

3. Systematic Theology is necessary because of the functional needs which have arisen in the history of the Church, specifically the catechetical, didactic, polemic, and apologetic needs. '

a. The need of catechetical instruction as preparation for baptism or as instruction in the foundational truths of the Christian Faith.

The Apostles' Creed appears to have arisen from a number of baptismal confessions in use during the Ante-Nicene period. It exemplifies this need.

F. J. Foakes-Jackson, in his *History of the Christian Church*, speaks to this point:

In the earliest days of the Faith a convert was sometimes admitted to the full privileges of a Christian without any previous probation. All that was required before baptism was a belief in Christ; nor is there any mention in the New Testament of a period of instruction preceding the administration of the rite of Baptism. When, however, the Church became a more organized society, it was considered advisable that those who desired to become Christians should submit to a course of preparation before being finally enrolled as members of the Church. This period of instruction and probation naturally varied in different churches, and sometimes extended over three years.

(Even if one were to take issue with Foakes-Jackson and make a clear-cut distinction between baptism (with no necessary time-interval between conversion and baptism) and entrance into local church membership (with a time-interval between conversion and church membership), catechetical instruction could still have cogency for those wishing to enter the privileges and duties of local church membership.)

John Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis* was written for the purpose of transmitting "certain rudiments by which those who are touched with any zeal for religion might be shaped to true godliness." It thus served a basic catechetical-instructive purpose.

b. The need of teaching the whole counsel of God in some uniform manner.

In Matthew 28:19-20 our Lord says: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you."

The Nicene Creed represents the results of the felt need for uniform teaching of the truths of the Word of God concerning the deity of Christ.

Philip Melancthon's *Loci Theologici* also reflects this need.

This need of teaching the separate truths of the Word of God in a uniform and self-consistent manner flows from the didactic responsibility of the Church.