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**THE SOLAS OF THE REFORMATION:  
SOLA FIDE**

As a review, this is our third in a series dealing with the battle cries of the Reformation. The first was Sola Scriptura, Scriptura Alone is our final authority. Sola Christus, Christ Alone is the only one to be worshiped. This issue will deal with Sola Fide, Faith Alone as the only means to salvation.

**“This is the issue on which the church stands or falls.”** This is the statement declared over five hundred years ago as the Reformation began to pick up speed. The early reformers realized that if this theological concept was lost, then men would also remain lost because they would believe their salvation to be one of works. Why was and is this doctrine so important to us as Protestants?

We must look at the Council of Trent which occurred in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was the most detailed council ever held by the Catholic Church and it still holds the doctrines by which Rome lives and breathes.

*“If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning thereby that no other cooperation is required for him to obtain the grace of Justification, and that in no sense is it necessary for him to make preparation and be disposed by a movement of his own will: let him be anathema.”* (Council of Trent Session 6 Decree on Justification Canon 9)

*“If anyone says that*

*faith which justifies is nothing else but trust in the divine mercy, which pardons sins because of Christ; or that is that trust alone by which we are justified; let him be anathema.”* (Council of Trent Session 6 Decree on Justification Canon 12)

As we can easily see, Rome today does not believe in Justification by faith alone but teaches that we must cooperate with the Holy Spirit in our “continued process of Justification.”

*“If anyone says that Justification is by faith alone, let him be anathema.”* (Council of Trent Canon Law 9)

To the medieval church (Rome) faith meant believing what the church taught. The reformers noticed that throughout Scripture faith was described as a matter of not only knowledge and assent but also of trust. In modern day evangelicalism, faith is a very nebulous term and it is frequently said that you don't have to really understand you just have to have faith. It is also said that faith is not knowledge and that knowledge is not required. Then the logical question is “faith in what or who.”

The early church said that our faith must consist of three things. A certain amount of knowledge about who Christ is, second we must believe what we know and third that not only do we know it and believe it but we trust in it for a salvation.

Rome concluded that

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something else was required in order for faith to be truly saving so they added that man must cooperate with faith but this meant that all of our lives we would be cooperating with faith and thus they combined the one time operation of Justification with the lifetime work of sanctification and the result is that Rome teaches that you can never truly know if you are justified, in fact, in the view of Rome if you ever believe you know that you are truly justified, you, in the eyes of Rome lose what Justification you might have had.

*“If anyone saith that he will for certain, of an absolute and infallible certainty, have that great gift of perseverance unto the end, unless he have learned this by special revelation: let him be anathema.”* (Council of Trent On Justification Canon VII)

What does this actually say. In the view of Rome, you can never know if you are justified because you are always “working” at being saved and at any time in your life if you would claim that you know you are saved, then Rome would remove your salvation from you. (They believe they have this authority and Power.)

Because of the translation of the Bible that Rome used at that time, the Latin Vulgate, they believed that you are “infused” with righteousness or that you actually became righteous. It was discovered that Jerome, who translated the original texts into Latin had made a mistake. The reformers went back to the original texts and discovered that the original Greek used the word “diakaiosune” which means to “declare” righteous whereas Jerome had translated it into the Latin work “justificare” which means to make righteous. There is a big difference.

The issue is, does faith cause us to actually become righteous and we are enabled to cooperate with the work of God and combined justification with sanctification or is our faith an instrument by which God

“legally declares” us righteous based on the righteousness of Christ.

Rome says we are “infused” and the Protestants say that we are not actually righteous but are “declared righteous.” In other words, the Protestant belief is that change is a legal change not a moral change. Luther expressed that God requires a “perfect” righteousness not just a willingness to become righteous.

What is the Protestant view of righteousness, *“Righteousness is God forgiving man's sins and imputing to him the righteousness of Christ through the instrument of faith.”*

The key word is “imputing.” It means a forensic, legal declaration. There have been three imputations in the Scripture and we will see how this works.

1. Adam, who was our federal head, sinned and because of his sin, all mankind since that time have been declared sinners. It is very important to remember that we are not sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners. In the womb, we are declared sinners and when we are born we actually work out this sin nature.

2. When Christ was on the cross we have the second imputation. Many Christians will say that Christ *became* a sinner on the cross. If this is true then His death was of no consequence. I could have done that.

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## Our Purpose...

**The Purpose of  
Reformed Discipleship Ministries  
is to bring the truth  
of the Reformation  
to a discipling ministry...**

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What actually happened is that on the cross, the sins of sinners were “declared” to be his and thus in the eyes of God the Father, Christ was legally a sinner, not actually.

3. The third imputation is that fact that when you and I place our faith in Christ, God “declares” us to be righteous and we are wrapped in a robe of “alien” righteousness.

This brings about a term which many do not know but most will agree to. The believer is **simul justus et peccator** “simultaneously justified and yet sinful.” Glory Hallelujah! This also explains our security in Christ, we were never actually righteous and capable of losing this righteousness but have always be declared righteous by God and He never changes.

Many will and do say that people are not interested in the doctrines of justification, sanctification, and redemption, which means that justification, sanctification and redemption should be preached even more vehemently.

We must preach how man is condemned under the law but there is good news. If you will repent of your sins and place your trust in Christ, God will impute to you the righteousness of Christ and you will begin your process of sanctification. Please remember, justification is a one time occurrence and sanctification lasts our entire life. We are finished with our sanctification when we pass from this life to see Christ.

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## ON A PERSONAL NOTE...

What a summer this has been. Kay had surgery on her feet and was laid up for about four weeks. I really learned what an important part of my life she is. The summer has also been a time of study and preparation for me as I get ready to begin the fall Bible studies. The studies are wide ranging from Church History, the Gospel of John, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the course that I taught in seminary, The Life of Christ and the Westminster Confession of Faith. I am looking forward to these getting started and the fun that comes from being involved.

As each issue of “*Truth Matters*” is mailed out I get more and more positive reviews. One reader, who I hope is reading this article said that he found the articles to be “quite provocative.” I took that to be positive, but I am not writing in order to be provocative but informative. I truly considered it a compliment. Another said that it was the first thing he read when it arrived in the mail.

There are several things I desire from the articles, one is that they be fun to read, another is informative and the third which might be the same as the second, I want them to teach. I was in the ministry for nearly 25 years and never knew of all the great history behind what I believed and to be honest even considered it irrelevant. I never knew how much I was missing until I began to read and become aware of the cost in lives, money and reputation that men paid that you and I might be able to read and study the Scriptures for ourselves.

Recently in watching a history program I listened to a man in his eighties who was telling of his life in the German youth movement during the rule of Hitler. He tells that once when he was telling the teenagers of the 90’s about what he did, one of the teenagers raised his hand asked the man why he did not see how stupid that it was and why he didn’t tell others. The old man got tears in his eyes and said, “I’m so glad you have the freedom to ask that question, I didn’t.”

In the middle ages, during the rule of Rome people were not allowed to ask questions that were critical of the church and many of those that did were burned at the stake. There were 278 burned alive during the reign of Mary Tudor, better known as Bloody Mary. This was in a period of only five years.

It is a delight to write these articles and my sincere prayer is that you come to know and appreciate what has gone before you and the price that men have paid for your freedom to worship Christ outside of Rome. Talk to you in January. Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year. (I think I got them all.)

*Dr. Louis Hill*

## MINISTRY *update:*

We both grew up in the Southern Baptist church, with Rex becoming an ordained SBC minister. We were never taught about God's sovereignty or that discipleship even existed in modern times. The Lord moved us to Colorado Springs, where we were taught about God's covenant grace. Rex and I began to pray for a couple to disciple/mentor us, for neither of us had ever been discipled during our Christian walk. God waited seven years to answer our prayers, but He answered in a way that far exceeded our hopes by sending Louis and Kay Hill into our lives. God has used the teachings of Reformed theology, and the mentoring of the Hills, to give us a desire to take what we have learned and teach others! It is our prayer to share the same enthusiasm and passion for the truth of God's Word as Louis and Kay do, every time they teach. We praise our sovereign Lord for raising up servants like Louis and Kay Hill!

To The Praise of His Glorious Grace,  
Rex and Noëlle Nelson

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# Historical Facts



## The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre

Before dawn on the morning of August 24, 1572, church bells rang in Paris. Soldiers under the command of Henri, Duke of Guise, had overcome resistance and assassinated the admiral of the French Huguenot movement, Gaspar de Coligny, in his bedroom. They threw his body from the window to the ground below, where angry crowds later mutilated it, cutting off his head and hands, and dragging it through the streets of Paris.

The killing unleashed an explosion of popular hatred against Protestants throughout the city. In the terrible days that followed Huguenots were slaughtered all through France. Some estimates range up to 50,000 although many believe this to be too high but the lower estimates reach 20,000 thousand. This slaughter ended the hopes of the Huguenots to transform France into a Protestant kingdom. So many Huguenots were killed that rivers ran red, and villagers downstream from the hostilities spent weeks burying corpses. The Pope issued a special medallion to commemorate the "holy" event. France could ill afford to lose them, as they constituted the very cream of her population. The Huguenots who left their land were about seven percent of the entire population, but in this number were included "a far higher proportion of skilled craftsmen, prosperous merchants, professional men and scholars."

To quote historian Philip Schaff: *The humblest of these refugees were intellectually and morally above the average of the common people on any kingdom in Europe. It was the destruction of the most virtuous, the most generally enlightening element in the French nations and it prepared the way for the inevitable degradation of the national character from which it has never been able to recover.*"

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TRUTH*matters*



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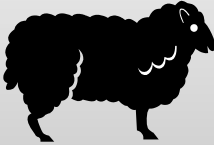
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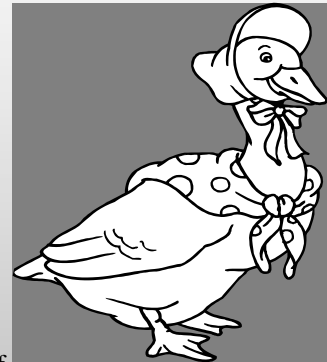
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## Baa Baa Black Sheep



Baa baa,  
Black sheep,  
Have you any wool?  
Yes sir, Yes sir,  
Three bags full”  
One for my master,  
One for my dame,  
And one for the little boy  
That lives in the lane.

## MOTHER • GOOSE



In the middle ages, a hard-working peasant was required to give one third of his income to the King, (My Master). He also had to give one third to the fat nobility, (My dame). Leaving only one third for himself, (the little boy).

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# SHORTER CATECHISM

### Q. 9. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

### Q. 10. How did God create man?

A. God created male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

### Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are, His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

### Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?

A. When God created man, He entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

### Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.