ABC Theology — Daily Theological Research Note

Practice Is Evidential, Not Magisterial

Section 8 Audit: Practice-Accountability and ABC as a Bridge

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1. Research Context

Today's discussion was deliberately limited to Section 8 of the September 3 pre-submission manuscript, "Practice-Accountability and Conclusion: ABC as a Bridge." Sections 1–7 remain closed in substance. The purpose was not to enlarge ABC Theology with another speculative construction, but to clarify what Practice-Accountability can and cannot do under the norm of Holy Scripture.

The manuscript already states two strong boundaries: "Practice does not create truth; it may expose the inadequacy of our understanding of truth," and "Truth is not accountable to practice; our claims about Truth are." Today's biblical discussion strengthens these boundaries and gives Practice-Accountability a more explicitly Christological and doxological orientation.

2. Three Biblical Stress Tests

2.1 Philippians 1:15–18 — Motive, proclamation, and fruit must not be collapsed

Paul distinguishes sharply between those who proclaim Christ from goodwill and love and those who do so from envy, rivalry, selfish ambition, and impure motives. Yet he can still rejoice that Christ is proclaimed. For Practice-Accountability this means that a defective human motive does not automatically make the truth proclaimed false, nor does a good motive automatically make an interpretation true.

> *Human motive ≠ Truth proclaimed ≠ Fruit God may bring.*

2.2 Romans 13:1 — Authority remains under divine sovereignty

Romans 13:1 places governing authority under God's sovereignty. This prevents Practice-Accountability from treating personal approval, political popularity, or historical success as the ultimate measure of divine order. At the same time, divine sovereignty over authority must not be confused with moral approval of every act performed by an authority.

> *Divine sovereignty over authority ≠ moral approval of every act of authority.*

2.3 Matthew 7:21–23 — Religious effectiveness is not the final verdict

Jesus' warning is especially decisive because the persons described appeal to impressive religious works done in his name: prophecy, exorcism, and mighty works. Visible religious effectiveness therefore cannot serve as the final criterion of truth or divine approval. The passage redirects attention toward doing the will of the Father.

> *Religious success ≠ Divine approval. Powerful apparent fruit ≠ Truth.*

3. The Lord's Prayer and the Positive Orientation of Practice

Matthew 6:9–13 supplies the positive center that prevents Practice-Accountability from becoming merely a method for detecting failure. The prayer moves from the holiness of the Father's name to the coming of

God's kingdom and the doing of God's will on earth as in heaven. It then enters ordinary embodied life: daily bread, forgiveness, temptation, and deliverance from evil.

> *God's Name → God's Kingdom → God's Will → faithful human practice*.

Accordingly, Practice-Accountability should ask first not whether our work is successful, influential, or even apparently powerful, but whether our interpretation and life are faithful to the will of God as normatively witnessed in Scripture.

4. A Refined Definition of Practice-Accountability

Today's discussion suggests a sharper formulation for Section 8:

> *Practice is evidential, not magisterial*.

Practice has evidential significance, but it does not possess final magisterial authority over Truth. Practice may expose inconsistency, hypocrisy, destructive consequences, inadequate interpretation, or unexpected fruit. Such evidence must be taken seriously. Yet neither human motive, institutional authority, political outcome, numerical growth, apparent usefulness, nor extraordinary religious performance can manufacture Truth or pronounce the final verdict upon it.

> *Practice does not test God or Truth; practice tests our interpretations, claims, and faithfulness*.

5. The Revised Practice-Accountability Movement

The existing manuscript's movement can therefore be refined without changing its basic architecture:

> *Holy Scripture → discernment of God's will → human interpretation → lived practice → fruit/evidence → renewed examination under Scripture → correction, rejection, preservation, or refinement*.

This movement is not a closed epistemic machine and does not make practice the final judge. The Living God remains the ultimate Judge. Scripture remains normative; interpretation remains corrigible. Practice is one real field in which the adequacy and faithfulness of human theological claims may become visible.

6. Political Hope and the Constantine Analogy

The discussion also touched a Christian hope that public authority might protect space in which the Gospel can be freely proclaimed. The historical image of Constantine can function only as a limited analogy. Political recognition does not make Christianity true, and political opposition cannot make the Gospel false. A Christian may pray for rulers who protect the freedom of the Gospel without making political power the guarantor of the Gospel.

> *Political recognition of Christianity ≠ Truth of Christianity*.

The deeper Christian petition is therefore not for a particular political arrangement as an ultimate end, but the petition taught by Jesus: that God's kingdom come and God's will be done on earth as in heaven.

7. Practice-Accountability and ABC as a Bridge

This clarification strengthens rather than weakens the concluding image of ABC as a bridge. A bridge does not erase the difference between its two shores. ABC may allow questions shaped by Zhu Xi and Chinese cultural memory—order, ground, antecedence, Li and Qi—to become occasions for serious encounter with

Scripture, Christ, and Trinitarian theology. But cultural resonance, social usefulness, political acceptance, and practical fruit do not themselves become revelation or the measure of Truth.

ABC therefore remains a servant of faithful rereading: culture raises questions; established knowledge constrains; practice supplies evidence; Scripture remains normative; and the Living God remains the final corrective.

8. Research Judgment for Section 8

Today's discussion materially clarifies the theological foundation of Practice-Accountability. The strongest new formulation is that practice is evidential rather than magisterial. Philippians 1:15–18 prevents motive from becoming an absolute truth-test; Romans 13:1 prevents private or historical judgment from exhausting divine sovereignty; Matthew 7:21–23 prevents visible religious success from becoming divine approval; and the Lord's Prayer positively orients practice toward the Father's name, kingdom, and will.

Practice-Accountability is primarily a discipline of faithfulness, not a theology of effectiveness.

This conclusion should be used to audit and, if necessary, modestly refine Section 8 of the Dao Feng manuscript. It does not require reopening Sections 1–7, nor does it require importing the independent ABC Trinity/AZF mathematical research into the submission article.

9. Working Principles Retained

- Scripture is normative; interpretation is corrigible.
- Practice does not create truth; it may expose the inadequacy of our understanding of truth.
- Truth is not accountable to practice; our claims about Truth are.
- Practice is evidential, not magisterial.
- Practice-Accountability is primarily a discipline of faithfulness, not a theology of effectiveness.
- The Living God Alone Is Antecedent.

Soli Deo Gloria. Amen and Amen.