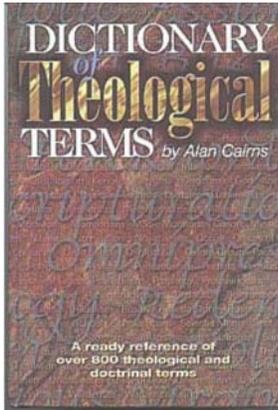




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The ABC of Christian Doctrine



ADOPTION

"The act of God's free grace whereby believers are received into the number of, and have a right to all the privileges of, the Sons of God" (Shorter Catechism, 34). The Westminster Confession of Faith (chap. 12) speaks of "the grace of adoption" by which the justified have God's name put upon them (2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 3:12); receive the Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15); have access to the throne of grace with boldness (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 3:12); are enabled to cry, "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6); are pitied (Ps. 103:13); protected (Prov. 14:26); provided for (Matt. 6:30, 32; 1 Pet. 5:7); and chastened by Him as a Father (Heb. 12:6); are never cast off (Lam. 3:31); but are sealed to the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30); and inherit the promises (Heb. 6:12) as heirs of everlasting salvation (1 Peter 1:3,4;

Heb. 1:14). Robert Shaw in his exposition of the Confession's statement remarks, "Among men adoption signifies that act by which a person takes the child of another into the place, and entitles him to the privileges of his own son. Spiritual adoption is that act by which God receives sinners into His family, and gives them a right to all the privileges of His children." The statements of Scripture on this subject show the inestimable depths of God's grace to His people. While men usually adopt to supply a deficiency, God did not, for He was fully satisfied with "His only begotten Son." Men usually adopt one or two, but God will bring "many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2:10). Men are influenced by some excellence, real or supposed, in the one they adopt, but God had no such inducement, for guilty sinners have nothing about them to merit His favour. We may note:

1. Adoption is an act, not a process. It is completed at once and is conferred equally upon all believers in Christ (Gal. 3:26, 28).
2. It is a gracious act (Eph. 1:4, 5; 1 John 3:1), carried out on the merit of Christ's redemption (Gal. 4:4, 5).
3. It is a forensic act, dealing with the legal right and status of the justified (John 1:12; Rom. 8:17). It is not to be confounded with regeneration, which describes an actual moral change whereby, being born of the Spirit (John 3:3, 5), we "are made partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4).
4. Like justification, it is a direct result of our union with Christ (see Mystical Union).
5. It is received by faith (Gal. 3:26) and exalts to the highest liberty (Gal. 4:7) and dignity (Isa. 43:4; Heb. 12:23, "firstborn," Rom. 8:17).
6. It always results in glorification (Rom. 8:16-18). "Adoption ends in coronation" (Thomas Watson).

ADVOCATE

The translation of the Greek word *parakletos*, which signifies "one called alongside to help." *Parakletos* is used of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7), where it is



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translated "Comforter," with the sense that He is the believer's advocate, helper, and intercessor (see Rom. 8:26). It is also used of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 John. 2:1) and shows Him to be our intercessor, pleading the merits of His own propitiatory sacrifice on our behalf.

ANGELUS

The thrice daily recitation of prayers and Hail Marys to the Virgin Mary by Roman Catholics. The hours for these prayers are marked by sounding a bell three times, three strokes each time. The Angelus was instituted by Pope John XXII in 1316. Since then several popes have granted indulgences to those who say the Angelus prayers on their knees. The introduction of the Angelus occurred during a period of increasing devotion to Mary and the popular acceptance of such notions as her assumption, her immaculate conception, and her participation in procuring redemption, as co-redemptrix, and comedatrix with her Son. (See Maryolatry.)