

3. Early church doctrine and worship

Introduction

So far we've spent two sessions looking at the early church – from the days of the apostles through to the mid 400s AD. Mainly we've been looking at how the early church related to the world.

Firstly, we saw the terrifying backdrop of persecution that came in waves until Constantine granted the Christian faith toleration and then active support. Following Christ comes at a cost.

Secondly, we looked from the era of toleration and then the collapse of Rome ("the eternal city") that we shouldn't expect earthly authorities to bring about the kingdom of God, for we belong to another and a heavenly city.

Today we're going to go "in-house" – into the life of the church. How did early Christian worship practices develop? And where did the church turn for guidance and leadership? The early church needed to develop their own gatherings, in ways that gave glory to God, maintained the unity of the body, and clearly separated Christianity from other religions of the day. And, they needed to defend the faith against the many theological and philosophical challenges that rose against it, from both within and without.

That's our territory in this session. The material in this session is drawn very largely from Garry Williams church history lectures at Oak Hill College and also from materials from Capitol Hill Baptist Church.

I'm going to pray and then read a sentence of Scripture:

Jude 1:3, "Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints."

1. Worship, Bible and leadership in the early church

(a) Gathered worship

Writing to the Roman Emperor Trajan, a governor named Pliny the Younger described the practice of the early Christians in the early second century:

"They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang an anthem to Christ as God, and bound themselves by a solemn oath not to commit any wicked deed, but to abstain from all fraud, theft and adultery, never to break their word, or deny a trust when called upon to honor it."¹

¹ Pliny the Younger, *Letters* x.96. AD112

Have you ever wondered where the order of our gathered worship services comes from? It's elements obviously come from the Bible – reading and preaching, singing and praying, baptism and the Lord's Supper – and were practiced in the very earliest churches. These met in private homes, like that of Priscilla and Aquila in Romans 16:3-5. Church buildings were not constructed until the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries.

Christians met on the first day of the week. This, of course, was in celebration of the fact that on the day after the Jewish Sabbath Jesus had risen from the dead. Within several years, this first day of the week had come to be known as "the Lord's Day," as John calls it while he is exiled on the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:10).

How did we know how our brethren conducted themselves? One source is the *Didache* which is an anonymous manual of church practices from the early second century.

It gives some instructions about baptism. Baptism was taken very seriously. When someone was converted out of paganism they might have required two years of instruction prior to baptism. Two areas divided the early Church: whether you should baptize infants and whether baptism regenerated people.

One of the fathers, Justin Martyr, wrote in about AD150 in his *First Apology*, giving a detailed account of early Christian gatherings. Justin records that the Lord's Supper was a "memorial of the passion" of Christ. He writes:

At the end of our prayers, we greet one another with a kiss. Then the president of the brethren is brought a bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he takes them, and offers up praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and gives thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their joyful assent by saying Amen... Then those whom we call deacons give to each of those present the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and carry away a portion to those who are absent. We call this food "Eucharist."²

In most cases, the first part of the service was open to anyone, including the times of Scripture-reading, prayer, singing, and exhortation. The second part of the service, however, which included the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, was reserved only for those who were baptized believers in Christ.

Prayer, singing of hymns and psalms, and Bible reading were consistent parts of an early Christian gathering. Apostolic letters would be read when they were available. Much Scripture-reading and teaching was from the old Jewish Scriptures, our Old Testament. Justin Martyr (ca. 150) writes:

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president [pastor] verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things."³

2 Justin, *Apology* I 65-66, AD150

3 Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 67.

The quality of preaching was mixed. 2 Clement, probably written in the 2nd century, gives us a good idea of early Christian preaching. It was faithful to God's Word, but not as expositively refined as would come along during the Reformation.

(b) The Canon of Scripture

The first Christians obviously affirmed the divine authorship and authority of the Old Testament. But what about the New? What books ended up in the New Testament? What about the "CANON" or "rule" of Scripture?

There was remarkable agreement very early on. The writings of the apostles and certain apostolic associates was accepted as inspired and authoritative. Even 2 Peter 3:16 – within the N.T. – recognized Paul's writing's as "Scripture" within the apostles' own lifetimes.

The key question here is: was the canon invented by the church, *or* was it an organic development from the Scriptures themselves and from the teaching of Jesus? Contra Dan Brown (and others!) we affirm the latter.

Evidence for this includes very early letters like Clement's first epistle from c.100AD which gives us a list of most N.T. books. It seems like there was a "natural" or "organic" recognition of the authorship and authority of these writings. The Scriptures self-authenticated themselves – they came to the church with the very power of God.

However, external challenge did make the church think hard about this question. In the mid 2nd century a heretic called Marcion tried to exclude the Old Testament and any part of the N.T. which he felt smacked of the O.T's God – and he was condemned for his heresy. The Montanists claimed direct revelation through their own prophets.

Therefore, the church developed the rule of thumb that a document had to be written by an apostle or close associate, had to agree with the doctrine of the undisputed epistles, and be functioning widely as scripture within the church. Other documents ruled OUT included the *Pseudepigrapha* – fake writings assigned to the name of a favourite apostle like Thomas, Barnabas or even Mary or Jesus. The first written document we possess that lists all 27 books of the N.T. is Athanasius' Easter Letter 39, written in 367.

(c) Leadership in the early church

The *Didache* – which we've previously mentioned - included instructions on the government of the church.⁴

• Church leadership: changing practices... and seeds of error

At first, each church had its own elders or bishops. As the Church continued to grow through the third century, though, the bishops were unable to keep up with the responsibility of so many people. Instead, the bishops became leaders over thousands of people and perhaps scores of congregations in a single city. Presbyters, or priests, were appointed to assist the bishop in his duties. Increasingly, the bishops acquired considerable personal power. Centers of authority also

⁴ "You must, then, elect for yourselves bishops and deacons who are a credit to the Lord; men who are gentle, generous, faithful, and well-tried. For their ministry to you is identical to that of the prophets and teachers." The "Didache" in Richardson, 178.

grew up – and all too soon Rome considered itself pre-eminent. These factors would lead in time to great abuses as Rome sought to assert its primacy.⁵

Why did things go so wrong so quickly? Here are three reasons: we're all sinful. Scripture wasn't known as widely as it should have been. And cultural influences were powerful.

- **Key names**

Key names in the early church are the names of the "Fathers": some like Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp had been trained by one or other of the Apostles.

Many Church Fathers in the Second and Third centuries focused on the intellectual challenges facing Christianity. Convinced that their beliefs could prevail against any other philosophy, they became known as the "Apologists" for their efforts to explain and defend the new faith.

Most well-known was Justin Martyr, converted out of pagan philosophy and beheaded in Rome in 165.

Irenaeus fought against gnostic heresy – the idea that matter is evil, spirit is good, and you need special knowledge ("gnosis") to attain salvation.

Tertullian helped us understand the Trinity. Clement of Alexandria (not Rome!) also sought to persuade pagans – but invented the false idea of purgatory and perpetrated some terrible allegorical readings of scripture, which sought to find hidden rather than plain meanings in the text.

Origen did early systematic theology. But was led astray by Greek philosophy. He self-castrated himself. He too was martyred.

Cyprian of Carthage first spoke of Rome as the "chair of Peter" – as well as doing much that was good.

We praise God for preserving his church, even as we lament how quickly errors crept in. We're now going to mention three specific areas of doctrinal challenge that are still important for us now to understand. Of course we can only consider them very briefly.

2. Sin: Augustine vs. Pelagius

Augustine's most fierce and famous dispute was against **Pelagianism**. The British monk Pelagius, whose followers spread his teachings throughout North Africa, denied original sin and taught that humans are born basically good and through enough effort can attain perfection. It followed that since we are not true sinners, we do not need a true Savior, and so Christ did not die as a perfect substitute in our place, but merely set a good moral example that we should follow. We just need the rules, because we *are* able to follow them.

⁵ Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons would declare that "It is a matter of necessity that every church should agree with this church [the church of Rome] on account of its pre-eminent authority." Quoted in La Tourette, *History of Christianity*, Vol. 1, p.118

Pelagianism was rightly condemned as heresy in the **Council at Ephesus in 431**. However, the idea had now crept into the church.

Along came something called **Semi-Pelagianism**. It's not saying that we are born good and that we learn to sin. Rather, Semi-Pelagianism says that we human beings take the first step towards God. It holds that we take that step, and God then responds with his grace. You can see the important difference.

In responding to the Pelagian heresy, **Augustine** relied first on Scripture and second on his own experience as a wretched sinner in rebellion against God who had been saved only by grace. He contended that every human being born with a sinful nature as a son or daughter of Adam – he had a strong and Biblical doctrine of original sin, of our deep and personal connection to the first Adam. As a result, he wrote, we invariably choose to sin, and through our own effort we could do nothing to save ourselves.

Rather, God takes the initiative in salvation. In eternity past he elects a people to save – and God's predestining is not based on foreknowledge of our response, but is His most free and sovereign choice. He graciously sends the Saviour. And chooses to *give* his people the gift of faith in Christ. Only because God changes our wills are we able to repent of our sins and trust in Christ for our salvation.

Key to all of this was Augustine's understanding of Scripture, especially: Rom 3 ('no one does good'); Matt 15:19 ('evil comes out of the heart'); John 8:34 ('we are all slaves to sin') – to recognize that we are by our very nature sinful.

Augustine knew that on our own we would never repent and believe. After all, we are dead in our sin. If you want to frame them up in theological categories, Augustine is arguing for what we call '**monergism**' (the sole work of God) and Semi-Pelagianism argues for '**synergism**' (us working together with God). According to monergism (Augustine), we are totally passive, and God is totally active – in salvation and in history.

Here's a characteristic quote, in which Augustine uses texts like Ephesians 2:8 to refute the idea that saving faith comes from us. He writes in *On the predestination of the saints* that our choice to believe must come in the first place from the very will of God:

"If anyone dare to say, 'I have faith of myself, I did not, therefore, receive it', he directly contradicts this most manifest truth, - not because it is not in the choice of man's will to believe or not to believe, but because in the elect the will is prepared by the Lord."

Should we be troubled that God's election is unjust Augustine notes that if God were to pass over the *whole* human race it would not be unjust – since all in Adam sin and die:

The fact that faith is not given to all ought not to disturb the believer, who believes that from one [Adam] all have gone into a condemnation, which undoubtedly is most righteous; so that even if none were delivered therefrom, there would be no just cause for finding fault with God."

Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism survive to this day all over the place – in liberal Protestantism and in any false teaching that downplays the seriousness of sin.

But it would take a real grip within developing **Roman Catholicism**. Through the Middle Ages Catholic doctrine increasingly argued that all we needed was God's grace (often understood in an un-Biblical way) to work in us so that *we can then work for God's righteousness*. [This is key in the Catholic grace-nature concept, which the Reformers rejected.]

One little observation: the "doctrines of grace" weren't invented by Luther and Calvin in the 16th century! They were taught by men like Augustine... and of course by the Bible itself!

3. Trinity: the Council of Nicaea (325 / 381AD)

Of all the disputes that rocked the early church two of the big ones were:

- Is Christ God? That came to a head in the 4th century.
- What did it mean that Christ was God *and* Man. That came to a head in the 5th century.

In the 300s, in Alexandria in Egypt, there was a presbyter named Arius. He was really keen to say that there were NOT THREE GODS. He was deeply concerned to defend the idea that there was ONE God. But he did it like this: he taught that Christ was not fully God. He said God that God the Son was the first creature whom God created and that he was not eternal. Arius had a soundbite that he put around: "there was a when when he was not." He set his teaching to music. And it attracted many followers

The emperor Constantine called together a conference of church leaders at Nicaea, in 325 AD. That's in modern day Turkey (now Iznik). We praise God for the good guys who gathered to contend for the faith, and to search the Scriptures for what they taught about the being of God. But when the 300 bishops arrived the vast majority had not decided whether they supported Arius or not. There were some attempts at a "fudge" – something that would keep everyone happy. Praise God, a few realized that God's truth does not always lie at midpoint of diverse human opinions.

One hero of the faith was Bishop Nicholas of Ancyra. He was so incensed by Arius' dishonouring of Jesus that he punched Arius in the face! The greatest human hero of Nicaea was Athanasius (and his boss, Alexander). Athanasius was instrumental in giving us the Nicene Creed.⁶ This positively declared the orthodox – and it condemned Arius as a damnable heretic, and any who followed him as condemned to eternal destruction. It was put into its final form in 381 AD – and it's this form that churches to this day recite in gathered worship – largely the same as 325, but with the "anathema" clauses removed.

For our purposes the key portion is in bold:

⁶ Why bother with church history & old creeds? (1) God is Lord of history: we see his providential hand in it – and as we see it we are encouraged. (2) We can learn from it, positively & negatively. (3) We don't follow creeds and councils just because they're old or people have traditionally done so. But insofar as they represent the truth of Scripture they exert a "ministerial authority" (i.e. serving) by helping us understand the Bible which alone possesses "magisterial" (ruling) authority. (4). Why recite these creeds, even though they are man-made & not a sufficient statement of doctrine (e.g. they don't say enough about the doctrine of salvation)? Because in standing with them we stand together with historic orthodoxy and declare we are not schismatics. Also, their subject is the being of God, and especially the divinity of the Son which remains both a *central* and an *attacked* truth.

Nicene Creed of 381 AD

I 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; God of God, 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 for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

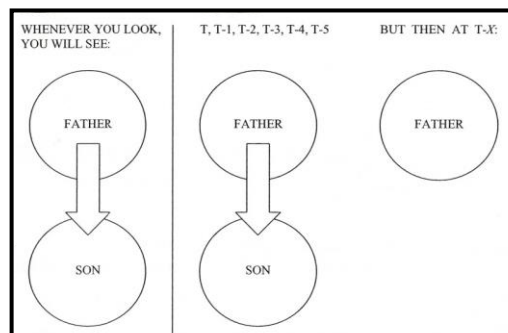
And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Athanasius summed up the being of God like this: *“The Father is God, The Son is God, The HS is God; And yet there are not three Gods, but one God.”* (Athanasius). That’s the outer perimeter of Trinitarian theology.

A key bible text in support would be Matthew 28:18-19 – which speaks of the three divine persons, and yet only one divine “name”:

“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

But how do we understand the person of God the Son? What does it mean that God is “Trinity” – three and one? The key phrase which the Nicene fathers gave us was this: that God the Son is **eternally begotten not made**. As you reach back into eternity past there was never a time when the Son was not. And there was never a time when the “Father” was not “begetting” the Son. Theirs is an unfathomable relationship of eternal generation.



The Nicene Fathers realized that Scripture taught that God the Son is begotten **of the essence of the Father**. Everything that makes God God is in the Son, as well as in the Father. He is **consubstantial with the Father**. [One supporting Scripture is John 5:26, “For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.”]

To learn more about God the Trinity you might like to check the “Doctrine of God” resources on Immanuel’s website. We looked together at the Trinity and the Attributes of God in summer 2016.

4. Christology: the Council of Chalcedon (451AD)

Probably much less familiar to us is the work of the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD). The century after Nicaea saw growing speculation and error in Christology – i.e. the doctrine of the person of Jesus. What did it mean that he God and man? How did Christ’s natures relate?

If that seems a little bit abstract just consider this for a moment: would it matter if Jesus...

- merely *appeared* to be a human. (Docetism)
- was a man, who at some point was *adopted* by God and infused with divine characteristics (Adoptionism)
- was a “*mask*” worn by God who sometimes appeared as Father, or Son or Spirit (Modalism / Sabellianism)
- was *not fully God* (Arianism)
- only possessed an *animal soul* (Apollinarianism)
- his divine and human natures were utterly *divided*, only appearing to be one person (Nestorianism)
- divinity and humanity was mixed together in one nature (Monophysitism/Eutuchianism)

It’s fairly mind-bending stuff! But it’s really important. For example, if Christ were not truly a man then he cannot suffer in a human nature – and he is not saviour that we need. (Nor, for that matter, can he sympathise with us in our weakness).

Or, consider this: if Christ’s natures are muddled up what happens as he dies upon the Cross? Does the eternal God die? That would be error. And impossible!

God’s providence brought us some answers to these questions. It all started with a horse! – the Emperor Theodosius fell off one and broke his neck. His successor was orthodox on matters of Christology and summoned the Council of Chalcedon. The human hero of Chalcedon was Cyril of Alexandria – who had died in 444, but whose fierce support of orthodoxy triumphed at Chalcedon. Here’s the Chalcedonian definition:

Following the holy Fathers we teach with one voice that the Son [of God] and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same [Person], that he is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, very God and very man, of a reasonable soul and [human] body consisting, consubstantial with the Father as touching his Godhead, and consubstantial with us as touching his manhood; made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted; begotten of his Father before the worlds according to his Godhead; but in these last days for us men and for our salvation born [into the world] of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God according to his manhood. This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son [of God] must be confessed to be in two natures, unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly, inseparably [united], and that without the distinction of natures being taken away by such union, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and being united in one Person and subsistence, not separated or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten, God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Prophets of old time have spoken concerning him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ hath taught us, and as the Creed of the Fathers hath delivered to us.

It was a corrective statement, speaking against various errors:

1. **Against the Docetists:** Jesus is perfectly human. He is homoousion with humans, and born of Mary.
2. **Against the Samosatian adoptionists:** it insists on the personal subsistence of the Logos 'begotten of the Father before the ages.'
3. **Against the Sabellians:** it distinguishes the Son from the Father both by the titles of 'Father' and 'Son' and by its reference to the Father's begetting of the Son before the ages.
4. **Against the Arians:** the Lord Jesus Christ was perfect in deity, truly God, and consubstantial with the Father.
5. **Against the Apollinarians:** who had said that Jesus had an 'animal soul' 'psuke alogos', it said that Jesus had a 'rational soul' 'psuke logike', that is a 'spirit.'
6. **Against the Nestorians:** it described Mary as 'theotokos', and spoke throughout of 'one and the same Jesus Christ', and one person and one subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons and whose natures are in union without division and without separation.
7. **Against the Monophysites/Eutychians:** it confessed that Christ's two natures were without confusion and without change.

And it was a unifying statement. It sought to draw together the orthodox around a clear statement of the truth. Though, significantly, it recognised that were big areas of mystery into which our speculation would be unhelpful or even unfaithful. It doesn't try to pin down everything.

It was a clarifying statement. It explained that Jesus does not have two self-consciousnesses but one, for he is *one* person. And yet we can distinguish his natures (as does the New Testament, which uses phrases like "according to the flesh", Romans 1:3). And those two natures were united by being of the one person – in what is sometimes called the personal or hypostatic union.

Chalcedonian Christology sounds confusing, but it makes sense of our reading of the Gospels: there we meet one person, Jesus – but who "seamlessly" exists as divine (calming the storm) and as human (he grows tired).

Some applications as we close...

First: Today we stand on the shoulders of men like Athanasius and Cyril. What we take for granted as Biblical orthodoxy they wrestled to understand, and very often experienced great persecution from others in church whilst contending for the truth. (E.g. Athanasius died in 373, having served as a bishop for 45 years. During that time he spent 17 years in exile courtesy of four different Roman emperors. We thank God for men like Athanasius!

Second: Difficult doctrine helps us to think true thoughts about God and about his work. We need to know that God is Trinity – it's not higher level theology for keenies, it is who God is. Similarly, Biblical Christology helps us speak truly about the Cross (e.g. God the Son died... according to His human nature. It is God the Son who died... it is not the Father or the Spirit. But He did not die *without* the Father or the Spirit). Growing Christians must not stop growing and be like babes on milk – we need to wrap our heads around things that are hard and holy.

One little clue that beefy doctrine mattered to the early church was that they turned it into song! For you to take away is an ancient hymn of the church: "Of the Father's love begotten" – a hymn of praise deeply stamped with Trinity and Incarnation.

Postscript: “Of the Father’s love begotten” – a 4th century Trinitarian hymn

Kevin de Young introduces the hymn writer – followed by the words of this ancient hymn.

Aurelius Clemens Prudentius was born in Spain in 348 A.D. He was loyal to the Roman Empire and considered it an “instrument in the hands of Providence for the advancement of Christianity.” Thirty-five years prior to his birth, Christianity had been granted full toleration under the Edict of Milan. With Constantine’s conversion, Christianity became the favored religion of the Empire, a change that is oft maligned by younger evangelicals suspicious of “Christendom,” but must have been a welcome relief and answer to prayer for the beleaguered saints in the fourth century. Prudentius was trained to be a lawyer and rose to high office, serving as a powerful judge. He rose through the ranks of the state and finished his civil career as a court official for the Christian Emperor Theodosius.

At the age of fifty-seven, at the height of his power and prestige, Prudentius grew weary of civic life and considered his life thus far to have been a waste. He was having a midlife crisis (or, given the age span at the time, more like an almost-at-the-end-of-my-life crisis). So the successful lawyer, judge, and civil servant retired to write hymns and poetry. For the last decade of his life, before his death around 413, Prudentius wrote some of the most beautiful hymns of his day. His poetry was treasured throughout the Middle Ages. His collection of twelve long poems (*Cathemerinon*), one for each hour of the day, became the foundation for several of the office hymns of the church. But without a doubt, Prudentius’ best known hymn today is *Corde Natus Ex Parentis*—Of the Father’s Love Begotten.

It was translated into English by John Mason Neale and Henry Baker in the 1850s. It was included in the book *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and given the plainsong chant-like melody *Divinum Mysterium* (Divine Mystery), which may date back as far as the twelfth century.

The hymn/poem originally contained nine verses. The song tells the story of redemption. Verse one speaks of the Son’s eternal nature. Verse two is about creation. Verse three chronicles the fall. Verse four moves into redemption with the virgin birth. Verse five links the Christ child to ancient prophecies. Verse six is a chorus of praise to the Messiah. Verse seven warns of final judgment for the wicked. Verse eight tells of men, women, and children singing their songs of praise. And verse nine concludes the hymn with a song of victory to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Most Christians will recognize many of the verses, but sadly not all.

1. Of the Father's love begotten,

'Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore!

2. At His Word the worlds were framèd;
He commanded; it was done:
Heaven and earth and depths of ocean
In their threefold order one;
All that grows beneath the shining
Of the moon and burning sun,
Evermore and evermore!

3. He is found in human fashion,
Death and sorrow here to know,
That the race of Adam's children
Doomed by law to endless woe,
May not henceforth die and perish
In the dreadful gulf below,
Evermore and evermore!

4. O that birth forever blessèd,
When the virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
Bare the Saviour of our race;
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
First revealed His sacred face,
evermore and evermore!

5. O ye heights of heaven adore Him;
Angel hosts, His praises sing;
Powers, dominions, bow before Him,
and extol our God and King!
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Every voice in concert sing,
Evermore and evermore!

6. This is He Whom seers in old time
Chanted of with one accord;
Whom the voices of the prophets
Promised in their faithful word;
Now He shines, the long expected,
Let creation praise its Lord,
Evermore and evermore!

7. Righteous judge of souls departed,
Righteous King of them that live,
On the Father's throne exalted
None in might with Thee may strive;
Who at last in vengeance coming
Sinners from Thy face shalt drive,
Evermore and evermore!

8. Thee let old men, thee let young men,
Thee let boys in chorus sing;
Matrons, virgins, little maidens,
With glad voices answering:
Let their guileless songs re-echo,
And the heart its music bring,
Evermore and evermore!

9. Christ, to Thee with God the Father,
And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee,
Hymn and chant with high thanksgiving,
And unwearied praises be:
Honour, glory, and dominion,
And eternal victory,
Evermore and evermore!