



## WHY WERE DOCTRINAL STANDARDS WRITTEN?

*Why was there a need for Doctrinal Standards?*

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### I. The Heidelberg Catechism

- **The Problem:** During the mid 1500's, a series of theological disputes broke out over the issue of the "real presence" in the Holy Communion.
- **The Response:** A professor at the Heidelberg University in Germany was asked to prepare a manual for catechetical instruction. It eventually included 129 questions and answers, divided into 52 Lord's Days used in the schools as a manual of instruction, a guide for preaching and a



"YEA, ALL THAT WILL LIVE  
GODLY IN JESUS CHRIST SHALL  
SUFFER PERSECUTION."  
- II TIMOTHY 3:12

confession of faith. The first publication took place in 1563.

#### II. Belgic Confession of Faith

- **The Problem:** Under Philip II of Spain, the Reformed believers in the Lowlands, now known as Belgium, were sorely persecuted for their fight for Biblical truth.
- **The Response:** A confession was written to the Spanish king to prove that the Reformed believers were not rebels but law-abiding citizens who professed only those doctrines which were teachings of the Holy Scriptures. In 1562, a copy was sent to the king, accompanied by a petition of relief from persecution, declaring they would obey the government in all lawful things, but would "offer their back to stripes, their tongues to knives, their mouths to gags, and their whole bodies to fire," rather than deny the truth of God's Word.

#### III. Canons of Dort

- **The Problem:** The Synod of Dordrecht was held in 1618-19 to settle a serious controversy in the Reformed Church caused by the rise and spread of Arminianism, begun by Jacob Arminius, a theology professor at Leiden University. These views were presented in the Remonstrance of 1610.
- **The Response:** At the Synod of Dort, these views were rejected and the opposite views were embodied in what is now called the Canons of Dort. Each of the Canons consists of a positive and negative part, the clarification of the Reformed position followed by the repudiation of the corresponding Arminian error.

The original purpose of the Canons was a judicial decision concerning the doctrinal dispute brought on by the Arminian controversy.



"I WILL SET A PLUMB  
LINE IN THE MIDST  
OF MY PEOPLE IS-  
RAEL." - AMOS 7:8

THE REFORMERS,  
MANY OF WHOM  
GAVE UP THEIR  
LIVES RATHER THAN  
TO DENY THE TRUTH  
OF GOD'S WORD,  
WOULD BE  
APPALLED IF THEY  
WERE TO SEE THE  
DOCTRINE TAUGHT  
IN THE MAJORITY OF  
"REFORMED"  
CHURCHES TODAY.

## DO WE "AVOID THEM" OR "GIVE AN ANSWER"?

1. **AGREE or DISAGREE:** The people of the modern Christian church realize they are being taught the doctrine of Arminianism. (see *"The Dispute"* pg. 2)
2. Is a church that holds to one or some of these view points guilty of following another gospel?
  - Defend your answer: Galatians 1:6-12
3. **CONSIDER:** Do we stay in our little, safe dwelling and condemn those around us of another gospel, or do we continue in the fight for the truth of the God's Word that the Reformers began?
  - How do you know when to "avoid them" or "give an answer"?  
Ro. 16:17-18; 2 John 9-11; 1 Pet. 3:15
4. **EVALUATE:** How well can you defend the true gospel?
  - Test Situation #1: The doctrine of Unconditional Election does not rule out man's responsibility to believe in the redeeming work of God.
  - Test Situation #2: Holding to the doctrine of Limited Atonement does damage to evangelism.

### VERSE OF THE WEEK

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."  
- Romans 16:17