

A CONCISE DICTIONARY
OF Theological Terms

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To Chelsey, with prayers that you will abound in
faith, hope, and love.

—Chris

To Noble and Blake, with prayers that you will
grow to be strong in the Lord.

—Robert

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Introduction to *A Concise Dictionary of Theological Terms*

Bill grew up in a Christian home and trusted Christ at a young age. He attends a Christian college and plans to major in Christian studies. He hopes school will help him be a better husband and father, and maybe a pastor. The Old and New Testament Survey courses have shown him how little he knows about the Bible's teaching. He wants help, especially with theological words and important figures in church history.

Maria came to know Christ five years ago, all but devoured her Bible, and has grown steadily as a Christian. Recently she was asked to join the women's leadership team at her church. The plan is for her to learn to lead Bible studies. She is excited about preparing to teach women but feels inadequate. Maria says, "When I read books to learn more, I am overwhelmed by terms I do not know."

Can you identify with Bill or Maria? If so, then this book is for you.

What is the burden behind this book? By God's grace we are passionate about theology (what the Bible teaches) and the church. We are eager for believers to understand their faith so they can disciple others and reach the lost with the gospel.

What is the story behind it? We wrote a book summarizing the Bible's teachings—*Christian Theology: The Biblical Story and Our Faith*. At the end of each chapter we put key terms. Giving full definitions of those

terms within it would have made the theology book clumsy. So, we wrote a separate dictionary.

What exactly is it? It is a companion to the theology book. It includes definitions for the terms at the end of the theology book's chapters and much more. We envision it as a sort of GPS to help students find their way when studying theology.

What is its audience? We wrote for any believer (in school or church) serious about understanding what the Bible teaches about God, Christ, salvation, last things, and so on. It is not a book that you read from cover to cover, but a reference book. When hearing a lecture or sermon, reading a book or a blog, or listening to a podcast, you as this book's reader would use it to look up words you don't fully understand.

What does it cover? We included entries from many sources: the Bible, theology, church history (people, movements, councils, and documents), philosophy, church practice, and more.

What is its style? We tried to make it user-friendly, clear, and easy to understand. It follows an alphabetical format including entries from "Abrahamic covenant" to "Zwinglian view of the Lord's Supper."

How do I use it? You use it to look up unfamiliar terms, such as "Bonhoeffer," "Eastern Orthodoxy," "mysticism," "new heavens and new earth," "prevenient grace," "signs of the times," and "*sola scriptura*." We've included cross-references for easier use. At the end of many entries you'll find "*see also*" followed by related entries. Throughout the dictionary you'll also find "*see*" references with topics that point you to entries that treat those topics. For example, there appears "postmillennialism—*See* millennium," because that is where postmillennialism is treated.

Does it include common words too? Yes, because often we know something about a topic but want to know more. Examples include "hope," "assurance of salvation," "evangelicalism," "Trinity," "last days," "relativism," "Roman Catholicism," and "spiritual disciplines."

Where are the authors coming from? We are evangelical Christians who love the Lord and theology, and we want to help readers love him and it more too.

What are the dictionary's unique features? First, the dictionary is tied to *Christian Theology: The Biblical Story and Our Faith*. This volume

thus covers all the key terms from that book and many more. Second, we combine words in one entry instead of separating them throughout the dictionary. This is because bringing related terms together promotes understanding. For example, instead of making seven entries for various views of the Bible's inspiration, we put them together in one longer entry, "inspiration, views," to present them in relation to one another. Third, and most important, there is another reason some entries are substantial. We wanted to show how theology is drawn from Scripture. Examples include entries on "church, pictures," "Christ's saving work," "heaven," "hell," and "Holy Spirit's works."

Does it use abbreviations? Yes, one is "c." before a date, meaning "about." For example, the church father Tertullian's dates are c. 160–220 because we don't know exactly the year he was born. Another common abbreviation is *e.g.*, which means "for example."

Allen is coleader of his church's youth group. Preparing to take his turn leading Bible studies has helped him grow in his faith. He wants to go deeper into the Bible and theology but is intimidated by the books his pastor has recommended. He would prefer that someone explain in layman's terms the Bible's teachings on topics on which he will teach—topics such as "adoption," "assurance of salvation," and the "sovereignty of God" and "free will." This dictionary is written to help people like Allen serve the Lord better. It is our prayer that God will use it to help many.

Aa

Abrahamic covenant—*See* covenant(s); new covenant.

accountability—*See* free will; Last Judgment.

active obedience of Christ—*See* Christ's obedience; Christ's saving work, biblical images.

Adonai—*See* God, names of.

adoption—God the Father's placing of believers in Christ into his family by grace. God accepts us and adopts us as his children. Before adoption we were slaves to sin and did Satan's will (Gal 4:3; 1 John 3:10). God's eternal love is the source of adoption (Eph 1:3–6), and because of his vast love, he calls us his children (1 John 3:1). The basis of adoption is Christ's death as a redemption that frees us from sin's bondage (Gal 3:13; 4:4–5). We receive adoption by faith in Christ (John 1:12; Gal 3:26). The Holy Spirit empowers us to believe that the Father has adopted us (Rom 8:15). Adoption brings wonderful results. The Spirit not only enables us to call God "Father" but also testifies to his love in our hearts (v. 16). We share a family resemblance to our heavenly Father (v. 14). He disciplines us because he loves us (Heb 12:6). Adoption is present and future, for God has made us his heirs, awaiting our inheritance of the redemption of our bodies and renewed creation (Rom 8:18–23). *See also* application of salvation.

adoptionism—*See* Christ's deity, denials; Trinity.

age to come—*See* two ages.

ages, the two—*See* two ages.

agnosticism—uncertainty as to the existence of God. *See also* apatheism; atheism; skepticism.

alien righteousness—*See* justification.

Alpha and Omega—*See* Christ's names and titles.

“already” and “not yet”—distinction between elements of predictions of last things that are “already” fulfilled and those elements that have “not yet” seen the greater fulfillment to come at the end of the age. For example, God's kingdom is present and future; he reigns in the present age (Eph 1:20–21) and will reign more fully in the age to come (Rev 19:6). Antichrists have “already” appeared: “It is the last hour. . . . Even now many antichrists have come” (1 John 2:18). But “the man of lawlessness” has not yet come, the one who “opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god” (2 Thess 2:3–4). Jesus's coming is “already,” for he said that if anyone loves and obeys him, his Father and he will come and make their home with him (John 14:23). But Jesus's return is also “not yet,” for he told believers, “I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also” (John 14:3). Salvation and condemnation are realities now (John 3:17–18). But they are still future, for Jesus told what the unsaved and saved, respectively, will experience at his return: “They will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matt 25:46). The resurrection of the dead also exhibits both features. Jesus says that the resurrection has “already” come spiritually in the new birth (John 5:24–25) but also that it awaits fulfillment in the resurrection of the body (vv. 28–29). We live in the tension between the “already” and the “not yet.” The great events of Christ's death and resurrection have occurred. Their effects have begun, but their full effects await his return. *See also* antichrist(s); eschatology; kingdom of God.

amillennialism—*See* millennium.

Anabaptists—the most important groups of the Radical Reformation. Notable leaders included Menno Simons and Jacob Hutter. In general, Anabaptists embraced believer's baptism and rejected infant baptism.

They held to the Lord's Supper as a memorial for the baptized, free will, and an early form of separation of church and state. Later, separatist forms of Anabaptism included Mennonites, Amish, and Hutterites. *See also* Calvin, John; Luther, Martin; Radical Reformation; Reformation.

analytic philosophy—an approach to philosophy that focuses on the study of language and the logical analysis of concepts instead of traditional issues. Also called linguistic philosophy, analytic philosophy has been dominant in the Western world from early in the twentieth century. Key figures include Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and G. E. Moore. *See also* epistemology; existentialism; truth; truthfulness of God.

angels—spiritual beings created holy by God in large numbers. The unfallen or elect angels have remained holy. Although angels sometimes appear in human form, they do not have physical bodies, marry, procreate, or die. In ancient times, some good angels, including Satan and demons, rebelled. These are thus the fallen angels. Angels have great but limited intelligence and strength. As creatures, angels are not to be worshipped. Good angels are God's servants who occupy four key roles. They adore God, serve as his messengers, bring God's judgment on evil human beings, and serve believers, especially by preserving them (Job 1:6; Ps 148:1–5; Isa 6:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:6, 14; Rev 4:8). *See also* Satan and demons.

Anglicans—Protestant Christians who belong to the worldwide Church of England or Anglican Church. The Anglican Communion is an international association of churches consisting of the Church of England and churches in full communion with it. It is the third-largest church in the world, after the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. The archbishop of Canterbury is its spiritual leader but has no binding authority outside of his own province. The Anglican Church is viewed as representing a middle ground between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The Book of Common Prayer, first compiled in 1549 and revised several times until 1662, is pivotal to Anglican worship around the globe. *See also* church, government; Eastern Orthodoxy; Episcopalians; evangelicalism; Roman Catholicism.

annihilationism—the view that lost people in hell will be destroyed after they pay the penalty for their sins. Also called conditional immortality (or conditionalism), it's the idea that God gives immortality only to those he regenerates. The lost, then, never receive the gift of immortality and cease to exist. Annihilationism is a serious error that Scripture opposes (Dan 12:2; Matt 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43–48; 2 Thess 1:9–10). Annihilationism does not fit the biblical story because, at the end of the story, the unsaved do not cease to exist but, in line with the church's historic position, endure never-ending torment in the lake of fire and are shut out forever from the new Jerusalem, the joyous dwelling place of God and his people (Rev 20:10, 14–15; 21:8; 22:14–15). *See also* hell.

Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1033/4–1109)—Benedictine monk, abbot, and theologian who originated the ontological argument for God's existence. His approach was “faith seeking understanding,” using the mind to understand theology already believed. His most famous work, *Cur Deus Homo* (*Why God Became a Man*), was a response for requests to discuss the incarnation. This work argues that God had to become a man to make atonement for humanity because the Savior had to be both fully divine and fully human. *See also* Christ's deity; Christ's humanity; Christ's saving work; Christ's saving work, historical views.

anthropology—in Christian theology, the study of the doctrine of human beings as created in the image of God.

anthropomorphism—the attributing of human attributes or actions to God. God is a spirit and does not have a body, but God speaks to us in human terms to help us understand him. Thus, for example, the psalmist speaks of God's power in this way: “You have a mighty arm; your hand is powerful” (Ps 89:13). David tells of God's attention to humans by ascribing to him human action: “The LORD looks down from heaven on the human race to see if there is one who is wise, one who seeks God” (Ps 14:2). *See also* anthropopathism; impassibility of God; spirituality of God.

anthropopathism—the attributing of human emotions or passions to God. Scripture speaks of God as if he had human feelings to help us understand him. This attributing of emotions to God can be observed

with jealousy (Exod 20:5), anger (Num 25:3), regret (1 Sam 15:35), grief (Gen 6:6), compassion (Jer 31:20), love (Jer 31:3), and hatred (Amos 5:21). Importantly, God has divine emotions rather than human ones. Thus, God's emotions are free from the sins that frequently taint human emotions. The tension comes in acknowledging with Scripture that God is both transcendent and personal, which includes his having emotions. The occurrence of anthropathism in Scripture does not take away from God, the holy One, who is without sin. *See also* anthropomorphism; impassibility of God; spirituality of God.

antichrist(s)/Antichrist—(1) *lowercased*: people who oppose Jesus and his incarnation and (2) *capitalized*: a final false-Christ figure. The predictions of the Antichrist, like other major features of last things, are already fulfilled in part but also will have a greater fulfillment in the future. John noted the appearance of antichrists in the first century and drew an important conclusion: “Even now many antichrists have come. By this we know that it is the last hour” (1 John 2:18). These antichrists (pl.) are people who deny that Jesus is God’s Messiah and thereby deny the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22–23). They seek to deceive others with their false teaching (2 John v. 7). *The Antichrist* (sg.) is the final pseudo-messiah, who will oppose Christ and is still to come. He is “the man of lawlessness . . . the man doomed to destruction” who “opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship” (2 Thess 2:3–4). *See also* “already” and “not yet”; signs of the times.

antinomianism—opposition to law, especially as a rule for the Christian life. Antinomians pit grace against law and claim to be governed by the former and free from the latter. In keeping with the Old Testament (Exod 20:5–6; Ps 119:98), however, Jesus and his apostles taught that although salvation is by grace and not law keeping, believers are obligated to obey the law (John 14:15, 21; 15:10; Rom 6:14–16; Gal 5:13–14; Jas 2:8, 12). Because of his emphasis on grace, Paul’s opponents accused him of antinomianism, a charge he vehemently denied (Rom 3:8). Believers are saved and kept by God’s grace, which should lead to obeying God in gratitude for his grace. God’s law reflects his will; therefore, his law is good, and keeping it brings wisdom and happiness. The law condemns and drives

sinner to the cross, but it also is part of God's wisdom for living according to his will—for his glory and believers' good. *See also* law, uses; legalism; sanctification; Ten Commandments.

apatheism—the view that belief in God is insignificant or irrelevant. This term was coined by Jonathan Rauch to describe a lack of interest or relaxed attitude to one's beliefs or that of others. This view entails an attitude of apathy toward any kind of question about God's existence or nonexistence or what one might believe. *See also* agnosticism; atheism; skepticism.

apocalyptic—a biblical literary genre that reveals God's hidden plans for the future in heaven and on earth. God rarely speaks in apocalyptic literature but communicates through angels and heavenly figures. Apocalyptic themes include visions and symbols of God's rule over a chaotic world, his protection of believers, and his kingdom's final victory over evil powers. Apocalyptic writing occurs in Ezekiel 1–3; Zechariah 1–6; Matthew 24; and especially in Daniel 7–12 and Revelation. *See also* hermeneutics; prophecy.

Apocrypha—books written in the intertestamental period included in the Old Testament by Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy but never accepted by the Jews. These include 1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Rest of Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel, Prayer of Manasseh, and 1 and 2 Maccabees. *See also* canon.

Apollinarianism—*See* Christ's humanity, denials.

apologetics—formal defense of Christianity. It includes reasons for Christianity and answers objections to the faith. Appeal is made to 1 Pet 3:15–16: “[Be] ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. . . . with gentleness and respect.” Christian apologetics has a long history, from the early days of the church to the more recent writings of C. S. Lewis, Ravi Zacharias, and William Lane Craig. Methods include rational arguments and appeals to fulfilled prophecy, archaeology, and changed lives. Topics include the existence of God, the reliability of Scripture, the problem of evil, and Christ's deity and

resurrection. Apologetics' aim is persuasion, seeking both to strengthen believers and to remove obstacles to faith for unbelievers. *See also* gospel; Great Commission; mission.

apophatic theology—an approach to the doctrine of God that asserts it is impossible to describe God positively because human language is inadequate. Therefore, we can only say what God is *not*. Two examples are that God is not finite (infinite) and not mutable (immutable). Characteristic of Eastern Orthodoxy, apophatic (or negative) theology points to inner experience of God rather than rational articulation. *See also* Eastern Orthodoxy; mysticism.

apostasy—rejection of a faith once professed. One who commits apostasy (apostatizes) is an apostate. Christians disagree as to whether true believers can apostatize and never come back to Christ. Arminianism says this is possible, though unlikely. Calvinism says this is impossible because of God's preservation of his people for final salvation (Heb 6:4–12; 10:26–29, 39). Jesus says, "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28). Paul affirms that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38–39). *See also* Arminianism; assurance of salvation; Calvinism.

apostle—an eyewitness of the risen Christ, commissioned by him to spread the gospel. Building upon Christ the cornerstone, God made apostles a part of the foundation of the church. In fulfillment of Jesus's words, many apostles wrote New Testament books (John 14:26; 16:13–14; Acts 1:21–22; Eph 2:19–20; 2 Pet 1:16–20). *See also* gospel; inspiration; mission.

Apostles' Creed—an early statement of Christian belief widely used by many churches. Contrary to legend, the creed was not written by the apostles. Apparently based on the old Roman Creed of the second century, the Apostles' Creed first appeared in the fourth century and reached its current form around 700. It is trinitarian in structure, with sections affirming belief in God the Father, Jesus Christ his Son, and the Holy Spirit. It also affirms belief in the church, the communion of saints, forgiveness of sins,

resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. *See also* confession (3); Council of Chalcedon; Nicene Creed; Trinity.

apostolic succession—*See* church, attributes; church, government.

apostolicity of the church—*See* apostle; church, attributes.

application of salvation—God’s bringing people to salvation. Distinguished from God’s planning salvation before creation (predestination, election) and his accomplishing salvation in Christ in the first century (Jesus’s death and resurrection). The application of salvation includes many elements, each of which helps explain salvation differently. The overarching aspect is union with Christ, the Holy Spirit’s joining us spiritually to Christ so that all of his benefits become ours (Eph 2:6). Union with Christ embraces all the other aspects of the application of salvation. Regeneration is God’s making alive those who are spiritually dead (1 Pet 1:3). Calling is God, through the gospel, effectively summoning to him those who were spiritually deaf and blind (Eph 4:1). Conversion is God’s turning around lost people so they come to Christ. Conversion includes repentance (turning from sin) (Matt 4:17) and faith (turning to Christ) (Eph 2:8). Justification is God’s declaring righteous all believers in Christ (Gal 2:16). Adoption is God’s putting into his family all who trust Christ as Redeemer (Gal 4:4–5). Sanctification is both definitive and progressive. Definitive sanctification is God’s setting apart sinners to holiness (1 Cor 1:2). Progressive sanctification is God’s gradually building holiness into the lives of his saved people (2 Cor 7:1). Perseverance is God’s keeping his people saved and their continuing to believe the gospel and live for God (Heb 12:14). Glorification is God’s conforming people to the returning Christ’s perfect glory (2 Thess 2:14). *See also* adoption; calling; conversion; faith; glorification; justification; perseverance; regeneration; repentance; sanctification; union with Christ.

Aquinas, Thomas (1224/25–1274)—the foremost medieval scholastic theologian, who synthesized Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy. He wrote two masterpieces: the *Summa contra Gentiles*, to help missionaries teach and defend Christianity, and his famous *Summa theologiae*, the classical systematization of Latin theology. The Roman Catholic

Church recognizes Thomas Aquinas, whose doctrinal system and method are known as Thomism, as its leading Western philosopher and theologian. He wrote biblical commentaries, summarized five proofs for God's existence (the *quinque viae*, or "Five Ways"), and laid the philosophical foundation of transubstantiation. *See also* existence of God, arguments for the; Lord's Supper, views; Rahner, Karl; Roman Catholicism.

Arianism—*See* Christ's deity, denials.

Aristotelianism—the philosophy of Aristotle (c. 384–322 BC), a Greek philosopher during the classical period who greatly influenced Western philosophy and theology. He studied at Plato's Academy in Athens. Whereas Plato regarded things in our world as imitations of the eternal forms, Aristotle regarded the forms as attached to the things in our world, which he studied industriously. He wrote on many subjects: science, metaphysics, logic, ethics, poetry, music, rhetoric, psychology, linguistics, and politics among them. He had a profound effect on the Middle Ages, especially on Thomas Aquinas, who, using Aristotelianism, held that the image of God in humans is primarily rationality and taught the philosophy behind transubstantiation. *See also* Aquinas, Thomas; Lord's Supper, views; Platonism; Roman Catholicism.

Arminianism—theological system stemming from James Arminius that was formally presented by his followers in their protest ("The Remonstrance") at the Synod of Dort (1618–19) and later was further developed by John Wesley. The Arminians at Dort summarized their teaching in five points. (1) Conditional election: God chose people for salvation based on foreseen faith. (2) Unlimited atonement: Christ died to save all humans. (3) Total depravity: sinners are unable to save themselves (in agreement with Calvinism). (4) Resistible grace: by his grace, God gives sinners opportunity to believe or resist the gospel, and some do the latter. (5) Perseverance: at Dort, the Arminians expressed uncertainty concerning this point. Later, Wesley taught that believers can fall away from grace and be lost. *See also* Arminius, James; atonement; Calvinism; election; grace of God; perseverance; preservation; prevenient grace; total depravity; Wesley, John.

Arminius, James (1560–1609)—Dutch Reformed theologian and pastor whose views became the basis of Arminianism. As a theology professor at the University of Leiden, he came into conflict with his colleague Franciscus Gomarus over predestination. Although Arminius formerly held the Calvinist view, he came to defend a conditional election, according to which God elects to eternal life those he foreknows will believe the gospel. After Arminius’s death, some of his followers signed “The Remonstrance,” a theological document supporting his views. The Synod of Dort (1618–19) debated Arminius’s views, condemned Arminianism, and adopted the five points of Calvinism. As a result, Arminian pastors suffered expulsion and persecution. Arminianism continues to influence many Christians, including Methodists, Nazarenes, and some Baptists. *See also* Arminianism; Calvinism; election; sovereignty of God; total depravity.

ascension of Christ—*See* Christ’s saving work.

asceticism—the view that holiness is attained by denial of bodily appetites and physical pleasures, and the pursuit of rough treatment of the body. Growth in godliness is attained by downplaying the physical (eating, sex, and sleep) and accentuating the spiritual (meditation and prayer). In monasticism, asceticism was practiced by religious individuals and communities. Paul denies that asceticism produces holiness (Col 2:20–23). *See also* antinomianism; Gnosticism; law, uses; legalism; sanctification; Ten Commandments.

aseity of God—the doctrine that God has life within himself and depends on nothing else for his existence. He is the living God, who has existed forever. As Lord, he gives life to all and needs nothing (Jer 2:13; John 5:26; Acts 17:24–25). *See also* creation; eternity of God.

assurance of salvation—confidence of final salvation. Assurance is based on God’s preservation, the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, and believers’ perseverance. Preservation is God’s saving and keeping his people saved so they do not totally and finally fall away from grace (John 10:28–30; Rom 8:29–39). God’s promises to save (the gospel) and to keep (preservation) are the main basis of assurance. The Spirit’s inner witness is his working in

believers' hearts to convince them that they are children of God the Father, who loves them (Rom 8:16). Perseverance is believers' continuing to believe the gospel and live for God (Col 1:21–23). *See also* application of salvation; Holy Spirit's ministries; perseverance; preservation; providence.

Athanasius (c. 296–373)—Christian theologian, church father, and the chief defender of trinitarianism against Arianism. He endured five exiles because of his unwavering commitment to Christ's deity. His chief argument was that Christ must be God to be able to save sinners. Opposing Arius and several Roman emperors, Athanasius was embattled during his lifetime. Christians later esteemed his writings for their deep devotion to the Word-become-flesh and their pastoral concern. *See also* Christ's deity; Christ's incarnation; Council of Nicaea; *homoousios*; Nicene Creed; Trinity.

atheism—denial of the existence of God. *See also* agnosticism; apatheism; skepticism.

atonement—God's act of dealing with sin to bring forgiveness. Sin broke the relationship between God and human beings, but Christ's death brings restoration. Old Testament sacrifices brought forgiveness because they looked forward to Christ's once-for-all sacrifice for sin (John 1:29; Heb 9:15). Peter teaches, "Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God" (1 Pet 3:18). *See also* Christ's saving work; Christ's saving work, biblical images; Christ's saving work, historical views; propitiation.

attributes of God—God's qualities that make him who he is. Clarifications are in order. First, because God is infinite, we will never (even on the new earth) know him exhaustively. Second, because God is eternal, his attributes are too. God always has been and will be loving, holy, good, and so on. Third, God is unified and indivisible. Thus, we distinguish his attributes but do not separate them. This is known as the doctrine of God's simplicity. His attributes are not parts of him. Rather, he is totally sovereign, wise, faithful, and so forth. Fourth, because God is a divine person, we focus not on the attributes but on God himself. Thus, we do not study mercy and power per se, but God as merciful and powerful. Fifth, God has revealed himself, and we can know him truly (but never exhaustively, as

the first clarification states). Sixth, although attempts to categorize God's attributes are flawed, many discuss them as incommunicable (unique to him) and communicable (shared with his followers). When we label God's attributes as incommunicable and communicable, the categories overlap, but labeling reminds us of how we relate to God. Often the Bible says that we are not like God, and the incommunicable attributes highlight this. He is Creator, we are creatures; he is infinite, we are finite; and so on. The Bible also says that God created us in his image and that we must reflect him in our lives, and the communicable attributes highlight this. *See also* communicable attributes of God; eternity of God; image of God (*imago Dei*); incommunicable attributes of God; revelation.

Augsburg Confession (1530)—the principal confession of faith of the Lutheran Church, and one of the key documents of the Reformation. Written by Philip Melancthon and approved by Martin Luther, it summarized Lutheran belief as presented to Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg. It contains twenty-one statements of belief and seven statements of Roman Catholic abuses. *See also* confession (3); Luther, Martin; Reformation; Roman Catholicism.

Augustine of Hippo (354–430)—African Christian theologian who shaped the development of Western Christianity. His principal works include *The City of God*, *On the Trinity*, and *Confessions*. Also known as Augustine the Great, he extolled God's grace and helped formulate the doctrine of original sin. Luther and Calvin looked to him as a father of the Reformation because of his teachings on salvation and grace. *See also* Calvin, John; grace of God; Luther, Martin; original sin; Reformation; sin; Trinity.

authority of Scripture—*See* Scripture; Scripture, attributes.

autographs—the original texts of the books of Scripture (as opposed to copies) as they came from the hands of the inspired human authors. *See also* inspiration; inspiration, views; Scripture, attributes.