Jesus Christ is expressed in the words “He is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty” (cf. Colossians 3: 1).

The end of the second Article expresses the belief that the exalted Lord will return. He will not remain with the Father, but take His own unto Himself (cf. John 14: 3).

— The Third Article of Faith

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the one, holy, universal, and apostolic church, the community of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting.

At the beginning of the third Article, faith in the Holy Spirit is professed. The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Godhead. The divine nature of the Holy Spirit, His unity with the Father and the Son, is also expressed in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed “[We believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets”. Believers therefore profess the Holy Spirit and His divinity.

One work of the Holy Spirit is the Church. The Church is not something emanating from, or made by, man; it is rather a divine establishment. It is the community of those who have been baptised, who lead their lives following Christ and profess Jesus Christ as their Lord. The purpose of the Church of Christ is, on the one hand, to make salvation and eternal fellowship with the Triune God accessible to man and, on the other hand, to praise and worship God.

In its nature, the Church of Christ reflects the double nature of Jesus Christ: true man and true God. His divine nature is concealed or invisible, whereas His human nature is visible and manifest. Thus the Church of Christ too has a concealed or invisible and a manifest or visible side.

Ultimately, just as the divine nature of Jesus Christ, the concealed component of the Church can not be described; its presence, however, can be perceived in the salvific effects of the Sacraments and the word of God. Just as Jesus, as a human, participated in human history, so too participated the manifest component of the Church of Christ. In contrast to Him, however, humans active in the Church are subject to sinfulness. Hence, making errors, going astray, and lapsing in judgment, all common to mankind, are also to be found in the Church.

The Apostolicum only speaks of the “holy [universal] catholic Church”. The wording “one holy [universal] catholic and apostolic Church” is taken from the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. This wording, which has now been incorporated into our Creed, makes clear the essential criteria of the Church of Christ: it is “one”, it is “holy”, it is “universal”, and it is “apostolic”.

The Church is “one”: the profession of the One Church is based on belief in the One God. The Triune God established and preserves the One Church through the Father, who sent the Son, through Jesus Christ, who as the head of the body is permanently united with the congregation, and through the One Holy Spirit, who is active in the Church of Christ.

The Church is “holy”: the Church of Christ is holy because of the sanctifying act of God in the sacrifice of Christ and through the activity of the Holy Spirit in word and

Sacrament. This sanctifying activity manifests itself to believers in the divine service. The holiness of the Church of Christ is based solely upon the Triune God and not the humans who belong to it.

The Church is “universal”: the Church of Christ is universal, i.e. all-encompassing. It is for this world and for the world beyond, for the present and for the future. God’s will for universal salvation can be directly experienced in the Church.

The Church is “apostolic”: the Church of Christ is apostolic in two respects: apostolic doctrine is proclaimed and the apostolic ministry is active in it. The apostolic doctrine is the unadulterated message of the death, resurrection, and return of Christ. The apostolic ministry is the Apostle ministry, given its authority by Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit. Thus the apostolicity of the Church consists of its continued proclamation of the apostolic doctrine, as attested in Holy Scripture, and the historical realisation of the Apostle ministry in the Apostles presently active.

In its historical manifestation, the Church of Jesus Christ has not completely met the standards of oneness, holiness, universality, and apostolicity demanded of it. This is, among other things, due to the fact that the people active in it are subject to sinfulness. Despite these deficiencies, the Church of Christ is neither concealed nor inaccessible; it can be most clearly perceived where the Apostle ministry, the administration of the three Sacraments to the living and dead, as well as the proper proclamation of the word are present. This is the Lord’s work of redemption in which the bride of Christ is prepared for the marriage feast in heaven.

The “community of the saints” is to be understood as those who will belong to the bridal congregation. The “community of the saints” is to be equaled with the 144,000 (cf. Revelation 14: 1), the male Child (cf. Revelation 12: 5), and the bride of the Lord (cf. Revelation 19: 7). This will only become manifest at the return of Christ.

The “forgiveness of sins”, made possible through the sacrifice of Christ, is also professed. The fundamental liberation from the power of sin is effected in Holy Baptism with water through which original sin is washed away.

The third Article of Faith concludes with a twofold eschatological hope, namely for “the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting”. Belief in the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead based thereon is an essential Christian conviction. “The resurrection of the dead” means the transformation of something corruptible into a spiritual body, through which redeemed humans can partake of the glory of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 15: 42-44).

The perspective of “life everlasting” which concludes the third Article of Faith refers to eternal fellowship with God in the new creation.

— The Fourth Article of Faith

I believe that the Lord Jesus rules His Church and thereto sent His Apostles, and until His return, still sends them with the commission to teach, to forgive sins in His name and to baptise with water and Holy Spirit.

The fourth Article of Faith defines more precisely the belief in the Church already mentioned in the third Article. First, this Article deals with the reign of Jesus Christ. He rules His Church; He is “the head of the body” (cf. Colossians 1: 18). His rule is revealed, among other ways, through the sending of the Apostles. The Great Commission in Matthew 28: 19-20 shows that the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the Sacraments are causally linked to the Apostolate. Here the theme of the apostolicity of the Church, already mentioned in the third Article of Faith, is taken up again and incorporated into the concrete structure of Church within its historical manifestation.

Historically, the Apostle ministry is not limited to a specific time. It is intended to fulfil its task “until His [Jesus’] return”. The Article then describes Jesus’ activity through His Apostles that can be experienced by every believer, namely “to teach, to forgive sins in His name and to baptise with water and Holy Spirit”. The commission to teach refers to the proper proclamation of the Gospel of the death, resurrection, and return of the Lord. Another task of the Apostolate is “to forgive sins in His [Jesus’] name” (cf. John 20: 23), i.e. authoritatively pronounce, to believers, forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice and merit of Jesus Christ. The conclusion of the fourth Article of Faith refers to the Sacraments of Holy Baptism with water and Holy Sealing. It falls to the Apostolate to baptise with water and Holy Spirit, i.e. to administer those Sacraments through which a new life before God becomes possible.

— The Fifth Article of Faith

I believe that those designated by God for a ministry are ordained only by Apostles, and that authority, blessing, and sanctification for their ministration come forth out of the apostle ministry.

Like the fourth Article of Faith, the fifth Article also mentions the importance of the Apostle ministry. Whereas in the fourth Article the connection of the Apostle ministry to proper doctrine, forgiveness of sins, and the ministration of the Sacraments was emphasised, the fifth Article deals with spiritual ministry. It is God who designates a person for a ministry. Thus the ministry is neither a human work nor the work of the congregation, but God's gift to His Church. The Article expresses that a person does not carry out a ministry due to any human decision, but solely due to the will of God. His will is implemented through the Apostle ministry. Ministry and Apostolate are directly linked; consequently, a spiritual ministry can only exist where the Apostle ministry is active.

Ministers receive, through the Apostle ministry, "authority, blessing, and sanctification for their ministration". The ministry is neither an end in itself, nor oriented towards itself, but rather has its place in the Church, most often in a specific congregation. By "ministration" is meant devotion to Jesus Christ and the congregation.

There are three aspects of ordination into a spiritual ministry: "authority, blessing, and sanctification". The aspect of "authority" is of crucial importance, particularly for priestly ministers, since they are authorised, in their commission by the Apostle, to proclaim forgiveness of sins and to consecrate Holy Communion. Thus priestly ministers take part in the proper administration of the Sacraments through the Apostles. The proper proclamation of God's will that all be saved is also made by the "authority" imparted through the Apostolate. The "blessing" promises divine support and the help of the Holy Spirit in discharging both the priestly and the deaconal ministry. "Sanctification" indicates that God Himself, in His holiness and inviolability, wishes to act through the ministry. "Sanctification" (being made "holy") is also necessary, because the Church itself is "holy".

Although the minister is designated by God, he might nevertheless fail to properly discharge his ministry or may even founder on it. Yet the original call of God is thereby not called into question.

Since "authority, blessing, and sanctification for their [the ministers'] ministration come forth out of the apostle ministry", every minister is inseparably related to the Apostle ministry.

— The Sixth Article of Faith

I believe that the Holy Baptism with water is the first step to a renewal of a human being in the Holy Spirit, and that the person baptised is adopted into the fellowship of those who believe in Jesus Christ and profess Him as their Lord.

The sixth Article of Faith concerns Holy Baptism with water. It deals with essential elements of Baptism with water. At the beginning, it professes that Holy Baptism with water “is the first step to a renewal of a human being in the Holy Spirit”. Thus, the fundamental separation of man from God is abolished. This is not effected through any human merit, through a person’s free decision to turn to God, but rather through God turning to man and liberating him from the power of sin. Through this act of God turning to man, man partakes of the sacrifice of Christ, of its power to overcome sin. This is evident, in that original sin is washed away through Holy Baptism with water and the person baptised is incorporated into the Church of Christ, thereby becoming a Christian.

Holy Baptism with water does not provide everything necessary for man’s new existence before God. It is “the first step to a renewal of a human being in the Holy Spirit”. This renewal in the Holy Spirit, which begins in Holy Baptism with water, continues with the impartation of Holy Spirit during Holy Sealing. Only then is man reborn of water and the Spirit.

Baptism with water not only constitutes fellowship with God, but also fellowship of Christians with each other, for “the person baptised is adopted into the fellowship of those who believe in Jesus Christ and profess Him as their Lord”. Faith in Jesus as the Christ and Lord, namely as the determining power in one’s life, unites all believing Christians.

— The Seventh Article of Faith

I believe that Holy Communion was instituted by the Lord Himself in memory of the once brought, fully valid sacrifice, and bitter suffering and death of Christ. The worthy partaking of Holy Communion establishes our fellowship with Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is celebrated with unleavened bread and wine; both must be consecrated and dispensed by a minister authorised by an Apostle.

While the sixth Article of Faith applied to Holy Baptism with water, the seventh Article addresses Holy Communion. The first sentence refers to its institution by Jesus Christ. The second sentence refers to the effect of worthily partaking of it, and the concluding sentence makes clear that the authorised ministry is required for the consecration and administration of Holy Communion.

First comes the profession that Holy Communion is a meal of remembrance. This was emphasised already in the oldest known text describing Holy Communion; Jesus Himself called for such remembrance (cf. 1 Corinthians 11: 24-25). In Holy Communion, the “once brought, fully valid sacrifice, and bitter suffering and death of Christ” is brought to mind. First, the sacrifice of Jesus and its timeless significance is remembered. To this is joined the remembrance of His “suffering and death”, as witnessed in the Gospels. Thus Holy Communion reminds us of the concrete events just before the crucifixion as well as of the lasting significance of His death on the cross.

Partaking of Holy Communion has great effects. The prerequisite is the “worthy partaking” of it (cf. 1 Corinthians 11: 27), which, among other things, becomes possible through faith, acceptance of forgiveness of sins, and a penitent heart. “Fellowship with Jesus Christ, our Lord” is “established”, i.e. guaranteed through worthily partaking of Holy Communion. In this respect, Holy Communion strengthens faith in Jesus Christ and one’s will and ability to follow Him. In Holy Communion, believers have sacramental fellowship with Jesus Christ as their Lord and receive strength to lead their lives accordingly.

The Article then addresses the nature of the means of the Sacrament: Holy Communion is “celebrated with unleavened bread and wine”. The requirement to celebrate it with “unleavened bread” and “wine” parallels the Passover meal. “Unleavened bread and wine” are the visible prerequisites for the Sacrament, just as the water in Holy Baptism with water.

After speaking of the outward signs, the conclusion of the seventh Article describes the prerequisites by which sacramental reality – namely the presence of the body and blood of Christ – is achieved. Bread and wine must be “consecrated and dispensed by a minister authorised by an Apostle”. Through the Apostle ministry and the ministers authorised by it, the presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the bread and wine becomes possible. Although without the authorised ministry, Holy Communion can certainly be celebrated as a meal of remembrance, of fellowship, and of thanksgiving, it will not constitute the true realisation of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

The authorised ministry, which is necessary for the creation of comprehensive sacramental reality, performs two acts: it consecrates and administers Holy Communion. Consecration entails taking bread and wine out of their common use (“I consecrate bread and wine for Holy Communion ...”) and, by pronouncing the words of institution, making possible the concealed presence of the body and blood of Christ in the visible elements of bread and wine. Administration means, in this context, making the body and blood of Christ accessible to the congregation, as expressed in the invitation to receive Holy Communion and then offering the consecrated wafer itself.

— The Eighth Article of Faith

I believe that those baptised with water must, through an Apostle, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to attain the childhood in God and thereby the prerequisite for becoming a firstling.

The eighth Article of Faith deals with Holy Sealing or the Baptism with Spirit, i.e. the impartation of the gift of Holy Spirit to the believer.

Holy Sealing is the Sacrament that is solely assigned to the Apostle ministry. Prerequisite for its reception is Holy Baptism with water. Only baptised persons should receive the gift of Holy Spirit.

Holy Sealing has a present and a future effect: the present effect of receiving the gift of Holy Spirit is “childhood in God” (cf. Romans 8: 14-17). “Childhood in God” is a status imparted to Christians reborn of water and the Spirit. It constitutes, as it were, an anticipation of the future state of being a firstfruit and belonging to the “royal priesthood” (cf. 1 Peter 2: 9). Thus “childhood in God” is the status before God imbued through the reception of all Sacraments, through proper preaching, and through orienting one’s life to the return of Christ. The future effect of the reception of Holy Spirit is to become a firstfruit. However, sealed souls have not yet achieved the state of being firstfruits, but have, through Baptism with Spirit, only received the prerequisites of achieving it. If they strive for the day of Christ, believers can then be part of the bridal congregation, of the “community of the saints”. The duty of sealed souls is to remain followers of Christ and to allow themselves to be prepared, through word and Sacrament, for the return of Jesus Christ.

— The Ninth Article of Faith

I believe that the Lord Jesus will return as surely as He ascended into heaven and that He will take to Himself the firstfruits of the dead and living who have hoped for and were prepared for His coming; that after the marriage in heaven He will return to earth with them, to establish His kingdom of peace and that they will reign with Him as a royal priesthood. After the conclusion of the kingdom of peace, He will hold the Last Judgment. Then God will create a new heaven and a new earth and dwell with His people.

The ninth Article of Faith offers an eschatological elaboration of the corresponding statements in the second and third Articles (the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, life everlasting). The relatively exhaustive nature of this Article indicates the great significance of future events in the New Apostolic faith.

The beginning of the Article refers to Acts 1: 11: “This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” Furthermore, the Article continues the eschatological statements of the second Article of Faith.

Linked to the return of Jesus Christ is the fact that the Lord “will take to Himself the firstfruits of the dead and living who have hoped for and were prepared for His coming” (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17). “The firstfruits of the dead and living” will be resurrected, i.e. receive a spiritual body, and join the returning Christ. The “firstfruits” are those who have become God’s own, have a living hope for the return of Christ, and have allowed themselves to be prepared for the return of Christ by the Apostolate.

The return of Christ is the central event upon which further eschatological events depend. The goal of the rapture of the “living and dead” is fellowship with Jesus Christ – the image for this is the “marriage in heaven”. The “marriage in heaven” refers to direct fellowship of the Lord with the bridal congregation.

The “marriage in heaven” is of limited duration; after its conclusion, Jesus Christ, together with His own, will turn to all humans who did not participate in this event. Jesus Christ will then visibly appear on earth and there establish “His kingdom of peace” (cf. Revelation 20: 4 and 6). As the “royal priesthood” (cf. 1 Peter 2: 9; Revelation 20: 6), the bridal congregation (symbolised by the number 144,000) shares in the rule of Christ. The gospel will be proclaimed to all souls, both the living and the dead.

Only “after the conclusion of the kingdom of peace, He [Jesus Christ] will hold the Last Judgment”. Then all creation will know that Jesus Christ is the righteous Judge, from whom nothing is hidden (cf. John 5: 22, 26, 27).

The final sentence of the ninth Article provides an image of God’s renewed act of creation: “Then God will create a new heaven and a new earth and dwell with His people.” The new creation is mentioned in, among other places, Revelation 21 and

22; it is the place of the perfect presence of God. The statement that God will dwell with His people means that this will be a completely new existence together with God, namely “life everlasting” which was mentioned at the end of the third Article of Faith.

■ The Tenth Article of Faith

I believe that I am obliged to obey the worldly authorities provided no godly laws are thereby transgressed.

The tenth Article differs fundamentally from the preceding ones. Whereas the nine previous Articles profess the existence of God as the Creator, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Church, its ministries and Sacraments, and the hope for the future, the tenth Article deals with the Christians’ relation to the political state. The tenth Article makes clear that Christian life does not take place outside the state or society. It shows that the Christian faith has a fundamentally positive relation to the state, to the “worldly authorities”. This positive relation is summarised in the term “obey”.

Already in New Testament times, the relation of the Christian congregation to state authority was considered (cf. 1 Peter 2: 11-17). The statements in Romans 13: 1-7, in which the state is designated as God’s minister, are well-known. This passage has given rise to many misunderstandings, since it seemed that one should also be unconditionally obedient to an unjust state. This interpretation, however, does not take into consideration that the state is God’s minister, i.e. that the divine will, as made clear e.g. in the Ten Commandments, should also be the standard of state law.

Romans 13: 1-7 is also the background of the tenth Article of Faith. It not only demands obedience, i.e. loyalty to the state, but also specifies the criterion for justifying such obedience: “provided no godly laws are thereby transgressed”. The state too is not entirely free, but subject to divine order. Its laws should, at the very least, not contradict divine order; even better would be their compliance with it. If the divine will and state legislation are not contradictory, but, to a degree, even complement each other, then Christians are obliged to accept this as positive and binding. If, however, the divine will and state legislation contradict each other, then the passage in Acts 5: 29 applies to the individual: “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

Appendix

1 The Apostolic Creed (Symbolum Apostolicum)

“I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy [universal] catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.”

2 The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds (æons), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; from thence he shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. In one holy [universal] catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.”