

C. The Atonement of Christ

1. The Nature of the Atonement

a. Statements of the Doctrine

(1) The *Augsburg Confession* (A.D. 1530), Part First, Article III

"Also they teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God, took unto him man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, the divine and the human, inseparably joined together in unity of persons; one Christ, true God and true man: who was born of the virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, that he might reconcile the Father unto us, and might be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men."

(2) The *Heidelberg Catechism* (A.D. 1563), Questions 37, 40

"Question 37. What dost thou understand by the word Suffered?

Answer. That all the time he lived on earth, but especially at the end of his life, he bore, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race, in order that by his passion, as the only atoning sacrifice, he might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life."

"Question 40. Why was it necessary for Christ to suffer death?

Answer. Because, by reason of the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise than by the death of the Son of God."

(3) The *Belgic Confession* (A.D. 1561), Article 21

"We believe that Jesus Christ is ordained with an oath to be an everlasting High-Priest, after the order of Melchisedec: who hath presented himself in our behalf before his Father, to appease his wrath by his full satisfaction, by offering himself on the tree of the cross, and pouring out his precious blood to purge away our sins; as the prophets had foretold. For it is written, He was wounded for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. and numbered with the transgressors; and condemned by Pontius Pilate as a malefactor, though he had first declared him innocent. Therefore, He restored that which he took away, and suffered the just for the unjust, as well in his body as in his soul, feeling the terrible punishment which our sins had merited; insomuch that His sweat became like unto drops of blood falling on the ground. He called out, My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me? And hath suffered all this for the remission of our sins. Wherefore we justly say with the Apostle Paul, that we know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified; we count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord: in whose wounds we find all manner of consolation. Neither is it necessary