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Appendix A

LITURGIES

1. Development of the Worship Service

The order of worship services in the Christian Reformed Church is determined by Article 10.1 and its ensuing stipulations. Church councils are to act autonomously in presenting their worship services, as long as they comply to the stipulations of the constitution and the good order.

The form of the Christian worship service is particularly ancient and went through the following phases:

- 1. The Old Testament Service**

The altar service of the Israelite patriarchs was incorporated into the simple tabernacle service of the desert period. The altar was central, and a priesthood acted as intermediaries. The temple service following this greatly elaborated on the tabernacle service. During the exile, because of the absence of the temple, the synagogue service came to the fore and underwent development. In the synagogue service, the Law was central, and emphasis was laid on Scripture explication and teaching. In this way, the rabbi (teacher) replaced the priest. At the time of Jesus, the temple service and synagogue service co-existed.
- 2. The New Testament Service**

The crucifixion of Jesus fulfilled and discarded the Old Testament sacrificial system, and the temple, therefore, was afterwards destroyed and never rebuilt. The early Christian congregations followed the pattern of the synagogue service and included the following synagogue elements: Scripture reading, explication, prayers, and singing. The eucharist was celebrated regularly, probably weekly. The congregation contributed as their gifts permitted.
- 3. The Catholic Service**

As the centuries went by, the worship service, while focusing on the above elements, was elaborated upon with much ritual, including some untrue elements. The reintroduction of the priesthood (weekly offering the Eucharist as a sacrifice) and the growth of sacramentalism (giving the sacraments supernatural properties) re-established the altar as the focus of the service, with priests officiating and the congregation acting as spectators. The role of Scripture became limited to the prescribed readings.
- 4. The Reformed Service**

The Reformation (especially by Calvin) restored the worship service to a simpler format, centred upon the Word. Congregational involvement was increased, especially via congregational singing, and a slot for questions and answers after the sermon. Much of the ritual was abandoned, including the vestments, candles, incense, and Latin. The introit, reading of the Law and Creed, the salutation and the benediction were kept. The frequency of Communion was reduced. This form came to South Africa, undergoing further development here. Most noticeable is the gradual simplification and lesser emphasis on form.
- 5. The Service of the Christian Reformed Church in SA**

The Christian Reformed Church retained the liturgy of the Dutch Reformed Church of the 1940s and used it for several decades. Later additions by the Dutch Reformed Church, for example the proclamation of absolution (and an admonishment) were not followed. Through the years, the church more or less followed the Dutch Reformed Church concerning changes to the hymnal, the use of the toga, the wearing of hats, communion cups, etc. Initially, however, it continued to use the "Hallelujah" hymnal and the 1933 Bible translation (for Afrikaans services). Later, during the 1970s, the church nationwide experienced the Holy Spirit Renewal Movement. This started a process to hold less formal worship services. Other songs than the above were introduced, personal testimonies were incorporated, as well as praying for specific needs during or after the service. Formal elements like the reading of the law and the Creed were increasingly excluded. Music bands were introduced and "praise and worship" singing became an important element preceding the Word, with the congregation often participating by clapping and raising of hands. The current standpoint of the church is that a church council may put together a worship service as it wants to, but within the guidelines of synod.

In returning to a worship form that is simple, authentic, and Biblical, church councils are urged to consider the historical context, as delineated above, and at all times present a justifiable worship service. To that purpose we offer the following examples and guidelines:

2. Worship Services in the CR Church

2.1. The Ordinary Service

2.1.1 The traditional service used by the Christian Reformed Church

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Introit | The minister and church council enter the church while a hymn is sung |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Votum | A fitting Scripture word, e.g.: "Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who made..." |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Salutation | (With one hand raised) For example: "Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Opening Prayer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Announcements | "The following announcements on behalf of the church council..." |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Congregational singing | The first hymn of the service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reading of the law | Or summary of it, for example in Matthew 22:37-40. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reading of the creed | Usually the Apostle's Creed: "I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of..." |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Collection | With musical accompaniment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Congregational singing | The second hymn of the service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prayer | Either the minister's intercession or a prayer at the opening of the Word |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Scripture reading | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Proclamation of the Word | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Closing prayer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Congregational singing | The third hymn of the service. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Benediction | (With extended hands) |

2.1.2 The common service in the church as is generally found in our congregations follows the following pattern:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Greeting | (Some congregations. For example: "I greet all in the Name of Jesus...") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Welcome | Members and visitors are welcomed by the minister. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Announcements | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Testimonies | (Some congregations) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Congregational singing | Praise and worship singing, accompanied by music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prayers | (Some) For example praying for needs or a "prayer focus", e.g. on missions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Collection | (Some afterwards dedicate the offering to the Lord in prayer) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Scripture reading | (Followed by a prayer by some) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Proclamation of the Word | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Response | (Some congregations allow for quiet prayer or other response) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Closing prayer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Congregational singing | Closing hymn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Benediction | |

2.2. The Special Service

2.2.1 A service in which members, church council members or ministers are confirmed proceeds as usual, but either before or after the proclamation of the Word the following elements are included:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Call to the front | Those involved are called up to the front |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Formulary | Formulary A,B,C |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Confirmation | Formulary A,B,C |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Benediction | Formulary A,B,C |

2.2.2 Some services have a special emphasis

- Evangelisation – with testimonies, evangelistic message and altar call
- Teaching – the minister might work through specific topics
- Prayer – the congregation is led in prayer for specific topics
- Singing – a song service can be presented, for example with a Christmas theme
- Missions – with appropriate testimonies and aids
- Youth – a service highlighting youth ministry, with youth involvement
- Children – a service aimed at children, with teaching aids

2.2.3 Special elements are often included in the service:

- Song item – either by a choir (an ancient practice), singing group or soloist
- Dance – accompanying praise and worship
- Technological aids – video, projector, streaming service, virtual service
- Artistic elements – readings, drama, dance or mime, film clip, painting

2.3 The Sacrament Service

2.3.1 Communion is added after the proclamation of the Word, in the following way:

- Preparation The table is prepared by the deacons
- Scripture reading Reading of appropriate Scriptures (Formulary D)
- Formulary Formulary D
- Epiclesis Prayer dedicating the elements of Communion (Formulary D)
- Fraction The celebrant breaks the bread
- Communion The bread is shared and eaten (according to the local custom)
- After this the wine/grape juice is poured, shared and drunk
- Thanksgiving A prayer of thanksgiving

2.3.2 Baptism can be included before or after the proclamation of the Word, in the following way:

- Call to the front Those to be baptised are called to the front
- Formulary Formulary E
- Ministration Formulary E (Adults receiving sprinkling (aspersion) kneel)
- Benediction Formulary E

2.3.3 In the Christian Reformed Church, the sacraments may also be administered outside of the worship service. In such instances a short Christian meeting must nevertheless be held, for example at a baptism at a river, or an informal communion at a house meeting.

2.4 The Wedding Service

2.4.1 A wedding service is a special occasion that is presented as follows:

- Entrance of the bride Usually accompanied by the Wedding March or other music.
- Word of welcome
- Prayer
- Congregational singing The first hymn of the service (optional)
- Scripture reading
- Proclamation of the Word
- Formulary Formulary F
- Confirmation Formulary F
- Prayer of Blessing Formulary F
- Musical item (Optional)
- Signing of the register (Can also occur after the service)
- Congregational singing. The second hymn of the service (optional)
- Benediction

The congregation is usually allowed to leave the building, while photos are taken inside. The bridal couple then exits the building amidst the joyful throwing of confetti or rose petals.

2.4.2 'n Wedding can also be solemnised in an ordinary worship service, in which case the formulary (as above) is read after the proclamation of the Word.

2.5. The Funeral Service

2.5.1 The Reformed funeral service, which is solemn and short, can be presented as follows.

- Prayer
- Necrology See Note 2.5.2.2
- Congregational singing The first hymn of the service
- Scripture reading
- Proclamation of the Word
- Prayer
- Congregational singing The second hymn of the service
- Benediction
- Announcements A family member may make some announcements (e.g. about procedures at the grave) or thank various parties involved.
- Bearing the coffin Where applicable, the names of the coffin bearers are read and they are given the opportunity to exit the building first, followed by the family.

At the grave:

Formulary	Formulary G
Committal	Formulary G (possibly accompanied by singing)
Prayer	Formulary G

2.5.2 Notes:

- 2.5.2.1 In practice, culture and tradition often dictates what happens at funerals. Funerals are often much more expansive and ceremonial.
- 2.5.2.2 The necrology consists of the obituary particulars usually found on the undertaker's programme
 OR a short curriculum vitae (one or two paragraphs only) of the deceased
 OR simply the following words: "It has pleased Almighty God to take from our midst (full names and surname), born on, passed away on, at the age of The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen."
 Take note: the purpose of the necrology is not to eulogise the deceased, but to state the name and basic biography of the deceased by way of introduction. It formalises the event and states its purpose, and therefore must be done by the liturgist. If family members hand the minister particulars about the deceased he may include it in a shortened format befitting the solemnity of the occasion. In our tradition, eulogies are delivered at the social meeting following the funeral, but times and customs will dictate the procedure.
- 2.5.2.3 In cases of cremation the liturgy at the grave is adapted for the purpose.

Appendix B

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

Confession of Faith 1

APOSTLE'S CREED

Also called the Symbolum Apostolicum, the Credo or the Twelve Articles.

I believe in God the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord:
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
who suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried,
who on the third day rose again from the dead,
ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty,
from where He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit.
I believe in the holy catholic church,
the communion of the saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Note:

1. Different churches read the *Apostle's Creed* in various ways. The phrase "descended into hell" is questionable, because the hell as such (*Gehenna*) is not meant, but *Hades*, the dead. Some churches nowadays, therefore, render it as "descended to the dead". The Christian Reformed Church merely omits this phrase.
2. "Catholic" as an adjective means "universal" - the church of all times and places.

Confession of Faith 2

ATHANASIAN CREED

Although Athanasius himself did not compose this confession, it is traditionally attributed to him. It probably dates from approximately 500 AD from Spain or the South of France. It is also called, "Symbolum Quicumque". The term "catholic" (with the lower case 'c') does not refer to the Roman Catholic Church but has the meaning of "common" or "general".

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith.
2. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
And the catholic faith is this:
3. That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity,
4. neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.
5. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit.
6. But the godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.
7. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit.
8. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated.
9. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.
10. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal.
11. And yet they are not three eternal, but one Eternal.
12. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one Uncreated, and one Incomprehensible.
13. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Spirit Almighty.
14. And yet they are not three almighties, but one Almighty.
15. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.
16. And yet they are not three gods, but one God.
17. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord.
18. And yet not three lords, but one Lord.
19. For as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge each Person by Himself to be both God and Lord, so we are also forbidden by the catholic religion to say that there are three Gods or three Lords.
20. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten.
21. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten.
22. The Holy Spirit is of the Father, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.
23. So there is one Father, not three fathers; one Son, not three sons; one Holy Spirit, not three holy spirits.
24. And in the Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another, but all three Persons are coeternal together and coequal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved must think thus of the Trinity.
27. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
For the right faith is,
28. that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man;
29. God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of the substance of his mother, born in the world;
30. perfect God and perfect man, of a rational soul and human flesh subsisting.
31. Equal to the Father, as touching His godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching His manhood;
32. who, although He is God and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ;
33. one, not by conversion of the godhead into flesh but by taking of the manhood into God;
34. one altogether; not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.
35. For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ;
36. who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.
37. He ascended into heaven, He sits at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the quick and the dead.
38. At His coming all men will rise again with their bodies and shall give account for their own works.
39. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.
40. This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

Confession of Faith 3

NICENE CREED

Although this creed bears the name of the place Nicéa (Asia Minor), where the first ecumenic council was held in the year 325, it is not the literal creed that was composed at the council. It was developed after 362 and was expanded at the second ecumenic council at Constantinople (381), and “and the Son” (by the coming forth of the Holy Spirit) was added even later to it. It is therefore also called the “Niceno-Constantinopolitanum”.

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;

he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,

and was made human. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried.

The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.

He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead.

His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.

He spoke through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come. Amen.

Confession of Faith 4

BELGIC CONFESSION

- Article 1 The only God**
 We all believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that there is a single and simple spiritual being, whom we call God -- eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, unchangeable, infinite, almighty; completely wise, just, and good, and the overflowing source of all good.
- Article 2 The means by which we know God**
 We know him by two means:
 First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, since that universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God: his eternal power and his divinity, as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20. All these things are enough to convict men and to leave them without excuse. . Second, he makes himself known to us more openly by his holy and divine Word, as much as we need in this life, for his glory and for the salvation of his own.
- Article 3 The written Word of God**
 We confess that this Word of God was not sent nor delivered by the will of men, but that holy men of God spoke, being moved by the Holy Spirit, as Peter says. (2 Pet. 1:21) Afterwards our God-- because of the special care he has for us and our salvation-- commanded his servants, the prophets and apostles, to commit this revealed Word to writing. He himself wrote with his own finger the two tables of the law. Therefore we call such writings holy and divine Scriptures.
- Article 4 The canonical books**
 We include in the Holy Scripture the two volumes of the Old and New Testaments. They are canonical books with which there can be no quarrel at all. In the church of God the list is as follows:
 In the Old Testament, the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth; the two books of Samuel, and two of Kings; the two books of Chronicles, called Paralipomenon; the first book of Ezra; Nehemiah, Esther, Job; the Psalms of David; the three books of Solomon: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song; the four major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel; and then the other twelve minor prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.
 In the New Testament, the four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles; the fourteen letters of Paul: to the Romans; the two letters to the Corinthians; to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians; the two letters to the Thessalonians; the two letters to Timothy; to Titus, Philemon, and to the Hebrews; the seven letters of the other apostles: one of James; two of Peter; three of John; one of Jude; and the Revelation of the apostle John.
- Article 5 The authority of Scripture**
 We receive all these books and these only as holy and canonical, for the regulating, founding, and establishing of our faith. And we believe without a doubt all things contained in them-not so much because the church receives and approves them as such but above all because the Holy Spirit testifies in our hearts that they are from God, and also because they prove themselves to be from God. For even the blind themselves are able to see that the things predicted in them do happen.
- Article 6 The difference between Canonical and Apocryphal Books**
 We distinguish between these holy books and the apocryphal ones, which are the third and fourth books of Esdras; the books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Jesus Sirach, Baruch; what was added to the Story of Esther; the Song of the Three Children in the Furnace; the Story of Susannah; the Story of Bell and the Dragon; the Prayer of Manasseh; and the two books of Maccabees. The church may certainly read these books and learn from them as far as they agree with the canonical books. But they do not have such power and virtue that one could confirm from their testimony any point of faith or of the Christian religion. Much less can they detract from the authority of the other holy books.
- Article 7 The sufficiency of Scripture**
 We believe that this Holy Scripture contains the will of God completely and that everything one must believe to be saved is sufficiently taught in it. For since the entire manner of service which God requires of us is described in it at great length, no one-- even an apostle or an angel from heaven, as Paul says (Gal. 1:8) ought

to teach other than what the Holy Scriptures have already taught us. For since it is forbidden to add to or subtract from the Word of God, this plainly demonstrates that the teaching is perfect and complete in all respects. (Deut. 12:32) Therefore we must not consider human writings-- no matter how holy their authors may have been-- equal to the divine writings; nor may we put custom, nor the majority, nor age, nor the passage of time or persons, nor councils, decrees, or official decisions above the truth of God, for truth is above everything else. (Rev. 22:18-19) For all human beings are liars by nature and more vain than vanity itself. (Ps 62:10) Therefore we reject with all our hearts everything that does not agree with this infallible rule, as we are taught to do by the apostles when they say, "Test the spirits to see if they are of God," (1 John 4:1) and also, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house." (2 John 10)

Article 8

The Trinity

In keeping with this truth and Word of God we believe in one God, who is one single essence, in whom there are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct according to their incommunicable properties-- namely, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is the cause, origin, and source of all things, visible as well as invisible. The Son is the Word, the Wisdom, and the image of the Father. The Holy Spirit is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son. Nevertheless, this distinction does not divide God into three, since Scripture teaches us that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each has his own subsistence distinguished by characteristics-- yet in such a way that these three persons are only one God. It is evident then that the Father is not the Son and that the Son is not the Father, and that likewise the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. Nevertheless, these persons, thus distinct, are neither divided nor fused or mixed together. For the Father did not take on flesh, nor did the Spirit, but only the Son. The Father was never without his Son, nor without his Holy Spirit, since all these are equal from eternity, in one and the same essence. There is neither a first nor a last, for all three are one in truth and power, in goodness and mercy.

Article 9

The scriptural witness on the Trinity

All these things we know from the testimonies of Holy Scripture as well as from the effects of the persons, especially from those we feel within ourselves. The testimonies of the Holy Scriptures, which teach us to believe in this Holy Trinity, are written in many places of the Old Testament, which need not be enumerated but only chosen with discretion. In the book of Genesis God says, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness." So "God created man in his own image"-- indeed, "male and female he created them." (Gen. 1:26-27) "Behold, man has become like one of us." (Gen. 3:22) It appears from this that there is a plurality of persons within the Deity, when he says, "Let us make man in our image"-- and afterwards he indicates the unity when he says, "God created." It is true that he does not say here how many persons there are-- but what is somewhat obscure to us in the Old Testament is very clear in the New. For when our Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the voice of the Father was heard saying, "This is my dear Son"; (Matt. 3:17) the Son was seen in the water; and the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove. So, in the baptism of all believers this form was prescribed by Christ: "Baptize all people in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19) In the Gospel according to Luke the angel Gabriel says to Mary, the mother of our Lord: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and therefore that holy one to be born of you shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35) And in another place it says: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you." (2 Cor. 13:14) "There are three who bear witness in heaven-- the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit-- and these three are one." (1 John 5:7) (KJV) In all these passages we are fully taught that there are three persons in the one and only divine essence. And although this doctrine surpasses human understanding, we nevertheless believe it now, through the Word, waiting to know and enjoy it fully in heaven. Furthermore, we must note the particular works and activities of these three persons in relation to us. The Father is called our Creator, by reason of his power. The Son is our Saviour and Redeemer, by his blood. The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier, by his living in our hearts. This doctrine of the holy Trinity has always been maintained in the true church, from the time of the apostles until the present, against Jews, Muslims, and certain false Christians and heretics, such as Marcion, Mani, Praxeas, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, Arius, and others like them, who were rightly condemned by the holy fathers. And so, in this matter we willingly accept the three ecumenical creeds-- the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian--as well as what the ancient fathers decided in agreement with them.

Article 10

The Deity of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, according to his divine nature, is the only Son of God-- eternally begotten, not made nor created, for then he would be a creature. He is one in essence with the Father; coeternal; the exact image of the person of the Father and the "reflection of his glory, (Heb 1:3) (Col. 1:15) being in all things like him. (Fil. 2:6) He is the Son of God not only from the time he assumed our nature but from all eternity, as the following testimonies teach us when they are taken together. Moses says that God "created the world"; (Gen. 1:1) and John says that "all things were created by the Word," (John 1:3) which he calls God. The apostle says that "God made the world by his Son." (Heb. 1:2); He also says that "God created all things

by Jesus Christ." (Col. 1:16) And so it must follow that he who is called God, the Word, the Son, and Jesus Christ already existed when all things were created by him. Therefore the prophet Micah says that his origin is "from ancient times, from eternity." (Mic. 5:2) And the apostle says "...that he has "neither beginning of days nor end of life." (Heb. 7:3) So then, he is the true eternal God, the Almighty, whom we invoke, worship, and serve.

Article 11 The Deity of the Holy Spirit

We believe and confess also that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son--neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but only proceeding from the two of them. In regard to order, he is the third person of the Trinity-- of one and the same essence, and majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son. He is true and eternal God, as the Holy Scriptures teach us.

Article 12 The creation of all things

We believe that the Father created heaven and earth and all other creatures from nothing, when it seemed good to him, by his Word-- that is to say, by his Son. He has given all creatures their being, form, and appearance, and their various functions for serving their Creator. Even now he also sustains and governs them all, according to his eternal providence, and by his infinite power, that they may serve man, in order that man may serve God. He has also created the angels good, that they might be his messengers and serve his elect. Some of them have fallen from the excellence in which God created them into eternal perdition; and the others have persisted and remained in their original state, by the grace of God. The devils and evil spirits are so corrupt that they are enemies of God and of everything good. They lie in wait for the church and every member of it like thieves, with all their power, to destroy and spoil everything by their deceptions. So then, by their own wickedness they are condemned to everlasting damnation, daily awaiting their torments. For that reason we detest the error of the Sadducees, who deny that there are spirits and angels, and also the error of the Manicheans, who say that the devils originated by themselves, being evil by nature, without having been corrupted.

Article 13 The doctrine of God's providence

We believe that this good God, after he created all things, did not abandon them to chance or fortune but leads and governs them according to his holy will, in such a way that nothing happens in this world without his orderly arrangement. Yet God is not the author of, nor can he be charged with, the sin that occurs. For his power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible that he arranges and does his work very well and justly even when the devils and wicked men act unjustly. We do not wish to inquire with undue curiosity into what he does that surpasses human understanding and is beyond our ability to comprehend. But in all humility and reverence we adore the just judgments of God, which are hidden from us, being content to be Christ's disciples, so as to learn only what he shows us in his Word, without going beyond those limits. This doctrine gives us unspeakable comfort since it teaches us that nothing can happen to us by chance but only by the arrangement of our gracious heavenly Father. He watches over us with fatherly care, keeping all creatures under his control, so that not one of the hairs on our heads (for they are all numbered) nor even a little bird can fall to the ground (Matt. 10:29-30) without the will of our Father. In this thought we rest, knowing that he holds in check the devils and all our enemies, who cannot hurt us without his permission and will. For that reason we reject the damnable error of the Epicureans, who say that God involves himself in nothing and leaves everything to chance.

Article 14 The creation and fall of man

We believe that God created man from the dust of the earth and made and formed him in his image and likeness-- good, just, and holy; able by his own will to conform in all things to the will of God. But when he was in honor he did not understand it (Ps. 49:20) and did not recognize his excellence. But he subjected himself willingly to sin and consequently to death and the curse, lending his ear to the word of the devil. For he transgressed the commandment of life, which he had received, and by his sin he separated himself from God, who was his true life, having corrupted his entire nature. So he made himself guilty and subject to physical and spiritual death, having become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways. He lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and he retained none of them except for small traces which are enough to make him inexcusable. Moreover, all the light in us is turned to darkness, as the Scripture teaches us: "The light shone in the darkness, and the darkness did not receive it." (John 1:5) Here John calls men "darkness." Therefore we reject everything taught to the contrary concerning man's free will, since man is nothing but the slave of sin and cannot do a thing unless it is "given him from heaven." (John 3:27). For who can boast of being able to do anything good by himself, since Christ says, "No one can come to me unless my Father who sent me draws him"? (John 6:44) Who can glory in his own will when he understands that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God"? (Rom. 8:7) Who can speak of his own knowledge in view of the fact that "the natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit of God"? (1 Cor. 2:14) In short, who can produce a single thought, since he knows that we are "not able to think a thing" about ourselves, by our-

selves, but that "our ability is from God"? (2 Cor. 3:5) And therefore, what the apostle says ought rightly to stand fixed and firm: "God works within us both to will and to do according to his good pleasure." (Phil.2:13) For there is no understanding nor will conforming to God's understanding and will apart from Christ's involvement, as he teaches us when he says, "Without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Article 15 The doctrine of original sin

We believe that by the disobedience of Adam original sin has been spread through the whole human race. It is a corruption of all nature-- an inherited depravity which even infects small infants in their mother's womb, and the root which produces in man every sort of sin. It is therefore so vile and enormous in God's sight that it is enough to condemn the human race, and it is not abolished or wholly uprooted even by baptism, seeing that sin constantly boils forth as though from a contaminated spring. Nevertheless, it is not imputed to God's children for their condemnation but is forgiven by his grace and mercy- not to put them to sleep but so that the awareness of this corruption might often make believers groan as they long to be set free from the "body of this death." (Rom. 7:24) Therefore we reject the error of the Pelagians who say that this sin is nothing else than a matter of imitation.

Article 16 The doctrine of election

We believe that- all Adam's descendants having thus fallen into perdition and ruin by the sin of the first man-- God showed himself to be as he is: merciful and just. He is merciful in withdrawing and saving from this perdition those whom he, in his eternal and unchangeable counsel, has elected and chosen in Jesus Christ our Lord by his pure goodness, without any consideration of their works. He is just in leaving the others in their ruin and fall into which they plunged themselves.

Article 17 The recovery of fallen man

We believe that our good God, by his marvellous wisdom and goodness, seeing that man had plunged himself in this manner into both physical and spiritual death and made himself completely miserable, set out to find him, though man, trembling all over, was fleeing from him. And he comforted him, promising to give him his Son, "born of a woman," (Gal. 4:4) to crush the head of the serpent, (Gen. 3:15) and to make him blessed.

Article 18 The Incarnation

So then we confess that God fulfilled the promise which he had made to the early fathers by the mouth of his holy prophets when he sent his only and eternal Son into the world at the time set by him. The Son took the "form of a servant" and was made in the "likeness of man," (Phil. 2:7) truly assuming a real human nature, with all its weaknesses, except for sin; being conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, without male participation. And he not only assumed human nature as far as the body is concerned but also a real human soul, in order that he might be a real human being. For since the soul had been lost as well as the body he had to assume them both to save them both together. Therefore we confess, against the heresy of the Anabaptists who deny that Christ assumed human flesh from his mother, that he "shared the very flesh and blood of children"; (Heb. 2:14) that he is "fruit of the loins of David" according to the flesh; (Acts 2:30) "born of the seed of David" according to the flesh; (Rom. 1:3) "fruit of the womb of the virgin Mary"; (Luke 1:42) "born of a woman"; (Gal. 4:4) "the seed of David";(2 Tim. 2:8) "a shoot from the root of Jesse"; (Rom.15:12) "the offspring of Judah," (Heb. 7:14) having descended from the Jews according to the flesh; "from the seed of Abraham"-- for he "assumed Abraham's seed" and was "made like his brothers except for sin." (Heb. 2:17) In this way he is truly our Immanuel-- that is: "God with us." (Matt. 1:23)

Article 19 The two natures of Christ

We believe that by being thus conceived the person of the Son has been inseparably united and joined together with human nature, in such a way that there are not two Sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures united in a single person, with each nature retaining its own distinct properties. Thus his divine nature has always remained uncreated, without beginning of days or end of life, (Heb. 7:3) filling heaven and earth. His human nature has not lost its properties but continues to have those of a creature-- it has a beginning of days; it is of a finite nature and retains all that belongs to a real body. And even though he, by his resurrection, gave it immortality, that nonetheless did not change the reality of his human nature; for our salvation and resurrection depend also on the reality of his body. But these two natures are so united together in one person that they are not even separated by his death. So then, what he committed to his Father when he died was a real human spirit which left his body. But meanwhile his divine nature remained united with his human nature even when he was lying in the grave; and his deity never ceased to be in him, just as it was in him when he was a little child, though for a while it did not show itself as such. These are the reasons why we confess him to be true God and true man- true God in order to conquer death by his power, and true man that he might die for us in the weakness of his flesh.

- Article 20 The justice and mercy of God in Christ**
 We believe that God- who is perfectly merciful and also very just- sent his Son to assume the nature in which the disobedience had been committed, in order to bear in it the punishment of sin by his most bitter passion and death. So God made known his justice toward his Son, who was charged with our sin, and he poured out his goodness and mercy on us, who are guilty and worthy of damnation, giving to us his Son to die, by a most perfect love, and raising him to life for our justification, in order that by him we might have immortality and eternal life.
- Article 21 The Atonement**
 We believe that Jesus Christ is a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek—made such by an oath- and that he presented himself in our name before his Father, to appease his wrath with full satisfaction by offering himself on the tree of the cross and pouring out his precious blood for the cleansing of our sins, as the prophets had predicted. For it is written that "the chastisement of our peace" was placed on the Son of God and that "we are healed by his wounds." He was "led to death as a lamb"; he was "numbered among sinners" (Isa. 53:4-12) and condemned as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, though Pilate had declared that he was innocent. So he paid back what he had not stolen, (Ps. 69:4) and he suffered- the "just for the unjust," (1 Pet. 3:18) in both his body and his soul- in such a way that when he senses the horrible punishment required by our sins his sweat became like "big drops of blood falling on the ground." (Luke 22:44) He cried, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Matt. 27:46) And he endured all this for the forgiveness of our sins. Therefore we rightly say with Paul that we "know nothing but Jesus and him crucified"; (1 Cor. 2:2); (Phil. 3:8) we consider all things as "dung for the excellence of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁵¹ We find all comforts in his wounds and have no need to seek or invent any other means to reconcile ourselves with God than this one and only sacrifice, once made, which renders believers perfect forever. (Heb 10:14) This is also why the angel of God called him Jesus- that is, "Saviour"- because he would save his people from their sins. (Matt. 1:21)
- Article 22 The righteousness of faith**
 We believe that for us to acquire the true knowledge of this great mystery the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith that embraces Jesus Christ, with all his merits, and makes him its own, and no longer looks for anything apart from him. For it must necessarily follow that either all that is required for our salvation is not in Christ or, if all is in him, then he who has Christ by faith has his salvation entirely. Therefore, to say that Christ is not enough but that something else is needed as well is a most enormous blasphemy against God- for it then would follow that Jesus Christ is only half a Saviour. And therefore we justly say with Paul that we are justified "by faith alone" or by faith "apart from works." (Rom. 3:28) However, we do not mean, properly speaking, that it is faith itself that justifies us - for faith is only the instrument by which we embrace Christ, our righteousness. But Jesus Christ is our righteousness in making available to us all his merits and all the holy works he has done for us and in our place. And faith is the instrument that keeps us in communion with him and with all his benefits. When those benefits are made ours they are more than enough to absolve us of our sins.
- Article 23 The justification of sinners**
 We believe that our blessedness lies in the forgiveness of our sins because of Jesus Christ, and that in it our righteousness before God is contained, as David and Paul teach us when they declare that man blessed to whom God grants righteousness apart from works. (Ps. 32:1), (Rom. 4:6) And the same apostle says that we are justified "freely" or "by grace" through redemption in Jesus Christ. (Rom. 3:24) And therefore we cling to this foundation, which is firm forever, giving all glory to God, humbling ourselves, and recognizing ourselves as we are; not claiming a thing for ourselves or our merits and leaning and resting on the sole obedience of Christ crucified, which is ours when we believe in him. That is enough to cover all our sins and to make us confident, freeing the conscience from the fear, dread, and terror of God's approach, without doing what our first father, Adam, did, who trembled as he tried to cover himself with fig leaves. In fact, if we had to appear before God relying- no matter how little- on ourselves or some other creature, then, alas, - we would be swallowed up. Therefore everyone must say with David: "Lord, do not enter into judgment with your servants, for before you no living person shall be justified." (Ps 143:2).
- Article 24 The sanctification of sinners**
 We believe that this true faith, produced in man by the hearing of God's Word and by the work of the Holy Spirit, regenerates him and makes him a "new man," (2 Cor. 5:17) causing him to live the "new life" (Rom. 6:4; 59) and freeing him from the slavery of sin. Therefore, far from making people cold toward living in a pious and holy way, this justifying faith, quite to the contrary, so works within them that apart from it they will never do a thing out of love for God but only out of love for themselves and fear of being condemned. So then, it is impossible for this holy faith to be unfruitful in a human being, seeing that we do not speak of an empty faith but of what Scripture calls "faith working through love," (Gal. 5:6) which leads a man to do by himself

the works that God has commanded in his Word. These works, proceeding from the good root of faith, are good and acceptable to God, since they are all sanctified by his grace. Yet they do not count toward our justification- for by faith in Christ we are justified, even before we do good works. Otherwise they could not be good, any more than the fruit of a tree could be good if the tree is not good in the first place. So then, we do good works, but not for merit- for what would we merit? Rather, we are indebted to God for the good works we do, and not he to us, since it is he who "works in us both to will and do according to his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13)- thus keeping in mind what is written: "When you have done all that is commanded you, then you shall say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have done what it was our duty to do.'" (Luke 17:10) Yet we do not wish to deny that God rewards good works-- but it is by his grace that he crowns his gifts. Moreover, although we do good works we do not base our salvation on them; for we cannot do any work that is not defiled by our flesh and also worthy of punishment. And even if we could point to one, memory of a single sin is enough for God to reject that work. So we would always be in doubt, tossed back and forth without any certainty, and our poor consciences would be tormented constantly if they did not rest on the merit of the suffering and death of our Saviour.

Article 25

The fulfilment of the law

We believe that the ceremonies and symbols of the law have ended with the coming of Christ, and that all foreshadowing's have come to an end, so that the use of them ought to be abolished among Christians. Yet the truth and substance of these things remain for us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have been fulfilled. Nevertheless, we continue to use the witnesses drawn from the law and prophets to confirm us in the gospel and to regulate our lives with full integrity for the glory of God, according to his will.

Article 26

The intercession of Christ

"We believe that we have no access to God except through the one and only Mediator and Intercessor: Jesus Christ the Righteous" (1 John 2:1). He therefore was made man, uniting together the divine and human natures, so that we human beings might have access to the divine Majesty. Otherwise we would have no access. But this Mediator, whom the Father has appointed between himself and us, ought not terrify us by his greatness, so that we have to look for another one, according to our fancy. For neither in heaven nor among the creatures on earth is there anyone who loves us more than Jesus Christ does. Although he was "in the form of God," he nevertheless "emptied himself," taking the form of "a man" and "a servant" for us; (Phil. 2:6-8) and he made himself "completely like his brothers." (Heb. 2:17) Suppose we had to find another intercessor. Who would love us more than he who gave his life for us, even though "we were his enemies"? (Rom. 5:10) And suppose we had to find one who has prestige and power. Who has as much of these as he who is seated "at the right hand of the Father," (Heb. 1:3) and who has all power "in heaven and on earth"? (Matt. 28:18) And who will be heard more readily than God's own dearly beloved Son? So then, sheer unbelief has led to the practice of dishonouring the saints, instead of honouring them. That was something the saints never did nor asked for, but which in keeping with their duty, as appears from their writings, they consistently refused. We should not plead here that we are unworthy - for it is not a question of offering our prayers on the basis of our own dignity but only on the basis of the excellence and dignity of Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is ours by faith. Since the apostle for good reason wants us to get rid of this foolish fear-- or rather, this unbelief-- he says to us that Jesus Christ was "made like his brothers in all things," that he might be a high priest who is merciful and faithful to purify the sins of the people. (Heb.2:17) For since he suffered, being tempted, he is also able to help those who are tempted. (Heb 2:17,18) And further, to encourage us more to approach him he says, "Since we have a high priest, Jesus the Son of God, who has entered into heaven, we maintain our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to have compassion for our weaknesses, but one who was tempted in all things, just as we are, except for sin. Let us go then with confidence to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace, in order to be helped." (Heb. 4:14-16) The same apostle says that we "have liberty to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus. Let us go, then, in the assurance of faith...." (Heb. 10:19, 22) Likewise, "Christ's priesthood is forever. By this he is able to save completely those who draw near to God through him who always lives to intercede for them." (Heb. 7:24-25) What more do we need? For Christ himself declares: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to my Father but by me." (John 14:6) Why should we seek another intercessor? Since it has pleased God to give us his Son as our Intercessor, let us not leave him for another- or rather seek, without ever finding. For when God gave him to us he knew well that we were sinners. Therefore, in following the command of Christ we call on the heavenly Father through Christ, our only Mediator, as we are taught by the Lord's Prayer, being assured that we shall obtain all we ask of the Father in his name.

Article 27

The holy catholic church

We believe and confess one single catholic or universal church-- a holy congregation and gathering of true Christian believers, awaiting their entire salvation in Jesus Christ being washed by his blood, and sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit. This church has existed from the beginning of the world and will last until the end, as appears from the fact that Christ is eternal King who cannot be without subjects. And this holy church

is preserved by God against the rage of the whole world, even though for a time it may appear very small in the eyes of men-- as though it were snuffed out. For example, during the very dangerous time of Ahab the Lord preserved for himself seven thousand men who did not bend their knees to Baal. (1 Kings 19:18) And so this holy church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or certain persons. But it is spread and dispersed throughout the entire world, though still joined and united in heart and will, in one and the same Spirit, by the power of faith.

Article 28

The obligations of church members

We believe that since this holy assembly and congregation is the gathering of those who are saved and there is no salvation apart from it, no one ought to withdraw from it, content to be by himself, regardless of his status or condition. But all people are obliged to join and unite with it, keeping the unity of the church by submitting to its instruction and discipline, by bending their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ, and by serving to build up one another, according to the gifts God has given them as members of each other in the same body. And to preserve this unity more effectively, it is the duty of all believers, according to God's Word, to separate themselves from those who do not belong to the church, in order to join this assembly wherever God has established it, even if civil authorities and royal decrees forbid and death and physical punishment result. And so, all who withdraw from the church or do not join it act contrary to God's ordinance.

Article 29

The marks of the true church

We believe that we ought to discern diligently and very carefully, by the Word of God, what is the true church - for all sects in the world today claim for themselves the name of "the church." We are not speaking here of the company of hypocrites who are mixed among the good in the church and who nonetheless are not part of it, even though they are physically there. But we are speaking of distinguishing the body and fellowship of the true church from all sects that call themselves "the church." The true church can be recognized if it has the following marks: The church engages in the pure preaching of the gospel; it makes use of the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them; it practices church discipline for correcting faults. In short, it governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it and holding Jesus Christ as the only Head. By these marks one can be assured of recognizing the true church- and no one ought to be separated from it. As for those who can belong to the church, we can recognize them by the distinguishing marks of Christians: namely by faith, and by their fleeing from sin and pursuing righteousness, once they have received the one and only Saviour, Jesus Christ. They love the true God and their neighbours, without turning to the right or left, and they crucify the flesh and its works. Though great weakness remains in them, they fight against it by the Spirit all the days of their lives, appealing constantly to the blood, suffering, death, and obedience of the Lord Jesus, in whom they have forgiveness of their sins, through faith in him. As for the false church, it assigns more authority to itself and its ordinances than to the Word of God; it does not want to subject itself to the yoke of Christ; it does not administer the sacraments as Christ commanded in his Word; it rather adds to them or subtracts from them as it pleases; it bases itself on men, more than on Jesus Christ; it persecutes those who live holy lives according to the Word of God and who rebuke it for its faults, greed, and idolatry. These two churches are easy to recognize and thus to distinguish from each other.

Article 30

The government of the church

We believe that this true church ought to be governed according to the spiritual order that our Lord has taught us in his Word. There should be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments. There should also be elders and deacons, along with the pastors, to make up the council of the church. By this means true religion is preserved; true doctrine is able to take its course; and evil men are corrected spiritually and held in check, so that also the poor and all the afflicted may be helped and comforted according to their need. By this means everything will be done well and in good order in the church, when such persons are elected who are faithful and are chosen according to the rule that Paul gave to Timothy. (1 Tim. 3)

Article 31

The officers of the church

We believe that ministers of the Word of God, elders, and deacons ought to be chosen to their offices by a legitimate election of the church, with prayer in the name of the Lord, and in good order, as the Word of God teaches. So everyone must be careful not to push himself forward improperly, but he must wait for God's call, so that he may be assured of his calling and be certain that he is chosen by the Lord. As for the ministers of the Word, they all have the same power and authority, no matter where they may be, since they are all servants of Jesus Christ, the only universal bishop, and the only head of the church. Moreover, to keep God's holy order from being violated or despised, we say that everyone ought, as much as possible, to hold the ministers of the Word and elders of the church in special esteem, because of the work they do, and be at peace with them, without grumbling, quarrelling, or fighting.

Article 32

The order and discipline of the church

We also believe that although it is useful and good for those who govern the churches to establish and set up a certain order among themselves for maintaining the body of the church, they ought always to guard against deviating from what Christ, our only Master, has ordained for us. Therefore we reject all human innovations and all laws imposed on us, in our worship of God, which bind and force our consciences in any way. So we accept only what is proper to maintain harmony and unity and to keep all in obedience to God. To that end excommunication, with all it involves, according to the Word of God, is required.

Article 33 The sacraments

We believe that our good God, mindful of our crudeness and weakness, has ordained sacraments for us to seal his promises in us, to pledge his good will and grace toward us, and also to nourish and sustain our faith. He has added these to the Word of the gospel to represent better to our external senses both what he enables us to understand by his Word and what he does inwardly in our hearts, confirming in us the salvation he imparts to us. For they are visible signs and seals of something internal and invisible, by means of which God works in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. So they are not empty and hollow signs to fool and deceive us, for their truth is Jesus Christ, without whom they would be nothing. Moreover, we are satisfied with the number of sacraments that Christ our Master has ordained for us. There are only two: the sacrament of baptism and the Holy Supper of Jesus Christ.

Article 34 The sacrament of baptism

We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, in whom the law is fulfilled, has by his shed blood put an end to every other shedding of blood, which anyone might do or wish to do in order to atone or satisfy for sins. Having abolished circumcision, which was done with blood, he established in its place the sacrament of baptism. By it we are received into God's church and set apart from all other people and alien religions, that we may be dedicated entirely to him, bearing his mark and sign. It also witnesses to us that he will be our God forever, since he is our gracious Father. Therefore he has commanded that all those who belong to him be baptized with pure water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28:19) In this way he signifies to us that just as water washes away the dirt of the body when it is poured on us and also is seen on the body of the baptized when it is sprinkled on him, so too the blood of Christ does the same thing internally, in the soul, by the Holy Spirit. It washes and cleanses it from its sins and transforms us from being the children of wrath into the children of God. This does not happen by the physical water but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God, who is our Red Sea, through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, who is the devil, and to enter the spiritual land of Canaan. So ministers, as far as their work is concerned, give us the sacrament and what is visible, but our Lord gives what the sacrament signifies-- namely the invisible gifts and graces; washing, purifying, and cleansing our souls of all filth and unrighteousness; renewing our hearts and filling them with all comfort; giving us true assurance of his fatherly goodness; clothing us with the "new man" and stripping off the "old," with all its works. For this reason we believe that anyone who aspires to reach eternal life ought to be baptized only once without ever repeating it-- for we cannot be born twice. Yet this baptism is profitable not only when the water is on us and when we receive it but throughout our entire lives. For that reason we detest the error of the Anabaptists who are not content with a single baptism once received and also condemn the baptism of the children of believers. We believe our children ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as little children were circumcised in Israel on the basis of the same promises made to our children. And truly, Christ has shed his blood no less for washing the little children of believers than he did for adults. Therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of what Christ has done for them, just as the Lord commanded in the law that by offering a lamb for them the sacrament of the suffering and death of Christ would be granted them shortly after their birth. This was the sacrament of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, baptism does for our children what circumcision did for the Jewish people. That is why Paul calls baptism the "circumcision of Christ." (Col. 2:11)

Article 35 The sacrament of the Lord's Supper

We believe and confess that our Saviour Jesus Christ has ordained and instituted the sacrament of the Holy Supper to nourish and sustain those who are already born again and in grafted into his family: his church. Now those who are born again have two lives in them. The one is physical and temporal-- they have it from the moment of their first birth, and it is common to all. The other is spiritual and heavenly, and is given them in their second birth; it comes through the Word of the gospel in the communion of the body of Christ; and this life is common to God's elect only. Thus, to support the physical and earthly life God has prescribed for us an appropriate earthly and material bread, which is as common to all as life itself also is. But to maintain the spiritual and heavenly life that belongs to believers he has sent a living bread that came down from heaven: namely Jesus Christ, who nourishes and maintains the spiritual life of believers when eaten-- that is, when appropriated and received spiritually by faith. To represent to us this spiritual and heavenly bread Christ has instituted an earthly and visible bread as the sacrament of his body and wine as the sacrament of his blood. He did this to testify to us that just as truly as we take and hold the sacraments in our hands and eat and drink it in our mouths, by which our life is then sustained, so truly we receive into our

souls, for our spiritual life, the true body and true blood of Christ, our only Saviour. We receive these by faith, which is the hand and mouth of our souls. Now it is certain that Jesus Christ did not prescribe his sacraments for us in vain, since he works in us all he represents by these holy signs, although the manner in which he does it goes beyond our understanding and is incomprehensible to us, just as the operation of God's Spirit is hidden and incomprehensible. Yet we do not go wrong when we say that what is eaten is Christ's own natural body and what is drunk is his own blood- but the manner in which we eat it is not by the mouth but by the Spirit, through faith. In that way Jesus Christ remains always seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven- but he never refrains on that account to communicate himself to us through faith. This banquet is a spiritual table at which Christ communicates himself to us with all his benefits. At that table he makes us enjoy himself as much as the merits of his suffering and death, as he nourishes, strengthens, and comforts our poor, desolate souls by the eating of his flesh, and relieves and renews them by the drinking of his blood. Moreover, though the sacraments and things signified are joined together, not all receive both of them. The wicked person certainly takes the sacrament, to his condemnation, but does not receive the truth of the sacrament, just as Judas and Simon the Sorcerer both indeed received the sacrament, but not Christ, who was signified by it. He is communicated only to believers. Finally, with humility and reverence we receive the holy sacrament in the gathering of God's people, as we engage together, with thanksgiving, in a holy remembrance of the death of Christ our Saviour, and as we thus confess our faith and Christian religion. Therefore no one should come to this table without examining himself carefully, lest "by eating this bread and drinking this cup he eat and drink to his own judgment." (1 Cor. 11:27) In short, by the use of this holy sacrament we are moved to a fervent love of God and our neighbours. Therefore we reject as desecrations of the sacraments all the muddled ideas and damnable inventions that men have added and mixed in with them. And we say that we should be content with the procedure that Christ and the apostles have taught us and speak of these things as they have spoken of them.

Article 36

The civil government

We believe that because of the depravity of the human race our good God has ordained kings, princes, and civil officers. He wants the world to be governed by laws and policies so that human lawlessness may be restrained and that everything may be conducted in good order among human beings. For that purpose he has placed the sword in the hands of the government, to punish evil people and protect the good. And being called in this manner to contribute to the advancement of a society that is pleasing to God, the civil rulers have the task, subject to God's law, of removing every obstacle to the preaching of the gospel and to every aspect of divine worship. They should do this while completely refraining from every tendency toward exercising absolute authority, and while functioning in the sphere entrusted to them, with the means belonging to them. And the government's task is not limited to caring for and watching over the public domain but extends also to upholding the sacred ministry, with a view to removing and destroying all idolatry and false worship of the Antichrist; to promoting the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and to furthering the preaching of the gospel everywhere; to the end that God may be honoured and served by everyone, as he requires in his Word. Moreover everyone, regardless of status, condition, or rank, must be subject to the government, and pay taxes, and hold its representatives in honour and respect, and obey them in all things that are not in conflict with God's Word, praying for them that the Lord may be willing to lead them in all their ways and that we may live a peaceful and quiet life in all piety and decency. (1 Tim 2:2) And on this matter we denounce the Anabaptists, other anarchists, and in general all those who want to reject the authorities and civil officers and to subvert justice by introducing common ownership of goods and corrupting the moral order that God has established among human beings.

Article 37

The last judgment

Finally we believe, according to God's Word, that when the time appointed by the Lord is come (which is unknown to all creatures) and the number of the elect is complete, our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, bodily and visibly, as he ascended, with great glory and majesty, to declare himself the judge of the living and the dead. He will burn this old world, in fire and flame, in order to cleanse it. Then all human creatures will appear in person before the great judge- men, women, and children, who have lived from the beginning until the end of the world. They will be summoned there by the voice of the archangel and by the sound of the divine trumpet. (1 Thess. 4:16). For all those who died before that time will be raised from the earth, their spirits being joined and united with their own bodies in which they lived. And as for those who are still alive, they will not die like the others but will be changed "in the twinkling of an eye" from "corruptible to incorruptible." (1 Cor. 15:51-53) Then "the books" (that is, the consciences) will be opened, and the dead will be judged according to the things they did in the world, (Rev. 20:12) whether good or evil. Indeed, all people will give account of all the idle words they have spoken, (Matt. 12:36) which the world regards as only playing games. And then the secrets and hypocrisies of men will be publicly uncovered in the sight of all. But it is very pleasant and a great comfort to the righteous and elect, since their total redemption will then be accomplished. They will then receive the fruits of their labour and of the trouble they have suffered; their innocence will be openly recognized by all; and they will see the terrible vengeance that God will bring on the evil

ones who tyrannized, oppressed, and tormented them in this world. The evil ones will be convicted by the witness of their own consciences, and shall be made immortal- but only to be tormented in the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matt. 25:14) In contrast, the faithful and elect will be crowned with glory and honour. The Son of God will "confess their names" (Matt. 10:32) before God his Father and the holy and elect angels; all tears will be "wiped from their eyes";(Rev.7:17) and their cause- at present condemned as heretical and evil by many judges and civil officers- will be acknowledged as the "cause of the Son of God." And as a gracious reward the Lord will make them possess a glory such as the heart of man could never imagine. So we look forward to that great day with longing in order to enjoy fully the promises of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Confession of Faith 5

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

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Scripture reference sections: Christian Reformed Church in North America

Sunday 1

Question 1: What is your only comfort in life and death?

Answer: That I am not my own, [1] but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, [2] to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.[3] He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil.[5] He also preserves me in such a way [6] that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; [7] indeed, all things must work together for my salvation.[8] Therefore, by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life [9] and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for Him.[10]

1. 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2. Rom. 14:7-9; 3. 1 Cor. 3:23; Titus 2:14; 4. 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:2; 5. John 8:34-36; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:1-11; 6. John 6:39-40; 10:27-30; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:5; 7. Matt. 10:29-31; Luke 21:16-18; 8. Rom. 8:28; 9. Rom. 8:15-16; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14; 10. Rom. 8:1-17

Question 2. What do you need to know in order to live and die in the joy of this comfort?

Answer: First, how great my sins and misery are [1]; second, how I am delivered from all my sins and misery [2]; third, how I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance. [3]

1. Rom. 3:9-10; 1 John 1:10; 2. 2 John 17:3; Acts 4:12; 10:43; 3. 3 Matt. 5:16; Rom. 6:13; Eph. 5:8-10; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:9-10

The First Part: The misery of humankind (Sunday 2-4)

Sunday 2

Question 3: From where do you know your sins and misery?

Answer: From the law of God. [1]

1. 1 Rom. 3:20; 7:7-25

Question 4: What does God's law require of us?

Answer: Christ teaches us this in a summary in Matthew 22:37-40: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." [1] "This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." [2]

1. Deut. 6:5; 2. Lev. 19:18

Question 5: Can you keep all this perfectly?

Answer: No, [1] I am inclined by nature to hate God and my neighbour. [2]

1. Rom. 3:9-20, 23; 1 John 1:8, 10; 2. Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:23-24; 8:7; Eph. 2:1-3; Titus 3:3

Sunday 3

Question 6: Did God, then, create man so wicked and perverse?

Answer: No, on the contrary, God created man good [1] and in His image, [2] that is, in true righteousness and holiness, [3] so that he might rightly know God His Creator, [4] heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal blessedness to praise and glorify Him. [5]

1. Gen. 1:31; 2. Gen. 1:26-27; 3. Eph. 4:24; 4. Col. 3:10; 5. Ps. 8

Question 7: From where, then, did man's depraved nature come?

Answer: From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise, [1] for there our nature became so corrupt [2] that we are all conceived and born in sin. [3]

1. Gen. 3; 2. Rom. 5:12, 18-19; 3. Ps. 51:5

Question 8: But are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any good and inclined to all evil?

Answer: Yes, [1] unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. [2]

1. Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Job 14:4; Isa. 53:6; 2. John 3:3-5

Sunday 4

Question 9: Is God, then, not unjust by requiring in His law what man cannot do?

Answer: No, for God so created man that he was able to do it. [1] But man, at the instigation of the devil, [2] in deliberate disobedience [3] robbed himself and all his descendants of these gifts. [4]

1. Gen. 1:31; Eph. 4:24; 2. Gen. 3:13; John 8:44; 3. Gen. 3:6; 4 Rom. 5:12, 18, 19

Question 10: Will God allow such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?

Answer: Certainly not. He is terribly displeased with our original sin as well as our actual sins. Therefore He will punish them by a just judgment both now and eternally, [1] as He has declared: [2] Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them (Galatians 3:10).

1. *Ex. 34:7; Ps. 5:4-6; Nah. 1:2; Rom. 1:18; Eph. 5:6; Heb. 9:27; 2. Gal. 3:10; Deut. 27:26*

Question 11: But is God not also merciful?

Answer: God is indeed merciful, [1] but He is also just. [2] His justice requires that sin committed against the most high majesty of God also be punished with the most severe, that is, with everlasting, punishment of body and soul.[3]

1. *Ex. 34:6-7; Ps. 103:8-9; 2. Ex. 34:7; Deut. 7:9-11; Ps. 5:4-6; Heb. 10:30-31; 3. Matt. 25:35-46*

The Second Part: The delivery of humankind (Sunday 5-31)

Sunday 5

Question 12: Since, according to God's righteous judgment we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, how can we escape this punishment and be again received into favour?

Answer: God demands that His justice be satisfied.[1] Therefore full payment must be made either by ourselves or by another.[2]

1. *Ex. 23:7; Rom. 2:1-11; 2. Isa. 53:11; Rom. 8:3-4*

Question 13: Can we ourselves make this payment?

Answer: Certainly not. On the contrary, we daily increase our debt.[1]

1. *Matt. 6:12; Rom. 2:4-5*

Question 14: Can any mere creature pay for us?

Answer: No. In the first place, God will not punish another creature for the sin which man has committed.[1] Furthermore, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin and deliver others from it.[2]

1. *Ezek. 18:4, 20; Heb. 2:14-18; 2. Ps. 49:7-9; 130:3*

Question 15: What kind of mediator and deliverer must we seek?

Answer: One who is a true [1] and righteous [2] man, and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is at the same time true God.[3]

1. *Rom. 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:21; Heb. 2:17; 2. Isa. 53:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 3. Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Jer. 23:6; John 1:1*

Sunday 6

Question 16: Why must He be a true and righteous man?

Answer: He must be a true man because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which has sinned should pay for sin.[1] He must be a righteous man because one who himself is a sinner cannot pay for others.[2]

1. *Rom. 5:12, 15; 1 Cor. 15:21; Heb. 2:14-16; 2. Heb. 7:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:18*

Question 17: Why must He at the same time be true God?

Answer: He must be true God so that by the power of His divine nature He might bear in His human nature the burden of God's wrath, and might obtain for us and restore to us righteousness and life.[1]

1. *Isa. 53; John 3:16; 2. Cor. 5:21*

Question 18: But who is that Mediator who at the same time is true God and a true and righteous man?

Answer: Our Lord Jesus Christ, [1] whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption (I Corinthians 1:30) [2].

1. *Matt. 1:21-23; Luke 2:11; 1 Tim. 2:5; 2. 1 Cor. 1:30*

Question 19: From where do you know this?

Answer: From the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise.[1] Later, He had it proclaimed by the patriarchs [2] and prophets, [3] and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law. [4] Finally, He had it fulfilled through His only Son.[5]

1. *Gen. 3:15; 2. Gen. 22:18; 49:10; 3. Isa. 53; Jer. 23:5-6; Mic. 7:18-20; Acts 10:43; Heb. 1:1-2; 4. Lev. 1-7; John 5:46; Heb. 10:1-10; 5. Rom. 10:4; Gal. 4:4-5; Col. 2:17*

Sunday 7

Question 20: Are all men, then, saved by Christ just as they perished through Adam?

Answer: No. Only those are saved who by a true faith are grafted into Christ and accept all His benefits.[1]

1. *Matt. 7:14; John 3:16, 18, 36; Rom. 11:16-21*

Question 21: What is true faith?

Answer: True faith is a sure knowledge whereby I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in His Word. [1] At the same time it is a firm confidence [2] that not only to others, but also to me, [5] God has granted forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation, [6] out of mere grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.[7] This faith the Holy Spirit works in my heart [3] by the gospel.[4]

1. *John 17:3, 17; Heb. 11:1-3; James 2:19; 2. Rom. 4:18-21; 5:1; 10:10; Heb. 4:14-16; 3. Matt. 16:15-17; John 3:5; Acts 16:14; 4. Rom. 1:16; 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:21; 5. Gal. 2:20; 6. Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:10; 7. Rom. 3:21-26; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-10*

Question 22: What, then, must a Christian believe?

Answer: All that is promised us in the gospel, [1] which the articles of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith teach us in a summary.

1. *Matt. 28:18-20; John 20:30-31*

Question 23: What are these articles?

Answer: 1. I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. 2. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord; 3. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary; 4. suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; 5. On the third day He arose from the dead; 6. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty; 7. from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. 8. I believe in the Holy Spirit; 9. I believe a holy catholic Christian church, the communion of saints; 10. the forgiveness of sins; 11. the resurrection of the body; 12. and the life everlasting.

Sunday 8

Question 24: How are these articles divided?

Answer: Into three parts: the first is about God the Father and our creation; the second about God the Son and our redemption; the third about God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification.

Question 25: Since there is only one God, [1] why do you speak of three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Answer: Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word [2] that these three distinct persons are the one, true, eternal God.

1. *Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6; 2. Matt. 3:16-17; 28:18-19; Luke 4:18 (Isa. 61:1); John 14:26; 15:26; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:6; Tit. 3:5-6*

God the Father and Our Creation (Sunday 9-10)

Sunday 9

Question 26: What do you believe when you say: I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

Answer: That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and all that is in them, [1] and who still upholds and governs them by His eternal counsel and providence, [2] is, for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father.[3] In Him I trust so completely as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul, [4] and will also turn to my good whatever adversity He sends me in this life of sorrow.[5] He is able to do so as almighty God, [6] and willing also as a faithful Father.[7]

1. *Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11; Ps. 33:6; Isa. 44:24; Acts 4:24; 14:15; 2. Ps. 104; Matt. 6:30; 10:29; Eph. 1:11; 3. John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:5; 4. Ps. 55:22; Matt. 6:25-26; Luke 12:22-31; 5. Rom. 8:28; 6. Gen. 18:14; Rom. 8:31-39; 7. Matt. 7:9-11*

Sunday 10

Question 27. What do you understand by the providence of God?

Answer. God's providence is His almighty and ever present power, [1] whereby, as with His and, He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures, [2] and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, [3] indeed, all things, come not by chance [4] but by His fatherly hand. [5]

1. *Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-28; 2. Heb. 1:3; 3. Jer. 5:24; Acts 14:15-17; John 9:3; Prov. 22:2; 4. Prov. 16:33; 5. Matt. 10:29*

Question 28: What does it benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by His providence?

Answer: We can be patient in adversity, [1] thankful in prosperity, [2] and with a view to the future we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from His love; [3] for all creatures are so completely in His hand that without His will they cannot so much as move. [4]

1. *Job 1:21-22; James 1:3; 2. Deut. 8:10; 1 Thess. 5:18; 3. Ps. 55:22; Rom. 5:3-5; 8:38-39; 4. Job 1:12; 2:6; Prov. 21:1; Acts 17:24-28*

God the Son and Our Salvation (Sunday 11-19)

Sunday 11

Question 29: Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is, Saviour? Jesus, that is, Saviour?

Answer: Because He saves us from all our sins, [1] and because salvation is not to be sought or found in anyone else. [2]

1. *Matt. 1:21; Heb. 7:25; 2. Isa. 43:11; John 15:5; Acts 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 2:5*

Question 30: Do those believe in the only Saviour Jesus who seek their salvation and well-being from saints, in themselves, or anywhere else?

Answer: No. Though they boast of Him in words, they in fact deny the only Saviour Jesus.[1] For one of two things must be true: either Jesus is not a complete Saviour, or those who by true faith accept this Saviour must find in Him all that is necessary for their salvation.[2]

1. *1 Cor. 1:12-13; Gal. 5:4; 2. Col. 1:19-20; 2:10; 1 John 1:7*

Sunday 12

Question 31: Why is He called Christ, that is, Anointed?

Answer: Because He has been ordained by God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, [1] to be our chief Prophet and Teacher, [2] who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; [3] our only High Priest, [4] who by the one sacrifice of His body has redeemed us, [5] and who continually intercedes for us before the Father; [6] and our eternal King, [7] who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and who defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us.[8]

1. *Luke 3:21-22; 4:14-19 (Isa. 61:1); Heb. 1:9 (Ps. 45:7); 2. Acts 3:22 (Deut. 18:15); 3. John 1:18; 15:15; 4. Heb. 7:17 (Ps. 110:4); 5. Heb. 9:12; 10:11-14; 6. Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; 7. Matt. 21:5 (Zech. 9:9); 8. Matt. 28:18-20; John 10:28; Rev. 12:10-11*

Question 32: Why are you called a Christian?

Answer: Because I am a member of Christ by faith [1] and thus share in His anointing, [2] so that I may as prophet confess His Name,[3] as priest present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him, [4] and as king fight with a free and good conscience against sin and the devil in this life, [5] and hereafter reign with Him eternally over all creatures.[6]

1. *1 Cor. 12:12-27; 2. Acts 2:17 (Joel 2:28); 1 John 2:27; 3. Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9-10; Heb. 13:15; 4. Rom. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; 5. Gal. 5:16-17; Eph. 6:11; 1 Tim. 1:18-19; 6. Matt. 25:34; 2 Tim. 2:12*

Sunday 13

Question 33: Why is He called God's only begotten Son, since we also are children of God?

Answer: Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God.[1] We, however, are children of God by adoption, through grace, for Christ's sake.[2]

1. *John 1:1-3, 14, 18; Heb. 1; 2. John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-17; Eph. 1:5-6*

Question 34: Why do you call Him our Lord?

Answer: Because He has ransomed us, body and soul, [1] from all our sins, not with silver or gold but with His precious blood, [2] and has freed us from all the power of the devil to make us His own possession.[3]

1. *1 Pet. 1:18-19; 2. Col. 1:13-14; Heb. 2:14-15; 3. 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Tim. 2:5-6*

Sunday 14

Question 35: What do you confess when you say: He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary?

Answer: The eternal Son of God, who is and remains true and eternal God,[1] took upon Himself true human nature from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,[2] through the working of the Holy Spirit.[3] Thus He is also the true seed of David,[4] and like His brothers in every respect,[5] yet without sin.[6]

1. *John 1:1; 10:30-36; Acts 13:33 (Ps. 2:7); Col. 1:15-17; 1 John 5:20; 2. Luke 1:35; 3. Matt. 1:18-23; John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14; 4. 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11; Matt. 1:1; Rom. 1:3; 5. Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:17; 6. Heb. 4:15; 7:26-27*

Question 36: What benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ?

Answer: He is our Mediator,[1] and with His innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin, in which I was conceived and born.[2]

1. *1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 9:13-15; 2. Rom. 8:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 4:4-5; 1 Pet. 1:18-19*

Sunday 15

Question 37: What do you confess when you say that He suffered?

Answer: During all the time He lived on earth, but especially at the end, Christ bore in body and soul the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race.[1] Thus, by His suffering, as the only atoning sacrifice, [2] He has redeemed our body and soul from everlasting damnation,[3] and obtained for us the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life.[4]

1. *Isa. 53; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; 2. Rom. 3:25; Heb. 10:14; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; 3. Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 3:13; 4. John 3:16; Rom. 3:24-26*

Question 38: Why did He suffer under Pontius Pilate as judge?

Answer: Though innocent, Christ was condemned by an earthly judge, [1] and so He freed us from the severe judgment of God that was to fall on us.[2]

1. *Luke 23:13-24; John 19:4, 12-16; 2. Isa. 53:4-5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13*

Question 39: Does it have a special meaning that Christ was crucified and did not die in a different way?

Answer: Yes. Thereby I am assured that He took upon Himself the curse which lay on me, for a crucified one was cursed by God.[1]

1. *Gal. 3:10-13 (Deut. 21:23)*

Sunday 16

Question 40: Why was it necessary for Christ to humble Himself even unto death?

Answer: Because of the justice and truth of God [1] satisfaction for our sins could be made in no other way than by the death of the Son of God.[2]

1. *Gen. 2:17; 2. Rom. 8:3-4; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 2:9*

Question 41: Why was He buried?

Answer: His burial testified that He had really died.[1]

1. *Isa. 53:9; John 19:38-42; Acts 13:29; 1 Cor. 15:3-4*

Question 42: Christ has died for us, why do we still have to die?

Answer: Our death is not a payment for our sins, but it puts an end to sin and is an entrance into eternal life. [1]

1. *Ps. 49:7; 2. John 5:24; Phil. 1:21-23; 1 Thess. 5:9-10*

Question 43: What further benefit do we receive from Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross?

Answer: Through Christ's death our old nature is crucified, put to death, and buried with Him, [1] so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer reign in us, [2] but that we may offer ourselves to Him as a sacrifice of thankfulness.[3]

1. *Rom. 6:5-11; Col. 2:11-12; 2. Rom. 6:12-14; 3. Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:1-2*

Question 44: Why is there added: He descended into hell?

Answer: In my greatest sorrows and temptations I may be assured and comforted that my Lord Jesus Christ, by His unspeakable anguish, pain, terror, and agony, which He endured throughout all His sufferings but especially on the cross, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.[1]

1. *Isa. 53; Matt. 26:36-46; 27:45-46; Luke 22:44; Heb. 5:7-10*

Sunday 17

Question 45: How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?

Answer: First, by His resurrection He has overcome death, so that He could make us share in the righteousness which He had obtained for us by His death.[1] Second, by His power we too are raised up to a new life. [2] Third, Christ's resurrection is to us a sure pledge of our glorious resurrection.[3]

1. *Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:16-20; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 2. Rom. 6:5-11; Eph. 2:4-6; Col. 3:1-4; 3. Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:12-23; Phil. 3:20-21*

Sunday 18

Question 46: What do you confess when you say, He ascended into heaven?

Answer: That Christ, before the eyes of His disciples, was taken up from the earth into heaven, [1] and that He is there for our benefit [2] until He comes again to judge the living and the dead.[3]

1. *Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11; 2. Rom. 8:34; Eph. 4:8-10; Heb. 7:23-25; 9:24; 3. Acts 1:11*

Question 47: Is Christ, then, not with us until the end of the world, as He has promised us? [1]

Answer: Christ is true man and true God. With respect to His human nature He is no longer on earth, [2] but with respect to His divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit He is never absent from us.[3]

1. *Matt. 28:20; 2. Acts 1:9-11; 3:19-21; 3. Matt. 28:18-20; John 14:16-19*

Question 48: But are the two natures in Christ not separated from each other if His human nature is not present wherever His divinity is?

Answer: Certainly not. For His divinity has no limits and is present everywhere.[1] So it must follow that His divinity is indeed beyond the human nature which He has taken on and nevertheless is within this human nature and remains personally united with it.[2]

1. *Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 7:48-49 (Isa. 66:1); 2. John 1:14; 3:13; Col. 2:9*

Question 49: How does Christ's ascension into heaven benefit us?

Answer: First, He is our Advocate in heaven before His Father.[1] Second, we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that He, our Head, will also take us, His members, up to Himself.[2] Third, He sends us His Spirit as a counter pledge, [3] by whose power we seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, and not the things that are on earth.[4]

1. Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1; 2. John 14:2; 17:24; Eph. 2:4-6; 3. John 14:16; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; 4. Col. 3:1-4

Sunday 19

Question 50: Why is it added, And sits at the right hand of God?

Answer: Christ ascended into heaven to manifest Himself there as Head of His Church, [1] through whom the Father governs all things.[2]

1. Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18; 2. Matt. 28:18; John 5:22-23

Question 51: How does the glory of Christ, our Head, benefit us?

Answer: First, by His Holy Spirit He pours out heavenly gifts upon us, His members.[1] Second, by His power He defends and preserves us against all enemies.[2]

1. Acts 2:33; Eph. 4:7-12; 2. Ps. 110:1-2; John 10:27-30; Rev. 19:11-16

Question 52: What comfort is it to you that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead?

Answer: In all my sorrow and persecution I lift up my head and eagerly await as judge from heaven the very same person who before has submitted Himself to the judgment of God for my sake, and has removed all the curse from me. [1] He will cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but He will take me and all His chosen ones to Himself into heavenly joy and glory.[2]

1. Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:22-25; Phil. 3:20-21; Tit. 2:13-14; 2. Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 1:6-10

God the Holy Spirit and Our Sanctification (Sunday 20-24)

Sunday 20

Question 53: What do you believe concerning the Holy Spirit?

Answer: First, He is, together with the Father and the Son, true and eternal God.[1] Second, He is also given to me, [2] to make me by true faith share in Christ and all His benefits, [3] to comfort me, [4] and to remain with me forever.[5]

1. Gen. 1:1-2; Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 2. 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 4:6; 3. Gal. 3:14; 4. John 15:26; Acts 9:31; 5. John 14:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:14

Sunday 21

Question 54: What do you believe concerning the holy catholic Christian church?

Answer: I believe that the Son of God, [1] out of the whole human race, [2] from the beginning of the world to its end, [3] gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself, [4] by His Spirit and Word, [1] in the unity of the true faith, [5] a church chosen to everlasting life.[4] And I believe that I am [6] and forever shall remain a living member of it.[7]

1. John 10:14-16; Acts 20:28; Rom. 10:14-17; Col. 1:18; 2. Gen. 26:3b-4; Rev. 5:9; 3. Isa. 59:21; 1 Cor. 11:26; 4. Matt. 16:18; John 10:28-30; Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3-14; 5. Acts 2:42-47; Eph. 4:1-6; 6. 1 John 3:14, 19-21; 7. John 10:27-28; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; 1 Pet. 1:3-5

Question 55: What do you understand by the communion of saints?

Answer: First, that believers, all and everyone, as members of Christ have communion with Him and share in all His treasures and gifts.[1] Second, that everyone is duty-bound to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the benefit and well-being of the other members.[2]

1. Rom. 8:32; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:4-7, 12-13; 1 John 1:3; 2. Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:20-27; 13:1-7; Phil. 2:4-8

Question 56: What do you believe concerning the forgiveness of sins?

Answer: I believe that God, because of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins, [1] nor my sinful nature, against which I have to struggle all my life, [2] but He will graciously grant me the righteousness of Christ, that I may never come into condemnation.[3]

1. Ps. 103:3-4, 10, 12; Mic. 7:18-19; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; 1 John 1:7; 2:2; 2. Rom. 7:21-25; 3. John 3:17-18; Rom. 8:1-2

Sunday 22

Question 57: What comfort does the resurrection of the body offer you?

Answer: Not only shall my soul after this life immediately be taken up to Christ, my Head, [1] but also this my flesh, raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul and made like Christ's glorious body.[2]

1. Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:21-23; 2. 1 Cor. 15:20, 42-46, 54; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2

Question 58. What comfort do you receive from the article about the life everlasting?

Answer: Since I now already feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, [1] I shall after this life possess perfect blessedness, such as no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived-- a blessedness in which to praise God forever.[2]

1. *Rom. 14:17; 2. John 17:3; 1 Cor. 2:9*

Sunday 23

Question 59: But what does it help you now that you believe all this?

Answer: In Christ I am righteous before God and heir to life everlasting.[1]

1. *John 3:36; Rom. 1:17 (Hab. 2:4); Rom. 5:1-2*

Question 60: How are you righteous before God?

Answer: Only by true faith in Jesus Christ.[1] Although my conscience accuses me that I have grievously sinned against all God's commandments, have never kept any of them, [2] and am still inclined to all evil, [3] yet God, without any merit of my own, [4] out of mere grace, [5] imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ.[6] He grants these to me as if I had never had not committed any sin, and as if I myself had accomplished all the obedience which Christ has rendered for me, [7] if only I accept this gift with a believing heart.[8]

1. *Rom. 3:21-28; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil 3:8-11; 2. Rom. 3:9-10; 3. Rom. 7:23; 4. Tit. 3:4-5; 5. Rom.*

3:24; Eph. 2:8; 6. Rom. 4:3-5 (Gen. 15:6); 2 Cor. 5:17-19; 1 John 2:1-2; 7. Rom. 4:24-25; 2 Cor. 5:21; 8. John 3:18; Acts 16:30-31

Question 61: Why do you say that you are righteous only by faith?

Answer: Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith, for only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God.[1] I can receive this righteousness and make it mine my own by faith only.[2]

1. *1 Cor. 1:30-31; 2. Rom. 10:10; 1 John 5:10-12*

Sunday 24

Question 62: But why can our good works not be our righteousness before God, or at least a part of it?

Answer: Because the righteousness which can stand before God's judgment must be absolutely perfect and in complete agreement with the law of God, [1] whereas even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.[2]

1. *Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:10 (Deut. 27:26); 2. Isa. 64:6*

Question 63: But do our good works earn nothing, even though God promises to reward them in this life and the next?

Answer: This reward is not earned [1]; it is a gift of grace.[2]

1. *Matt. 5:12; Heb. 11:6; 2. Luke 17:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8*

Question 64: Does this teaching not make people careless and wicked?

Answer: No. It is impossible that those grafted into Christ by true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.[1]

1. *Luke 6:43-45; John 15:5*

The Holy Sacraments (Sunday 25-30)

Sunday 25

Question 65: Since then faith alone makes us share in Christ and all His benefits, where does this faith come from?

Answer: From the Holy Spirit, [1] who works it in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel [2] and strengthens it by the use of the sacraments.[3]

1. *John 3:5; 1 Cor. 2:10-14; Eph. 2:8; 2. Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:23-25; 3. Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 10:16*

Question 66: What are the sacraments?

Answer: The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals. They were instituted by God so that by their use He might the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel. [1] And this is the promise: that God graciously grants us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life because of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross.[2]

1. *Gen. 17:11; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 4:11; 2. Matt. 26:27-28; Acts 2:38; Heb. 10:10*

Question 67: Are both the Word and the sacraments then intended to focus our faith on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?

Answer: Yes, indeed. The Holy Spirit teaches us in the gospel and assures us by the sacraments that our entire salvation rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us on the cross.[1]

1. *Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 3:27*

Question 68: How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the new covenant?

Answer: Two: holy baptism and the holy supper.[1]

1. *Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26*

Holy Baptism (Sunday 26-27)

Sunday 26

Question 69: How does holy baptism signify and seal to you that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross benefits you?

Answer: In this way: Christ instituted this outward washing[1] and with it gave the promise that, as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body, so certainly His blood and Spirit wash away the impurity of my soul, that is, all my sins.[2]

1. *Acts 2:38; 2. Matt. 3:11; Rom. 6:3-10; 1 Pet. 3:21*

Question 70: What does it mean to be washed with Christ's blood and Spirit?

Answer: To be washed with Christ's blood means to receive forgiveness of sins from God, through grace, because of Christ's blood, poured out for us in His sacrifice on the cross. [1] To be washed with His Spirit means to be renewed by the Holy Spirit and sanctified to be members of Christ, so that more and more we become dead to sin and lead a holy and blameless life.[2]

1. *Zech. 13:1; Eph. 1:7-8; Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:5; 2. Ezek. 36:25-27; John 3:5-8; Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 6:11; Col. 2:11-12*

Question 71: Where has Christ promised that He will wash us with His blood and Spirit as surely as we are washed with the water of baptism?

Answer: In the institution of baptism, where He says: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" [1]. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned" [2]. This promise is repeated where Scripture calls baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins [3].

1. *Matt. 18:19; 2. Mark 16:16; 3. Tit. 3:5, Acts 22:16*

Sunday 27

Question 72: Does this outward washing with water itself wash away sins?

Answer: No, only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sins.[1]

1. *Matt. 3:11; 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 John 1:7*

Question 73: Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins?

Answer: God speaks in this way for a good reason. He wants to teach us that the blood and Spirit of Christ remove our sins just as water takes away dirt from the body.[1] But, even more important, He wants to assure us by this divine pledge and sign that we are as truly cleansed from our sins spiritually as we are bodily washed with water.[2]

1. *1 Cor. 6:11; Rev. 1:5; 7:14; 2. Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27*

Question 74: Should infants, too, be baptized?

Answer: Yes. Infants as well as adults belong to God's covenant and congregation.[1] Through Christ's blood the redemption from sin and the Holy Spirit, who works faith, are promised to them no less than to adults.[2] Therefore, by baptism, as sign of the covenant, they must be grafted into the Christian church and distinguished from the children of unbelievers. [3] This was done in the old covenant by circumcision, [4] in place of which baptism was instituted in the new covenant.[5]

1. *Gen. 17:7; Matt. 19:14; 2. Isa. 44:1-3; Acts 2:38-39; 16:31; 3. Acts 10:47; 1 Cor. 7:14; 4. Gen. 17:9-14; 5. Col. 2:11-13*

The holy Communion of our Lord (Sunday 28-30)

Sunday 28

Question 75: How does the Lord's Supper signify and seal to you that you share in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross and in all His gifts?

Answer: In this way: Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup in remembrance of Him. With this command He gave these promises:[1] First, as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup given to me, so surely was His body offered for me and His blood poured out for me on the cross. Second, as surely as I receive from the hand of the minister and taste with my mouth the bread and the cup of the Lord as sure signs of Christ's body and blood, so surely does He Himself nourish and refresh my soul to everlasting life with His crucified body and shed blood.

1. *Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25*

Question 76: What does it mean to eat the crucified body of Christ and to drink His shed blood?

Answer: First, to accept with a believing heart all the suffering and the death of Christ, and so receive forgiveness of sins and life eternal.[1] Second, to be united more and more to His sacred body through the Holy Spirit, who lives both in Christ and in us.[2] Therefore, although Christ is in heaven [3] and we are on earth, yet we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones, [4] and we forever live and are governed by one Spirit, as the members of our body are by one soul.[5]

1. *John 6:35, 40, 50-54; 2. John 6:55-56; 1 Cor. 12:13; 3. Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 11:26; Col. 3:1; 4. 1 Cor. 6:15-17; Eph. 5:29-30; 1 John 4:13; 5. John 6:56-58; 15:1-6; Eph. 4:15-16; 1 John 3:24*

Question 77: Where has Christ promised that He will nourish and refresh believers with His body and blood as surely as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup?

Answer: In the institution of the Lord's supper: The Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" [1]. This promise is repeated by Paul where he says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" ([2]. 1. *1 Cor. 11:23-26; 2. 1 Cor. 10:16-17*

Sunday 29

Question 78: Are then the bread and wine changed into the real body and blood of Christ?

Answer: No. Just as the water of baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ and is not the washing away of sins itself but is simply God's sign and pledge, [1] so also the bread in the Lord's supper does not become the body of Christ itself, [2] although it is called Christ's body [3] in keeping with the nature and usage of sacraments.[4]

1. *Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5; 2. Matt. 26:26-29; 3. 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:26-28; 4. Gen. 17:10-11; Ex. 12:11, 13; 1 Cor. 10:1-4*

Question 79: Why then does Christ call the bread His body and the cup His blood, or the new covenant in His blood, and why does Paul speak of a participation in the body and blood of Christ?

Answer: Christ speaks in this way for a good reason: He wants to teach us by His supper that as bread and wine sustain us in this temporal life, so His crucified body and shed blood are true food and drink for our souls to eternal life.[1] But, even more important, He wants to assure us by this visible sign and pledge, first, that through the working of the Holy Spirit we share in His true body and blood as surely as we receive with our mouth these holy signs in remembrance of Him, [2] and, second, that all His suffering and obedience are as certainly ours as if we personally had suffered and paid for our sins.[3]

1. *John 6:51, 55; 2. 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:26; 3. Rom. 6:5-11*

Sunday 30

Question 80: What difference is there between the Lord's Supper and the papal mass?

Answer: The Lord's supper testifies to us, first, that we have complete forgiveness of all our sins through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself accomplished on the cross once for all; [1] and, second, that through the Holy Spirit we are grafted into Christ, [2] who with His true body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father, [3] and this is where He wants to be worshipped.[4] But the mass teaches, first, that the living and the dead do not have forgiveness of sins through the suffering of Christ unless He is still offered for them daily by the priests; and, second, that Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine, and there is to be worshipped. Therefore the mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.

1. *John 19:30; Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 25-26; 10:10-18; 2. 1 Cor. 6:17; 10:16-17; 3. Acts 7:55-56; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 4. Matt. 6:20-21; John 4:21-24; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1-3*

Question 81: Who are to come to the table of the Lord?

Answer: Those who are truly displeased with themselves because of their sins and yet trust that these are forgiven them and that their remaining weakness is covered by the suffering and death of Christ, and who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and amend their life. But hypocrites and those who do not repent eat and drink judgment upon themselves.[1]

1. *1 Cor. 10:19-22; 11:26-32*

Question 82: Are those also to be admitted to the Lord's supper who by their confession and life show that they are unbelieving and ungodly?

Answer: No, for then the covenant of God would be profaned and His wrath kindled against the whole congregation.[1] Therefore, according to the command of Christ and His apostles, the Christian church is duty-

bound to exclude such persons by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, until they amend their lives.
1. 1 Cor. 11:17-32; Ps. 50:14-16; Isa. 1:11-17

Church discipline (Sunday 31)

Sunday 31

Question 83: What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

Answer: The preaching of the holy gospel and church discipline. By these two the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and closed to unbelievers.[1]

1. Matt. 16:19; John 20:22-23

Question 84: How is the kingdom of heaven opened and closed by the preaching of the gospel?

Answer: According to the command of Christ, the kingdom of heaven is opened when it is proclaimed and publicly testified to each and every believer that God has really forgiven all their sins for the sake of Christ's merits, as often as they by true faith accept the promise of the gospel. The kingdom of heaven is closed when it is proclaimed and testified to all unbelievers and hypocrites that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation rest on them as long as they do not repent. According to this testimony of the gospel, God will judge both in this life and in the life to come.[1]

1. Matt. 16:19; John 3:31-36; 20:21-23

Question 85: How is the kingdom of heaven closed and opened by church discipline?

Answer: According to the command of Christ, people who call themselves Christians but show themselves to be unchristian in doctrine or life are first repeatedly admonished in a brotherly manner. If they do not give up their errors or wickedness, they are reported to the church, that is, to the elders. If they do not heed also their admonitions, they are forbidden the use of the sacraments, and they are excluded by the elders from the Christian congregation, and by God Himself from the kingdom of Christ.[1] They are again received as members of Christ and of the church when they promise and show real amendment.[2]

1. Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:3-5, 11-13; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; 2. Luke 15:20-24; 2 Cor. 2:6-11

The Third Part: How to be thankful to God for such deliverance (Sunday 32-52)

Sunday 32

Question 86: Since we have been delivered from our misery by grace alone through Christ, without any merit of our own, why must we yet do good works?

Answer: Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit to be His image, so that with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful to God for His benefits, [1] and He may be praised by us.[2] Further, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by its fruits, [3] and that by our godly walk of life we may win our neighbours for Christ.[4]

1. Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:5-10; 2. Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 3. Matt. 7:17-18; Gal. 5:22-24; 2 Pet. 1:10-11; 4. Matt. 5:14-16; Rom. 14:17-19; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:1-2

Question 87: Can those be saved who do not turn to God from their ungrateful and impenitent walk of life?

Answer: Certainly not. By no means. Scripture says that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, greedy person, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like shall inherit the kingdom of God.[1]

1. 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:1-20; 1 John 3:14

Sunday 33

Question 88: What is the true repentance or conversion of man?

Answer: It is the dying of the old nature and the coming to life of the new.[1]

1. Rom. 6:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-10

Question 89: What is the dying of the old nature?

Answer: It is to grieve with heartfelt sorrow that we have offended God by our sin, and more and more to hate it and flee from it.[1]

1. Ps. 51:3-4, 17; Joel 2:12-13; Rom. 8:12-13; 2 Cor. 7:10

Question 90: What is the coming to life of the new nature?

Answer: It is a heartfelt joy in God through Christ, [1] and a love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works.[2]

1. Ps. 51:8, 12; Isa. 57:15; Rom. 5:1; 14:17; 2. Rom. 6:10-11; Gal. 2:20

Question 91: But what are good works?

Answer: Only those which are done out of true faith, [1] in accordance with the law of God, [2] and to His glory, [3] and not those based on our own opinion or on precepts of men.[4]

1. John 15:5; Heb. 11:6; 2. Lev. 18:4; 1 Sam. 15:22; Eph. 2:10; 3. 1 Cor. 10:31; 4. Deut. 12:32; Isa. 29:13; Ezek. 20:18-19; Matt. 15:7-9

The Law (Sunday 34-44)

Sunday 34

Question 92: What is the law of the LORD?

Answer:

God spoke all these words, saying (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21): I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

The first commandment

You shall have no other gods before Me.

The second commandment

You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, But showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

The third commandment

You shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His Name in vain.

The fourth commandment

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

The fifth commandment

Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

The sixth commandment

You shall not kill.

The seventh commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

The eighth commandment

You shall not steal.

The ninth commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

The tenth commandment

You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbour's.[1]

1. Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:6-21.

Question 93: How are these commandments divided?

Answer: Into two parts. The first teaches us how to live in relation to God; the second, what duties we owe our neighbour.[1]

1. Matt. 22:37-39

Question 94: What does the Lord require in the first commandment?

Answer: That for the sake of my very salvation I avoid and flee all idolatry, [1] witchcraft, superstition, [2] and prayer to saints or to other creatures.[3] Further, that I rightly come to know the only true God.[4] trust in Him alone, [5] submit to Him with all humility [6] and patience,[7] expect all good from Him only, [8] and love, [9] fear, [10] and honour Him [11] with all my heart. In short, that I forsake all creatures rather than do

the least thing against His will.[12]

1. 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 10:5-14; 1 John 5:21; 2. Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:9-12; 3. Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9; 4. John 17:3; 5. Jer. 17:5, 7; 6. Ps. 104:27-28; James 1:17; 7. 1 Pet. 5:5-6; 8. Col. 1:11; Heb. 10:36; 9. Matt. 22:37 (Deut. 6:5); 10. Prov. 9:10; 1 Pet. 1:17; 11. Matt. 4:10 (Deut. 6:13); 12. Matt. 5:29-30; 10:37-39

Question 95: What is idolatry?

Answer: Idolatry is having or inventing something in which to put our trust instead of, or in addition to, the only true God who has revealed Himself in His Word.[1]

1. 1 Chron. 16:26; Gal. 4:8-9; Eph. 5:5; Phil. 3:19

Sunday 35

Question 96: What does God require in the second commandment?

Answer: We are not to make an image of God in any way, [1] nor to worship Him in any other manner than He has commanded in His Word.[2]

1. Deut. 4:15-19; Isa. 40:18-25; Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:22-23; 2. Lev. 10:1-7; 1 Sam. 15:22-23; John 4:23-24

Question 97: May we then not make any image at all?

Answer: God cannot and may not be visibly portrayed in any way. Creatures may be portrayed, but God forbids us to make or have any images of them in order to worship them or to serve God through them.[1]

1. Ex. 34:13-14, 17; 2 Kings 18:4-5

Question 98: But may images not be tolerated in the churches as "books for the laity"?

Answer: No, for we should not be wiser than God. He wants His people to be taught not by means of dumb images [1] but by the living preaching of His Word.[2]

1. Rom. 10:14-15, 17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19; 2. Jer. 10:8; Hab. 2:18-20

Sunday 36

Question 99: What is required in the third commandment?

Answer: We are not to blaspheme or to abuse the Name of God by cursing, [1] perjury, [2] or unnecessary oaths, [3] nor to share in such horrible sins by being silent bystanders. [4] In short, we must use the holy Name of God only with fear and reverence, [5] so that we may rightly confess Him, [6] call upon Him, [7] and praise Him in all our words and works.[8]

1. Lev. 24:10-17; 2. Lev. 19:12; 3. Matt. 5:37; James 5:12; 4. Lev. 5:1; Prov. 29:24; 5. Ps. 99:1-5; Jer. 4:2; 6. Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10; 7. Ps. 50:14-15; 1 Tim. 2:8; 8. Col. 3:17

Question 100: Is the blaspheming of God's Name by swearing and cursing such a grievous sin that God is angry also with those who do not prevent and forbid it as much as they can?

Answer: Certainly, [1] for no sin is greater or provokes God's wrath more than the blaspheming of His Name. That is why He commanded it to be punished with death.[2]

1. Lev. 5:1; 2. Lev. 24:10-17

Sunday 37

Question 101: But may we swear an oath by the Name of God in a godly manner?

Answer: Yes, when the government demands it of its subjects, or when necessity requires it, in order to maintain and promote fidelity and truth, to God's glory and for our neighbour's good. Such oath-taking is based on God's Word [1] and was therefore rightly used by saints in the Old and the New Testament.[2]

1. Deut. 6:13; 10:20; Jer. 4:1-2; Heb. 6:16; 2. Gen. 21:24; Josh. 9:15; 1 Kings 1:29-30; Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23

Question 102: May we also swear by saints or other creatures?

Answer: No. A lawful oath is a calling upon God, who alone knows the heart, to bear witness to the truth, and to punish me if I swear falsely.[1] No creature is worthy of such honour.[2]

1. Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:23; 2. Matt. 5:34-37; 23:16-22; James 5:12

Sunday 38

Question 103: What does God require in the fourth commandment?

Answer: First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained [1] and that, especially on the day of rest, I diligently attend the church of God [2] to hear God's Word, [3] to use the sacraments, [4] to call publicly upon the LORD, [5] and to give Christian offerings for the poor. [6] Second, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, let the LORD work in me through His Holy Spirit, and so begin in this life the eternal sabbath. [7]

1. Deut. 6:4-9, 20-25; 1 Cor. 9:13-14; 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:13-17; Tit. 1:5; 2. Deut. 12:5-12; Ps. 40:9-10; 68:26; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; 3. Rom. 10:14-17; 1 Cor. 14:31-32; 1 Tim. 4:13; 4. 1 Cor. 11:23-25; 5. Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:1; 6. Ps. 50:14; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8 & 9; 7 Isa. 66:23; Heb. 4:9-11

Sunday 39

Question 104: What does God require in the fifth commandment?

Answer: That I show all honour, love, and faithfulness to my father and mother and to all those in authority

over me, submit myself with due obedience to their good instruction and discipline, [1] and also have patience with their weaknesses and shortcomings, [2] since it is God's will to govern us by their hand.[3]

1. Ex. 21:17; Prov. 1:8; 4:1; Rom. 13:1-2; Eph. 5:21-22; 6:1-9; Col. 3:18-4:1; 2. Prov. 20:20; 23:22; 1 Pet. 2:18; 3. Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:1-8; Eph. 6:1-9; Col. 3:18-21

Sunday 40

Question 105: What does God require in the sixth commandment?

Answer: I am not to dishonour, hate, injure, or kill my neighbour by thoughts, words, or gestures, and much less by deeds, whether personally or through another; [1] rather, I am to put away all desire of revenge.[2] Moreover, I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself.[3] Therefore, also, the government bears the sword to prevent murder.[4]

1. Gen. 9:6; Lev. 19:17-18; Matt. 5:21-22; 26:52; 2. Prov. 25:21-22; Matt. 18:35; Rom. 12:19; Eph. 4:26; 3. Matt. 4:7; 26:52; Rom. 13:11-14; 4. Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:14; Rom. 13:4

Question 106: But does this commandment speak only of killing?

Answer: By forbidding murder God teaches us that He hates the root of murder, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge, [1] and that He regards all these as murder.[2]

1. Prov. 14:30; Rom. 1:29; 12:19; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 2:9-11; 2. 1 John 3:15

Question 107: Is it enough, then, that we do not kill our neighbour in any such way?

Answer: No. When God condemns envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves, [1] to show patience, peace, gentleness, mercy, and friendliness toward him, [2] to protect him from harm as much as we can, and to do good even to our enemies. [3]

1. Matt. 7:12; 22:39; Rom. 12:10; 2. Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 6:36; Rom. 12:10, 18; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 3:8; 3. Ex. 23:4-5; Matt. 5:44-45; Rom. 12:20-21 (Prov. 25:21-22)

Sunday 41

Question 108: What does the seventh commandment teach us?

Answer: That all unchastity is cursed by God. [1] We must therefore detest it from the heart [2] and live chaste and disciplined lives, both within and outside of holy marriage. [3]

1. Lev. 18:30; Eph. 5:3-5; 2. Jude 22-23; 3. 1 Cor. 7:1-9; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Heb. 13:4

Question 109: Does God in this commandment forbid nothing more than adultery and similar shameful sins?

Answer: Since we, body and soul, are temples of the Holy Spirit, it is God's will that we keep ourselves pure and holy. Therefore He forbids all unchaste acts, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, [1] and whatever may entice us to unchastity.[2]

1. Matt. 5:27-29; 1 Cor. 6:18-20; Eph. 5:3-4; 2. 1 Cor. 15:33; Eph. 5:18

Sunday 42

Question 110: What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

Answer: God forbids not only outright theft and robbery [1] but also such wicked schemes and devices as false weights and measures, deceptive merchandising, counterfeit money, and usury; [2] we must not defraud our neighbour in any way, whether by force or by show of right. [3] In addition God forbids all greed [4] and all abuse or squandering of His gifts. [5]

1. Ex. 22:1; 1 Cor. 5:9-10; 6:9-10; 2. Mic. 6:9-11; Luke 3:14; James 5:1-6; 3. Deut. 25:13-16; Ps. 15:5; Prov. 11:1; 12:22; Ezek. 45:9-12; Luke 6:35; 4. Luke 12:15; Eph. 5:5; 5. Prov. 21:20; 23:20-21; Luke 16:10-13

Question 111: What does God require of you in this commandment?

Answer: I must promote my neighbour's good wherever I can and may, deal with him as I would like others to deal with me, and work faithfully so that I may be able to give to those in need.[1]

1. Isa. 58:5-10; Matt. 7:12; Gal. 6:9-10; Eph. 4:28

Sunday 43

Question 112: What is required in the ninth commandment?

Answer: I must not give false testimony against anyone, twist no one's words, not gossip or slander, nor condemn or join in condemning anyone rashly and unheard. [1] Rather, I must avoid all lying and deceit as the devil's own works, under penalty of God's heavy wrath. [2] In court and everywhere else, I must love the truth, [3] speak and confess it honestly, and do what I can to defend and promote my neighbour's honour and reputation.[4]

1. Ps. 15; Prov. 19:5; Matt. 7:1; Luke 6:37; Rom. 1:28-32; 2. Lev. 19:11-12; Prov. 12:22; 13:5; John 8:44; Rev. 21:8a; 3. 1 Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:25; 4. 1 Pet. 3:8-9; 4:8

Sunday 44

Question 113: What does the tenth commandment require of us?

Answer: That not even the slightest thought or desire contrary to any of God's commandments should ever arise in our heart. Rather, we should always hate all sin with all our heart, and delight in all righteousness.[1]

1. Ps. 19:7-14; 139:23-24; Rom. 7:7-8

Question 114: But can those converted to God keep these commandments perfectly?

Answer: No. In this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience. [1] Nevertheless, with earnest purpose they do begin to live not only according to some but to all the commandments of God.[2]
1. Eccles. 7:20; Rom. 7:14-15; 1 Cor. 13:9; 1 John 1:8-10; 2. Ps. 1:1-2; Rom. 7:22-25; Phil. 3:12-16

Question 115: If in this life no one can keep the ten commandments perfectly, why does God have them preached so strictly?

Answer: First, that throughout our life we may more and more become aware of our sinful nature, and therefore seek more eagerly the forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ. [1] Second, that we may be zealous for good deeds and constantly pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that He may more and more renew us after God's image, until after this life we reach the goal of perfection.[2]
1. Ps. 32:5; Rom. 3:19-26; 7:7, 24-25; 1 John 1:9; 2. 1 Cor. 9:24; Phil. 3:12-14; 1 John 3:1-3

The Lord's Prayer (Sunday 45-52)

Sunday 45

Question 116: Why is prayer necessary for Christians?

Answer: Because prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness which God requires of us.[1] Moreover, God will give His grace and the Holy Spirit only to those who constantly and with heartfelt longing ask Him for these gifts and thank Him for them.[2]
1. Ps. 50:14-15; 116:12-19; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; 2. Matt. 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-13

Question 117: What belongs to a prayer which pleases God and is heard by Him?

Answer: First, we must from the heart call upon the one true God only, who has revealed Himself in His Word, for all that He has commanded us to pray.[1] Second, we must thoroughly know our need and misery, so that we may humble ourselves before God.[2] Third, we must rest on this firm foundation that, although we do not deserve it, God will certainly hear our prayer for the sake of Christ our Lord, as He has promised us in His Word.[3]
1. Ps. 145:18-20; John 4:22-24; Rom. 8:26-27; James 1:5; 1 John 5:14-15; 2. 2 Chron. 7:14; Ps. 2:11; 34:18; 62:8; Isa. 66:2; Rev. 4; 3. Dan. 9:17-19; Matt. 7:8; John 14:13-14; 16:23; Rom. 10:13; James 1:6

Question 118: What has God commanded us to ask of Him?

Answer: All the things we need for body and soul, [1] as included in the prayer which Christ our Lord Himself taught us.
1. James 1:17; Matt. 6:33

Question 119: What is the Lord's Prayer?

Answer: Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our debts, As we also have forgiven our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Thine are the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen. [1]
1. Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

Sunday 46

Question 120: Why has Christ commanded us to address God as Our Father?

Answer: To awaken in us at the very beginning of our prayer that childlike reverence and trust toward God which should be basic to our prayer: God has become our Father through Christ and will much less deny us what we ask of Him in faith than our fathers would refuse us earthly things.[1]
1. Matt. 7:9-11; Luke 11:11-13

Question 121: Why is there added, Who art in heaven?

Answer: These words teach us not to think of God's heavenly majesty in an earthly manner, [1] and to expect from His almighty power all things we need for body and soul.[2]
1. Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-25; 2. Matt. 6:25-34; Rom. 8:31-32

Sunday 47

Question 122: What is the first petition?

Answer: Hallowed be Thy Name. That is: Grant us first of all that we may rightly know Thee, [1] and sanctify, glorify, and praise Thee in all Thy works, in which shine forth Thy almighty power, wisdom, goodness, righteousness, mercy, and truth.[2] Grant us also that we may so direct our whole life-- our thoughts, words, and actions- that Thy Name is not blasphemed because of us but always honoured and praised.[3]

1. Jer. 9:23-24; 31:33-34; Matt. 16:17; John 17:3; 2. Ex. 34:5-8; Ps. 145; Jer. 32:16-20; Luke 1:46-55, 68-75; Rom. 11:33-36; 3. Ps. 115:1; Matt. 5:16

Sunday 48

Question 123: What is the second petition?

Answer: Thy kingdom come. That is: So rule us by Thy Word and Spirit that more and more we submit to Thee.[1] Preserve and increase Thy church.[2] Destroy the works of the devil, every power that raises itself against Thee, and every conspiracy against Thy holy Word.[3] Do all this until the fullness of Thy kingdom comes, wherein Thou shalt be all in all.[4]

1. Ps. 119:5, 105; 143:10; Matt. 6:33; 2. Ps. 122:6-9; Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:42-47; 3. Rom. 16:20; 1 John 3:8
4. Rom. 8:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:28; Rev. 22:17, 20

Sunday 49

Question 124: What is the third petition?

Answer: Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. That is: Grant that we and all men may deny our own will, and without any murmuring obey Thy will, for it alone is good.[1] Grant also that everyone may carry out the duties of his office and calling [2] as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.[3]

1. Matt. 7:21; 16:24-26; Luke 22:42; Rom. 12:1-2; Tit. 2:11-12; 2. 1 Cor. 7:17-24; Eph. 6:5-9; 3. Ps. 103:20-21

Sunday 50

Question 125: What is the fourth petition?

Answer: Give us this day our daily bread. That is: Provide us with all our bodily needs [1] so that we may acknowledge that Thou art the only fountain of all good, [2] and that our care and labour, and also Thy gifts, cannot do us any good without Thy blessing.[3] Grant therefore that we may withdraw our trust from all creatures, and place it only in Thee.[4]

1. Ps. 104:27-30; 145:15-16; Matt. 6:25-34; 2. Acts 14:17; 17:25; James 1:17; 3. Deut. 8:3; Ps. 37:16; 127:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:58; 4. Ps. 55:22; 62; 146; Jer. 17:5-8; Heb. 13:5-6

Sunday 51

Question 126: What is the fifth petition?

Answer: And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. That is: For the sake of Christ's blood, do not impute to us, wretched sinners; any of our transgressions, nor the evil which still clings to us,[1] as we also find this evidence of Thy grace in us that we are fully determined wholeheartedly to forgive our neighbour.[2]

1. Ps. 51:1-7; 143:2; Rom. 8:1; 1 John 2:1-2; 2. Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35

Sunday 52

Question 127: What is the sixth petition?

Answer: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. That is: In ourselves we are so weak that we cannot stand even for a moment.[1] Moreover, our sworn enemies - the devil, [2] the world, [3] and our own flesh [4] do not cease to attack us. Wilt Thou, therefore, uphold and strengthen us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, so that in this spiritual war [5] we may not go down to defeat, but always firmly resist our enemies, until we finally obtain the complete victory.[6]

1. Ps. 103:14-16; John 15:1-5; 2. 2 Cor. 11:14; Eph. 6:10-13; 1 Pet. 5:8; 3. John 15:18-21; 4. Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17; 5. Matt. 10:19-20; 26:41; Mark 13:33; Rom. 5:3-5; 6. 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23

Question 128: How do you conclude your prayer?

Answer: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. That is: All this we ask of Thee because, as our King, having power over all things, Thou art both willing and able to give us all that is good, [1] and because not we but Thy holy Name should so receive all glory forever.[2]

1. Rom. 10:11-13; 2 Pet. 2:9; 2. Ps. 115:1; John 14:13

Question 129: What does the word Amen mean?

Answer: Amen means: It is true and certain. For God has much more certainly heard my prayer than I feel in my heart that I desire this of Him.[1]

1. Isa. 65:24; 2 Cor. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:13

Confession of Faith 6

THE CANONS OF DORDT

The decision of the National Synod of the Reformed Churches of the United Netherlands, held in Dordrecht, November 13, 1618—May 9, 1619, concerning the five familiar doctrines on which a dispute arose among the Reformed Churches of the United Netherlands.

Chapter 1 Divine predestination and reprobation (1-18)

1. Since all people have sinned in Adam and have come under the sentence of the curse and eternal death, God would have done no one an injustice if it had been his will to leave the entire human race in sin and under the curse, and to condemn them on account of their sin. As the apostle says: *The whole world is liable to the condemnation of God* (Rom. 3:19), *All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God* (Rom. 3:23), and *The wages of sin is death* (Rom. 6:23).
2. But this is how God showed his love: *He sent his only begotten Son into the world, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* (John 3:16) (Cp. 1 John 4:9)
3. In order that people may be brought to faith, God mercifully sends proclaimers of this very joyful message to the people he wishes and at the time he wishes. By this ministry people are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified. *For how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without someone preaching? And how shall they preach unless they have been sent?* (Rom. 10:14-15)
4. God's anger remains on those who do not believe this gospel. But those who do accept it and embrace Jesus the Saviour with a true and living faith are delivered through him from God's anger and from destruction, and receive the gift of eternal life. (John 3:36; Mark 16:16)
5. The cause or blame for this unbelief, as well as for all other sins, is not at all in God, but in man. Faith in Jesus Christ, however, and salvation through him is a free gift of God. As Scripture says, *It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is a gift of God* (Eph. 2:8). Likewise: *It has been freely given to you to believe in Christ* (Phil. 1:29)
6. The fact that some receive from God the gift of faith within time, and that others do not, stems from his eternal decision. For all his works are known to God from eternity (Acts 15:18; Eph. 1:11). In accordance with this decision he graciously softens the hearts, however hard, of his chosen ones and inclines them to believe, but by his just judgment he leaves in their wickedness and hardness of heart those who have not been chosen. And in this especially is disclosed to us his act--unfathomable, and as merciful as it is just--of distinguishing between people equally lost. This is the well-known decision of election and reprobation revealed in God's Word. This decision the wicked, impure, and unstable distort to their own ruin, but it provides holy and godly souls with comfort beyond words.
7. Election [or choosing] is God's unchangeable purpose by which he did the following: Before the foundation of the world, by sheer grace, according to the free good pleasure of his will, he chose in Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out of the entire human race, which had fallen by its own fault from its original innocence into sin and ruin. Those chosen were neither better nor more deserving than the others, but lay with them in the common misery. He did this in Christ, whom he also appointed from eternity to be the mediator, the head of all those chosen, and the foundation of their salvation. And so he decided to give the chosen ones to Christ to be saved, and to call and draw them effectively into Christ's fellowship through his Word and Spirit. In other words, he decided to grant them true faith in Christ, to justify them, to sanctify them, and finally, after powerfully preserving them in the fellowship of his Son, to glorify them. God did all this in order to demonstrate his mercy, to the praise of the riches of his glorious grace. As Scripture says, God chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, so that we should be holy and blameless before him with love; he predestined us whom he adopted as his children through Jesus Christ, in himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, by which he freely made us pleasing to himself in his beloved (Eph. 1:4-6). And elsewhere, *Those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified* (Rom. 8:30).
8. This election is not of many kinds; it is one and the same election for all who were to be saved in the Old and the New Testament. For Scripture declares that there is a single good pleasure, purpose, and plan of God's will, by which he chose us from eternity both to grace and to glory, both to salvation and to the way of salvation, which he prepared in advance for us to walk in. (Eph. 1:4-5; 2:10)

9. This same election took place, not on the basis of foreseen faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, or of any other good quality and disposition, as though it were based on a prerequisite cause or condition in the person to be chosen, but rather for the purpose of faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, and so on. Accordingly, election is the source of each of the benefits of salvation. Faith, holiness, and the other saving gifts, and at last eternal life itself, flow forth from election as its fruits and effects. As the apostle says, He chose us (not because we were, but) so that we should be holy and blameless before him in love (Eph. 1:4).
10. But the cause of this undeserved election is exclusively the good pleasure of God. This does not involve his choosing certain human qualities or actions from among all those possible as a condition of salvation, but rather involves his adopting certain particular persons from among the common mass of sinners as his own possession. As Scripture says, When the children were not yet born, and had done nothing either good or bad..., she (Rebecca) was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Rom. 9:11-13). Also, *All who were appointed for eternal life believed* (Acts 13:48).
11. Just as God himself is most wise, unchangeable, all-knowing, and almighty, so the election made by him can neither be suspended nor altered, revoked, or annulled; neither can his chosen ones be cast off, nor their number reduced.
12. Assurance of this their eternal and unchangeable election to salvation is given to the chosen in due time, though by various stages and in differing measure. Such assurance comes not by inquisitive searching into the hidden and deep things of God, but by noticing within themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unmistakable fruits of election pointed out in God's Word-- such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins, a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and so on. (2 Cor. 13:5)
13. In their awareness and assurance of this election God's children daily find greater cause to humble themselves before God, to adore the fathomless depth of his mercies, to cleanse themselves, and to give fervent love in return to him who first so greatly loved them. This is far from saying that this teaching concerning election, and reflection upon it, make God's children lax in observing his commandments or carnally self-assured. By God's just judgment this does usually happen to those who casually take for granted the grace of election or engage in idle and brazen talk about it but are unwilling to walk in the ways of the chosen.
14. Just as, by God's wise plan, this teaching concerning divine election has been proclaimed through the prophets, Christ himself, and the apostles, in Old and New Testament times, and has subsequently been committed to writing in the Holy Scriptures, so also today in God's church, for which it was specifically intended, this teaching must be set forth - with a spirit of discretion, in a godly and holy manner, at the appropriate time and place, without inquisitive searching into the ways of the Most High. This must be done for the glory of God's most holy name, and for the lively comfort of his people. (Acts 20:27; Rom. 12:3; 11:33-34; Heb. 6:17-18)
15. Moreover, Holy Scripture most especially highlights this eternal and undeserved grace of our election and brings it out more clearly for us, in that it further bears witness that not all people have been chosen but that some have not been chosen or have been passed by in God's eternal election - those, that is, concerning whom God, on the basis of his entirely free, most just, irreproachable, and unchangeable good pleasure, made the following decision: to leave them in the common misery into which, by their own fault, they have plunged themselves; not to grant them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but finally to condemn and eternally punish them (having been left in their own ways and under his just judgment), not only for their unbelief but also for all their other sins, in order to display his justice. And this is the decision of reprobation, which does not at all make God the author of sin (a blasphemous thought!) but rather its fearful, irreproachable, just judge and avenger.
16. Those who do not yet actively experience within themselves a living faith in Christ or an assured confidence of heart, peace of conscience, a zeal for childlike obedience, and a glorying in God through Christ, but who nevertheless use the means by which God has promised to work these things in us — such people ought not to be alarmed at the mention of reprobation, nor to count themselves among the reprobate; rather they ought to continue diligently in the use of the means, to desire fervently a time of more abundant grace, and to wait for it in reverence and humility. On the other hand, those who seriously desire to turn to God, to be pleasing to him alone, and to be delivered from the body of death, but are not yet able to make such progress along the way of godliness and faith as they would like --such people ought much less to stand in fear of the teaching concerning reprobation, since our merciful God has promised that he will not snuff out a smouldering wick and that he will not break a bruised reed. However, those who have forgotten God and their Saviour Jesus Christ and have abandoned themselves wholly to the cares of the world and the pleasures of the flesh — such people have every reason to stand in fear of this teaching, as long as they do not seriously turn to God.

17. Since we must make judgments about God's will from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but by virtue of the gracious covenant in which they together with their parents are included, godly parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in infancy. (Gen. 17:7; Acts 2:39; 1 Cor. 7:14)
18. To those who complain about this grace of an undeserved election and about the severity of a just reprobation, we reply with the words of the apostle, "Who are you, O man, to talk back to God?" (Rom. 9:20), and with the words of our Saviour, "Have I no right to do what I want with my own?" (Matt. 20:15). We, however, with reverent adoration of these secret things, cry out with the apostle: *Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond tracing out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor? Or who has first given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen* (Rom. 11:33-36).

Rejection of the errors by which the Dutch churches have for some time been disturbed (1-9)

Having set forth the orthodox teaching concerning election and reprobation,

1. the Synod rejects the errors of those: Who teach that the will of God to save those who would believe and persevere in faith and in the obedience of faith is the whole and entire decision of election to salvation, and that nothing else concerning this decision has been revealed in God's Word. The Synod teaches: For they deceive the simple and plainly contradict Holy Scripture in its testimony that God does not only wish to save those who would believe, but that he has also from eternity chosen certain particular people to whom, rather than to others, he would within time grant faith in Christ and perseverance. As Scripture says, I have revealed your name to those whom you gave me (John 17:6). Likewise, All who were appointed for eternal life believed (Acts 13:48), and He chose us before the foundation of the world so that we should be holy... (Eph. 1:4).
2. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that God's election to eternal life is of many kinds: one general and indefinite, the other particular and definite; and the latter in turn either incomplete, revocable, non-peremptory (or conditional), or else complete, irrevocable, and peremptory (or absolute). Likewise, who teach that there is one election to faith and another to salvation, so that there can be an election to justifying faith apart from a peremptory election to salvation. The Synod teaches: For this is an invention of the human brain, devised apart from the Scriptures, which distorts the teaching concerning election and breaks up this golden chain of salvation: and those whom he justified, he also glorified (Rom. 8:30). Those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified (Rom. 8:30).
3. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that God's good pleasure and purpose, which Scripture mentions in its teaching of election, does not involve God's choosing certain particular people rather than others, but involves God's choosing, out of all possible conditions (including the works of the law) or out of the whole order of things, the intrinsically unworthy act of faith, as well as the imperfect obedience of faith, to be a condition of salvation; and it involves his graciously wishing to count this as perfect obedience and to look upon it as worthy of the reward of eternal life. The Synod teaches: For by this pernicious error the good pleasure of God and the merit of Christ are robbed of their effectiveness and people are drawn away, by unprofitable inquiries, from the truth of undeserved justification and from the simplicity of the Scriptures. It also gives the lie to these words of the apostle: God called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of works, but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time (2 Tim. 1:9)
4. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that in election to faith a prerequisite condition is that man should rightly use the light of nature, be upright, unassuming, humble, and disposed to eternal life, as though election depended to some extent on these factors. The Synod teaches: For this smacks of Pelagius, and it clearly calls into question the words of the apostle: We lived at one time in the passions of our flesh, following the will of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in transgressions, made us alive with Christ, by whose grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with him and seated us with him in heaven in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages we might show the surpassing riches of his grace, according to his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith (and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God) not by works, so that no one can boast (Eph. 2:3-9).

5. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that the incomplete and no peremptory election of particular persons to salvation occurred on the basis of a foreseen faith, repentance, holiness, and godliness, which has just begun or continued for some time; but that complete and peremptory election occurred on the basis of a foreseen perseverance to the end in faith, repentance, holiness, and godliness. And that this is the gracious and evangelical worthiness, on account of which the one who is chosen is more worthy than the one who is not chosen. And therefore that faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, godliness, and perseverance are not fruits or effects of an unchangeable election to glory, but indispensable conditions and causes, which are prerequisite in those who are to be chosen in the complete election, and which are foreseen as achieved in them. The Synod teaches: This runs counter to the entire Scripture, which throughout impresses upon our ears and hearts these sayings among others: Election is not by works, but by him who calls (Rom. 9:11-12); All who were appointed for eternal life believed (Acts 13:48); He chose us in himself so that we should be holy (Eph. 1:4); You did not choose me, but I chose you (John 15:16); If by grace, not by works (Rom. 11:6); In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son (1 John 4:10).
6. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that not every election to salvation is unchangeable, but that some of the chosen can perish and do in fact perish eternally, with no decision of God to prevent it. The Synod teaches: By this gross error they make God changeable, destroy the comfort of the godly concerning the steadfastness of their election, and contradict the Holy Scriptures, which teach that the elect cannot be led astray (Matt. 24:24), that Christ does not lose those given to him by the Father (John 6:39), and that those whom God predestined, called, and justified, he also glorifies (Rom. 8:30).
7. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that in this life there is no fruit, no awareness, and no assurance of one's unchangeable election to glory, except as conditional upon something changeable and contingent. The Synod teaches: For not only is it absurd to speak of an uncertain assurance, but these things also militate against the experience of the saints, who with the apostle rejoice from an awareness of their election and sing the praises of this gift of God; who, as Christ urged, rejoice with his disciples that their names have been written in heaven (Luke 10:20); and finally who hold up against the flaming arrows of the devil's temptations the awareness of their election, with the question Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? (Rom. 8:33).
8. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that it was not on the basis of his just will alone that God decided to leave anyone in the fall of Adam and in the common state of sin and condemnation or to pass anyone by in the imparting of grace necessary for faith and conversion. The Synod teaches: For these words stand fast: He has mercy on whom he wishes, and he hardens whom he wishes (Rom. 9:18). And also: To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given (Matt. 13:11). Likewise: I give glory to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and have revealed them to little children; yes, Father, because that was your pleasure (Matt. 11:25-26).
9. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that the cause for God's sending the gospel to one people rather than to another is not merely and solely God's good pleasure, but rather that one people is better and worthier than the other to whom the gospel is not communicated. The Synod teaches: For Moses contradicts this when he addresses the people of Israel as follows: Behold, to Jehovah your God belong the heavens and the highest heavens, the earth and whatever is in it. But Jehovah was inclined in his affection to love your ancestors alone, and chose out their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as at this day (Deut. 10:14-15). And also Christ: Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! for if those mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes (Matt. 11:21).

Chapter 2

Christ's Death and Human Redemption Through It

1. God is not only supremely merciful, but also supremely just. His justice requires (as he has revealed himself in the Word) that the sins we have committed against his infinite majesty be punished with both temporal and eternal punishments, of soul as well as body. We cannot escape these punishments unless satisfaction is given to God's justice.
2. Since, however, we ourselves cannot give this satisfaction or deliver ourselves from God's anger, God in his boundless mercy has given us as a guarantee his only begotten Son, who was made to be sin and a curse for us, in our place, on the cross, in order that he might give satisfaction for us.
3. This death of God's Son is the only and entirely complete sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; it is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world.

4. This death is of such great value and worth for the reason that the person who suffered it is — as was necessary to be our Savior — not only a true and perfectly holy man, but also the only begotten Son of God, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. — Another reason is that this death was accompanied by the experience of God's anger and curse, which we by our sins had fully deserved.
5. Moreover, it is the promise of the gospel that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be announced and declared without differentiation or discrimination to all nations and people, to whom God in his good pleasure sends the gospel.
6. However, that many who have been called through the gospel do not repent or believe in Christ but perish in unbelief is not because the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross is deficient or insufficient, but because they themselves are at fault.
7. But all who genuinely believe and are delivered and saved by Christ's death from their sins and from destruction receive this favor solely from God's grace — which he owes to no one—given to them in Christ from eternity.
8. For it was the entirely free plan and very gracious will and intention of God the Father that the enlivening and saving effectiveness of his Son's costly death should work itself out in all his chosen ones, in order that he might grant justifying faith to them only and thereby lead them without fail to salvation. In other words, it was God's will that Christ through the blood of the cross (by which he confirmed the new covenant) should effectively redeem from every people, tribe, nation, and language all those and only those who were chosen from eternity to salvation and given to him by the Father; that he should grant them faith (which, like the Holy Spirit's other saving gifts, he acquired for them by his death); that he should cleanse them by his blood from all their sins, both original and actual, whether committed before or after their coming to faith; that he should faithfully preserve them to the very end; and that he should finally present them to himself, a glorious people, without spot or wrinkle.
9. This plan, arising out of God's eternal love for his chosen ones, from the beginning of the world to the present time has been powerfully carried out and will also be carried out in the future, the gates of hell seeking vainly to prevail against it. As a result the chosen are gathered into one, all in their own time, and there is always a church of believers founded on Christ's blood, a church which steadfastly loves, persistently worships, and—here and in all eternity—praises him as her Savior who laid down his life for her on the cross, as a bridegroom for his bride.

Rejection of the Errors (1-7)

Having set forth the orthodox teaching,

1. the Synod rejects the errors of those: Who teach that God the Father appointed his Son to death on the cross without a fixed and definite plan to save anyone by name, so that the necessity, usefulness, and worth of what Christ's death obtained could have stood intact and altogether perfect, complete and whole, even if the redemption that was obtained had never in actual fact been applied to any individual. The Synod teaches: For this assertion is an insult to the wisdom of God the Father and to the merit of Jesus Christ, and it is contrary to Scripture. For the Savior speaks as follows: "... I lay down my life for the sheep, and "... I know them (John 10:15, 27). And Isaiah the prophet says concerning the Savior: When he shall make himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days, and the will of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand (Isa. 53:10). Finally, this undermines the article of the creed in which we confess what we believe concerning the Church.
2. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that the purpose of Christ's death was not to establish in actual fact a new covenant of grace by his blood, but only to acquire for the Father the mere right to enter once more into a covenant with men, whether of grace or of works. The Synod teaches: For this conflicts with Scripture, which teaches that Christ has become the guarantee and mediator of a better—that is, a new-covenant (Heb. 7:22; 9:15), and that a will is in force only when someone has died (Heb. 9:17, 25).
3. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that Christ, by the satisfaction which he gave, did not certainly merit for anyone salvation itself and the faith by which this satisfaction of Christ is effectively applied to salvation, but only acquired for the Father the authority or plenary will to relate in a new way with men and to impose such new conditions as he chose, and that the satisfying of these conditions depends on the free choice of man; consequently, that it was possible that either all or none would fulfill them. The Synod teaches: For they have too low an opinion of the death of Christ, do not at all acknowledge the foremost fruit or benefit which it brings forth, and summon back from hell the Pelagian error.

4. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that what is involved in the new covenant of grace which God the Father made with men through the intervening of Christ's death is not that we are justified before God and saved through faith, insofar as it accepts Christ's merit, but rather that God, having withdrawn his demand for perfect obedience to the law, counts faith itself, and the imperfect obedience of faith, as perfect obedience to the law, and graciously looks upon this as worthy of the reward of eternal life. The Synod teaches: For they contradict Scripture: They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ, whom God presented as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood (Rom. 3:24,25). And along with the ungodly Socinus, they introduce a new and foreign justification of man before God, against the consensus of the whole church.
5. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that all people have been received into the state of reconciliation and into the grace of the covenant, so that no one on account of original sin is liable to condemnation, or is to be condemned, but that all are free from the guilt of this sin. The Synod teaches: For this opinion conflicts with Scripture which asserts that we are by nature children of wrath. (Eph. 2:3)
6. Who make use of the distinction between obtaining and applying in order to in still in the unwary and inexperienced the opinion that God, as far as he is concerned, wished to bestow equally upon all people the benefits which are gained by Christ's death; but that the distinction by which some rather than others come to share in the forgiveness of sins and eternal life depends on their own free choice (which applies itself to the grace offered indiscriminately) but does not depend on the unique gift of mercy which effectively works in them, so that they, rather than others, apply that grace to themselves. The Synod teaches: For, while pretending to set forth this distinction in an acceptable sense, they attempt to give the people the deadly poison of Pelagianism.
7. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that Christ neither could die, nor had to die, nor did die for those whom God so dearly loved and chose to eternal life, since such people do not need the death of Christ. The Synod teaches: For they contradict the apostle, who says: Christ loved me and gave himself up for me (Gal. 2:20), and likewise: Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died, that is, for them (Rom. 8:33-34). They also contradict the Savior, who asserts: "... I lay down my life for the sheep (John 10:15), and My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends (John 15:12-13).

Chapter 3 and 4

Human Corruption, Conversion to God, and the Way It Occurs

1. Man was originally created in the image of God and was furnished in his mind with a true and salutary knowledge of his Creator and things spiritual, in his will and heart with righteousness, and in all his emotions with purity; indeed, the whole man was holy. However, rebelling against God at the devil's instigation and by his own free will, he deprived himself of these outstanding gifts. Rather, in their place he brought upon himself blindness, terrible darkness, futility, and distortion of judgment in his mind; perversity, defiance, and hardness in his heart and will; and finally impurity in all his emotions.
2. Man brought forth children of the same nature as himself after the fall. That is to say, being corrupt he brought forth corrupt children. The corruption spread, by God's just judgment, from Adam to all his descendants — except for Christ alone — not by way of imitation (as in former times the Pelagians would have it) but by way of the propagation of his perverted nature.
3. Therefore, all people are conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, unfit for any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin; without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted nature, or even to dispose themselves to such reform.
4. There is, to be sure, a certain light of nature remaining in man after the fall, by virtue of which he retains some notions about God, natural things, and the difference between what is moral and immoral, and demonstrates a certain eagerness for virtue and for good outward behavior. But this light of nature is far from enabling man to come to a saving knowledge of God and conversion to him — so far, in fact, that man does not use it rightly even in matters of nature and society. Instead, in various ways he completely distorts this light, whatever its precise character, and suppresses it in unrighteousness. In doing so he renders himself without excuse before God.
5. In this respect, what is true of the light of nature is true also of the Ten Commandments given by God through Moses specifically to the Jews. For man cannot obtain saving grace through the Decalogue, because, although it does expose the magnitude of his sin and increasingly convict him of his guilt, yet it does not offer a remedy or enable him to escape from his misery, and, indeed, weakened as it is by the flesh, leaves the offender under the curse. —

6. What, therefore, neither the light of nature nor the law can do, God accomplishes by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Word or the ministry of reconciliation. This is the gospel about the Messiah, through which it has pleased God to save believers, in both the Old and the New Testament.
7. In the Old Testament, God revealed this secret of his will to a small number; in the New Testament (now without any distinction between peoples) he discloses it to a large number. The reason for this difference must not be ascribed to the greater worth of one nation over another, or to a better use of the light of nature, but to the free good pleasure and undeserved love of God. Therefore, those who receive so much grace, beyond and in spite of all they deserve, ought to acknowledge it with humble and thankful hearts; on the other hand, with the apostle they ought to adore (but certainly not inquisitively search into) the severity and justice of God's judgments on the others, who do not receive this grace.
8. Nevertheless, all who are called through the gospel are called seriously. For seriously and most genuinely God makes known in his Word what is pleasing to him: that those who are called should come to him. Seriously he also promises rest for their souls and eternal life to all who come to him and believe.
9. The fact that many who are called through the ministry of the gospel do not come and are not brought to conversion must not be blamed on the gospel, nor on Christ, who is offered through the gospel, nor on God, who calls them through the gospel and even bestows various gifts on them, but on the people themselves who are called. Some in self-assurance do not even entertain the Word of life; others do entertain it but do not take it to heart, and for that reason, after the fleeting joy of a temporary faith, they relapse; others choke the seed of the Word with the thorns of life's cares and with the pleasures of the world and bring forth no fruits. This our Savior teaches in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13).
10. The fact that others who are called through the ministry of the gospel do come and are brought to conversion must not be credited to man, as though one distinguishes himself by free choice from others who are furnished with equal or sufficient grace for faith and conversion (as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains). No, it must be credited to God: just as from eternity he chose his own in Christ, so within time he effectively calls them, grants them faith and repentance, and, having rescued them from the dominion of darkness, brings them into the kingdom of his Son, in order that they may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called them out of darkness into this marvelous light, and may boast not in themselves, but in the Lord, as apostolic words frequently testify in Scripture.
11. Moreover, when God carries out this good pleasure in his chosen ones, or works true conversion in them, he not only sees to it that the gospel is proclaimed to them outwardly, and enlightens their minds powerfully by the Holy Spirit so that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God, but, by the effective operation of the same regenerating Spirit, he also penetrates into the inmost being of man, opens the closed heart, softens the hard heart, and circumcises the heart that is uncircumcised. He infuses new qualities into the will, making the dead will alive, the evil one good, the unwilling one willing, and the stubborn one compliant; he activates and strengthens the will so that, like a good tree, it may be enabled to produce the fruits of good deeds.
12. And this is the regeneration, the new creation, the raising from the dead, and the making alive so clearly proclaimed in the Scriptures, which God works in us without our help. But this certainly does not happen only by outward teaching, by moral persuasion, or by such a way of working that, after God has done his work, it remains in man's power whether or not to be reborn or converted. Rather, it is an entirely supernatural work, one that is at the same time most powerful and most pleasing, a marvelous, hidden, and inexpressible work, which is not lesser than or inferior in power to that of creation or of raising the dead, as Scripture (inspired by the author of this work) teaches. As a result, all those in whose hearts God works in this marvelous way are certainly, unfailingly, and effectively reborn and do actually believe. And then the will, now renewed, is not only activated and motivated by God but in being activated by God is also itself active. For this reason, man himself, by that grace which he has received, is also rightly said to believe and to repent.
13. In this life believers cannot fully understand the way this work occurs; meanwhile, they rest content with knowing and experiencing that by this grace of God they do believe with the heart and love their Savior.
14. In this way, therefore, faith is a gift of God, not in the sense that it is offered by God for man to choose, but that it is in actual fact bestowed on man, breathed and infused into him. Nor is it a gift in the sense that God bestows only the potential to believe, but then awaits assent — the act of believing — from man's choice; rather, it is a gift in the sense that he who works both willing and acting and, indeed, works all things in all people produces in man both the will to believe and the belief itself.

15. God does not owe this grace to anyone. For what could God owe to one who has nothing to give that can be paid back? Indeed, what could God owe to one who has nothing of his own to give but sin and falsehood? Therefore the person who receives this grace owes and gives eternal thanks to God alone; the person who does not receive it either does not care at all about these spiritual things and is satisfied with himself in his condition, or else in self-assurance foolishly boasts about having something which he lacks. Furthermore, following the example of the apostles, we are to think and to speak in the most favorable way about those who outwardly profess their faith and better their lives, for the inner chambers of the heart are unknown to us. But for others who have not yet been called, we are to pray to the God who calls things that do not exist as though they did. In no way, however, are we to pride ourselves as better than they, as though we had distinguished ourselves from them.
16. However, just as by the fall man did not cease to be man, endowed with intellect and will, and just as sin, which has spread through the whole human race, did not abolish the nature of the human race but distorted and spiritually killed it, so also this divine grace of regeneration does not act in people as if they were blocks and stones; nor does it abolish the will and its properties or coerce a reluctant will by force, but spiritually revives, heals, reforms, and—in a manner at once pleasing and powerful—bends it back. As a result, a ready and sincere obedience of the Spirit now begins to prevail where before the rebellion and resistance of the flesh were completely dominant. It is in this that the true and spiritual restoration and freedom of our will consists. Thus, if the marvelous Maker of every good thing were not dealing with us, man would have no hope of getting up from his fall by his free choice, by which he plunged himself into ruin when still standing upright. It is in this that the true and spiritual restoration and freedom of our will consists. Thus, if the marvelous Maker of every good thing were not dealing with us, man would have no hope of getting up from his fall by his free choice, by which he plunged himself into ruin when still standing upright.
17. Just as the almighty work of God by which he brings forth and sustains our natural life does not rule out but requires the use of means, by which God, according to his infinite wisdom and goodness, has wished to exercise his power, so also the aforementioned supernatural work of God by which he regenerates us in no way rules out or cancels the use of the gospel, which God in his great wisdom has appointed to be the seed of regeneration and the food of the soul. For this reason, the apostles and the teachers who followed them taught the people in a godly manner about this grace of God, to give him the glory and to humble all pride, and yet did not neglect meanwhile to keep the people, by means of the holy admonitions of the gospel, under the administration of the Word, the sacraments, and discipline. So even today it is out of the question that the teachers or those taught in the church should presume to test God by separating what he in his good pleasure has wished to be closely joined together. For grace is bestowed through admonitions, and the more readily we perform our duty, the more lustrous the benefit of God working in us usually is and the better his work advances. To him alone, both for the means and for their saving fruit and effectiveness, all glory is owed forever. Amen.

Rejection of the Errors

Having set forth the orthodox teaching,

1. The Synod rejects the errors of those: Who teach that, properly speaking, it cannot be said that original sin in itself is enough to condemn the whole human race or to warrant temporal and eternal punishments. The Synod teaches: For they contradict the apostle when he says: Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death passed on to all men because all sinned (Rom. 5:12); also: The guilt followed one sin and brought condemnation (Rom. 5:16); likewise: The wages of sin is death.
2. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that the spiritual gifts or the good dispositions and virtues such as goodness, holiness, and righteousness could not have resided in man's will when he was first created, and therefore could not have been separated from the will at the fall. The Synod teaches: For this conflicts with the apostle's description of the image of God in Ephesians 4:24, where he portrays the image in terms of righteousness and holiness, which definitely reside in the will.
3. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that in spiritual death the spiritual gifts have not been separated from man's will, since the will in itself has never been corrupted but only hindered by the darkness of the mind and the unruliness of the emotions, and since the will is able to exercise its innate free capacity once these hindrances are removed, which is to say, it is able of itself to will or choose whatever good is set before it — or else not to will or choose it. The Synod teaches: This is a novel idea and an error and has the effect of elevating the power of free choice, contrary to the words of Jeremiah the prophet: The heart itself is deceitful above all things and wicked (Jer. 17:9); and of the words of the apostle: All of us also lived among them (the sons

- of disobedience) at one time in the passions of our flesh, following the will of our flesh and thoughts (Eph. 2:3).
4. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that unregenerate man is not strictly or totally dead in his sins or deprived of all capacity for spiritual good but is able to hunger and thirst for righteousness or life and to offer the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit which is pleasing to God. The Synod teaches: For these views are opposed to the plain testimonies of Scripture: You were dead in your transgressions and sins (Eph. 2:1, 5); The imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil all the time (Gen. 6:5; 8:21). Besides, to hunger and thirst for deliverance from misery and for life, and to offer God the sacrifice of a broken spirit is characteristic only of the regenerate and of those called blessed (Ps. 51:17; Matt. 5:6).
 5. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that corrupt and natural man can make such good use of common grace (by which they mean the light of nature) or of the gifts remaining after the fall that he is able thereby gradually to obtain a greater grace — evangelical or saving grace—as well as salvation itself; and that in this way God, for his part, shows himself ready to reveal Christ to all people, since he provides to all, to a sufficient extent and in an effective manner, the means necessary for the revealing of Christ, for faith, and for repentance. The Synod teaches: For Scripture, not to mention the experience of all ages, testifies that this is false: He makes known his words to Jacob, his statutes and his laws to Israel; he has done this for no other nation, and they do not know his laws (Ps. 147:19-20); In the past God let all nations go their own way (Acts 14:16); They (Paul and his companions) were kept by the Holy Spirit from speaking God's word in Asia; and When they had come to Mysia, they tried to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit would not allow them to (Acts 16:6-7).
 6. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that in the true conversion of man new qualities, dispositions, or gifts cannot be infused or poured into his will by God, and indeed that the faith [or believing] by which we first come to conversion and from which we receive the name "believers" is not a quality or gift infused by God, but only an act of man, and that it cannot be called a gift except in respect to the power of attaining faith. The Synod teaches: For these views contradict the Holy Scriptures, which testify that God does infuse or pour into our hearts the new qualities of faith, obedience, and the experiencing of his love: I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts (Jer. 31:33); I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring (Isa. 44:3); The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Rom. 5:5). They also conflict with the continuous practice of the Church, which prays with the prophet: Convert me, Lord, and I shall be converted (Jer. 31:18).
 7. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that the grace by which we are converted to God is nothing but a gentle persuasion, or (as others explain it) that the way of God's acting in man's conversion that is most noble and suited to human nature is that which happens by persuasion, and that nothing prevents this grace of moral suasion even by itself from making natural men spiritual; indeed, that God does not produce the assent of the will except in this manner of moral suasion, and that the effectiveness of God's work by which it surpasses the work of Satan consists in the fact that God promises eternal benefits while Satan promises temporal ones. The Synod teaches: For this teaching is entirely Pelagian and contrary to the whole of Scripture, which recognizes besides this persuasion also another, far more effective and divine way in which the Holy Spirit acts in man's conversion. As Ezekiel 36:26 puts it: I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; and I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.... (Eseg 36:26).
 8. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that God in regenerating man does not bring to bear that power of his omnipotence whereby he may powerfully and unfailingly bend man's will to faith and conversion, but that even when God has accomplished all the works of grace which he uses for man's conversion, man nevertheless can, and in actual fact often does, so resist God and the Spirit in their intent and will to regenerate him, that man completely thwarts his own rebirth; and, indeed, that it remains in his own power whether or not to be reborn. The Synod teaches: For this does away with all effective functioning of God's grace in our conversion and subjects the activity of Almighty God to the will of man; it is contrary to the apostles, who teach that we believe by virtue of the effective working of God's mighty strength (Eph. 1:19), and that God fulfills the undeserved good will of his kindness and the work of faith in us with power (2 Thess. 1:11), and likewise that his divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).
 9. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that grace and free choice are concurrent partial causes which cooperate to initiate conversion, and that grace does not precede — in the order of causality — the effective influence of the will; that is to say, that God does not effectively help man's will to come to conversion before man's will itself motivates and determines it-

self. The Synod teaches: For the early church already condemned this doctrine long ago in the Pelagians, on the basis of the words of the apostle: It does not depend on man's willing or running but on God's mercy (Rom. 9:16); also: Who makes you different from anyone else? and What do you have that you did not receive? (1 Cor. 4:7); likewise: It is God who works in you to will and act according to his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).

Chapter 5

The Perseverance of the Saints

1. Those people whom God according to his purpose calls into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord and regenerates by the Holy Spirit, he also sets free from the reign and slavery of sin, though in this life not entirely from the flesh and from the body of sin.
2. Hence daily sins of weakness arise, and blemishes cling to even the best works of God's people, giving them continual cause to humble themselves before God, to flee for refuge to Christ crucified, to put the flesh to death more and more by the Spirit of supplication and by holy exercises of godliness, and to strain toward the goal of perfection, until they are freed from this body of death and reign with the Lamb of God in heaven.
3. Because of these remnants of sin dwelling in them and also because of the temptations of the world and Satan, those who have been converted could not remain standing in this grace if left to their own resources. But God is faithful, mercifully strengthening them in the grace once conferred on them and powerfully preserving them in it to the end.
4. Although that power of God strengthening and preserving true believers in grace is more than a match for the flesh, yet those converted are not always so activated and motivated by God that in certain specific actions they cannot by their own fault depart from the leading of grace, be led astray by the desires of the flesh, and give in to them. For this reason they must constantly watch and pray that they may not be led into temptations. When they fail to do this, not only can they be carried away by the flesh, the world, and Satan into sins, even serious and outrageous ones, but also by God's just permission they sometimes are so carried away — witness the sad cases, described in Scripture, of David, Peter, and other saints falling into sins.
5. By such monstrous sins, however, they greatly offend God, deserve the sentence of death, grieve the Holy Spirit, suspend the exercise of faith, severely wound the conscience, and sometimes lose the awareness of grace for a time — until, after they have returned to the way by genuine repentance, God's fatherly face again shines upon them.
6. For God, who is rich in mercy, according to his unchangeable purpose of election does not take his Holy Spirit from his own completely, even when they fall grievously. Neither does he let them fall down so far that they forfeit the grace of adoption and the state of justification, or commit the sin which leads to death (the sin against the Holy Spirit), and plunge themselves, entirely forsaken by him, into eternal ruin.
7. For, in the first place, God preserves in those saints when they fall his imperishable seed from which they have been born again, lest it perish or be dislodged. Secondly, by his Word and Spirit he certainly and effectively renews them to repentance so that they have a heartfelt and godly sorrow for the sins they have committed; seek and obtain, through faith and with a contrite heart, forgiveness in the blood of the Mediator; experience again the grace of a reconciled God; through faith adore his mercies; and from then on more eagerly work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.
8. So it is not by their own merits or strength but by God's undeserved mercy that they neither forfeit faith and grace totally nor remain in their downfalls to the end and are lost. With respect to themselves this not only easily could happen, but also undoubtedly would happen; but with respect to God it cannot possibly happen, since his plan cannot be changed, his promise cannot fail, the calling according to his purpose cannot be revoked, the merit of Christ as well as his interceding and preserving cannot be nullified, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit can neither be invalidated nor wiped out.
9. Concerning this preservation of those chosen to salvation and concerning the perseverance of true believers in faith, believers themselves can and do become assured in accordance with the measure of their faith, by which they firmly believe that they are and always will remain true and living members of the church, and that they have the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
10. Accordingly, this assurance does not derive from some private revelation beyond or outside the Word, but from faith in the promises of God which he has very plentifully revealed in his Word for our comfort, from the testimony of the Holy Spirit testifying with our spirit that we are God's children and heirs (Rom. 8:16-17), and finally from a serious and holy pursuit of a clear conscience and of good works. And if God's chosen ones in this world did not have this well-founded comfort that the victory will be theirs and this reliable guarantee of eternal glory, they would be of all people most miserable.

11. Meanwhile, Scripture testifies that believers have to contend in this life with various doubts of the flesh and that under severe temptation they do not always experience this full assurance of faith and certainty of perseverance. But God, the Father of all comfort, does not let them be tempted beyond what they can bear, but with the temptation he also provides a way out (1 Cor. 10:13), and by the Holy Spirit revives in them the assurance of their perseverance.
12. This assurance of perseverance, however, so far from making true believers proud and carnally self-assured, is rather the true root of humility, of childlike respect, of genuine godliness, of endurance in every conflict, of fervent prayers, of steadfastness in crossbearing and in confessing the truth, and of well-founded joy in God. Reflecting on this benefit provides an incentive to a serious and continual practice of thanksgiving and good works, as is evident from the testimonies of Scripture and the examples of the saints.
13. Neither does the renewed confidence of perseverance produce immorality or lack of concern for godliness in those put back on their feet after a fall, but it produces a much greater concern to observe carefully the ways of the Lord which he prepared in advance. They observe these ways in order that by walking in them they may maintain the assurance of their perseverance, lest, by their abuse of his fatherly goodness, the face of the gracious God (for the godly, looking upon his face is sweeter than life, but its withdrawal is more bitter than death) turn away from them again, with the result that they fall into greater anguish of spirit.
14. And, just as it has pleased God to begin this work of grace in us by the proclamation of the gospel, so he preserves, continues, and completes his work by the hearing and reading of the gospel, by meditation on it, by its exhortations, threats, and promises, and also by the use of the sacraments.
15. This teaching about the perseverance of true believers and saints, and about their assurance of it — a teaching which God has very richly revealed in his Word for the glory of his name and for the comfort of the godly and which he impresses on the hearts of believers — is something which the flesh does not understand, Satan hates, the world ridicules, the ignorant and the hypocrites abuse, and the spirits of error attack. The bride of Christ, on the other hand, has always loved this teaching very tenderly and defended it steadfastly as a priceless treasure; and God, against whom no plan can avail and no strength can prevail, will ensure that she will continue to do this. To this God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. Amen.

Rejection of the Errors Concerning the Teaching of the Perseverance of the Saints

Having set forth the orthodox teaching,

1. The Synod rejects the errors of those: Who teach that the perseverance of true believers is not an effect of election or a gift of God produced by Christ's death, but a condition of the new covenant which man, before what they call his "peremptory" election and justification, must fulfill by his free will. The Synod teaches: For Holy Scripture testifies that perseverance follows from election and is granted to the chosen by virtue of Christ's death, resurrection, and intercession: The chosen obtained it; the others were hardened (Rom. 11:7); likewise, He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not, along with him, grant us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died: — more than that, who was raised — who also sits at the right hand of God, and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom. 8:32-35).
2. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that God does provide the believer with sufficient strength to persevere and is ready to preserve this strength in him if he performs his duty, but that even with all those things in place which are necessary to persevere in faith and which God is pleased to use to preserve faith, it still always depends on the choice of man's will whether or not he perseveres. The Synod teaches: For this view is obviously Pelagian; and though it intends to make men free it makes them sacrilegious. It is against the enduring consensus of evangelical teaching which takes from man all cause for boasting and ascribes the praise for this benefit only to God's grace. It is also against the testimony of the apostle: It is God who keeps us strong to the end, so that we will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:8).
3. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that those who truly believe and have been born again not only can forfeit justifying faith as well as grace and salvation totally and to the end, but also in actual fact do often forfeit them and are lost forever. The Synod teaches: For this opinion nullifies the very grace of justification and regeneration as well as the continual preservation by Christ, contrary to the plain words of the apostle Paul: If Christ died for us while we were still sinners, we will therefore much more be saved from God's wrath through him, since we have now been justified by his blood (Rom. 5:8-9); and contrary to the apostle John: No one who is born of God is intent on sin, because God's seed remains in him, nor can he sin, because he has been born of God (1 John 3:9); also contrary to the words of Jesus Christ: I give eternal life to my sheep,

- and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand (John 10: 28-29).
4. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that those who truly believe and have been born again can commit the sin that leads to death (the sin against the Holy Spirit). The Synod teaches: For the same apostle John, after making mention of those who commit the sin that leads to death and forbidding prayer for them (1 John 5: 16-17), immediately adds: We know that any one born of God does not commit sin (that is, that kind of sin), but the one who was born of God keeps himself safe, and the evil one does not touch him (v. 18).
 5. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that apart from a special revelation no one can have the assurance of future perseverance in this life. The Synod teaches: For by this teaching the well-founded consolation of true believers in this life is taken away and the doubting of the Romanists is reintroduced into the church. Holy Scripture, however, in many places derives the assurance not from a special and extraordinary revelation but from the marks peculiar to God's children and from God's completely reliable promises. So especially the apostle Paul: Nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:39); and John: They who obey his commands remain in him and he in them. And this is how we know that he remains in us: by the Spirit he gave us (1 John 3:24).
 6. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that the teaching of the assurance of perseverance and of salvation is by its very nature and character an opiate of the flesh and is harmful to godliness, good morals, prayer, and other holy exercises, but that, on the contrary, to have doubt about this is praiseworthy. The Synod teaches: For these people show that they do not know the effective operation of God's grace and the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and they contradict the apostle John, who asserts the opposite in plain words: Dear friends, now we are children of God, but what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he is made known, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure (1 John 3:2-3). Moreover, they are refuted by the examples of the saints in both the Old and the New Testament, who though assured of their perseverance and salvation yet were constant in prayer and other exercises of godliness.
 7. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that the faith of those who believe only temporarily does not differ from justifying and saving faith except in duration alone. The Synod teaches: For Christ himself in Matthew 13:20ff. and Luke 8:13ff. clearly defines these further differences between temporary and true believers: he says that the former receive the seed on rocky ground, and the latter receive it in good ground, or a good heart; the former have no root, and the latter are firmly rooted; the former have no fruit, and the latter produce fruit in varying measure, with steadfastness, or perseverance.
 8. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that it is not absurd that a person, after losing his former regeneration, should once again, indeed quite often, be reborn. The Synod teaches: For by this teaching they deny the imperishable nature of God's seed by which we are born again, contrary to the testimony of the apostle Peter: Born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable (1 Pet. 1:23).
 9. The Synod rejects the errors of those that teach: Who teach that Christ nowhere prayed for an un-failing perseverance of believers in faith. The Synod teaches: For they contradict Christ himself when he says: I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith may not fail (Luke 22:32); and John the gospel writer when he testifies in John 17 that it was not only for the apostles, but also for all those who were to believe by their message that Christ prayed: Holy Father, preserve them in your name (v. 11); and My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you preserve them from the evil one (v. 15).

Confession of Faith 7

THE 39 ARTICLES

1. **Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.**

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

2. **Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very Man.**

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

3. **Of the going down of Christ into Hell.**

As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

4. **Of the Resurrection of Christ.**

Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.

5. **Of the Holy Ghost.**

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

6. **Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.**

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. Of the Names and Number of the Canonical Books. Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy Joshua Judges Ruth The First Book of Samuel The Second Book of Samuel The First Book of Kings The Second Book of Kings The First Book of Chronicles The Second Book of Chronicles The First Book of Esdras The Second Book of Esdras The Book of Esther The Book of Job The Psalms The Proverbs Ecclesiastes or Preacher Cantica, or Songs of Solomon Four Prophets the greater Twelve Prophets the less. And the other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following: The Third Book of Esdras The Fourth Book of Esdras The Book of Tobias The Book of Judith The rest of the Book of Esther The Book of Wisdom Jesus the Son of Sirach Baruch the Prophet The Song of the Three Children The Story of Susanna Of Bel and the Dragon The Prayer of Manasses The First Book of Maccabees The Second Book of Maccabees All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical.

7. **Of the Old Testament.**

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.

8. **Of the Creeds.**

The Three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius' Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.

9. **Of Original or Birth-Sin.**

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corrup-

tion of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, (which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh), is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized; yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

10. **Of Free-Will.**

The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith; and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

11. **Of the Justification of Man.**

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

12. **Of Good Works.**

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

13. **Of Works before Justification.**

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

14. **Of Works of Supererogation.**

Voluntary Works besides, over and above, God's Commandments, which they call Works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety: for by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

15. **Of Christ alone without Sin.**

Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh, and in his spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world; and sin (as Saint John saith) was not in him. But all we the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

16. **Of Sin after Baptism.**

Not every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

17. **Of Predestination and Election.**

Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity. As the godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly mem-

bers, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: So, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation. Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture: and, in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God. 18. Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ. They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the light of Nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

19. **Of the Church.**

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same. As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

20. **Of the Authority of the Church.**

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

21. **Of the Authority of General Councils.**

General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God), they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture.

22. **Of Purgatory.**

The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relics, and also Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

23. **Of Ministering in the Congregation.**

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

24. **Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the people understandeth.**

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church to have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood of the people.

25. **Of the Sacraments.**

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him. There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord. Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God. The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith.

26. **Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacraments.**

Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authori-

ty in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith, and rightly, do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men. Nevertheless, it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that inquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and finally, being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed.

27. **Of Baptism.**

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New-Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed, Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

28. **Of the Lord's Supper.**

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather it is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ. Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions. The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

29. **Of the Wicked, which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper.**

The Wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing.

30. **Of both Kinds.**

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people: for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.

31. **Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross.**

The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

32. **Of the Marriage of Priests.**

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

33. **Of excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided.**

That person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge that hath authority thereunto.

34. **Of the Traditions of the Church.**

It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like,) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren. Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, Ceremonies or Rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be

done to edifying.

35. **Of the Homilies.**

The Second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this Article, doth contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth; and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people. Of the Names of the Homilies. 1. Of the right Use of the Church. 2. Against Peril of Idolatry. 3. Of repairing and keeping clean of Churches. 4. Of good Works, first of Fasting. 5. Against Gluttony and Drunkenness. 6. Against Excess of Apparel. 7. Of Prayer. 8. Of the Place and Time of Prayer. 9. That Common Prayers and Sacraments ought to be ministered in a known tongue. 10. Of the reverent Estimation of God's Word. 11. Of Alms-doing. 12. Of the Nativity of Christ. 13. Of the Passion of Christ. 14. Of the Resurrection of Christ. 15. Of the worthy receiving of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. 16. Of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. 17. For the Rogation-days. 18. Of the State of Matrimony. 19. Of Repentance. 20. Against Idleness. 21. Against Rebellion.

36. **Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers.**

The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons, lately set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and confirmed at the same time by authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering: neither hath it any thing, that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the Rites of that Book, since the second year of the forenamed King Edward unto this time, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites; we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

37. **Of the Power of the Civil Magistrates.**

The King's Majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of England, and other his Dominions, unto whom the chief Government of all Estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign Jurisdiction. Where we attribute to the King's Majesty the chief government, by which Titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended; we give not our Princes the ministering either of God's Word, or of the Sacraments, the which thing the Injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our Queen do most plainly testify; but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil-doers. The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England. The Laws of the Realm may punish Christian men with death, for heinous and grievous offences. It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars.

38. **Of Christian Men's Goods, which are not common.**

The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same; as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

39. **Of a Christian Man's Oath.**

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his Apostle, so we judge, that Christian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the Magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching in justice, judgement, and truth.

Confession of Faith 8

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION

1. *The Westminster Confession of Faith was the work of an assembly of ministers which was called together by the British Parliament and met in London, at Westminster Abbey, during the years 1643—1648.*

2. *This text: www.ligonier.org. For the Scripture references supporting the Confession, please refer to the internet.*

CHAPTER 1: OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.

Under the name of holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament, which are these:

Of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Of the New Testament: The Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistles to the Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, The Epistle of James, The First and Second Epistles of Peter, The First, Second, and Third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation.

All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.

The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon of Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.

The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the Author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and the government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion the church is

finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God who have right unto, and interest in, the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner, and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.

The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture, is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it may be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

CHAPTER 2: OF GOD, AND OF THE HOLY TRINITY

There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal most just and terrible in His judgments; hating all sin; and who will by no means clear the guilty.

God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; He is the alone foundation of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever Himself pleaseth. In His sight all things are open and manifest; His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature; so as nothing is to Him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them.

In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

CHAPTER 3: OF GOD'S ETERNAL DECREE

God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions; yet hath He not decreed any thing because He foresaw it as future, as that which would come to pass, upon such conditions.

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it can not be either increased or diminished.

Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His free grace and love alone, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto; and all to the praise of His glorious grace.

As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.

The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending to the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

CHAPTER 4: OF CREATION

It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create or make of nothing the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness after His own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Besides this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

CHAPTER 5: OF PROVIDENCE

God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, He ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

God, in His ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at His pleasure. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

The most wise, righteous, and gracious God, doth oftentimes leave for a season His own children to manifold temptations and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden; from them He not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had; and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others. As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures, so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

CHAPTER 6: OF THE FALL OF MAN, OF SIN, AND OF THE PUNISHMENT THEREOF

Our first parents, begin seduced by the subtlety and temptations of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

They being the root of mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by original generation.

From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

CHAPTER 7: OF GOD'S COVENANT WITH MAN

The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of Him, as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace: wherein He freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.

This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ, the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation, and is called the Old Testament.

Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed, are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.

CHAPTER 8: OF CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only-begotten Son, to be the mediator between God and men, the prophet, priest, and king; the head and Savior of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom He did, from all eternity, give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof; yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

The Lord Jesus in His human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure; having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell: to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator and surety. Which office He took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by His Father; who put all power and judgment into His hand, and gave Him commandment to execute the same.

This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which, that He might discharge, He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul, and most painful sufferings in His body; was crucified and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day He arose from the dead, with the same body in which He suffered; with which also He ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father, making intercession; and shall return to judge men and angels, at the end of the world.

The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.

Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof were communicated into the elect, in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices wherein He was revealed, and signified to be the seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head, and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, being yesterday and today the same and forever. Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures; by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes, in Scripture, attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them, and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.

CHAPTER 9: OF FREE WILL

God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil.

Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.

Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

When God converts a sinner and translates Him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only.

CHAPTER 10: OF EFFECTUAL CALLING

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ: enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.

This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who work-eth when, and where, and how He pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested.

CHAPTER 11: OF JUSTIFICATION

Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth: not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love. Christ, by His obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real,

and full satisfaction of His Father's justice in their behalf. Yet inasmuch as He was given by the Father for them, and His obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

God did, from all eternity, decree to justify the elect; and Christ did, in the fullness of time, die for their sins and rise again for their justification; nevertheless they are not justified until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified; and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may by their sins fall under God's Fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.

CHAPTER 12: OF ADOPTION

All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption: by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have His name put upon them; receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry, Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by Him as by a father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.

CHAPTER 13: OF SANCTIFICATION

They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life: there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome: and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

CHAPTER 14: OF SAVING FAITH

The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word: by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.

By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein; and acteth differently, upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.

CHAPTER 15: OF REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE

Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ.

By it a sinner, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God, and upon the apprehension of His mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for, and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God, purposing and endeavoring to walk with Him in all the ways of His commandments.

Although repentance be not to be rested in as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.

As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.

Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins, particularly.

As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof, upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy: so he that scandalizeth his brother, or the church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended; who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him.

CHAPTER 16: OF GOOD WORKS

Good works are only such as God hath commanded in His holy Word, and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretense of good intention.

These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith: and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.

Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure; yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

They, who in their obedience, attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate and to do more than God requires, that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do.

We cannot, by our best works, merit pardon of sin, or eternal life, at the hand of God, because of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit, nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants: and because, as they are good, they proceed from His Spirit; and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment.

Notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in Him, not as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unreprouvable in God's sight; but that He, looking upon them in His Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God.

CHAPTER 17: OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

They, whom God hath accepted in His beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their perseverance, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

CHAPTER 18: OF THE ASSURANCE OF GRACE AND SALVATION

Although hypocrites, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions: of being in the favor of God and estate of salvation; which hope of theirs shall perish: yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God: which hope shall never make them ashamed.

This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God; which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.

This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith but that a true believer may wait long and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of everyone to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance: so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it; by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience, and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation; by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light: yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which, in the meantime, they are supported from utter despair.

CHAPTER 19: OF THE LAW OF GOD

God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty toward God, and the other six our duty to man.

Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.

To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other, now, further than the general equity thereof may require.

The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen, this obligation.

Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of His obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin, and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof; although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works: so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.

Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it: the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

CHAPTER 20: OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law; and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto Him, not out of slavish fear, but a childlike love, and a willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law; but under the New Testament the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected; and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to His Word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

They who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.

And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And, for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or, to the power of godliness; or, such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church, they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church.

CHAPTER 21: OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND THE SABBATH DAY

The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is good, and doeth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.

Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to Him alone: not to angels, saints, or any other creature: and since the fall, not without a mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.

Prayer with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men; and that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of His Holy Spirit, according to His will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue.

Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.

The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching, and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God with understanding, faith, and reverence; singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as, also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God: besides religious oaths, and vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasion; which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in an holy and religious manner.

Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now, under the gospel, either tied unto, or made more acceptable to, any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: but God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself, so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God, by His Word or providence, calleth thereunto.

As it is of the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath.

This Sabbath is to be kept holy unto the Lord when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations; but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

CHAPTER 22: OF LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS

A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth.

The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred. Yet, as, in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the Word of God, under the New Testament, as well as under the Old, so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters ought to be taken.

Whosoever taketh an oath ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may any man bind himself by oath to any thing but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform.

An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in anything not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt: nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics or infidels.

A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.

It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for obtaining of what we want; whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.

No man may vow to do anything forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his own power, and for the performance of which he hath no promise or ability from God. In which respects, monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

CHAPTER 23: OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE

God, the supreme Lord and king of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under Him over the people, for His own glory and the public good; and to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evildoers.

It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate when called thereunto; in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth, so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions.

Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith. Yet, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger. And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretense of religion or of infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.

It is the duty of the people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience's sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their obedience to him: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; much less hath the pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretense whatsoever.

CHAPTER 24: OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.

Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife; for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness.

It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgment to give their consent. Yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And, therefore, such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies.

Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together, as man and wife. Adultery or fornication, committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.

Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage; wherein a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it, not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case.

CHAPTER 25: OF THE CHURCH

The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

Unto this catholic and visible church, Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.

This catholic church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less, visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.

The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error: and some have so degenerated as to become apparently no churches of Christ. Nevertheless, there shall be always a church on earth, to worship God according to His will. There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof.

CHAPTER 26: OF THE COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS

All saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head, by His Spirit and by faith, have fellowship with Him in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory: and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as to conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

Saints by profession, are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

This communion which the saints have with Christ, doth not make them in any wise partakers of the substance of the Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm, is impious and blasphemous. Nor doth their communion one with another as saints, take away or infringe the title or property which each man hath in his goods and possessions.

CHAPTER 27: OF THE SACRAMENTS

Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him: as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word.

There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospels, that is to say, baptism and the supper of the Lord: neither or which may be dispensed by any but a minister of the Word, lawfully ordained.

The sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the New.

CHAPTER 28: OF BAPTISM

Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in His church until the end of the world.

The outward element to be used in the sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel, lawfully called thereunto.

Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.

Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.

Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.

The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in His appointed time.

The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person.

CHAPTER 29: OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein He was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of His body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in His church unto the end of the world; for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death, the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His mystical body.

In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to His Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sins of the quick or dead, but a commemoration of that one offering up of Himself, by Himself, upon the cross, once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same; so that the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominably injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to declare His word of institution to the people, to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise the denial of the cup to the people; wor-

shipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.

The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly, and only, bread and wine, as they were before. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to common-sense and reason; overthroweth the nature of the sacrament; and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries.

Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.

Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby; but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation. Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto.

CHAPTER 30: OF CHURCH CENSURES

The Lord Jesus, as king and head of His church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.

To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require. Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring of others from like offenses; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer His covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season, and by excommunication from the church, according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person.

CHAPTER 31: OF SYNODS AND COUNCILS

For the better government and further edification of the church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called synods or councils and it belongeth to the overseers and other rulers of the particular churches, by virtue of their office, and the power which Christ hath given them for edification and not for destruction, to appoint such assemblies; and to convene together in them, as often as they shall judge it expedient for the good of the church.

It belongeth to synods and councils, ministerially, to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of His church; to receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in His Word.

All synods or councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help in both.

Synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate.

CHAPTER 32: OF THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH, AND OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever.

The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor; the bodies of the just, by His Spirit, unto honor, and be made conformable to His own glorious body.

CHAPTER 33: OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

God hath appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged; but likewise all persons, that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of His justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord: but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will He have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.