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FIVE  
*Essential*  
DOCTRINES

A Monergism Tract

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# **Five Essential Doctrines**

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## **Introduction:**

### **The Five Essential Doctrines**

The Christian faith is built on a foundation of essential truths that are rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ. These are the

bedrock truths that define who God is, who we are, and how we can be joined in fellowship with Him. In this devotional book, we'll explore five of these essential doctrines: the absolute supremacy of Holy Scripture, the doctrine of human sinfulness and corruption, the work and office of our Lord Jesus Christ, the inward work of the Holy Spirit, and the visible work of the Holy Spirit in a person.

In a world where truth is often relative and opinions are varied, the Christian faith offers a unique perspective on life, the world, and our place in it. Through these chapters, we'll gain a deeper understanding of the Bible and its authority in our lives, the sinfulness that separates us from God and our need for a savior, the work of Christ as our redeemer, and the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives as believers. We'll learn how the Holy Spirit works inwardly to transform our hearts and minds and how He works visibly through us to impact the world around us.

As we consider the different worldviews that surround us, we can find comfort in the Christian faith. Our given task is to free the captives by being a faithful witness to Christ, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords. As we love our neighbors and seek the good of our community and nation, we can remain true to our beliefs without endorsing idolatry or the rule of other deities. We can trust that by staying true to our faith, we can live a life that honors God and blesses those around us.

As we delve into these five essential doctrines, we invite you to join us on a journey of deepening your understanding of God and growing in your faith. May these truths serve not only as a foundation for our beliefs but also as a guide for how we live and interact with the world around us.

## **Chapter 1:**

# **The Absolute Supremacy of Holy Scripture**

There is nothing more foundational to the Christian faith than the Holy Scriptures. As the Apostle Paul wrote to his young protégé Timothy, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV). In this chapter, we will explore the absolute supremacy of Holy Scripture and its vital importance for our lives as followers of Christ.

The Christian faith is rooted in the Bible, and it is through the Scriptures that we learn about God, His character, His purposes, and His plan of salvation. It is through the Bible that we come to know Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). The Scriptures are the final authority on all matters of faith and practice, and they are the source of truth that guides our lives.

The Reformers of the sixteenth century recognized the supreme authority of Scripture and the need to return to the clear teaching of God's Word. They rejected the traditions and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, which had elevated human authority and tradition above the Scriptures. As the Protestant theologian Martin Luther famously declared at the Diet of Worms in 1521, "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience" (Luther's Works, Vol. 32, p. 112).

The supremacy of Scripture is not a new idea, however. It is a doctrine that has been held by faithful Christians throughout the centuries. The Dutch theologian Herman Ridderbos writes, "The

church has always recognized the supreme authority of Scripture, and the Reformation did not introduce the doctrine of sola Scriptura, but rather restored it to its rightful place in the life of the church. Scripture is the final authority because it is the very Word of God, and as such, it has the power to judge and correct all human ideas, opinions, and traditions" (Ridderbos, "The Authority of Scripture," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr., p. 59).

The supremacy of Scripture has important implications for our lives as Christians. It means that we must be willing to submit ourselves to the clear teaching of God's Word, even when it contradicts our own opinions or desires. As the great British preacher Charles Spurgeon once said, "We have come to a turning-point in the road. If we turn to the right, we shall find the Church and the world joining hands; if we turn to the left, we shall find Christ and the Bible. We must choose one or the other, for we cannot have both" (Spurgeon, "The Greatest Fight in the World," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 58, p. 623).

To submit ourselves to the authority of Scripture requires humility, faith, and a willingness to be transformed by God's Word. It means that we must be willing to repent of our sins, to seek forgiveness, and to obey God's commands. It means that we must be willing to let go of our own ideas and opinions and to trust in the wisdom and guidance of God's Word.

The supremacy of Scripture also means that we must be careful not to add to or subtract from its teachings. The Bible is complete in itself, and we must not add our own ideas or traditions to it. We must also be careful not to subtract from its teachings by ignoring or rejecting certain parts of Scripture that we may find difficult or uncomfortable.

As we hold firmly to the absolute supremacy of Holy Scripture, let us also be humble in our approach to its teachings. Let us recognize that

our understanding is limited, and that we are dependent on the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. Let us also be open to correction and willing to learn from others who may have a different perspective.

Ultimately, our goal as Christians is to conform ourselves to the image of Christ, and the absolute supremacy of Holy Scripture provides us with the means to do so. Let us therefore make it our aim to study the Scriptures diligently, to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). In doing so, we will be equipped to live a life that is pleasing to God, and to fulfill the purpose for which we were created.

The Bible is not only the supreme authority but also the infallible and inerrant Word of God. It is perfect and without error in its original manuscripts, and it contains all that is necessary for our salvation and sanctification.

In an age where truth is relative and subjectivity reigns, the absolute supremacy of Holy Scripture stands in stark contrast. It is a beacon of truth in a world of confusion and chaos. It provides a sure foundation upon which we can build our lives and our faith.

As Christians, we must hold firmly to the absolute supremacy of Holy Scripture. We must study it diligently, meditate on its teachings, and seek to apply its truths to our lives. We must not allow the shifting sands of culture and opinion to sway us from the truth that is found in God's Word.

The absolute supremacy of Holy Scripture is not only a matter of doctrine but also a matter of practical living. It is the foundation of our faith and the source of our hope. It is the guide for our lives and the lamp that lights our path. It is the voice of God speaking to us, guiding us, and directing us.

Therefore, let us make it our aim to know the Scriptures deeply and to live our lives in light of their teachings. Let us follow the example of the psalmist who said, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light

to my path" (Psalm 119:105). Let us hold firmly to the absolute supremacy of Holy Scripture, and let us be guided by its unchanging truths in all that we do.

## **Chapter 2:**

# **The Doctrine of Human Sinfulness and Corruption**

Man is radically diseased. The biblical doctrine of human sinfulness and corruption, also known as the doctrine of original sin, is a fundamental truth that lies at the very heart of the Christian faith. This doctrine affirms that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, inherited from our first parents, Adam and Eve. This nature is not merely inclined towards sin but is desperately corrupt, such that every aspect of our being is tainted by sin. Our thoughts, desires, and actions are all affected by this corruption, leaving us incapable of pleasing God and in need of his mercy and grace. While the image of God has not been completely lost since the fall, it has been distorted. However, while we still reflect the dignity of the Lord in some way, our corrupt nature has led to an increasingly dark world.

Many people today find the idea of human sinfulness difficult to accept. In a world that places a high value on self-esteem and personal autonomy, the notion that we are inherently sinful seems to run counter to the prevailing cultural norms. However, the reality of human sinfulness is evident in the brokenness and dysfunction that pervade our world. Wars, violence, injustice, and oppression are just a few examples of the many ways in which sin has marred God's creation.



The Bible teaches that human sinfulness is not merely a matter of external behavior but is rooted in the very core of our being. The apostle Paul describes this reality in Romans 3:10-12: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." This passage makes it clear that the problem of sin is not limited to a few bad apples but is a universal human condition.

The doctrine of human sinfulness also teaches that we are utterly unable to recover ourselves. We cannot save ourselves by our own efforts or merit. This truth is humbling but essential for our spiritual growth and development. If we believe that we can earn our salvation or improve our standing before God through good works or religious observance, we are tragically mistaken. To save ourselves, our obedience would have to be perfect, which is an impossible standard to meet.

The knowledge of our utter inability to recover ourselves is necessary for the due humiliation of a sinner. The Bible teaches that true repentance involves a turning away from sin and a turning towards God in faith. It is only when we acknowledge our sinfulness and our need for a savior that we can begin to experience the transforming power of God's grace in our lives.

The doctrine of human sinfulness also requires that we repent of trusting in our own righteousness. This kind of self-righteousness can manifest itself in many ways, from prideful attitudes to legalistic religious practices. Whatever form it takes, it is a deadly spiritual disease that prevents us from experiencing the fullness of God's love and grace.

The biblical doctrine of human sinfulness stands in sharp contrast to other worldviews that either deny or minimize the reality of sin. Some believe that human beings are born neutral or even good, and that it is only external factors such as society or culture that corrupt

us. Others believe that we are potentially good and that through the right education or social conditions, we can create a utopian society free from sin and its effects.

These views, however, are fundamentally flawed. They ignore the reality of sin as a universal human condition and the devastating effects it has on our lives and the world around us. They also place an undue amount of faith in human abilities and achievements, rather than recognizing our utter dependence on God for salvation.

In conclusion, the biblical doctrine of human sinfulness and corruption is an essential truth that lies at the very heart of the Christian faith. It affirms that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and that we are utterly unable to save ourselves or recover from our fallen state without divine intervention and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

## **Chapter 3:**

# **The Work and Office of our Lord Jesus Christ**

The heart of the Christian faith lies in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. He is not merely a prophet, a teacher, or an example to follow; He is the one who accomplished our salvation through his life, death, and resurrection. In this chapter, we will explore what Jesus contributes to our salvation, what we contribute, and the infinite value of his person.

What does Christ contribute?

Jesus Christ contributes everything necessary for our salvation. He offers us his perfect righteousness, which He earned through his

sinless life, and He bears the punishment for our sins on the cross. He is our Representative and Substitute. Through his obedience to the Father, He fulfills the demands of the law on our behalf. Through his death, He pays the penalty for our disobedience. Through his resurrection, He conquers death and secures our eternal life.

Moreover, Christ's work is complete and sufficient. There is nothing we can add to it, and nothing can be taken away from it. It is a finished work that fully satisfies the justice of God and grants us forgiveness and reconciliation with Him.

What do we contribute?

What do we contribute to our salvation? The answer is simple: nothing. We contribute nothing to our salvation, except our sin and our need for a Savior. We cannot earn God's favor through our works, our efforts, or our religious observances. We are all sinners who have fallen short of God's glory and are unable to save ourselves.

This is why we need Christ's righteousness and his atoning sacrifice. We need Him to reconcile us to God and to bring us into a right relationship with Him. We cannot do this on our own. We need Christ to do for us what we are unable to do for ourselves.

The Infinite Value of Jesus' Person

The person of Jesus Christ is of infinite value. He is the eternal Son of God, who took on human flesh and dwelt among us. He is fully God and fully man, the perfect Mediator between God and man. He is the only way to the Father, the only Savior of the world.

When we compare Jesus with other world systems, we see the inadequacy of those systems. They are all based on human attainment, on our efforts to reach up to God or to achieve enlightenment, utopia or salvation through our own works. But Christianity is different. It is not based on our accomplishments, but

on Christ's accomplishment. He reaches down to us, to do what we are unable to do for ourselves.

In Christ, we find the perfect solution to our sin and our separation from God. He offers us forgiveness, redemption, and eternal life. He is the source of our hope, our joy, and our peace.

It is important to note that no particular sin can exclude us from God's grace if we repent and believe in Christ. The offer of salvation is open to all, regardless of their past or present sins. Christ's sacrifice on the cross is sufficient to cover all our sins, no matter how great or how many. Turn to Christ in faith, and receive his forgiveness, his grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit who acts a seal to keep you to the Day of redemption.

In conclusion, the work and office of our Lord Jesus Christ are essential to our salvation. He contributes everything necessary for our salvation, and we contribute nothing. His person is of infinite value, and his work is complete and sufficient. We must place our trust in Him alone for our salvation, and not in any human institution or achievement. Let us remember that Christ offers forgiveness and salvation to all who repent and believe in Him, regardless of their past or present sins. May we trust in Him alone and find our hope, joy, and peace in Him.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **The Inward Work of the Holy Spirit**

In the life of every person set apart by God, there was a time when they were faced with the reality of their own sinfulness. They recognized that they fell short of the glory of God and that their hearts were filled with rebellion against Him. It was at this moment

that they realized their desperate need for a Savior. They needed someone to rescue them from the bondage of sin and restore them to a right relationship with God.

How did we come to this wise realization? Was it due to our good hearts, or great intellect? No. We were in wilful rebellion against God. This is where the Holy Spirit came in. The Holy Spirit is the dispenser of divine grace. He is the one who enables us to see our sinfulness and our need for a Savior. He is the one who convicts us of our rebellion against God and leads us to repentance.

The grace of God in the work of redemption is manifested in the inward work of the Holy Spirit. It was through the Holy Spirit that we were regenerated and born again. He gave us a new heart and a new spirit, taking away our heart of stone (e.g. wilful and stubborn) and giving us a heart of flesh (pliable, willing). He made us new creatures in Christ.

The inward, transformative work of the Holy Spirit is not just helpful, but essential for our salvation. Intellectual knowledge and mere church membership cannot save us. To be saved, we must be reconciled with God through faith in Jesus Christ. But such faith is not something we can manufacture on our own, as our natural hostility to God prevents us from doing so. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit gifts us with the moral and spiritual ability to believe and transforms our hearts so that we can truly love and follow God.

The Holy Spirit empowers and enables us to believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior. Through the Holy Spirit, our eyes are opened to the truth of the gospel, and our hearts are transformed from stubbornness to submission, enabling us to trust in Christ alone for our salvation. By the work of the Holy Spirit, we are united to Christ through faith, which is itself a gift from God. He reassures us of our salvation and gives us the confidence to approach God boldly, knowing that we have been reconciled to Him through Christ.

The Holy Spirit also works in us to produce the fruits of the Spirit. These fruits are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are the marks of a true Christian. They are evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives.

The Holy Spirit not only empowers us to resist sin and to live a godly life but also enables us to bear fruit that will last, as Jesus said in John 15:16. Our good works are a result of God's workmanship in us, prepared beforehand for us to walk in, as Ephesians 2:10 states, and we can only accomplish them by the power of the Holy Spirit. By transforming our hearts, the Holy Spirit helps us to hate sin and to love God's law, putting to death the deeds of the flesh, and enabling us to be effective witnesses for Christ, sharing the gospel with others.

The inward work of the Holy Spirit is not something that we can see with our physical eyes. It is a spiritual work that takes place in the depths of our souls. It is a work that transforms us from the inside out. It is a work that gives us new desires and new passions. It is a work that enables us to live a pious and godly life.

As believers, we should be aware of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives and seek to yield ourselves up to His leading and trust that He will work in us according to His good purpose. We need to be filled with the Spirit and pursue a life that is in step with Him. This involves putting to death the deeds of the flesh and cultivating the fruit of the Spirit, which is evidence of His work in us.

We must also be mindful of those around us who do not know Christ. We must share the gospel with them and pray that the Holy Spirit will work in their hearts. We must be patient and persistent, knowing that the Holy Spirit is the one who convicts and converts souls.

In conclusion, the inward work of the Holy Spirit is essential for our salvation and sanctification. It is through the Holy Spirit that we are regenerated and born again. He gives us the faith to believe in Jesus

Christ as our Savior and enables us to live a godly life. He produces in us the fruits of the Spirit and empowers us to be witnesses. As believers, we must be continually mindful of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives, submitting ourselves to His leading and cooperating with Him as He transforms us from the inside out. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can live out our faith and bring glory to God in all that we do.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **The Visible Work of the Holy Spirit in a Person**

As we come to the final essential doctrine, we encounter a topic that is of utmost importance, for it speaks to the very heart of our Christian life. It is the visible work of the Holy Spirit in a person. The Bible makes it clear that being born again or regenerated is a transformation that takes place in a person's life. It is not just a change in behavior, but a complete renewal of one's innermost being.

To tell a person that he or she is "born of God" while living in carelessness or sin is a dangerous delusion. In fact, 1 John 3:9 says that a person who is born again will not abide in sin because God's seed is in him. This is not to say that a Christian will never sin, but rather that a true Christian will not habitually live in sin. If a person claims to be a Christian but continues to live in sin, it is evidence that the Holy Spirit has not done a work of regeneration in their life.

It is true that some abuse the grace of the gospel and turn it into wantonness. However, it is not the grace itself that is being abused,

but the ill-understood and not believed doctrine of grace. The power of grace prevents its abuse, and this is what the apostle Paul teaches us in Romans 6:1 and following. The grace of God is all treasured up in Christ Jesus, offered to all men in the gospel, and poured forth by our Lord in the working of faith. This grace becomes a living spring in those who receive it, and it must break out and spring up in all holy conversation.

To illustrate this truth, let us consider the parable of the waiting father and his two sons. The antinomian prodigal was awakened and tempted to legalism, thinking that he could gain grace in his father's eyes by becoming a slave in his house. However, he was bathed in his father's grace and set free to live as an obedient son. On the other hand, the legalistic older brother never tasted his father's grace because of his legalism. He had never been able to enjoy the privileges of the father's house.

Between them stood the father offering free grace to both, without prior qualifications in either. If the older brother had embraced his father, he would have found grace that would make every duty a delight and dissolve the hardness of his servile heart. If this had been the case, his once antinomian brother would have felt free to come out to him and say, "Isn't the grace we have been shown and given simply amazing? Let us forevermore live in obedience to every wish of our gracious father!" And arm in arm they could have gone in to dance at the party, sons and brothers together, a glorious testimony to the father's love.

God pre-ordains good works for us in Christ, but it is only as we walk in the Spirit that these works become evident in our lives. To walk in the Spirit means to live in accordance with the leading of the Holy Spirit, following His guidance and direction in all aspects of life. It involves submitting our will to His will, seeking His guidance in prayer, and studying His Word to gain a deeper understanding of His ways.



When we walk in the Spirit, we do not do good works to earn salvation, but because we have been saved. Our good works are the natural fruit of our faith, and they give evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. As we walk in the Spirit, we become more like Christ, and His character is reflected in our actions and attitudes. This transformation is a gradual process, and it requires a daily commitment to seek the Lord's guidance and to follow Him wherever He leads us.

Therefore, let us seek to walk in the Spirit, not out of obligation or duty, but out of a heart filled with gratitude for the grace that has been bestowed upon us. As we do, we will experience the joy of living a life that is pleasing to God, and we will become a powerful witness to those around us of the transforming power of the Gospel.

In conclusion, the visible work of the Holy Spirit in a person is something that we cannot manufacture or produce in our own strength. It is the result of the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration and transformation in our lives. It is evidence of the grace of God that has been poured out on us through faith in Jesus Christ. Let us, therefore, walk in the Spirit, crucifying the desires of the flesh, and producing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. May we be living testimonies of the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God,

## **Epilogue:**

### **Abiding in Christ**

Throughout this devotional book, we have explored five essential doctrines of the Christian faith. We have seen how these truths are foundational to our understanding of God and His plan of salvation. We have also seen how they have practical implications for our daily lives as believers. But knowledge alone is not enough. We must apply

these truths to our lives and live in a way that reflects our faith in Christ.

In John 15:1-11, Jesus speaks of the importance of abiding in Him. He uses the metaphor of a vine and branches to illustrate the relationship between Himself and His followers. He says that He is the vine and we are the branches. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains attached to the vine, we cannot bear spiritual fruit unless we abide in Him.

To abide in Christ means to remain in fellowship with Him through prayer, Bible study, and obedience to His commands. It means yielding to His life flowing through us, producing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. This is not something we can do on our own, but it is the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

As we reflect on the five essential doctrines we have studied, above all, we must remember that they all point to the centrality of Christ. We are saved by grace through faith in Him. We are justified by His blood and made righteous in Him. We are sanctified by His Spirit and conformed to His image. We are adopted into His family and made co-heirs with Him. And we are assured of our eternal inheritance in Him.

Therefore, let us abide in Christ, knowing that apart from Him we can do nothing. Let us trust in His grace and rely on His strength to live a life pleasing to Him. Let us be filled with His love and bear the fruit of His Spirit in our lives. And let us encourage one another to persevere in the faith, looking forward to the day when we will be with Him forever.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, and may He give you peace. Amen.

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## **MONERGISM BOOKS**

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