

A SUGGESTED CREED FOR THE 21ST CENTURY NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH (Part I)

When the elders assigned to me the task of developing a creed for the 21st Century New Testament Church, I realized that to undertake the task with honesty would require more than just a study of the Scriptures. Such is the case because we live in an age in which skepticism and doubt, concerning the Scriptures, and even the existence of God, dominate much of our culture. Therefore, if we are to determine what we must believe, it is important for us to establish the veracity of the basis for that belief.¹

With this in mind we will travel along the following path:

- As an introduction, we briefly will survey some of the early Protestant creeds that produced the historic Protestant denominations.
- Next, we will look into the history of the earliest creeds which, to some degree, are respected in the present-day Christian world.
- As we turn to the task of creating a creed for the 21st Century New Testament Church, we will begin our quest by seeking the answer to the question, “Is there a God?”
- If there is a God, we then ask, “Has that God given us an objective revelation of Himself and His activities in the world, so that we might know who He is and what is His character?”
- If there is such a revelation, which of the contenders for that role are valid and which ones are bogus?
- Then we must ask, “What do we learn from this revelation/record that informs us as to what we must believe about God, His Will, and His relationship to mankind and the world?”

As can be seen from this procedure, the task before us is somewhat daunting, but we will travel this road together and see where it leads us.

Another factor that is an issue for me, personally, is the fact that creeds have been devices of division in the Church. In efforts to define correct doctrine, one group after another created a creed defining its group’s doctrines. Then, another group, disagreeing with that creed, created its creed. Then, which creed to which one is loyal, determines to which group one belongs.

Although there were a number of councils that produced statements of faith and creeds in the early centuries of the Church, it was not until the Reformation that the proliferation of divisive creeds took place. Prior to the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church in the West and the Orthodox Church in the East dominated the Church. The hierarchies of these institutions became the arbiters of doctrinal authority. There always were breakoff groups, but none of them developed an historical significance until the Reformation. With the birth of the Reformation, aided by the invention of the moveable type printing press, various individuals and groups began producing creeds that codified their distinctive doctrines. These creeds were printed and distributed in the churches and in the non-Church population. Thus, the proliferation of creeds, resulting in the calcification of division, is the birth-child of the Reformation.

¹ The English term, *creed*, is derived from the Latin, *credo*, which means, “believe.”

The earliest Protestant creeds were produced by the Lutherans. Notably, Luther's *Smaller Catechism*,² Luther's *Larger Catechism*, and the *Augsburg Confession*.³ These became the defining documents for Lutherans.

Calvin and Luther had some doctrinal disagreements and in time, the Calvinists produced documents to define their denomination. The Calvinist doctrinal documents resulted in controversy between Arminians, Calvinists, and Free Will advocates. This particular controversy began with the composition and the publication of the Heidelberg Confession, which loosely defined tenets of Calvinism in 1563.

The *Heidelberg Catechism*⁴ was written in Heidelberg at the request of pious Christian prince Elector Frederick III, ruler of the most influential German province, the Palatinate, from 1559 to 1576. The *Heidelberg Catechism* was adopted by a Synod in Heidelberg and published in German with a preface by Frederick III, dated January 19, 1563. A second and third German edition, each with some small additions, as well as a Latin translation were published in Heidelberg in the same year.

The Catechism was soon divided into fifty-two sections, so that a section of the Catechism could be explained to the churches each Sunday of the year.

In 1561, the Dutch Calvinists produced the *Belgic Confession*,⁵ which, among other topics, set forth, unequivocally the Calvinist doctrine of predestination.

Arminius, who began as a Dutch Calvinist, disagreed with some of the views of Calvinism on God's sovereignty and the perseverance of the saints. Soon a sizeable group of Calvinists began to espouse his views.

Arminius and his followers agreed with the Calvinist view that no human can choose God without God's intervention. However, the Armenians asserted that when the Gospel is preached, God, in a prevenient act of grace, bestows upon the individual the ability to choose, whether or not to accept the Gospel. This was in opposition to the Unconditional Election of Calvinists

Arminius also argued that eternal security is conditional – that a saved person can fall from grace and be damned – this disagreed with the Calvinist doctrine of eternal security.

After the death of Arminius, his followers, in a reaction to the Belgic Confession, produced in 1610, *Five Articles of Remonstrance*.⁶

In reaction to the growing Arminian movement and the *Remonstrance*, Dutch Calvinists convened a synod in Dordrecht, Netherlands, to settle the controversy. *Dort* was a contemporary English term for the town of *Dordrecht* and has become the colloquial pronunciation thus, the synod usually is referred to as the *Synod of Dort*. The first meeting of the synod was convened on November 13, 1618. The final meeting (the 180th) was on May 29, 1619. The Synod set forth the Reformed (Calvinist) doctrine on each point of controversy. The document that was the

² ADDENDUM A

³ ADDENDUM B

⁴ ADDENDUM C

⁵ ADDENDUM D

⁶ A *remonstrance* is a expression of opposition or protest.

product of the synod was labelled, *The Canons of Dort*⁷. The original preface called them a “judgment, in which both the true view, agreeing with God’s Word, concerning the aforesaid five points of doctrine is explained, and the false view, disagreeing with God’s Word, is rejected.” The Canons also have a limited character in that they do not cover the whole range of doctrine, but rather, focus on the five points of doctrine disputed in *Five Articles of Remonstrance*.

The five points of the *Canons of Dort* later were expressed in the TULIP acronym for the benefit of the English-speaking world.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY – Humans are totally depraved and unable to have any part in their salvation

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION – God chooses to save people unconditionally – the choice as to whom is saved and whom is not saved is totally His choice, totally unaffected by the worthiness or the unworthiness of the individual.

LIMITED ATONEMENT – The sacrifice of Christ on the cross was for the purpose of saving only the elect.

IRRESISTIBLE GRACE – When God has chosen to save someone, that person will be saved, and nothing can prevent it.

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS – Once saved, always saved.

These three historic documents, *The Heidelberg Catechism*, *The Belgic Confess*, and *The Canons of Dort*, are known as *The Three Forms of Unity*. In continental Calvinist churches and in almost all Reformed churches, world-wide, *The Three Forms of Unity* are considered to be authority, next to the Bible.

Another influential creed among reformed churches, expressing a degree of Calvinist theology, is the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.⁸ The *Westminster Confession of Faith* is a Reformed confession of faith, drawn up by the 1646 Westminster Assembly, as part of the Westminster Standards to be a confession of the Church of England. The *Westminster Confession* became and remains the "subordinate standard" (subordinate to the Bible) of doctrine in the Church of Scotland and is accepted within Presbyterian churches worldwide. The Westminster assembly also developed a Larger Catechism and a Shorter Catechism, based on the Confession.

In disagreement with both Arminians and Calvinists, Free Will Advocates separated from both groups.

The conflict between Calvinists, Arminians, and Free Will Advocates has resulted in the production of many denominations and the conflict has infected denominations that later came into existence for other reasons.

An example of such an action and consequence is the 1833 New Hampshire Baptist Confession. When the “Free Will Baptist Movement” (General Baptists) began to manifest itself, the June, 1830, New Hampshire Baptist Convention appointed a committee to create a confession that clearly defined the Calvinism of the New Hampshire Baptists. The result was the 1833 *New*

⁷ ADDENDUM E

⁸ The Westminster confession is found in ADDENDUM F

Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith, which was upgraded in 1853. This confession divided the New Hampshire Baptists between the General Baptists who adhered to the *Standard Confession* of 1660, and those who adhered to the 1833/1853 *New Hampshire Baptist Confession*.

The Southern Baptist Convention was organized in 1845, but no formal confession of faith was adopted until 1925. One reason so many decades passed without such a document was the traditional Baptist statement, “No creed but Christ.” Thus, when the confession was composed and adopted, the statement was made that it was not a creed, but a confession of faith. The 1925 *Southern Baptist Faith and Message* was revised in 1963, 1998, and 2000. The revisions of 1963 and 2000 (the result of conservatives taking over the leadership of the denomination, losing it, then regaining it) brought about great controversy and division. Recently influential Baptist leaders, such as R. Albert Mohler Jr. (president of the flagship Southern Baptist Seminary, in Louisville, KY) are attempting to bring the Southern Baptists back to Calvinist theology, thus causing further turbulence in the denomination.

Because creeds have been such a source of division, we are going to label the product of our endeavors, *A suggested creed*, rather than a binding creed.

I. A SURVEY OF THE EARLIEST CREEDS AND THE REASON FOR THEIR CREATION

Creeds are relative and limited expressions of Divine Truth and practices that are deduced from the Scriptural record. Statements in the New Testament that have the flavor of creeds are:

Romans 10:9-10 *that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*

I Corinthians 15:3-4 *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,*

I Timothy 3:16 *And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.*

The earliest form of what we label a *creed*, was a statement of faith that converts were asked to recite or affirm prior to their being immersed. These were not written. They were orally transmitted.

At one point, during the early years of the Church, out of concern for the possible distortion of doctrinal truth, those who wanted to be immersed into Christ were not told the contents of statement until just before their immersion. The statement sometimes was referred to as “the secret.”

In addition to being concerned over the distortion of doctrine, another concern was the security of the saints in the Sunday meeting. During one season of persecution by a Roman Emperor, the statement served as a password whereby a person was admitted into the meeting. The requirement of a password for entrance into the meeting was a means of preventing spies from getting into the Sunday meeting in order to identify those who were in attendance.

When Christianity began to spread rapidly and thousands were coming into the Church from paganism, immersion was preceded by a season of instruction. Those who were being instructed in the faith were given the label, *catechumens*. Some churches extended the *catechumenate* as long as three years.

During the time of this instruction, the catechumens could remain in the Sunday service until the time of the Lord's Supper, at which time they had to leave the meeting. At his immersion, the catechumen was given the statement of faith, to which he assented, then he was immersed, and immediately served the Lord's Supper. In some churches, additional traditions developed, such as anointing with oil, and the sign of the cross, and giving the newly immersed person a cup of milk (signifying that in his immersion, the convert had become a newborn child of God).

The practice of such extensive catechesis prior to immersion, is a direct violation of the command of Christ, to immerse, then to instruct.

Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ 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,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

Catechesis prior to immersion also violates the consistent pattern of the apostles, who immersed converts, immediately upon their profession of faith. (Acts 2:38-41; 8:4-24; 9:1-8; 10:47-48; 16:12-15; 16:25-34; 18:8; 19:1-5; 22:1-16).

Some of the creeds recited in present-day churches have their origin in the creeds presented to the catechumens prior to their immersion.

THE RULE OF FAITH

We begin our survey of the creeds by taking a look at the first creed used in the early Church. The first creed of Christendom existed in the early years prior to the development of a formally composed creed. As noted above, it was not written. The creed was conveyed orally and was known as the *Rule of Faith*, or sometimes referred to as the *Rule of Truth*,⁹ and sometimes, as noted above, *The Secret*.

Irenaeus (130 – c202 AD) is the first writer to record the elements of the *Rule*. False teachings were being circulated in the early Second Century. One of the most pernicious was the Gnostic Heresy. Because of this threat, Irenaeus wrote, *Adversus Haereses (i.e. Against Heresies)*. In this document, Irenaeus described the *Rule* as being the statement of faith that was recited to the convert when he was immersed into Christ. He stated that having received this *Rule of truth* at the time of his immersion, a Christian would not be swayed by the doctrines of the heretics, who were using pieces of Scripture to present the Gnostic heresy.

“In like manner he also who retains unchangeable in his heart the *rule of the truth*, which he received by means of immersion, will doubtless recognize the names, the

⁹ Tertullian used both of these terms in the Third Century in *On Prescription Against Heretics*

expressions, and the parables from the Scriptures, but will by no means acknowledge the blasphemous use which these men make of them.”¹⁰

Here are the contents of the *Rule*, as recorded by Irenaeus, which he asserts was accepted by the Church throughout the world.

“The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith:

[She believes] in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them;

and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation;

and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents,

and the birth from a virgin,

and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead,

and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord,

and His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father ‘to gather all things in one,’

and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Savior, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, ‘every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess’ to Him,

and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send ‘spiritual wickednesses,’ and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire;

but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory.

2. As I have already observed, the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth.”¹¹

This summary by Irenaeus is the first example of an embryonic creed to be found in the extant documents from the Early Church.

¹⁰ Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, Book I, Chapter 9, Section 4, paragraph 3

¹¹ *Adversus Haereses*, Book I, Chapter 10, Sections 1-2

THE APOSTLES CREED (Early)

By the close of the Second Century, various churches began to write the creeds that were recited by converts at the time of their immersion. What we know today as the Apostles Creed, was not written by the Apostles, but rather was the result of bringing together the essential thoughts in some of the rustic local creeds that had developed. Most scholars assume that this creed grew out of Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16, and the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19.

Some argue that the creed was composed as early as 150 A.D.,¹² but few who study the history of the creed ascribe to it such an early date. As best as can be determined, the oldest form of creed in a form similar to the present-day Apostles Creed appeared in Rome in 340 AD. However, its origin predates by many years its arrival in Rome.

Phillip Schaff states,

“But this baptismal creed was at first not precisely the same. It assumed different shapes and forms in different congregations. Some were longer, some were shorter; some were declarative, some were interrogative in the form of questions and answers.”¹³

The Apostles Creed as it exists today probably appeared near the close of the 5th Century. The following table compares the form of the creed as it existed at around 390 A.D. (The old Roman Form) with the received form, which came into general use in the 7th or 8th Century. The received form's additions to the Old Roman Form creed are displayed in brackets [].

THE OLD ROMAN FORM

I believe in God the Father Almighty

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord
Who was born by the Holy Ghost of the
Virgin Mary
Was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was
buried

The third day He rose from the dead
He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the
right hand of the Father
From thence He shall come to judge the
quick and the dead
And in the Holy Ghost
The Holy Church

The forgiveness of sins
The resurrection of the body

THE RECEIVED FORM

I believe in God the Father Almighty
[Maker of heaven and earth]
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord
Who was [conceived] by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary
[Suffered] under Pontius Pilate, was
crucified [dead] and buried
[He descended into Hell (Hades)]
The third day He rose from the dead
He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the
right hand of [God] the Father [Almighty]
From thence He shall come to judge the
quick and the dead
[I believe] in the Holy Ghost
The Holy [Catholic] Church
[The communion of saints]
The forgiveness of sins
The resurrection of the body
[And the life everlasting]

¹² <https://www.gotquestions.org/apostles-creed.html>

¹³ Phillip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids, Baker Books) 1931, reprinted 2007, page 17

THE NICENE CREED (A.D. 325)

Gnosticism continued to plague the Church. Gnosticism argued that all spirit is good and all physical matter is evil, therefore, Jesus could not have come in the flesh. We might think of their view of Jesus as being similar to an holograph. Early in the Fourth Century, seemingly in a reaction to Gnosticism, Arius began to promote a doctrine that emphasized the humanity of Christ, while at the same time acknowledging His Divinity. Arius' basic doctrine was anti-trinitarian. He contended that God the Father is the only being who is eternal, and that the Son was created by the Father at a point prior to the beginning of creation. He further argued that the Son is in subjection to the Father. In a letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia, Arius succinctly stated his core beliefs.

“Some of them say that the Son is an eructation¹⁴ others that he is a production, others that he is also unbegotten. These are impieties to which we cannot listen, even though the heretics threaten us with a thousand deaths.

But we say and believe and have taught, and do teach, that the Son is not unbegotten, nor in any way part of the unbegotten; and that he does not derive his subsistence from any matter; but that by his own will and counsel he has subsisted before time and before ages as perfect as God, only begotten and unchangeable, and that before he was begotten, or created, or purposed, or established, he was not.

For he was not unbegotten. We are persecuted because we say that the Son has a beginning, but that God is without beginning.”¹⁵

Because Arius and his followers had great influence in the schools of Alexandria (counterparts to modern universities or seminaries) their views spread in the eastern Mediterranean.

In opposition to the Arians, were the trinitarians, sometimes called the *homoousians* (ὁμοούσιον). The term means, *same in being, or same in essence*.¹⁶ The trinitarian homoousians argued that the Father and the Son are of the same essence and have been so from eternity.

Arius' movement began to cause serious division in the Church – some agreed with him, but many considered his teaching to be heresy.

Constantine had recently become Emperor of the Roman Empire. He moved his capitol from Rome to a city that He had built in Asia. He named the city, Constantinople (*Constantine City*).¹⁷ He also had embraced Christianity and saw the Church as a unifying factor in his empire. Because the Arian doctrine was dividing the Church, and hence, dividing his empire, Constantine convened a Church Council in Nicaea, a city adjacent to Constantinople. The council convened in 325 AD. His intention was to settle the issue and end the controversy.

By this time, hierarchies had developed in the Church. No longer were congregations autonomous and led only by elders. The office of bishop had developed. These were overseers over a region. Constantine invited all of the bishops in the Empire (about 1800) to attend the council. Different sources cite different numbers for how many bishops attended, but the

¹⁴ A polite term the translators used to render, ἐρυγή – meaning, *a loud belch*

¹⁵ Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, IV. LPNF, ser. 2, Vol 3, 41

¹⁶ The term comes from two Greek terms, ὁμός (*homos*), meaning, *same*, and οὐσία (*ousia*), meaning, *being or essence*.

¹⁷ Present day, Istanbul, in Turkey

traditional number is 318, all from the East, with the exception of one from Spain. Deacons and other church leaders accompanied the bishops. The total attendees (bishops, deacons, staff) usually is estimated to be more than 1800.

Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, was one of the two most prominent bishops. Athanasius, Alexander's deacon, accompanied him to the council. Even though Athanasius, being only a deacon, was not allowed to sit on the council, he is the one who did most of strategizing during the deliberations. He framed the arguments defending the Trinity and the homoousian position.

Arius strongly presented his case, but the council decided in favor of the Trinitarian formula. Eusebius of Caesarea suggested as a form of reconciliation, the baptismal formula from his diocese at Caesarea in Palestine. Many liked Eusebius' suggestion but the final document also reflected elements from the baptismal formula of Jerusalem. All of the Bishops present signed the document, except two from Libya: Theognas and Secundus. At the close of the council, Constantine ordered the death penalty for those who refused to surrender Arius' writings. Here is his proclamation:

“In addition, if any writing composed by Arius should be found, it should be handed over to the flames, so that not only will the wickedness of his teaching be obliterated, but nothing will be left even to remind anyone of him. And I hereby make a public order, that if someone should be discovered to have hidden a writing composed by Arius, and not to have immediately brought it forward and destroyed it by fire, his penalty shall be death. As soon as he is discovered in this offence, he shall be submitted for capital punishment.”¹⁸

Although he was committed to maintaining what the Church had defined at Nicaea, Constantine also was bent on pacifying the situation and uniting his empire. Eventually, he became more lenient toward those who had been condemned and exiled at the council. First, he allowed Eusebius of Nicomedia (who was a protégé of his sister) and Theognis to return, once both had signed an ambiguous statement of faith. These two, as well as others worked for Arius' rehabilitation.

In spite of the victory of Athanasius and the homoousians at Nicaea, Arians continued to display their political adeptness. At the First Synod of Tyre, in AD 335, where Arians had influence, accusations were brought against Athanasius, who had succeeded Alexander as bishop of Alexandria. Because he was fervent about seeking to unite his empire, Constantine had Athanasius banished. He considered Athanasius to be an impediment to reconciliation. In 336, the Synod of Jerusalem under Constantine's direction, readmitted Arius to communion. Arius died on the way to Constantinople, where the readmission ceremony was to take place.

Constantine had been a catechumen for many years, but he put off being immersed into Christ until the end of his life. Believing that all sins were forgiven in immersion, he wanted to wait until the final moments of his life so that none would remain unforgiven. As he was near death, he was immersed by the Arian, Eusebius of Nicomedia.

¹⁸ Athanasius <https://www.fourthcentury.com/urkunde-33/> 1

THE NICAENO-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED (381 A.D.)

In reaction to the Macedonians (also known as Pneumatomachians) who denied the deity of the Holy Spirit, a second ecumenical council of 150 bishops from the East was convened by Theodosius in Constantinople in 381. The resulting, Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, adds clauses relating to the Holy Ghost, but omits the anathema with which the Nicene Creed ends. In the following chart, the 381 additions to the original Nicene Creed are Italicized.¹⁹

THE NICENE CREED OF 325

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only begotten that is of the essence of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made [both in heaven and on earth]; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence he shall come to judge the dead

And in the Holy Ghost

But those who say: “There was a time when he was not;” and “He was not before he was made;” and “He was made out of nothing,” or “He is of another substance” or “essence,” or “The Son of God created: or “changeable,” or “alterable” – they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.

THE ENLARGED NICENE CREED 381²⁰

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven *and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.*

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the *only begotten* Son of God, begotten of the Father *before all worlds*, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation, came down *from heaven*, and was incarnate *by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary*, and was made man; he *was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and on the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; from thence he shall come again with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.*

And in the Holy Ghost, *the Lord and Giver of life who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. In one holy catholic and apostolic Church we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen*

¹⁹ Schaff, pages 28-29

²⁰ Known as the *Constantinopolitan Creed*

Note that the term, *catholic*, which is found in many of these creeds, is an alliteration of the Greek term, καθολικός (*katholikos*), meaning, *universal*, i.e., *the Universal Church*. Interestingly, translators have chosen to alliterate the term, rather than translate it. It would not necessarily have referred to the present-day Roman Catholic Church.

THE CREED OF CHALCEDON (A.D. 451)

One of the challenges that always has plagued the church, is man's effort to define the indefinable. It is difficult for many people to accept enigma – something that defies explanation or human reason.

One such issue has been the incarnation. Exactly how did it work? Various efforts have been put forth to explain the nature of the incarnation and some of these efforts have caused serious disruption in the Church. This especially has been true, when individuals of influence insisted that everyone agree with them. We have seen how Arius caused controversy with his efforts to define, logically, the relationship between the Father and the Son. Efforts to explain the incarnation became as divisive as had been the doctrines of Arius.

One of the first of the Incarnational doctrines to disturb the Church was put forth by Nestorius of Constantinople (386-45 AD)

Nestorianism argued that Christ had two totally different natures that were joined together by an exercise of the will (*i.e.*, by choice)

In opposition to Nestorianism, two expressions of *monophysitism* emerged in the late Fourth/early Fifth Century.

- *Eutychianism*, propounded by Eutyches in Egypt, held that the human nature of Christ was dissolved into his Divine Nature, “dissolved like a drop of honey in the sea.”
- *Apollinarianism*, propounded by Apollonarius of Laodicea, argued that Jesus had a human body and a human soul, but that His mind was taken over by the Logos.

These competing doctrines began causing division in the churches and consequently in the Roman Empire. Because of the developing division in his empire, Emperor Marcian called a council of Church leaders to be held at Chalcedon, a city opposite of Constantinople. The council convened from October 8 to November 1, 451 A.D. 520 Church leaders attended.

After lengthy discussion, the council ultimately accepted the views put forth by Leo, who was the bishop of Rome at the time. Leo was a man who was very gifted in bringing together differing parties. The Emperor had dispatched Leo to arbitrate between differing secular parties in the Empire. Leo also was a strong defender of what he understood to be the orthodox position on doctrinal matters. The result of the council's deliberation was a clear statement that Jesus is perfect in both deity and humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man. The creed avoided the Scylla and Charybdis of choosing from the specific definitions of the incarnation that were bringing division into the Church.

Here is the text of the Creed of Chalcedon:

We then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood;

Truly God and truly man, of a reasonable (rational) soul and body; consubstantial (coessential) with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin;

Begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood;

One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably;

The distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather of the property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God, the Word the Lord Jesus Christ;

As the prophets from the beginning (have declared) concerning Him and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.²¹

Throughout the following centuries, many creeds were written by many councils. The Orthodox Churches consider Seven Ecumenical Councils and their creeds to be authoritative. These seven councils are:

- The First Council of Nicaea, 325 A.D.
- The First Council of Constantinople, 381 A.D.
- The Council of Ephesus, 431 A.D.
- The Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D.
- The Second Council of Constantinople, 553 A.D.
- The Third Council of Constantinople, 680 A.D.
- The Second Council of Nicaea, 787 A.D.

The Greek Orthodox Church adds two other councils: The Concilium Quinsexantum (held at Constantinople 691 A.D.) and the 879 AD Council of Constantinople. The rivalry between the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope in Rome is reflected in these two councils.

We could spend many hours and write many pages, should we choose to acquaint ourselves with all of the creeds that have been produced through the centuries. We will content ourselves with these early examples, which illustrate how church leaders sought to protect orthodox doctrine.

One thing becomes apparent when we study creeds – creating an adequate creed is difficult, if not impossible. Augustine's statement rings true, *God is greater and truer in our thoughts than in our words; He is greater and truer in reality than our thoughts.*²²

²¹ Chalcedon, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 138:552:326

²² Schaff, page 38

This must be borne in mind, as we seek to create a creed for the 21st Century New Testament Church.

II. IS THERE A CREATOR, WHO BY THE FACT THAT HE IS THE CREATOR, DEFINES HIM AS GOD?

As already noted, the first thing that must be examined, is the question as to whether or not there is a Creator/God. The earlier creeds all were composed at a time in history in which every culture believed in some sort of a god. In the 21st Century, that universal understanding no longer prevails. Atheism is the dominant view in many quarters of 21st Century Western Civilization. Any creed must be based on how one answers this question. If there is no Creator/God and all of creation is but a product of energy, matter, and chance, then that must be our creed.

However, if there is a Creator/God, then that truth must be the foundation on which all of the rest of the creed must be built. An honest assessment of the evidence for or against the existence of a Creator/God is where we must begin.²³

To answer the question as to whether or not there is a Creator/God, we first turn to the evidence from science. Increasingly, scientists of many disciplines are turning away from the “science versus faith” stance, that has characterized the last century. An example is an increasing rejection of the Darwinist contention that everything happened by chance and natural selection.

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

In 2001, the Public Broadcasting System presented a seven-part series, *Evolution*. Spokespersons for the series declared, “all known scientific evidence supports [Darwinian] evolution” as does, “virtually every reputable scientist in the world.”

In October of that year, in protest to that declaration, 100 biologists, chemists, zoologists, physicists, anthropologists, molecular and cell biologists, bioengineers, organic chemists,

²³ In this section, we will rely heavily on Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan) 2004. Strobel was the award-winning legal editor and investigative reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*. Lee Strobel has a journalism degree from the University of Missouri and a Masters of Law degree from Yale. He was an adamant atheist when his wife became a Christian. In a somewhat venomous tone, he asked her, “What has gotten into you?” He could not believe that such a rational person as his wife could buy into “an irrational religious concoction of wishful thinking, make believe, mythology, and legend.” (page 29) He set out to disprove her new religion. In his efforts to show the fallacy of theism, he applied his highly developed skills of an investigative reporter, asking the hardest questions that could be asked of the “experts.” In this book, he gives very precise and detailed accounts of his interviews. When he encountered theism in his interviews, he challenged it with direct and probing questions. After two years of interviews, and traveling thousands of miles in planes and automobiles to carry out those interviews, he realized that atheism was untenable. He was compelled by the evidence he encountered to forsake his former atheism and he has become a Christian apologist. The first book that he wrote after becoming a believer, was *The Case for Christ*, which details his journey from atheism to Christianity.

geologists, astrophysicists and other scientists published a two-page article in a national magazine under the banner, “A Scientific Dissent from Darwinism.” Their dissenting article was a direct and defiant challenge to the PBS spokespersons, declaring, “We are skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life. Careful examination of the evidence for Darwinian theory should be encouraged.”²⁴

The signers of this dissent were men at the top of their disciplines, such as Nobel nominee, Henry F. Schaefer, the third most-cited chemist in the world; James Tour of Rice University’s Center for Nanoscale Science and Technology; and Fred Figworth, professor of cellular and molecular physiology at Yale Graduate School.

A later 151-page critique of the PBS series, claimed that it “failed to present accurately and fairly the scientific problems with the evidence for Darwinian evolution” and ignored “disagreements among evolutionary biologists themselves.”²⁵

Although there are some scientists who argue that one can be both a Darwinist and a Christian, their number is decreasing. Nancy Percy, who has written extensively on the subject of science and faith, points out that Darwin himself recognized that the presence of an omnipotent deity would undermine his theory, stating,

“If we admit God into the process, then God would ensure that only the right variations occurred...and natural selection would be superfluous.”²⁶

In that same vein, the late evolutionary biologist, George Gaylord Simpson, wrote an oft-quoted observation,

“Man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind.”²⁷

Although this mindset prevailed in the last Century, as stated above, a growing number of scientists are rejecting Darwin’s natural selection doctrine. As scientific knowledge increases, so is the number of scientists who are deciding that honesty requires them to reject the atheistic path and become advocates of intelligent design, i.e. the existence of a creator.

One example is Allan Rex Sandage, who is recognized as the greatest observational cosmologist in the world. Sandage has deciphered the secrets of the stars, plumbed the mysteries of quasars, revealed the age of globular clusters, pinpointed the distances of remote galaxies, and quantified the universe’s expansion through his work at the Mount Wilson and Palomar observatories. Few scientists are as respected as this one-time protégé of Edwin Hubble. He has been showered with prestigious honors from groups such as the American Astronomical Society, and the Swiss Academy of Sciences. The *New York Times* gave him the label, “The Grand Old Man of Cosmology.”

²⁴ *The Weekly Standard* (October 2001), as cited in Strobel.

²⁵ *Getting the Facts Straight* (Seattle, Discovery Institute Press) 2001 page 9, as cited in Strobel

²⁶ Nancy Percy as quoted in Lee Strobel, page 25

²⁷ George Gaylord Simpson, *The Meaning of Evolution* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press) 1967, page 345

In 1985, a conference on science and religion was held in Dallas, Texas. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the origin of the universe. Those who believed in God were seated on one side of the platform, and those who did not were seated on the other side of the platform. Everyone knew where Sandage, an ethnic Jew, would sit – among the atheists.

Then, to everyone's surprise, Sandage turned and took a seat with the theists. Later, in the discussion about the Big Bang theory and its implications, Sandage publicly declared that not only had he come to believe in a Creator God, but that after considering the evidence, he had decided to become a Christian.

Sandage stated that the Big Bang could take us to the First Event, but that it could not take us to the First Cause. Some years later, when being interviewed by a *Newsweek* reporter, he said, "It was my science that drove me to the conclusion that the world is much more complicated than can be explained by science. It was only through the supernatural that I can understand the mystery of science."²⁸

In the same 1985 Dallas conference, a session was held on the origin of life. One of the speakers was Dean Kenyon. Kenyon was a biophysicist from San Francisco State University and co-author of an influential book, *Biochemical Predestination*. Kenyon clearly was an advocate of a non-theistic view of creation. He asserted that the emergence of life might have been "biochemically predestined." He championed the view that chemical attractions caused DNA's four-letter alphabet to self-assemble or that the natural affinities between amino acids prompted them to link together by themselves to create protein.²⁹ Thus, the development of life was inevitable.

To everyone's surprise, when Kenyon stepped to the lectern, he repudiated the conclusions in his own book. He said that due to the immense molecular complexity of the cell and the information-bearing properties of DNA, he had come to believe that the evidence pointed toward a designer of life.

At the conference, specialists of the highest levels of achievements said that they had become theists, because of the growing scientific evidence that demanded that they do so. As Sandage later stated, "Many scientists are now driven to faith by their very work."³⁰

There are some who struggle with giving up, entirely, on the theory of evolution, but they do reject Darwin's contention that evolution took place by blind chance and natural selection. These evolutionists argue that evolution was God-directed. Most who hold this view are biologists.

To explore this possibility, Strobel was able to spend a few hours interviewing Jonathan Wells, PhD, PhD.³¹ While studying at Princeton, Wells had become an atheist. He told Strobel, "The

²⁸ Sharon Begley, "Science Finds God," *Newsweek* (July 20, 1998)

²⁹ The DNA four letter alphabet is **A, T, G, C**. Each letter represents a chemical base: Adenine, Thymine, Guanine, and Cytosine. Looking at DNA directly, the As, Ts, Gs, and Cs are seen as a double helix.

³⁰ Allan Sandage, "A Scientist Reflects on Religion and Belief," www.leaderu.com/truth/1truth15.html (January 7, 2003). Cited in Strobel, page 74

³¹ A doctorate in theology, and a doctorate in molecular and cell biology

evolutionary story simply replaced the religious imagery I had grown up with. I didn't need the spiritual anymore..."³²

Jonathan Wells earned an undergraduate degree in geology and physics, with a minor in biology, at the University of California at Berkeley. He earned a doctorate in religious studies at Yale Graduate School. He next received a doctorate in molecular and cell biology from Berkeley, where he focused primarily on vertebrate embryology and evolution. He later worked as a post-doctorate research biologist. Wells has written on the topic of evolution in such journals as, *Origins and Designs*, *The Scientist*, *Touchstone*, *The American Biology Teacher*, *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*. He has written articles such as, "Microtubulemediated transport of organelles and localization of beta-catenin to the future dorsal side of Xenopus eggs." These technical articles have appeared in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, *Development*, and *Biosystems*. Clearly, Wells is qualified to discuss the topic of evolution, whether theistic or atheistic.

As Wells grew in his profession and through his objective study of the evolutionary disciplines, he forsook his former atheism and became an advocate for the necessity of a Creator.

The Strobel/Wells interview ranged over a wide spectrum of topics, such as,

- Investigating the icons of evolution
- The Miller experiment
- Darwin's Tree of Life
- Haeckel's Embryos
- Homology in Vertebrate Limbs
- Human Genes and Ape Genes
- The *Archaeopteryx* Missing Link
- The Legend of Java Man
- The Cambrian Explosion

Rather than getting into all of the details of the Strobel/Wells interview, we note the most important challenge to evolution – the fossil record.

When Darwin's book, *The Origin of the Species*, was published in 1859, he conceded that "the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory" was that the fossil record failed to back up his evolutionary hypothesis. He asked, "Why, if species have descended from other species by insensibly fine gradations, do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms?" He attributed the problem to the fossil record's being incomplete and predicted that future discoveries would vindicate his theory.³³

Since Darwin's theory was first presented, one after another fossil find has given temporary hope to the proponents of evolution. However, every time an example has been presented, it ultimately has been discredited. An example is the 1999 announcement by *National Geographic* magazine that a fossil had been found that is the terrestrial link between dinosaurs and birds. They labeled the fossil, the *Archaeoraptor*. However, the fossil turned out to be a fake. A

³² Strobel page 35

³³ Strobel, page 59

Chinese paleontologist proved that someone had glued a fossil of a dinosaur tail to a fossil of a primitive bird.³⁴

Another example was a conference in Florida in which the star of the show was a fossil called, *bambiraptor*, a chicken-sized dinosaur with supposedly bird-like characteristics, i.e. feathers. The problem was that no feathers were found with the fossil, but because scientists said that they should be there, they were added to the fossil. The man who had reconstructed the fossil had used the artificial eyes that taxidermists use on stuffed eagles. Later, the promoters of the *bampiraptor* had to publish a disclaimer.

Wells said that fakes are coming out of fossil beds all the time, because fossil dealers know that there is big money in it. One investigator, Alan Feduccia, an evolutionary biologist at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, wrote, “I have heard there is a fake-fossil factory in northeast China, in Liaoning Province, near where many of these recent alleged feathered dinosaurs were found.”³⁵

Thus, the challenge to all evolutionists, whether or atheist or theist, is that there is no fossil record to substantiate the theory. Every fossil that has been put forth as the “missing link,” has failed to pass the test of authenticity.

Thus, both theistic and atheistic evolutionists have yet to find the evidence that they need to substantiate their theory.

COSMOLOGY

Among the various scientific disciplines that cause scientists to become theists is the science of cosmology.³⁶

The relationship between the earth and the sun is precisely set to make the earth ideal for human habitation. The slightest variation in this relationship would make the earth uninhabitable.

Although the distance between the earth and the sun usually is stated as being 93 million miles, it is more correct to say that this is the average distance.

In its orbit about the sun, the earth has a slightly elliptical orbit.³⁷

- The point in its orbit which it is closest to the sun is called the *perihelion*. At the perihelion, the earth is 91,402,505.6172 miles distant from the sun.
- The point in which the earth is most distant from the sun is called the *aphelion*. At the aphelion, the earth is 94,509,129.8069 miles distant from the sun.

Describing the nature of elliptical orbits, scientists use a factor known as “eccentricity.” This is expressed in the form of a number between zero and one.

- If a planet’s eccentricity is close to zero, then the ellipse is nearly a circle.
- it is close to one, the ellipse is long and slender.

³⁴ Strobel, page 62

³⁵ Kathy A. Svitil “Plucking Apart the Dino-Birds,” *Discover* (February 2003)

³⁶ Cosmology is the philosophy and science that deals with the study of the universe as a whole and of its form, nature, etc. as a physical system.

³⁷ Much of the material in this section is from Matt Williams, *The Earth’s Orbit Around the Sun*, theuniversetoday.com, November 21, 2014

The earth's orbit has an eccentricity of less than 0.02, which means that it is very close to being circular. The difference between the distance of the earth to the sun at perihelion and aphelion is very little, just over 3 million miles – which when compared to the distances at perihelion and aphelion is but a fraction of the distance.

The circular orbit is essential, because if the orbit were elliptical, and the distance were altered 5% either way, disaster would result. If the earth were closer to the sun, water would evaporate into the atmosphere and cause a greenhouse effect. The oceans would boil away. If the earth were to venture farther away from the sun, water and carbon dioxide would freeze and there would be runaway glaciation.³⁸

The earth's orbit has to remain where it is, and as constant as it is, and as circular as it is, or else the earth would experience life-threatening surface temperature variations. These orbital factors are called, the *centripetal force*.

The earth travels around the sun at 6710.8089 miles per hour. It takes the earth 365.242199 solar days to rotate around the sun – which is the reason that every four years, a day is added to the month of February – to make up for the .2242199 portion of the day.³⁹

The weight/mass of the earth, and the speed of the earth's orbit, and the exact strength of the combined gravitational pull of the sun and the earth, are precisely tuned so that the earth's orbit is where it needs to be in relation to the sun. Were the mass or the speed greater, the earth would wander further away from the sun. Were the mass of the earth less or the speed of the earth less, the earth would be pulled closer to the sun.

One of the most important factors in making the earth habitable is the influence of the moon. The moon plays several significant roles in making the earth habitable.

First, we note the influence of the moon-caused tides on the speed of the rotation of the earth. The moon contributes 60% to the tides, the sun accounts for the other 40%.

At the equator, the earth rotates at the speed of 1000 miles per hour. The moon-caused tides pull on the earth and slow it down a bit, not allowing the speed of the earth's rotation to accelerate.

- If the moon were larger, it would slow down the earth's rotation to such an extent that days and nights would be too long and the extreme temperature changes between day and night would make habitation on the earth difficult.
- If the moon were smaller, the earth's rotation would accelerate, and objects would begin to be thrown off the earth.

The moon-caused tides serve another important role by flushing out nutrients from the continents into the ocean, which keeps the oceans nutrient rich.

³⁸ Richards, as quoted in Strobel, pages 183-184 (see page 8 in these notes)

³⁹ To make the calendar in sync with the Solar Year, another calculation also is necessary. The addition of that extra day in February every four years causes there to be three extra days (in relation to the Solar Year) after several centuries. To correct for this, a year does not have an extra day in February unless the date of the year can be divided by 400.

The moon-caused tides also cause the large-scale circulation of the waters in the oceans. The oceans carry a lot of heat and the circulation of the ocean waters keep the temperatures relatively mild in the higher latitudes of the earth.

The moon is important to the earth in that it influences the tilt of the earth. Warm or cold weather does not depend on the distance from the sun, but rather, the tilt of the earth. The earth is closest to the sun on or near January 3, each year. The earth is at its greatest distance from the sun on or near July 4. If the temperature of the earth depended on its distance to the sun, July would be the coldest month of the year and January the warmest. The reverse is true.

The earth tilts an average of 23.4 degrees on its axis. It is this tilt that results in the important seasons that the earth experiences – seasons that are necessary for life cycles of plants and animals. When the northern hemisphere is tilted toward the sun, it experiences summer, while the southern hemisphere experiences winter. Six months later, when the northern hemisphere is tilted away from the sun, it experiences winter and the southern hemisphere experiences summer.

The earth's tilt is stabilized by the moon. The tilt of the earth varies, at most, by 1½ degrees during the year. The gravity of the moon's orbit keeps the tilt stabilized. Gonzales, in the interview with Strobel, stated,

“The moon's large size compared to its host planet is unique in the inner solar system. Mercury and Venus have no moons. Mars has two tiny moons – probably captured asteroids – and they don't do anything to stabilize the axis of Mars. Its axis is pretty close to earth's right now,⁴⁰ but that is a coincidence. It actually varies over a huge range. In fact, all three of these planets have chaotic variations in their tilt (as contrasted to the earth's tilt, which is controlled by the earth's moon).”⁴¹

Another very important factor important to the earth's being ideal for human habitation is its position in the galaxy. The earth is in the outer portions of our galaxy (the Milky Way). The earth is in a perfect place in the galaxy to avoid threats to life.

Two scientists, Guillermo Gonzales, PhD, and Jay Wesley Richards, PhD, recently published a book, *The Privileged Planet*.⁴² One of the many things that they documented in the book is the importance of the location of the earth in the universe.

- Gonzalez is informally known as “the star guy.” After graduating *summa cum laude* with degrees in astronomy and physics from the University of Arizona, he later earned his master's degree and doctorate from the University of Washington, in Seattle. He presently teaches at Iowa State University. In his ongoing research he also spends a lot of time in various observatories throughout the world, His research centers on low and intermediate mass stars and theories about stellar and planet evolution. Gonzales is a member of the International Astronomical Union and the American Scientific Affiliation.
- Richards holds three advanced degrees in philosophy and theology, including a doctorate from Princeton Theological Seminary. He is a prolific author, both of books and articles in scholarly journals, such as, *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, *The*

⁴⁰ 2004, the time of the interview

⁴¹ Strobel, page 189

⁴² Gonzales & Richards, (Washington, DC, Regnery Publishing) 2004

Washington Post, the Princeton Theological Review. He is the vice-president of the Discovery Institute.

In a several hours-long interview with Lee Strobel, these men presented a long list of reasons why the earth is unique in its position in the universe and the only known body that could support life. In concluding the interview, Gonzales said,

“In terms of habitability, I think we are in the best possible place. Our location (in the galaxy) provides enough building blocks to yield an Earth, while providing a low level of threats to life. I really can’t come up with an example of another place in the galaxy that is as friendly to life as our location. I studied other regions – spiral arms, galactic centers. Globular cluster, edge of disks – and no matter where it is, it’s worse for life. I can’t think of a better place than we are...

The more you pile on the threats we’re discovering in most place in the universe, and you contrast that with the many ways we’re in a cocoon of safety, the more our situation appears special.”⁴³

These men argue that for such to be the result of chance, is somewhat preposterous. They see the only explanation to be an Intelligent Designer.

Another topic related to the earth’s uniqueness is what has been labeled, “the anthropic principle.”⁴⁴ To discuss this topic, Strobel interviewed Robin Collins, PhD.

Collins earned degrees in physics and mathematics at Washington State University (with a grade point average - a scant 0.07 points shy of perfection). He then entered a doctoral program in physics at the University of Texas in Austin. His third major in college was philosophy. After years of research, he has emerged as one of the most informed and persuasive voices on the anthropic principle.

Collins has written about the topic for numerous books and articles, as well as speaking at many symposiums and conferences at Yale, Concordia, Baylor, Stanford, and elsewhere, including the plenary address at the 2003 Russian-U.S. conference on *Good and Physical Cosmology*, held at Notre Dame.⁴⁵

In the Strobel interview, Collins stated,

“Over the past thirty years or so, scientists have discovered that just about everything about the basic structure of the universe is balanced on a razor’s edge for life to exist. The coincidences are far too fantastic to attribute this to mere chance or to claim that it needs no explanation. The dials are set too precisely to have been a random accident.

⁴³ Strobel, page 180-181

⁴⁴ The anthropic principle refers to either of two principles in cosmology: (a) conditions that are observed in the universe must allow the observer to exist (the weaker principle); (b) the universe must have properties that make inevitable the existence of intelligent life (the stronger principle).

⁴⁵ Strobel, page 136

As Fred Hoyle quipped, ‘Somebody has been monkeying with the physics.’⁴⁶ This has to be among the most fascinating scientific discoveries of the century.’⁴⁷

Collins discussed a number of facts that pointed to the precise condition of the earth that made life possible. Such things as the ratio of carbon dioxide and oxygen, and how the nuclear force of the stars influence this, resulting in just the right portion of each for the existence of animal life on earth.

One of the most intriguing topics in Strobel’s interview was Collins’ discussion of gravity. In addition to the gravitational pull of the sun and the earth, which hold the earth in its orbit, is the importance of the earth’s gravity to animal life on the earth.

Concerning what would happen if the earth’s gravity were slightly increased, Collins commented,

“...one part in ten thousand billion billion billion, ...animals anywhere near the size of human beings would be crushed. As astrophysicist Martin Rees said, ‘In an imaginary strong gravity world, even insects would need strong legs to support them, and no animals could get much larger.’⁴⁸

As you can see, compared to the total range of force strengths in nature, gravity has an incomprehensibly narrow range for life to exist. Of all the possible settings on the dial, from one side of the universe to the other, it happens to be situated in the exact right fraction of an inch to make our universe capable of sustaining life.’⁴⁹

In addition to these matters, Collins spent time in the interview talking about such things as

- the cosmological constant,
- the difference in mass between protons and neutrons,
- the six numbers that underlie the fundamental properties of the universe,
- the many universes theory,
- the inflationary theory, and
- the beauty of physics.

In all of these discussions, Collins demonstrated that the only plausible explanation is the existence of a designer.

In closing the interview, Strobel asked Collins, “How do you assess the persuasiveness of the anthropic evidence?” Collins replied,

“Its not conclusive in the sense that mathematics tells us two plus two equals four. Instead, it’s a cumulative argument. The extraordinary fine-tuning of the laws and constants of nature, their beauty, their discoverability, their intelligibility – all of this

⁴⁶ Fred Hoyle, “The Universe Past and Present Reflections,” *Engineering and Science* (November 1981)

⁴⁷ Strobel, page 137

⁴⁸ Martin Rees, *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe* (New York, Basic) 2000, page 30, as quoted in Strobel page 337

⁴⁹ Strobel, page 139

combines to make the God hypothesis the most reasonable choice we have. All other theories fall short.”⁵⁰

What do we conclude from this examination of the evidence of cosmology? The only plausible conclusion is that the cumulative evidence presents an overwhelming probability for:

- an intelligent planner, who designed an earth ideally designed to provide an habitation for mankind,
- an intelligent designer who had the power to fulfill His plan.

Furthermore, the cosmological elements would have had to come into existence simultaneously, for them to produce the present state of the cosmos.

As the first statement in the Book of Genesis declares, *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

Another evidence of the existence of a creator is seen in the many systems involved in the function of the human body. These defy explanation, without the acknowledgement of a Creator/Designer. An example of this is the intricacy of the digestive system. Many years ago, when my wife was diagnosed with chronic ulcerative colitis, I began to investigate the digestive system. In doing so, the intricacies so impressed me that I had to ask, “Could any reasonable person conclude that the amazing digestive system happened by chance, or without direction?” Here is an overview of this well-designed and complex system that is necessary for the sustaining of physical life. We are not going to describe the manner in which nutrients are removed from the tract and transported to the body’s organs, but rather, focus on the mechanics of the digestive system.⁵¹

Mouth

The mouth is the beginning of the digestive tract. Digestion starts here as soon as the first bite of food is taken. Chewing breaks the food into pieces that are more easily digested, while saliva mixes with food to begin the process of breaking it down into a form the body can absorb and use.

Throat

The food travels down the pharynx (throat) to the esophagus or swallowing tube.

Esophagus

The esophagus is a muscular tube extending from the pharynx to the stomach. By means of a series of contractions, called peristalsis, the esophagus delivers food to the stomach. At the bottom of the esophagus, just before it connects to the stomach, is a "zone of high pressure." This zone is called, “the lower esophageal sphincter.” The sphincter is a one-way "valve," which keeps food from passing back into the esophagus.

⁵⁰ Strobel, page 157

⁵¹ This section is an edited version of an article found at <https://www.webmd.com/heartburn-gerd/your-digestive-system>

Stomach

The stomach is a sac-like organ with strong muscular walls. In addition to holding the food, the stomach also is a mixer and grinder. The stomach secretes acid and powerful enzymes that continue the process of breaking down the food. When food leaves the stomach, it is the consistency of a liquid or paste. From there the food moves to the small intestine.

Small Intestine

The small intestine is a long tube loosely coiled in the abdomen (it is more than 20 feet long). It consists of three segments, the duodenum, jejunum, and ileum. The small intestine continues the process of breaking down food by using enzymes released by the pancreas and bile supplied from the liver. Bile is a compound that aids in the digestion of fat and eliminates waste products from the blood. Peristalsis (contractions) also is at work in the small intestine, moving food through and mixing it up with digestive secretions. The duodenum is largely responsible for continuing the process of breaking down food, with the jejunum and ileum being mainly responsible for the absorption of nutrients into the bloodstream.

Three organs external to the digestive tract play a pivotal role in helping the stomach and small intestine digest food: the pancreas, the liver, and the gallbladder

Pancreas

One of the functions of the oblong pancreas is the secreting of enzymes into the small intestine. These enzymes break down protein, fat, and carbohydrates.

Liver

The liver has many functions, but two of its main functions within the digestive system are to make and secrete bile, and to cleanse and purify the blood coming from the small intestine containing the nutrients just absorbed.

Gallbladder

The gallbladder is a pear-shaped reservoir that sits under the liver and stores bile. Bile is made in the liver then, if it needs to be stored, travels to the gallbladder through a channel called the cystic duct. During a meal, the gallbladder contracts, sending bile to the small intestine.

Once the nutrients have been absorbed and the leftover liquid has passed through the small intestine, what is left of the food passes into the colon.

Colon

The colon is a 5- to 6-foot-long muscular tube. The first part of the colon is the cecum. The parts of the colon are the cecum, the ascending (right) colon, the transverse (across) colon, the descending (left) colon, and the sigmoid colon, which connects to the rectum.

Stool, or waste left over from the digestive process, is passed through the colon by means of peristalsis (contractions), first in a liquid state and ultimately in solid form as the water is removed from the stool. Stool is stored in the sigmoid colon until a "mass movement" empties it into the rectum once or twice a day. It normally takes about 36 hours for stool to get through the colon. The stool itself is mostly food debris and bacteria. These bacteria perform several useful functions, such as synthesizing various vitamins, processing waste products and food particles, and protecting against harmful bacteria. When the descending colon becomes full of stool, it empties its contents into the rectum to begin the process of elimination.

Rectum

The rectum is an 8-inch chamber that connects the colon to the anus. It is the rectum's job to receive stool from the colon, to let you know there is stool to be evacuated, and to hold the stool until evacuation happens. When anything comes into the rectum, sensors send a message to the brain. The brain then decides if the rectal contents can be released or not. If they can, the sphincters relax and the rectum contracts, expelling its contents. If the contents cannot be expelled, the sphincters contract and the rectum "accommodates," so that the sensation temporarily goes away.

Anus

The anus is the last part of the digestive tract. It consists of the pelvic floor muscles and the two anal sphincters (internal and external muscles). The lining of the upper anus is specialized to detect rectal contents. It signals whether the contents are liquid, gas, or solid. The pelvic floor muscle creates an angle between the rectum and the anus that stops stool from coming out when it is not supposed to. The anal sphincters provide fine control of stool. The internal sphincter prevents a person's going to the bathroom when the person is asleep, or otherwise unaware of the presence of stool. When there is an urge to go to the bathroom, a person relies on the external sphincter to keep the stool in until one can get to the toilet.

Again, we must ask, "Can any person reasonably conclude that this complex digestive system just happened?" Any unbiased investigator would have to say that there must have been a designer who also had the power to implement His design.

Again, we quote Genesis,

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."²⁷ And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)

MIRACLES

If there is a creator, is He still involved with His creation, or is the view of the deists correct? Some of the patriot-founders of the United States of America were deists.

Deists argue that the Creator created the universe, put all of the fine-tuned operations in place, and then retired from the scene. They illustrate this by the model of the clockmaker. The clockmaker makes a clock, winds it up, puts on the shelf, and he then goes his way, while the clock ticks away, exactly as it was designed to do. Is there evidence that this view is incorrect? Is the Creator still involved with His creation and does He, from time to time, exercise His power and control over His creation?

One evidence that He is involved with His creation is the occurrence of miracles. What is a true miracle?

Joni Eareckson Tada was a vivacious athletic seventeen-year-old. She was a horse rider, hiker, tennis player, a swimmer. In the summer of 1967, while diving from a raft in the Chesapeake Bay, she misjudged the depth of the water and hit the bottom of the bay with force. She fractured the levels between her fourth and fifth vertebrae, becoming an instant

quadriplegic. She found herself underwater, completely unable to move her arms or legs. There was no way that she could push herself to the surface and would have drowned in a minute or two.

Just seconds after she hit bottom, her sister was pulling herself out of the water on to the raft, when a crab bit her toe. Her back was turned to Joni, but when the crab bit her she turned around to tell Joni that the crabs were out and biting. She looked down and saw Joni's peroxide-blond hair swirling away in the water – some distance from the sister. Of course, the sister quickly dove down and pulled Joni to the surface.

Joni describes her hair as “mousy brown” that would not have been seen in the water. However, the night before, on a teen-age whim, she had driven to the drugstore, bought a bottle of bleach, and bleached her hair. Had she not done that, the night before the diving incident, her sister would not have seen her in the water.

So, because the crab bit her sister's toe, just at the right moment, and because Joni had bleached her hair the night before, she was saved from drowning.⁵²

Was this a miracle? No doubt it seemed so to Joni's family, but by the strictest definition of a miracle, it was not. It was providential.

Providence is when God uses natural means to supply a need or an answer to our prayers.

A personal example is an experience that Barbara and I had while I was attending Cincinnati Bible Seminary. I attended school sixteen hours each week, worked as a lab technician thirty hours each week and was the minister of a country church about forty miles upriver from Cincinnati. There were no fellowships, scholarships, or student loans at that time, so one either paid his way through college or just didn't attend college. Money was very tight. One day we were completely out of dish detergent, laundry detergent, bath soap, toothpaste, etc. There was no money to purchase these needed items. I left for school each morning at 6:30 AM, and so on that day, Barbara and I placed our plight before the Lord – we were helpless.

We lived in a third floor flat. Later that morning, when no one else was in the building, the doorbell rang. Barbara went downstairs to answer the door. There stood a man in a business suit, who said, “Good morning. I am from Procter and Gamble and we are preparing to introduce several new products on the market. If you will be one of our test families, we will give you a six-month supply of dish detergent, laundry detergent, bath soap, and toothpaste. Each one of the various products will be labeled A, B, C, etc. We would ask you to use them and then give your impression of each one.”

Of course, Barbara accepted, and our need was met – providentially, not miraculously.

⁵² This is a condensation of the account as presented in Eric Metaxas, *Miracles: What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life* (New York, Penguin Random House LLC) 2014, pages 57-58

I often have demonstrated the difference between providence and miracle with this illustration. Picture yourself driving along and you notice that your gas-gauge is on empty. You know that a gas station is just block away, right across the railroad tracks. As you proceed toward the gas station, your engine quits – you have run out of gas. You hope that you can keep coasting to get to the station, but as you cross the railroad tracks, your car comes to a halt – straddling the tracks. Suddenly, you hear the sound of an oncoming locomotive. The engineer blasts the locomotive’s horn and you know that tragedy is about to happen. You desperately cry out to God – “God help me.!” Suddenly, a strong wind begins to blow and, amazingly, pushes your car forward – just enough to get you off of the railroad tracks. You cry out to God in thanksgiving! Even though a believer would see the hand of God in this episode, this was not a miracle. It was providence.

Providence is when God uses natural means to accomplish something that is totally unexpected. An unbeliever would argue that it was just coincidence, although highly unlikely. To a hardened unbeliever, this would not cause him/her to believe in God.

On the other hand, if when you cried out to God, your automobile did not move, but remained on the tracks, as the locomotive bore down on you. Then, suddenly, the locomotive took flight, and flew over your car and came down on the tracks on the other side of your vehicle and proceeded on its way – that would be a miracle. No one could deny that a miracle had occurred.

In providence, a believer sees the hand of God, but an atheist sees coincidence. Miracles, however, are another story. Although some unbelievers would be like the Pharisees in Jesus’ day, who in spite of miracles refused to believe, most observers of miracles would have to admit that God had done something that could not have been done without Him.

- The New Testament and Septuagint Greek word that we render as *miracle*, is *σημαίον* (*saymaion*).
- The Old Testament Hebrew term is *מוֹפֵת* (*mopet*).

Both the Greek and the Hebrew terms literally, mean, *a sign*. That which we call a miracle, if it really is a miracle, is a sign.

When Yahweh delivered the Israelites from Egypt, He used Moses to work several miracles. The deliverance culminated in the parting of the Red Sea, while Pharaoh’s army rushed toward the Israelites. Note that Yahweh did not stop the flow of water by creating a dam-like wall upstream and allowing the water to continue to flow away downstream. No, he caused there to be a wall of water on both sides of the dry riverbed (Exodus 14:22, 29). The river was halted in its flow. There was a wall of water both above and below the path provided for the Israelites. The water stood still. Also, the Israelites did not trudge across a muddy riverbed, but on dry land (Exodus 14:22).

When the Israelites had finished crossing the dry riverbed, Yahweh commanded Moses to stretch out his hand over the river and when the pursuing Egyptians entered the riverbed, the waters, once again would flow and overwhelm the Egyptians (Exodus 14:26-28). Moses obeyed and the Egyptians were slain (Exodus 14:30).

This was a sign to the Israelites that,

- Yahweh was real;
- He was in control;
- He had chosen the Israelites to be His people.

The sign had its intended effect.

And when Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses. (Exodus 14:31)

As the Israelites stood on the side of the river and saw the Egyptians dead on the shore, Moses led the nation in a song of praise to Yahweh (Exodus 15:1ff).

Similarly, the resurrection of Lazarus was something that no one had ever seen before. A man had been dead for four days and his body had begun to decay (John 11:38ff). Yet, when Jesus cried out, “Lazarus, come forth,” the decaying tissue became healthy tissue, and the dead man became a living man. Jesus was credentialed as the author of life. *I am the resurrection and the Life* (John 11:25).

All true “miracles” occur as a sign to someone or to some group. Often, they result in the conversion and salvation of an individual or even a culture. Sometimes, miracles occur to bring doubters to a place of faith. Sometimes miracles display God’s compassion and love, thus revealing something about His Character. All true miracles cannot be explained away by any means other than the intervention of someone or something beyond human explanation. Thus, when a servant of the Lord, in obedience to the witness of the Holy Spirit, is used as an instrument to bring forth a miracle in the name of Jesus, then Jesus is exalted and observers are moved to faith in Him – not to faith in the one who was the human instrument.

Miracles always are under the control of the sovereignty of God. God only displays His miraculous power when He desires to give a sign to an individual or to a group, for reasons that exist only in Him. Thus, we cannot use some formula to compel God to act, in the same manner that we put a quarter in the gum machine and out comes a pack of chewing gum.

An example is Joni Eareckson Tada, referred to earlier. Joni is a woman of profound faith. For fifty-two years, Joni has lived as a quadriplegic. Scores of times she has been prayed for and prayed over. Yet, she has not been healed. She has been used of God mightily over the years, by demonstrating great faith in the face of a major disability. Our Lord has chosen to use her as a quadriplegic, rather than as one who has experienced a healing. He is in control.

Examples of this truth in Scripture are many, but quite notable is the experience of Paul. Some of the most remarkable miracles recorded in Scripture occurred during Paul’s ministry in Ephesus. Acts 19:11 describes Paul’s miracles in Ephesus as *extraordinary miracles* (the Greek term is *τυγχάνω* [*tugchano*]). That seems to be an extreme statement since every miracle is extraordinary. Even so,

- when Paul wrote to Timothy concerning Timothy’s health, a miracle was not in the offing. Instead, Paul advised him to refrain from drinking water but to drink a little wine for his stomach and his frequent infirmities (I Timothy 5:23).

- One of Paul's traveling companions was Trophimus. Paul wrote to Timothy that he had left Trophimus sick, at Miletus. No miracle healed Trophimus. (II Timothy 4:20)
- Paul himself had some sort of physical problem. Three times he sought the Lord for a removal of the problem, but God responded that His grace was sufficient for Paul. Paul recognized that since God had given him so many revelations that this problem kept him from having too high an opinion of himself (II Corinthians 12:7-9).

Whether or not miracles happen is up to the sovereignty of God and it always will remain so.

We are thankful, that miracle-signs have not ceased, but still are being experienced in our present day. I can recommend three books dealing with this subject:⁵³

- Eric Metaxas, *Miracles: What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life*⁵⁴
- Jane Teas PhD, Melinda Holland, Tara Georgianna Jackson: *Faith that Heals*⁵⁵
- Lee Strobel: *The Case for Miracles*⁵⁶

We will cite some of the miracles recounted in these volumes, but first, a personal encounter. I could describe more than one episode during my years in ministry in which Our Lord clearly responded to prayer, but I will present only one.

When Gordon Wright and I were traveling and ministering in Russia and the Ukraine, in the early 1990's, the custom was for people to come forward for prayer at the close of the service. One night in Kiev, after I finished preaching, the prayer line began. This was more than 25 years go, but in my memory, I still see the events of the evening. Here is the episode, as I remember it.

Gordon and some Ukrainian brothers, functioning as a team, were on one side of the auditorium, praying for people. The translator was with them. Their prayers were quite vociferous. I was alone on the other side of the auditorium, totally exhausted from the events of the day. I was praying for those who were in a line before me. I had no interpreter with me.

Because I was alone, without an interpreter and did not know the language, I could not understand what the people were saying to me. Even so, I had a very strong sense of having special access to God's throne room that night. So, I prayed, "God, you know what each of these is asking me to pray for, and I trust you to hear my prayer, and theirs, accordingly." I sensed my spirit was being touched by His Spirit and I felt an inexplicable connection with each person for whom I prayed. My prayer for each person was brief. I focused on each person, prayed, and then moved on to the next person as the line passed by me.

The next night, as we prepared to begin the evening service, a group of people came into the room and filled the seats at the rear. Gordon asked Nicholai Levchinko, "Who are these people?" Nicholai said, "Last night, when Jim Garrett was praying, one woman on whom he laid hands, was a cripple. After Jim's prayer, she was healed. Her village knew her to be a cripple

⁵³ I also highly recommend, Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: Two Volumes: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic) 2011

⁵⁴ New York, Penguin Random House LLC, 2014

⁵⁵ Xlibris Corporation, 2008

⁵⁶ Zondervan, 2018

and as a result of that healing, her entire village has come to the meeting.”

There was no doubt that a miracle had occurred, and that God had given a sign to this village that these Christians were not just going through some religious exercise. The God to Whom these Christians prayed was alive and listening. As a result, the woman’s village came to the service and heard the Gospel that night.

Eric Metaxas

Eric Metaxas is a respected author and radio personality. He is a Yale University graduate and was the editor of the *Yale Record*. Metaxas is a high respected author. He is known for three biographies, *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery* [2007], *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* [2011], and *Martin Luther: The Man Who Rediscovered God and Changed the World* [2017]. He has also written humor, children's books, and scripts for *VeggieTales*. Metaxas is the founder and host of the NYC-based event series, "Socrates in the City: Conversations on the Examined Life" and the host of the nationally syndicated radio program, *The Eric Metaxas Show*. Metaxas father is Greek; his mother is German. He was reared as a Greek and grew up in the Greek Orthodox Church.

The first portion of the book, *Miracles, What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life*, deals with a general discussion of miracles. Metaxas takes the Word of Faith Movement to task, totally rejecting its view of miracles. All of the miracle stories in this book happened to personal acquaintances of Metaxas. He indicates in the introduction to his book, that he only wanted to record those accounts that he knew were true and accurate.⁵⁷

The second portion of the book deals with conversion miracles. These are very inspiring and faith building.

For our purposes, we turn to the section on healing miracles. Several accounts are given, but we will recount only the first one presented in the book. Because of the length of Metaxas’ account, we will greatly edit the account.⁵⁸

Cisco Anglero is a Puerto Rico American – his family immigrated to America when he was five years-old. He grew up in a rough part of Brooklyn. Cisco’s grandfather was a Pentecostal pastor in Puerto Rico and his mother, following in her father’s footsteps, was a very godly woman.

Even so, Cisco had contempt for anything in the church. He had become one of Brooklyn’s tough guys and became a feared drug dealer. In time, he became a hit man, killing for hire. We will not present here, the story of his conversion (which Metaxas describes), but in time he was sent to prison, where he received Christ.

One of Cisco’s prison mates was a man named Hector. One evening, shortly after becoming a Christian, Cisco noticed that Hector was in bed – sick. He was shivering and covered with a blanket and heavy clothing. Cisco walked over to the bed and Hector said to him, “The Holy Spirit told me that if you pray for me, what I feel now is going to be gone.”

Being a new Christian, Cisco didn’t know how to pray, but even so, he offered a simple prayer and as he did so, a bright light covered the two of them. Suddenly, Hector stood up, took off the blankets that had covered him, removed his coat and his sweater, which he had been wearing to

⁵⁷ Page xiii

⁵⁸ Pages 165-170

keep warm and to stop shivering. Hector then began jumping up and down, shouting, “Thank you, Jesus, thank you Jesus.”

Later, Hector was taken from the prison suffering from an undiagnosed severe weakness. He was taken to Kings County Hospital. Hector had AIDS. Not long thereafter, Hector’s mother visited Cisco in prison and told him that Hector had told her about the previous episode in which Cisco had prayed, and that Hector wanted Cisco to pray for him again.

Getting things lined up for Cisco to talk to Hector on the phone was quite complicated. However, it finally took place and Hector told Cisco that the Holy Spirit had spoken to him. “He told me that you were going to pray for me, and that he was going to heal me.” So, immediately, because he was being allowed only three minutes on the phone, Cisco prayed for Hector.

Later, Hector’s mother visited Cisco in prison, and she was beaming. She said that when Cisco prayed for Hector, Hector’s whole body began shaking violently, so much so that the intravenous needles came out of his body, he fell off the bed, got up and started jumping up and down, thanking God. The healing was complete and permanent. When he was released, Hector attended Bible college and became a minister of the Gospel.

Cisco became the initiator and leader of a ministry to the homeless, ex-cons, alcoholics, drug addicts and people with mental illness. At the date of Metaxas book, at least 1,200 and possibly, 1,500 men had passed through Cisco’s program and 800 had given their lives to Christ.

Clearly, Cisco’s prayer for Hector resulted in a miracle, and it is clear that Our Lord had a reason for the miracle – ministry to the down and outs and those enslaved to various things.

Dr. Jane Teas

In 2001, the US Government’s Centers for Disease Control funded a study to explore healing and faith. Dr. Deborah A. Jones at the CDC is the one who initiated the call for this proposal. Dr. Jane Teas, PhD, received the grant and was commissioned to undertake the study.

Dr. Barbara Ainsworth monitored the progress of the study through the Prevention Research Center at the University of North Carolina. The study was supported by a cooperative agreement between the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Prevention Research Center of the Arnold School of Public Health at the University of South Carolina.

Dr. Teas carefully assembled a team, including anthropologist, Andrew Cousins, who trained team members in how to do interviews. In time, the team included a number of people from various racial and social backgrounds. 107 original stories of faith and healing were collected and edited by Dr. Teas, Melinda Holland, and Tara Georgianna Jackson. 45 of these stories are included in the book, *Faith that Heals, Stories of God’s Love*.

All of the interviews in the book are a bit lengthy, because they contain, word for word, what the interviewees said in their unedited dialect. For that reason, as was done with the Metaxas book, we are going to cite just the first interview, which we greatly condense – from several pages to just a few of paragraphs.⁵⁹

Molly Ritter had a tumor on her breast, her chin, one on her arm, and several up and down her spine. Surgery was done on the lump on her breast, as well as taking a bone marrow biopsy. These tests revealed that Molly had non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. A CAT scan revealed that she had seven tumors on her liver and it also was determined that she had cancer in her spine. Her

⁵⁹ Pages 23-29

oncologist said to her, “If we don’t deal with this aggressively with high doses of chemotherapy, you will not be alive in December because of how fast this is progressing (this was in October).” They gave Molly a 40% chance of survival. She was told that they would begin immediate chemotherapy, attempting to bring the disease into remission so that they could give her bone marrow transplant.

Many people began praying for Molly, including members of their church and missionaries from all over the world, whom Molly and her husband, Frank, had known through their extensive missions work. In prayer, she heard the Lord say, “Molly, it’s ok to be afraid. As you walk through this, I want you to remember My past faithfulness in your life. I want you to use this as a faith builder to remember how I have already walked with you this far in your life...I want your dependence to be on me.”

One night, after coming home from treatment, Molly was deeply discouraged, and she began to pray. While she was deep in prayer, she suddenly became aware of a presence in her room. She could not open her eyes because of the of the light. The peace, and the joy, and the Presence, were so strong that she could hardly stand it.

In January, Molly received a call from the oncologist – she had not gone into remission. The oncologist urged her to go ahead with a bone marrow transplant, even though the efforts to achieve remission had failed. He told her that given her condition, there was a 30% chance that the transplant surgery would result in her death. She decided to not go through the treatment.

In February, a biopsy was done on her back, revealing the continued presence of cancer. Molly and Frank and their friends continued to bathe the situation in prayer. Plans were made for the doctor to operate on her back to determine the exact nature and extent of the cancer. He told her that he would make a two-inch incision on her lower back and if that did not locate the cancer, he would have to make a longer incision in the upper portion of her back. The procedure ended up being the longer incision.

When Molly awoke after the surgery, Frank excitedly said, “Molly, you’re not going to believe it, but there is no cancer there at all! Whatever was there was completely gone and the bone that had deteriorated was completely new. There were new bone cells that they saw.”

Later, the orthopedic surgeon came in. He was not a Christian. He was just shaking his head. He said, “Molly, there’s nothing there. It was there, and then it was gone. There is new bone. I can’t explain it.... It’s just one of those things.”

One year later, Molly was giving her testimony in a church in Nashville. She discovered that the orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Meyers, was so moved by the experience that he had become a Christian and a faithful member of that Nashville church.

In closing the interview, Molly commented, “God knew what He wanted to accomplish through this, and I leave those results to Him.”

Lee Strobel

We introduced Lee Strobel in the section dealing with the subject of a Creator (see footnote 1). In authoring this book, *The Case for Miracles*, Strobel follows the same procedure as he did in *The Case for a Creator*. He diligently interviewed and asked challenging questions in each situation. When appropriate, he approached the interview as a skeptic.

As with the other two books that we have cited, we will recount the first lengthy account of the many miracles recorded in Strobel's book.

This account was the result of an interview with Craig S. Keener, PhD. As has been true of so many of the authors whom we have researched in this study, Keener was an avowed atheist, mocking Christians, until he had an undeniable encounter with God.

Keener is an academic's hero. He has authored twenty-one books. One of his most significant is an award-winning four-volume commentary, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*. This monumental work has stunned academics. Scholars from some of the most prestigious institutions have hailed this work as the high-water mark in research and scholarship. Keener has written a two-volume book on miracles, which biblical scholar Craig A. Evans of Houston Baptist University has labeled, "arguably the best book ever written on miracles." (see footnote 53)

A physician picked up Keener's two volume book on miracles with but one goal in mind - to reinforce his highly skeptical world view. "I was ready to 'see through' yet another theologian who didn't know much about psychosomatic illnesses, temporary improvements with no long-term follow up, incorrect medical diagnoses, conversion disorders, faked-cures, self-deception, and the like." After reading the book, he admitted, "I was blindsided."

He said that he read through the many cases "with the critical eye of a skeptic having many years of medical practice under my belt." He said that in many of the instances, he could envision alternative, naturalistic explanations to account for what happened." Yet, not in all cases.

He said, "I found [hundreds of case studies] to be stunning. They couldn't just be dismissed with a knowing answer and a cheery wave of the hand. With respect to my worldview. I had the chair pulled out from underneath me."⁶⁰

Indeed, it was his own investigations that won over Keener, himself.

Here is a case that Keener described in the Strobel interview. This case is not recorded in Keener's two volumes on miracles.

Barbara was diagnosed at Mayo Clinic with progressive multiple sclerosis. Keener confirmed the facts about her case by interviewing two physicians who treated her. There are numerous independent witnesses to her condition and years of medical records. Two of her doctors were so astounded by her case that they have written about it.⁶¹

One of those physicians, Dr. Harold Adolph, a board-certified surgeon who performed twenty-five thousand operations in his career, declared, "Barbara was one of the most hopelessly ill patients I ever saw."

The diagnosis of progressive multiple sclerosis was confirmed through spinal taps and other diagnostic tests at Mayo Clinic.

⁶⁰ Strobel, Page 95

⁶¹ Dr. Harold P. Adolph, *Today's Decisions, Tomorrow's Destiny* (Spooner, WI: White Birch) 2006, pages 48-49; Dr. Scott J. Kolbaba, MD, *Physicians Untold Stories* (North Charleston, SC: Create Space) 2016, pages 115-122

As the disease progressed, Barbara spent months in hospitals, often being treated for pneumonia, after being unable to breathe. In time, one side of her diaphragm was paralyzed, leaving one lung nonfunctional. The other lung operated at less than 50%. A tracheostomy tube was inserted into her neck with oxygen pumped from canisters in the garage.

When she lost control of her bladder and her bowels, a catheter was inserted into her bladder and an ileostomy was performed, with a bag attached to her side for body waste. She became legally blind, and a feeding tube had to be inserted into her stomach. Describing Barbara, Dr. Adolph said, “Her abdomen was swollen grotesquely because the muscles of her intestine did not work.”⁶²

Dr. Marshall commented, “She needed continuous oxygen, and her muscles and joints were becoming contracted and deformed because she could not move or exercise them.”⁶³

By 1981, she had not been able to walk for seven years, she was confined to her bed with her body twisted like a pretzel, her hands were permanently fixed to the point that her fingers nearly touched her wrists. Her feet were locked in a downward position. Everyone acquainted with the case knew that death was not far in the future.

One day, someone called the radio station of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and described Barbara’s illness, asking listeners to pray for her. 450 Christians wrote letters indicating that they were interceding for Barbara.

On Pentecost Sunday, 1981, Barbara’s aunt visited Barbara, with some of the letters in which people had offered prayers for her healing. Two of Barbara’s girlfriends joined Barbara and her aunt, and they began to read the letters to Barbara. Suddenly, during a lull in the conversation, Barbara heard a man’s voice speak to her from behind – even though there was no one else in the room. Describing the scene, Dr. Marshall said, “The words were clear and articulate and spoken with great authority, but also with great compassion.” The voice said, “My child, get up and walk!”

Seeing that Barbara was struggling to say something, one of her friends plugged the hole in her neck so that she could speak. Barbara quickly said, “I don’t know what you are going to think about this, but God just told me to get up and walk. I know He really did! Run and get my family, I want them to be here with us.!” The girls rushed out of the room and hurriedly called the family, “Come quick; come quick!”

Dr. Marshall then described what happened next. “Barbara felt compelled to do immediately what she was divinely instructed, so she literally jumped out of bed and removed her oxygen. She was standing on legs that had not supported her for years. Her vision was back, and she was no longer short of breath, even without her oxygen. Her contractions were gone, and she could move her hands and feet freely.”

Her mother grabbed her legs and exclaimed, “You have muscles again!” Her father grabbed her, and they waltzed around the room. Everyone in the living room began to offer tearful prayers of thanksgiving, but Barbara could not sit still.

⁶² Strobel, page 102

⁶³ *ibid*

Almost everyone in their Wheaton Wesleyan Church knew about Barbara's grave condition. The church had a worship service that evening, and Barbara's family attended. When the pastor asked if anyone had any announcements, Barbara stepped into the center aisle and casually walked to the front, her heart pounding. Whispered prayers began emanating from the congregation, then, as if someone had orchestrated it, the entire congregation broke out in applause and, without prompting, the congregation began to sing, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now, I see!"

The next day, she had a chest X-ray that showed her lungs to be completely normal and most surprising of all, the intestine that had been vented to the abdominal wall for the ileostomy was reconnected normally to the rest of her intestinal tract.

She was eventually restored to full health and has lived 38 years with no recurrence of her illness. She is married to a Christian minister and considers her calling in life to be a servant to His people.⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

Considering the evidence from cosmology, and a study of the digestive tract, it is difficult to deny that the evidence points to a Designer who, not only could design, but had the ability to produce what He had designed.

Considering the evidence from miracles (scores of which we could have recounted), it is difficult to deny the presence of a Being who intervenes in natural affairs, and completely reverses the only reasonable outcome – thus, constituting a miracle – *a sign*.

III. IF THERE IS A GOD, WE THEN ASK, "HAS THAT GOD GIVEN US AN OBJECTIVE REVELATION OF HIMSELF AND HIS ACTIVITIES IN THE WORLD, SO THAT WE MIGHT KNOW WHO HE IS AND WHAT IS HIS CHARACTER AND IF SO, WHICH OF THE CONTENDERS FOR THAT ROLE PROVE TO BE RELIABLE?"

In pursuit of the answer to this question, we will acquaint ourselves with the three most popular current contenders for this stated role: the Quran, Mormon literature, and the Judeo/Christian Bible. Hopefully, we can determine which of these fulfills the sought-after role.

⁶⁴ Strobel, pages 102-105

THE QURAN (AND OTHER ISLAMIC WRITINGS)⁶⁵

Important Islamic documents are:

- Quran – the collection of words of Allah that Muhammad claimed that the angel Gabriel had given to him.
- Hadith – a collection of narrations of the life and deeds of Muhammad.
- Sira – Muhammad’s recorded biography
- Sunnah – reportedly Muhammad’s way of life
- Sharia - Islamic law which is based on the Sunnah

The first contender that we will consider for the role of God’s revelation of Himself and His will for mankind is the Quran. The Quran is the holy book which Muslims recite and turn to for guidance in all aspects of their lives. Muslims consider this book to be the last testament in a series of divine revelations from God. The revelations supposedly were given to Muhammad orally, by the Angel Gabriel.

An Islamic Presentation of the Quran

We begin this exploration by acquainting ourselves with an Islamic presentation and defense of the Quran. The Islamic website, *Why Islam?*, is a reliable summary of the Islamic view of the Quran.⁶⁶ The website contains the text of a lengthy brochure designed to describe and defend the Quran. The following paragraphs are a summary of the brochure.

Muhammad was born in Mecca in 570 AD. The first revelations came to him at the age of 40 in 610 AD. Here is how the Islamic website, *Why Islam?*, describes the relationship of Muhammad’s revelations to the revelations of those that preceded him.

“Islam is a continuation of the teachings of previous Prophets, such as Noah, Abraham, David, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them all),⁶⁷ some of whom were also given divine books. Muslims believe that the key message brought by all Prophets was the same, to believe in One God and not to associate partners with Him, to stay away from sins and to lead a life devoted to earning God’s pleasure....

The Quran describes signs of God’s existence in the universe and how everything is carefully placed in the total scheme of creation.”⁶⁸

Here is an Islamic description of the origin of the Quran.

“The Prophet (pbuh) could not read or write, so as soon as a portion of the Quran was revealed, he called upon his scribes to record the revealed text. The Prophet (pbuh) specified the part of the Quran the revelation belonged to and had the companions read back what was written to ensure that it corresponded exactly with what was revealed.

⁶⁵ Although most non-Muslim English speakers use the term, *Koran*, Muslim writers describe the document by the title, *Quran*.

⁶⁶ <https://www.whyislam.org/quran/originofquran/>

⁶⁷ It is customary for Muslims, after saying the name, Muhammad, to say, *pbuh*, which means, *peace be upon him*, which is an invocation of respect.

⁶⁸ <https://www.whyislam.org/quran/originofquran/>

Thus, the complete Quran was not only memorized by the Prophet (pbuh) and many of his companions, but also existed in written form during his lifetime. Within a year after the Prophet's (pbuh) death, a manuscript of the entire Quran was assembled by a committee led by the chief scribe of the Prophet (pbuh), who followed stringent criteria to safeguard against any errors. The manuscript was unanimously approved by the companions of the Prophet (pbuh), including hundreds that had memorized the entire Quran. Several replicates of the manuscript were prepared under the leadership of the third caliph and were distributed to Muslim centers."⁶⁹, ⁷⁰

Muhammad lived in an era in which Arabs excelled in poetry. Poetry competitions were held in the marketplace in an atmosphere similar to the present-day, *America's Got Talent*, TV show. Muhammad was a gifted poet and, according to Islamic sources, "Many converted simply by listening to the deep acoustic rhythms, literary merit and wisdom of the Quranic verses," as they were recited by Muhammad.⁷¹

The following lengthy quote is an example of a typical Muslim apologist's argument for the veracity of the Quran.⁷²

1) Historical accounts document, and the Quran openly declares, that Muhammad (pbuh) was unlettered.

"You (O Muhammad) were not a reader of any Scripture before it, nor did you write (such a Scripture) with your right hand, for then those who follow falsehood might (have a right) to doubt it. [Quran, 29:48]"

2) ...The Arabic of 1400 years ago was restricted to words and expressions relevant to the simple life of desert men and it was impossible to express metaphysical ideas or scientific, religious and philosophical concepts. In fact, the science of Arabic grammar was developed after the revelation of the Quran, using the Quran as a basis for devising its rules. It is difficult to find an explanation (other than revelation) that explains how a book existed that superseded, and also differed so greatly from any other Arabic literature. The challenge of the Quran to produce a chapter like its own has not been met to this day:

"And if you are in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto Our slave (Muhammad) then produce a Surah (chapter) of the like thereof, and call your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful. [Quran, 2:23]"

3) The Quran is a highly comprehensive book containing Divine truths, metaphysics, religious beliefs and worship, prayer, law and morality. It is a book fully describing the other life, a book of psychology, sociology, epistemology, and history, and a book containing scientific facts and the principles of a utopian life. A testament to the Divine

⁶⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁰ The Third Calif was Uthman ben Affan (reigned 644-656 AD). He was one of the earliest believers in Islam. He married Muhammed's daughter, Ruqaiyyah and after her death, married another of Muhammed's daughters, Umm Kulthum.

⁷¹ <https://www.whyislam.org/quran/originofquran/>

⁷² *The Origin of the Quran*, available at: www.whyislam.org

authenticity of the Quran is that such a comprehensive book, one that was revealed over a period of 23 years, does not have any contradictory points.

“Will they not then ponder on the Quran? If it had been from other than God, they would have found therein much contradiction and incongruity. [Quran, 4:82]”

4) Could Muhammad (pbuh) have been a liar or had motives for inventing the Quran? The early years of Muhammad’s (pbuh) mission were punctuated by persecutions and sorrow. His followers were brutally tortured, killed and forced to migrate. His clan was boycotted, and he was stoned. His enemies even offered him wealth and kingship if he abandoned his call to the belief in One God. Instead, the Prophet (pbuh) lived a very austere life and never pursued any worldly gains like fame, power or wealth. Furthermore, the life of Muhammad (pbuh) was a practical embodiment of the Divine message and a study of his life (through the Hadith) provides an appreciation of this fact. Even before he received the Prophethood, he was known in his society as Al-Ameen (The Trustworthy) and As-Sadiq (The Truthful). Both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars attest to his honesty and integrity.

5) The Quran mentions things that were not known at the time. How can the existence of these verses be explained? The Quran has scientific descriptions only recently discovered by modern science and that could not have been known 1400 years ago.

“Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay); then we placed him (as a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, The Best to Create [Quran, 23:12-14].”

The Quran describes the expansion of the universe:

”And it is we who have built the universe with (Our creative) power; and verily, it is We who are steadily expanding it. [Quran, 51:47].”

It was not until 1925, when Edwin Hubble provided evidence of receding galaxies, that the expanding universe came to be accepted as a scientific fact.

The Quran describes geographical concepts that were proven after its revelation. For example, it was the common dogma 1400 years ago that the earth was flat, but the Quran described it as a sphere, compressed at each end (like an ostrich egg):

“And the earth moreover, He has made egg shaped⁷³ [Quran 79:30].

In 1597, when Sir Francis Drake sailed around the world, the earth became known to be a sphere.

What can explain the origin of the Quran?

The life and character of the Prophet (pbuh), the depth of the Quranic message, its appeal and relevance to both the spiritual and the mundane, all testify to the Divine

⁷³ the Arabic word for egg here is *dahaahaa*, meaning ostrich egg

origin of the Quran. These points compel us to admit our inability to provide an explanation that relies solely upon material causes. In a world starved of love and compassion, the Qurans universal message is the perfect antidote to the collective despair of the human condition.

What are we to make of these arguments? Considering all of the relevant facts, is the above argument convincing?

An Alternative View of the Quran

Literary Criticism

The contention that the Quran is the result of Gabriel's speaking to Muhammad, and that the present-day Quran's being an accurate preservation of those revelations has been rejected by many historians and literary critics. An excellent and well-documented summary of the problems with the traditional Islamic view of the Quran is presented in the Wikipedia article, *Criticism of the Quran*.⁷⁴

One of the challenges to the authenticity of the present-day Quran is the significant differences found in historic collections of the Quran. Copies from one geographical location differ from one another. This is significant, because even though Muslims do not object to having the Quran translated in languages other than Arabic, the contention is that any translation is not the genuine Quran. Since the words supposedly were spoken by Gabriel to Muhammad in Arabic, then only the Arabic words of those original revelations is the genuine Quran.⁷⁵ The fact that there are differences in different collections, make suspect the contention that any one version of the Quran is the original – because they contain different Arabic words.

Beginning about 12 years after Muhammad's death and finishing 24 years later (644-656 AD), Caliph Uthman made the final recensions to produce, from the variant texts, an official and uniform Quran. When he and his co-laborers had completed their work, they made copies and sent a copy to each of the main centers of the empire. Accompanying these copies was the command that all other Quran materials, whether in a single sheet form or in whole volumes, were to be burned.⁷⁶

In spite of Uthman's efforts to establish the official Quran, earlier copies survived. Among the most important is the Sana Quranic material.

In 1972, during a restoration of the Great Mosque in the Yemeni capital of Sana, 12,000 Quranic parchment fragments were discovered. Some of the most important were found between the

⁷⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_the_Quran. Although Wikipedia articles are not always reliable, this particular article is so well documented that it must be regarded as an accurate presentation of the relevant material.

⁷⁵ This fact was first told to me by Terry Ligon, who had been a missionary among the Muslims in Lebanon for many years.

⁷⁶ John Burton, *The Collection of the Quran* (Cambridge Univ. Press) 1977, pages 141-142, citing Ahmad b'alib' Muhammad al'Asqalani, ibn Hajar, 'Fath al Bari," 13 volumes, Cairo 1939, Vol. 9, page 18

ceiling and the roof. These fragments consist of tiny snippets of the Quran as well as whole folios belonging to some 926 copies of the Quran.

One of the most important Sana findings is a palimpsest which “may be, from a textual-critical standpoint, the most important one among those discovered in 1972, between the ceiling and the roof of the Great Mosque of Şan‘ā.”⁷⁷

NOTE: A palimpsest is a manuscript page that has been erased so that another text could be written over it. The top layer of the Sana Quran palimpsest (the text written over what was erased) is the standard Uthmanic version of the Quran. Beneath this standard Uthmanic version of the Quran (the part that was erased) is a non-Uthmanic version of the Quran. With modern X-ray florescent technology, the erased text can be read.

Through radio-carbon dating, the Sana manuscript has been determined (with 99% accuracy) to date prior to 671 AD; with a 94% probability of being older than 661 AD; and a 75% probability of being produced before 646 AD. This manuscript contains many variants from the Uthman Quran. Among other things, the order of the Sura is different from that in the Uthman Quran.

In addition to the Sana manuscript, other ancient manuscripts of the Quran with variants have been found. As a result of these discoveries, the science of literary criticism calls into question the assertion that the standard existing Quran contains the original words of an angel spoken to Muhammad.

Another factor is in the certainty of the Arabic script in the Quran. The early Arabic script of the Quran transcribed 28 consonants. Based on the construction of the consonants, only 6 of these can be distinguished with certainty. The remaining 22 had to be determined by context. The question had to be asked, “What does the context say and what is the meaning of the context? Since we understand the context to mean, xxx, then that must mean that this is the intended word with these consonants.” This decision required some interpretation of the text. It was only after Arabic diacritics were introduced centuries after the life of Muhammad that Islam established a canonical vocalization of the text – how it was to be read, etc., thus establishing the official meaning of the entire text.

The Quran contains material from narratives that predate the Quran. Fifty individuals from the Bible are mentioned and many of the stories in the Quran differ in detail from those in the Bible. A notable example is the Quran’s denial of the crucifixion of Jesus, which probably was influenced by the Docetism (Manichaenism) heresy.

The historical record of Jesus’ crucifixion is a well-established fact. Non-biblical sources from the years immediately after the life of Christ attest to this.⁷⁸ Scholars of many disciplines and world-views consider the crucifixion of Jesus to be undisputed history.

Some of the Quran’s stories about Jesus are from pre-Islamic pseudo-graphic sources. For example, the stories about the childhood of Mary are found in the *Protovangelium of James*; the

⁷⁷ Sadeghi, Behnam; Mohsen Goudarzi, “Şan‘ā’ 1 and the Origins of the Qur’ān,” *Der Islam*. March 2012, page 9.

⁷⁸ Tacitus, *Annals* 1544; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18:63,64; The Babylonian Talmud, *Tractate Sanhedrin*, 43a, etc.

story about the miracle of the palm tree and the stream of water in the account of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt is from the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*.

The story of the baby Jesus' speaking from the cradle can be traced to the *Arabic Infancy Gospel*.

The story about the child Jesus' bringing to life clay birds, is from the *Infancy Story of Thomas*.

Another example encountered early in the Quran is the intermingling and conflation of the story of Gideon and his army's excluding those who knelt and lapped up the water, with the story of David and Goliath (Quran 2:249)

These are a few of the many examples of pre-Islamic narratives that point to their being introduced into the Quran by Muhammad's creative mind, rather than something spoken by Gabriel to Muhammad.

Muhammad's Life and the Origin of the Quran⁷⁹

Totally apart from the literary/critical issues, are the concerns that arise from the story of Muhammad's life. Verses in the Quran were recited by Muhammad at key points in his life and the situations when these verses were recited reflect what was happening at the time.

Research into Muhammad's life results in a far different picture than that presented in the earlier section of our study, *An Islamic Presentation of the Quran*.

The Muslim/Arabic term for collections of Muhammad's sayings and the story of his life is the term, *hadith*. Two of the sources that Muslims view as trustworthy hadith of the life of Muhammad are:

- Ibn Ishaq (Arabic pronunciation, is'ha:q) died in 767 or 761 AD. He is a respected Muslim historian and hagiographer. He collected oral traditions and documents and formed the basis of a respected biography of Muhammad.
- Sahih al-Bukhari completed a collection of stories of the prophet in 846 AD. The title, *Sahih*, translates as *authentic* or *correct*. Sunni Muslims view al-Bukhari's collections as one of the most trusted collections of accounts of the prophet's life and non-Quran sayings.

These two sources, as well as others that will be cited, are the authority for the material presented in the following pages. When a source, other than Ibn Isahq or Sahih all-Bukhari are the source of information, they will be footnoted.

Ali Sina, an Iranian born former Muslim, is the founder of Faith Freedom International, a grassroots movement of ex-Muslims. Considering the facts of Muhammad's life, Ali Sina has stated,

"Muhammad is a narcissist, a pedophile, a mass murderer, a terrorist, a misogynist, a lecher, a cult leader, a madman rapist, a torturer, an assassin and a looter."

Ali Sina has offered \$50,000 to anyone who could prove this statement false, based on Islamic texts. So far, the reward has gone unclaimed.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ The website, <https://.thereligionofpeace.com/pages/Muhammad/index.aspx>, contains an excellent well-documented account and refutation of myths about Muhammad

⁸⁰ *The Life of Muhammad: An Inconvenient Truth*, <https://www.thereligionofpeace.com/pages/Muhammad/life-of-muhammad.aspx>

Timeline of Muhammad's Life (A.D)

570 - Born in Mecca	625 - Battle of Uhud (defeat)
576 - Orphaned upon death of mother	625 - Evicts Nadir Jews
595 - Marries Kadijah - older, wealthy widow	627 - Battle of the Trench (victory)
610 - Reports first revelations at age of 40	627 - Massacre of the Qurayza Jews
619 - Protector uncle dies	628 - Signing of the Treaty of Hudaibiya with Mecca
622 - Emigrates from Mecca to Medina (the Hijra)	628 - Destruction and subjugation of the Khaybar Jews
623 - Orders raids on Meccan caravans	629 - Orders first raid into Christian lands at Muta (defeat)
624 - Battle of Badr (victory)	630 - Conquers Mecca by surprise (along with other tribes)
624 - Evicts Qaynuqa Jews from Medina	631 - Leads second raid into Christian territory at Tabuk (no battle)
624 - Orders assassination of Abu Afak	632 - Dies of a fever
624 - Orders assassination of Asma bint Marwan	
624 - Orders the assassination of Ka'b al-Ashraf	

Here is a challenging question posed by one who has studied the history of Islam.

“What if a man you knew began telling people that God was routinely speaking to him and only him - and that the ‘revelations’ he claimed to be receiving were mostly about him and his relative importance to all other people? Say, for example, that this self-proclaimed prophet insisted that God had declared him to be the 'excellent pattern of conduct' for mankind (Quran 33:21) and that others were therefore to accord him with special privilege, unwavering obedience (Quran 4:80), wealth and earthly desires, including all of the slaves and women that his lust could handle.

Such figures still arise from time to time. Some of the more dynamic manage to develop a small group of followers so taken with their leader's self-assurance that they willingly offer their own children to him for "marriage" and are prepared to kill on his behalf.

Would it really validate the message of any such cult leader if his followers did successfully kill and seize the property of anyone who dared disagree? What if they gradually expanded their power and numbers in such fashion that eventually they were recognized as a major world religion? Would that make the cult leader's claims about himself true? Would it really change the fact that what they believe ultimately sprang from the imagination of a narcissist?

In 610, an Arab salesman with a charismatic personality attracted a small cult of credulous fanatics by claiming to be a prophet. Though his ‘revelations’ were self-referential and occasionally contradicting, he was successful in manipulating his followers with promises of heavenly reward and threat of divine wrath. The god heard

only by him, told them to lie and steal for him, to give their children to him for sexual pleasure and, eventually, to gruesomely murder his detractors...”⁸¹

To understand how Islam took root, we must note the harsh circumstances into which it was born. The Arabian Peninsula at the time of Muhammad was a barren and desolate region. Days were oppressively hot, and nights were chillingly cold. There was little vegetation. The nomadic Arabs lived between jagged rocks and shifting sand dunes. The tribes were constantly at war with one another. They lived short, brutal lives with little to offer beyond their harsh existence.

The harsh climate and terrain protected the peninsula from conquest and from the cultural influence of other societies. With the exception of some trading routes, the area was relatively isolated. The Arabs had little time for anything other than daily survival.

There were several pagan religions in the peninsula. These were important elements in the trading centers, such as Mecca, where Muhammad was born. Some of these towns had cube-like structures, called, “kaabas,” that housed various idols. One of those in Mecca was the black meteorite, which remains in Mecca, today.

Muhammad was born in the city of Mecca in 570 AD. His birth name was Abu al-Qasim Muhammad ibn Abd Allah ibn Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim. His family was a part of the highly respected Banu Hashim clan in Mecca. His father died a few months before Muhammad was born and his mother, Amina, died when he was six years old. Originally, his grandfather took him in and when the grandfather died, his uncle, Abu Talib, an influential Meccan merchant, took Muhammad under his custody. When Muhammad was 8 or 9 years old, Abu took him on a trip to Syria, where, through a Christian preacher named, Bahira, Muhammad had his first encounter with Christianity.

When he was in his early 20s, he began working for a wealthy widow merchant woman, named, Khadija bint khawalayd. They were distant cousins. She was 15 years older than Muhammad. As Khadija’s agent, Muhammad carried her goods to the north, and sold them at considerable profit. Impressed by his honesty and character, as well as his exceptional sales ability, she became attracted to him and proposed marriage. He accepted and they were married; he was 25 years old and she was 40 years old. They had a happy union and six children were born to them: two sons who died in infancy and four daughters.

As Muhammad began participating in his wife’s business, he developed his natural talent of persuasiveness and he became a successful salesman. Also, in this role, he was able to travel, resulting in his exposure to other cultures. Increasingly, in his business travels, he had encounters with Judaism and Christianity, where he heard biblical stories. He incorporated into some of his “revelations,” stories that he picked up from these two religions. As noted above, he did not always present the stories correctly.

He remained married to Khadija until her death. Following her death, he married eleven women,⁸² nine of the twelve survived him.

⁸¹ *What makes Islam so different*, “The Life of Muhammed,” *ibid*

⁸² Sawda bint Zam’a. Aisha bint Abi Bakr, Hafsa bint Umar, Zaynab bint Khuzayma, Hind bint

At age 40 (610 AD), having acquired wealth and a comfortable lifestyle, he occasionally wandered off alone for periods of meditation and contemplation about his life. He probably was experiencing something of a midlife crisis, pondering the meaning of life. One of the sites which he frequented for his time of reflection was a nearby cave.

One day, returning from one of these times of reflection, he told his wife that he had been visited by the angel Gabriel. This was the first of a series of “revelations” that continued until his death, 23 years later.

With his wife’s influence, he began proclaiming himself as a prophet and that he was of the same lineage as Abraham and Jesus. His talents of persuasion were effective, and he began narrating his revelations (the Quran) to those who believed him to be a prophet. Of course, no one but he had heard the “revelations.”

At first, Mohammed tried to compromise his teachings with the predominate beliefs of the community elders – for example combining all of their 300 gods under the name, “Allah.” In time, his combining of Judeo-Christian theology with the pagan gods became more sophisticated, but the message always was, “Believe the messenger (Muhammad) or suffer the consequences.” It also was monotheistic, which caused problems with the polytheistic Meccan leaders.

Initially, the Meccan leaders did not object to his new religion. That changed when the self-proclaimed prophet began attacking their religion, including their customs and their ancestors – especially speaking against the idols in the Kabaas.⁸³ The Meccan leaders began to put Muhammad down, mocking his humble beginnings in contrast to his boastful claims. Even so, Mecca was a tolerant society and for 13 years they put up with him. This was in spite of the fact that much of their town’s economy depended on the annual pilgrimages that pagans made to the Kaabas in Mecca.

At first, Muhammad had success only with friends and family. After 13 years, Muhammad could only claim about 100 followers. In addition to his wife, Muhammad’s first convert was his cousin, Ali.⁸⁴ Another early convert was Abu Bakr, a wealthy merchant whose money and unquestioning acceptance of Muhammad often is credited with the survival of the cult. Muhammad later would “marry” Abu Bakr’s 6 yearold daughter.

At one point, Muhammad agreed to recognize the local gods, in addition to Allah (in contrast to grouping all of them under the label, “Allah”). When he did this, the leaders of the city generously began to welcome him. However, this move caused his followers to lose faith in him and so he declared that Satan, rather than Gabriel, had spoken through him and that Gabriel had rebuked him for these recitations.⁸⁵ He rescinded the recognition of the gods of Mecca.⁸⁶ As a result, the Meccan officials intensified their mockery of him and began to make his life difficult.

Abi Umayya, Zaynab bint Jahsh, Juwayriyya bint al-Harith, Ramla bint Abi Sufyan, Rayhana bint Zayd, Safiyya bint Huyayy, Maymunah bint a Qasim. www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/prophet-muhammad-3315.php

⁸³ Ibn Isaq/Hisham 167

⁸⁴ Ali later became Muhammed’s son-in-law, and Islam’s Fourth Caliph

⁸⁵ Tabari 1192, Quran 22:52-54

⁸⁶ These verses in the Quran are called, *the Satanic verses*

Although Muslims describe this season as a time of “persecution,” the earliest and most reliable biographers (Ibn Ishaq and Sahih al-Bukhari) record the death of only one Muslim during this period – an old woman who died from stress.

The death of his uncle, Abu Talib, in 619, left Muhammad without a protector in Mecca. When Abu Talib was on his deathbed, Meccan leaders came to him and implored him to bring his nephew to a place of co-existence. Here is the record reported by Ibn Ishaq.

Abu Sufyan, with other sundry notables, went to Abu Talib and said: "You know the trouble that exists between us and your nephew, so call him and let us make an agreement that he will leave us alone and we will leave him alone; let him have his religion and we will have ours."⁸⁷

Muhammad rejected the offer of some sort of compromise. By this time, his attitude was that his religion was intended to dominate, not be on an equal footing with any other religion. Muslims were becoming increasingly violent with those who did not agree with them.

In an effort to find a political alliance that would give him clout, Muhammad joined with the people of Medina (an Arab town to the north of Mecca) in a treaty of war against Mecca.⁸⁸ In response, the Meccans decided to capture Muhammad and put him to death. When the Meccans came to his home to assassinate him, Muhammad escaped by using his son-in-law, Ali, to trick the assassins into thinking that they had trapped him.

The moderation of the Meccans is seen in that they did not retaliate against Ali or his wife, but rather, allowed them to remain in Mecca for several days to complete the transfer of Muhammad's family business to Medina.⁸⁹

This is in stark contrast to Muhammad's behavior. In Banu Qurayza, Muhammad slaughtered an entire tribe of people, because one of their leaders had switched loyalties in a conflict. None of the slaughtered villagers had participated in the matter in one way whatsoever.

Muhammad moved (escaped) to Medina in 622, which marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

Muhammad's message became increasingly intolerant and ruthless. This is seen in the progression of violence in the Quran. Earlier parts of the Quran promise eternal damnation to those who do not accept this religion. Later parts of the Quran add violence and earthly defeat at the hands of the Muslims to those who will not accept Muhammad as a prophet. In the later years of his life, “infidels” were evicted, enslaved, given the choice of conversion or death, and sometimes rounded up and slaughtered, if it were more convenient to do so.

To fund his quest for world domination, Muhammad instructed his followers to raid the caravans that were traveling to the shrines at Mecca during the holy days – days that the caravans would not expect such a thing to happen. Muhammad provided his people with revelations from Allah that allowed them to kill innocent travelers and steal their property.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Ibn Ishaq 278

⁸⁸ Ibn Ishaq 299-301

⁸⁹ Ibn Ishaq 326

⁹⁰ Ibn Ishaq/Hisham, 426

Muhammad's followers began to develop a lust for things that could be taken in battle, including captured women and children. Often the people captured in battle were brought before the prophet where they would plead for their lives. Traditions picture Muhammad as being unmoved and ordering their deaths. In one case, he ordered a man to be slain, telling the man that Hell would take care of the man's orphaned daughter.⁹¹

The Meccans sent an army to protect the caravans, which resulted in the Battle of Badr. The Meccans were defeated, and this emboldened Muhammad to move forward with more conquests.

At first, Muhammad had tried to gain the favor of the three Jewish groups at Medina. He had preached that Christians and Jews could attain salvation through their own faith. Jewish knowledge of the Torah threatened Muhammad's claim to be a prophet of God because his stories did not jibe with what they knew to be the true stories. Conveniently, Allah told Muhammad that the Jews had corrupted their own stories to hide the existence of his role as "The Prophet."

By this time, Arab polytheists in significant numbers were converting to Muhammad's new religion. As a result, Muhammad began the practice of imposing his religion by force. One of the first such actions was against the Jews of Medina, who refused to give up their Judaism and become Muslims.

Muhammad looked for an opportunity to move against them. On the pretext that a Jew had harassed a Muslim woman, Muhammad moved against the Qaunuqa community of Jews. They were driven from their homes and land. Muhammad wanted to put to death every male Jew, but he was talked out of it by an associate. Later, Allah rebuked Muhammad for not killing all of the male Jews of the community. The Muslims took all of the Qaunuqa Jews' property, and Muhammad personally reserved a fifth of the loot for himself (a rule that made it into the Quran).

Muhammad's next target was the Medina Jewish community of Banu Nadir. On Muhammad's orders, Muslims killed several prominent leaders of this community. Muhammad then claimed that an angel had appeared to him in a dream and told him that the Jews were going to target him in retaliation. Based on this angelic revelation, Muhammad laid siege to the community and forced the inhabitants to surrender. They were driven out of the region. Allah then gave a revelation to Muhammad that he was to confiscate all of the Jews' property for himself.

A surviving group of Jews from this community fled to a fortress. A representative of Muhammad went to the fortress and promised them peace talks. Muhammad sent a contingent to escort them to the peace talks. When the trusting Jews left the fortress, the Muslim's slaughtered them.

Muhammad now was wealthy and powerful. He evicted the remaining Jews from Medina (the Banu Qurayza community) and declared that all of their properties belonged to him, personally. Muhammad ordered that a ditch be dug outside of town and that every Banu Qurayza man and boy over the age of 12 be brought to the ditch – arriving in groups. Each person would be forced

⁹¹ Ibn Ishaq 459

to kneel and then he was beheaded. The body and head were dumped into the ditch. Between 700 – 900 men and boys were slaughtered in this fashion.⁹²

The surviving children became slaves of the Muslims and their widows became sex slaves (some were traded for horses). Muhammad took the Jewish girl, Rayhana, as his personal concubine the very night her husband was beheaded.

One way that Islam grew was through the many children born to the captive women. Following one battle, Muhammad instructed his troops that when they were raping the women to not practice, *coitus interruptus*, “Since Allah has written whom he is going to create.”⁹³ Muslim men could have four wives, but as many sex slaves as they desired. Muhammad was an exception – he had eleven wives. Muhammad instigated the practice of keeping one fifth of the captured women for himself. He had a stable of sex slaves, which he doled out like party favors to some of his associates.

From Medina, Muhammad waged a campaign of terror. Helpless communities were savaged, murdered, and raped. The tribes began to convert to Islam out of a sense of self-preservation. Muhammad preached that it was Allah’s will for Muslims to rule over all other people.

Muhammad’s personal life became a life of hedonism and excess, all justified by frequent revelations from Allah. He demanded strict obedience of his followers, telling them that they obeyed God by obeying him. The authority for this lifestyle is immortalized in the Quran.⁹⁴

An example is the first verse of Sura 66. Two of Muhammed’s wives were pressuring him to not visit his favorite sex slave. In response, Allah said, “O Prophet! Why do you forbid (yourself) that which Allah has made lawful for you, seeking to please your wives?”⁹⁵

Later, Muhammad conquered Mecca and put to death those who had ridiculed him years before. In less than a decade, Muhammad had evolved into a warlord and a death machine. As noted above, in the earlier Quran (produced during his years in Mecca), unbelievers are told to follow the example of Muhammad or suffer Hell. The later Quran (produced during his years at Medina) tells unbelievers to obey Muhammad or suffer death.

When Muhammad died in 632, he did not leave a clear line of succession. The result was a deep schism which erupted into violence. This problem persists even today in the Sunni/Shia conflict. Thousands died in the battle between Muhammad’s favorite wife, Aisha, and his adopted son, Ali.

Violence continues to characterize the religion. Muslims are instructed to invite their enemies to either embrace Islam, or pay *jizya* (protection money), or die.

In Muhammad’s words, *I have been ordered to fight the people till they say: “None has the right to be worshipped but Allah,” and if they say so, pray like our prayers, face our Qibla and*

⁹² Ibn Kathir Vol. 3, page 170

⁹³ Bukhari 34:432

⁹⁴ Suras 33 and 66 specifically

⁹⁵ Sura 66:1

*slaughter as we slaughter, then their blood and property will be sacred to us and we will not interfere with them.*⁹⁶

CONCLUSION

Does the Quran pass the test of reliability? Do the assertions of its advocates prevail? In my opinion, given the history of the Quran and its supposed origin, it does not. Here are some of the reasons for my conclusion.

- The variants in existing manuscripts indicate that the current standard Quran is questionable as to its being the very words that the angel Gabriel spoke to Muhammad.
- Its suspicious origin casts great doubt on its veracity. Muhammad claims to have been visited by the angel Gabriel. No one but Muhammad witnessed these visits. There was not, nor is there now, any means whereby the validity of this claim can be sustained. It is Muhammad's word and his only. There is no test to which Muhammad's proclamations can be put (such as fulfilled prophecy, as is found in the Bible).
- Given the manner in which these supposed visits happened - just when Muhammed needed for them to occur - often with some word that propped up his status or gave him some special privilege (take possessions, including women for his harem), makes the purported revelations suspicious.
- None of the revelations ever were a rebuke to Muhammad, except for the time that he agreed to allow Allah to co-exists with the Meccan gods – which he rescinded when his people began to lose faith in him – then he claimed that Satan had spoken through him and that Allah had rebuked him for this mistake.
- The supposed scientific facts are vague and not convincing. The Quran's descriptions are the sort of thing that one finds in poetic expression rather than the expression of literal truth – the shape of the earth, the creation of man, the expansion of the universe. Some of these are the sort of thing that one finds in poetic license – expressing a truth in symbols and figures of speech. Moreover, for more than 2000 years, going back to the ancient Greeks, informed people have considered the earth to be round. Pythagoras, for example, in 500 BC put forth this proposition. So, even if Muhammad's describing the earth by the figure of an ostrich egg was meant to convey its shape, it was not a new idea.
- The manner in which the declarations of the Quran changed through the years jeopardizes its credibility. For example, early on, when Muhammed was somewhat powerless, those who refused to recognize him as a prophet were threatened with hell – no punishment in this life. Sura 2:256 states, "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error." Later, when Muhammad was powerful and somewhat untouchable, the Quran authorized physical consequences for failing to recognize the prophet – plunder, rape, and death.
- There is no truth in the statement, "His enemies even offered him wealth and kingship if he abandoned his call to the belief in One God. Instead, the Prophet (pbuh) lived a very austere life and never pursued any worldly gains like fame, power or wealth." For that

⁹⁶ Bukhari 8:387

matter, just the opposite is true. He pursued everything for himself and his life became rather opulent.

In short, the Quran appears to be a document composed to justify the hedonistic and ruthless lifestyle of Muhammad. His persuasive personality seems to have brought forth the first converts, then, intimidation became his style of evangelism.

Thus, the lifestyle of the one who produced the Quran (supposedly the vehicle through which the angel spoke), the occasion for supposed angelic pronouncements, and the content of the Quran, discredit its veracity.

MORMON LITERATURE

The next contender for the role of being the Divine Revelation of God, His Will, His Character, etc., that we will consider in our project will be the documents of Mormonism.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known as, “Mormons,”⁹⁷ now numbers more than 14 million adherents world-wide. Prominent Mormons, such as Ezra Taft Benson⁹⁸ and Mitt Romney⁹⁹ have been important figures in recent American history.

Four documents/books currently constitute the Mormon scriptural canon:

- The 1611 *King James version of the Holy Bible* (in non-English speaking countries other versions are sanctioned)
- *The Book of Mormon* (subtitled since 1981, *Another Testament of Jesus Christ*)
- *The Doctrine and Covenants of the LDS Church*
- *The Pearl of Great Price* (containing the *Book of Moses*, *The Book of Abraham*, *Joseph Smith – Matthew*, and *Joseph Smith – History and The Articles of Faith*)

It is possible that at some future time, other documents will be added to the canon, because Mormons believe in on-going revelation. The doctrine of continuing revelation states that individual members are entitled to divine revelation for confirmation of truths, gaining knowledge, wisdom, and dealing with personal challenges. Parents especially are entitled to divine revelation for rearing their families.

Divine revelation for the entire church must come from God to the President of the Church, who is considered to be a prophet in the same sense as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Peter, and other biblical figures.

When prophets and general authorities of the church speak, “as moved upon by the Holy Ghost,” it shall be considered to have the authority of Scripture (the mind of the Lord, the will of the Lord, the word of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation). Members are exhorted to

⁹⁷ The term, “Mormon,” comes from the name of the ancestor of the supposed author of the *Book of Mormon*

⁹⁸ The United States Secretary of Agriculture during both of President Eisenhower’s terms and 13 President of the LDS from 1985 until his death in 1994.

⁹⁹ Businessman, Governor of Massachusetts, Republican nominee for President in 2012, Utah’s US Senator, beginning in 2019

ponder these new revelations and pray for themselves, to determine the truthfulness of the doctrine.¹⁰⁰

The *Doctrine and Covenants* states, “All things must be done decently and in order, and by common consent in the church.”¹⁰¹ LDS Church President, Harold B. Lee taught that “the only one authorized to bring forth any new doctrine is the President of the Church, who, when he does, will declare it as revelation from God and it will be so accepted by the Council of the Twelve and sustained by the body of the Church.”¹⁰²

Here are some of the significant historical additions to the doctrines of the LDS:

- April 6, 1830: When the church was organized the 1611 King James Version of the Bible and the *Book of Mormon* were unanimously accepted as Scripture.¹⁰³
- June 9, 1830: First conference of the Church, *The Articles and Covenants* of the Church of Christ, now known as *Doctrines and Covenants*.
- August 17, 1835: Select revelations from Joseph Smith were unanimously accepted as scripture.¹⁰⁴ These were later printed in the *Doctrine and Covenants*.
- October 10, 1880: *The Pearl of Great Price* was unanimously accepted as Scripture.¹⁰⁵ Also at that time, other revelations in the *Doctrine and Covenants* – which had not been accepted as scripture in 1835 because they were received after that date – were unanimously accepted as scripture.¹⁰⁶
- October 6, 1890: *Official Declaration #1* was accepted unanimously as scripture. It later began to be published in the *Doctrine and Covenants*.
- April 3, 1976: Two visions (one received by Joseph Smith and the other by Joseph F. Smith) were accepted as Scripture and added to the *Pearl of Great Price*. (The two visions were later moved to the *Doctrine and Covenants* as sections 137 and 138.)
- September 30, 1978: *Official Declaration #2* was accepted unanimously as scripture. It immediately was added to the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

¹⁰⁰ A tactic used by Mormon missionaries is consistent with this belief. It is customary for a Mormon missionary to urge a person to accept a gift of the Book of Mormon, then, as they read it to pray and see if they have a witness from the Holy Spirit that what they are reading is the Word of God.

¹⁰¹ *Doctrines and Covenant*, 28:13

¹⁰² Harold B. Lee, *The First General Conference for Germany, Austria, Holland, Italy, Switzerland, France, Belgium, and Spain of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, held in Munich, Germany, August 24-26, 1973, with reports and discourses.

¹⁰³ Although there was no declaration in April, 1830, that these two were/are the authority, in the June 9, 1830, first General Conference, these two documents, by default were sustained when the *Articles and Covenants* were sustained (see *Doctrines and Covenants* 20:8-11).

¹⁰⁴ Joseph B. Smith, B. H. Roberts (editor with footnotes), *The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (7 volumes – first published 1902) 2:243:246

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/articles-and-covenants-circa-april-1830-dc-20/1#historical-intro>

¹⁰⁶ Cannon, George Q. (November 15, 1880), “Comments,” *Millennial Star* 42 (46). Page 724 referring to the General Conference of October 10, 1880

As noted above, the 1611 King James Version of the Bible is considered by Mormons to be the Word of God, but the LDS Church also teaches that omissions and mistranslations occurred, even in the earliest manuscripts. Therefore, according to the LDS Church, the most reliable way to assure the accuracy of a passage is not by comparing texts, but by comparing a text with the *Book of Mormon* and other LDS revelations.

The *Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible* is not a translation but a revision of the Bible by Joseph Smith. He was killed before he completed it. In this work, Smith stated that the Song of Solomon is not inspired Scripture and therefore is not in the LDS canon. However, it is printed in every edition of the KJV that is published by the church. Interestingly, although the KJV printed by the LDS Church contains references to the JST, no portions of the JST have been officially canonized by the church.

Also, the Apocrypha was a part of the 1611 King James Bible and was included in the KJV version's first 274 years. It was removed in the editions printed in 1885 and thereafter. Even though the LDS considers the 1611 KJV as its authority, it does not consider the Apocrypha as a part of its canon.

Joseph Smith and the Origin of Mormon Literature

The history and origin of Mormon literature calls to mind the origin of the Quran, in that both originated in the visions received by a single individual. One difference between Mormon literature and the Quran is that material other than that from the originator have been added to Mormon literature in recent years.

NOTE: Many history textbooks present the story of the Mormons. However, in an effort to be fair in presenting the origin, history, and beliefs of the Mormons, we allow Mormons to tell their own story. The material on the next several pages is gleaned from the two websites owned by the Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter Day Saints (*lds.org* and *mormon.org*) and a non-official LDS website (*historyofmormonism.com*).

Joseph Smith was born on December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Vermont. He was the fifth child of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack. The family was among the many who found farming Vermont to be fraught with insurmountable difficulty. In 1811, they moved to Lebanon, New Hampshire. While in Lebanon, a typhoid epidemic swept through the area, killing 6,000 people in that region. Joseph contracted the disease and in time developed an infection in his leg. Dartmouth Medical College was nearby and several physicians from the college treated Joseph. They recommended that the leg be amputated, but Lucy would not allow it. Dr. Nathan Smith proposed that they open the leg and cut out the infected portions. Joseph was about seven years old at the time. Because of this incident, he had a slight limp for the rest of his life.

In 1816 the family moved to Palmyra, New York, which was in the heart of the Erie Canal boom country. The family purchased some uncleared land south of Palmyra and continued in the hard-scrabble farming that always had been their lot. They were not successful farmers.

The Smith family was very religious; they read the Bible and prayed together each evening, but like many on the frontier, they did not regularly attend church. In time, Joseph's mother and some of his siblings joined the Presbyterian Church, but Joseph Smith Sr. did not join them.

Joseph Smith Jr. was very loyal to his father and so he remained at home with his father when the rest of the family attended the local Presbyterian Church.

As he entered his teen years, young Joseph became increasingly agitated about the state of his soul. At times he would go out into the open field at night and stare at the stars, think about God, and ponder his eternal state. He began to visit various churches and according to his later testimony,

“How to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of Scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.”¹⁰⁷

Smith recounted that while reading the Bible, James 1:5 grabbed his attention, *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.* Smith said that as he read this passage, “It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did.”¹⁰⁸

The First Vision

In the spring of 1820, when he was fourteen years old, Joseph Smith went into the forest to pray, seeking Divine wisdom concerning which church to join, and how he could get rid of his troubling sense of sin. Here is how he reported what happened that day.

“After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me, I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Smith, History, 1:12 (quotes from Joseph Smith-History may be found at <http://LDS.org> and <http://historyofmormonism.com>

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*

My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: ‘they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.’

He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home.”¹⁰⁹

Mormons call this event, *the First Vision*, because it marks the beginning of Joseph Smith’s prophetic and revelatory mission.

He returned home and at first kept the vision a secret. The only thing that he told his family was that he had discovered, by himself, that he should not join any of the available churches. He occasionally did attend the meeting of one of the churches in the area and often discussed matters of religion with some of the local ministers. He did not hide the fact that he now considered all churches to be in error and he began to tell others about the vision.

As would be expected, his declaration that all churches were wrong did not put him in a good relationship with church leaders. Ministers began warning people to stay away from him, declaring that the vision was from the devil, since God no longer worked by revelation.

The Visit of the Angel Moroni and The Second Vision

The Smith family accepted Joseph’s description of the vision to be the truth. Because the family declared Joseph’s vision to be valid, they experienced the same prejudice in the community that Joseph encountered. Some in the area refused to hire any member of the family for day labor.

In November of 1823, Alvin Smith, the oldest son, died. Alvin’s death caused Joseph once again to be agitated over the state of his soul. At Alvin’s funeral, the minister had said that the unconverted would be consigned to hell. Joseph realized that in the three years since his first vision, he had grown distanced from God. He had not committed any “malignant” sins, but he was guilty of “levity.”

On November 21, 1823, Joseph knelt to pray in his room and a light suddenly appeared above him. A figure appeared, dressed in a white robe, standing in the air next to Joseph’s bed. The being said that he was an angel named Moroni who had been sent from God to call Joseph Smith to be a prophet of God and to complete a special God-ordained mission. He told Joseph that a book, written on metal plates, was deposited in a hill (later called the *Hill Cumorah* after a hill in the Book of Mormon) near Palmyra. It contained the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the

¹⁰⁹ Joseph Smith-History 1:15-20

form in which God's prophets had taught it to the ancient inhabitants of the American continent. He also spoke of the work that Joseph would be called to perform. When Moroni had completed the message, he disappeared.

The angel appeared to Joseph Smith two more times that night and repeated the same message, each time adding something more information. He exhorted Joseph to be faithful and not use the book for material gain. Neither was he to show it to anyone except those whom God would appoint. After the third visit, the Angel ascended into heaven and the sun came up.

Joseph immediately got out of bed and prepared to do his daily chores, but he found himself surprisingly weak. He went into the field with his father, but his father soon realized that Joseph was not well. He told Joseph to go home. As Joseph started to climb the fence that surrounded the field, he fell to the ground unconscious. When he awoke, he saw the angel Moroni again standing above him. The angel told Joseph to go tell his father about the recent visions. Joseph did so, and his father, after some reflection, declared that the visions truly came from God. He told Joseph to go to the hill as the angel had instructed.

Guided by the vision of the hill he had seen in his mind, Joseph found the spot where the records were deposited. He cleared away the dirt around a large stone which marked the spot and started to open the box containing the records and other sacred items. The angel immediately reappeared and told him that the time had not come for him to remove the records, and that he had much to learn before he would be ready to open the record and translate it. The angel told him to return to that spot every year on September 22nd, until the time was right for him to open the box.

Treasure Digging and Marriage

Over the next few years, Joseph returned to the hill every year on September 22nd. Joseph and His family continued to be harassed and mocked by the town people because of his visions.

Upper state New York was full of legends about buried Spanish or pirate treasure (Captain Kidd's treasure was often sought). In 1825, a man named Josiah Stowell hired both Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr. to help him search for buried treasure. Stowell had heard that young Joseph had the ability to find hidden things as well as his gift of finding water (a dowser), and so he offered the Smiths employment as "diggers." The Smiths were so desperate for cash that they accepted Stowell's offer. Stowell hired them to search for Spanish treasure, not in New York, but in Harmony, Pennsylvania.

After one month of fruitless digging in the vicinity of Harmony, the Smiths convinced Stowell to give up the venture. According to Joseph Smith, Moroni later commanded him to stay away from money diggers and the whole treasure-seeking business, because these were greedy, wicked people and he was called to a higher work.

While working in Harmony, Joseph stayed with the Hale family who had a daughter, Emma. Joseph and Emma married in January 1827.

The Golden Plates and the Translation of the Records

On September 22, 1827, in obedience to what he had been told to do, Joseph and Emma went to the hill where the records were buried. During that visit, Moroni gave Joseph the golden plates and the Urim & Thummim.¹¹⁰ According to a later description by those who were allowed to see the plates in a vision,

- each plate was about as thin as rolled tin with characters engraved upon them;
- they were either gold or gold in appearance;
- they were connected by three rings and the entire “book” measured about six by six by eight inches thick.

Two-thirds of the record was sealed. Joseph never translated that portion. For the next few months he studied the records. With the aid of the Urim and Thummim, he began the work of translation, with Emma serving as his scribe. Because he had been instructed to not let anyone see the plates, a curtain separated Joseph and Emma. He translated and she, on the other side of the curtain, wrote down what he dictated (the practice of having the scribe separated from Joseph and the plates by a curtain, was the consistent practice during the entire translation process).

News that Joseph had records inscribed on metal plates with the appearance of gold spread through the surrounding community. A local farmer named Martin Harris, who was much older and well respected in the community, became interested in the record. Martin was curious, but also skeptical. Joseph Smith needed to find financial supporters, and so he sought to convince Harris that the work was genuine. Joseph, without angelic permission, copied some of the characters from the plates onto a piece of paper along with his initial translation and gave them to Harris. Harris took this document to Albany and to New York City, planning to show the characters and translation to various scholars hoping to confirm that the work was accurate.

Harris took the document to Charles Anthon at Columbia College (now University), and showed him the characters and Smith’s translation. Anthon and Harris differ in their later accounts of the meeting. Harris asserted that Anthon confirmed the antiquity of the characters and the accuracy of the translation. Anthon later insisted that Harris’ report was not true.

Anthon said that he had asked to see the book from whence the characters supposedly had been copied, but that Harris had replied that he could not bring the record because it was sealed. When Harris told Anthon that an Angel of God had shown Joseph where the record was buried, Anthon rejected the whole affair and declared, “I cannot read a sealed book.”¹¹¹

Whatever really happened during Harris’ visits with the “scholars,” Harris became convinced of the validity of Smith’s story and began to support Joseph financially. He also began to replace Emma as Joseph’s translation scribe, still following the practice of being on one side of a suspended curtain, with Smith and the plates on the other side.

¹¹⁰ The two stones which had been used by the Israelite priests for receiving revelation -see Exodus 28:30)

¹¹¹ Mormons consider this to be the fulfillment of Isaiah 29:11-12, in which a book is delivered to the learned man who is unable to read it, and then given to an unlearned man who, by the power of God, can read it.

Harris' wife, Lucy, was not convinced of the validity of Smith's story. She became angry over the time Martin spent with Joseph as well as the money that her husband was giving to Joseph. In the summer of 1828, after Smith had translated 116 handwritten pages, Harris begged Joseph to let him show the translation to his wife so that she would know he was really working on something. Joseph prayed to the Lord about it and received from the Lord a definite "no," but Harris was insistent. Twice more Joseph asked the Lord to let Harris borrow the writings. Finally, upon Joseph's third request, the Lord said yes, but only if Harris swore an oath to show them only to a few designated persons. Harris agreed, and Joseph gave him the writings.

A short time after Martin Harris left for his home in Palmyra, Joseph's wife, Emma, gave birth to a son. The baby died a few hours after birth, but in addition to that sorrow, Emma also came close to death. For nearly two weeks, Joseph sat at her bedside, rarely sleeping or eating. When she began to improve, Joseph began to realize that he had not heard from Harris, who had been gone for three weeks.

Emma encouraged Joseph to go to Palmyra and find Harris. Joseph left Emma in the care of relatives and went to his parent's home in Palmyra. He immediately sent for Harris.

When he arrived, Harris sheepishly admitted that he had lost the writings. Mormons call these "the lost 116 pages." He confessed that he had broken his oath and had shown the writings to many interested people and eventually lost track of who had them. Joseph was devastated. In a subsequent revelation Joseph was rebuked by the Lord for not accepting the original response to his request, and for fearing men above God. Because of this, the plates and the Urim and Thummim were taken away from Smith for a season.

When the plates were once again entrusted to Joseph, he was commanded to not translate those passages already translated and lost. The Lord revealed that those who had stolen the writings were planning to alter them and publish them. Then, when Joseph retranslated the record, they would use his second translation, compared to his former translation, in an attempt to prove that he could not translate, or that the work was a fraud (they assumed that there would be a difference between the two). The Lord told Joseph to go forward and translate the rest of the record, because it contained a summary of the lost 116 pages.

The Arrival of Oliver Cowdery

Shortly after this episode, a schoolteacher named Oliver Cowdery came to work in the Palmyra area and heard about Joseph Smith (whom the locals disparagingly called "Peepstone Joe") and his "Gold Bible." Curious about these reports, Oliver talked to Hyrum, Joseph's older brother, who informed Oliver that Joseph and Emma had gone to stay with Emma's parents in Harmony, Pennsylvania. In April of 1829, Oliver traveled to Harmony to meet Joseph.

Oliver quickly became convinced that Joseph's story was true and that the plates were what Joseph said they were. Oliver became Joseph's primary scribe for the handwritten draft of the Book of Mormon (which is label that had been given to the plates). From April 7 to the last week of June, 1829, Joseph dictated and Oliver wrote, with the customary curtain separating them. In sixty working days, they produced the final portion of the Book of Mormon (most of the book had not been translated before Oliver joined Joseph Smith in the project).

The Restoration of the Priesthood

The only time that Smith and Cowdrey took a break from translating the plates was when they would go into the woods to pray about what they were discovering in the Book. On May 15, 1829, shortly after they translated the Book of 3 Nephi, which mentions that baptism should be done only those who have authority, they prayed about how one might receive the authority from God to perform baptisms. While they were praying, an angel appeared to them and identified himself as John the Baptist, who had baptized Jesus Christ. John the Baptist gave them the authority to baptize in Jesus Christ's name. The angel told them that this authority was called "the priesthood." This priesthood, he explained to them, is the "lesser priesthood," which gives the holder power to baptize, but not power to give the Holy Ghost. Immediately, Joseph baptized Oliver and then Oliver baptized Joseph.

In June, during another prayer recess in the woods, Peter, James, and John, appeared to Joseph and Oliver. The three apostles gave them the higher authority, called the "Melchizedek Priesthood," which included the authority to give the gift of the Holy Ghost and to preside over Christ's Church. This concept of authority and priesthood is a basic Mormon tenet.

The Witnesses to the Book of Mormon

At the direction of the angel, only Smith had been permitted to see and handle the plates, unless God directed otherwise. As Joseph translated a passage in Ether 5:3, *And in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established; and the testimony of three, and this work, in the which shall be shown forth the power of God and also his word, of which the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost bear record—and all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day* – he realized that God was directing him to allow witnesses to see the gold pages so that they could testify as to their existence.

Three men were selected to be these special witnesses of the Book of Mormon: Oliver Cowdrey, Martin Harris, and David Whitmer, all of whom at one time or another had served as a scribe. The four men retired to woods and prayed for a manifestation from God. After some time, Harris withdrew, feeling that he was to blame for the lack of a heavenly vision. After he left, an angel appeared to the three remaining men and they were given a vision in which they were able to see the plates, the Urim & Thummim, and other artifacts (note that they did not physically see and handle these items, but only did so in a vision). The men reported hearing the voice of God commanding them to testify to the world that these things were true. In the vision, they were permitted to see, touch, and lift the plates (how that was done as a vision was not made clear in their later reports). After the vision closed, Joseph found Martin Harris alone in the woods praying. The two of them continued praying and at last the angel reappeared and Harris saw the same things. Their testimony is affixed to the beginning of every copy of the Book of Mormon as "The Testimony of Three Witnesses."

A short time later, eight other men were allowed to have the same visionary experience of seeing the plates: Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jr., John Whitmer, Hiram Page, Joseph Smith, Sr., Hyrum Smith, and Samuel Smith. Their testimony is known as the "Testimony of Eight Witnesses." None of these eleven men ever denied that they had this visionary experience, even though they sometimes faced threats because of their refusal to deny the experience. Four of the witnesses later left the Mormon Church because of unrelated

disagreements. Of the eleven, seven died in full fellowship with the Mormon Church. The four who left the church, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, and Hiram Page, did not deny their visionary experience even though disagreements and conflicts caused them to leave the Mormon Church. After the translation was completed, Joseph Smith returned the gold plates to the angel Moroni.

Publishing the Book of Mormon

On June 11, 1829, Joseph Smith obtained a copyright for the Book of Mormon. E. B. Grandin, a publisher in Palmyra, New York, agreed to publish the book, but because the venture was risky, he required a deposit of \$3,000 dollars in advance. Martin Harris mortgaged his farm to raise the \$3,000 dollars. Joseph insisted that Grandin never be allowed to have the entire manuscript in his possession. Each day several handwritten sheets were taken to the publisher where he set the type and printed the pages. At the end of the day, the sheets were returned to Joseph Smith.

News of the forthcoming publication excited the local press and even made it into major newspapers in New York City. A local journalist named Abner Cole, writing under the pseudonym Obadiah Dogberry, stole some printed pages of the Book of Mormon and published them illegally in his newspaper along with mocking commentary. Joseph, who had the sole publishing rights, threatened legal action, and Cole ceased his journalistic mocking.

In late March of 1830, the first copies of the Book of Mormon were published.

The Church is Organized

With the Book of Mormon published and the Priesthood authority restored, Joseph Smith announced that a church needed to be established. The Church of Christ, as the Mormon Church was originally called, was organized on April 6, 1830. Over 40 people were present, but only six constituted the first members. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were accepted as teachers and elders of the Church. Many others were baptized in that first meeting, including Joseph's father and mother, and his childhood friend Orrin Porter Rockwell. Joseph also reportedly cast an evil spirit out of an early convert named, Newel Knight.

The Mormons immediately sent missionaries out into the surrounding regions and found success in Fayette and Colesville, New York, but only a few converts came from Palmyra. Elders, priests, and teachers were ordained in the congregations. Almost every male was ordained to the priesthood and appointed to some leadership function.

Joseph Smith's preaching of the new doctrines began to arouse controversy in the region. As a result, Smith was arrested for stirring up trouble in the community by preaching the Book of Mormon and organizing public meetings. The court acquitted Joseph of the charges, but vigilante mobs continued to plague the Mormons at their meetings and at their baptisms. In spite of these difficulties, the growth of the church continued. Mormon missionaries were sent throughout Canada and New England. By revelation, Joseph appointed Emma to organize a hymn book for the young Mormon Church.

In the fall of 1830, Joseph Smith received a revelation that missionaries were to preach to the Indians, whom the Mormons referred to as the Lamanites (after a tribe in the Book of Mormon), in Missouri and to preach along the way. The "Mission to the Lamanites," sent Peter Whitmer, Parley Pratt, and Ziba Peterson westwards. Parley Pratt, a recent convert from Ohio, had

previously been a preacher among the Disciples of Christ. As the group traveled toward Missouri they passed through Kirtland, Ohio, where Pratt's old friend, Sidney Rigdon, was the minister of a Disciples congregation. Rigdon soon joined the Mormon Church. Many other Disciples along the way also became Mormons. As a result of the number of Disciples that were converting to Mormonism, Alexander Campbell produced the first books and pamphlets ever to be written in opposition to Mormonism.

The Mormons continued to suffer legal harassment and mob disruption of meetings in New York. Smith was arrested numerous times, because his preaching "disturbed the peace." As Joseph prayed for guidance, he received a revelation instructing the members to prepare to move to Kirtland, Ohio, where the "Law of the Lord" for the Church would be given. Joseph and his family moved to Kirtland in January 1831. Most of the faithful Mormons remaining in New York followed the Smiths to Ohio.

Within months, Joseph sent a number of Church members to Independence, Missouri, to establish the Church there as well. This resulted in two centers of Mormon activity, but the LDS Church headquarters remained in Kirtland.

The earliest persecution in Ohio was brought against Joseph Smith on March 24th, 1832, a little more than a year after his arrival in Kirtland. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were attacked by a group of drunken men who after beating the pair tarred and feathered them. Strangely, in the five years that followed this act of violence, the Mormons and their neighbors in Kirtland peacefully coexisted.

In Missouri the story was different. The Mormons in Missouri were engaged in tremendous struggles with the non-Mormons. In May 1834, Joseph Smith formed an army called Zion's Camp and marched his men from Ohio to Missouri to try to put an end to the Missouri conflict. His efforts at armed intimidation were unsuccessful. The struggles continued.

On February 14, 1835, the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon (David Whitmer, Martin Harris, and Oliver Cowdery) were commissioned to select the Twelve Apostles. They chose Lyman Johnson, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, David Patten, Luke Johnson, William McLellan, John Boynton, Orson Pratt, William Smith, Thomas Marsh, and Parley Pratt. Shortly afterwards, they selected the first members of the Quorum of Seventy. All of these men, mostly drawn from the members of Zion's Camp, were ordained and ultimately would assume the leadership of the Mormon Church after Joseph Smith's death.

Obtaining of the Book of Abraham

In July, 1835, a traveling showman named Michael H. Chandler arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, with four mummies and several rolls of papyrus. Chandler claimed to have obtained them from an Italian archaeologist named Antonio Sebolo, who supposedly found them in 1831 near the ancient city of Thebes. Chandler, having heard that Joseph Smith was known for translating ancient documents, came to Kirtland to meet him. As Joseph Smith examined the papyri, he was convinced of their legitimacy. The Kirtland Mormons pooled their money and bought the papyri and the four mummies. Joseph spent the next few months studying and translating the papyri, which he declared to contain the writings of the patriarch Abraham and the writings of Isaac's

grandson, Joseph. He completed most of the translation by November of 1835. Ultimately, the translation would be published as the *Book of Abraham*.

Dedication of the Kirtland Temple

The Kirtland Temple, the first to be built by the Mormons, was dedicated on March 27, 1836. Between 900 and 1,000 Church members sat in the temple, and hundreds stood outside, unable to find seating in the building. Scriptures were read and hymns were sung. Sidney Rigdon spoke for a long time, recalling the sacrifices they had made to ensure the temple was completed. Joseph Smith offered the dedicatory prayer, which he had received by revelation, and which is now contained in the *Doctrine and Covenants* as *section 109*. Many Church officers spoke throughout the meeting. Smith describes what happened next,

“George A. Smith arose and began to prophesy, when a noise was heard like the sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the Temple, and all the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power; many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw glorious visions; and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels, which fact I declared to the congregation. The people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple), and were astonished at what was taking place. This continued until the meeting closed at eleven P.M.”¹¹²

NOTE: Prophecy, speaking in tongues, and the gift of healing are prominent doctrines of Mormonism.

The Collapse of the Kirtland Community

The time of peace in Kirtland ended late in 1837. Joseph Smith and other Latter-day Saints leaders had illegally organized a bank in 1836, The Kirtland Safety Society. The bank failed in November 1837.

Armed with threats and warrants, creditors swarmed in upon Joseph. The non-Mormon creditors, whom he could not repay, brought a series of lawsuits against Smith. Thirteen suits were filed against Smith between June 1837 and April 1839. The suits sought restitution for damages, totaling almost \$35,000.00. Smith was arrested seven times in four months. Six of the suits were settled out of court for approximately \$12,000.00.

Many in the Church had grown disillusioned with Smith’s leadership. Heber Kimball, an LDS apostle at the time, wrote that “there were not twenty persons on earth that would declare that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.”¹¹³

While Joseph was away from Kirtland for five weeks, the three “witnesses,” David Whitmer, Martin Harris, and Oliver Cowdery, became loyal followers of a young girl with a black stone who claimed to be a prophetess. Their loyalty to this girl resulted in their being somewhat distanced from Smith.

¹¹² *ibid*

¹¹³ Brodie page 203

Most of the LDS Church members in Kirtland who had the financial ability to do so, pulled up stakes and moved west to Missouri. Those who stayed in Kirtland faced further distress. Church dissenters and those still loyal to Smith brawled in the temple; more lawsuits were brought against Church leaders who had stayed behind, causing even these leaders to flee to Missouri. Disenchanted Mormons formed a new local church. The Church in Ohio was crumbling.

Joseph tried to remain in Kirtland but when he learned of yet another warrant for his arrest in January 1838, he left Kirtland for Missouri under cover of night, never to return.¹¹⁴

Joseph's leaving Kirtland left a void that the church members in Ohio found intolerable. The axiom, "absence makes the heart grow fonder," began to be displayed by those who remained in Kirtland. With each passing week, even those who had been critics of Smith remembered less of their prophet's financial ineptitude and spoke more of his genial warmth and his magnetic presence in the pulpit. Six hundred of the remaining Mormons pooled their resources and formed a wagon train which headed for Missouri.

Far West, Missouri

According to a revelation given by Joseph Smith, Independence, Missouri, would be the "centerplace" of the City of Zion when Jesus returned. However, disputes between Mormons and the Missourians who already occupied the region, led to the expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County in 1833. Most Mormons temporarily settled in Clay County. Toward the end of 1836, in order to recompense the Mormon losses sustained by their being expelled from Jackson County, a new county, Caldwell County, was created specifically for Mormon settlement.

In August 1836, shortly before the creation of the new county, the town of Far West, Missouri, was founded by Missouri Mormon leaders. The design of the town resembled Joseph Smith's plan for the City of Zion, which he had planned to build in Independence. Shortly after the creation of Caldwell County, Far West was made the county seat.

After the Mormons began to build Far West, Joseph Smith declared that the Garden of Eden had been in Jackson County and when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, they moved to Caldwell County and Daviess County in Missouri.

While headquartered in Far West, the official name of the church was changed from "Church of Jesus Christ" to the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."

The Mormon War of 1838

New problems erupted between the Mormons and their non-Mormon neighbors. Several things contributed to the conflict:

- Missouri was a slave state and the Mormons had strong antislavery beliefs.
- The number of Mormons grew to the point that they could out-vote the Missourians.
- As the number of Mormons increased, they began to buy and occupy land in counties outside of Caldwell, causing land prices to increase.
- Their doctrines conflicted with the traditional beliefs of the other Missouri residents.

¹¹⁴ For more on the Kirtland Safety Society Bank see <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/josephsmithsbank.htm>

When some Mormons showed up at a voting site, a mob led by a local judge attacked them. A riot ensued which was followed over the next several days by a series of escalating conflicts. As things became worse, Governor Lilburn W. Boggs called out 2,500 state militiamen to put down what he alleged to be a "Mormon rebellion." Boggs said, "Mormons must be exterminated or driven from the state."

A few days later, mobs joined by the Missouri State militia, attacked a Mormon settlement killing twenty people in what was called the "massacre at Haun's Mill." A number of small battles took place between the Mormon militia and various Missouri groups. When Latter Day Saints poured into the town of Far West for protection, they found themselves under siege. Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and others surrendered at the end of October, 1838, and were put on trial by the state for treason. The main body of the Mormons were then forced to sign over their property in Caldwell County to pay for the militia muster and then leave the state.

Smith and the other Mormon leaders were kept in jail for many months, but finally a compassionate jailer helped them to escape.

About fifteen thousand Missouri Mormons fled to the free state of Illinois where they were welcomed. After his escape, Smith joined the Mormons in Illinois. They bought the city of Commerce, located in a bend in the Mississippi, fifty-three miles above Quincy. Smith renamed the town, "Nauvoo," which is an Anglicization of the Hebrew word for "beautiful." Joseph Smith thought this swampy land in the bend of the Mississippi River would be a perfect place for the Mormons to settle. The non-Mormon residents watched in awe and with a little jealousy as the hard-working Mormons began to prosper. They dug canals to drain the swampy land, and they built brick houses and structures while most other residents of this area lived in simple log cabins.

In the spring of 1840, John C. Bennett, the Quarter Master General of the Illinois State Militia converted to Mormonism and became Joseph Smith's friend and confidante. Bennett's experience with Illinois' government allowed him to help Smith craft a city charter for Nauvoo.

At the time, the Illinois state government was closely balanced between members of the Democrat party and members of the Whig party. Both parties hoped to attract Mormon votes, and thus, both were quick to place the charter into effect. The document gave the city a number of important powers, including the establishment of municipal court, the University of Nauvoo, and an independent militia unit.

After the charter was passed, Bennett was elected Nauvoo's first mayor. A militia unit, named the "Nauvoo Legion" was established, and Smith and Bennett were made its commanding generals.

Within a few years, the population of Nauvoo reached twenty thousand (including suburbs), which made it the largest city in Illinois. A big part of the reason for this growth was the great success of the Mormon missionaries. In England, where economic times were very hard, they found a population willing to accept Mormonism and move to America. Most of the immigrants settled in Nauvoo. The majority of these English immigrants were poor and had no farming skills.

In 1841, a Masonic Lodge was established in Nauvoo and Mormon leaders quickly became prominent leaders in the Masonic Fraternity.

Although Nauvoo looked busy and prosperous, most of its economy was based on the construction of housing and public buildings, as well as credit lending.

Because much of the economy of Nauvoo was based on credit, economic problems inevitably developed. The lack of money and old debts from Ohio and Missouri caused the Mormons to resort to declaring bankruptcies and other maneuvers to clear their debts. One thing that caused them big problems was the general policy of not repaying any debts owed to non-Mormons. Joseph Smith was blamed for these practices. As could be expected, this brought a reaction from the non-Mormons surrounding Nauvoo and political problems for Mormons in the state of Illinois.

Mormon leaders felt safe from retaliation because they had their own militia, the Nauvoo Legion. The Legion, which had ceremonial duties within the church, soon evolved into an army whose main job was to protect the leadership of the church. The non-Mormons of the area saw this army as a threat and increasingly were motivated to rise to the challenge.

During this period, Joseph Smith introduced and expanded a number of distinct practices. These included

- Baptism for the dead,
- Rebaptism,
- the Nauvoo-era Endowment,
- and the ordinance of the Second Anointing.

In addition, he created a new inner council of the church — containing both men and women — called the “Anointed Quorum.”¹¹⁵

Although not publicly acknowledged, Smith had been practicing plural marriage for some time. In Nauvoo he began to teach other leaders this doctrine which he supposedly had received by Divine revelation. Some objected to this teaching.

Mayor, John C. Bennett, was caught in adultery, which Bennett defended as "spiritual wifery" or having multiple "spiritual" wives. He said that Joseph Smith endorsed it and practiced it himself. Bennett was subsequently expelled from Nauvoo in the summer of 1842 and Smith himself became the city's second mayor.

After Bennett's fall, Brigham Young became the most prominent among Smith's confidants. Young was totally loyal to Smith and helped him to promote the teachings of the Church including the new doctrine of polygamy.

Officials from Missouri frequently attempted to arrest Smith and extradite him on charges relating to the Missouri Mormon War, but the Nauvoo Municipal Court, would issue writs of

¹¹⁵ Joseph Smith ran for President of the United States in 1844 advocating for a "Theodemocracy". He wrote: "I go emphatically, virtuously, and humanely, for a Theodemocracy, where God and the people hold the power to conduct the affairs of men in righteousness." (*Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 17, 1844).

habeas corpus and force his release. The court occasionally did the same when non-Mormons tried to arrest Latter Day Saints on other charges.

Dissatisfaction with the theocracy began to develop in Nauvoo. In 1844, First Presidency member, William Law broke with the church President over both the issue of plural marriage and the legal issues plaguing Nauvoo. Law was excommunicated and founded a reformed church called the True Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He also established a newspaper named the *Nauvoo Expositor* which threatened to expose the practice of plural marriage; only one issue was published. A portion of the Nauvoo Legion, marched into the newspaper office, wrecked the press and burned every copy of the *Nauvoo Expositor* that could be found.

As the Mormon population grew, non-Mormons in Hancock County, especially in the towns of Warsaw and Carthage, felt threatened by the growing political power of the Mormons. Thomas Sharp was the publisher of a paper in nearby Warsaw, and his paper had been calling for the destruction of the Mormon Church. The destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* press was seen as an opportunity to further attack the Mormons. Non-Mormons and disaffected church members around Hancock county, Illinois, began to call for Smith's arrest on the basis of illegally destroying William Law's printing office. It appeared that the anger had reached the point that violence was about to be unleashed on Nauvoo. Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum, and several other church leaders submitted to arrest in order to prevent the pending carnage.

While the Mormon leaders awaited trial in Carthage (the county seat), Illinois governor, Ford, assured them of their safety, sending state militia to protect them. Even so, a vigilante mob (including members of the state militia that had been charged with protecting the Mormon prisoners), entered the jail and assassinated Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

The relocation to Utah

As harassment continued, the bulk of the Mormons left Nauvoo in 1846 under the leadership of Brigham Young. They ultimately settled in Utah.

Joseph Smith's widow, Emma, did not make the journey to Utah. She continued to live in Nauvoo for many years with her son, Joseph Smith III. Emma and her son formed the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In time, they changed the name to the Community of Christ. In 1866 they moved their headquarters to Plano, Illinois. Later, many of the Reorganized LDS moved to Independence, Missouri, where Joseph Smith originally had declared to be the location of Zion.

Brigham Young had been a Vermont Methodist, prior to his being converted by Smith. During the Kirtland period, Brigham Young was made one of the apostles. He organized the exodus from Missouri and after a brief preparation in Iowa, led the Mormons on their famous trek to the Great Salt Lake basin. In June 1847, the first wagon ended its 100- day crossing of the basin.

A constitutional convention was held in 1849 and the autonomous State of Deseret was declared to be in existence as a church-regulated community. In less than ten years, ninety communities had been founded, some as far as 300 miles north of the lake, and some as far south as San Bernardino, California.

The Compromise of 1850, which was an effort to avoid civil war over the issue of slavery, made Utah a territory to which the President of the United States was to send a territorial governor.

The old conflicts renewed. More than once, major military conflicts between the U.S. Army and the Nauvoo Legion had to be averted. At one point, the Mormons petitioned Congress to create the State of Deseret as one of the United States of America, but the Mormons wanted it to include Utah, portions of Colorado, California, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, Arizona, and New Mexico. Congress declined.

When Brigham Young published the *Order of Jacob*, which authorized plural marriage, there was a major congressional objection to making Utah a state. In 1879, the U.S. Supreme Court rendered its verdict against polygamy in the U.S., stating that religious freedom did not involve the right to subvert an institution upon which “society may be said to be built.” The 1862 Act of Congress against bigamy was declared constitutional. Only in 1890, after long delays and various legal maneuvers, did the Mormon Church revise its teaching on polygamy, thus opening up the way to statehood. Statehood was granted in 1896. By that time, a straitlaced kind of prosperity and stability had replaced the enthusiasm and the millennial expectation as the driving forces of Mormonism.

Mormon Beliefs

The following statements of beliefs are obtained from the official LDS website, *mormon.org*

Two years before he died, in a letter to a newspaper editor, John Wentworth, who had asked for information about the church, Joseph Smith wrote 13 statements that summarized the Mormon’s fundamental beliefs. These became the LDS Articles of Faith.

1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.
2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.
3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.
4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.
6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.
7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.
8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.
9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.
10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign

personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.
12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.
13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul- We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.¹¹⁶

NOTE: From these statements, one would not see much variance from any group that would look to the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice. However, when one goes beyond these thirteen Articles, there are other doctrines that are unorthodox.

One of the greatest departures from orthodox Christianity is the Mormon teaching that Jesus, Satan, angels, and all humans are brothers and sisters. All were begotten by God the Father and His God-wife. All humans on earth had a preexistence, which they don't remember while on earth. Here are some quotes from Mormon teachers and LDS authorities that declare this doctrine.

- “Latter-day Saints believe that angels are men and women, human beings, sons and daughters of God, personages of the same type as we are. Parley P. Pratt, an early apostle, wrote, ‘Gods, angels and men are all of one species, one race, one great family.’ Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a more recent apostle, wrote, ‘These messengers, agents, angels of the Almighty, are chosen from among his offspring and are themselves pressing forward along the course of progression and salvation, all in their respective spheres.’ (BYU Professor Robert L. Millet, *The Mormon Faith: Understanding Restored Christianity*, p.39)
- “By definition, exaltation includes the ability to procreate the family unit throughout eternity. This our Father in heaven has power to do. His marriage partner is our mother in heaven. We are their spirit children, born to them in the bonds of celestial marriage.” (*Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, LDS Church manual, p.129)
- “*Sex Among the Gods*. Sex, which is indispensable on this earth for the perpetuation of the human race, is an eternal quality which has its equivalent everywhere. It is indestructible. The relationship between men and women is eternal and must continue eternally. In accordance with Gospel philosophy there are males and females in heaven. Since we have a Father, who is our God, we must also have a mother, who possesses the attributes of godhood. This simply carries onward the logic of things earthly, and conforms with the doctrine that whatever is on this earth is simply a representation of

¹¹⁶ Mormon.org: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

spiritual conditions of deeper meaning than we can here fathom.” (John A. Widtsoe, *Rational Theology*, 1915 1st ed., p.64)

- “*Eternity of Sex*. It has already been said that sex is an eternal principle. The equivalent of sex, dimly understood by man, has always existed and will continue forever. Since sex, then, represents an eternal condition, the begetting of children is coincidentally an eternal necessity. We were begotten into the spirit world by God the Father, and have been born into the world which we now possess.” (John A. Widtsoe, *Rational Theology*, 1915 1st ed., p.146)
- “Our Father said, ‘Whom shall I send?’ (Abraham 3:27). Two of our brothers offered to help. Our oldest brother, Jesus Christ, who was then called Jehovah, said, ‘Here am I, send me’....Satan, who was called Lucifer, also came, saying, ‘Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor’ (Moses 4:1).” (*Gospel Principles*, 1997, pp.17-18).

The two eldest sons of God, Jesus and Lucifer, contended with the Father as to which one of them could be the Savior of mankind.

- “The appointment of Jesus to be the Savior of the world was contested by one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer, son of the morning. Haughty, ambitious, and covetous of power and glory, this spirit-brother of Jesus desperately tried to become the Savior of mankind.” (Seventy Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages*, Melchizedek priesthood manual, 15).
- “In the grand council called to ratify the Father’s plan, a great difference arose. The majority, led by the First Born of the Father, our Elder Brother, Jesus the Christ, was ready to accept the plan with all its conditions. The minority, led by Lucifer, a ‘son of the morning,’ feared the isolation and the pains and ills of earth. For them Lucifer proposed that they should be sent to earth, but that provisions should be made by which they would suffer no pain and would not have to make any sacrifices. All of them would be returned with earthly bodies irrespective of their works on earth. This latter plan seemed desirable that one-third of those present favored it, in direct opposition of God’s plan. Lucifer and his followers were thrown out of the council, and as opponents of God’s plan, became the devil and his angels, who strive ever to tempt men to disobey the laws of God.” (John A. Widtsoe, *Joseph Smith – Seeker After Truth*, pp.156-157)
- “According to our teachings, Satan and an army of supporters were cast down to earth from the premortal spirit world. They are spirit brothers of ours, and are real persons having spirit bodies.” (Mormon Apostle Joseph F. Merrill, *Conference Report*, April 1941, p.49)
- “And again, we exclaim, O Mormonism! No wonder that Lucifer, son of the morning, the next heir to Jesus Christ, our eldest brother, should fight so hard against his brethren; he lost the glory, the honor, power, and dominion of a God: and the knowledge, spirit, authority and keys of the priesthood of the son of God!” W. W. Phelps (*Times and Seasons*, 5:758)
- “We cannot remember that we once lived with our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and that we probably sat in meetings much like this, where the Father’s plan for us was

explained. We cannot remember that Lucifer, a son of God the Father, a brother of Jesus Christ, rebelled against God's plan and, in his rebellion, promised he would bring us all back home. But Lucifer would have denied us our free agency, the freedom to make decisions. We cannot remember that his plan was not accepted by us because, without choice, there would not have been a purpose for coming to this mortal probation. We would not have had opposition or repentance. We would not have learned obedience." (Robert D. Hales, "The Aaronic Priesthood: Return with Honor," *Ensign*, Conference edition, May 1990, 39).

Scores of quotes from Mormon doctrinal documents and speeches could be cited, displaying this uniquely Mormon view of Jesus, Lucifer, angels, humans, God the Father and his God-wife, as well as the teaching that all humans pre-existed as God's spirit children. However, these quotes should be sufficient to display the Mormon doctrine on these issues.

NOTE For a collection of LDS doctrinal statements on a variety of topics, see ADDENDUM G

A Response to Mormonism

Rather than spending time dealing with each specific item of Mormon teaching, the underlying question is this, "Is there any validity to the assertion that new doctrines through new revelation will come forth prior to Christ's return." One answer to that question is found in Jude, which the Mormons consider to be Scripture.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. (Jude 1:3 KJV)

The Greek term rendered as *once delivered* (*tay hapax*, τῆ ἅπαξ), is an adverb meaning, *only once, for all time*.¹¹⁷ Later versions, such as the NAS, ESV, NIV, render the term in a manner that makes this clear, i.e., *once for all*.

Following this declaration, Jude embarks on a description and condemnation of those who have tried to introduce new revelation and teaching rather than being content with that which was once, for all, handed down to the saints. Thus, even if the KJV rendering of the term might be considered to be ambiguous, the context of Jude 1:3 indicates that any revelation later than 100 A.D. is spurious. Mormons accept the Epistle of Jude to be Scripture. Thus, on the basis of Jude's statement, all Mormon literature produced in 19th Century and following must be regarded as spurious.

The Existence of Gold Plates and the Urim & Thummim

Another issue is the veracity of Joseph Smith's claim that, at the angel's direction, Smith found the gold plates and the Urim and Thummim. As evidence for the existence and the discovery of the plates, Mormon's cite the eleven witnesses who saw these items. This is weak evidence

¹¹⁷ Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*, (Vancouver B.C., Canada, Trafford Publishing) 2005; Louw-Nida *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson Publishers) 2019; Joseph H. Thayer *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody Mass., Hendrickson Publishers) 1995

because Martin Harris, one of the witnesses, clearly stated that none of the witnesses saw the plates with their natural eyes but only through a vision.^{118 119}

The Divinely Given Word for Word Translation of the Plates

Another matter concerning the Divine origin of the Book of Mormon is the claim that it is a word for word translation, given by the Holy Spirit, through the Urim & Thummim.

Supposedly, the plates from which the Book of Mormon were translated, contain the historical record of God's dealings with the ancient inhabitants of the Americas. Two of those who served as Smith's scribes, Martin Harris and David Whitmer, stated that Smith's work was an exact, word for word translation. Here is one scribe's description of the process,

“Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus, the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man.”¹²⁰

Since Smith and the scribe were separated by a curtain, one wonders how the scribe was able to describe the process. Also, since Smith supposedly was translating from the sacred plates, why would he have put his head into a hat and “something resembling parchment would appear”? This is but one of the inconsistencies of the Mormon accounts of the origin of the Book of Mormon.

The fact that Mormons have made significant revisions in the Book of Mormon is an immediately challenge to the Mormon claim that the book is a Divinely given, word for word, translation.¹²¹ One count, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, cites almost four thousand changes. Even though they may be minor, they still challenge the contention that Smith produced a word for word translation as given by Divine means.

Three matters immediately present themselves as to the validity of the claims made for the Divine inspiration of the Book of Mormon. The first is the claim that it was written in Reformed Egyptian.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Brodie, Fawn M.. *No man knows my history: the life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet* (2. ed., revised and enlarged New York: Vintage Books) (1995). p. 78. ISBN 0679730540.

¹¹⁹ Wunderli, Earl M.. *An imperfect book : what the Book of Mormon tells us about itself*. (Salt Lake City, Signature Books) 2013, pages. 27–28. ISBN 9781560852308.

¹²⁰ Wunderli, pages 34-35

¹²¹ Fawn Brody, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf) 1971; Jon Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* (New York, Doubleday) 2003

¹²² Smith, Title page to the Book of Mormon (1830). The Book of Mormon,, 9:32

Reformed Egyptian

Another challenge to the Book of Mormon is the claim that the plates contain the writings of ancient prophets who lived on the American continent from approximately 2200 BC to AD 421. Smith claimed that the plates were written in Reformed Egyptian. Egyptologists, seeking to find some example of Reformed Egyptian language have not found any evidence of their ever having been a Reformed Egyptian language.¹²³ Even if a discovery of Reformed Egyptian had been made, the question has to be asked, “Would the inhabitants of Mesoamerica¹²⁴ have understood that language? On their website, *Bad Archeology*, two British archaeologists, Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews and Dames Doerer, say, “The only writing systems to have been recognized in the Americas are those used by the Maya and the Aztecs, neither of which resembles Egyptian hieroglyphs, although Joseph Smith, produced a scrap of papyrus containing hieroglyphs he claimed to be a Reformed Egyptian text written by the Patriarch Abraham.”¹²⁵

The Book of Abraham

The papyrus to which these archaeologists refer was the papyrus purchased along with four mummies from the traveling salesman, Michael H. Chandler, in Kirkland, Ohio, in 1835 (described on pages 58-59 of these notes). It is from these papyri that Joseph Smith “translated” the *Book of Abraham*. Smith presented this material as having been written by Abraham when he was in Egypt. Unlike the Book of Mormon, which was based on golden plates that are not available to examination, the papyri on which the Book of Abraham is based are available. Several fragments of these documents were in the Metropolitan Museum, until 1967. In 1967 an anonymous donor purchased them and gave them to the LDS Church. The church ultimately acquired eleven pieces of papyri.

Mormon author, Randall S. Chase, calls the material in the Book of Abraham, “truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ that were previously unknown to Church members of Joseph Smith’s day.”¹²⁶

These papyri have been studied and translated by both Mormon and non-Mormon scholars who have shown that the translation produced by these Egyptologists is completely at odds with Smith’s purported translation. One glaring example is the fact that the papyri supposedly contain a record of Abraham’s time Egypt. The Egyptologists who have translated the papyri state that

¹²³ Peter T. Daniels and William Bright, eds. *The World’s Writing Systems* (New York, Oxford University Press) 1996; David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* (Cambridge University Press) 2004; Andrew Robinson, *Lost Languages: The Enigma of the World’s Undeciphered Scripts* (New York, McGraw Hill) 2002.

¹²⁴ Mesoamerica is a region and cultural area in the Americas, extending approximately from central Mexico to Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and northern Costa Rica. A number of pre-Columbian societies flourished in Mesoamerica before the Spanish colonization of the Americas in the 15th and 16th Centuries. This is the geographical area in which the Book of Mormon claims to have originated and claims to relate the history of the peoples of this area.

¹²⁵ <http://www.badarchaeology.com/lost-civilisations/the-lost-tribes-of-israel/>

¹²⁶ Randall S. Chase, *Pearl of Great Price Study Guide*, (Washington, UT, Plain & Precious Publishing) 2014, page 160

they contain no direct references, either historical or textual to Abraham. Edward Ashment states, “the sign that Smith identified with Abraham...is nothing more than the hieratic version of...a ‘W’ in Egyptian. It has no phonetic or semantic relation to [Smith’s] Ah-broam.”¹²⁷

Mormon BYU scholar, Michael Rhodes, summarized the content of the papyri,

“*The Hor Book of Breathings* is a part of eleven papyri fragments ... from three separate papyri scrolls. Joseph Smith Papyri I, X, and XI are from the *Book of Breathings* belonging to Hor (Hr) the son of Usirwer. Joseph Smith Papyri II, IV, V, VI, VII, and IX all came from a *Book of the Dead* belonging to Tshemmim (Ts-sri.t Min.), the daughter of Eskhons (Ns-Hnsw). Finally, Joseph Smith Papyrus III is part of Chapter 125 of the *Book of the Dead* belonging to Neferirtnub (Nfr-ir(.t)-nbw).¹²⁸

We could cite an extensive collection of quotes from scholars (Mormon and non-Mormon) who have examined and translated the papyri, and the clear consensus is that these papyri are from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* and that Smith’s purported translation bears no resemblance to what the documents actually say.

The only conclusion to reach, concerning the Book of Abraham, is that it is either a product of Smith’s imagination, or Smith’s deliberate deception.

Archaeology and DNA Evidence

Two other matters cast doubt on the veracity of the narrative contained in the Book of Mormon. One is archaeology. Archaeologists have not been able to find any archaeological evidence that validates the Book of Mormon narrative concerning the Mesoamerican narrative.

A second concern is DNA evidence. The claim that the individuals referred to in the Book of Mormon are Israelites, would have some credibility if the DNA of the inhabitants of Mesoamerica and the Native North Americans indicated such an origin. Such is not the case.

The DNA evidence indicates that the origin of the Native Americans is most similar to that of the people anciently associated with the Altay Mountains of Central Asia. (where Russia, China, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan come together). This supports a large amount of archaeological, anthropological, and linguistic evidence that the Native Americans’ ancestors migrated from Asia, across the Beringia land bridge which had formed between northeastern Siberia and western Alaska, during the lowering of the sea level that resulted from the Last Glacial Maximum. This was estimated to have been about 14,000 years ago. The Native Americans prior to 10,000 years ago are referred to as Paleo-Indians.

This contradicts the Book of Mormon’s narrative, which describes a small band of Israelites under the leadership of Lehi migrating from Jerusalem, sailing to the Western Hemisphere about 600 BC. According the Book of Mormon, when Lehi died, his family split into two

¹²⁷ Edward H. Ashment (December 2000). "Joseph Smith's Identification of "Abraham" in Papyrus JS1, the "Breathing Permit of Hor"" (PDF) 2000. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. 33 (4): 121–6.

¹²⁸ Rhodes, Michael. *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary*. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University) 2005 page 1

opposing factions: one under Lehi's oldest son, Laman, and the other under a younger son, Nephi. LDS church advocates argue that the DNA evidence is inconclusive. However, they are not able to unquestionably refute it. Their explanations are speculative.

The Rate of Population Growth

Another challenge is presented by those who study population growth. Some, such as M. T. Lamb and John Kunich argue that the population size and growth of the tribes described in the Book of Mormon is unreasonable.¹²⁹ Mormon scholar James Smith disputes this conclusion.

Anachronisms

There are a number of words and phrases in the Book of Mormon that are anachronistic—their existence in the text of the Book of Mormon is at odds with known linguistic patterns, archaeological findings, or known historical events.

Each of the anachronisms is a word, phrase, artifact, or other concept that critics, historians, archaeologists, or linguists believe did not exist in the Americas during the time period in which the Book of Mormon claims to have been written.

Mormon Apologists offer varying views on these anachronisms, typically countering them in one of two ways. One claim is that archaeological evidence may exist that has not yet been found. Another is that Joseph Smith used English words in a generic way, sometimes referring to an item other than that which the direct English word would imply.

However, it is clear that one flaw in the Book of Mormon is its frequent use of anachronisms. The following chart illustrates some of these. In the left column is the subject, the second column is the verse in the Book of Mormon, the third column is the anachronistic quote, the fourth column is the problem with the quote, and the last column is the date that the Book of Mormon assigns to the quote.

Subject	Reference Verse		Problem	BOM Date
Cimeter (interpreted as Scimitar)	Mosiah 9:16	And it came to pass that I did arm them with bows, and with arrows, with swords, and with cimeters, and with clubs, and with slings, and with all manner of weapons which we could invent, and I and my people did go forth against the Lamanites to battle. (See also Enos 1:20; Mosiah 10:8; Alma 2:12; 27:29; 43:18, 20, 37; 44:8; 60:2; Heaman 1:14)	Scimitars (curved swords) did not exist until the 4 th Century AD.	200-187 B.C.

¹²⁹ Brent Metcalfe, Edited by Brent Lee *New approaches to the Book of Mormon : explorations in critical methodology.* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books) 1993, page 251; Brent Metcalfe., *New approaches to the Book of Mormon : explorations in critical methodology.* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books) 1993 pages. 231–267

Elephants	Ether 9:19	<p>And they also had horses, and asses, and there were elephants and cureloms and cumoms; all of which were useful unto man, and more especially the elephants and cureloms and cumoms.</p>	<p>Elephants did not exist in America at the time of Ether.</p>	<p>About 2200-600 B.C.</p>
Horses	1 Nephi 18:25	<p>And it came to pass that we did find upon the land of promise, as we journeyed in the wilderness, that there were beasts in the forests of every kind, both the cow and the ox, and the ass and the horse, and the goat and the wild goat, and all manner of wild animals, which were for the use of men. And we did find all manner of ore, both of gold, and of silver, and of copper. (Horses see 2 Nephi 12:7; 2 Nephi 15:28; Enos 1:21; Alma 18:9, 10,12; 20:6; 3 Nephi 3:22; 4:4; 6:1; 21:14; Ether 9:19;)</p>	<p>Horses on the American continent died out in the Pleistocene and were not reintroduced until the 16th century.</p>	<p>590-589 B.C.</p>
Steel	1 Nephi 4:9	<p>And I beheld his sword, and I drew it forth from the sheath thereof; and the hilt thereof was of pure gold, and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine, and I saw that the blade thereof was of the most precious steel. (See also 1 Nephi 16:18; 2 Nephi 5:15; Jarom 1:8; Ether 7:9)</p>	<p>The Jews did not have steel at the time of this event and there is no archaeological evidence of steel production in pre-Columbian America. Note: Apologists counter that the word "steel" may refer to another hardened metal such as the copper alloy that is translated "steel" in the KJV.¹³⁰</p>	<p>600-592 B.C.</p>
Silk	Alma 4:6	<p>And it came to pass in the eighth year of the reign of the judges, that the people of the church began to wax proud, because of their exceeding riches, and their fine silks, and their fine-twined linen, and because of their many flocks and herds, and their gold and their silver, and all manner of precious things, which they had</p>	<p>There is little archaeological evidence of silk in pre-Columbian America.</p>	<p>86-83 B.C.</p>

¹³⁰ II Samuel 22:35; Job 20:24; Psalm 18:34; Jeremiah 15:12. Both the Hebrew term, נְחֹשֶׁת, and the Greek of the Septuagint βροχτων mean, copper or brass.

		obtained by their industry; and in all these things were they lifted up in the pride of their eyes, for they began to wear very costly apparel.		
Wheat & Barley	Mosiah 9:9	And we began to till the ground, yea, even with all manner of seeds: with seeds of corn and of wheat and of barley ...	Wheat and barley were brought to America by Europeans.	About 200–187 B.C.
Sheep	Ether 9:18	and also all manner of cattle, of oxen and cows, and of sheep and of swine and of goats ...	Europeans brought sheep to America.	About 2200–600 B.C.
Goats	1 Ne. 18:25	both the cow and the ox and the ass and the horse and the goat and the wild goat ...	Europeans introduced the first domesticated goats to America.	
Cattle and Cows	Ether 9:18	and also all manner of cattle, of oxen and cows, and of sheep and of swine and of goats ...	There is no evidence that Old World cattle (members of the genus <i>Bos</i>) inhabited the New World prior to European contact in the 17th century AD.	
Swine	Ether 9:18	and also all manner of cattle, of oxen and cows, and of sheep and of swine and of goats ...	Spaniards brought the first swine to America.	
Jeremiah in Prison	1 Ne. 7:14	... and Jeremiah have they cast into prison ...	Nephi says Jeremiah was imprisoned sometime before the 8th year of the reign of Zedekiah. However, the Bible does not mention Jeremiah being imprisoned before the 10th year of the reign of Zedekiah.	
Apparent Quoting of the New Testament	1 Nephi 22:17	shall be saved, even if it so be as by fire (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:15)	Paul did not write this epistle for another 600 years after Nephi's death.	

Conclusion

What are we to conclude from these challenges to Mormon literature? To say the least, they do cause us to distrust Mormon literature. An unbiased appraisal removes any comfort one might have in basing his theology or trusting his eternal destiny to the veracity of Mormon documents.

THE BIBLE

The book that we call the *Bible*,¹³¹ is a collection of documents written over a period of about 1600 years, by approximately 30 different writers. The exact number of writers must remain uncertain because no one knows beyond a doubt the author of the last chapter of Deuteronomy, the book of Job, and some of the Psalms. Also, the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is debated.¹³²

The categories of literature in these documents include law, history, poetry, prophecy, narratives, and letters.

Prior to the Sixteenth Century and the invention of the moveable type printing press, a book containing a collection of all the sixty-six documents in our present-day Bibles did not exist. However, the individual documents that comprise the Bible were recognized as Sacred Writings and authoritative for doctrine and practice in the Church. This has been true from the moment they were written and distributed to their intended recipients.

For the most part, the authors of the various documents did not know one another. This is an important point because these documents, written over sixteen centuries by an assortment of authors, living in different countries and different cultures, and of varied literary categories, are void of contradiction. Amazingly, these documents are in agreement with one another and affirm one another.^{133 134}

The documents comprising the Old Testament were written on scrolls and collections of these scrolls were made by the Jews for use in the synagogues. Each time a scroll was copied, it was done so with great precision and with great concern for getting each letter in each word, exactly right.

¹³¹ The term, *Bible*, is an Anglicization of the Greek term, βίβλιος (*Biblios*) meaning, *book*.

¹³² The most commonly held view is that the epistle was written by Paul (the view held by James Garrett). The basis for that view is the fact that many of the early Christian Fathers ascribed it to Paul (Pantaenus [c.180 AD]; Clement of Alexandria [c.187 AD]; Origen [c.231]; The Council of Antioch [264 AD]; Eusebius [c.320 AD]; Jerome [392 AD]. Also, comments made in the closing section of the Epistle, (13:22-25) fit Paul's situation and comments that he would have made. Even so, other possibilities have been hypothesized as the author: Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Silas or Slivanus, Apolos, Aquilla, Mark, etc.

¹³³ The chronology of Kings and Chronicles seem to contradict one another. To resolve this issue, see <https://bible.org/article/reliability-kings-and-chronicles> and Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, (Grand Rapids, Kregel) 1994

¹³⁴ The Four Gospels frequently present complimentary details of an account, rather than contradicting one another.

The New Testament documents also originally were written as scrolls, but not long into the New Testament era, the Christians began copying scrolls onto pages that were bound together in *codices*, which were the first manifestations of what we know as a *book*.¹³⁵ With the rise of codices, it became possible to combine several documents into a single codex. With the invention of the moveable type printing press (Gutenberg, 1436 A.D.), it became the custom to publish all of the Old Testament and the New Testament documents in a single volume, which was given the label, *The Bible*, i.e., *The Book*.

Can we trust the Bible? Are the documents contained in the Bible the means whereby God has given us a record of Himself, His activities in creation, His character, and His Will? To seek the answer to this question, we will employ several tools as our means of testing the veracity of the Bible.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

One of the early challenges to Moses authorship of the Pentateuch, was that during Moses lifetime, written language had not developed sufficiently for the Pentateuch to have been composed. That has been totally disproved by the discovery of many ancient texts, beginning in the middle/late 1800's. Some of these predate Moses and some are contemporary with Moses. For the ten oldest religious texts, other than the writing of Moses, see ADDENDUM I.

Unlike the Quran, the Bible is filled with historical references that can be tested as to their accuracy. Unlike Mormon literature, the Bible consistently passes the test of history and archaeology. Throughout the history of modern archaeology, every discovery that relates to the biblical account has validated the information contained in the Bible.

Until recent archaeological discoveries, much of ancient history and the history of ancient civilizations was known only through the Bible. Because of this, beginning in the 1800's a growing number of academic skeptics discounted the biblical accounts, contending that the Bible was written by mere men, who made mistakes, and in some cases, wrote fantasy. However, archaeology in the last 150 years has validated the biblical record, time and again. Nothing in these discoveries has contradicted the biblical accounts. The accuracy of biblical details – some quite minute – lends to the credibility of the entire narrative and instructive material in the Old Testament. The following are some examples.

The Exodus

The most reliable date for the beginning of Israel's Exodus out of Egypt is 1447 B.C. and the date of the Israelites entering the land of Canaan, forty years later, 1407 B.C. The events of these years are recounted in Exodus Chapter 12, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. Several things recounted in this portion of Scripture are validated by non-biblical historical documents and archaeology. We will note but a few of these.

¹³⁵ For a detailed study of the development of the Bible, see James Garrett, *How We Got Our Bible*, <http://www.tulsachristianfellowship.com/doulos-press.html>, papers at this link

The Israelites Forced to Make Bricks in Egypt

Thutmose III would have been the Pharaoh who was the greatest oppressor of Israel. He was a great builder and employed in his vast construction projects Semitic captives and slaves. Many of his projects were overseen by a prime minister named, Rekhmire. Rekhmire's tomb near Thebes is covered with scenes depicting his career. A portion of the scene on Rekhmire's tomb pictures him leaning on his staff overseeing Semitic brickmakers. The process of making bricks involved breaking up the Nile mud with mattocks, moistening it with water, and mixing it with sand and chopped straw. This fits the Exodus 5:6-19 picture of the Israelites (Semites).

The Death of the Firstborn on Passover Night

The last of the ten plagues (Exodus Chapters 7 – 12), was the death of the first-born of every family that had not placed the blood of the Passover lamb on its door posts and lintels (Exodus Chapter 12). All of the Israelite families complied with these instructions. The Egyptians did not. At midnight, the death angel passed over the land.

Now it came about at midnight that the LORD struck all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of cattle. (Exodus 12:29)

The Pharaoh at the time of this event was Amenhotep II. The Egyptian law of primogeniture dictated that the eldest son should succeed his father as Pharaoh. However, when Amenhotep II died, this did not happen. Although there is no Egyptian record explaining the death of the eldest son, records do make it apparent that Amenhotep II was succeeded by Thutmose IV, who was not his firstborn son. Such a fact is in line with the above quoted statement in Exodus – that Pharaoh's firstborn son died in the tenth plague.

The Hebrews Entrance into Canaan

The Israelites began their entrance into Canaan shortly before 1400 B.C. In the famous Amarna Letters¹³⁶ (dealing with the period from approximately 1400-1366 B.C.), Abdi-Hiba, governor of Jerusalem wrote to the Pharaoh pleading for aid against the Habiru.¹³⁷ When the Israelites began their invasion of Canaan, Jerusalem and its surrounding territory were a part of the Egyptian empire. Abdi-Hiba wrote to the Egyptians that if the country were to be saved for Egypt, the Pharaoh needed to send military aid.

*The Habiru plunder all lands of the King.
If archers are here
this year, then the lands of the king
the Lord, will remain; but if the archers are not here,
then the lands of the king, my lord, are lost.*

¹³⁶ The Amarna Letters are diplomatic Correspondence between the Egyptian government and its allies in Canaan. This correspondence is written on clay tablets. The tablets were discovered in the ruined city of Amarna. The first discoveries occurred in 1887. Over the next thirty years, a vast store of this correspondence was discovered. This vast store of material presently is scattered through museums in Germany, France, England, Egypt, Russia, and the United States.

¹³⁷ Etymologically equitable with Hebrew. Merrill F. Unger, ThD, PhD, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House) 1954, pages 145-146

The mention of the Habiru in these Amarna Letters coincides with the date of the Israelites invasion of Canaan (as recorded in Joshua and Judges).

Archaeologist/scholar, J. W. Jack, commenting on these and similar statements in the letters, wrote, “Who were these invaders of southern and central Palestine?... Who else could they be but the Hebrews of the Exodus, and have we not here the native version of their entry into the land?”¹³⁸

Indeed, no one has been able to come up with any other contender for the identity of the Habiru mentioned in these letters.

Jericho

The site on which Jericho was built commanded the entrance into Canaan from the east. Throughout the centuries, several successive cities had been built on this site. The cities of Jericho were built above an oasis where there were abundant springs, now called, Ain el-Sultan. These springs yield the most plentiful water supply in the entire region.

Jericho is the most excavated site in Israel. Charles Warren first began excavation in 1868, but through several errors in his calculations of the site, he missed important structures. German archaeologists Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger excavated in 1907-1913. John Garstang, another German archaeologist, did extensive excavations in 1930-1936. Dame Kathleen Mary Kenyan excavated 1952 – 1958 and an Italian-Palestinian team excavated for several years, beginning in 1997.

These extensive excavations revealed that a series of successive cities had occupied the site between 4500-3000 B.C. After this period, four successive cities were erected.

- The first of these was dated 3000 B.C.
- The second city, which was in existence in the time of Abraham, was founded about 2500 B.C. and fell in 1700 B.C.
- The next city was erected by the Hyksos, who are best known for having conquered northern Egypt, being expelled from Egypt just prior to the time of Joseph and the Israelites occupying the land of Goshen. The Hyksos city existed at Jericho from approximately 1700 B.C. to 1500 B.C.
- The next city, constructed at about 1500 B.C., was the one taken by Joshua and the invading Israelites.

The Jericho taken by Joshua and the Israelites was protected by a double wall made of brick. The inner wall was fifteen feet thick and was separated from the outer wall by a space of twelve to fifteen feet. The wall was about thirty feet in height. Jericho was small and crowded (occupying about six acres), so portions of the space between the two walls was partially filled with earth and houses were erected in the space between the inner and outer walls. This description fits the account in Joshua 2:15, which describes Rahab’s letting the spies down *by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall, so that she was living on the wall.* (Joshua 2:15)

¹³⁸ Samuel A. B. Mercer, *The Tell El-Amarna Tablets*, Volume II, no. 287 (Toronto, Macmillan Company of Canada) 1939, lines 56-60

An examination of the collapse of the walls and the manner in which the city was destroyed, have caused archaeologists to confirm the biblical account – the walls fell down (Joshua 6:20), rather than being pushed inward or destroyed in some other fashion. Furthermore, archaeologists have dated the fall at around 1400 B.C., which is an exact fit with the biblical chronology.¹³⁹

Dozens of stone jars full of grain have been found at Jericho, indicating that the destruction of the city was at harvest time. This find, plus other evidence has verified the biblical account, i.e., that the city was burned and not looted (Joshua 6:24).

Hittites

One charge that skeptics levelled against the Bible was its references to the Hittites. Until the archaeological discoveries made in the second half of the 19th Century, the Old Testament was the only source of information about the Hittites. Many critical scholars viewed the biblical record as fantasy, doubting that such a people had ever existed. One prominent author argued that the biblical accounts were absurd because, “no Hittite king could have compared in power to the King of Judah.”¹⁴⁰ The Old Testament, on the other hand, presented a picture of a powerful and influential Hittite empire.

As the archaeological discoveries of the 19th Century progressed, the biblical picture of the Hittites was validated, time and again. Today, the history of the Hittites is one of the most well-known of all ancient peoples. Their history has been well established, from prior to 2000 BC through the period encompassing the post-exilic biblical era. They now are one of the most studied ancient peoples and even their script has been found to be vehicle for correspondence between various nations. Archaeology has confirmed that through the centuries, the Hittite empire waxed and waned.

As the discoveries of the second half of the 19th Century revealed the scale of the Hittite kingdom, Archibald Sayce stated that rather than being compared to Judah, the Hittite civilization was “worthy of comparison to the divided Kingdom of Egypt...and was infinitely more powerful than Judah.”¹⁴¹

Scripture does not describe the Hittites and Judah as being enemies. The Hittites supplied the Israelites with cedar, chariots, and horses. Genesis describes a Hittite who was a friend and ally of Abraham. Uriah, the Hittite, was in David’s army, as well as Ahimelech.¹⁴²

Thus, what once was put forth as evidence of the fallible human origin of Scripture, has been thoroughly discounted. Instead, all of the discoveries related to the Hittites have validated the Scriptural account, exactly as portrayed therein.

¹³⁹ J. Garstang *Annals of Archeology and Anthropology, issued by the Institute of Archaeology, University of Liverpool*, IXX (1932), pp 3-22; XX (1933), pp 3-42; XXI (1934, pp 99-136; XXII (1935), pp 143-168; XXIII (1936), pp 67-76; J. and J.B.E. Garstang, *The Story of Jericho* (London, 1940)

¹⁴⁰ Francis William Newman, *A History of the Hebrew Monarch from the Administration of Samuel to the Babylonish Captivity*, 2nd edition (London, John Chapman) 1853, page 179, note 2

¹⁴¹ Archibald Henry Sayce, *The Hittites: the Story of a Forgotten Empire*, (Oxford, Queens College) October 1888, Introduction

¹⁴² Genesis 50:13; I Samuel 26:6; II Samuel 11:3-24; I Kings 10:29; II Kings 7:6

Babylonian Conquest of Jerusalem

Jeremiah 14 records Jeremiah's plea with Jehovah to not bring destruction and calamity on the Jewish people. Jehovah declared that because of the nation's idolatry and other sins, he was not going to listen to Jeremiah's pleas. Jeremiah 15 records God's words to the prophet, declaring the severity of what He is going to bring upon Jerusalem. Verse 4 records Jehovah's dire declaration,

"And I shall make them (Jerusalem and its inhabitants) an object of horror among all the kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 15:4)

As John Stonestreet wrote in the August 20, 2019, issue of *BreakPoint*,

"Can you imagine God's saying that he is going to make you, 'an object of horror'?"¹⁴³

God does, indeed keep His word. In 587-586 BC the wealth of Jerusalem's inhabitants was given as plunder to the invaders, the Babylonians.

For many years, academic circles long assumed that the "real" Jerusalem was rather insignificant. Closer in size to Dayton, Tennessee, rather than Dayton, Ohio. The assumption of most academics was that the stories of Jerusalem's rise and fall were over-inflated myths created to serve some theological or political purpose. Recent discoveries increasingly have validated the biblical record.

One such recent discovery was so significant that CNN reported the discovery and its significance.¹⁴⁴ Here is an edited version of the CNN report.

"Archaeologists excavating Mount Zion in Jerusalem have uncovered evidence of the Babylonian conquest of the city, appearing to confirm a Biblical account of its destruction. Academics from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte made significant finds, including ash deposits, arrowheads, and broken pieces of pots and lamps.

The most surprising discovery, however, was an item of jewelry, which appears to be a tassel or earring with a bell-shaped upper portion, the researchers said. Shimon Gibson, co-director of the university's Mount Zion archaeological project, told CNN that the recovery of the rare piece of jewelry is the first time that archaeologists have uncovered signs of the 'elites,' appearing to confirm Biblical descriptions of Jerusalem's wealth prior to the conquest in 587-586 BC.

Gibson said jewelry is a rare find at conflict sites as warriors would normally loot it and melt it down. It is a, 'clear indication of the wealth of the inhabitants of the city at the time of the siege,' he said.

¹⁴³ Colson Center for Christian Worldview, *Breakpoint*, August 20, 2019
consoncenter@colsoncenter.org

¹⁴⁴ Matthew Robinson, CNN, August 12, 2019

The historian said that while the items in isolation do not provide conclusive evidence of the Babylonian attack, the unique mix of artifacts leads researchers to believe they have uncovered direct evidence of the conquest

‘For archaeologists, an ashen layer can mean a number of things,’ Gibson said in a statement. ‘It could be ashy deposits removed from ovens; or it could be localized burning of garbage. However, in this case, the combination of an ashy layer full of artifacts, mixed with arrowheads, and a very special ornament indicates some kind of devastation and destruction. Nobody abandons golden jewelry, and nobody has arrowheads in their domestic refuse.’¹⁴⁵

Another important factor is that the arrowheads discovered in the refuse were Scythian arrowheads. These were fairly commonplace in battle sites from the 7th and 6th Centuries BC and were the type used by Babylonian warriors.

Not only do these findings corroborate the Babylonian conquest, they also corroborate what the Bible says about life in Jerusalem at the time of the conquest – that wealth abounded in the city.

The Edomite Kingdom

Another important discovery, made just this summer, is verification of the biblical picture of Edom. The Edomites, descendants of Jacob’s older brother, Esau, are mentioned more than 100 times in the Old Testament.

For many years, scholars doubted that the Edomites even existed, and if they did, they did not exist as pictured in the Bible. They regarded the depiction of the Edomites in the Pentateuch as largely mythical. They believed that the Edomite kingdom did not come into existence until three or more centuries later – during the latter part of Israel’s divided monarchy, and was, “read back,” into the story of the Exodus.

These skeptical scholars were mistaken. Recently, a team excavating in Israel’s Timna Valley found evidence of a “thriving and wealthy” society dating back to at least, the 12th Century before Christ. The evidence is an extensive network of copper-smelting facilities that the Bible associates with Edom.

The Tel Aviv University’s Professor Ezra Ban-Yosef, who led the study with Professor Tom Levy, of the University of Southern California, San Diego, explained, “Using technological evolution as a proxy for social processes, we were able to identify and characterize the emergence of the biblical kingdom of Edom. Our results prove it happened earlier than previously thought and in accordance with the biblical description.”¹⁴⁶

According to the study, which was published September 18, 2019, on the website of the scientific journal, PLOS ONE, the kingdom’s wealth appears to have been built on a “hi-tech network” of copper, the most valuable resource in the region at the time. Copper was

¹⁴⁵ Matthew Robinson, CNN – Updated 12th August 2019

¹⁴⁶ *The Jerusalem Post*, September 19, 2019

used in ancient times to craft weapons and tools, and the production process for copper is incredibly complex.¹⁴⁷

Ben-Yosef told the Jerusalem Post, “Copper smelting was essentially the hi-tech of ancient times... The Edomites developed precise working protocols that allowed them to produce a very large amount of copper with minimum energy... Our new findings contradict the view of many archaeologists, that the Arava was populated by a loose alliance of tribes. [Our findings] are consistent with the biblical story that there was an Edomite kingdom here. A flourishing copper industry in the Arava can only be attributed to a centralized and hierarchical polity, and this might fit the biblical description of the Edomite Kingdom.”¹⁴⁸

Once again, archaeological explorations have found the evidence to be, “consistent with the biblical story.” One would think that since this phrase is popping up a lot in descriptions of recent archaeological investigations – not only that it happened, but also when it happened – that the skepticism of the social scientists would soften.

These are but a few of the many examples of archaeology and history that could be cited, which establish, beyond question, the historical veracity of the Old Testament. Entire books have been written detailing the various archaeological discoveries that have validated the biblical account. We could spend our entire eight weeks of this seminar, in doing nothing other than recounting the archaeological discoveries that confirm the biblical account.

See ADDENDUM H, for Biblical Archaeology’s top discoveries in 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014.

Fulfilled Prophecy

There are many examples of fulfilled prophecy in the Scriptures. One of the most impressive is that contained in Isaiah, Chapters 13, 44 and 45. These prophecies which were composed 697-695 B.C. predict the Judeans’ being delivered from Babylonian captivity, when the Medes and Persians, under the leadership of Cyrus, conquered Babylon.

When Isaiah penned these prophecies, the dominate world power was Assyria, not Babylon and the Medes and Persians were not even on the radar screen. Furthermore, the Judeans were not in captivity when Isaiah received these prophecies.

When the Babylonians did become the dominant world power, under the monarchy of Nebuchadnezzar, they conquered Jerusalem and carried the inhabitants of Judea into Babylonian captivity. That took place in four stages, beginning in 606 B.C.

The Judeans remained in exile in Babylon for 70 years, until the Medes and Persians under Cyrus conquered Babylon and ended the Judean exile, exactly as Isaiah had prophesied.

In summary, the amazing elements of the Isaiah prophecy are these:

- The Assyrians, not the Babylonians, was the world power when Isaiah prophesied.
- The prophecy was given about 90 years before the Babylonian captivity began.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid*

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*

- The Medes and Persians, who Isaiah’s prophecies predicted would be the Judeans’ deliverers, were not of any reputation, when Isaiah’s prophecies were given.
- Cyrus had not been born when Isaiah prophesied, yet, he is mentioned by name as the leader of the Medes and Persians who would conquer Babylon and return the Judeans to their homeland (Isaiah 44:28; 44:1).
- The prophecies concerning Cyrus were given approximately 185 years prior to his freeing the Judeans from their exile.

This is but one striking example of many fulfilled prophecies that are recorded in the Old Testament

The Testimony of the New Testament

One of the most important evidences for the veracity of the Old Testament is the testimony of the New Testament. The Old Testament is quoted or referenced many times in the New Testament. One of the sources that has counted the New Testament references to the Old Testament, produced this data: ¹⁴⁹

- Quotes: 302
- Allusions: 493
- Possible allusions: 138
- Total: 933

In every instance of the New Testament’s reference to the Old Testament, the OT is viewed as being true and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, we next will investigate the evidence for the veracity of the New Testament. Should the New Testament pass the test, then this would validate the authenticity of the Old Testament record.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are many paths that we can take to test the trustworthiness of the New Testament. We will consider but a few. First, we examine the evidence for the historical evidence of their being a man named, Jesus, in the early First Century.

Pagan Evidence for the Existence of Jesus

Many consider Tacitus to be the most respected of the Roman historians. Here is what he wrote concerning Christians and “Christus.”

“Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called, Christians, by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judah, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome...Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty;

¹⁴⁹ The free project from the Blue Letter Bible, *Parallel Passages in New Testament Quoted from Old Testament*

ghthen, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind.”¹⁵⁰

This is an important testimony by an unsympathetic witness to the success and spread of Christianity, which had its origin in an historical figure, “Christus.” i.e. Christ (Jesus). According to Tacitus’ account, Christus was crucified under Pontius Pilate. An immense multitude held to belief in this Christus to the point that they were willing to be tortured and killed for that belief.

Another Roman, Pliny the Younger, referred to Christians in his writings. Pliny the Younger (who succeeded his father, Pliny the Elder) was governor of Bithynia in western Turkey. In correspondence with the Emperor, Trajan, concerning Christians that he had arrested, he wrote,

“I have asked them if they are Christians, and if they admit it I repeat the question a second and third time, with a warning of the punishment awaiting them. If they persist, I order them to be led away for execution; for, whatever the nature of their admission, I am convinced that their stubbornness and unshakable obstinacy ought not to go unpunished...

They also declared that the sum of their guilt or error amount to no more than this: they had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day to chant verses alternately amongst themselves in honor of Christ as to a god, and also to bind themselves by oath not for any criminal purpose, but to abstain from theft, robbery, adultery...”¹⁵¹

Note that those whom Pliny tortured were not willing to give up their faith in Jesus Christ, regardless of what extreme punishments and execution awaited them. This is evidence that they believed in someone whom they considered to be a real person. Also, this is evidence for the resurrection of Christ. No one would be inclined to die for someone whose life had ended when he had been crucified as a criminal.

In these two documents (Tacitus and Pliny) we have testimony from two hostile Roman witnesses. They documented the fact that Jesus was a real person, and not some legend devised by Jewish religionists.

Jewish Sources Validating the Existence of Jesus

Josephus (37? – 100? AD) the famous Jewish historian, was reared in Jerusalem during the stirring days of the rise of the Christian Church. During the First Roman Jewish War, he was the head of the Jewish forces in Galilee. In 67 AD, future Emperor, Vespasian, defeated Josephus’ forces and Josephus surrendered, rather than commit suicide, as his companions had done. He quickly became a favorite of the Romans and he tried to negotiate between the Romans and the Jews, during the siege of Jerusalem. After the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, Josephus took up residence in Rome and spent the rest of his life in literary pursuits. One of his writings, *Jewish Antiquities*, was written in 20 volumes and was completed in 93 A.D. This writing traces the history of the Jews, from their beginning to the time of their revolt against Rome, 66-70 A.D. In this work, he sought

¹⁵⁰ Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44

¹⁵¹ Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10.96

to produce for the Romans an apology of the Jews – seeking to establish the Jews’ significance in the eyes of the Romans. Here is a section in which he refers to Jesus. The sections in italics are generally understood to be later interpolations, probably by Christians.

“Now there was about this time (i.e. about the time of the rising against Pilate, who wished to extract money from the temple for the purpose of bringing water into Jerusalem from a distant spring), Jesus, a wise man, *if it be lawful to call Him a man.* For He was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men, as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. *He was the Messiah,* and when Pilate at the suggestion of principal men among us, had condemned Him to the cross, those who loved Him at the first ceased not (so to do), *for He appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning Him,* and the race of Christians so named from Him is not extinct, even now.”^{152 153}

Another Jewish source is the Talmud.¹⁵⁴ There are many Talmudic references to a person named, *Yeshu* – which is the Aramaic pronunciation of the Hebrew, *Yeshua*. The problem is identifying to whom these passages refer. The derivation of the name also is an issue.

In the Jewish Old Testament Greek text (the Septuagint), *Joshua* is rendered, ἰησοῦς (*Hieasous*), a Greek alliteration of the Hebrew, *Yahoshu* (יהושע). When Jerome translated the Greek New Testament into Latin (the Vulgate Version),¹⁵⁵ he alliterated the Greek, *Hieasous*, as *Iesus*. It is from this Latin term that English translators of Scripture derived the name, *Jesus*. Even so, in the original text, both the 15th Century B.C. Old Testament Jewish leader Joshua, and the New Testament Jesus (i.e. the Christ) have the same name.

Because of the derivation of the name, there is dispute among the scholars as to whether or not all of the Talmudic references to a *Yeshu*, refer to Jesus Christ or to some other, *Yeshu* (i.e. Joshua). However, some passages are beyond dispute. Here is one example of a passage that indisputably refers to Jesus in the context of his execution.

"On (Sabbath eve and) the eve of Passover Jesus the Nazarene was hanged, and a herald went forth before him forty days heralding, 'Jesus the Nazarene is going forth to be stoned because he practiced sorcery and instigated and seduced Israel to idolatry. Whoever knows anything in defense may come and state it.' But since they did not find anything in his defense, they hanged him on (Sabbath eve and) the eve of Passover. Ulla said: Do you suppose that Jesus the Nazarene was one for whom a defense could be made? He was a *mesit* (someone who instigated Israel to idolatry), concerning whom the Merciful [God] says: Show him no compassion and do not shield him (Deut. 13:9)."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 18.63-64

¹⁵³ The portions of this quote in italics probably are later interpolations, added by Christians

¹⁵⁴ *Talmud* means, *instruction*, or, *doctrine*

¹⁵⁵ Jerome began the translation in 382 A.D.

¹⁵⁶ *Babylonian Sanhedrin 43a-b*

Other passages in some versions of the Talmud refer to Jesus' mother, Mary, as being an adulterer and that Jesus' father was a Roman soldier named, *Pantera*. This obviously was an attempt to discredit Jesus and to stain His reputation.

Even though the Talmud attacks His reputation and does not accurately describe His death, it does describe Jesus as a real person, who existed in the First Century A.D.

Can the Biblical Accounts of Jesus be Trusted?

For any part of the New Testament to be trusted, the accounts of the birth, the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus must be true. Otherwise, the entire New Testament is but fantasy.

The Question of Authorship

The first question to ask, concerning the Four Gospels, is the question of authorship. Did Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, write the Four Gospels?

The early writings of non-biblical authors are helpful to us in seeking an answer to this question. The earliest writer to make comment on this matter was Papias of Hierapolis (in present-day Turkey). Papias lived a very long life (c. 60 A.D. -163 A.D). Papias wrote a five-volume set of books, *Exposition of the Sayings of the Lord* (written approximately, 125 A.D.). Unfortunately, most of this five-volume set has been lost, but excerpts from it survived in the writings of Irenaeus (c.180 A.D.) and Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 320 A.D.).

Papias wrote that he heard the accounts of the Life of Christ from those who had heard the Lord Himself and who had witnessed events in His life. Among these whom he named were John the Apostle, Phillip and Phillip's daughters, and a man named, Ariston. He wrote that he did not care for secondary sources, but only primary sources,

“I shall not hesitate also to put into ordered form for you, along with the interpretations, everything I learned carefully in the past from the elders and noted down carefully, for the truth of which I vouch. For unlike most people I took no pleasure in those who told many different stories, but only in those who taught the truth. Nor did I take pleasure in those who reported their memory of someone else's commandments, but only in those who reported their memory of the commandments given by the Lord to the faith and proceeding from the Truth itself.”¹⁵⁷

Papias' careful assessment of what he was told is of value to us, because it lends to trust in what he wrote. Papias wrote about the composition of three of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and John. He wrote that Matthew first composed his Gospel account in “the Hebrew dialect,” (Aramaic) and that Mark was the careful amanuensis of Peter, writing things in the order as Peter recited them. Papias clearly favored the chronology of John over that displayed in Matthew and Mark, stating that they did not display the careful order that he saw in John's Gospel. He also cited the First Epistle of John and the First Epistle of Peter as being authoritative.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, The Writings of Papias, Book III, Chapter 39 (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House) 1994, pages 124-125

¹⁵⁸ Eusebius, page 126

The very early date of Papias writings, and the precise manner with which he conducted his research, lends authenticity to his testimony.

Another early testimony is that of Justin Martyr, written between 120 A.D. and 160 A.D. Justin referred to the Gospels as, *the memoirs of the apostles*.

“And on the day called, Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country, gather together in one place and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. Then, when the reader has ceased, the one presiding verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.”¹⁵⁹

Justin considered the Gospels to be the work of the apostles – they were the apostles’ *memoirs*.

The early Church accepted the four Gospels as being from the four whose names are attached to them. No one challenged their authorship. Irenaeus, writing about 180 A.D., wrote this description of the four accounts:

“Matthew published his own Gospel among the Hebrews in their own tongue, when Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome and founding the church there. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself handed down to us in writing the substance of Peter’s preaching. Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel preached by his teacher. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on his breast, himself produced his Gospel while he was living at Ephesus in Asia.”¹⁶⁰

Another interesting factor related to the authorship and authority of Luke’s Gospel is the testimony of Paul. Jesus was crucified in 30 A.D. and Paul’s conversion would have been in 32 A.D. Nothing that Paul did in the remaining approximately 30 years of his life was done in secret. His reputation was well-known. Luke was one of Paul’s closest companions.¹⁶¹ Luke was an uncircumcised Gentile physician.¹⁶² In I Timothy 5:18, Paul quoted Luke’s Gospel. *For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."* (1 Timothy 5:18)

Note that Moses wrote that an ox should not be muzzled while he is threshing. Yet, he wrote nothing about the laborer being worthy of his wages.

"You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing. (Deuteronomy 25:4)

We ask then, “Where did Paul get the ‘Scripture’¹⁶³ stating that a laborer is worthy of his wages?” Obviously from Luke, who was quoting Jesus’ instructions to the seventy when He sent them out to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom (Luke 10:1ff).

¹⁵⁹ Justin Martyr, First Apology, Chapter 67, paragraph 3

¹⁶⁰¹⁶⁰ Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, Book III, Chapter I, paragraph 1

http://www.prudencetrue.com/images/Irenaeus_Against_Heresies_Book_III.pdf

¹⁶¹ Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; etc.

¹⁶² Colossians 4:10-11a lists those of the circumcision who were with Paul. 4:11b – 14 lists the Gentiles, including Luke who were Paul’s companions.

¹⁶³ There is no Greek term that distinguishes Holy Spirit inspired writings from other writings. The Greek in every passage that English versions render as, *Scripture*, is the Greek term, *graphe* (γραφή), which means, *a written document*. The term, *Scripture*, came into use through Jerome’s Latin translation of the Greek. The Latin term for something written is *scriptura*.

"And stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. (Luke 10:7)

There is no other record in Scripture of this statement from Jesus or any other source. It could only have come from Luke's Gospel account.

This is significant, because it would require Luke's Gospel to have been written quite early for Paul to have been aware of it and to have quoted it. Here some of the reasons for the necessity of assigning an early date to Luke.

In the introduction to his narrative, the Acts of the Apostles, Luke refers to his having written his Gospel prior to his writing of Acts. He was writing for a friend named, Theophilus. *The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when He was taken up, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. (Acts 1:1-2)*

Since Luke closed his narrative in Acts with Paul's imprisonment, Acts must have been written before Paul was martyred. After Paul's imprisonment, with which Acts closes, Paul was released from prison and traveled for about two more years, prior to his re-arrest and execution.¹⁶⁴ Paul's death has been dated as late as 68 A.D.¹⁶⁵ Others date his death as early as 64 A.D.¹⁶⁶ Acts would have been written at least two years or more before Paul's death (during his first imprisonment in Rome).

The fact that Luke's introduction to Acts refers to his Gospel as something that he had written before he wrote Acts, that means that Luke's Gospel would have been written around 60 A.D., perhaps even earlier.

Luke had neither seen nor heard Jesus, but he was able to interview those who had done so. He began his Gospel account with a description of his sources.

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, ³ it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from

Thus, when Jerome translated the Greek term for written material, *graphe*, he used the Latin term, *scriptura*. When the King James translators were translating the Greek documents, they chose to use Jerome's Latin term for the written material that they considered to have been written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The question has to be asked, "How can we know that Paul was referring only to the material that we consider to be *Scripture*, when he used the common Greek term that refers to any written material?" The key to answering that question is in Paul's using the definite article, ἡ (hey), i.e. *the writing*, which means that he was referring to specific writings, not just all literature. This also is the general practice of the other New Testament writers. The exception to this is II Timothy 3:16, where the definite article is missing in the verse that our English versions render, *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God...*

¹⁶⁴ Most consider the Letter to the Hebrews, and the epistles of Titus, I Timothy, and II Timothy to have been written during this period. <http://matthewmcgee.org/paultime.html>

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.biblestudy.org/apostlepaul/timeline-life-of-paul-from-first-missionary-journey-to-death.html>

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-47/apostle-paul-and-his-times-christian-history-timeline.html>

the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;⁴ so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4 NAS)

This introduction to Luke's Gospel indicates that it was written during the lifetime of those who were witnesses of the Life of Christ, again, attesting to its early date. It also gives credibility to Luke's Gospel because those who could have questioned what he were still alive when he wrote – but there is no record of anyone's challenging the material in Luke's Gospel. For that matter, in the documents from the early church, there is no record of anyone's challenging Luke's authorship of the Gospel that bears his name.

In summary, these considerations, as well as the consistent testimony in the documents from the earliest centuries, assure us that the four Gospels were composed by those whose names are attached to them.¹⁶⁷

The Harmony of the Gospel Accounts

The three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke (the synoptics), have similarities of content and style that set them apart from John. For example,

- the synoptics contain parables, whereas, John does not.
- John records seven statements that Jesus made about Himself, beginning with, "I am..." such as "I am the Bread of Life," (John 6:35), "I am the door (John 10:9), "I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). The synoptics do not contain a record of such statements.

Yet, even though these four documents were written by four different individuals and there are stylistic differences, they harmonize with one another – in chronology, narrative, and teaching. They do not contradict one another, but rather, supplement one another.¹⁶⁸

An example of stylistic difference, but harmony of content, is seen in Matthew's and Luke's report of a speech attributed to John the Baptist. In their quoting of the speech, Matthew's Greek text and Luke's Greek text vary from one another by only three insignificant differences.

*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"⁸ Bear **fruit in keeping with repentance.**⁹ And do not **presume** to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. (Matthew 3:7-9 ESV)*

*He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"⁸ Bear **fruits in keeping with repentance.** And do not **begin** to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. (Luke 3:7-8 ESV)*

¹⁶⁷ In his writings, Papias mentions, John the Elder, in conjunction with John the Apostle. Some have speculated that John the Elder wrote the Gospel of John, but there never has been any proof that this theory has credibility.

¹⁶⁸ For an extended treatment of this subject, including a harmony of the Four Gospels, see, <http://www.tulsachristianfellowship.com/doulos-press---papers.html>, *Sundry Studies in the Life of Christ*

Although the introductory words in the English versions vary, in the Greek from which the English is rendered, there are three different Greek words:

- *Fruit* is singular in Matthew and plural in Luke
- The Greek adjective translated, *in keeping with*, must match the noun which it modifies (singular in Matthew; plural in Luke)
- Matthew has, *presume*, whereas Luke has, *begin*.

Some modern “rational” scholars argue that the Gospel writers copied from one another.¹⁶⁹ Others argue that the Gospel writers received their material from some speculative oral source which they labeled, “Q” (*Quelle*). There is no evidence for the existence of “Q.” Regardless whatever view one takes, the point is that the Four Gospels are unified in their testimony and that the overall pattern is a compelling argument for their veracity.

The Dates of the Composition of the Gospels and their Authorship

As to the dates of the individual Gospels, none of them have dates. However, it is noteworthy that Matthew and John were written by those who were active disciples prior to the date of Jesus’ death (30-33 AD). Mark, was an assistant to Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, which would have taken place no later than 50 AD. Luke was Paul’s companion in the 50’s and 60’s AD (see comment on its date in earlier paragraph).

Relevant to this topic is Peter’s reference to Paul’s writings.

and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,¹⁶ as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. (2 Peter 3:15-16)

The fact that Paul’s letters had been widely distributed before the death of Peter, is evidence of the early production of those letters. The date of Peter’s death is widely understood to be between 64 AD and 68 AD.¹⁷⁰

Non-biblical writers also quoted Paul’s epistles. One of the most important examples is the First Epistle of Clement, which was addressed to the Church at Corinth. Clement was an important leader in the Church of Rome in the First Century and the letter is from the “the Church of God which sojourneth in Rome, to the Church of God which sojourneth in Corinth.”

Some have dated this epistle as early at 70 AD, and at the other extreme end, as late as 140 AD. However, almost all scholars date it’s composition as being 96 AD, because of its reference to “the sudden and repeated misfortunes and hindrances which have befallen us,” (1:1).

Considering the history of early Christianity in Rome, Domitian’s persecution of the Church in Rome, near the close of the First Century (96-97 AD), is the most likely event to fit this description.

¹⁶⁹ The most common assertion among those who hold this position is that Mark was written first and the other’s copied from his Gospel.

¹⁷⁰ This is a valid point only if one accepts the canonicity of II Peter. Honesty requires a recognition that in the Fourth Century, when lists of documents that belong in the canon were produced, II Peter usually was included, but often with some doubt as to its authenticity.

The letter was written to confront those in the Corinthian Church who had deposed their elders. The epistle calls on the congregation to repent, to restore their elders, and to obey their superiors. The epistle states that the deposed elders are men whom the apostles had installed in that role and had instructed them as to how they should perpetuate the ministry. This is another evidence of the early date of Clement, since those whom the apostles had appointed as elders were still in leadership in Corinth.

In the epistle, Clement often refers to the Old Testament as Scripture. Pertinent to our topic is his reference to Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. Clement wrote, "Take up the epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle," (47:1), and then references things that Paul wrote to them in I Corinthians. In the letter there are statements that allude to Paul's epistles to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians. There also are numerous phrases from the Epistle to the Hebrews and possible material from Acts, James, and I Peter.

The important point of this is that by the close of the First Century, the epistles of Paul had been widely distributed among the churches, and no one disputed their authenticity.

This is an example of the evidence that can be mustered to demonstrate the early date and authorship of the epistles.

Geographical Accuracy of the Gospels

The Gospels also pass the test of geography. They mention twenty-six towns.¹⁷¹ Not only do they mention famous places, such as Jerusalem, but insignificant villages. Many of these villages are mentioned repeatedly. Archaeology confirms the location of many of these villages. How could the authors of the Gospels have obtained such precise knowledge of the geography of the region, without having visited the region. There were no travel atlases to consult in biblical times.

Other details, such as consistently describing traveling to Jerusalem as, "going up," and going out of Jerusalem, as "going down," are accurate portrayals of the geography. There are no geographical mistakes in the Four Gospels.

Accuracy in the Identity of Government Officials in the Narratives

All of the administrative and governmental officials, both Roman and Jewish, are accurate for the period portrayed. One of the most impressive is Luke's comment on Quirinius.

Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.² This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.³ And all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city. (Luke 2:1-3)

Many skeptics have asserted that the date of the census when Quirinius' was governor (Greek – ἡγεμονεύω, *haygemoneuo*) of Syria was not until 6 AD. This would have been approximately 10 years after the death of Herod, but Matthew states that Jesus was born during, *the days of Herod the king* (Matthew 2:1). Information now available indicates that there was a series of

¹⁷¹ Sixteen each in Matthew and Luke; thirteen each in Mark and John.

census' during this period, and that Quirinius was in the role of ἡγεμονεύω of Syria at least twice.¹⁷²

Luke is precise in that he indicates that the birth took place during the *first census*, which would have been during the lifetime of Herod.

The Darkening of the Sky During Jesus' Crucifixion

Matthew and Luke report that darkness fell over the land, during Jesus' crucifixion.

Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. (Matthew 27:45)

And it was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, (Luke 23:44)

The question has to be asked, "If this really happened, wouldn't there be some record of this unusual event, in addition to the report in the Gospels?" Indeed, there is such comment, in addition to the Gospels.

Dr. Gary Habermas has written about a historian named, Thallus, who in 52 AD wrote a history of the Eastern Mediterranean from the time of Trojan war until his generation. Although Thallus work has been lost, it was quoted by Julius Africanus, who wrote about Thallus in approximately 221 AD. Africanus made a comment on Thallus report of the darkness. Africanus wrote, "Thallus, in the third book of his histories, explains away the darkness as an eclipse of the sun – unreasonably, as it seems to me." Thallus reported the darkness, but he attributed it to an eclipse. Africanus disagrees with Thallus, arguing that it couldn't have been an eclipse, given the date and time when the crucifixion occurred.

Another report of the darkness is found in Tertullian, who describes it as being visible in Rome, Athens, and other Mediterranean cities. According to Tertullian, it was a "cosmic" or "world event."¹⁷³

Phlegon, a Greek author from Coria, writing a chronology, shortly after 137 AD, reported that in the fourth year of the 202 Olympiad (i.e. 33 AD), there was "the greatest eclipse of the sun," and that "it became night in the sixth hour of the day [noon] so that stars even appeared in the heavens. There was a great earthquake in Bithynia, and many things were overturned in Nicea."¹⁷⁴ Matthew 27:54 states that there was a great earthquake that accompanied the darkness. Thus, Phlegon's history not only describes the darkness and the earthquake, but his dating and timing of these events coincides with the chronology of the Gospel account.

The Lives of the Apostles

One very important evidence as to the veracity of the Gospel accounts is the fate of the apostles who went forth to proclaim the message contained in these documents. Every one of the

¹⁷² For an extended treatment of this subject, see, Sir William Ramsey at https://biblehub.com/library/ramsay/was_christ_born_in_bethlehem/chapter_11_quirinius_the_governor.htm

¹⁷³ Strobel, *The Case for Christ*, page 85

¹⁷⁴ Paul L. Maier, *Pontius Pilate* (Wheaton, Ill; Tyndale House) 1968, page 366. Cited in Strobel, *The Case for Christ*, page 85

apostles, with the exception of John,¹⁷⁵ was martyred. Some suffered painful deaths. Nathaniel, for example, was skinned alive. Would anyone willingly suffer such a fate, unless he knew that what he proclaimed was true?

Every effort that has been put forth to discredit the Gospels, by any possible objective data, has failed. The Four Gospels just keep passing every possible test.

The same thing can be said of the epistles. Every fair and objective test that can be given to the epistles has shown the epistles to be what they purport to be and by the authorship ascribed to them.

CONCLUSION

In contrast to the Quran and Mormon Literature, the literature contained in the Bible can be tested by objective data, such as history, geography, linguistics, archaeology, and similar disciplines (only a few of which we have cited in the preceding paragraphs). In each of these, the literature contained in the Bible passes the test. Therefore, we conclude that the Bible will be the basis that we will trust, and use, in constructing *A Suggested Creed for the Twenty-first Century New Testament Church*.

¹⁷⁵ John died as a whitehaired old man in Ephesus, after being released from exile on the Isle of Patmos. A number of Christian writers of the Second Century indicate that they knew those who had been companions of John, in Ephesus.

Introduction to the Composition of the Creed

As we begin the formal task of creating *A Suggested Creed for the 21st Century New Testament Church*, there are some preliminary considerations that must be acknowledged.

We first must define what we mean by a *New Testament Church*. A New Testament Church is a church that seeks to duplicate in this present age the church as it was instituted by the apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

There are a number of reasons why a church would choose to be a New Testament Church. One, is the question of authority. Throughout the centuries, many practices and ecclesiastical structures have developed that are the result of human reason, human tendencies, and in some cases, well-intentioned means of solving problems. Sadly, these often have replaced what the Holy Spirit initiated and authorized in the Church. So in answer to the question, *By what authority do you do these things?* The New Testament Church answers, *By the Holy Spirit, as recorded in Holy Scripture.*

The earliest advocates of re-establishing the New Testament Church in this present age, were motivated by the issue of unity. Grieved by the division caused by the denominations, their traditions their practices, their structures, and their dogmas, these men reasoned, *If we could get rid of all of these human instituted denominations, their structures, their creeds, and return to the Church of the New Testament, then we could eliminate much of the division in Christianity, thus participating in the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer in John 17.*¹⁷⁶

Whatever might be one's motive for seeking to become a New Testament Church, a New Testament Church in this current century considers the New Testament to be the authority for every aspect of the Church. Some of the ways in which that understanding is demonstrated are:

- recognizing that sound hermeneutical principles and practices are necessary for establishing biblical truth;
- defining God as the Scriptures reveal and define Him (both Old and New Testaments);
- displaying the form of church government that was established by the apostles;
- answering the question, "What must I do to be saved," as the apostles, by their preaching and actions, answered that question;
- meeting on the first day of the week, and in that meeting participating in the activities that the apostles and their immediate successors considered to be the reason for that gathering;
- holding, without compromise, to the doctrines of belief and behavior that are asserted in the New Testament;
- seeking to fulfill the Great Commission, as declared by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20;
- recognizing that in certain cultures and seasons there are things that are appropriate for the church that were not present in the New Testament Church, and yet are not contradictory to the New Testament pattern and doctrine (*unscriptural* does not

¹⁷⁶ This was the motive of the Presbyterians, led by Barton W. Stone, following the 1801 Cane Ridge Revival, and the Pennsylvania and Virginia Presbyterians, led by Thomas and Alexander Campbell, in the mid-1800's.

automatically translate to *anti-scriptural*, but caution must be displayed to make certain that unscriptural practices do not displace or are at variance with the New Testament practices).

It is important to realize that there are many truths concerning God and things of the Spirit that must remain ambiguous. One of the problems with many of the existing creeds of Christendom is their tendency to give a precise definition to things that are uncertain in Scripture. Some things also are beyond the realm of human logic. These matters must be left in the realm of enigma and not defined in our creed. We are reminded that the apostle Paul, who had so many revelations that he feared that he might become overly impressed with himself,¹⁷⁷ wrote,

*For we know in part, and we prophesy in part... For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.*¹⁷⁸
*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."*¹⁷⁸

Since Paul, who had so many revelations, admitted that there are things that were beyond his understanding, we must accept the fact that, in spite of our most serious study, there are things that are beyond our understanding. We must accept this truth and be at peace with enigmas.

As the first article in the creed, we must state our authority for the elements in the creed. Beyond question, the thirty-nine documents that constitute the Old Testament will be accepted as having originated in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. No serious challenge against these documents has been able to sustain itself against responsible refutation.

We accept the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament as authentic and authoritative – thus, they are included in our canon.

The twenty-seven documents that constitute the New Testament are another story. From the First Century onward, the Four Gospels, Acts, the Epistles of Paul, I Peter, and I John have been accepted, universally.

However, from the earliest centuries onward, there have been doubts about the authorship of James, II Peter, II & III John, Jude, and the Apocalypse (The Revelation). There has been some debate as to the authorship of Hebrews, but even with that uncertainty, the Epistle to the Hebrews has been universally accepted as authoritative.

The Apocalypse has been the most controversial. In many quarters (especially in the Greek churches), The Apocalypse was not received as being from the pen of John the Apostle and was not included in some of the early lists of authoritative Scriptures. Rather than entering into an extended discussion of this topic, it is suggested that those who are interested see, James Garrett, *How We Got Our Bible*.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ II Corinthians 12:7

¹⁷⁸ I Corinthians 13:9, 12; Isaiah 55:8-9

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.tulsachristianfellowship.com/doulos-press---papers.html>. For those interested in an excellent and very thorough exploration of this topic, see, Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament, Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford, Clarendon Press) 1987

Even though all of the six books noted above were not always included in the early church's list of authoritative documents, there is nothing in any of them that contradict the documents that are universally accepted. In the epistles, only James adds anything new,

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. (James 5:14-15)

This very specific exhortation for the sick to call for the elders who will anoint him and pray over him, resulting in healing is not found in any other of the New Testament documents. It does not contradict anything in the rest of the New Testament, but it is new information.

The first three chapters of The Apocalypse add nothing significantly new, but from chapter four onward, the visions are additions, but there is nothing in them that contradict earlier Scriptures.

Because of the above stated reasons, as well as the fact that for many centuries the twenty-seven documents of our contemporary New Testaments have been accepted by the Church as constituting the New Testament canon (with the exception of The Apocalypse in the Greek churches), we include them in our canon.

ARTICLE ONE: THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

A. Defining Scripture

Although, by observing the creation mankind has been able to discern the existence of a creator, the identity of that creator, and objective knowledge about Him, is not obtainable by examination of the creation. Throughout the history of the human race, God has chosen, at various times, to reveal Himself and to declare His will.

Most significantly, as a permanent and certain record His revelation of His person, His activities, and His will, God has chosen to commit this information to mankind in writing. Such writings are not the result of human creativity or of human wisdom. but are the product of the Holy Spirit's direction and revelation, given to those whom God has chosen to be human authors of these documents. These documents, labeled, *Holy Scripture*, constitute the canon.¹⁸⁰

Holy Scripture is divided into two testaments: the Old and New Testaments. The documents that constitute the Old and New Testaments are the following:

The Old Testament

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

¹⁸⁰ The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are not part of the canon.

The New Testament

The Gospel according to: Matthew Mark Luke John The Acts of the Apostles	Paul's Epistles: Romans I & II Corinthians. Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians I & II Thessalonians I & II Timothy. Titus Philemon	The Epistle to the Hebrews The Epistle of James I & II Peter I II & III John The Epistle of Jude The Revelation of John
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B. The Authority of Scripture

The New Testament Church looks to these Divinely inspired documents as:

- the only rule for the administration of the Church,
- the only source of Divine doctrine,
- the only rule of faith and life for the Church and for the individual Christian.

C. Understanding and Interpreting Scripture

The first rule of biblical interpretation is that where possible, Scripture interprets itself. When a passage is unclear, the first recourse is to seek clarification through the examination of the entire corpus of Scripture.

When examining a particular passage, the sequence of approach is the following:

- Context must control the understanding of a passage of Scripture.
- The exegete first must note, who said it. In Scripture there are statements of mere men, statements of apostles, statements of Satan, as well as statements made by God.
- The exegete must note when it was said. Was it said as a part of the Old Covenant, a statement made by Jesus before His ascension, a statement made before Pentecost, or a statement made after the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost etc.?¹⁸¹
- The exegete must note where was it spoken. Was it a statement restricted to a particular place (i.e., the Jewish Temple, Palestine, etc.)?¹⁸²
- The exegete must note to whom it was spoken. Was it spoken to a particular individual, to a particular group, or to everyone? ¹⁸³
- The exegete must note why was it said.
- The exegete must ask, is there any enlightenment gained from examining the text in the original language: Hebrew in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament.¹⁸⁴
- The exegete must note what is said.

¹⁸¹ See ADDENDUM J for an example of the relevance of covenant

¹⁸² See ADDENDUM K for an example of a promise related to a specific place

¹⁸³ See ADDENDUM L for an example of a promise to a particular people for a particular purpose

¹⁸⁴ See ADDENDUM M for an example of exploring the original language.

Thus, as we begin to construct a *Suggested Creed for the Twenty-first Century New Testament Church*, we will use responsible practices of exegesis as we explore the Scriptures for the elements of the creed. We will not look to the traditions or practices of past or current churches, except to note how these practices might assist us in our pursuit.

ARTICLE TWO: WHO IS GOD?

The Trinity

When seeking to understand the Trinity, we must admit that we are in an arena where the human mind is not adequate to fully grasp the subject. One of the traits of some of the creeds is that they seek to define precisely what must always remain somewhat imprecise to human understanding. We will seek to avoid that in creating our creed. We are thankful that Scripture does give us much important information concerning the Trinity.

Modalism (also known as Sabellianism) states that there is only one being, who manifests Himself in three ways.¹⁸⁵ They illustrate this with the figure of water. A pail of water can be liquid, it can be frozen into ice, and when heated it becomes steam, but it is the same pail of water.

Some Modalists state that God never manifested Himself in any two or three of these ways at the same time, but rather, consecutively. Prior to the incarnation, He manifested Himself as the Father, at the incarnation, as the Son, and from Pentecost, onward, as the Holy Spirit. This is a very old doctrine, which was condemned by Tertullian (c. 213 AD),¹⁸⁶ Dionysius (a bishop in Rome, c. 262 AD),¹⁸⁷ the Council of Nicea (325) as well as other various councils in the early centuries of the Church.

Most contemporary Modalists begin their argument by tracing the name of God throughout the Old Testament. They argue that the monotheism of the Old Testament requires that there be only one being. For the Christian, the Old Testament is not sufficient. The axiom, *The Old is the New concealed, and the New is the Old revealed*, is the manner in which Christians must approach Scripture.

In contrast to the Modalist view, the New Testament presents all three, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit as existing simultaneously, but as separate beings. Matthew describes the presence of all three at Jesus' immersion.

And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him,¹⁷ and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." (Matthew 3:16-17)

Then, the Spirit immediately led Jesus into the wilderness to be tested – thus two, the Spirit and the Son, existing simultaneously.

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:1)

¹⁸⁵ Contemporary groups that hold to Modalism are the United Pentecostals, the United Apostolic Churches, and many of the heirs of the Latter Rain Movement. These argue that the name of God is Jesus and that baptism should be in the name of Jesus, only.

¹⁸⁶ Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 1, in *Ante Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3

¹⁸⁷ Dionysius, *Philosophumena (Refutation of All Heresies)*

On the mount of transfiguration, the Father and the Son are described as separate beings, co-existing

While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" (Matthew 17:5)

Either the Father and the Son are separate persons, who existed simultaneously, or else Jesus practiced deception.

- When Jesus was in the Garden, on the night He was betrayed, he prayed, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*¹⁸⁸. Was He really praying to the Father or was He pretending?
- On the cross, as Jesus breathed His last, He said, *Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit*.¹⁸⁹ Was He really speaking to the Father, or was He just putting on a show for the benefit of the onlookers?

These and many other instances could be cited in which the Father and Son are presented as, co-existing separate entities.

An interesting insight into the plurality, but indivisibility of God is seen in the Hebrew term, *Elohim*, rendered as, *God*. In Hebrew, the means of showing plurality is to end a noun with, *im*. This ending fulfills the same function as the *S* fulfills in English (i.e. boy(s) as contrasted with boy). This implies that in some fashion, God is a plural being.¹⁹⁰ It would be going too far to declare that the plural use of the term, clearly indicates the Trinity, but, rather, tht the plural term is compatible with the concept of the Trinity, as revealed in the New Testament.

Very relevant to this is Deuteronomy 6:4. This verse is rendered literally, *Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!*

As noted in the above paragraph, the word rendered as God (*Elohim*) is a plural word. The word *one* (the Hebrew, *echad*) refers to one in a collective sense. As such, it is used of the union of Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:24) to describe two persons in one flesh. The term is used in this sense to describe one cluster of grapes, i.e. several things constituting a single entity.

This understanding of God has resulted in many using the term, *The Godhead* to refer to God.

These considerations, and others, demonstrate that the New Testament, clearly, and the Old Testament, covertly, describe a God who is constituted by more than one person.

¹⁸⁸ Matthew 26:39

¹⁸⁹ Luke 23:46

¹⁹⁰ Modalists and some other argue that the use of the plural here is *pluralis majestatis*, which refers to a monarch's using plural pronouns in reference to himself/herself. In contemporary language, this usually is referred to as the *royal we*, in which a monarch refers to himself/herself, as *we*, rather than, *I*. The church fathers and the early church theologians, almost unanimously, regarded the plural, *Elohim*, as indicative of the Trinity. Many modern commentators argue that this is *pluralis majestatis*. For a discussion of this subject, see H. C. Leupold, D.D., *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus, OH, Wartburg Press) 1942, p. 43; C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume I, The Pentateuch (Peabody, Mass, Hendrickson Publishers) 1989, page 62.

The Divinity of Each of the Beings Who Constitute the Godhead

The Divinity of each person of the Godhead must be established in order to know how to frame this portion of our creed.

There is no dispute as to the Divinity of the Father, and so we can accept that without question. However, there is dispute concerning the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Divinity of Jesus

As early as Arius, there was a dispute as to the Divinity of the man, Jesus. In recent days, some of the followers of Bill Johnson, Pastor Bethel Church of Redding California, and co-founder of the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry, contend that Jesus was a mere man and that all that Jesus did was done under the anointing of the Holy Spirit – thus, we can have that same anointing and do the same things that Jesus did. Johnson, himself, has never stated that Jesus is a mere man, but that He limited Himself to the role of humanity, prior to His ascension.¹⁹¹

We must ask, was/is Jesus Divine? How does the New Testament describe Him?

Immediately comes to mind the prologue to John's Gospel,

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.¹⁹²
He was in the beginning with God.³ All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being...*

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-3, 14)

Thus, John began his Gospel with a clear acknowledgement of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

A second passage that immediately comes to mind is Paul's description of Jesus Christ in his Philippian letter.

Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus,

⁶ *who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be a thing to be grasped,*

⁷ *but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and being made in the likeness of men.*

(Philippians 2:5-7)

The Greek terms referring to Jesus in this passage are revealing.

The term rendered as *form* is *morphe* (μορφή). This is the term used both in the expression, *the form of God* and *the form of a slave*. This term implies more than mere appearance, although appearance is included in the term. It implies *essence*, or *nature*.

The term rendered as *the likeness of men* is *schema* (σχῆμα). This term refers to one's outward appearance, not necessarily to one's nature or essence.

¹⁹¹ Bill Johnson, *When Heaven Invades Earth*, (Shippensburg, PA, Destiny Image Publishers) 2003 page 23

¹⁹² For an analysis of the Greek in this sentence, see ADDENDUM N

Thus, Philippians 2:5-7 states that Christ was of the same essence as the Father, but He emptied Himself of the prerogatives of that essence and took on Himself the identity of a slave and He did this by taking on the form of a human.

The point important for our purposes is that in this passage Paul described Christ Jesus as being Divine, having the same essence as the Father prior to his incarnation.

Paul's letter to the Colossians expresses this same truth,

And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. (Colossians 1:15

Hebrews 1:1-8 not only describes the Divine essence of Jesus but also records God's elaboration of Jesus identity, but also of His role in creation and sustaining all things.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

³*And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.*

When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;⁴ having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

⁵*For to which of the angels did He ever say, "Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee"? And again, "I will be a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me"?*

⁶*And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."*

⁷*And of the angels He says, "Who makes His angels winds, And His ministers a flame of fire."*

⁸*But of the Son He says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. (Hebrews 1:2-8)*

Not only do we have these and other direct citations that establish the Divinity of Jesus, but there also is indirect affirmation of His identity.

Jesus repeatedly placed Himself in the place of Yahweh, by assuming the Father's Divine prerogatives. He often did and said things that only God has the right to say. For example, when Jesus stood before the High Priest, the High Priest asked him, *Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?*

Jesus answered, *I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. (Mark 14:61-62)*

In this answer, Jesus was referencing Daniel,

"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.¹⁴ "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

Jesus was declaring that He was the fulfillment of Daniel's prophetic vision.

When quizzed about how He had special knowledge of Abraham, Jesus responded,
Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." (John 8:58)

In this reply Jesus was applying the personal name of God to Himself, i.e. *I AM* (Exodus 3:14). The audience understood exactly what He was doing. So, offended by His claim,
⁵⁹ *Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.* (John 8:59)

It also is significant that there are passages that apply to Jesus the title, *the First and the Last*. This is one of the Old Testament titles of Yahweh.

"Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me. (Isaiah 44:6)¹⁹³

This title is directly applied to Jesus three times in the Book of Revelation.

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, (Revelation 1:17)

"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: (Revelation 2:8)

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. ¹³ "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (Revelation 22:12-13)

Jesus exercised the power to forgive, a prerogative that belongs only to God.

And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. ⁴ And being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying

⁵ *And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven."*

⁶ *But there were some of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷ "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"*

⁸ *And immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? ⁹ "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Arise, and take up your pallet and walk '?*

¹⁰ *"But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins "-- He said to the paralytic-- ¹¹ "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home."*

¹² *And he rose and immediately took up the pallet and went out in the sight of all; so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."* (Mark 2:3-12)

Note also that Jesus used the label, *Son of Man*, for Himself. As noted earlier, this was the prophetic label of the one who would come in clouds of glory.

The Gospels record several times in which Jesus was worshipped. Here are a few examples:

¹⁹³ See also Isaiah 41:4; 48:12

And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. (Matthew 28:9)

*And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. (Matthew 28:17)
And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. (John 9:38)*

Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)

Also, as cited earlier, Hebrews 1:6

And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."

In none of these situations in which people worshipped Him, did Jesus object to their worship, but rather He considered it to be well-placed (as contrasted with Peter in Acts 10:26).

Jesus also stated that his forthcoming resurrection from the dead would validate the very special claims that He made about Himself.

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

³⁹ *But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;*

⁴⁰ *for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:38-40)*

Indeed, after having been crucified and buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, Jesus rose from the dead, thus establishing His claims to deity.

Conclusion Concerning the Divinity of Jesus Christ

Without question, the Scriptures declare the Divinity of Christ through several devices.

Therefore, as we look to defining God, and the Trinity, it is clear that Jesus Christ is Divine, and thus, a member of the Godhead.

The Divinity of the Holy Spirit

As stated earlier, when seeking to grasp a full understanding of the Godhead, there are things that are beyond our ability to fully grasp. We are reminded of the truth of Deuteronomy 29:29

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

When it comes to seeking an understanding the Holy Spirit, we must not go beyond what Scripture says, but thankfully, Scripture does give us important information concerning the Holy Spirit.

One of the things that presents a difficulty in giving definition to the Holy Spirit is the fact that the Holy Spirit speaks, not of Himself, but rather, of Jesus Christ.

"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, (John 15:26)

The Spirit's role is not to glorify Himself, but to glorify the Christ.

"He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. (John 16:14)

The Holy Spirit, even though a Divine Being, does not speak on His own.

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. (John 16:13)

One might say that the Holy Spirit often works in the background, putting forth the other members of the Godhead.

There are some who argue that the Holy Spirit is a force, rather than a being. One thing on which they base this argument is the fact that the Greek term that we render as *spirit*, is *pneuma* (πνεῦμα), which is a neuter noun. Based on the fact that *pneuma* is a neuter noun, the argument is put forth that the Holy Spirit is *a thing*, instead of *a person*.

Indeed, *pneuma* is a neuter noun, but that does not mean that the Spirit is a thing and not a person. As is true in many languages, Greek nouns are labeled as being of a gender, but that does not necessarily mean that the term refers to something masculine, feminine, or neuter. In other words, the terms, masculine, feminine, and neuter refer to a class of nouns, but not necessarily the sex of the object or person to which the noun relates. It merely describes the linguistic family of nouns to which the word belongs.¹⁹⁴

For example, the Greek word for water, *hudor* (ὕδωρ) is a feminine noun. Likewise, the word for the physical organ, the heart *kardia* (καρδία) feminine. The word for sea, *thalassa* (θάλασσα) is feminine. The word for death, *thanatos* (θάνατος) is masculine. In none of these examples does the fact that the noun is feminine, or masculine, indicate that the reference is to a male or female person. Thus, the gender assigned to a word does not necessarily refer to its identity, although it often does.

Furthermore, Jesus applied the name, *parakletos* (παράκλητος) to the Being that we know as the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:11). *Parakletos* is a masculine noun.

In addition to the masculine term, *parakletos*, John used masculine terminology in quoting Jesus reference to the Holy Spirit. We cite passages quoted earlier:

¹⁹⁴ There are three broad categories of Greek nouns, which are grouped as to how the word changes spelling as it is declined from one case to the next (nominative [subject], genitive [relationship], dative [indirect object], accusative [direct object], vocative [direct address]). In recent centuries, the term, *gender*, has been used to distinguish these categories. *Gender* is an English word. The history of its usage in describing Greek nouns helps to understand the sense in which the term is used today. Aristotle wrote three books on *Rhetoric*. In his writing, describing Greek nouns, he used the term, *genos* (though Aristotle attributes the idea to Protagoras). The term, *genos*, simply means, *kind*, or *type*. The term worked its way into French as *genre*, hence *gender* in English. The first example of this term's occurring in English is found in 1390 A.D. The non-grammatical sense is attested about 100 years later.
<https://linguistics.stackexchange.com/questions/17624/who-was-the-first-to-call-noun-classes-genders>

John 14:26, *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He** will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. **He** will bear witness of me.*

John 15:26 *"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, **He** will bear witness of Me,*

John 16:13-14 *"But when **He**, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He** will guide you into all the truth; for **He** will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever **He** hears, **He** will speak; and **He** will disclose to you what is to come. **He** shall glorify Me; for **He** shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you.*

In each of these passages, (14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14), the Greek term rendered as *He*, is the term, *ekeinos* (ἐκεῖνος). This is the masculine singular of a demonstrative noun. It literally means, *this one*. The fact that the masculine form is used is another layer of evidence that the Holy Spirit is a person. In quoting Jesus, John could have used, *ekeino* (ἐκεῖνο), the neuter form of the demonstrative pronoun. Thus, the terms in these passages agree as to the identity of the Holy Spirit's being a person, not a force.

One of the strongest arguments against the Spirit's being a force and not a person is the fact that the Father is a *pneuma*. *"God is spirit (pneuma), and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* (John 4:24)

No one argues that because God is a *pneuma* He is not a person.

Another important thing to consider is that Jesus commanded the disciples to immerse in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Thus, making no distinction in the Divinity of the members of the Trinity.

Although most biblical references to the Holy Spirit are somewhat indirect concerning His Divinity. One of the most direct is Acts 5:1-4.

But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,² and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.

³ *But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?"*

⁴ *"While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God."*

Note that Peter said to Ananias that he had lied to the Holy Spirit (verse 3). Then, he declared that Ananias had lied to God (verse 4). In this parallelism, we see the Holy Spirit described as God.

Because of the Old Testament background to Hebrews 10:15-17, it is clear that this passage presents the Holy Spirit as Divine. Recall that in the Old Testament it was Yahweh (colloquially, Jehovah, and usually rendered in English translations as LORD), who made the covenant with Israel.

And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,¹⁶ "This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And upon their mind I will write them," He then says,¹⁷ "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

Note that it is the Holy Spirit who is speaking, and He speaks of Himself as making the covenant with Israel, whereas the Old Testament describes Yahweh as making the covenant. This implies that all three persons, the Trinity, constitute the identity of Yahweh – including the Holy Spirit.

Scripture ascribes attributes of God to the Holy Spirit:

- Omniscience is intimated: *for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.*¹¹ *For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.* (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)
- He raised Jesus from the dead and can even give life to our mortal bodies: *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.* (Romans 8:11)
- He renews our minds and changes our lives: *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,* (Titus 3:5)

Conclusion Concerning the Divinity of the Holy Spirit

These and other passages that could be cited, cause us to conclude that the Holy Spirit is, indeed, Divine, and one of the constituents of the Godhead – The Trinity.

God as the Creator and Sustainer

Several verses of Scripture address the subject of the Trinity's involvement in the creation. The first verses of the Bible state,

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.² And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

Thus, the Bible begins with the Hebrew, *barasheth bara Elohim*. As noted earlier, the Hebrew term, *Elohim*, rendered as, *God*, is a plural term. Much comment could be made on the some of the subtleties of the Hebrew in these verses, but for our purposes, the important point is that the concept of the Trinity is compatible with the language of these verses.

When Genesis describes the creation of mankind, the language implies a plural identity of God.

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness;... And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.* (Genesis 1:26-27)

The expression, *let Us*, and the plural personal pronoun, *Our*, implies a reference to more than one person. We know that God was not talking to the angels because man is made in the image of God. Thus, as was true of the plurality of *Elohim*, the language is compatible with the concept of the Trinity.

Concerning the role of the Son in creation, once again, the prologue to John's Gospel comes into play. John, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was in the beginning with God.³ All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.... He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. (John 1:1-3, 10)

Later in the prologue, John identified the Logos as Jesus Christ.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.¹⁵ John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" (John 1:14-15)

Paul, describing Jesus Christ's role in the creation, wrote to the Colossians,

For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:14-17)

This last phrase calls to mind the opening words of the Epistle to the Hebrews,

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; (Hebrews 1:1-3)

The same truth is expressed by Paul in his first Letter to the Corinthians,

yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. (I Corinthians 8:6)

These verses combined, tell us that the Father created through the Son, and it is the Son who now, *holds all things together* (Colossians) and *upholds all things by the word of His power* (Hebrews) and *we exist through Him* (I Corinthians).

Conclusion Concerning the Role of the Trinity in Creation

Given the accumulative evidence that we have reviewed, the clear conclusion is that Scripture presents each member of the Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) as having a role in creating heaven, earth, and all that in them is. Therefore, we conclude that the creation is the result of the activity of the Trinity.

ADDENDUM A

Martin Luther's Small Catechism (1529) A 'short course' in the Christian Faith

Martin Luther's Small Catechism, 1529, was written to answer the need for a basic exposition of the Christian faith for lay people. It follows the historic form of a catechism, based on explanations of the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, to which Luther has added sections on Baptism, Confession and the Sacrament of the Altar, along with forms for Morning and Evening Prayer and Grace at Table. Each section consists of an elaboration of the point of doctrine.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The First Commandment:

"You shall have no other gods."

We should fear, love and trust in God above all things.

The Second Commandment:

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."

We should fear and love God, and so we should not use his name to curse, swear, practice magic, lie or deceive, but in every time of need call upon him, pray to him, praise him and give him thanks.

The Third Commandment:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

We should fear and love God, and so we should not despise his Word and the preaching of the same, but deem it holy and gladly hear and learn it.

The Fourth Commandment:

"Honor your father and your mother."

We should fear and love God, and so we should not despise our parents and superiors, nor provoke them to anger, but honor, serve, obey, love and esteem them.

The Fifth Commandment:

"You shall not kill."

We should fear and love God, and so we should not endanger our neighbor's life, nor cause him any harm, but help and befriend him in every necessity of life.

The Sixth Commandment:

"You shall not commit adultery."

We should fear and love God, and so we should lead a chaste and pure life in word and deed, each one loving and honoring his wife or her husband.

The Seventh Commandment:

"You shall not steal."

We should love and fear God, and so we should not rob our neighbor of his money or property, nor bring them into our possession by dishonest trade or by dealing in shoddy wares, but help him to improve and protect his income and property.

The Eighth Commandment:

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

We should love and fear God, and so we should not tell lies about our neighbor, nor betray, slander or defame him, but should apologize for him, speak well for him, and interpret charitably all that he does.

The Ninth Commandment:

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house."

We should love and fear God, and so we should not seek by craftiness to gain possession of our neighbor's inheritance or home, nor to obtain them under pretext of legal right, but be of service and help to him so that he may keep what is his.

The Tenth Commandment:

"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

We should love and fear God, and so we should not abduct, estrange or entice away our neighbor's wife, servants or cattle, but encourage them to remain and discharge their duty to him.

What does God declare concerning all these commandments?

He says, "I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."

God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. We should therefore fear his wrath and not disobey these commandments. On the other hand, he promises grace and every blessing to all who keep them. We should therefore love him, trust in him, and cheerfully do what he has commanded.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

The First Article: Creation

"I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth."

I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that he has given me and still sustains my body and soul, all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with food and clothing, house and home, family and property; that he provides me daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me from all evil. All this he does out of his pure, fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness on my part. For all of this I am bound to thank, praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true.

The Second Article: Redemption

"I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate
 was crucified, died, and was buried;
 he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead."

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, delivered me and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold but with his holy and precious blood and with his innocent sufferings and death, in order that I may be his, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, even as he is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

The Third Article: Sanctification

"I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the Holy catholic Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting. Amen."

I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and on the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

"Our Father in heaven."

Here God would encourage us to believe that he is truly our Father and we are truly his children—in order that we may approach him boldly and confidently in prayer, even as beloved children approach their dear father.

"Hallowed be your name."

To be sure, God's name is holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may also be holy for us.

How is this done?

When the Word of God is taught clearly and purely and we, as children of God, lead holy lives in accordance with it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But whoever teaches and lives otherwise than the Word of God teaches, profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, heavenly Father!

"Your kingdom come."

To be sure, the kingdom of God comes of itself, without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also come to us.

How is this done?

When the heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit so that by his grace we may believe his holy Word and live a godly life, both in time and hereafter forever.

"Your will be done, on earth as in heaven."

To be sure, the good and gracious will of God is done without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also be done by us.

How is this done?

When God curbs and destroys every evil counsel and purpose of the devil, of the world, and of our flesh which would hinder us from hallowing his name and prevent the coming of his reign, and when he strengthens us and keeps us steadfast in his Word and in faith even to the end. This is his good and gracious will.

"Give us today our daily bread."

To be sure, God provides daily bread, even to the wicked, without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that God may make us aware of his gifts and enable us to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread?

Everything required to satisfy our bodily needs, such as food and clothing, house and home, fields and flocks, money and property; a pious spouse and good children, trustworthy servants, godly and faithful rulers, good government; seasonable weather, peace and health, order and honor; true friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

"Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us."

We pray in this petition that our heavenly Father may not look upon our sins, and on their account deny our prayers, for we neither merit nor deserve those things for which we pray. Although we sin daily and deserve nothing but punishment, we nevertheless pray that God may grant us all things by his grace. And assuredly we on our part will heartily forgive and cheerfully do good to those who may sin against us.

"Save us from the time of trial."

God tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God may so guard and preserve us that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or mislead us into unbelief, despair, and

other great and shameful sins, but that, although we may be so tempted, we may finally prevail and gain the victory.

"And deliver us from evil."

We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven may deliver us from all manner of evil, whether it affect body or soul, property or reputation, and that at last, when the hour of death comes, he may grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven.

"Amen."

It means that I should be assured that such petitions are acceptable to our heavenly Father and are heard by him, for he himself commanded us to pray like this and promised to hear us.

"Amen, amen" means "Yes, yes, it shall be so."

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

What is baptism?

Baptism is not merely water, but it is water used according to God's command and connected with God's Word.

What is this Word of God?

As recorded in Matthew 28:19, our Lord Christ said, "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."

What gifts or benefits does Baptism bestow?

It effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare.

What is this Word and promise of God?

As recorded in Mark 16:16, our Lord Christ said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned."

How can water produce such great effects?

It is not the water that produces these effects, but the Word of God connected with the water, and our faith which relies on the Word of God connected with the water. For without the Word of God the water is merely water and no Baptism. But when connected with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul wrote to Titus (3:5-8): "He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life. This saying is sure."

What does such baptizing with water signify?

It signifies that the old Adam in us, together with all sins and evil lusts, should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance and be put to death, and that the new man should come forth daily and rise up, cleansed and righteous, to live forever in God's presence.

Where is this written?

In Romans 6:4, St. Paul wrote: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

What is confession?

Confession consists of two parts. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive absolution or forgiveness from the confessor as from God himself, by no means doubting but firmly believing that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should acknowledge that we are guilty of all manner of sins, even those of which we are not aware, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. Before the confessor, however, we should confess only those sins of which we have knowledge and which trouble us.

What are such sins?

Reflect on your condition in the light of the Ten Commandments: whether you are a father or mother, a son or daughter, a master or servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, lazy, ill-tempered, or quarrelsome; whether you have harmed anyone by word or deed; and whether you have stolen, neglected, or wasted anything, or done other evil.

[Here Luther gives two examples of a confession.] . . . Then the confessor shall say: "God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith. Amen."

Again he shall say: "Do you believe that the forgiveness I declare is the forgiveness of God?"

Answer: "Yes, I do."

Then he shall say: "Be it done for you as you have believed. According to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Go in peace."

A confessor will know additional passages of the Scriptures with which to comfort and to strengthen the faith of those whose consciences are heavily burdened or who are distressed and sorely tried.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

Instituted by Jesus Christ himself, it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and to drink.

Where is this written?

The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke, and also St. Paul, write thus: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'"

What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

We are told in the words "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sins." By these words the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are given to us in the sacrament, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking produce such great effects?

The eating and drinking do not in themselves produce them, but the words "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sins." These words, when accompanied by the bodily eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the sacrament, and he who believes these words has what they say and declare: the forgiveness of sins.

Who, then, receives this sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation are a good external discipline, but he is truly worthy and well prepared who believes these words: "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sins." On the other hand, he who does not believe these words, or doubts them, is unworthy and unprepared, for the words "for you" require truly believing hearts.

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS

In the morning

. . . when you rise, make the sign of the cross and say, "In the name of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Then, kneeling or standing, say the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Then you may say this prayer:

"I give you thanks, heavenly Father, through your dear Son Jesus Christ, that you have protected me through the night from all harm and danger. I beseech you to keep me this day, too, from all sin and evil, that in all my thoughts, words and deeds I may please you. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all that is mine. Let your holy angel have charge of me, that the wicked one may have no power over me. Amen."

After singing a hymn (possibly a hymn on the Ten Commandments) or whatever your devotion may suggest, you should go to your work joyfully.

In the evening

. . . when you retire, make the sign of the cross and say, "In the name of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Then, kneeling or standing, say the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Then you may say this prayer:

"I give you thanks, heavenly Father, through your dear Son Jesus Christ, that you have graciously protected me through this day. I beseech you to forgive all my sin and wrong which I have done. Graciously protect me during the coming night. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all that is mine. Let your holy angels have charge of me, that the wicked one may have no power over me. Amen."

Then quickly lie down and sleep in peace.

GRACE AT TABLE

Blessing before eating

When the children and the whole household gather at the table, they should reverently fold their hands and say:

"The eyes of all look to you, O Lord, and you give them their food in due season. You open wide your hand. You satisfy the desire of every living thing."

(It is to be observed that "satisfying the desire of every living thing" means that all creatures receive enough to eat to make them joyful and of good cheer. Greed and anxiety about food prevent such satisfaction.)

Then the Lord's Prayer should be said, and afterwards this prayer:

"Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these your gifts which of you bountiful goodness you have bestowed upon us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Thanksgiving after eating

After eating, likewise, they should fold their hands reverently and say:

"O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens when they cry. His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man; but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love."

Then the Lord's Prayer should be said, and afterwards this prayer:

"We give you thanks, Lord God, our Father, for all your benefits, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns forever. Amen."

ADDENDUM B

The Augsburg Confession (1530)

The Confession of Faith which was submitted to His Imperial Majesty Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg in the year 1530 by certain princes and cities

I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, and will not be put to shame. -- Psalm 119:46

Holy Roman Emperor Charles V called the Princes and Free Territories in Germany explain their religious convictions in an attempt to restore religious and political unity in the Holy Roman Empire. He was motivated by his desire to rally support against the Turkish invasion. It was read to the assembled Diet, both in Latin and German.

It is the primary confession of faith of the Lutheran Church.

Chief Articles of Faith

Article I: Of God.

Our Churches, with common consent, do teach that the decree of the Council of Nicaea concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons, is true and to be believed without any doubting; that is to say, there is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the term "person" they use as the Fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself.

They condemn all heresies which have sprung up against this article, as the Manichaeans, who assumed two principles, one Good and the other Evil: also the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mohammedans, and all such. They condemn also the Samosatenes, old and new, who, contending that there is but one Person, sophistically and impiously argue that the Word and the Holy Ghost are not distinct Persons, but that "Word" signifies a spoken word, and "Spirit" signifies motion created in things.

Article II: Of Original Sin.

Also they teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost.

They condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ's merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason.

Article III: Of the Son of God.

Also they teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God, did assume the human nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, the divine and the human, inseparably enjoined in one Person, one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, that He might reconcile the Father unto us, and be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.

He also descended into hell, and truly rose again the third day; afterward He ascended into heaven that He might sit on the right hand of the Father, and forever reign and have dominion over all creatures, and sanctify them that believe in Him, by sending the Holy Ghost into their hearts, to rule, comfort, and quicken them, and to defend them against the devil and the power of sin.

The same Christ shall openly come again to judge the quick and the dead, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed.

Article IV: Of Justification.

Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

Article V: Of the Ministry.

That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake.

They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.

Article VI: Of New Obedience.

Also they teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruits, and that it is necessary to do good works commanded by God, because of God's will, but that we should not rely on those works to merit justification before God. For remission of sins and justification is apprehended by faith, as also the voice of Christ attests: When ye shall have done all these things, say: We are unprofitable servants. [Luke 1:10](#). The same is also taught by the Fathers. For Ambrose says: It is ordained of God that he who believes in Christ is saved, freely receiving remission of sins, without works, by faith alone.

Article VII: Of the Church.

Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered.

And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. [Eph. 4:5-6](#).

Article VIII: What the Church Is.

Although the Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers, nevertheless, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith, it is lawful to use Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ: The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, etc. [Matt. 23:2](#). Both the Sacraments and Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men.

They condemn the Donatists, and such like, who denied it to be lawful to use the ministry of evil men in the Church, and who thought the ministry of evil men to be unprofitable and of none effect.

Article IX: Of Baptism.

Of Baptism they teach that it is necessary to salvation, and that through Baptism is offered the grace of God, and that children are to be baptized who, being offered to God through Baptism are received into God's grace.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who reject the baptism of children, and say that children are saved without Baptism.

Article X: Of the Lord's Supper.

Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who eat the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise.

Article XI: Of Confession.

Of Confession they teach that Private Absolution ought to be retained in the churches, although in confession an enumeration of all sins is not necessary. For it is impossible according to the Psalm: Who can understand his errors? [Ps. 19:12](#).

Article XII: Of Repentance.

Of Repentance they teach that for those who have fallen after Baptism there is remission of sins whenever they are converted and that the Church ought to impart absolution to those thus returning to repentance. Now, repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which is born of the Gospel, or of absolution, and believes that for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that those once justified can lose the Holy Ghost. Also those who contend that some may attain to such perfection in this life that they cannot sin.

The Novatians also are condemned, who would not absolve such as had fallen after Baptism, though they returned to repentance.

They also are rejected who do not teach that remission of sins comes through faith but command us to merit grace through satisfactions of our own.

Article XIII: Of the Use of the Sacraments.

Of the Use of the Sacraments they teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments.

They therefore condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify by the outward act, and who do not teach that, in the use of the Sacraments, faith which believes that sins are forgiven, is required.

Article XIV: Of Ecclesiastical Order.

Of Ecclesiastical Order they teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called.

Article XV: Of Ecclesiastical Usages.

Of Usages in the Church they teach that those ought to be observed which may be observed without sin, and which are profitable unto tranquillity and good order in the Church, as particular holy days, festivals, and the like.

Nevertheless, concerning such things men are admonished that consciences are not to be burdened, as though such observance was necessary to salvation.

They are admonished also that human traditions instituted to propitiate God, to merit grace, and to make satisfaction for sins, are opposed to the Gospel and the doctrine of faith. Wherefore vows and traditions concerning meats and days, etc., instituted to merit grace and to make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the Gospel.

Article XVI: Of Civil Affairs.

Of Civil Affairs they teach that lawful civil ordinances are good works of God, and that it is right for Christians to bear civil office, to sit as judges, to judge matters by the Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to make oath when required by the magistrates, to marry a wife, to be given in marriage.

They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid these civil offices to Christians.

They condemn also those who do not place evangelical perfection in the fear of God and in faith, but in forsaking civil offices, for the Gospel teaches an eternal righteousness of the heart. Meanwhile, it does not destroy the State or the family, but very much requires that they be preserved as ordinances of God, and that charity be practiced in such ordinances. Therefore,

Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws save only when commanded to sin; for then they ought to obey God rather than men. [Acts 5:29](#).

Article XVII: Of Christ's Return to Judgment.

Also they teach that at the Consummation of the World Christ will appear for judgment, and will raise up all the dead; He will give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, but ungodly men and the devils He will condemn to be tormented without end.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who think that there will be an end to the punishments of condemned men and devils.

They condemn also others who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.

Article XVIII: Of Free Will.

Of Free Will they teach that man's will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness, and to work things subject to reason. But it has no power, without the Holy Ghost, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, [1 Cor. 2:14](#); but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the Word. These things are said in as many words by Augustine in his Hypognosticon, Book III: We grant that all men have a free will, free, inasmuch as it has the judgment of reason; not that it is thereby capable, without God, either to begin, or, at least, to complete aught in things pertaining to God, but only in works of this life, whether good or evil. "Good" I call those works which spring from the good in nature, such as, willing to labor in the field, to eat and drink, to have a friend, to clothe oneself, to build a house, to marry a wife, to raise cattle, to learn diverse useful arts, or whatsoever good pertains to this life. For all of these things are not without dependence on the providence of God; yea, of Him and through Him they are and have their being. "Evil" I call such works as willing to worship an idol, to commit murder, etc. They condemn the Pelagians and others, who teach that without the Holy Ghost, by the power of nature alone, we are able to love God above all things; also to do the commandments of God as touching "the substance of the act." For, although nature is able in a manner to do the outward work, (for it is able to keep the hands from theft and murder,) yet it cannot produce the inward motions, such as the fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience, etc.

Article XIX: Of the Cause of Sin.

Of the Cause of Sin they teach that, although God does create and preserve nature, yet the cause of sin is the will of the wicked, that is, of the devil and ungodly men; which will, unaided of God, turns itself from God, as Christ says [John 8:44](#): When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own.

Article XX: Of Good Works.

Our teachers are falsely accused of forbidding Good Works. For their published writings on the Ten Commandments, and others of like import, bear witness that they have taught to good purpose concerning all estates and duties of life, as to what estates of life and what works in every calling be pleasing to God. Concerning these things preachers heretofore taught but little, and urged only childish and needless works, as particular holy-days, particular fasts, brotherhoods, pilgrimages, services in honor of saints, the use of rosaries, monasticism, and such like. Since our adversaries have been admonished of these things, they are now unlearning them,

and do not preach these unprofitable works as heretofore. Besides, they begin to mention faith, of which there was heretofore marvelous silence. They teach that we are justified not by works only, but they conjoin faith and works, and say that we are justified by faith and works. This doctrine is more tolerable than the former one, and can afford more consolation than their old doctrine.

Forasmuch, therefore, as the doctrine concerning faith, which ought to be the chief one in the Church, has lain so long unknown, as all must needs grant that there was the deepest silence in their sermons concerning the righteousness of faith, while only the doctrine of works was treated in the churches, our teachers have instructed the churches concerning faith as follows:—

First, that our works cannot reconcile God or merit forgiveness of sins, grace, and justification, but that we obtain this only by faith when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ's sake, who alone has been set forth the Mediator and Propitiation, **1 Tim. 2:5**, in order that the Father may be reconciled through Him. Whoever, therefore, trusts that by works he merits grace, despises the merit and grace of Christ, and seeks a way to God without Christ, by human strength, although Christ has said of Himself: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. **John 14:6**.

This doctrine concerning faith is everywhere treated by Paul, **Eph. 2:8**: By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of your selves; it is the gift of God, not of works, etc.

And lest any one should craftily say that a new interpretation of Paul has been devised by us, this entire matter is supported by the testimonies of the Fathers. For **1** Augustine, in many volumes, defends grace and the righteousness of faith, over against the merits of works. **1** And Ambrose, in his *De Vocatione Gentium*, and elsewhere, teaches to like effect. For in his *De Vocatione Gentium* he says as follows: Redemption by the blood of Christ would become of little value, neither would the preeminence of man's works be superseded by the mercy of God, if justification, which is wrought through grace, were due to the merits going before, so as to be, not the free gift of a donor, but the reward due to the laborer.

But, although this doctrine is despised by the inexperienced, nevertheless God-fearing and anxious consciences find by experience that it brings the greatest consolation, because consciences cannot be set at rest through any works, but only by faith, when they take the sure ground that for Christ's sake they have a reconciled God. As Paul teaches **Rom. 5:1**: **1**Being justified by faith, we have peace with God. **1** This whole doctrine is to be referred to that conflict of the terrified conscience, neither can it be understood apart from that conflict. Therefore **1** inexperienced and profane men judge ill concerning this matter, who dream that Christian righteousness is nothing but civil and philosophical righteousness.

Heretofore consciences were plagued with the doctrine of works, they did not hear the consolation from the Gospel. Some persons were driven by conscience into the desert, into monasteries hoping there to merit grace by a monastic life. Some also devised other works whereby to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins. **2** Hence there was very great need to treat of, and renew, this doctrine of faith in Christ, to the end that anxious consciences should not be without consolation but that they might know that grace and forgiveness of sins and justification are apprehended by faith in Christ.

Men are also admonished that here the term "faith" does not signify merely the knowledge of the history, such as is in the ungodly and in the devil, but signifies a faith which believes, not merely the history, but also the effect of the history—namely, this article: the forgiveness of sins, to wit, that we have grace, righteousness, and forgiveness of sins through Christ.

Now he that knows that he has a Father gracious to him through Christ, truly knows God; he knows also that God cares for him, and calls upon God; in a word, he is not ² without God, as the heathen. For devils and the ungodly are not able to believe this article: the forgiveness of sins. Hence, they hate God as an enemy, call not upon Him, ² and expect no good from Him. Augustine also admonishes his readers concerning the word "faith," and teaches that the term "faith" is accepted in the Scriptures not for knowledge such as is in the ungodly but for confidence which consoles and encourages the terrified mind.

Furthermore, it is taught on our part that it is necessary to do good works, not that we should trust to merit grace by them, but because it is the will of God. ² It is only by faith that forgiveness of sins is apprehended, and that, for nothing. ² And because through faith the Holy Ghost is received, hearts are renewed and endowed with new affections, so as to be able to bring forth good works. ³⁰ For Ambrose says: Faith is the mother of a good will and right doing. For man's powers without the Holy Ghost are full of ungodly affections, and are too weak to do works which are good in God's sight. ³ Besides, they are in the power of the devil who impels men to divers sins, ³ to ungodly opinions, to open crimes. This we may see in the philosophers, who, although they endeavored to live an honest life could not succeed, ³ but were defiled with many open crimes. Such is the feebleness of man when he is without faith and without the Holy Ghost, and governs himself only by human strength.

Hence it may be readily seen that this doctrine is not to be charged with prohibiting good works, but rather the more to be commended, because it shows how we are enabled to do good works. For without faith human nature can in no wise do the works of the First or of the Second Commandment. ³ Without faith it does not call upon God, nor expect anything from God, nor bear the cross, but seeks, and trusts in, man's help. ³ And thus, when there is no faith and trust in God all manner of lusts and human devices rule in the heart. ³ Wherefore Christ said, **John 15:5**: Without Me ye can do nothing; and the Church sings:

Lacking Thy divine favor,
There is nothing found in man,
Naught in him is harmless.

Article XXI: Of the Worship of the Saints.

Of the Worship of Saints they teach that the memory of saints may be set before us, that we may follow their faith and good works, according to our calling, as the Emperor may follow the example of David in making war to drive away the Turk from his country. For both are kings. But the Scripture teaches not the invocation of saints or to ask help of saints, since it sets before us the one Christ as the Mediator, Propitiation, High Priest, and Intercessor. He is to be prayed to, and has promised that He will hear our prayer; and this worship He approves above all, to wit, that in all afflictions He be called upon, **1 John 2:1**: If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, etc.

This is about the Sum of our Doctrine, in which, as can be seen, there is nothing that varies from the Scriptures, or from the Church Catholic, or from the Church of Rome as known from its writers. This being the case, they judge harshly who insist that our teachers be regarded as heretics. There is, however, disagreement on certain abuses, which have crept into the Church without rightful authority. And even in these, if there were some difference, there should be proper lenity on the part of bishops to bear with us by reason of the Confession which we have now reviewed; because even the Canons are not so severe as to demand the same rites everywhere, neither, at any time, have the rites of all churches been the same; although, among us, in large part, the ancient rites are diligently observed. For it is a false and malicious charge

that all the ceremonies, all the things instituted of old, are abolished in our churches. But it has been a common complaint that some abuses were connected with the ordinary rites. These, inasmuch as they could not be approved with a good conscience, have been to some extent corrected.

Articles in which are reviewed the abuses which have been corrected.

Inasmuch, then, as our churches dissent in no article of the faith from the Church Catholic, but only omit some abuses which are new, and which have been erroneously accepted by the corruption of the times, contrary to the intent of the Canons, we pray that Your Imperial Majesty would graciously hear both what has been changed, and what were the reasons why the people were not compelled to observe those abuses against their conscience. Nor should Your Imperial Majesty believe those who, in order to excite the hatred of men against our part, disseminate strange slanders among the people. ¹ Having thus excited the minds of good men, they have first given occasion to this controversy, and now endeavor, by the same arts, to increase the discord. ¹ For Your Imperial Majesty will undoubtedly find that the form of doctrine and of ceremonies with us is not so intolerable as these ungodly and malicious men represent. ¹ Besides, the truth cannot be gathered from common rumors or the revilings of enemies. ¹ But it can readily be judged that nothing would serve better to maintain the dignity of ceremonies, and to nourish reverence and pious devotion among the people than if the ceremonies were observed rightly in the churches.

Article XXII: Of Both Kinds in the Sacrament.

To the laity are given Both Kinds in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, because this usage has the commandment of the Lord in **Matt. 26:2**: Drink ye all of it, where Christ has manifestly commanded concerning the cup that all should drink. And lest any man should craftily say that this refers only to priests, Paul in **1 Cor. 11:2** recites an example from which it appears that the whole congregation did use both kinds. And this usage has long remained in the Church, nor is it known when, or by whose authority, it was changed; although Cardinal Cusanus mentions the time when it was approved. Cyprian in some places testifies that the blood was given to the people. The same is testified by Jerome, who says: The priests administer the Eucharist, and distribute the blood of Christ to the people. Indeed, Pope Gelasius commands that the Sacrament be not divided (dist. II., De Consecratione, cap. Comperimus). Only custom, not so ancient, has it otherwise. But it is evident that any custom introduced against the commandments of God is not to be allowed, as the Canons witness (dist. III., cap. Veritate, and the following chapters). But this custom has been received, not only against the Scripture, but also against the old Canons and the example of the Church. Therefore, if any preferred to use both kinds of the Sacrament, they ought not to have been compelled with offense to their consciences to do otherwise. And because the division ¹ of the Sacrament does not agree with the ordinance of Christ, we are accustomed to omit the procession, which hitherto has been in use.

Article XXIII: Of the Marriage of Priests.

There has been common complaint concerning the examples of priests who were not chaste. For that reason also Pope Pius is reported to have said that there were certain causes why marriage was taken away from priests, but that there were far weightier ones why it ought to be given back; for so Platina writes. Since, therefore, our priests were desirous to avoid these open scandals, they married wives, and taught that it was lawful for them to contract matrimony. First, because Paul says, **1 Cor. :2,9**: To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife. Also: It is better to marry than to burn. Secondly Christ says, **Matt. 19:11**: All men cannot receive this

saying, where He teaches that not all men are fit to lead a single life; for God created man for procreation, **Gen. 1:28**. Nor is it in man's power, without a singular gift and work of God, to alter this creation. [For it is manifest, and many have confessed that no good, honest, chaste life, no Christian, sincere, upright conduct has resulted (from the attempt), but a horrible, fearful unrest and torment of conscience has been felt by many until the end. Therefore, those who are not fit to lead a single life ought to contract matrimony. For no man's law, no vow, can annul the commandment and ordinance of God. For these reasons the priests teach that it is lawful for them to marry wives.

It is also evident that in the ancient Church priests were married men. For Paul says, **1 Tim. 3:2**, that a bishop should be chosen who is the husband of one wife. **1** And in Germany, four hundred years ago for the first time, the priests were violently compelled to lead a single life, who indeed offered such resistance that the Archbishop of Mayence, when about to publish the Pope's decree concerning this matter, was almost killed in the tumult raised by the enraged priests. **1** And so harsh was the dealing in the matter that not only were marriages forbidden for the future, but also existing marriages were torn asunder, contrary to all laws, divine and human, contrary even to the Canons themselves, made not only by the Popes, but by most celebrated Synods. [Moreover, many God-fearing and intelligent people in high station are known frequently to have expressed misgivings that such enforced celibacy and depriving men of marriage (which God Himself has instituted and left free to men) has never produced any good results, but has brought on many great and evil vices and much iniquity.

Seeing also that, as the world is aging, man's nature is gradually growing weaker, it is well to guard that no more vices steal into Germany.

Furthermore, God ordained marriage to be a help against human infirmity. **1** The Canons themselves say that the old rigor ought now and then, in the latter times, to be relaxed because of the weakness of men; which it is to be wished were done also in this matter. **1** And it is to be expected that the churches shall at some time lack pastors if marriage is any longer forbidden.

But while the commandment of God is in force, while the custom of the Church is well known, while impure celibacy causes many scandals, adulteries, and other crimes deserving the punishments of just magistrates, yet it is a marvelous thing that in nothing is more cruelty exercised than against **1** the marriage of priests. God has given commandment to honor marriage. By the laws of all well-ordered commonwealths, even among the heathen, marriage is most highly honored. But now men, and that, priests, are cruelly put to death, contrary to the intent of the Canons, for no other cause than **2** marriage. Paul, in **1 Tim. 4:3**, calls that a doctrine of devils which forbids marriage. **2** This may now be readily understood when the law against marriage is maintained by such penalties.

But as no law of man can annul the commandment of God, so neither can it be done by any vow. Accordingly, Cyprian also advises that women who do not keep the chastity they have promised should marry. His words are these (Book I, Epistle XI): But if they be unwilling or unable to persevere, it is better for them to marry than to fall into the fire by their lusts; they should certainly give no offense to their brethren and sisters.

And even the Canons show some leniency toward those who have taken vows before the proper age, as heretofore has generally been the case.

Article XXIV: Of the Mass.

Falsely are our churches accused of abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained among us, and celebrated with the highest reverence. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone that the unlearned be taught [what they need to know of Christ. And not only has Paul commanded to use in the church a language understood by the people **1 Cor. 14:2-9**, but it has also been so ordained by man's law. The people are accustomed to partake of the Sacrament together, if any be fit for it, and this also increases the reverence and devotion of public worship. For none are admitted except they be first examined. The people are also advised concerning the dignity and use of the Sacrament, how great consolation it brings anxious consciences, that they may learn to believe God, and to expect and ask of Him all that is good. [In this connection they are also instructed regarding other and false teachings on the Sacrament. This worship pleases God; such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion toward God. It does not, therefore, appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries than among us.

But it is evident that for a long time this also has been the public and most grievous complaint of all good men that Masses have been basely profaned and applied to purposes of lucre. For it is not unknown how far this abuse obtains in all the churches by what manner of men Masses are said only for fees or stipends, and how many celebrate them contrary to the Canons. **1** But Paul severely threatens those who deal unworthily with the Eucharist when he says, **1 Cor. 11:2**: Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. **1** When, therefore our priests were admonished concerning this sin, Private Masses were discontinued among us, as scarcely any Private Masses were celebrated except for lucre's sake.

Neither were the bishops ignorant of these abuses, and if they had corrected them in time, there would now be less dissension. Heretofore, **1** by their own connivance, they suffered many corruptions to creep into the Church. Now, when it is too late, they begin to complain **1** of the troubles of the Church, while this disturbance has been occasioned simply by those abuses which were so manifest that they could be borne no longer. There have been great **1** dissensions concerning the Mass, concerning the Sacrament. **1** Perhaps the world is being punished for such long-continued profanations of the Mass as have been tolerated in the churches for so many centuries by the very men who **1** were both able and in duty bound to correct them. For in the Ten Commandments it is written, **Ex. 20:7**: The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. But since the world began, nothing that God ever ordained seems to have been so abused for filthy lucre as the Mass.

There was also added the opinion which infinitely increased Private Masses, namely that Christ, by His passion, had made satisfaction for original sin, and instituted the Mass wherein an offering should be made for daily sins, **2** venial and mortal. From this has arisen the common opinion that the Mass **2** takes away the sins of the living and the dead by the outward act. Then they began to dispute whether one Mass said for many were worth as much as special Masses for individuals, and this brought forth that infinite multitude of Masses. [With this work men wished to obtain from God all that they needed, and in the mean time faith in Christ and the true worship were forgotten.

Concerning these opinions our teachers have given warning that they depart from the Holy Scriptures and diminish the glory of the passion of Christ. For Christ's passion **2** was an oblation and satisfaction, not for original guilt only, but also for all other sins, as it is written to the **Hebrews 10:10**: **2** We are sanctified through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all. Also,

Hebrews 10:14: 2 By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. [It is an unheard-of innovation in the Church to teach that Christ by His death made satisfaction only for original sin and not likewise for all other sin. Accordingly it is hoped that everybody will understand that this error has not been reprov'd without due reason.

Scripture also teaches that we are justified before God through faith in Christ, when we believe that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. 2 Now if the Mass take away the sins of the living and the dead by the outward act justification comes of the work of Masses, and not of faith, which Scripture does not allow.

But Christ commands us, **Luke 22:19:** This do in remembrance of Me; therefore the Mass was instituted that the faith of those who use the Sacrament should remember what benefits it receives through Christ, and cheer and comfort the anxious conscience. For to remember Christ is to remember His benefits, and to realize that they are truly offered unto us. 3 Nor is it enough only to remember the history; for this also the Jews and the ungodly can remember. 3 Wherefore the Mass is to be used to this end, that there the Sacrament [Communion may be administered to them that have need of consolation; as Ambrose says: Because I always sin, I am always bound to take the medicine. [Therefore this Sacrament requires faith, and is used in vain without faith.

Now, forasmuch as the Mass is such a giving of the Sacrament, we hold one communion every holy-day, and, if any desire the Sacrament, also on other days, when it is given to such as ask for it. 3 And this custom is not new in the Church; for the Fathers before Gregory make no mention of any private Mass, but of the common Mass [the Communion they speak very much. Chrysostom says 3 that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some 3 to the Communion and keeping back others. And it appears from the ancient Canons that some one celebrated the Mass from whom all the other presbyters and deacons received the body of the Lord; for thus 3 the words of the Nicene Canon say: Let the deacons, according to their order, receive the Holy Communion after the presbyters, from the bishop or from a presbyter. 3 And Paul, **1 Cor. 11:33**, commands concerning the Communion: Tarry one for another, so that there may be a common participation.

Forasmuch, therefore, as the Mass with us has the example of the Church, taken from the Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disapproved, especially since public ceremonies, for the most part like those hither to in use, are retained; only the number of Masses differs, which, because of very great and manifest abuses doubtless might be profitably reduced. For in olden times, even in churches most frequented, the Mass was not celebrated every day, as the Tripartite History (Book 9, chap. 33) testifies: Again in Alexandria, every Wednesday and Friday the Scriptures are read, and the doctors expound them, and all things are done, except the solemn rite of Communion.

Article XXV: Of Confession.

Confession in the churches is not abolished among us; for it is not usual to give the body of the Lord, except to them that have been previously examined and absolved. And the people are most carefully taught concerning faith in the absolution, about which formerly there was profound silence. Our people are taught that they should highly prize the absolution, as being the voice of God, and pronounced by God's command. The power of the Keys is set forth in its beauty and they are reminded what great consolation it brings to anxious consciences, also, that God requires faith to believe such absolution as a voice sounding from heaven, and that such faith in Christ truly obtains and receives the forgiveness of sins. Aforetime satisfactions were

immoderately extolled; of faith and the merit of Christ and the righteousness of faith no mention was made; wherefore, on this point, our churches are by no means to be blamed. For this even our adversaries must needs concede to us that the doctrine concerning repentance has been most diligently treated and laid open by our teachers.

But of Confession they teach that an enumeration of sins is not necessary, and that consciences be not burdened with anxiety to enumerate all sins, for it is impossible to recount all sins, as the **Psalm 19:13** testifies: Who can understand his errors? Also **Jeremiah 1:9** : The heart is deceitful; who can know it? But if no sins were forgiven, except those that are recounted, consciences could never find peace; for very many sins they neither see nor can remember. The ancient writers also testify that an enumeration is not necessary. For in the Decrees, Chrysostom is quoted, who says thus: I say not to you that you should disclose yourself in public, nor that you accuse yourself before others, but I would have you obey the prophet who says: "Disclose thy way before God." Therefore confess your sins before God, the true Judge, with prayer. Tell your errors, not with the tongue, but with the memory of your conscience, etc. And the Gloss (Of Repentance, Distinct. V, Cap. Consideret) admits that Confession is of human right only [not commanded by Scripture, but ordained by the Church.] Nevertheless, on account of the great benefit of absolution, and because it is otherwise useful to the conscience, Confession is retained among us.

Article XXVI: Of the Distinction of Meats.

It has been the general persuasion, not of the people alone, but also of those teaching in the churches, that making Distinctions of Meats, and like traditions of men, are works profitable to merit grace, and able to make satisfactions for sins. And that the world so thought, appears from this, that new ceremonies, new orders, new holy-days, and new fastings were daily instituted, and the teachers in the churches did exact these works as a service necessary to merit grace, and did greatly terrify men's consciences, if they should omit any of these things. From this persuasion concerning traditions much detriment has resulted in the Church.

First, the doctrine of grace and of the righteousness of faith has been obscured by it, which is the chief part of the Gospel, and ought to stand out as the most prominent in the Church, in order that the merit of Christ may be well known, and faith, which believes that sins are forgiven for Christ's sake be exalted far above works. Wherefore Paul also lays the greatest stress on this article, putting aside the Law and human traditions, in order to show that Christian righteousness is something else than such works, to wit, the faith which believes that sins are freely forgiven for Christ's sake. But this doctrine of Paul has been almost wholly smothered by traditions, which have produced an opinion that, by making distinctions in meats and like services, we must merit grace and righteousness. In treating of repentance, there was no mention made of faith; only those works of satisfaction were set forth; in these the entire repentance seemed to consist.

Secondly, these traditions have obscured the commandments of God, because traditions were placed far above the commandments of God. Christianity was thought to consist wholly in the observance of certain holy-days, rites, fasts, and vestures. These observances had won for themselves the exalted title of being the spiritual life and the perfect life. Meanwhile the commandments of God, according to each one's calling, were without honor namely, that the father brought up his offspring, that the mother bore children, that the prince governed the commonwealth,—these were accounted works that were worldly and imperfect, and far below those glittering observances. And this error greatly tormented devout consciences, which grieved that they were held in an imperfect state of life, as in marriage, in the office of

magistrate; or in other civil ministrations; on the other hand, they admired the monks and such like, and falsely imagined that the observances of such men were more acceptable to God.

Thirdly, traditions brought great danger to consciences; for it was impossible to keep all traditions, and yet men judged these observances to be necessary acts of worship. Gerson writes that many fell **1** into despair, and that some even took their own lives, because they felt that they were not able to satisfy the traditions, and they had all the while not heard any consolation of the righteousness of faith and **1** grace. We see that the summists and theologians gather the traditions, and seek mitigations whereby to ease consciences, and yet they do not sufficiently unfetter, but sometimes entangle, consciences even more. **1** And with the gathering of these traditions, the schools and sermons have been so much occupied that they have had no leisure to touch upon Scripture, and to seek the more profitable doctrine of faith, of the cross, of hope, of the dignity of civil affairs of consolation of sorely tried consciences. **1** Hence Gerson and some other theologians have grievously complained that by these strivings concerning traditions they were prevented from giving attention to a better kind of doctrine. Augustine also forbids that men's consciences should be burdened **1** with such observances, and prudently advises Januarius that he must know that they are to be observed as things indifferent; for such are his words.

Wherefore our teachers must not be looked upon as having taken up this matter rashly or from hatred of the bishops, **1** as some falsely suspect. There was great need to warn the churches of these errors, which had arisen from misunderstanding the traditions. For the Gospel compels us to insist in the churches upon the doctrine of grace, and of the righteousness of faith; which, however, cannot be understood, if men think that they merit grace by observances of their own choice.

Thus, therefore, they have taught that by the observance of human traditions we cannot merit grace or be justified, and hence we must not think such observances necessary acts of worship. They add hereunto testimonies of Scripture. Christ, **Matt. 15:3**, defends the Apostles who had not observed the usual tradition, which, however, evidently pertains to a matter not unlawful, but indifferent, and to have a certain affinity with the purifications of the Law, and says, **Matt. 15:9**, In vain do they worship Me with the commandments of men. **2** He, therefore, does not exact an unprofitable service. Shortly after He adds: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man. So also Paul, **Rom. 14:1**: **2**The kingdom of God is not meat and drink. **2 Col. 2:16**: Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the Sabbath-day; also: If **2**ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances: Touch not, taste not, handle not! And Peter says, **Acts 15:10**: Why **2**tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Here Peter forbids to burden the consciences with many rites, either of Moses or of others. And in **1 Tim. 4:1,3** Paul calls the prohibition of meats a doctrine of devils; for it is against the Gospel to institute or to do such works that by them we may merit grace, or as though Christianity could not exist without such service of God.

Here our adversaries object that our teachers are opposed to discipline and mortification of the flesh, as Jovinian. But the contrary may be learned from the writings of our teachers. For they have always taught concerning the cross that it behooves Christians to bear afflictions. This is the true, **3** earnest, and unfeigned mortification, to wit, to be exercised with divers afflictions, and to be crucified with Christ.

Moreover, they teach that every Christian ought to train and subdue himself with bodily restraints, or bodily exercises and labors that neither satiety nor slothfulness tempt him to sin, but

not that we may merit grace or make satisfaction for sins by such exercises. 3 And such external discipline ought to be urged at all times, not only on a few and set days. So Christ commands, 3 **Luke 21:34**: Take heed lest your hearts 3 be overcharged with surfeiting; also **Matt. 1:21**: This kind goeth not out but 3 by prayer and fasting. Paul also says, **1 Cor. 9:2**: I keep under my body and bring it into subjection. 3 Here he clearly shows that he was keeping under his body, not to merit forgiveness of sins by that discipline, but to have his body in subjection and fitted for spiritual things, and for the discharge of duty according 3 to his calling. Therefore, we do not condemn fasting in itself, but the traditions which prescribe certain days and certain meats, with peril of conscience, as though such works were a necessary service.

Nevertheless, very many traditions are kept on our part, which conduce to good order in the Church, as the Order of Lessons in the Mass and the chief holy-days. But, at the same time, men are warned that such observances do not justify before God, and that in such things it should not be made sin if they be omitted without offense. Such liberty in human rites was not unknown to the Fathers. For in the East they kept Easter at another time than at Rome, and when, on account of this diversity, the Romans accused the Eastern Church of schism, they were admonished by others that such usages need not be alike everywhere. And Irenaeus says: Diversity concerning fasting does not destroy the harmony of faith; as also Pope Gregory intimates in Dist. XII, that such diversity does not violate the unity of the Church. And in the Tripartite History, Book 9, many examples of dissimilar rites are gathered, and the following statement is made: It was not the mind of the Apostles to enact rules concerning holy-days, but to preach godliness and a holy life [to teach faith and love.

Article XXVII: Of Monastic Vows.

What is taught on our part concerning Monastic Vows, will be better understood if it be remembered what has been the state of the monasteries, and how many things were daily done in those very monasteries, contrary to the Canons. In Augustine's time they were free associations. Afterward, when discipline was corrupted, vows were everywhere added for the purpose of restoring discipline, as in a carefully planned prison.

Gradually, many other observances were added besides vows. And these fetters were laid upon many before the lawful age, contrary to the Canons.

Many also entered into this kind of life through ignorance, being unable to judge their own strength, though they were of sufficient age. Being thus ensnared, they were compelled to remain, even though some could have been freed by the kind provision of the Canons. And this was more the case in convents of women than of monks, although more consideration should have been shown the weaker sex. This rigor displeased many good men before this time, who saw that young men and maidens were thrown into convents for a living. They saw what unfortunate results came of this procedure, and what scandals were created, what snares were cast upon consciences! They were grieved that the authority of the Canons in so momentous a matter was utterly set aside and despised. To these evils was added such a persuasion concerning vows as, it is well known, in former times displeased even those monks who were more considerate. They taught that vows were equal to Baptism; they taught that by this kind of life they merited forgiveness of sins and justification before God. 1 Yea, they added that the monastic life not only merited righteousness before God but even greater things, because it kept not only the precepts, but also the so-called "evangelical counsels."

Thus they made men believe that the profession of monasticism was far better than Baptism, and that the monastic life was more meritorious than that of magistrates, than the life of pastors, and

such like, who serve their calling in accordance with God's commands, without any man-made services. ¹ None of these things can be denied; for they appear in their own books. [Moreover, a person who has been thus ensnared and has entered a monastery learns little of Christ.

What, then, came to pass in the monasteries? Aforetime they were schools of theology and other branches, profitable to the Church; and thence pastors and bishops were obtained. Now it is another thing. It is needless to rehearse what is known to all. ¹ Aforetime they came together to learn; now they feign that it is a kind of life instituted to merit grace and righteousness; yea, they preach that it is a state of perfection, and they put it far above all other kinds of life ordained of God. ¹ These things we have rehearsed without odious exaggeration, to the end that the doctrine of our teachers on this point might be better understood.

First, concerning such as contract matrimony, they teach on our part that it is lawful for all men who are not fitted for single life to contract matrimony, because vows cannot annul the ordinance and commandment of God. ¹ But the commandment of God is **1 Cor. :2**: To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife. Nor is it the commandment only, but also the creation and ordinance of God, which forces those to marry who are not excepted by a singular work of God, according to the text **Gen. 2:18**: It is not good that the man should be alone. Therefore they do not sin who obey this commandment and ordinance of God.

What objection can be raised to this? Let men extol the obligation of a vow as much as they list, yet shall they not bring to pass that the vow ² annuls the commandment of God. The Canons teach that the right of the superior is excepted in every vow; [that vows are not binding against the decision of the Pope; much less, therefore, are these vows of force which are against the commandments of God.

Now, if the obligation of vows could not be changed for any cause whatever, the Roman Pontiffs could never have given dispensation for it is not lawful for man to annul an obligation which is simply ² divine. But the Roman Pontiffs have prudently judged that leniency is to be observed in this obligation, and therefore ² we read that many times they have dispensed from vows. The case of the King of Aragon who was called back from the monastery is well known, and there are also examples in our own times. [Now, if dispensations have been granted for the sake of securing temporal interests, it is much more proper that they be granted on account of the distress of souls.

In the second place, why do our adversaries exaggerate the obligation or effect of a vow when, at the same time, they have not a word to say of the nature of the vow itself, that it ought to be in a thing possible, that it ought to be free, ² and chosen spontaneously and deliberately? But it is not unknown to what extent perpetual chastity is in the power of man. ² And how few are there who have taken the vow spontaneously and deliberately! Young maidens and men, before they are able to judge, are persuaded, and sometimes even compelled, to take the vow. Wherefore it is not fair to insist so rigorously on the obligation, since it is granted by all that it is against the nature of a vow to take it without spontaneous and deliberate action.

Most canonical laws rescind vows made before the age of fifteen; for before that age there does not seem sufficient judgment in a person to decide concerning a perpetual life. ³ Another Canon, granting more to the weakness of man, adds a few years; for it forbids a vow to be made before the age of eighteen. ³ But which of these two Canons shall we follow? The most part have an excuse for leaving the monasteries, because most of them have taken the vows before they reached these ages.

Finally, even though the violation of a vow might be censured, yet it seems not forthwith to follow that the marriages of such persons must be dissolved. ³ For Augustine denies that they ought to be dissolved (XXVII. Quaest. I, Cap. Nuptiarum), and his authority is not lightly to be esteemed, although other men afterwards thought otherwise.

But although it appears that God's command concerning marriage delivers very many from their vows, yet our teachers introduce also another argument concerning vows to show that they are void. For every service of God, ordained and chosen of men without the commandment of God to merit justification and grace, is wicked, as Christ says **Matt. 15:9**: ³In vain do they worship Me with the commandments of men. And Paul teaches everywhere that righteousness is not to be sought from our own observances and acts of worship, devised by men, but that it comes by faith to those who believe that they are received by God into grace for Christ's sake.

But it is evident that monks have taught that services of man's making satisfy for sins and merit grace and justification. What else is this than to detract from the glory of Christ and to obscure and deny the righteousness of faith? ³ It follows, therefore, that the vows thus commonly taken have been wicked services, and, consequently, are void. For a wicked vow, taken against the commandment of God, is not valid; for (as the Canon says) no vow ought to bind men to wickedness.

Paul says, **Gal. 5:4**: Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from grace. To those, therefore, who want to be justified by their vows Christ is made of no effect, and they fall from grace. For also these who ascribe justification to vows ascribe to their own works that which properly belongs to the glory of Christ.

Nor can it be denied, indeed, that the monks have taught that, by their vows and observances, they were justified, and merited forgiveness of sins, yea, they invented still greater absurdities, saying that they could give others a share in their works. If any one should be inclined to enlarge on these things with evil intent, how many things could he bring together whereof even the monks are now ashamed! Over and above this, they persuaded men that services of man's making were a state of Christian perfection. And is not this assigning justification to works? It is no light offense in the Church to set forth to the people a service devised by men, without the commandment of God, and to teach that such service justifies men. For the righteousness of faith, which chiefly ought to be taught in the Church, is obscured when these wonderful angelic forms of worship, with their show of poverty, humility, and celibacy, are cast before the eyes of men.

Furthermore, the precepts of God and the true service of God are obscured when men hear that only monks are in a state of perfection. For Christian perfection is to fear God from the heart, and yet to conceive great faith, and to trust that for Christ's sake we have a God who has been reconciled, to ask of God, and assuredly to expect His aid in all things that, according to our calling, are to be done; and meanwhile, to be diligent in outward good works, and to serve our calling. In these things consist the true perfection and the true service of God. It does not consist in celibacy, or in begging, or in vile apparel. But the people conceive many pernicious opinions from the false commendations of monastic life. They hear celibacy praised above measure; therefore they lead their married life with offense to their consciences. They hear that only beggars are perfect; therefore they keep their possessions and do business with offense to their consciences. They hear that it is an evangelical counsel not to seek revenge; therefore some in private life are not afraid to take revenge, for they hear that it is but a counsel, and not a commandment. Others judge that the Christian cannot properly hold a civil office or be a magistrate.

There are on record examples of men who, forsaking marriage and the administration of the Commonwealth, have hid themselves in monasteries. This they called fleeing from the world, and seeking a kind of life which would be more pleasing to God. Neither did they see that God ought to be served in those commandments which He Himself has given and not in commandments devised by men. A good and perfect kind of life is that which has for it the commandment of God. It is necessary to admonish men of these things.

And before these times, Gerson rebukes this error of the monks concerning perfection, and testifies that in his day it was a new saying that the monastic life is a state of perfection.

So many wicked opinions are inherent in the vows, namely, that they justify, that they constitute Christian perfection, that they keep the counsels and commandments, that they have works of supererogation. All these things, since they are false and empty, make vows null and void.

Article XXVIII: Of Ecclesiastical Power.

There has been great controversy concerning the Power of Bishops, in which some have awkwardly confounded the power of the Church and the power of the sword. And from this confusion very great wars and tumults have resulted, while the Pontiffs, emboldened by the power of the Keys, not only have instituted new services and burdened consciences with reservation of cases and ruthless excommunications, but have also undertaken to transfer the kingdoms of this world, and to take the Empire from the Emperor. These wrongs have long since been rebuked in the Church by learned and godly men. Therefore our teachers, for the comforting of men's consciences, were constrained to show the difference between the power of the Church and the power of the sword, and taught that both of them, because of God's commandment, are to be held in reverence and honor, as the chief blessings of God on earth.

But this is their opinion, that the power of the Keys, or the power of the bishops, according to the Gospel, is a power or commandment of God, to preach the Gospel, to remit and retain sins, and to administer Sacraments. For with this commandment Christ sends forth His Apostles, [John 20:21](#) sqq.: As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. [Mark 16:15](#): Go preach the Gospel to every creature.

This power is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, according to their calling either to many or to individuals. For thereby are granted, not bodily, but eternal things, as eternal righteousness, the Holy Ghost, eternal life. These things cannot come but by the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, as Paul says, [Rom. 1:16](#): The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Therefore, since the power of the Church grants eternal things, and is exercised only by the ministry of the Word, it does not interfere with civil government; no more than the art of singing interferes with civil government. For civil government deals with other things than does the Gospel. The civil rulers defend not minds, but bodies and bodily things against manifest injuries, and restrain men with the sword and bodily punishments in order to preserve civil justice and peace.

Therefore the power of the Church and the civil power must not be confounded. The power of the Church has its own commission to teach the Gospel and ¹ to administer the Sacraments. Let it not break into the office of another; let it not transfer the kingdoms of this world; let it not abrogate the laws of civil rulers; let it not abolish lawful obedience; let it not interfere with judgments concerning civil ordinances or contracts; let it not prescribe laws to civil rulers concerning the form of the Commonwealth. ¹ As Christ says, [John 18:36](#): My kingdom is not of this world; ¹ also [Luke 12:14](#): Who made Me a judge or a divider over you? ¹ Paul also says,

Phil. 3:20: Our citizenship is in heaven; **1 2 Cor. 10:4:** The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the casting down of imaginations.

After this manner our teachers discriminate between the duties of both these powers, and command that both be honored and acknowledged as gifts and blessings of God.

If bishops have any power of the sword, that power they have, not as bishops, by the commission of the Gospel, but by human law having received it of kings and emperors for the civil administration of what is theirs. This, however, is another office than the ministry of the Gospel.

When, therefore, the question is concerning the jurisdiction of bishops, civil authority must be distinguished from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Again, according to the Gospel or, as they say, by divine right, there belongs to the bishops as bishops, that is, to those to whom has been committed the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, no jurisdiction except to forgive sins, to judge doctrine, to reject doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the Church wicked men, whose wickedness is known, and this without human force, **2** simply by the Word. Herein the congregations of necessity and by divine right must obey them, according to **Luke 10:16:** He that heareth you heareth Me. **2** But when they teach or ordain anything against the Gospel, then the congregations have a commandment of God prohibiting obedience, **Matt. :15:** Beware of false prophets; **2 Gal. 1:8:** Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed; **2 2 Cor. 13:8:** We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. **2** Also: The power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction. **2** So, also, the Canonical Laws command (II. Q. VII. Cap., Sacerdotes, and Cap. Oves). **2** And Augustine (Contra Petilian Epistolam): Neither must we submit to Catholic bishops if they chance to err, or hold anything contrary to the Canonical Scriptures of God.

If they have any other power or jurisdiction, in hearing and judging certain cases, as of matrimony or of tithes, etc., they have it by human right, in which matters princes are bound, even against their will, when the ordinaries fail, to dispense justice to their subjects for the maintenance of peace. Moreover, it is disputed whether bishops or pastors have the right to introduce ceremonies in the Church, and to make laws concerning meats, holy-days and grades, that is, orders of ministers, etc.

They that give this right to the bishops refer to this testimony **John 16:12-13:** I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. **3** They also refer to the example of the Apostles, who commanded to abstain from blood and from things strangled, **Acts 15:29.** They refer to the Sabbath-day as having been changed into the Lord's Day, contrary to the Decalog, as it seems. Neither is there any example whereof they make more than concerning the changing of the Sabbath-day. Great, say they, is the power of the Church, since it has dispensed with one of the Ten Commandments!

But concerning this question it is taught on our part (as has been shown above) that bishops have no power to decree anything against the Gospel. The Canonical Laws teach the same thing (Dist. IX). **3** Now, it is against Scripture to establish or require the observance of any traditions, to the end that by such observance we may make satisfaction for sins, or merit grace and righteousness. **3** For the glory of Christ's merit suffers injury when, by such observances, **3** we undertake to merit justification. But it is manifest that, by such belief, traditions have almost infinitely multiplied in the Church, the doctrine concerning faith and the righteousness of faith being meanwhile suppressed. For gradually more holy-days were made, fasts appointed, new ceremonies and services in honor of saints instituted, because the authors of such things thought

that by these works they were meriting ³ grace. Thus in times past the Penitential Canons increased, whereof we still see some traces in the satisfactions.

Again, the authors of traditions do contrary to the command of God when they find matters of sin in foods, in days, and like things, and burden the Church with bondage of the law, as if there ought to be among Christians, in order to merit justification a service like the Levitical, the arrangement of which God had committed to the Apostles and bishops. For thus some of them write; and the Pontiffs in some measure seem to be misled by the example of the law of Moses. Hence are such burdens, as that they make it mortal sin, even without offense to others, to do manual labor on holy-days, a mortal sin to omit the Canonical Hours, that certain foods defile the conscience that fastings are works which appease God that sin in a reserved case cannot be forgiven but by the authority of him who reserved it; whereas the Canons themselves speak only of the reserving of the ecclesiastical penalty, and not of the reserving of the guilt.

Whence have the bishops the right to lay these traditions upon the Church for the ensnaring of consciences, when Peter, **Acts 15:10**, forbids to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, and Paul says, **2 Cor. 13:10**, that the power given him was to edification not to destruction? Why, therefore, do they increase sins by these traditions?

But there are clear testimonies which prohibit the making of such traditions, as though they merited grace or were necessary to salvation. Paul says, **Col. 2:16-23**: Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days. If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not; taste not; handle not, which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men! which things have indeed a show of wisdom. Also in **Titus 1:14** he openly forbids traditions: Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men that turn from the truth.

And Christ, **Matt. 15:14,13**, says of those who require traditions: Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind; ⁴ and He rejects such services: Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be plucked up.

If bishops have the right to burden churches with infinite traditions, and to ensnare consciences, why does Scripture so often prohibit to make, and to listen to, traditions? Why does it call them "doctrines of devils"? **1 Tim. 4:1**. Did the Holy Ghost in vain forewarn of these things?

Since, therefore, ordinances instituted as things necessary, or with an opinion of meriting grace, are contrary to the Gospel, it follows that it is not lawful for any bishop to institute or exact such services. For it is necessary that the doctrine of Christian liberty be preserved in the churches, namely, that the bondage of the Law is not necessary to justification, as it is written in the Epistle to the **Galatians 5:1**: Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. It is necessary that the chief article of the Gospel be preserved, to wit, that we obtain grace freely by faith in Christ, and not for certain observances or acts of worship devised by men.

What, then, are we to think of the Sunday and like rites in the house of God? To this we answer that it is lawful for bishops or pastors to make ordinances that things be done orderly in the Church, not that thereby we should merit grace or make satisfaction for sins, or that consciences be bound to judge them necessary services, and to think that it is a sin to break them without offense to others. So Paul ordains, **1 Cor. 11:5**, that women should cover their heads in the congregation, **1 Cor. 14:30**, that interpreters be heard in order in the church, etc.

It is proper that the churches should keep such ordinances for the sake of love and tranquillity, so far that one do not offend another, that all things be done in the churches in order, and without confusion, **1 Cor. 14:40**; comp. **Phil. 2:14** . but so that consciences be not burdened to think that they are necessary to salvation, or to judge that they sin when they break them without offense to others; as no one will say that a woman sins who goes out in public with her head uncovered provided only that no offense be given.

Of this kind is the observance of the Lord's Day, Easter, Pentecost, and like holy-days and rites. For those who judge that by the authority of the Church the observance of the Lord's Day instead of the Sabbath-day was ordained as a thing necessary, do greatly err. Scripture has abrogated the Sabbath-day; for it teaches that, since the Gospel has been revealed, all the ceremonies of Moses can be omitted. And yet, because it was necessary to appoint a certain day, that the people might know when they ought to come together, it appears that the Church designated the Lord's Day for this purpose; and this day seems to have been chosen all the more for this additional reason, that men might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the keeping neither of the Sabbath nor of any other day is necessary.

There are monstrous disputations concerning the changing of the law, the ceremonies of the new law, the changing of the Sabbath-day, which all have sprung from the false belief that there must needs be in the Church a service like to the Levitical, and that Christ had given commission to the Apostles and bishops to devise new ceremonies as necessary to salvation. These errors crept into the Church when the righteousness of faith was not taught clearly enough. Some dispute that the keeping of the Lord's Day is not indeed of divine right, but in a manner so. They prescribe concerning holy-days, how far it is lawful to work. What else are such disputations than snares of consciences? For although they endeavor to modify the traditions, yet the mitigation can never be perceived as long as the opinion remains that they are necessary, which must needs remain where the righteousness of faith and Christian liberty are not known.

The Apostles commanded **Acts 15:20** to abstain from blood. Who does now observe it? And yet they that do it not sin not; for not even the Apostles themselves wanted to burden consciences with such bondage; but they forbade it for a time, to avoid offense. For in this decree we must perpetually consider what the aim of the Gospel is.

Scarcely any Canons are kept with exactness, and from day to day many go out of use even among those who are the most zealous advocates of traditions. Neither can due regard be paid to consciences unless this mitigation be observed, that we know that the Canons are kept without holding them to be necessary, and that no harm is done consciences, even though traditions go out of use.

But the bishops might easily retain the lawful obedience of the people if they would not insist upon the observance of such traditions as cannot be kept with a good conscience. **0** Now they command celibacy; they admit none unless they swear that they will not teach **1** the pure doctrine of the Gospel. The churches do not ask that the bishops should restore concord at the expense of their honor; which, nevertheless, it would be proper for good pastors to do. They ask only that they would release unjust burdens which are new and have been received contrary to the custom of the Church Catholic. It may be that in the beginning there were plausible reasons for some of these ordinances; and yet they are not adapted to later times. It is also evident that some were adopted through erroneous conceptions. Therefore it would be befitting the clemency of the Pontiffs to mitigate them now, because such a modification does not shake the unity of the Church. For many human traditions have been changed in process of time, as the Canons themselves show. But if it be impossible to obtain a mitigation of such observances as cannot be

kept without sin, we are bound to follow the apostolic rule, [Acts 5:29](#), which commands us to obey God rather than men.

Peter, [1 Pet. 5:3](#), forbids bishops to be lords, and to rule over the churches. It is not our design now to wrest the government from the bishops, but this one thing is asked, namely, that they allow the Gospel to be purely taught, and that they relax some few observances which cannot be kept without sin. But if they make no concession, it is for them to see how they shall give account to God for furnishing, by their obstinacy, a cause for schism.

Conclusion.

These are the chief articles which seem to be in controversy. For although we might have spoken of more abuses, yet, to avoid undue length, we have set forth the chief points, from which the rest may be readily judged. There have been great complaints concerning indulgences, pilgrimages, and the abuse of excommunications. The parishes have been vexed in many ways by the dealers in indulgences. There were endless contentions between the pastors and the monks concerning the parochial right, confessions, burials, sermons on extraordinary occasions, and innumerable other things. Issues of this sort we have passed over so that the chief points in this matter, having been briefly set forth, might be the more readily understood. Nor has anything been here said or adduced to the reproach of any one.

Only those things have been recounted whereof we thought that it was necessary to speak, in order that it might be understood that in doctrine and ceremonies nothing has been received on our part against Scripture or the Church Catholic. For it is manifest that we have taken most diligent care that no new and ungodly doctrine should creep into our churches.

The above articles we desire to present in accordance with the edict of Your Imperial Majesty, in order to exhibit our Confession and let men see a summary of the doctrine of our teachers.

If there is anything that any one might desire in this Confession, we are ready, God willing, to present ampler information according to the Scriptures.

Your Imperial Majesty's faithful subjects:

John, Duke of Saxony, Elector
 George, Margrave of Brandenburg.
 Ernest, Duke of Lueneberg.
 Philip, Landgrave of Hesse.
 John Frederick, Duke of Saxony.
 Francis, Duke of Lueneburg.
 Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt.
 Senate and Magistracy of Nuremberg.
 Senate of Reutlingen.

ADDENDUM C

The Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

Divided into 52 sections, with one section to be explained each Sunday

LORD'S DAY 1

1. What is thy only comfort in life and in death?

That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me, that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.

2. How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou in this comfort mayest live and die happily?

Three things: first, the greatness of my sin and misery. Second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery. Third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption.

LORD'S DAY 2

3. Whence knowest thou thy misery?

Out of the Law of God.

4. What does the Law of God require of us?

Christ teaches us in sum, Matthew 22:37–40, “Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

5. Canst thou keep all this perfectly?

No: for I am by nature prone to hate God and my neighbor.

LORD'S DAY 3

6. Did God create man thus wicked and perverse?

No, but God created man good, and after His own image, that is, in righteousness and true holiness; that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal blessedness, to praise and glorify Him.

7. Whence then comes this depraved nature of man?

From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise, whereby our nature became so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin.

8. But are we so depraved, that we are wholly unapt to any good and prone to all evil?

Yes; unless we are born again by the Spirit of God.

LORD'S DAY 4

9. Does not God then wrong man, by requiring of him in His law that which he cannot perform?

No: for God so made man, that he could perform it; but man, through the instigation of the devil, by wilful disobedience deprived himself and all his posterity of this power.

10. Will God suffer such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?

By no means; but He is terribly displeased with our inborn as well as our actual sins, and will punish them in just judgment in time and eternity, as he has declared: Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them (Deut. 27:26).

11. Is then God not merciful?

God is indeed merciful, but He is likewise just; wherefore His justice requires that sin, which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment both of body and soul.

LORD'S DAY 5

12. Since then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, what is required that we may escape this punishment and be again received into favor?

God wills that His justice be satisfied, therefore we must make full satisfaction to the same, either by ourselves or by another.

13. Can we ourselves make this satisfaction?

By no means: on the contrary, we daily increase our guilt.

14. Can any mere creature make satisfaction for us?

None: for first, God will not punish, in any other creature, that of which man has made himself guilty; and further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, and redeem others therefrom.

15. What manner of mediator and redeemer then must we seek?

One who is a true and sinless man, and yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is at the same time true God.

LORD'S DAY 6

16. Why must He be a true and sinless man?

Because the justice of God requires, that the same human nature which has sinned should make satisfaction for sin; but no man, being himself a sinner, could satisfy for others.

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

That by the power of His Godhead He might bear in His manhood the burden of God's wrath and so obtain for and restore to us righteousness and life.

18. But who now is that Mediator, who is at the same time true God and a true, sinless man?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is freely given unto us for complete redemption and righteousness.

19. Whence knowest thou this?

From the Holy Gospel: which God Himself first revealed in Paradise; afterwards proclaimed by the holy Patriarchs and Prophets, and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and finally fulfilled by His well-beloved Son.

LORD'S DAY 7

20. Are all men then saved by Christ, as they have perished in Adam?

No; only such as by true faith are ingrafted into Him, and receive all His benefits.

21. What is true faith?

It is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word; but also a hearty trust, which the Holy Ghost works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, for the sake of Christ's merits.

22. What is then necessary for a Christian to believe?

All that is promised us in the Gospel, which the articles of our catholic, undoubted Christian faith teach us in sum.

23. What are these 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 Ghost, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

LORD'S DAY 8

24. How are these articles divided?

Into three parts: the first is of God the Father, and our creation; the second, of God the Son, and our redemption; the third, of God the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification.

25. Since there is but one Divine Being, why speakest thou of three, Father, Son and Holy Ghost?

Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word, that these three distinct Persons are the one, true, eternal God.

LORD'S DAY 9

26. What dost thou believe when thou sayest: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?

That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that in them is, who likewise upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence, is for the sake of Christ His Son my God and my Father; in whom I so trust, as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul; and further, that whatever evil He sends upon me in this vale of tears He will turn to my good; for He is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing also, being a faithful Father.

LORD'S DAY 10

27. What dost thou understand by the Providence of God?

The almighty everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth, with all creatures; and so governs them, that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things, come not by chance, but by His fatherly hand.

28. What does it profit us to know that God has created, and by His providence still upholds all things?

That we may be patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and for what is future, have good confidence in our faithful God and Father, that no creature shall separate us from His love; since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.

LORD'S DAY 11

29. Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is, Savior?

Because He saves us from our sins; and no salvation is to be either sought or found in any other.

30. Do such then believe in the only Savior Jesus, who seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else?

No; although they may make their boast of Him, yet in act they deny the only Savior Jesus. For either Jesus is not a complete Savior, or they who by true faith receive this Savior, must have in Him all that is necessary to their salvation.

LORD'S DAY 12

31. Why is He called Christ, that is, Anointed?

Because He is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our chief Prophet and Teacher, who fully reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; and our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of His body has redeemed us, and ever liveth to make intercession for us with the Father; and our eternal King, who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us.

32. But why art thou called a Christian?

Because by faith I am a member of Christ, and thus a partaker of His anointing; in order that I also may confess His name; may present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him; and may with free conscience fight against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter, in eternity, reign with Him over all creatures.

LORD'S DAY 13

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

Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God; but we are the children of God by adoption through grace for His sake.

34. Why callest thou Him our Lord?

Because, not with silver and gold, but with His precious blood, He has redeemed and purchased us, body and soul, from sin and from all the power of the devil, to be His own.

LORD'S DAY 14

35. What is the meaning of: Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary?

That the eternal Son of God, who is and continues true and eternal God, took upon Him the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; so that He also might be the true seed of David, like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted.

36. What benefit dost thou receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ?

That He is our Mediator, and with His innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin, wherein I was conceived.

LORD'S DAY 15

37. What dost thou understand by the word: Suffered?

That all the time He lived on earth, but especially at the end of His life, He bore, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race; in order that by His passion, as the only propitiatory sacrifice, He might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life.

38. Why did He suffer under Pontius Pilate, as judge?

That He, being innocent, might be condemned by the temporal judge, and thereby deliver us from the severe judgment of God, to which we are exposed.

39. Is there anything more in His having been crucified, than if He had died some other death?

Yes: for thereby I am assured, that He took on Himself the curse which lay upon me; because the death of the cross was accursed of God.

LORD'S DAY 16

40. Why was it necessary for Christ to suffer death?

Because, by reason of the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise than by the death of the Son of God.

41. Why was He buried?

To show thereby that He was really dead.

42. Since then Christ died for us, why must we also die?

Our death is not a satisfaction for our sin, but only a dying to sins and entering into eternal life.

43. What further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross?

That by His power our old man is with Him crucified, slain and buried; that so the evil lusts of the flesh may no more reign in us, but that we may offer ourselves unto Him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

44. Why is it added: He descended into Hell?

That in my greatest temptations I may be assured that Christ, my Lord, by His inexpressible anguish, pains and terrors, which He suffered in His soul on the cross and before, has redeemed me from the anguish and torment of hell.

LORD'S DAY 17

45. What benefit do we receive from the Resurrection of Christ?

First, by His resurrection He has overcome death, that He might make us partakers of the righteousness which by His death He has obtained for us. Secondly, we also are now by His power raised up to a new life. Thirdly, the resurrection of Christ is to us a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection.

LORD'S DAY 18

46. How dost thou understand the words: He ascended into Heaven?

That Christ, in sight of His disciples, was taken up from the earth into heaven; and in our behalf there continues, until He shall come again to judge the living and the dead.

47. Is not then Christ with us even unto the end of the world, as He has promised?

Christ is true Man and true God: according to His human nature, He is now not on earth; but according to His Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, He is at no time absent from us.

48. But are not, in this way, the two natures in Christ separated from one another, if the Manhood be not wherever the Godhead is?

By no means; for since the Godhead is incomprehensible and everywhere present, it must follow that it is indeed beyond the bounds of the Manhood, which it has assumed, but is yet nonetheless in the same also, and remains personally united to it.

49. What benefit do we receive from Christ's ascension into heaven?

First, that He is our Advocate in the presence of His Father in heaven. Secondly, that we have our flesh in heaven, as a sure pledge, that He, as the Head, will also take us, His members, up to Himself. Thirdly, that He sends us His Spirit, as an earnest, by whose power we seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and not things on the earth.

LORD'S DAY 19

50. Why is it added: And sitteth at the right hand of God?

Because Christ ascended into heaven for this end, that He might there appear as Head of His Church, by whom the Father governs all things.

51. What benefit do we receive from this glory of our Head, Christ?

First, that by His Holy Spirit He sheds forth heavenly gifts in us, His members; then, that by His power He defends and preserves us against all enemies.

52. What comfort is it to thee, that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead?

That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head, I look for the selfsame One, who has before offered Himself for me to the judgment of God and removed from me all curse, to come again as Judge from heaven; who shall cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall take me, with all His chosen ones, to Himself into heavenly joy and glory.

LORD'S DAY 20

53. What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Ghost?

First, that He is co-eternal God with the Father and the Son. Secondly, that He is also given unto me; makes me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all His benefits; comforts me; and shall abide with me forever.

LORD'S DAY 21

54. What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Catholic Church?

That, out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, the Son of God, by His Spirit and Word, gathers, defends and preserves for Himself unto everlasting life, a chosen communion, in the unity of the true faith; and that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member of the same.

55. What dost thou understand by the Communion of Saints?

First, that believers, all and every one, as members of Christ have part in Him and in all His treasures and gifts; secondly, that each one must feel himself bound to use his gifts, readily and cheerfully, for the advantage and welfare of other members.

56. What dost thou believe concerning the Forgiveness of Sins?

That God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins, neither the sinful nature with which I have to struggle all my life long; but graciously imputes to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may nevermore come into condemnation.

LORD'S DAY 22

57. What comfort does the Resurrection of the Body afford thee?

That not only my soul, after this life, shall be immediately taken up to Christ its Head; but also that this my body, raised by the power of Christ, shall again be united with my soul, and made like unto the glorious body of Christ.

58. What comfort hast thou from the article of the Life Everlasting?

That, inasmuch as I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, I shall after this life possess complete bliss, such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man; therein to praise God for ever.

LORD'S DAY 23

59. But what does it help thee now, that thou believest all this?

That I am righteous in Christ before God, and an heir of eternal life.

60. How art thou righteous before God?

Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. That is: although my conscience accuse me, that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them, and that I am still prone always to all evil, yet God, without any merit of mine, of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ, as if I had never committed nor had any sin, and had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me, if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart.

61. Why sayest thou, that thou art righteous only by faith?

Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith; but because only the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God, and I can receive the same and make it my own in no other way than by faith only.

LORD'S DAY 24

62. But why cannot our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God?

Because the righteousness which can stand before the judgment-seat of God must be perfect throughout and wholly conformable to the divine law; whereas even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.

63. How is it that our good works merit nothing, while yet it is God's will to reward them in this life and in that which is to come?

The reward comes not of merit, but of grace.

64. But does not this doctrine make men careless and profane?

No, for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

LORD'S DAY 25

65. Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence comes this faith?

The Holy Ghost works it in our hearts by the preaching of the Gospel, and confirms it by the use of the Holy Sacraments.

66. What are the Sacraments?

The Sacraments are visible, holy signs and seals, appointed by God for this end, that by the use thereof He may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the Gospel: namely, that He grants us out of free grace the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross.

67. Are both these, then, the Word and the Sacraments, designed to direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation?

Yes truly; for the Holy Ghost teaches in the Gospel, and by the Holy Sacraments assures us, that our whole salvation stands in the one sacrifice of Christ made for us on the cross.

68. How many Sacraments has Christ appointed in the New Testament?

Two: Holy Baptism and the Holy Supper.

LORD'S DAY 26

69. How is it signified and sealed unto thee in Holy Baptism, that thou has part in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross?

Thus: that Christ has appointed this outward washing with water, and has joined therewith this promise, that I am washed with His blood and Spirit from the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as certainly, as I am washed outwardly with water, whereby commonly the filthiness of the body is taken away.

70. What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?

It is to have the forgiveness of sins from God, through grace, for the sake of Christ's blood, which He shed for us in His sacrifice on the cross; and also, to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives.

71. Where has Christ promised that we are as certainly washed with His blood and Spirit as with the water of Baptism?

In the institution of Baptism, which runs thus: Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. This promise is also repeated where the Scripture calls Baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins.

LORD'S DAY 27

72. Is then the outward washing with water itself the washing away of sins?

No; for only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sin.

73. Why, then, doth the Holy Ghost call Baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins?

God speaks thus not without great cause: namely, not only to teach us thereby that like as the filthiness of the body is taken away by water, so our sins also are taken away by the blood and Spirit of Christ; but much more, that by this divine pledge and token He may assure us, that we are as really washed from our sins spiritually, as our bodies are washed with water.

74. Are infants also to be baptized?

Yes. For since they, as well as their parents, belong to the covenant and people of God, and both redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost, who works faith, are through the blood of Christ promised to them no less than to their parents: they are also by Baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be ingrafted into the Christian Church, and distinguished from the children of unbelievers, as was done in the Old Testament by Circumcision, in place of which in the New Testament Baptism is appointed.

LORD'S DAY 28

75. How is it signified and sealed unto thee in the Holy Supper that thou dost partake of the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross and all His benefits?

Thus; that Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, and has joined therewith these promises: First, that His body was offered, and broken on the cross for me, and His blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that, with His crucified body and shed blood, He Himself feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life as certainly as I receive from the hand of the minister, and taste with my mouth, the bread and cup of the Lord, which are given me as certain tokens of the body and blood of Christ.

76. What is it to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ?

It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the suffering and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the forgiveness of sins and eternal life; but moreover also, to be so united more and more to His sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us, that although He is in heaven, and we on the earth, we are nevertheless flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones, and live and are governed for ever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul.

77. Where has Christ promised that He will thus feed and nourish believers with His body and blood, as certainly as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup?

In the institution of the Supper, which runs thus: The Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said: Take, eat, this is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when he had supped, saying: This cup is the New Testament in My blood: This do ye as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.

And this promise is repeated also by St. Paul, where he says: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.

LORD'S DAY 29

78. Do then the bread and wine become the real body and blood of Christ?

No: but as the water, in Baptism, is not changed into the blood of Christ, nor becomes the washing away of sins itself, being only the divine token and assurance thereof, so also, in the Lord's Supper, the sacred bread does not become the body of Christ itself, though agreeably to the nature and usage of sacraments it is called the body of Christ.

79. Why then doth Christ call the bread His body, and the cup His blood, or the New Testament in His blood; and St. Paul, the communion of the body and blood of Christ?

Christ speaks thus not without great cause: namely, not only to teach us thereby, that, like as the bread and wine sustain this temporal life, so also His crucified body and shed blood are the true

meat and drink of our souls unto life eternal; but much more, by this visible sign and pledge to assure us, that we are as really partakers of His true body and blood, through the working of the Holy Ghost, as we receive by the mouth of the body these holy tokens in remembrance of Him; and that all His sufferings and obedience are as certainly our own, as if we had ourselves suffered and done all in our own person.

LORD'S DAY 30

80. What difference is there between the Lord's Supper and the Popish Mass?

The Lord's Supper testifies to us, that we have full forgiveness of all our sins by the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself has once accomplished on the cross; and that by the Holy Ghost we are ingrafted into Christ, who with His true body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father, and is to be there worshiped. But the Mass teaches, that the living and the dead have not forgiveness of sins through the sufferings of Christ, unless Christ is still daily offered for them by the priests; and that Christ is bodily under the form of bread and wine, and is therefore to be worshiped in them. And thus the Mass at bottom is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and passion of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.

81. Who are to come unto the table of the Lord?

Those who are displeased with themselves for their sins, yet trust that these are forgiven them, and that their remaining infirmity is covered by the passion and death of Christ; who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and amend their life. But the impenitent and hypocrites eat and drink judgment to themselves.

82. Are they then also to be admitted to this Supper, who show themselves to be, by their confession and life, unbelieving and ungodly?

No: for by this the covenant of God is profaned, and His wrath provoked against the whole congregation; wherefore the Christian Church is bound, according to the order of Christ and His Apostles, by the office of the keys to exclude such persons, until they amend their life.

LORD'S DAY 31

83. What is the Office of the Keys?

The Preaching of the Holy Gospel and Church Discipline; by which two things the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.

84. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the Preaching of the Holy Gospel?

In this way: that according to the command of Christ, it is proclaimed and openly witnessed to believers, one and all, that as often as they accept with true faith the promise of the Gospel, all their sins are really forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ's merits; and on the contrary, to all unbelievers and hypocrites, that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation abide on them, so long as they are not converted; according to which witness of the Gospel, will be the judgment of God both in this life and in that which is to come.

85. How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by Church Discipline?

In this way: that according to the command of Christ, if any under the Christian name show themselves unsound either in doctrine or life, and after repeated brotherly admonition refuse to

turn from their errors of evil ways, they are complained of to the church or to its proper officers, and, if they neglect to hear them also, are by them excluded from the Holy Sacraments and the Christian communion, and by God Himself from the kingdom of Christ; and if they promise and show real amendment, they are again received as members of Christ and His Church.

LORD'S DAY 32

86. Since then we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we do good works?

Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, renews us also by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing, and that He may be glorified through us; then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by the fruits thereof, and by our godly walk may win others also to Christ.

87. Can they then be saved who do not turn to God from their unthankful, impenitent life?

By no means: for, as the Scripture saith, no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

LORD'S DAY 33

88. In how many things does true repentance or conversion consist?

In two things: the dying of the old man, and the quickening of the new.

89. What is the dying of the old man?

Heartfelt sorrow for sin; causing us to hate and turn from it always more and more.

90. What is the quickening of the new man?

Heartfelt joy in God; causing us to take delight in living according to the will of God in all good works.

91. But what are good works?

Those only which are done from true faith, according to the Law of God, for His glory; and not such as rest on our own opinion, or the commandments of men.

LORD'S DAY 34

92. What is the Law of God?

God spake all these words, saying:

FIRST COMMANDMENT

I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

SECOND COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt not make unto thee any 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; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the

iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.

THIRD COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt not kill.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt not steal.

NINTH COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

TENTH COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

93. How are these commandments divided?

Into two tables: the first of which teaches us, in four commandments, what duties we owe to God; the second, in six, what duties we owe to our neighbor.

94. What does God require in the first commandment?

That, on peril of my soul's salvation, I avoid and flee all idolatry, sorcery, enchantments, invocation of saints or of other creatures; and that I rightly acknowledge the only true God, trust in Him alone, with all humility and patience expect all good from Him only, and love, fear and honor Him with my whole heart; so as rather to renounce all creatures than do the least thing against His will.

95. What is idolatry?

It is instead of the one true God who has revealed Himself in His Word, or along with the same, to conceive or have something else on which to place our trust.

LORD'S DAY 35

96. What does God require in the second commandment?

That we in no wise make any image of God, nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded in His Word.

97. Must we then not make any image at all?

God may not and cannot be imaged in any way; as for creatures, though they may indeed be imaged, yet God forbids the making or keeping any likeness of them, either to worship them, or by them to serve Himself.

98. But may not pictures be tolerated in churches as books for the laity?

No: for we should not be wiser than God, who will not have His people taught by dumb idols, but by the lively preaching of His Word.

LORD'S DAY 36

99. What is required in the third commandment?

That we must not by cursing, or by false swearing, nor yet by unnecessary oaths, profane or abuse the name of God; nor even by our silence and connivance be partakers of these horrible sins in others; and in sum, that we use the holy name of God no otherwise than with fear and reverence, so that He may be rightly confessed and worshiped by us, and be glorified in all our words and works.

100. Is then the profaning of God's name by swearing and cursing so grievous a sin that His wrath is kindled against those also who seek not, as much as in them lies, to hinder and forbid the same?

Yes truly: for no sin is greater, or more provoking to God than the profaning of His name. Wherefore He even commanded it to be punished with death.

LORD'S DAY 37

101. But may we not swear by the name of God in a religious manner?

Yes; when the magistrate requires it, or it may be needful otherwise to maintain and promote fidelity and truth, to the glory of God and our neighbor's good. For such swearing is grounded in God's Word, and therefore was rightly used by the saints in the Old and New Testaments.

102. May we swear by the saints or any other creature?

No: for a lawful oath is a calling upon God, as the only searcher of hearts, to bear witness to the truth, and to punish me if I swear falsely; which honor is due no creature.

LORD'S DAY 38

103. What does God require in the fourth commandment?

In the first place, that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the day of rest, diligently attend church to learn the Word of God, to use the Holy Sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give Christian alms. In the second place, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, allow the Lord to work in me by His Spirit, and thus begin in this life the everlasting Sabbath.

LORD'S DAY 39

104. What does God require in the fifth commandment?

That I show all honor, love and faithfulness to my father and mother, and to all in authority over me; submit myself with due obedience to all their good instruction and correction; and also bear patiently with their infirmities: since it is God's will to govern us by their hand.

LORD'S DAY 40

105. What does God require in the sixth commandment?

That I neither in thought, nor in word or look, much less in deed, revile, hate, insult or kill my neighbor, whether by myself or by another; but lay aside all desire of revenge; moreover, that I harm not myself, nor wilfully run into any danger. Wherefore also, to restrain murder, the magistrate is armed with the sword.

106. But this commandment speaks only of killing?

In forbidding this, however, God means to teach us that He abhors the root of murder, namely, envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that all these are in His sight hidden murder.

107. Is it then enough that we do not kill our neighbor in any such way?

No: for in condemning envy, hatred, and anger, God requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy and kindness towards him, and, so far as we have power, to prevent his hurt; also to do good even unto our enemies.

LORD'S DAY 41

108. What does the seventh commandment teach us?

That all unchastity is accursed of God; and that we should therefore loathe it from the heart, and live chastely and modestly whether in holy wedlock or single life.

109. Does God in this commandment forbid nothing more than adultery and such like gross sins?

Since our body and soul are both temples of the Holy Ghost, it is His will that we keep both pure and holy; for which reason He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever may entice thereto.

LORD'S DAY 42

110. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

Not only such theft and robbery as are punished by the magistrate; but God views as theft all wicked tricks and devices, whereby we seek to draw to ourselves our neighbor's goods, whether by force or with show of right, such as unjust weights, ells, measures, wares, coins, usury, or any means forbidden of God; so moreover all covetousness, and all useless waste of His gifts.

111. But what does God require of thee in this commandment?

That I further my neighbor's good, where I can and may; deal with him as I would have others deal with me; and labor faithfully, that I may be able to help the poor in their need.

LORD'S DAY 43

112. What is required in the ninth commandment?

That I bear false witness against no one; wrest no one's words; be no backbiter, or slanderer; join in condemning no one unheard and rashly; but that I avoid, on pain of God's heavy wrath, all lying and deceit, as being the proper works of the devil; in matters of judgment and justice and in all other affairs love, honestly speak and confess the truth; and, so far as I can, defend and promote my neighbor's good name.

LORD'S DAY 44

113. What is required in the tenth commandment?

That not even the least inclination or thought against any of God's commandments ever enter into our heart; but that, with our whole heart, we continually hate all sin, and take pleasure in all righteousness.

114. Can those who are converted to God keep these commandments perfectly?

No: but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; yet so, that with earnest purpose they begin to live, not only according to some, but according to all the commandments of God.

115. Why then doth God so strictly enjoin upon us the ten commandments, since in this life no one can keep them?

First, that all our life long, we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and so the more earnestly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ; secondly, that we may continually strive, and beg from God the grace of the Holy Ghost, so as to become more and more changed into the image of God, till we attain finally to full perfection after this life.

LORD'S DAY 45

116. Why is Prayer necessary for Christians?

Because it is the chief part of the thankfulness which God requires of us; and because God will give His grace and Holy Spirit only to such, as earnestly and without ceasing, beg them from Him, and render thanks unto Him for them.

117. What belongs to such prayer, as God is pleased with and will hear?

First, that from the heart we call only upon the one true God, who has revealed Himself to us in His word, for all that He has commanded us to ask of Him; secondly, that we thoroughly know our need and misery, so as to humble ourselves before the face of His Divine Majesty; thirdly, that we be firmly assured, that withstanding our unworthiness He will, for the sake of Christ our Lord, certainly hear our prayer, as He has promised us in His word.

118. What has God commanded us to ask of Him?

All things necessary for soul and body, which Christ our Lord has comprised in the prayer taught us by Himself.

119. What is the Lord's Prayer?

Our Father which art in heaven: Hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

LORD'S DAY 46

120. Why has Christ commanded us to address God thus: Our Father?

To awaken in us, at the very beginning of our prayer, that filial reverence and trust toward God, which are to be the ground of our prayer; namely, that God has become our Father through Christ, and will much less deny us what we ask of Him in faith, than our parents refuse us earthly things.

121. Why is it added: Who art in heaven?

That we may have no earthly thought of the heavenly majesty of God; and may expect from His almighty power all things necessary for body and soul.

LORD'S DAY 47

122. What is the first petition?

Hallowed be Thy name. That is: Enable us rightly to know Thee, and to hallow, magnify and praise Thee in all Thy works, in which shine forth Thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth; and likewise so to order our whole life, in thought, word and work, that Thy name may not be blasphemed, but honored and praised on our account.

LORD'S DAY 48

123. What is the second petition?

Thy kingdom come. That is: So govern us by Thy word and Spirit, that we submit ourselves unto Thee always more and more; preserve and increase Thy Church; destroy the works of the devil, every power that exalteth itself against Thee, and all wicked devices formed against Thy holy word, until the full coming of Thy kingdom, wherein Thou shalt be all in all.

LORD'S DAY 49

124. What is the third petition?

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. That is: Grant that we and all men may renounce our own will, and yield ourselves without gainsaying, to Thy will which alone is good; that so every one may fulfill his office and calling, as willingly and truly as the angels do in heaven.

LORD'S DAY 50

125. What is the fourth petition?

Give us this day our daily bread. That is: Be pleased to provide for all our bodily need; that we may thereby know that Thou art the only fountain of all good, and that without Thy blessing,

neither our care and labor, nor Thy gifts can profit us; and may therefore withdraw our trust from all creatures, and place it alone in Thee.

LORD'S DAY 51

126. What is the fifth petition?

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. That is: Be pleased for the sake of Christ's blood, not to impute to us, miserable sinners, our manifold transgressions, nor the evil which still always cleaves to us, as we find this witness of Thy grace in us, that it is our full purpose heartily to forgive our neighbor.

LORD'S DAY 52

127. What is the sixth petition?

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. That is: Since we are so weak in ourselves, that we cannot stand a moment; while our deadly enemies, the devil, the world and our own flesh, assail us without ceasing; be pleased to preserve and strengthen us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may make firm stand against them, and not sink in this spiritual war, until we come off at last with complete victory.

128. How do you close this prayer?

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. 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 good; and that thereby not we, but Thy holy Name may be glorified for ever.

129. What is the meaning of the word Amen?

Amen means: So shall it truly and surely be. For my prayer is much more certainly heard of God, than I feel in my heart that I desire these things of Him.

ADDENDUM D

The Belgic Confession (circa 1561 AD)

A Reformed Confession of the Dutch Churches.

Article I – There is Only One God

We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God; and that He is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good.

Article II – By What Means God is Made Known unto Us

We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to see clearly the invisible things of God, even his everlasting power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says (Rom. 1:20). All which things are sufficient to convince men and leave them without excuse. Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to His glory and our salvation.

Article III – The Written Word of God

We confess that this Word of God was not sent nor delivered by the will of man, but that men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit, as the apostle Peter says; and that afterwards God, from a special care which He has for us and our salvation, commanded His servants, the prophets and apostles, to commit His revealed word to writing; and He Himself wrote with His own finger the two tables of the law. Therefore we call such writings holy and divine Scriptures.

Article IV – Canonical Books of the Holy Scripture

We believe that the Holy Scriptures are contained in two books, namely, the Old and the New Testament, which are canonical, against which nothing can be alleged. These are thus named in the Church of God.

The books of the Old Testament are the five books of Moses, to wit: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; the book of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the two books of Samuel, the two of the Kings, two books of the Chronicles, [commonly called Paralipomenon, the first of] Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther; Job, the Psalms [of David], the three books of Solomon, namely, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs; the four great prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, {Lamentations,} Ezekiel, and Daniel; and the twelve lesser prophets, namely, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Those of the New Testament are the four evangelists, to wit: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles; the fourteen epistles of the apostle Paul, namely, one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one to the Galatians, one to the Ephesians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon; one to the Hebrews; the seven epistles of the other apostles, namely, one of James, two of Peter, three of John, one of Jude; and the Revelation of the apostle John.

Article V – Whence the Holy Scriptures Derive Their Dignity and Authority

We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; believing without any doubt all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God, and also because they carry the evidence thereof in themselves. For the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are being fulfilled.

Article VI – The Difference between the Canonical and Apocryphal Books

We distinguish those sacred books from the apocryphal, viz: the third and fourth books of Esdras, the books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Jesus Sirach, Baruch, the Appendix to the book of Esther, the Song of the Three Children in the Furnace, the History of Susannah, of Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasseh, and the two books of the Maccabees. All of which the Church may read and take instruction from, so far as they agree with the canonical books; but they are far from having such power and efficacy that we may from their testimony confirm any point of faith or of the Christian religion; much less may they be used to detract from the authority of the other, that is, the sacred books.

Article VII – The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures to be the Only Rule of Faith

We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein. For since the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in them at large, it is unlawful for any one, though an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scriptures: nay, though it were an angel from heaven, as the apostle Paul says. For since it is forbidden to add unto or take away anything from the Word of God, it does thereby evidently appear that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects.

Neither may we consider any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, of equal value with those divine Scriptures, nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all; for all men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself. Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever does not agree with this infallible rule, as the apostles have taught us, saying, Prove the spirits, whether they are of God. Likewise: If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house.

Article VIII – God is One in Essence, Yet Distinguished in Three Persons

According to this truth and this Word of God, we believe in one only God, who is the one single essence, in which are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct according to their incommunicable properties; namely, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is the cause, origin, and beginning of all things visible and invisible; the Son is the word, wisdom, and image of the Father; the Holy Spirit is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son. Nevertheless, God is not by this distinction divided into three, since the Holy Scriptures teach us that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit have each His personality, distinguished by Their properties; but in such wise that these three persons are but one only God.

Hence, then, it is evident that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, and likewise the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. Nevertheless, these persons thus distinguished are not divided, nor intermixed; for the Father has not assumed the flesh, nor has the Holy Spirit, but the Son only. The Father has never been without His Son, or without His Holy Spirit. For They are all three co-eternal and co-essential. There is neither first nor last; for They are all three one, in truth, in power, in goodness, and in mercy.

Article IX – The Proof of the Foregoing Article of the Trinity of Persons in One God

All this we know as well from the testimonies of Holy Writ as from their operations, and chiefly by those we feel in ourselves. The testimonies of the Holy Scriptures that teach us to believe this Holy Trinity are written in many places of the Old Testament, which are not so necessary to enumerate as to choose them out with discretion and judgment.

In Genesis, chap. 1:26, 27, God says: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, etc. And God created man in his own image, male and female created he them. And Gen. 3:22, Behold, the man is become as one of us. From this saying, Let us make man in our image, it appears that there are more persons than one in the Godhead; and when He says, God created, He signifies the unity. It is true, He does not say how many persons there are, but that which appears to us somewhat obscure in the Old Testament is very plain in the New. For when our Lord was baptized in Jordan, the voice of the Father was heard, saying, This is my beloved Son; the Son was seen in the water, and the Holy Spirit appeared in the shape of a dove. This form is also instituted by Christ in the baptism of all believers: Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel of Luke the angel Gabriel thus addressed Mary, the mother of our Lord: The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God. Likewise: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. And (A.V.): There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

In all these places we are fully taught that there are three persons in one only divine essence. And although this doctrine far surpasses all human understanding, nevertheless we now believe it by means of the Word of God, but expect hereafter to enjoy the perfect knowledge and benefit thereof in heaven.

Moreover, we must observe the particular offices and operations of these three persons towards us. The Father is called our Creator, by His power; the Son is our Savior and Redeemer, by His blood; the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier, by His dwelling in our hearts.

This doctrine of the Holy Trinity has always been affirmed and maintained by the true Church since the time of the apostles to this very day against the Jews, Mohammedans, and some false Christians and heretics, as Marcion, Manes, Praxeas, Sabellius, Samosatenus, Arius, and such like, who have been justly condemned by the orthodox fathers. Therefore, in this point, we do willingly receive the three creeds, namely, that of the Apostles, of Nicea, and of Athanasius; likewise that which, conformable thereunto, is agreed upon by the ancient fathers.

Article X – Jesus Christ is True and Eternal God

We believe that Jesus Christ according to His divine nature is the only begotten Son of God, begotten from eternity, not made, nor created (for then He would be a creature), but co-essential and co-eternal with the Father, the very image of his substance and the effulgence of his glory, equal unto Him in all things. He is the Son of God, not only from the time that He assumed our nature but from all eternity, as these testimonies, when compared together, teach us. Moses says that God created the world; and St. John says that all things were made by that Word which he calls God. The apostle says that God made the world by His Son; likewise, that God created all things by Jesus Christ. Therefore it must needs follow that He who is called God, the Word, the Son, and Jesus Christ, did exist at that time when all things were created by Him. Therefore the prophet Micah says: His goingsforth are from of old, from everlasting. And the apostle: He hath neither beginning of days nor end of life. He therefore is that true, eternal, and almighty God whom we invoke, worship, and serve.

Article XI – The Holy Spirit is True and Eternal God

We believe and confess also that the Holy Spirit from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son; and therefore neither is made, created, nor begotten, but only proceeds from both; who in order is the third person of the Holy Trinity; of one and the same essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son; and therefore is the true and eternal God, as the Holy Scriptures teach us.

Article XII – The Creation of All Things, Especially the Angels

We believe that the Father by the Word, that is, by His Son, has created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures, when it seemed good unto Him; giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator; that He also still upholds and governs them by His eternal providence and infinite power for the service of mankind, to the end that man may serve his God.

He also created the angels good, to be His messengers and to serve His elect; some of whom are fallen from that excellency in which God created them into everlasting perdition, and the others have by the grace of God remained steadfast and continued in their first state. The devils and evil spirits are so depraved that they are enemies of God and every good thing; to the utmost of their power as murderers watching to ruin the Church and every member thereof, and by their wicked stratagems to destroy all; and are, therefore, by their own wickedness adjudged to eternal damnation, daily expecting their horrible torments.

Therefore we reject and abhor the error of the Sadducees, who deny the existence of spirits and angels; and also that of the Manichees, who assert that the devils have their origin of themselves, and that they are wicked of their own nature, without having been corrupted.

Article XIII – The Providence of God and His Government of All Things

We believe that the same good God, after He had created all things, did not forsake them or give them up to fortune or chance, but that He rules and governs them according to His holy will, so that nothing happens in this world without His appointment; nevertheless, God neither is the Author of nor can be charged with the sins which are committed. For His power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible that He orders and executes His work in the most excellent

and just manner, even then when devils and wicked men act unjustly. And as to what He does surpassing human understanding, we will not curiously inquire into farther than our capacity will admit of; but with the greatest humility and reverence adore the righteous judgments of God, which are hid from us, contenting ourselves that we are pupils of Christ, to learn only those things which He has revealed to us in His Word, without transgressing these limits.

This doctrine affords us unspeakable consolation, since we are taught thereby that nothing can befall us by chance, but by the direction of our most gracious and heavenly Father; who watches over us with a paternal care, keeping all creatures so under His power that not a hair of our head (for they are all numbered), nor a sparrow can fall to the ground without the will of our Father, in whom we do entirely trust; being persuaded that He so restrains the devil and all our enemies that without His will and permission they cannot hurt us.

And therefore we reject that damnable error of the Epicureans, who say that God regards nothing but leaves all things to chance.

Article XIV – The Creation and Fall of Man, & His Incapacity to Perform What is Truly Good

We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after His own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will agreeably to the will of God. But being in honor, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but wilfully subjected himself to sin and consequently to death and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil. For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God, who was his true life; having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he has lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and retained only small remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying: The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not; where St. John calls men darkness.

Therefore we reject all that is taught repugnant to this concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave to sin, and can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven. For who may presume to boast that he of himself can do any good, since Christ says: No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him? Who will glory in his own will, who understands that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God? Who can speak of his knowledge, since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God? In short, who dares suggest any thought, since he knows that we are not sufficient of ourselves to account anything as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God? And therefore what the apostle says ought justly to be held sure and firm, that God worketh in us both to will and to work, for his good pleasure. For there is no understanding nor will conformable to the divine understanding and will but what Christ has wrought in man; which He teaches us, when He says: Apart from me ye can do nothing.

Article XV – Original Sin

We believe that through the disobedience of Adam original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature and a hereditary disease, wherewith even infants in their

mother's womb are infected, and which produces in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof, and therefore is so vile and abominable in the sight of God that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind. Nor is it altogether abolished or wholly eradicated even by baptism since sin always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain; notwithstanding it is not imputed to the children of God unto condemnation, but by His grace and mercy is forgiven them. Not that they should rest securely in sin, but that a sense of this corruption should make believers often to sigh, desiring to be delivered from this body of death.

Wherefore we reject the error of the Pelagians, who assert that sin proceeds only from imitation.

Article XVI – Eternal Election

We believe that, all the posterity of Adam being thus fallen into perdition and ruin by the sin of our first parents, God then did manifest Himself such as He is; that is to say, merciful and just: merciful, since He delivers and preserves from this perdition all whom He in His eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness has elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works; just, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves.

Article XVII – The Recovery of Fallen Man

We believe that our most gracious God, in His admirable wisdom and goodness, seeing that man had thus thrown himself into physical and spiritual death and made himself wholly miserable, was pleased to seek and comfort him, when he trembling fled from His presence, promising him that He would give His Son (who would be born of a woman) to bruise the head of the serpent and to make him blessed.

Article XVIII – The Incarnation of Jesus Christ

We confess, therefore, that God has fulfilled the promise which He made to the fathers by the mouth of His holy prophets, when He sent into the world, at the time appointed by Him, His own only-begotten and eternal Son, who took upon Him the form of a servant and became like unto man, really assuming the true human nature with all its infirmities, sin excepted; being conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit without the means of man; and did not only assume human nature as to the body, but also a true human soul, that He might be a real man. For since the soul was lost as well as the body, it was necessary that He should take both upon Him, to save both.

Therefore we confess (in opposition to the heresy of the Anabaptists, who deny that Christ assumed human flesh of His mother) that Christ partook of the flesh and blood of the children; that He is a fruit of the loins of David after the flesh; born of the seed of David according to the flesh; a fruit of the womb of Mary; born of a woman; a branch of David; a shoot of the root of Jesse; sprung from the tribe of Judah; descended from the Jews according to the flesh; of the seed of Abraham, since (A.V.) he took on him the seed of Abraham, and was made like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted; so that in truth He is our IMMANUEL, that is to say, God with us.

Article XIX – The Union and Distinction of the Two Natures in the Person of Christ

We believe that by this conception the person of the Son is inseparably united and connected with the human nature; so that there are not two Sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures united in one single person; yet each nature retains its own distinct properties. As, then, the divine nature has always remained uncreated, without beginning of days or end of life, filling heaven and earth, so also has the human nature not lost its properties but remained a creature, having beginning of days, being a finite nature, and retaining all the properties of a real body. And though He has by His resurrection given immortality to the same, nevertheless He has not changed the reality of His human nature; forasmuch as our salvation and resurrection also depend on the reality of His body. But these two natures are so closely united in one person that they were not separated even by His death. Therefore that which He, when dying, commended into the hands of His Father, was a real human spirit, departing from His body. But in the meantime the divine nature always remained united with the human, even when He lay in the grave; and the Godhead did not cease to be in Him, any more than it did when He was an infant, though it did not so clearly manifest itself for a while. Wherefore we confess that He is very God and very man: very God by His power to conquer death; and very man that He might die for us according to the infirmity of His flesh.

Article XX – God Has Manifested His Justice and Mercy in Christ

We believe that God, who is perfectly merciful and just, sent His Son to assume that nature in which the disobedience was committed, to make satisfaction in the same, and to bear the punishment of sin by His most bitter passion and death. God therefore manifested His justice against His Son when He laid our iniquities upon Him, and poured forth His mercy and goodness on us, who were guilty and worthy of damnation, out of mere and perfect love, giving His Son unto death for us, and raising Him for our justification, that through Him we might obtain immortality and life eternal.

Article XXI – The Satisfaction of Christ, Our Only High Priest, for Us

We believe that Jesus Christ is ordained with an oath to be an everlasting High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek; and that He has presented Himself in our behalf before the Father, to appease His wrath by His full satisfaction, by offering Himself on the tree of the cross, and pouring out His precious blood to purge away our sins, as the prophets had foretold. For it is written: He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and numbered with the transgressors; and condemned by Pontius Pilate as a malefactor, though he had first declared Him innocent. Therefore, He restored that which he took not away, and suffered, the righteous for the unrighteous, as well in His body as in His soul, feeling the terrible punishment which our sins had merited; insomuch that his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. He called out: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? and has suffered all this for the remission of our sins.

Wherefore we justly say with the apostle Paul that we know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; we count all things but loss and refuse for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, in whose wounds we find all manner of consolation. Neither is it necessary to seek or invent any other means of being reconciled to God than this only sacrifice, once offered, by which he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. This is also the reason why He was

called by the angel of God, JESUS, that is to say, SAVIOR, because He would save his people from their sins.

Article XXII – Our Justification Through Faith in Jesus Christ

We believe that, to attain the true knowledge of this great mystery, the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts an upright faith, which embraces Jesus Christ with all His merits, appropriates Him, and seeks nothing more besides Him. For it must needs follow, either that all things which are requisite to our salvation are not in Jesus Christ, or if all things are in Him, that then those who possess Jesus Christ through faith have complete salvation in Him. Therefore, for any to assert that Christ is not sufficient, but that something more is required besides Him, would be too gross a blasphemy; for hence it would follow that Christ was but half a Savior.

Therefore we justly say with Paul, that we are justified by faith alone, or by faith apart from works. However, to speak more clearly, we do not mean that faith itself justifies us, for it is only an instrument with which we embrace Christ our righteousness. But Jesus Christ, imputing to us all His merits, and so many holy works which He has done for us and in our stead, is our righteousness. And faith is an instrument that keeps us in communion with Him in all His benefits, which, when they become ours, are more than sufficient to acquit us of our sins.

Article XXIII – Wherein Our Justification before God Consists

We believe that our salvation consists in the remission of our sins for Jesus Christ's sake, and that therein our righteousness before God is implied; as David and Paul teach us, declaring this to be the blessedness of man that God imputes righteousness to him apart from works. And the same apostle says that we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

And therefore we always hold fast this foundation, ascribing all the glory to God, humbling ourselves before Him, and acknowledging ourselves to be such as we really are, without presuming to trust in anything in ourselves, or in any merit of ours, relying and resting upon the obedience of Christ crucified alone, which becomes ours when we believe in Him. This is sufficient to cover all our iniquities, and to give us confidence in approaching to God; freeing the conscience of fear, terror, and dread, without following the example of our first father, Adam, who, trembling, attempted to cover himself with fig-leaves. And, verily, if we should appear before God, relying on ourselves or on any other creature, though ever so little, we should, alas! be consumed. And therefore every one must pray with David: O Jehovah, enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight no man living is righteous.

Article XXIV – Man's Sanctification and Good Works

We believe that this true faith, being wrought in man by the hearing of the Word of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit, regenerates him and makes him a new man, causing him to live a new life, and freeing him from the of sin. Therefore it is so far from being true that this justifying faith makes men remiss in a pious and holy life, that on the contrary without it they would never do anything out of love to God, but only out of self-love or fear of damnation. Therefore it is impossible that this holy faith can be unfruitful in man; for we do not speak of a vain faith, but of such a faith which is called in Scripture a faith working through love, which excites man to the practice of those works which God has commanded in His Word.

These works, as they proceed from the good root of faith, are good and acceptable in the sight of God, forasmuch as they are all sanctified by His grace. Nevertheless they are of no account towards our justification, for it is by faith in Christ that we are justified, even before we do good works; otherwise they could not be good works, any more than the fruit of a tree can be good before the tree itself is good.

Therefore we do good works, but not to merit by them (for what can we merit?); nay, we are indebted to God for the good works we do, and not He to us, since it is He who worketh in us both to will and to work, for his good pleasure. Let us therefore attend to what is written: When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do. In the meantime we do not deny that God rewards good works, but it is through His grace that He crowns His gifts.

Moreover, though we do good works, we do not find our salvation upon them; for we can do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus, then, we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences would be continually vexed if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior.

Article XXV – The Abolishing of the Ceremonial Law

We believe that the ceremonies and symbols of the law ceased at the coming of Christ, and that all the shadows are accomplished; so that the use of them must be abolished among Christians; yet the truth and substance of them remain with us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have their completion. In the meantime we still use the testimonies taken out of the law and the prophets to confirm us in the doctrine of the gospel, and to regulate our life in all honorableness to the glory of God, according to His will.

Article XXVI – Christ's Intercession

We believe that we have no access unto God but alone through the only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous; who therefore became man, having united in one person the divine and human natures, that we men might have access to the divine Majesty, which access would otherwise be barred against us. But this Mediator, whom the Father has appointed between Him and us, ought in no wise to affright us by His majesty, or cause us to seek another according to our fancy. For there is no creature, either in heaven or on earth, who loves us more than Jesus Christ; who, though existing in the form of God, yet emptied himself, being made in the likeness of men and of a servant for us, and in all things was made like unto his brethren. If, then, we should seek for another mediator who would be favorably inclined towards us, whom could we find who loved us more than He who laid down His life for us, even while we were his enemies? And if we seek for one who has power and majesty, who is there that has so much of both as He who sits at the right hand of God and to whom hath been given all authority in heaven and on earth? And who will sooner be heard than the own well beloved Son of God?

Therefore it was only through distrust that this practice of dishonoring, instead of honoring, the saints was introduced, doing that which they never have done nor required, but have on the contrary steadfastly rejected according to their bounden duty, as appears by their writings.

Neither must we plead here our unworthiness; for the meaning is not that we should offer our prayers to God on the ground of our own worthiness, but only on the ground of the excellency and worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is become ours by faith.

Therefore the apostle, to remove this foolish fear, or rather distrust, from us, rightly says that Jesus Christ in all things was made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. And further to encourage us to go to Him, he says: Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need. The same apostle says: Having boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, etc. Likewise: Christ hath his priesthood unchangeable; wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

What more can be required? since Christ Himself says: I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. To what purpose should we, then, seek another advocate, since it has pleased God to give us His own Son as an Advocate? Let us not forsake Him to take another, or rather to seek after another, without ever being able to find him; for God well knew, when He gave Him to us, that we were sinners.

Therefore, according to the command of Christ, we call upon the heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our only Mediator, as we are taught in the Lord's Prayer; being assured that whatever we ask of the Father in His Name will be granted us.

Article XXVII – The Catholic Christian Church

We believe and profess one catholic or universal Church, which is a holy congregation of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by His blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

This Church has been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof; which is evident from this that Christ is an eternal King, which without subjects He cannot be. And this holy Church is preserved or supported by God against the rage of the whole world; though it sometimes for a while appears very small, and in the eyes of men to be reduced to nothing; as during the perilous reign of Ahab the Lord reserved unto Him seven thousand men who had not bowed their knees to Baal.

Furthermore, this holy Church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same Spirit.

Article XXVIII – Every One is Bound to Join Himself to the True Church

We believe, since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved, and outside of it there is no salvation, that no person of whatsoever state or condition he may be, ought to withdraw from it, content to be by himself; but that all men are in duty bound to join and unite

themselves with it; maintaining the unity of the Church; submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline thereof; bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ; and as mutual members of the same body, serving to the edification of the brethren, according to the talents God has given them.

And that this may be the more effectually observed, it is the duty of all believers, according to the Word of God, to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to the Church, and to join themselves to this congregation, wheresoever God has established it, even though the magistrates and edicts of princes were against it, yea, though they should suffer death or any other corporal punishment. Therefore all those who separate themselves from the same or do not join themselves to it act contrary to the ordinance of God

Article XXIX – The Marks of the True Church, and Wherein it Differs from the False Church

We believe that we ought diligently and circumspectly to discern from the Word of God which is the true Church, since all sects which are in the world assume to themselves the name of the Church. But we speak not here of hypocrites, who are mixed in the Church with the good, yet are not of the Church, though externally in it; but we say that the body and communion of the true Church must be distinguished from all sects that call themselves the Church.

The marks by which the true Church is known are these: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if it maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself.

With respect to those who are members of the Church, they may be known by the marks of Christians; namely, by faith, and when, having received Jesus Christ the only Savior, they avoid sin, follow after righteousness, love the true God and their neighbor, neither turn aside to the right or left, and crucify the flesh with the works thereof. But this is not to be understood as if there did not remain in them great infirmities; but they fight against them through the Spirit all the days of their life, continually taking their refuge in the blood, death, passion, and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom they have remission of sins, through faith in Him.

As for the false Church, it ascribes more power and authority to itself and its ordinances than to the Word of God, and will not submit itself to the yoke of Christ. Neither does it administer the sacraments as appointed by Christ in His Word, but adds to and takes from them, as it thinks proper; it relies more upon men than upon Christ; and persecutes those who live holily according to the Word of God and rebuke it for its errors, covetousness, and idolatry.

These two Churches are easily known and distinguished from each other.

Article XXX – The Government of the Church and its Officers

We believe that this true Church must be governed by that spiritual polity which our Lord has taught us in His Word; namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors, form the council of the Church; that by these means the true religion may be preserved, and the true doctrine everywhere propagated, likewise transgressors punished and restrained by spiritual

means; also that the poor and distressed may be relieved and comforted, according to their necessities. By these means everything will be carried on in the Church with good order and decency, when faithful men are chosen, according to the rule prescribed by St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy.

Article XXXI – The Ministers, Elders and Deacons

We believe that the ministers of God's Word, the elders, and the deacons ought to be chosen to their respective offices by a lawful election by the Church, with calling upon the name of the Lord, and in that order which the Word of God teaches. Therefore every one must take heed not to intrude himself by improper means, but is bound to wait till it shall please God to call him; that he may have testimony of his calling, and be certain and assured that it is of the Lord.

As for the ministers of God's Word, they have equally the same power and authority wheresoever they are, as they are all ministers of Christ, the only universal Bishop and the only Head of the Church.

Moreover, in order that this holy ordinance of God may not be violated or slighted, we say that every one ought to esteem the ministers of God's Word and the elders of the Church very highly for their work's sake, and be at peace with them without murmuring, strife, or contention, as much as possible.

Article XXXII – The Order and Discipline of the Church

In the meantime we believe, though it is useful and beneficial that those who are rulers of the Church institute and establish certain ordinances among themselves for maintaining the body of the Church, yet that they ought studiously to take care that they do not depart from those things which Christ, our only Master, has instituted. And therefore we reject all human inventions, and all laws which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience in any manner whatever. Therefore we admit only of that which tends to nourish and preserve concord and unity, and to keep all men in obedience to God. For this purpose, excommunication or church discipline is requisite, with all that pertains to it, according to the Word of God.

Article XXXIII – The Sacraments

We believe that our gracious God, taking account of our weakness and infirmities, has ordained the sacraments for us, thereby to seal unto us His promises, and to be pledges of the good will and grace of God towards us, and also to nourish and strengthen our faith; which He has joined to the Word of the gospel, the better to present to our senses both that which He declares to us by His Word and that which He works inwardly in our hearts, thereby confirming in us the salvation which He imparts to us. For they are visible signs and seals of an inward and invisible thing, by means whereof God works in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the signs are not empty or meaningless, so as to deceive us. For Jesus Christ is the true object presented by them, without whom they would be of no moment

Moreover, we are satisfied with the number of sacraments which Christ our Lord has instituted, which are two only, namely, the sacrament of baptism and the holy supper of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Article XXXIV – Holy Baptism

We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law, has made an end, by the shedding of His blood, of all other sheddings of blood which men could or would make as a propitiation or satisfaction for sin; and that He, having abolished circumcision, which was done with blood, has instituted the sacrament of baptism instead thereof; by which we are received into the Church of God, and separated from all other people and strange religions, that we may wholly belong to Him whose mark and ensign we bear; and which serves as a testimony to us that He will forever be our gracious God and Father.

Therefore He has commanded all those who are His to be baptized with pure water, into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, thereby signifying to us, that as water washes away the filth of the body when poured upon it, and is seen on the body of the baptized when sprinkled upon him, so does the blood of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit internally sprinkle the soul, cleanse it from its sins, and regenerate us from children of wrath unto children of God. Not that this is effected by the external 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, that is, the devil, and to enter into the spiritual land of Canaan.

The ministers, therefore, on their part administer the sacrament and that which is visible, but our Lord gives that which is signified by the sacrament, namely, the gifts and invisible grace; washing, cleansing, and purging our souls of all filth and unrighteousness; renewing our hearts and filling them with all comfort; giving unto us a true assurance of His fatherly goodness; putting on us the new man, and putting off the old man with all his deeds.

We believe, therefore, that every man who is earnestly studious of obtaining life eternal ought to be baptized but once with this only baptism, without ever repeating the same, since we cannot be born twice. Neither does this baptism avail us only at the time when the water is poured upon us and received by us, but also through the whole course of our life.

Therefore we detest the error of the Anabaptists, who are not content with the one only baptism they have once received, and moreover condemn the baptism of the infants of believers, who we believe ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as the children in Israel formerly were circumcised upon the same promises which are made unto our children. And indeed Christ shed His blood no less for the washing of the children of believers than for adult persons; and therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that which Christ has done for them; as the Lord commanded in the law that they should be made partakers of the sacrament of Christ's suffering and death shortly after they were born, by offering for them a lamb, which was a sacrament of Jesus Christ. Moreover, what circumcision was to the Jews, baptism is to our children. And for this reason St. Paul calls baptism the circumcision of Christ.

Article XXXV – The Holy Supper of Our Lord Jesus Christ

We believe and confess that our Savior Jesus Christ did ordain and institute the sacrament of the holy supper to nourish and support those whom He has already regenerated and incorporated into His family, which is His Church.

Now those who are regenerated have in them a twofold life, the one corporal and temporal, which they have from the first birth and is common to all men; the other, spiritual and heavenly,

which is given them in their second birth, which is effected by the Word of the gospel, in the communion of the body of Christ; and this life is not common, but is peculiar to God's elect. In like manner God has given us, for the support of the bodily and earthly life, earthly and common bread, which is subservient thereto and is common to all men, even as life itself. But for the support of the spiritual and heavenly life which believers have He has sent a living bread, which descended from heaven, namely, Jesus Christ, who nourishes and strengthens the spiritual life of believers when they eat Him, that is to say, when they appropriate and receive Him by faith in the spirit.

In order that He might represent unto us this spiritual and heavenly bread, Christ has instituted an earthly and visible bread as a sacrament of His body, and wine as a sacrament of His blood, to testify by them unto us that, as certainly as we receive and hold this sacrament in our hands and eat and drink the same with our mouths, by which our life is afterwards nourished, we also do as certainly receive by faith (which is the hand and mouth of our soul) the true body and blood of Christ our only Savior in our souls, for the support of our spiritual life.

Now, as it is certain and beyond all doubt that Jesus Christ has not enjoined to us the use of His sacraments in vain, so He works in us all that He represents to us by these holy signs, though the manner surpasses our understanding and cannot be comprehended by us, as the operations of the Holy Spirit are hidden and incomprehensible. In the meantime we err not when we say that what is eaten and drunk by us is the proper and natural body and the proper blood of Christ. But the manner of our partaking of the same is not by the mouth, but by the spirit through faith. Thus, then, though Christ always sits at the right hand of His Father in the heavens, yet does He not therefore cease to make us partakers of Himself by faith. This feast is a spiritual table, at which Christ communicates Himself with all His benefits to us, and gives us there to enjoy both Himself and the merits of His sufferings and death: nourishing, strengthening, and comforting our poor comfortless souls by the eating of His flesh, quickening and refreshing them by the drinking of His blood.

Further, though the sacraments are connected with the thing signified nevertheless both are not received by all men. The ungodly indeed receives the sacrament to his condemnation, but he does not receive the truth of the sacrament, even as Judas and Simon the sorcerer both indeed received the sacrament but not Christ who was signified by it, of whom believers only are made partakers.

Lastly, we receive this holy sacrament in the assembly of the people of God, with humility and reverence, keeping up among us a holy remembrance of the death of Christ our Savior, with thanksgiving, making there confession of our faith and of the Christian religion. Therefore no one ought to come to this table without having previously rightly examined himself, lest by eating of this bread and drinking of this cup he eat and drink judgment to himself. In a word, we are moved by the use of this holy sacrament to a fervent love towards God and our neighbor.

Therefore we reject all mixtures and damnable inventions which men have added unto and blended with the sacraments, as profanations of them; and affirm that we ought to rest satisfied with the ordinance which Christ and His apostles have taught us, and that we must speak of them in the same manner as they have spoken.

Article XXXVI – The Magistracy (Civil Government)

We believe that our gracious God, because of the depravity of mankind, has appointed kings, princes, and magistrates; willing that the world should be governed by certain laws and policies; to the end that the dissoluteness of men might be restrained, and all things carried on among them with good order and decency. For this purpose He has invested the magistracy with the sword for the punishment of evil-doers and for the protection of them that do well.

Their office is not only to have regard unto and watch for the welfare of the civil state, but also to protect the sacred ministry, that the kingdom of Christ may thus be promoted. They must therefore countenance the preaching of the Word of the gospel everywhere, that God may be honored and worshipped by every one, as He commands in His Word.

Moreover, it is the bounden duty of every one, of whatever state, quality, or condition he may be, to subject himself to the magistrates; to pay tribute, to show due honor and respect to them, and to obey them in all things which are not repugnant to the Word of God; to supplicate for them in their prayers that God may rule and guide them in all their ways, and that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.

Wherefore we detest the Anabaptists and other seditious people, and in general all those who reject the higher powers and magistrates and would subvert justice, introduce community of goods, and confound that decency and good order which God has established among men.

Article XXXVII – The Last Judgment

Finally, we believe, according to the Word of God, when the time appointed by the Lord (which is unknown to all creatures) is come and the number of the elect complete, that our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, corporally and visibly, as He ascended, with great glory and majesty to declare Himself Judge of the living and the dead, burning this old world with fire and flame to cleanse it.

Then all men will personally appear before this great Judge, both men and women and children, that have been from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, being summoned by the voice of the archangel, and by the sound of the trump of God. For all the dead shall be raised out of the earth, and their souls joined and united with their proper bodies in which they formerly lived. As for those who shall then be living, they shall not die as the others, but be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and from corruptible become incorruptible. Then the books [(that is to say, the consciences)] shall be opened, and the dead judged according to what they shall have done in this world, whether it be good or evil. Nay, all men shall give account of every idle word they have spoken, which the world only counts amusement and jest; and then the secrets and hypocrisy of men shall be disclosed and laid open before all.

And therefore the consideration of this judgment is justly terrible and dreadful to the wicked and ungodly, but most desirable and comfortable to the righteous and elect; because then their full deliverance shall be perfected, and there they shall receive the fruits of their labor and trouble which they have borne. Their innocence shall be known to all, and they shall see the terrible vengeance which God shall execute on the wicked, who most cruelly persecuted, oppressed, and tormented them in this world, and who shall be convicted by the testimony of their own consciences, and shall become immortal, but only to be tormented in the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.

But on the contrary, the faithful and elect shall be crowned with glory and honor; and the Son of God will confess their names before God His Father and His elect angels; all tears shall be wiped from their eyes; and their cause which is now condemned by many judges and magistrates as heretical and impious will then be known to be the cause of the Son of God. And for a gracious reward, the Lord will cause them to possess such a glory as never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Therefore we expect that great day with a most ardent desire, to the end that we may fully enjoy the promises of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN. Amen, come, Lord Jesus. Rev. 22:20.

AMEN

ADDENDUM E

THE CANONS OF DORT (1619 AD)

Ratified in the National Synod of the Reformed Church Held at Dordrecht in the years 1618 and 1619

COMMENT: Each of the main points consists of a positive and a negative part, the former being an exposition of the Reformed doctrine on the subject, the latter a repudiation of the corresponding errors. Although in form there are only four points, the Canons are spoken of as being five points, because the Canons were structured to correspond to the five articles of the 1610 Remonstrance. The third and fourth sections were purposely combined into one, since the delegates to the synod considered them inseparable, and therefore are designated as Main Point III/IV.

This translation of the Canons is based on the only extant Latin manuscript among those signed at the Synod of Dordt.

The First Head of Doctrine. Of Divine Election and Reprobation

Article 1: God's Right to Condemn All People

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). (All quotations from Scripture are translations of the original Latin manuscript.)

Article 2: The Manifestation of God's Love

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.

Article 3: The Preaching of the Gospel

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).

Article 4: A Twofold Response to the Gospel

God's anger remains on those who do not believe this gospel. But those who do accept it and embrace Jesus the Savior with a true and living faith are delivered through him from God's anger and from destruction, and receive the gift of eternal life.

Article 5: The Sources of Unbelief and of Faith

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).

Article 6: God's Eternal Decision

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.

Article 7: Election

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).

Article 8: A Single Decision of Election

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.

Article 9: Election Not Based on Foreseen Faith

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).

Article 10: Election Based on God’s Good Pleasure

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).

Article 11: Election Unchangeable

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.

Article 12: The Assurance of Election

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.

Article 13: The Fruit of This Assurance

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.

Article 14: Teaching Election Properly

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.

Article 15: Reprobation

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.

Article 16: Responses to the Teaching of Reprobation

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 smoldering wick and that he will not break a bruised reed. However, those who have forgotten God and their Savior 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.

Article 17: The Salvation of the Infants of Believers

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.

Article 18: The Proper Attitude Toward Election and Reprobation

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 Savior, "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 counselor? 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

Having set forth the orthodox teaching concerning election and reprobation, the Synod rejects the errors of those who teach:

Rejection 1

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.

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).

Rejection 2

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, nonperemptory (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.

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: "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).

Rejection 3

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.

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).

Rejection 4

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.

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).

Rejection 5

Who teach that the incomplete and nonperemptory 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.

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).

Rejection 6

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.

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).

Rejection 7

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.

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).

Rejection 8

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.

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).

Rejection 9

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.

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).

The Second Head of Doctrine Christ's Death and Human Redemption Through It

Article 1: The Punishment Which God's Justice Requires

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.

Article 2: The Satisfaction Made by Christ

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.

Article 3: The Infinite Value of Christ's Death

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.

Article 4: Reasons for This Infinite Value

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.

Article 5: The Mandate to Proclaim the Gospel to All

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.

Article 6: Unbelief Man's Responsibility

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.

Article 7: Faith God's Gift

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.

Article 8: The Saving Effectiveness of Christ's Death

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.

Article 9: The Fulfillment of God's Plan

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.

Having set forth the orthodox teaching, the Synod rejects the errors of those

Rejection 1

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.

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.

Rejection 2

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.

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).

Rejection 3

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.

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.

Rejection 4

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.

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.

Rejection 5

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.

For this opinion conflicts with Scripture which asserts that we are by nature children of wrath.

Rejection 6

Who make use of the distinction between obtaining and applying in order to instill 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.

For, while pretending to set forth this distinction in an acceptable sense, they attempt to give the people the deadly poison of Pelagianism.

Rejection 7

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.

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 do you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:12-13).

The Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine Of Human Corruption, Conversion to God, and the Way It Occurs

Article 1: The Effect of the Fall on Human Nature

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.

Article 2: The Spread of Corruption

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.

Article 3: Total Inability

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.

Article 4: The Inadequacy of the Light of Nature

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.

Article 5: The Inadequacy of the Law

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.

Article 6: The Saving Power of the Gospel

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.

Article 7: God's Freedom in Revealing the Gospel

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.

Article 8: The Serious Call of the Gospel

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.

Article 9: Human Responsibility for Rejecting the Gospel

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).

Article 10: Conversion as the Work of God

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.

Article 11: The Holy Spirit's Work in Conversion

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.

Article 12: Regeneration a Supernatural Work

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.

Article 13: The Incomprehensible Way of Regeneration

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.

Article 14: The Way God Gives Faith

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.

Article 15: Responses to God's Grace

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.

Article 16: Regeneration's Effect

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.

Article 17: God's Use of Means in Regeneration

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.

Having set forth the orthodox teaching, the Synod rejects the errors of those

Rejection 1

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.

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” (Rom. 6:23).

Rejection 2

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.

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.

Rejection 3

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.

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).

Rejection 4

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.

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).

Rejection 5

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.

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).

Rejection 5

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.

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).

Rejection 7

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.

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....”

Rejection 8

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.

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).

Rejection 9

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 itself.

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).

The Fifth Head of Doctrine

The Perseverance of the Saints

Article 1: The Regenerate Not Entirely Free from Sin

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.

Article 2: The Believer's Reaction to Sins of Weakness

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.

Article 3: God's Preservation of the Converted

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.

Article 4: The Danger of True Believers' Falling into Serious Sins

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.

Article 5: The Effects of Such Serious Sins

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.

Article 6: God's Saving Intervention

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.

Article 7: Renewal to Repentance

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.

Article 8: The Certainty of This Preservation

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.

Article 9: The Assurance of This Preservation

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.

Article 10: The Ground of This Assurance

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.

Article 11: Doubts Concerning This Assurance

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.

Article 12: This Assurance as an Incentive to Godliness

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.

Article 13: Assurance No Inducement to Carelessness

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.

Article 14: God's Use of Means in Perseverance

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.

Article 15: Contrasting Reactions to the Teaching of Perseverance

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, the Synod rejects the errors of those

Rejection 1

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.

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).

Rejection 2

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.

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).

Rejection 3

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.

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 take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can take them out of my Father's hand" (John 10: 28-29).

Rejection 4

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).

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 anyone 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).

Rejection 5

Who teach that apart from a special revelation no one can have the assurance of future perseverance in this life.

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).

Rejection 6

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.

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.

Rejection 7

Who teach that the faith of those who believe only temporarily does not differ from justifying and saving faith except in duration alone.

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.

Rejection 8

Who teach that it is not absurd that a person, after losing his former regeneration, should once again, indeed quite often, be reborn.

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).

Rejection 9

Who teach that Christ nowhere prayed for an unfailing perseverance of believers in faith.

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).

Conclusion

Rejection of False Accusations

And so this is the clear, simple, and straightforward explanation of the orthodox teaching on the five articles in dispute in the Netherlands, as well as the rejection of the errors by which the Dutch churches have for some time been disturbed. This explanation and rejection the Synod declares to be derived from God's Word and in agreement with the confessions of the Reformed churches. Hence it clearly appears that those of whom one could hardly expect it have shown no truth, equity, and charity at all in wishing to make the public believe:

— that the teaching of the Reformed churches on predestination and on the points associated with it by its very nature and tendency draws the minds of people away from all godliness and religion, is an opiate of the flesh and the devil, and is a stronghold of Satan where he lies in wait for all people, wounds most of them, and fatally pierces many of them with the arrows of both despair and self-assurance;

— that this teaching makes God the author of sin, unjust, a tyrant, and a hypocrite; and is nothing but a refurbished Stoicism, Manicheism, Libertinism, and Mohammedanism;

— that this teaching makes people carnally self-assured, since it persuades them that nothing endangers the salvation of the chosen, no matter how they live, so that they may commit the most outrageous crimes with self-assurance; and that on the other hand nothing is of use to the reprobate for salvation even if they have truly performed all the works of the saints;

— that this teaching means that God predestined and created, by the bare and unqualified choice of his will, without the least regard or consideration of any sin, the greatest part of the world to eternal condemnation; that in the same manner in which election is the source and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and ungodliness; that many infant children of believers are ed in their innocence from their mothers' breasts and cruelly cast into hell so that neither the blood of Christ nor their baptism nor the prayers of the church at their baptism can be of any use to them; and very many other slanderous accusations of this kind which the Reformed churches not only disavow but even denounce with their whole heart.

Therefore this Synod of Dordt in the name of the Lord pleads with all who devoutly call on the name of our Savior Jesus Christ to form their judgment about the faith of the Reformed churches,

not on the basis of false accusations gathered from here or there, or even on the basis of the personal statements of a number of ancient and modern authorities — statements which are also often either quoted out of context or misquoted and twisted to convey a different meaning — but on the basis of the churches' own official confessions and of the present explanation of the orthodox teaching which has been endorsed by the unanimous consent of the members of the whole Synod, one and all.

Moreover, the Synod earnestly warns the false accusers themselves to consider how heavy a judgment of God awaits those who give false testimony against so many churches and their confessions, trouble the consciences of the weak, and seek to prejudice the minds of many against the fellowship of true believers.

Finally, this Synod urges all fellow ministers in the gospel of Christ to deal with this teaching in a godly and reverent manner, in the academic institutions as well as in the churches; to do so, both in their speaking and writing, with a view to the glory of God's name, holiness of life, and the comfort of anxious souls; to think and also speak with Scripture according to the analogy of faith; and, finally, to refrain from all those ways of speaking which go beyond the bounds set for us by the genuine sense of the Holy Scriptures and which could give impertinent sophists a just occasion to scoff at the teaching of the Reformed churches or even to bring false accusations against it.

May God's Son Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of God and gives gifts to men, sanctify us in the truth, lead to the truth those who err, silence the mouths of those who lay false accusations against sound teaching, and equip faithful ministers of his Word with a spirit of wisdom and discretion, that all they say may be to the glory of God and the building up of their hearers. Amen.

ADDENDUM F

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)

The original text of 1646, from the manuscript of Cornelius Burges, Assessor to the Westminster Assembly, with the Assembly's proof texts, as published in the modern critical edition of 1937 by S. W. Carruthers.

Chapter I. 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 unexcusable;(a) yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation.(b) Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church;(c) 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:(d) which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary;(e) those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.(f)

(a) Rom. 2:14, 15; Rom. 1:19, 20; Ps. 19:1, 2, 3; Rom. 1:32, with chap. 2:1.

(b) I Cor. 1:21; I Cor. 2:13, 14.

(c) Heb. 1:1.

(d) Prov. 22:19, 20, 21; Luke 1:3, 4; Rom. 15:4; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Isa. 8:19, 20.

(e) II Tim. 3:15; II Pet. 1:19.

(f) Heb. 1:1, 2.

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

Of the New Testament:

The Gospels according to Matthew	Galatians	The Epistle to the Hebrews
Mark	Ephesians	The Epistle of James
Luke	Philippians	The first and second Epistles of Peter
John	Colossians	The first, second, and third Epistles of John
The Acts of the Apostles	Thessalonians I.	The Epistle of Jude
Paul's Epistles	Thessalonians II.	The Revelation of John
To the Romans	To Timothy I.	
Corinthians I.	To Timothy II.	
Corinthians II.	To Titus	
	To Philemon	

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

(g) Luke 16:29, 31; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 22:18, 19; II Tim. 3:16.

III. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the 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.(h)

(h) Luke 24:27, 44; Rom. 3:2; II Pet. 1:21.

IV. 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.(i)

(i) II Pet. 1:19, 21; II Tim. 3:16; I John 5:9; I Thess. 2:13.

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture.(k) 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.(l)

(k) I Tim. 3:15.

(l) I John 2:20, 27; John 16:13, 14; I Cor. 2:10, 11, 12; Isa. 59:21.

VI. 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.(m) 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:(n) and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and 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.(o)

(m) II Tim. 3:15, 16, 17; Gal. 1:8, 9; II Thess. 2:2.

(n) John 6:45, I Cor. 2:9 to 12.

(o) I Cor. 11:13, 14; I Cor. 14:26, 40.

VII. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all:(p) 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.(q)

(p) II Pet. 3:16.

(q) Psalms 119:105, 130.

VIII. 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;(r) so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.(s) 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,(t) therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,(u) that the Word

of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner;(w) and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.(x)

(r) Matt. 5:18.

(u) I Cor. 14:6, 9, 11, 12, 24, 27, 28.

(s) Isa. 8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39, 46.

(w) Col. 3:16.

(t) John 5:39.

(x) Rom. 15:4.

IX. 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 must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.(y)

(y) II Pet. 1:20, 21; Acts 15:15, 16.

X. 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.(z)

(z) Matt. 22:29, 31; Eph. 2:20 with Acts 28:25.

Chapter II. Of God, and of the Holy Trinity.

I. There is but one only,(a) living, and true God:(b) who is infinite in being and perfection,(c) a most pure spirit,(d) invisible,(e) without body, parts,(f) or passions,(g) immutable,(h) immense,(i) eternal,(k) incomprehensible,(l) almighty,(m) most wise,(n) most holy,(o) most free,(p) most absolute,(q) working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will,(r) for His own glory;(s) most loving,(t) gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;(u) the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him;(w) and withal, most just and terrible in His judgments,(x) hating all sin,(y) and who will by no means clear the guilty.(z)

(a) Deut. 6:4; I Cor. 8:4, 6.

(i) I Kings 8:27; Jer.

(r) Eph. 1:11.

(b) I Thess. 1:9; Jer. 10:10.

23:23, 24.

(s) Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11:36.

(c) Job 11:7, 8, 9; Job 26:14.

(k) Ps. 90:2; I Tim. 1:17.

(t) I John 4:8, 16.

(d) John 4:24.

(l) Ps. 145:3.

(u) Exod. 34:6, 7.

(e) I Tim. 1:17.

(m) Gen. 17:1; Rev. 4:8.

(w) Heb. 11:6.

(f) Deut. 4:15, 16; John 4:24,
with Luke 24:39.

(n) Rom. 16:27.

(x) Neh. 9:32, 33.

(g) Acts 14:11, 15.

(o) Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8.

(y) Ps. 5:5, 6.

(h) James 1:17; Mal. 3:6.

(p) Ps. 115:3.

(z) Nah. 1:2, 3; Exod. 34:7.

(q) Exod. 3:14.

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

(a) John 5:26.

(f) Job 22:2, 3.

(k) Rom. 11:33, 34; Ps.

(b) Acts 7:2.

(g) Rom 11:36.

147:5.

(c) Ps. 119:68.

(h) Rev. 4:11; I Tim.

(l) Acts 15:18; Ezek. 11:5.

(d) I Tim. 6:15; Rom. 9:5.

6:15; Dan. 4:25, 35.

(m) Ps. 145:17; Rom. 7:12.

(e) Acts 17:24, 25.

(i) Heb. 4:13.

(n) Rev. 5:12, 13, 14.

III. 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.(o) The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding: the Son is eternally begotten of the Father:(p) the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.(q)

(o) I John 5:7; Matt. 3:16, 17; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14.

(p) John 1:14, 18.

(q) John 15:26; Gal. 4:6.

Chapter III. Of God's Eternal Decree.

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

(a) Eph. 1:11; Rom. 11:33; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:15, 18.

(b) Jam. 1:13, 17; I John 1:5.

(c) Acts 2:23; Matt. 17:12; Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11; Prov. 16:33.

II. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions,(d) yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.(e)

(d) Acts 15:18; I Sam. 23:11, 12; Matt. 11:21, 23.

(e) Rom. 9:11, 13, 16, 18.

III. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels(f) are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death.(g)

(f) I Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:41.

(g) Rom. 9:22, 23; Eph. 1:5, 6; Prov. 16:4.

IV. These angels and men, thus predestinated, and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.(h)

(h) II Tim. 2:19; John 13:18.

V. 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,(i) out of His mere free grace and love, 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:(k) and all to the praise of His glorious grace.(l)

(i) Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; Rom. 8:30; II Tim. 1:9; I Thess. 5:9.

(k) Rom. 9:11, 13, 16; Eph. 1:4, 9.

(l) Eph. 1:6, 12.

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

(m) I Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:4, 5; Eph. 2:10; II Thess. 2:13.

(n) I Thess. 5:9, 10; Titus 2:14.

(o) Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:5; II Thess. 2:13.

(p) I Pet. 1:5.

(q) John 17:9; Rom. 8:28 to the end; John 6:64, 65; John 10:26; John 8:47; I John 2:19.

VII. 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 dishonour and wrath, for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.(r)

(r) Matt. 11:25, 26; Rom. 9:17, 18, 21, 22; II Tim. 2:19, 20; Jude ver. 4; I Pet. 2:8.

VIII. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care,(s) that men attending 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.(t) So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God,(u) and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.(w)

(s) Rom. 9:20; Rom. 11:33; Deut. 29:29.

(t) II Pet. 1:10.

(u) Eph. 1:6; Rom. 11:33.

(w) Rom. 11:5, 6, 20; II Pet. 1:10; Rom. 8:33; Luke 10:20.

Chapter IV. Of Creation.

I. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,(a) for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness,(b) 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.(c)

(a) Heb. 1:2; John 1:2, 3; Gen. 1:2; Job. 26:13; Job. 33:4.

(b) Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:12; Ps. 104:24; Ps. 33:5, 6.

(c) Gen. 1 chap.; Heb. 11:3; Col. 1:16; Acts 17:24.

II. After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female,(d) with reasonable and immortal souls,(e) endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image;(f) having the law of God written in their hearts,(g) and power to fulfil it:(h) and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change.(i) Beside 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, they were happy in their communion with God,(k) and had dominion over the creatures.(l)

(d) Gen. 1:27.

(h) Eccles. 7:29.

(e) Gen. 2:7 with Eccles. 12:7 & Luke 23:43 and Matt. 10:28.

(i) Gen. 3:6; Eccles. 7:29.

(f) Gen. 1:26; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24.

(k) Gen. 2:17; Gen. 3:8, 9, 10, 11, 23.

(g) Rom. 2:14, 15.

(l) Gen. 1:26, 28.

Chapter V. Of Providence.

I. God the great Creator of all things doth uphold,(a) direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things,(b) from the greatest even to the least,(c) by His most wise and holy providence,(d) according to His infallible fore-knowledge,(e) and the free and immutable counsel of His own will,(f) to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.(g)

(a) Heb. 1:3.

(b) Dan. 4:34, 35; Ps. 135:6; Acts 17:25, 26, 28; Job 38 to 41 chapters.

(c) Matt. 10:29, 30, 31.

(d) Prov. 15:3; Ps. 104:24; Ps. 145:17.

(e) Acts 15:18; Ps. 94:8, 9, 10, 11.

(f) Eph. 1:11; Ps. 33:10, 11.

(g) Isa. 63:14; Eph. 3:10; Rom. 9:17; Gen. 45:7; Ps. 145:7.

II. Although, in relation to the fore-knowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly:(h) yet, by the same providence, He ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.(i)

(h) Acts 2:23.

(i) Gen. 8:22; Jer. 31:35; Exod. 21:13 with Deut. 19:5; I Kings 22:28, 34; Isa. 10:6, 7.

III. God in His ordinary providence maketh use of means,(k) yet is free to work without,(l) above,(m) and against them at His pleasure.(n)

(k) Acts 27:31, 44; Isa. 55:10, 11; Hos. 2:21, 22.

(l) Hos. 1:7; Matt. 4:4; Job 34:20.

(m) Rom. 4:19, 20, 21.

(n) II Kings 6:6; Dan. 3:27.

IV. 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;(o) and that not by a bare permission,(p) but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding,(q) and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends;(r) 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.(s)

(o) Rom. 11:32, 33, 34; II Sam. 24:1 with I Chron. 21:1; I Kings 22:22, 23; I Chron. 10:4, 13, 14; II Sam. 16:10; Acts 2:23; Acts 4:27, 28.

(p) Acts 14:16.

(q) Ps. 76:10; II Kings 19:28.

(r) Gen. 50:20; Isa. 10:6, 7, 12.

(s) James 1:13, 14, 17; I John 2:16; Ps. 50:21.

V. 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;(t) 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.(u)

(t) II Chron. 32:25, 26, 31; II Sam. 24:1.

(u) II Cor. 12:7, 8, 9; Ps. 73 throughout; Ps. 77:1 to 12; Mark 14:66 to the end, with John 21:15, 16, 17.

VI. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous Judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden,(w) from them He not only withholdeth His grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts;(x) but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had,(y) and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasions of sin;(z) and, withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan:(a) whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.(b)

(w) Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; Rom. 11:7, 8.

(x) Deut. 29:4.

(y) Matt. 13:12; Matt. 25:29.

(z) Deut. 2:30; II Kings 8:12, 13.

(a) Ps. 81:11, 12; II Thess. 2:10, 11, 12.

(b) Exod. 7:3 with Exod. 8:15, 32; II Cor. 2:15, 16; Isa. 8:14; I Pet. 2:7, 8; Isa. 6:9, 10 with Acts 28:26, 27.

VII. 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.(c)

(c) I Tim. 4:10; Amos 9:8, 9; Rom. 8:28; Isa. 43:3, 4, 5, 14.

Chapter VI. Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof

I. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit.(a) This their sin God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.(b)

(a) Gen. 3:13; II Cor. 11:3.

(b) Rom. 11:32.

II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion, with God,(c) and so became dead in sin,(d) and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.(e)

(c) Gen. 3:6, 7, 8; Eccles. 7:29; Rom. 3:23.

(d) Gen. 2:17; Eph. 2:1.

(e) Tit. 1:15; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10 to 19.

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

(f) Gen. 1:27, 28 & Gen. 2:16, 17 and Acts 17:26 with Rom. 5:12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and I Cor. 15:21, 22, 49.

(g) Psa. 51:5; Gen. 5:3; Job 14:4, Job 15:14.

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

(h) Rom. 5:6; Rom. 8:7, Rom. 7:18; Col. 1:21.

(i) Gen. 6:5; Gen. 8:21; Rom. 3:10, 11, 12.

(k) James 1:14, 15; Eph. 2:2, 3; Matt. 15:19.

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

(l) I John 1:8, 10; Rom. 7:14, 17, 18, 23; James 3:2; Prov. 20:9; Eccles. 7:20.

(m) Rom. 7:5, 7, 8, 25; Gal. 5:17.

VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto,(n) doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner;(o) whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God,(p) and curse of the law,(q) and so made subject to death,(r) with all miseries spiritual,(s) temporal,(t) and eternal.(u)

(n) I John 3:4.

(o) Rom. 2:15; Rom. 3:9, 19.

(p) Ephes. 2:3.

(q) Gal. 3:10.

(r) Rom. 6:23.

(s) Ephes. 4:18.

(t) Rom. 8:20; Lam. 3:39.

(u) Matt. 25:41, II Thess. 1:9.

Chapter VII. Of God's Covenant with Man.

I. 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.(a)

(a) Isa. 40:13, 14, 15, 16, 17; Job. 9:32, 33; I Sam. 2:25; Ps. 113:5, 6; Ps. 100:2, 3; Job. 22:2, 3; Job 35:7, 8; Luke 17:10; Acts 17:24, 25.

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

(b) Gal. 3:12.

(d) Gen. 2:17; Gal. 3:10.

(c) Rom. 10:5, Rom. 5:12 to 20.

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

(e) Gal. 3:21; Rom. 8:3; Rom. 3:20, 21; Gen. 3:15; Isa. 42:6.

(f) Mark 16:15, 16; John 3:16; Rom. 10:6, 9; Gal. 3:11.

(g) Ezek. 36:26, 27; John 6:44, 45.

IV. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in 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.(h)

(h) Heb. 9:15, 16, 17; Heb. 7:22; Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25.

V. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel:(i) 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:(k) 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,(l) by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called, the Old Testament.(m)

(i) II Cor. 3:6, 7, 8, 9.

(k) Heb. 8, 9, 10 chapters; Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11, 12; I Cor. 5:7.

(l) I Cor. 10:1, 2, 3, 4; Heb. 11:13; John 8:56.

(m) Gal. 3:7, 8, 9, 14.

VI. Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance,(n) 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:(o) which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory; yet, in them, it is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy,(p) to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles;(q) and is called the New Testament.(r) There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.(s)

(n) Col. 2:17.

(o) Matt. 28:19, 20; I Cor. 11:23, 24, 25.

(p) Heb. 12:22 to 28; Jer. 31:33, 34.

(q) Matt. 28:19; Eph. 2:15, 16, 17, 18, 19.

(r) Luke 22:20.

(s) Gal. 3:14, 16; Rom 3:21, 22, 23, 30; Ps. 32:1 with Rom. 4:3, 6, 16, 17, 23, 24; Heb. 13:8; Acts 15:11.

Chapter VIII. Of Christ the Mediator.

I. 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 man;(a) the Prophet,(b) Priest,(c) and King,(d) the Head and Saviour of His Church,(e) the Heir of all things,(f) and Judge of the world:(g) unto whom He did from all eternity give a people, to be His seed,(h) and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.(i)

- (a) Isa. 42:1; I Pet. 19, 20; John 3:16; I Tim. 2:5. (f) Heb. 1:2.
 (b) Acts 3:22. (g) Acts 17:31.
 (c) Heb. 5:5, 6. (h) John 17:6; Ps. 22:30, Isa. 53:10.
 (d) Ps. 2:6; Luke 1:33. (i) I Tim. 2:6; Isa. 55:4, 5; I Cor. 1:30.
 (e) Eph. 5:23.

II. 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 fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature,(k) with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin:(l) being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance.(m) 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.(n) Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.(o)

- (k) John 1:1, 14; I John 5:20; Phil. 2:6; Gal. 4:4.
 (l) Heb. 2:14, 16, 17; Heb. 4:15.
 (m) Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Gal. 4:4.
 (n) Luke 1:35; Col. 2:9; Rom. 9:5; I Pet. 3:18; I Tim. 3:16.
 (o) Rom. 1:3, 4; I Tim. 2:5.

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

- (p) Ps. 45:7; John 3:34.
 (q) Col. 2:3.
 (r) Col. 1:19.
 (s) Heb. 7:26; John 1:14.
 (t) Acts 10:38; Heb. 12:24; Heb. 7:22.
 (u) Heb. 5:4, 5.
 (w) John 5:22, 27; Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36.

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

- (y) Gal. 4:4.
 (z) Matt. 3:15; Matt. 5:17.
 (a) Matt. 26:37, 38; Luke 22:44; Matt. 27:46.
 (x) Ps. 40:7, 8 with Heb. 10:5 to 10; John 10:18; Phil. 2:8.

(b) Matt. 26, 27 chapters.

(c) Phil. 2:8.

(d) Acts. 2:23, 24, 27; Acts 13:37; Rom. 6:9.

(e) I Cor. 15:3, 4.

(f) John 20:25, 27.

(g) Mark 16:19.

(h) Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; Heb. 7:25.

(i) Rom. 14:9, 10; Acts 1:11; Acts 10:42; Matt. 13:40, 41, 42; Jude ver. 6; II Pet. 2:4.

V. 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;(k) and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.(l)

(k) Rom. 5:19; Heb. 9:14, 16; Heb. 10:14; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 3:25, 26.

(l) Dan. 9:24, 26; Col. 1:19, 20; Eph. 1:11, 14; John 17:2; Heb. 9:12, 15.

VI. Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof were communicated unto 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 to-day the same, and forever.(m)

(m) Gal. 4:4, 5; Gen. 3:15; Rev. 13:8; Heb. 13:8.

VII. Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself:(n) 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.(o)

(n) Heb. 9:14; I Pet. 3:18.

(o) Acts 20:28; John 3:13; I John 3:16.

VIII. To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same,(p) making intercession for them,(q) and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation,(r) effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit;(s) 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.(t)

(p) John 6:37, 39; John 10:15, 16.

(q) I John 2:1, 2; Rom. 8:34.

(r) John 15:13, 15; Eph. 1:7, 8, 9; John 17:6.

(s) John 14:26; Heb. 12:2; II Cor. 4:13; Rom. 8:9, 14; Rom. 15:18, 19; John 17:17.

(t) Ps. 110:1; I Cor. 15:25, 26; Mal. 4:2, 3; Col. 2:15.

Chapter IX. Of Free Will.

I. 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.(a)

(a) Matt. 17:12; James 1:14; Deut. 30:19.

II. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good, and well pleasing to God;(b) but yet, mutably, so that he might fall from it.(c)

(b) Eccles. 7:29; Gen. 1:26.

(c) Gen. 2:16, 17; Gen. 3:6.

III. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation:(d) so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good,(e) and dead in

sin,(f) is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.(g)

(d) Rom. 5:6; Rom 8:7; John 15:5.

(e) Rom. 3:10, 12.

(f) Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13.

(g) John 6:44, 65; Eph. 2:2, 3, 4, 5; I Cor. 2:14; Titus 3:3, 4, 5.

IV. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin;(h) and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good;(i) 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.(k)

(h) Col. 1:13; John 8:34, 36.

(i) Phil. 2:13; Rom. 6:18, 22.

(k) Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:15, 18, 19, 21, 23.

V. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone, in the state of glory only.(l)

(l) Eph. 4:13; Heb. 12:23; I John 3:2; Jude ver. 24.

Chapter X. Of Effectual Calling.

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

(a) Rom. 8:30; Rom. 11:7; Eph. 1:10, 11.

(b) II Thess. 2:13, 14; II Cor. 3:3, 6.

(c) Rom. 8:2; Eph. 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5; II Tim. 1:9, 10.

(d) Acts 26:18; I Cor. 2:10, 12; Eph. 1:17, 18.

(e) Ezek. 36:26.

(f) Ezek. 11:19; Phil. 2:13; Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27.

(g) Eph. 1:19; John 6:44, 45.

(h) Cant. 1:4; Ps. 110:3; John 6:37; Rom. 6:16, 17, 18.

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

(i) II Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:4, 5; Eph. 2:4, 5, 8, 9; Rom. 9:11.

(k) I Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:5.

(l) John 6:37; Ezek. 36:27; John 5:25.

III. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ through the Spirit,(m) who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth:(n) so also, are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.(o)

(m) Luke 18:15, 16, and Acts 2:38, 39 and John 3:3, 5 and I John 5:12 & Rom. 8:9 compared.

(n) John 3:8.

(o) I John 5:12; Acts 4:12.

IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word,(p) and may have some common operations of the Spirit,(q) yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved:(r) 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.(s) And to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested.(t)

(p) Matt. 22:14.

(q) Matt. 7:22; Matt. 13:20, 21; Heb. 6:4, 5.

(r) John 6:64, 65, 66; John 8:24.

(s) Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Eph. 2:12; John 4:22; John 17:3.

(t) II John ver. 9, 10, 11; I Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:6, 7, 8.

Chapter XI. Of Justification

I. Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth;(a) not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous, not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor 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,(b) they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.(c)

(a) Rom. 8:30; Rom. 3:24.

(b) Rom. 4:5, 6, 7, 8; II Cor. 5:19, 21; Rom. 3:22, 24, 25, 27, 28; Tit. 3:5, 7; Eph. 1:7; Jer. 23:6; I Cor. 1:30, 31; Rom. 5:17, 18, 19.

(c) Acts 10:43; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:19; Acts 13:38, 39; Eph. 2:7, 8.

II. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification;(d) 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.(e)

(d) John 1:12; Rom. 3:28; Rom. 5:1.

(e) Jam. 2:17, 22, 26; Gal. 5:6.

III. 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 to His Father's justice in their behalf.(f) Yet, inasmuch as He was given by the Father for them;(g) and His obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead;(h) and both freely, not for anything in them; their justification is only of free grace;(i) that both the exact justice, and rich grace of God, might be glorified in the justification of sinners.(k)

(f) Rom. 5:8, 9, 10, 19; I Tim. 2:5, 6; Heb. 10:10, 14; Dan. 9:24, 26; Isa. 53:4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12.

(g) Rom. 8:32.

(h) II Cor. 5:21; Matt. 3:17; Eph. 5:2.

(i) Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7.

(k) Rom. 3:26; Eph. 2:7.

IV. God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect,(l) and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification:(m) nevertheless, they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them.(n)

(l) Gal. 3:8; I Pet. 1:2, 19, 20; Rom. 8:30.

(m) Gal. 4:4; I Tim. 2:6; Rom. 4:25.

(n) Col. 1:21, 22; Gal. 2:16; Tit. 3:3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

V. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified:(o) and although they can never fall from the state of justification;(p) 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.(q)

(o) Matt. 6:12; I John 1:7, 9; I John 2:1, 2.

(p) Luke 22:32; John 10:28; Heb. 10:14.

(q) Ps. 89:31, 32, 33; Ps. 51:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; Ps. 32:5; Matt. 26:75; I Cor. 11:30, 32; Luke 1:20.

VI. 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.(r)

(r) Gal. 3:9, 13, 14; Rom. 4:22, 23, 24; Heb. 13:8.

Chapter XII. Of Adoption.

Il those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption:(a) by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God,(b) have His name put upon them,(c) receive the spirit of adoption,(d) have access to the throne of grace with boldness,(e) are enabled to cry, Abba, Father,(f) are pitied,(g) protected,(h) provided for,(i) and chastened by Him as by a Father;(k) yet never cast off,(l) but sealed to the day of redemption,(m) and inherit the promises,(n) as heirs of everlasting salvation.(o)

(a) Eph. 1:5.

(b) Gal. 4:4, 5; Rom. 8:17; John 1:12.

(c) Jer. 14:9; II Cor. 6:18; Rev. 3:12.

(d) Rom. 8:15.

(e) Eph. 3:12; Rom. 5:2.

(f) Gal. 4:6.

(g) Ps. 103:13.

(h) Prov. 14:26.

(i) Matt. 6:30, 32; I Pet. 5:7.

(k) Heb. 12:6.

(l) Lam. 3:31.

(m) Eph. 4:30.

(n) Heb. 6:12.

(o) I Pet. 1:3, 4; Heb. 1:14.

Chapter XIII. Of Sanctification.

I. They who are once 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,(a) by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them:(b) the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed,(c) and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified;(d) and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces,(e) to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.(f)

(a) I Cor. 6:11; Acts 20:32; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 6:5, 6.

(b) John 17:17; Eph. 5:26; II Thess. 2:13.

(c) Rom. 6:6, 14.

(d) Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13.

(e) Col. 1:11; Eph. 3:16, 17, 18, 19.

(f) II Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14.

II. This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man;(g) yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part:(h) whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.(i)

(g) I Thess. 5:23.

(h) I John 1:10; Rom. 7:18, 23; Phil. 3:12.

(i) Gal. 5:17; I Pet. 2:11.

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

(k) Rom. 7:23.

- (l) Rom. 6:14; I John 5:4; Eph. 4:15, 16.
 (m) II Pet. 3:18; II Cor. 3:18.
 (n) II Cor. 7:1.

Chapter XIV. Of Saving Faith.

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

- (a) Heb. 10:39. (d) I Pet. 2:2; Acts 20:32; Rom. 4:11; Luke 17:5; Rom. 1:16, 17.
 (b) II Cor. 4:13; Eph. 1:17, 18, 19; Eph. 2:8.
 (c) Rom. 10:14, 17.

II. By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein;(e) and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands,(f) trembling at the threatenings,(g) and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come.(h) 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.(i)

- (e) John 4:42; I Thess. 2:13; I John 5:10; Acts 24:14.
 (f) Rom. 16:26.
 (g) Isa. 66:2.
 (h) Heb. 11:13; I Tim. 4:8.
 (i) John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Acts 15:11.

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

- (k) Heb. 5:13, 14; Rom. 4:19, 20; Matt. 6:30; Matt. 8:10.
 (l) Luke 22:31, 32; Eph. 6:16; I John 5:4, 5.
 (m) Heb. 6:11, 12; Heb. 10:22; Col. 2:2.
 (n) Heb. 12:2.

Chapter XV. Of Repentance unto Life.

I. Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace,(a) the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the Gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ.(b)

- (a) Zech. 12:10; Acts 11:18.
 (b) Luke 24:47; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21.

II. 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,(c) purposing and endeavouring to walk with Him in all the ways of His commandments.(d)

- (c) Ezek. 18:30, 31; Ezek. 36:31; Isa. 30:22; Ps. 51:4; Jer. 31:18, 19; Joel 2:12, 13; Amos 5:15; Ps. 119:128; II Cor. 7:11.
 (d) Ps. 119:6, 59, 106; Luke 1:6; II Kings 23:25.

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

(e) Ezek. 36:31, 32; Ezek. 16:61, 62, 63.

(f) Hosea 14:2, 4; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7.

(g) Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30, 31.

IV. As there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation,(h) so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.(i)

(h) Rom. 6:23; Rom. 5:12; Matt. 12:36.

(i) Isa. 55:7; Rom. 8:1; Isa. 1:16, 18.

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

(k) Ps. 19:13; Luke 19:8; I Tim. 1:13, 15.

VI. As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof;(l) upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy:(m) 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,(n) who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him.(o)

(l) Ps. 51:4, 5, 7, 9, 14; Ps. 32:5, 6.

(m) Prov. 28:13; I John 1:9.

(n) James 5:16; Luke 17:3, 4; Joshua 7:19; Ps. 51 throughout.

(o) II Cor. 2:8.

Chapter XVI. Of Good Works.

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

(a) Micah 6:8; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 13:21.

(b) Matt. 15:9; Isa. 29:13; I Pet. 1:18; Rom. 10:2; John 16:2; I Sam. 15:21, 22, 23.

II. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith:(c) and by them believers manifest their thankfulness,(d) strengthen their assurance,(e) edify their brethren,(f) adorn the profession of the Gospel,(g) stop the mouths of the adversaries,(h) and glorify God,(i) whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto;(k) that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.(l)

(c) James 2:18, 22.

(f) II Cor. 9:2; Matt. 5:16.

(i) I Pet. 2:12; Phil.

(d) Ps. 116:12, 13; I Pet. 2:9.

(g) Tit. 2:5, 9, 10, 11, 12; I

1:11; John 15:8.

(e) I John 2:3, 5; II Pet. 1:5,

Tim. 6:1.

(k) Eph. 2:10.

6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

(h) I Pet. 2:15.

(l) Rom. 6:22.

III. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ.(m) 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:(n) 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.(o)

(m) John 15:4, 5; Ezek. 36:26, 27.

(n) Phil. 2:13; Phil. 4:13; II Cor. 3:5.

(o) Phil. 2:12; Heb. 6:11, 12; II Pet. 1:3, 5, 10, 11; Isa. 64:7; II Tim. 1:6; Acts 26:6, 7; Jude ver. 20, 21.

IV. 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, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do.(p)

(p) Luke 17:10; Neh. 13:22; Job 9:2, 3; Gal. 5:17.

V. We cannot, by our best works, merit pardon of sin, or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason 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,(q) but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants;(r) and because, as they are good, they proceed from His Spirit;(s) 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.(t)

(q) Rom. 3:20; Rom. 4:2, 4, 6; Eph. 2:8, 9; Tit. 3:5, 6, 7; Rom. 8:18; Ps. 16:2; Job 22:2, 3; Job 35:7, 8.

(r) Luke 17:10.

(s) Gal. 5:22, 23.

(t) Isa. 64:6; Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:15, 18; Ps. 143:2; Ps. 130:3.

VI. Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in Him,(u) not as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unreproveable in God's sight;(w) 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.(x)

(u) Eph. 1:6; I Pet. 2:5; Exod. 28:38; Gen. 4:4 with Heb. 11:4.

(w) Job. 9:20; Ps. 143:2.

(x) Heb. 13:20, 21; II Cor. 8:12; Heb. 6:10; Matt. 25:21, 23.

VII. 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:(y) yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith;(z) nor are done in a right manner according to the Word;(a) nor to a right end, the glory of God;(b) they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God.(c) And yet, their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God.(d)

(y) II Kings 10:30, 31; I Kings 21:27, 29; Phil. 1:15, 16, 18.

(z) Gen. 4:5 with Heb. 11:4; Heb. 11:6.

(a) I Cor. 13:3; Isa. 1:12.

(b) Matt. 6:2, 5, 16.

(c) Hag. 2:14; Tit. 1:15; Amos 5:22, 23; Hosea 1:4; Rom. 9:16; Titus 3:5.

(d) Ps. 14:4; Ps. 36:3; Job 21:14, 15; Matt. 25:41, 42, 43, 45; Matt. 23:23.

Chapter XVII. Of the Perseverance of the Saints.

I. 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.(a)

(a) Phil. 1:6; II Pet. 1:10; John 10:28, 29; I John 3:9; I Pet. 1:5, 9.

II. 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;(b) upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ;(c) the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them;(d) and the nature of the covenant of grace:(e) from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.(f)

(b) II Tim. 2:18, 19; Jer. 31:3.

(c) Heb. 10:10, 14; Heb. 13:20, 21; Heb. 9:12, 13, 14, 15; Rom. 8:33 to the end; John 17:11, 24; Luke 22:32; Heb. 7:25.

(d) John 14:16, 17; I John 2:27; I John 3:9.

(e) Jer. 32:40.

(f) John 10:28; II Thess. 3:3; I John 2:19.

III. 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 preservation, fall into grievous sins;(g) and, for a time, continue therein:(h) whereby they incur God's displeasure,(i) and grieve His Holy Spirit,(k) come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts,(l) have their hearts hardened,(m) and their consciences wounded,(n) hurt and scandalize others,(o) and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.(p)

(g) Matt. 26:70, 72, 74.

(h) Ps. 51 title and ver. 14.

(i) Isa. 64:5, 7, 9; II Sam. 11:27.

(k) Eph. 4:30.

(l) Ps. 51:8, 10, 12; Rev. 2:4; Cant. 5:2, 3, 4, 6.

(m) Isa. 63:17; Mark 6:52; Mark 16:14.

(n) Ps. 32:3, 4; Ps. 51:8.

(o) II Sam. 12:14.

(p) Ps. 89:31, 32; I Cor. 11:32.

Chapter XVIII. Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation.

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

(a) Job 8:13, 14; Mic. 3:11; Deut. 29:19; John 8:41.

(b) Matt. 7:22, 23.

(c) I John 2:3; I John 3:14, 18, 19, 21, 24; I John 5:13.

(d) Rom. 5:2, 5.

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

(e) Heb. 6:11, 19.

(f) Heb. 6:17, 18.

(g) II Pet. 1:4, 5, 10, 11; I John 2:3; I John 3:14; II Cor. 1:12.

(h) Rom. 8:15, 16.

(i) Eph. 1:13, 14; Eph. 4:30; II Cor. 1:21, 22.

III. 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:(k) 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.(l) And therefore it is the duty of everyone to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure;(m) 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:(n) so far is it from inclining men to looseness.(o)

(k) I John 5:13; Isa. 50:10; Mark 9:24; Ps. 88 throughout; Ps. 77 to ver. 12.

(l) I Cor. 2:12; I John 4:13; Heb. 6:11, 12; Eph. 3:17, 18, 19.

(m) II Pet. 1:10.

(n) Rom. 5:1, 2, 5; Rom. 14:17; Rom. 15:13; Eph. 1:3, 4; Ps. 4:6, 7; Ps. 119:32.

(o) I John 2:1, 2; Rom. 6:1, 2; Tit. 2:11, 12, 14; II Cor. 7:1; Rom. 8:1, 12; I John 3:2, 3; Ps. 130:4; I John 1:6, 7.

IV. 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:(p) yet are they never so 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;(q) and by the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.(r)

(p) Cant. 5:2, 3, 6; Ps. 51:8, 12, 14; Eph. 4:30, 31; Ps. 77:1 to 10; Matt. 26:69, 70, 71, 72; Ps. 31:22; Ps. 88 throughout; Isa. 50:10.

(q) I John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Job 13:15; Ps. 73:15; Ps. 51:8, 12; Isa. 50:10.

(r) Mic. 7:7, 8, 9; Jer. 32:40; Isa. 54:7, 8, 9, 10; Ps. 22:1; Ps. 88 throughout.

Chapter XIX. Of the Law of God

I. 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.(a)

(a) Gen. 1:26, 27 with Gen. 2:17; Rom. 2:14, 15; Rom. 10:5; Rom. 5:12, 19; Gal. 3:10, 12; Eccles. 7:29; Job 28:28.

II. 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:(b) the four first commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six our duty to man.(c)

(b) James 1:25; James 2:8, 10, 11, 12; Rom. 13:8, 9; Deut. 5:32; Deut. 10:4; Ex. 34:1.

(c) Matt. 22:37, 38, 39, 40.

III. Beside 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;(d) and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties.(e) All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the new testament.(f)

(d) Heb. 9 chap.; Heb. 10:1; Gal. 4:1, 2, 3; Col. 2:17.

(e) I Cor. 5:7; II Cor. 6:17; Jude ver. 23.

(f) Col. 2:14, 16, 17; Dan. 9:27; Eph. 2:15, 16.

IV. 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.(g)

(g) Ex. 21 chap.; Ex. 22:1 to 29; Gen. 49:10 with I Pet. 2:13, 14; Matt. 5:17, with ver. 38, 39; I Cor. 9:8, 9, 10.

V. The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof;(h) 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:(i) neither doth Christ, in the Gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.(k)

(h) Rom. 13:8, 9, 10; Eph. 6:2; I John 2:3, 4, 7, 8.

(i) James 2:10, 11.

(k) Matt. 5:17, 18, 19; James 2:8; Rom. 3:31.

VI. Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned;(l) 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;(m) discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives;(n) so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come

to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin;(o) together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of His obedience.(p) It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin:(q) 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.(r) The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof;(s) although not as due to them by the law, as a covenant of works.(t) 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.(u)

(l) Rom. 6:14; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:13; Gal. 4:4, 5; Acts 13:39; Rom. 8:1.

(m) Rom. 7:12, 22, 25; Ps. 119:4, 5, 6; I Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

(n) Rom. 7:7; Rom. 3:20.

(o) James 1:23, 24, 25; Rom. 7:9, 14, 24.

(p) Gal. 3:24; Rom. 7:24, 25; Rom. 8:3, 4.

(q) Jam. 2:11; Ps. 119:101, 104, 128.

(r) Ezra 9:13, 14; Ps. 89:30, 31, 32, 33, 34.

(s) Lev. 26:1 to 14 with II Cor. 6:16; Eph. 6:2, 3; Ps. 37:11 with Matt. 5:5; Ps. 19:11.

(t) Gal. 2:16; Luke 17:10.

(u) Rom. 6:12, 14; I Pet. 3:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, with Ps. 34:12, 13, 14, 15, 16; Heb. 12:28, 29.

VII. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it;(w) 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.(x)

(w) Gal. 3:21.

(x) Ezek. 36:27; Heb. 8:10 with Jer. 31:33.

Chapter XX. Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience.

I. The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the Gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, and condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law;(a) and, in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin;(b) from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grace, and everlasting damnation;(c) as also, in their free access to God,(d) and their yielding obedience unto Him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love and willing mind.(e) All which were common also to believers under the law.(f) 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;(g) and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace,(h) and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.(i)

(a) Tit. 2:14; I Thess. 1:10; Gal. 3:13.

(b) Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18; Rom. 6:14.

(c) Rom. 8:28; Ps. 119:71; I Cor. 15:54, 55, 56, 57; Rom. 8:1.

(d) Rom. 5:1, 2.

(e) Rom. 8:14, 15; I John 4:18.

(f) Gal. 3:9, 14.

(g) Gal. 4:1, 2, 3, 6, 7; Gal. 5:1; Acts 15:10, 11.

(h) Heb. 4:14, 16; Heb. 10:19, 20, 21, 22.

(i) John 7:38, 39; II Cor. 3:13, 17, 18.

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

of conscience, and reason also.(n)

(k) Jam. 4:12; Rom. 14:4.

(l) Acts 4:19; Acts 5:29; I Cor. 7:23; Matt. 23:8, 9, 10; II Cor. 1:24; Matt. 15:9.

(m) Col. 2:20, 22, 23; Gal. 1:10; Gal. 2:4, 5; Gal. 5:1.

(n) Rom. 10:17; Rom. 14:23; Isa. 8:20; Acts 17:11; John 4:22; Hos. 5:11; Rev. 13:12, 16, 17; Jer. 8:9.

III. They who, upon pretence 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.(o)

(o) Gal. 5:13; I Pet. 2:16; II Pet. 2:19; John 8:34; Luke 1:74, 75.

IV. 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.(p) 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,(q) and by the power of the civil magistrate.(r)

(p) Matt. 12:25; I Pet. 2:13, 14, 16; Rom. 13:1 to 8; Heb. 13:17.

(q) Rom. 1:32 with I Cor. 5:1, 5, 11, 13; II John ver. 10, 11, and II Thess. 3:14, and I Tim. 6:3, 4, 5, and Tit. 1:10, 11, 13, and Tit. 3:10 with Matt. 18:15, 16, 17; I Tim. 1:19, 20; Rev. 2:2, 14, 15, 20; Rev. 3:9.

(r) Deut. 13:6 to 12; Rom. 13:3, 4 with II John ver. 10, 11; Ezra 7:23, 25, 26, 27, 28; Rev. 17:12, 16, 17; Neh. 13:15, 17, 21, 22, 25, 30; II Kings 23:5, 6, 9, 20, 21; II Chron. 34:33; II Chron. 15:12, 13, 16; Dan. 3:29; I Tim. 2:2; Isa. 49:23; Zech. 13:2, 3.

Chapter XXI. Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath-day.

I. The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth 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.(a) 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.(b)

(a) Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:24; Ps. 119:68; Jer. 10:7; Ps. 31:23; Ps. 18:3; Rom. 10:12; Ps. 62:8; Josh. 24:14; Mark 12:33.

(b) Deut. 12:32; Matt. 15:9; Acts 17:25; Matt. 4:9, 10; Deut. 4:15 to 20; Exod. 20:4, 5, 6; Col. 2:23.

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

(c) Matt. 4:10 with John 5:23 and II Cor. 13:14.

(d) Col. 2:18, Rev. 19:10; Rom. 1:25.

(e) John 14:6; I Tim. 2:5; Eph. 2:18; Col. 3:17.

III. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship,(f) is by God required of all men:(g) and that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son,(h) by the help of His Spirit,(i) according to His will,(k) with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and

perseverance;(l) and, if vocal, in a known tongue.(m)

(f) Phil. 4:6.

(g) Ps. 65:2.

(h) John 14:13, 14; I Pet. 2:5.

(i) Rom. 8:26.

(k) I John 5:14.

(l) Ps. 47:7; Eccles. 5:1, 2; Heb. 12:28; Gen. 18:27; James 5:16; James 1:6, 7; Mark 11:24; Matt. 6:12, 14, 15; Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18.

(m) I Cor. 14:14.

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

(n) I John 5:14.

(o) I Tim. 2:1, 2; John 17:20; II Sam. 7:29; Ruth 4:12.

(p) II Sam. 12:21, 22, 23 with Luke 16:25, 26; Rev. 14:13.

(q) I John 5:16.

V. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear,(r) the sound preaching(s) and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith and reverence;(t) singing of psalms with grace in the heart;(u) as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God:(w) beside religious oaths,(x) vows,(y) solemn fastings,(z) and thanksgivings, upon special occasions,(a) which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner.(b)

(r) Acts 15:21; Rev. 1:3.

(s) II Tim. 4:2.

(t) James 1:22; Acts 10:33; Matt. 13:19; Heb. 4:2; Isa. 66:2.

(u) Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; James 5:13.

(w) Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:23 to 29; Acts 2:42.

(x) Deut. 6:13 with Neh. 10:29.

(y) Isa. 19:21 with Eccles. 5:4, 5.

(z) Joel 2:12; Esther 4:16; Matt. 9:15; I Cor. 7:5.

(a) Ps. 107 throughout; Esther 9:22.

(b) Heb. 12:28.

VI. Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the Gospel either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed:(c) but God is to be worshipped everywhere,(d) in spirit and truth;(e) as in private families(f) daily,(g) and in secret each one by himself;(h) so, more solemnly, in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or wilfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by His Word or providence, calls thereunto.(i)

(c) John 4:21.

(d) Mal. 1:11; I Tim. 2:8.

(e) John 4:23, 24.

(f) Jer. 10:25; Deut. 6:6, 7; Job 1:5; II Sam. 6:18, 20; I Pet. 3:7; Acts 10:2.

(g) Matt. 6:11.

(h) Matt. 6:6; Eph. 6:18.

(i) Isa. 56:6, 7; Heb. 10:25; Prov. 1:20, 21, 24; Prov. 8:34; Acts 13:42; Luke 4:16; Acts 2:42.

VII. As it is 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:(k) 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,(l) which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day,(m) and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.(n)

(k) Exod. 20:8, 10, 11; Isa. 56:2, 4, 6, 7.

(l) Gen. 2:2, 3; I Cor. 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7.

(m) Rev. 1:10.

(n) Exod. 20:8, 10, with Matt. 5:17, 18.

VIII. This Sabbath is then 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,(o) 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.(p)

(o) Exod. 20:8; Exod. 16:23, 25, 26, 29, 30; Exod. 31:15, 16, 17; Isa. 58:13; Neh. 13:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22.

(p) Isa. 58:13; Matt. 12:1 to 13.

Chapter XXII. Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

I. A lawful oath is a part of religious worship,(a) 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.(b)

(a) Deut. 10:20.

(b) Exod. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; II Cor. 1:23; II Chron. 6:22, 23.

II. 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.(c) 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.(d) 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;(e) so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters ought to be taken.(f)

(c) Deut. 6:13.

(d) Exod. 20:7; Jer. 5:7; Matt. 5:34, 37; James 5:12.

(e) Heb. 6:16; II Cor. 1:23; Isa. 65:16.

(f) I Kings 8:31; Neh. 13:25; Ezra 10:5.

III. 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.(g) Neither may any man bind himself by oath to anything but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform.(h) Yet is it a sin to refuse an oath touching anything that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority.(i)

(g) Exod. 20:7; Jer. 4:2.

(h) Gen. 24:2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9.

(i) Num. 5:19, 21; Neh. 5:12; Exod. 22:7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

IV. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation, or mental reservation.(k) It cannot oblige to sin: but in anything not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt.(l) Not is it to be violated, although made to heretics, or infidels.(m)

(k) Jer. 4:2; Ps. 24:4.

(l) I Sam. 25:22, 32, 33, 34; Ps. 15:4.

(m) Ezek. 17:16, 18, 19; Josh. 9:18, 19 with II Sam. 21:1.

V. 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.(n)

(n) Isa. 19:21; Eccles. 5:4, 5, 6; Ps. 61:8; Ps. 66:13, 14.

VI. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone:(o) 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 the 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.(p)

(o) Ps. 76:11; Jer. 44:25, 26.

(p) Deut. 23:21, 22, 23; Ps. 50:14; Gen. 28:20, 21, 22; I Sam. 1:11; Ps. 66:13, 14; Ps. 132:2, 3, 4, 5.

VII. 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 whereof he hath no promise of ability from God.(q) In which respects, Popish 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.(r)

(q) Acts 23:12, 14; Mark 6:26; Numb. 30:5, 8, 12, 13.

(r) Matt. 19:11, 12; I Cor. 7:2, 9; Eph. 4:28; I Peter 4:2; I Cor. 7:23.

Chapter XXIII. Of the Civil Magistrate.

I. 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 defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers.(a)

(a) Rom. 13:1, 2, 3, 4; I Pet. 2:13, 14.

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

(b) Prov. 8:15, 16; Rom. 13:1, 2, 4.

(c) Ps. 2:10, 11, 12; I Tim. 2:2; Ps. 82:3, 4; II Sam. 23:3; I Pet. 2:13.

(d) Luke 3:14; Rom. 13:4; Matt. 8:9, 10; Acts 10:1, 2; Rev. 17:14, 16.

III. The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven:(e) yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be. preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed; all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administrated, and observed.(f) For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.(g)

(e) II Chron. 26:18 with Matt. 18:17 and Matt. 16:19; I Cor. 12:28, 29; Eph. 4:11, 12; I Cor. 4:1, 2; Rom. 10:15; Heb. 5:4.

(f) Isa. 49:23; Ps. 122:9; Ezra 7:23, 25, 26, 27, 28; Lev. 24:16; Deut. 13:5, 6, 12; I Kings 18:4; I Chron. 13:1 to 9; II Kings 23:1 to 26; II Chron. 34:33; II Chron. 15:12, 13.

(g) II Chron. 19:8, 9, 10, 11; II Chron. 29 and 30; Matt. 2:4, 5.

IV. It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates,(h) to honour their persons,(i) to pay them tribute or other dues,(k) to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake.(l) Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrates' just and legal authority, nor free

the people from their due obedience to them:(m) from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted,(n) much less hath the Pope any power and 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 pretence whatsoever.(o)

(h) I Tim. 2:1, 2.

(i) I Pet. 2:17.

(k) Rom. 13:6, 7.

(l) Rom. 13:5; Tit. 3:1.

(m) I Pet. 2:13, 14, 16.

(n) Rom. 13:1; I Kings 2:35; Acts

25:9, 10, 11; II Pet. 2:1, 10, 11; Jude ver. 8, 9, 10, 11.

(o) II Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:15, 16, 17.

Chapter XXIV. Of Marriage and Divorce.

I. 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.(a)

(a) Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5, 6; Prov. 2:17.

II. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife,(b) for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed;(c) and for preventing of uncleanness.(d)

(b) Gen. 2:18.

(c) Mal. 2:15.

(d) I Cor. 7:2, 9.

III. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent.(e) Yet is it the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord:(f) 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.(g)

(e) Heb. 13:4; I Tim. 4:3; I Cor. 7:36, 37, 38; Gen. 24:57, 58.

(f) I Cor. 7:39.

(g) Gen. 34:14; Exod. 34:16; Deut. 7:3, 4; I Kings 11:4; Neh. 13:25, 26, 27; Mal. 2:11, 12; II Cor. 6:14.

IV. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden by the Word;(h) 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.(i) The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own; nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own.(k)

(h) Lev. 18 ch.; I Cor. 5:1; Amos 2:7.

(i) Mark 6:18; Lev. 18:24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

(k) Lev. 20:19, 20, 21.

V. Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract.(l) In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce:(m) and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.(n)

(l) Matt. 1:18, 19, 20.

(m) Matt. 5:31, 32.

(n) Matt. 19:9; Rom. 7:2, 3.

VI. 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 wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage:(o) 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.(p)

(o) Matt. 19:8, 9; I Cor. 7:15; Matt. 19:6.

(p) Deut. 24:1, 2, 3, 4.

Chapter XXV. Of the Church.

I. 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 fulness of Him that filleth all in all.(a)

(a) Eph. 1:10, 22, 23; Eph. 5:23, 27, 32; Col. 1:18.

II. 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;(b) and of their children:(c) and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ,(d) the house and family of God,(e) out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.(f)

(b) I Cor. 1:2; I Cor. 12:12, 13; Ps. 2:8; Rev. 7:9; Rom. 15:9, 10, 11, 12.

(c) I Cor. 7:14; Acts 2:39; Ezek. 16:20, 21; Rom. 11:16; Gen. 3:15; Gen. 17:7.

(d) Matt. 13:47; Isa. 9:7.

(e) Eph. 2:19; Eph. 3:15.

(f) Acts 2:47.

III. Unto this catholic 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.(g)

(g) I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11, 12, 13; Matt. 28:19, 20; Isa. 59:21.

IV. This catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible.(h) 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.(i)

(h) Rom. 11:3, 4; Rev. 12:6, 14.

(i) Rev. 2 and 3; I Cor. 5:6, 7.

V. The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error:(k) and some have so degenerated, as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan.(l) Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth, to worship God according to His will.(m)

(k) I Cor. 13:12; Rev. 2 and 3; Matt. 13:24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47.

(l) Rev. 18:2; Rom. 11:18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

(m) Matt. 16:18; Ps. 72:17; Ps. 102:28; Matt. 28:19, 20.

VI. There is no other head of the Church, but the Lord Jesus Christ;(n) nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself, in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God.(o)

(n) Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22.

(o) Matt. 23:8, 9, 10; II Thess. 2:3, 4, 8, 9; Rev. 13:6.

Chapter XXVI. Of the Communion of the Saints.

I. All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head by His Spirit and by faith, have fellowship with Him in His grace, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory:(a) and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces,(b) and are obliged to the performance of such

duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.(c)

(a) John 1:3; Eph. 3:16, 17, 18, 19; John 1:16; Eph. 2:5, 6; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 6:5, 6; II Tim. 2:12.

(b) Eph. 4:15, 16; I Cor. 12:7; I Cor. 3:21, 22, 23; Col. 2:19.

(c) I Thess. 5:11, 14; Rom. 1:11, 12, 14; I John 3:16, 17, 18; Gal. 6:10.

II. Saints by profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God; and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification;(d) 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.(e)

(d) Heb. 10:24, 25; Acts 2:42, 46; Isa. 2:3; I Cor. 11:20.

(e) Acts 2:44, 45; I John 3:17; II Cor. 8 and 9 chapters; Acts 11:29, 30.

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

(f) Col. 1:18, 19; I Cor. 8:6; Isa. 42:8; I Tim. 6:15, 16; Ps. 45:7, with Heb. 1:8, 9.

(g) Exod. 20:15; Eph. 4:28; Acts 5:4.

Chapter XXVII. Of the Sacraments.

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

(a) Rom. 4:11; Gen. 17:7, 10.

(b) Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:23.

(c) I Cor. 10:16; I Cor. 11:25, 26; Gal. 3:17.

(d) Rom. 15:8; Exod. 12:48; Gen. 34:14.

(e) Rom. 6:3, 4; I Cor. 10:16, 21.

II. 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.(f)

(f) Gen. 17:10; Matt. 26:27, 28; Tit. 3:5.

III. 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:(g) but upon the work of the Spirit,(h) and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.(i)

(g) Rom. 2:28, 29; I Pet. 3:21.

(h) Matt. 3:11; I Cor. 12:13.

(i) Matt. 26:27, 28; Matt. 28:19, 20.

IV. There are only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any but by a minister of the Word lawfully ordained.(k)

(k) Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:20, 23; I Cor. 4:1; Heb. 5:4.

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

(l) I Cor. 10:1, 2, 3, 4.

Chapter XXVIII. Of Baptism

I. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ,(a) not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church;(b) but also, to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace,(c) of his ingrafting into Christ,(d) of regeneration,(e) of remission of sins,(f) and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in the newness of life.(g) Which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in His Church until the end of the world.(h)

(a) Matt. 28:19.

(e) Tit. 3:5.

(b) I Cor. 12:13.

(f) Mark 1:4.

(c) Rom. 4:11 with Col. 2:11, 12.

(g) Rom. 6:3, 4.

(d) Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:5.

(h) Matt. 28:19, 20.

II. The outward element to be used in this 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.(i)

(i) Matt. 3:11; John 1:33; Matt. 28:19, 20.

III. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.(k)

(k) Heb. 9:10, 19, 20, 21, 22; Acts 2:41; Acts 16:33; Mark 7:4.

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

(l) Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 8:37, 38.

(m) Gen. 17:7, 9, 10 with Gal. 3:9, 14 and Col. 2:11, 12 & Acts 2:38, 39 & Rom. 4:11, 12; I Cor. 7:14; Matt. 28:19; Mark 10:13, 14, 15, 16; Luke 18:15.

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

(n) Luke 7:30 with Exod. 4:24, 25, 26.

(o) Rom. 4:11; Acts 10:2, 4, 22, 31, 45, 47.

(p) Acts 8:13, 23.

VI. The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered;(q) 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.(r)

(q) John 3:5, 8.

(r) Gal. 3:27; Titus 3:5; Eph. 5:25, 26; Acts 2:38, 41.

VII. The sacrament of Baptism is but once to be administered unto any person.(s)

(s) Titus 3:5.

Chapter XXIX. Of the Lord's Supper.

I. 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.(a)

(a) I Cor. 11:23, 24, 25, 26; I Cor. 10:16, 17, 21; I Cor. 12:13.

II. 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;(b) but only 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:(c) 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 His elect.(d)

(b) Heb. 9:22, 25, 26, 28.

(c) I Cor. 11:24, 25, 26; Matt. 26:26, 27.

(d) Heb. 7:23, 24, 27; Heb. 10:11, 12, 14, 18.

III. 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;(e) but to none who are not then present in the congregation.(f)

(e) Matt. 26:26, 27, 28 & Mark 14:22, 23, 24 and Luke 22:19, 20 with I Cor. 11:23, 24, 25, 26.

(f) Acts. 20:7; I Cor. 11:20.

IV. Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest or any other alone;(g) as likewise, the denial of the cup to the people,(h) worshipping 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.(i)

(g) I Cor. 10:16.

(h) Mark 14:23; I Cor. 11:25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

(i) Matt. 15:9.

V. 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;(k) albeit in substance and nature they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.(l)

(k) Matt. 26:26, 27, 28.

(l) I Cor. 11:26, 27, 28; Matt. 26:29.

VI. 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.(m)

(m) Acts 3:21 with I Cor. 11:24, 25, 26; Luke 24:6, 39.

VII. Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament,(n) 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.(o)

(n) I Cor. 11:28.

(o) I Cor. 10:16.

VIII. 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,(p) or be admitted thereunto.(q)
 (p) I Cor. 11:27, 28, 29; II Cor. 6:14, 15, 16.

(q) I Cor. 5:6, 7, 13; II Thess. 3:6, 14, 15; Matt. 7:6.

Chapter XXX. Of Church Censures.

I. 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.(a)

(a) Isa. 9:6, 7; I Tim. 5:17; I Thess. 5:12; Acts 20:17, 28; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; I Cor. 12:28; Matt. 28:18, 19, 20.

II. 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.(b)

(b) Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:17, 18; John 20:21, 22, 23; II Cor. 2:6, 7, 8.

III. Church censures are necessary, for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from the like offences, for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump, for vindicating the honour 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.(c)

(c) I Cor. 5 chap.; I Tim. 5:20; Matt. 7:6; I Tim. 1:20; I Cor. 11:27 to the end, with Jude ver. 23.

IV. 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.(d)

(d) I Thess. 5:12; II Thess. 3:6, 14, 15; I Cor. 5:4, 5, 13; Matt. 18:17; Tit. 3:10.

Chapter XXXI. Of Synods and Councils.

I. For the better government, and further edification of the Church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called synods or councils.(a)

(a) Acts 15:2, 4, 6.

II. As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with, about matters of religion;(b) so, if magistrates be open enemies to the Church, the ministers of Christ of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons upon delegation from their Churches, may meet together in such assemblies.(c)

(b) Isa. 49:23; I Tim. 2:1, 2; II Chron. 19:8, 9, 10, 11; II Chron. 29, 30 chaps.; Matt. 2:4, 5; Prov. 11:14.

(c) Acts 15:2, 4, 22, 23, 25.

III. It belongs 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.(d)

(d) Acts 15:15, 19, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31; Acts 16:4; Matt. 18:17, 18, 19, 20.

III. 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.(e)

(e) Eph. 2:20; Acts 17:11; I Cor. 2:5; II Cor. 1:24.

IV. 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.(f)

(f) Luke 12:13, 14; John 18:36.

Chapter XXXII. Of the State of Man After Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead.

I. The bodies of men, after death, return to dust and see corruption:(a) but their souls (which neither die nor sleep) having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them:(b) 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.(c) 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.(d) Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

(a) Gen. 3:19; Acts 13:36.

(b) Luke 23:43; Eccles. 12:7.

(c) Heb. 12:23; II Cor. 5:1, 6, 8; Phil. 1:23, with Acts 3:21 & Eph. 4:10.

(d) Luke 16:23, 24; Acts 1:25; Jude ver. 6, 7; I Pet. 3:19.

II. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed:(e) and all the dead shall be raised up, with the selfsame bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever.(f)

(e) I Thess. 4:17; I Cor. 15:51, 52.

(f) Job 19:26, 27; I Cor. 15:42, 43, 44.

III. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour: the bodies of the just, by His Spirit, unto honour; and be made conformable to His own glorious body.(g)

(g) Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; I Cor. 15:43; Phil. 3:21.

Chapter XXXIII. Of the Last Judgment.

I. God hath appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ,(a) to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father.(b) In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged,(c) 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.(d)

(a) Acts 17:31.

(b) John 5:22, 27.

(c) I Cor. 6:3; Jude ver. 6; II Pet. 2:4.

(d) II Cor. 5:10; Eccles. 12:14; Rom. 2:16; Rom. 14:10, 12; Matt. 12:36, 37.

II. 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 fulness 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 be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.(e)

(e) Matt. 25:31 to the end; Rom. 2:5, 6; Rom. 9:22, 23; Matt. 25:21; Acts 3:19; II Thess. 1:7, 8, 9, 10.

III. 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;(f) 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.(g)

(f) II Pet. 3:11, 14; II Cor. 5:10, 11; II Thess. 1:5, 6, 7; Luke 21:27, 28; Rom. 8:23, 24, 25.

(g) Matt. 24:36, 42, 43, 44; Mark 13:35, 36, 37; Luke 12:35, 36; Rev. 22:20.

ADDENDUM G

What Does Mormonism Teach?

The following is from *carm.org/teachings-of-mormonism*. The quotations were assembled by Matt Slick. Even though some of these doctrines may not be believed by all contemporary Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), they are doctrines that have been taught by Mormon leaders in an authoritative manner. JWG

Most of the seemingly “odd” doctrines The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are not initially taught to potential converts. Instead, "they are revealed later as one matures and gains the ability to accept them."

All of the documentation of the quotes is that of Mormon writers. This is what present-day Mormons are taught.

1. Atonement

1. "Jesus paid for all our sins when He suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane," (Laurel Rohlving, “Sharing Time: The Atonement,” *Friend*, Mar. 1989, p. 39.).
2. "We accept Christ's atonement by repenting of our sins, being baptized, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and obeying all of the commandments," (*Gospel Principles*, Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, p. 68.).

2. Baptism

1. Baptism for the dead, (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. II, p. 141). This is a practice of baptizing each other in place of non-Mormons who are now dead. The Mormon belief is that in the afterlife, the "newly baptized" person will be able to enter into a higher level of Mormon heaven.

3. Bible

1. "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly. . ." (8th Article of Faith of the Mormon Church).
2. "Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God," (1 Nephi 13:28).

4. Book of Mormon

1. The book of Mormon is more correct than the Bible, (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

5. Devil, the

1. The Devil was born as a spirit after Jesus "in the morning of pre-existence," (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 192).
2. Jesus and Satan are spirit brothers and we were all born as siblings in heaven to them both, (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 163).
3. A plan of salvation was needed for the people of earth so Jesus offered a plan to the Father and Satan offered a plan to the Father but Jesus' plan was accepted. In effect the Devil wanted to be the Savior of all Mankind and to "deny men their agency and to dethrone god," (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 193; *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, p. 8).

6. God

1. God used to be a man on another planet, (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 321; Joseph Smith, *Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, p. 613-614; Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, p. 345; Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, p. 333).
2. "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's..." (*Doctrines & Covenant* 130:22).
3. God is in the form of a man, (Joseph Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, p. 3).
4. "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!!! . . . We have imagined that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea and take away the veil, so that you may see," (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 345).
5. God the Father had a Father, (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 476; Heber C. Kimball, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, p. 19; Milton Hunter, *First Council of the Seventy*, Gospel through the Ages, p. 104-105).
6. God resides near a star called Kolob, (*Pearl of Great Price*, p. 34-35; *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 428).
7. God had sexual relations with Mary to make the body of Jesus, (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, 1857, p. 218; vol. 8, p. 115). - This one is disputed among many Mormons and not always 'officially' taught and believed. Nevertheless, Young, the 2nd prophet of the Mormon church taught it.
8. "Therefore we know that both the Father and the Son are in form and stature perfect men; each of them possesses a tangible body . . . of flesh and bones." (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 38).

7. God, becoming a god

1. After you become a good Mormon, you have the potential of becoming a god, (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 345-347, 354.)
2. "Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them," (*Doctrines & Covenant* 132:20).

8. God, many gods

1. There are many gods, (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 163).
2. "And they (the Gods) said: Let there be light: and there was light," (*Book of Abraham* 4:3).

9. God, mother goddess

There is a mother god, (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 443). God is married to his goddess wife and has spirit children, (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 516).

10. God, Trinity

The trinity is three separate Gods: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. "That these three are separate individuals, physically distinct from each other, is demonstrated by the accepted records of divine dealings with man," (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 35).

11. Gospel, the

1. The true Gospel was lost from the earth. Mormonism is its restoration, (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 182-185.)
2. The Gospel consists of laws and ordinances: "As these sins are the result of individual acts it is just that forgiveness for them should be conditioned on individual compliance with prescribed requirements -- 'obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel,'" (*Articles of Faith*, p. 79)

12. Heaven

There are three levels of heaven: telestial, terrestrial, and celestial, (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 348).

13. Holy Ghost, the

The Holy Ghost is a male personage, A Marvelous Work and a Wonder, (Le Grand Richards, Salt Lake City, 1956, p. 118; *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, p. 179).

14. Jesus

1. The first spirit to be born in heaven was Jesus, (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 129).
2. Jesus and Satan are spirit brothers and we were all born as siblings in heaven to them both, (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 163; *Gospel Through the Ages*, p. 15).
3. Jesus' sacrifice was not able to cleanse us from all our sins, (murder and repeated adultery are exceptions), (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, 1856, p. 247).
4. "Therefore we know that both the Father and the Son are in form and stature perfect men; each of them possesses a tangible body . . . of flesh and bones," (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 38).
5. "The birth of the Saviour was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood - was begotten of his Father, as we were of our fathers," (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 8, p. 115).
6. "Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers," (*Mormon Doctrine*, by Bruce McConkie, p. 547).
7. "Christ Not Begotten of Holy Ghost ...Christ was begotten of God. He was not born without the aid of Man, and that Man was God!" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954, 1:18).
8. "Elohim is literally the Father of the spirit of Jesus Christ and also of the body in which Jesus Christ performed His mission in the flesh..." (*First Presidency and Council of the Twelve*, 1916, "God the Father," compiled by Gordon Allred, p. 150).

15. Joseph Smith

If it had not been for Joseph Smith and the restoration, there would be no salvation. There is no salvation [the context is the full gospel including exaltation to Godhood] outside the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 670).

16. Pre-existence

1. We were first begotten as spirit children in heaven and then born naturally on earth, (*Journal of Discourse*, vol. 4, p. 218).
2. The first spirit to be born in heaven was Jesus, (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 129).
3. The Devil was born as a spirit after Jesus "in the morning of pre-existence," (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 192).

17. Prophets

We need prophets today, the same as in the Old Testament, (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 444-445).

18. Salvation

1. "One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation," (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, Spencer W. Kimball, p. 206).
2. A plan of salvation was needed for the people of earth so Jesus offered a plan to the Father and Satan offered a plan to the Father, but Jesus' plan was accepted. In effect the Devil wanted to be the Savior of all Mankind and to "deny men their agency and to dethrone god," (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 193; *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 6, p. 8).
3. Jesus' sacrifice was not able to cleanse us from all our sins, (His sacrifice was not sufficient to cleanse us from murder and repeated adultery), (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, 1856, p. 247).
4. Good works are necessary for salvation (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 92).
5. There is no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith as a prophet of God (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 188).
6. "The first effect [of the atonement] is to secure to all mankind alike, exemption from the penalty of the fall, thus providing a plan of General Salvation. The second effect is to open a way for Individual Salvation whereby mankind may secure remission of personal sins (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 78-79).
7. "As these sins are the result of individual acts it is just that forgiveness for them should be conditioned on individual compliance with prescribed requirements -- 'obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel,'" (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 79).
8. "This grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts," (*LDS Bible Dictionary*, p. 697).
9. "We know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do," (2 Nephi 25:23).

19. Trinity, the

1. The trinity is three separate Gods: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. "That these three are separate individuals, physically distinct from each other, is demonstrated by the accepted records of divine dealings with man," (*Articles of Faith*, by James Talmage, p. 35.).
2. "Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are only one God. I say that is a strange God [anyhow]--three in one and one in three. . .It is curious organization... All are crammed into one God according to sectarianism (Christian faith). It would make the biggest God in all the world. He would be a wonderfully big God--he would be a giant or a monster," (Joseph Smith, *Teachings*, p. 372).

ADDENDUM H

Biblical Archaeology's top Discoveries in 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014

Biblical Archaeology's Top 10 Discoveries of 2018

A glimpse at the important excavation work revealed this year.

Gordon Govier December 27, 2018 7:00 AM



Image: Carole Raddato /Flickr

Below are the top excavation findings reported in 2018 which have increased our knowledge of the biblical world and the early history of Christianity.

10) Biblical “Yerushalayim” inscription on ancient column

Archeologists uncovered an inscription on a pillar in an excavation of an ancient potter’s village, near the western edge of the modern city of Jerusalem earlier this year. The inscription includes the word, “Yerushalayim,” the name of Jerusalem written in Hebrew, and was dated to 100 B.C.

The potter’s village no doubt served the many pilgrims who were on their way to the Temple in Jerusalem, just a few miles to the east. It calls to mind the potter’s field in Matthew 27:7 that was bought by the priests with the money Judas took for betraying Jesus and then returned.

9) Clay pomegranate found at Tel Shiloh

Tel Shiloh, the site where the Jewish tabernacle and the Holy Ark were located between the Israelite conquest and the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, yielded an unusual clay pomegranate in an excavation this year. In the Bible the pomegranate is a common temple decoration (1 Kings 7:18; 2 Kings 25:17), and small pomegranate decorations hung from hems of the robes of the priests (Ex. 28:33).

8) Esarhaddon inscriptions found at the shrine of Jonah

In 2014 ISIS blew up the shrine of the tomb of the prophet Jonah in the Iraqi city of Mosul. The now-destroyed Muslim shrine had been situated on a mound, where archaeologists soon found the remains of a palace of the Assyrian King Esarhaddon. The king's name is referenced in inscriptions discovered in tunnels ISIS dug into the mound, as the group searched for artifacts to sell on the antiquities market. Today, archaeologists are using these tunnels to investigate the temple remains.

The Old Testament references Esarhaddon when discussing the assassination of his father Sennacherib (1 Kings 19:36–37; Isa. 37:37–38), who was the king who ravaged much of Hezekiah's kingdom of Judah and unsuccessfully besieged Jerusalem. Esarhaddon himself reigned from 681–669 B.C. Information archaeologists discover in the remains of his palace will tell us more about the latter days of the kingdom of Assyria than of the time of Jonah, who lived almost a century earlier and whose actual final resting place is unknown.

7) Semitic abecedary found in Egypt

Biblical history intersects multiple times with the history of writing, as illustrated by an inscribed piece of limestone discovered in 1995 in a tomb along the west bank of the Nile at Luxor. University of British Columbia Egyptologist Thomas Schneider has deciphered the letters and announced this year that it's an abecedary, a very early version of the Semitic alphabet in ABC order.

The excavated tomb dates back to 1450 B.C., the time of Moses, according to the biblical chronology. It suggests that if "Moses wrote down everything the Lord had said" (Ex. 24:4), he wasn't the only one writing in a Semitic script in Egypt at that time.

6) Unlooted royal family tomb at Megiddo

A Canaanite tomb excavated at Tel Megiddo in 2016 and announced earlier this year has revealed new information about the inhabitants of one of the most famous and important ancient cities in the region. At the original announcement last March, archaeologists marveled that the 3,700-year-old tomb was still intact and unlooted, yielding the remains of a man, a woman, and a child, all adorned with gold and silver jewelry.

From the tomb, archaeologists expected to learn much more about the Canaanite culture that existed in Israel during the time of the patriarchs. And, indeed, just a few weeks ago it was reported that residue in one of the jugs from the tomb was discovered to be vanilla, which was not thought to have been known nor used in that part of the ancient world at that time. The finding illustrates the robust spice trade of the ancient world.

5) Beka weight from the Temple Mount

An extra-careful processing of archaeologically recovered dirt called the wet sifting process has resulted in many more tiny but significant discoveries in recent years, such as the beka weight announced recently. As explained in Exodus 38:26, the beka was used to measure the half shekel temple tax due from each member of the community.

This tiny weight (5.5 grams or 0.2 ounces) was inscribed with the Hebrew letters spelling beka and was discovered in excavations near Robinson's arch, at the southwestern corner of the

Temple Mount. It is believed to have been used to weigh the temple tax during the First Temple period.

4) Governor of Jerusalem's seal impression

In 2017, while cleaning out dust between stones in an ancient Jerusalem wall, archaeologists discovered a biblical title heretofore unattested by archaeology, "governor of the city." As the dust was carefully sifted, a clay seal impression was recovered. The image on the clay depicted two figures facing each other and the inscription.

The governor of the city, much like a modern mayor, is mentioned in 2 Kings 23:8, where the author lists a man named Joshua as the governor of the city in the days of Hezekiah, and in 2 Chronicles 18:25, where the author notes Amon as governor of the city in the days of Jehoshaphat (NASB).

3) Signature of Isaiah the prophet in seal impression?

Another seal impression surfaced in 2018, this one with the actual name of one of the most important Old Testament prophets, Isaiah. It nearly says "Isaiah the prophet," but because there's a letter missing at the end, it's unclear if it actually refers to a personal name.

One piece of evidence that suggests that the seal impression refers to the biblical prophet is a small piece of clay that archeologists recovered in an area near Jerusalem's Temple Mount. This similar seal impression, which was first found in 2015, says "of King Hezekiah of Judah." King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah are mentioned in the same verse 17 times in the Bible.

2) The statue head of a biblical king from Abel Beth Maacah

This discovery might have shot to the top of the list if there was some way of identifying who this statue head depicts. But there's no name or inscription. The best clue to his identity is the band around his head, suggesting a crown.

This tiny two-inch sculpture was found in 2017 at Abel Beth-Maacah, a site near the border between Israel and Lebanon, but caught the public's attention when it was placed on display at the Israel Museum last summer. It dates to the 9th century B.C., so it could depict a king of the northern kingdom Israel, such as Ahab or Jehu. But just as easily it could be King Hazael of Damascus or King Ithobaal of Tyre, the father of Jezebel.

1) Pontius Pilate Seal Ring

The name of Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator who interrogated Jesus and then ordered him crucified, has turned up for the second time in the archaeological record. The first time his name and title were found engraved in a stone discovered in 1961 in secondary use at Caesarea Maritima. Just a few weeks ago, scientists announced that a seal ring excavated in the late 1960s at Herodium, a desert palace just outside of Bethlehem, also carried the inscription "of Pilates."

The inscription on the badly corroded ring was finally read using advanced photographic techniques. The copper alloy ring was probably not fancy enough to have actually been worn by Pilate. It was more likely worn by someone who was authorized to act on Pilate's authority and who would use the seal to create official communications.

These discoveries, relatively insignificant individually, join with many other discoveries over the decades to give us a great deal of confidence in the historical details contained in the Bible.

Gordon Govier is editor of ARTIFAX magazine and executive producer of The Book & The Spade radio program and podcast.

Biblical Archaeology's Top 10 Discoveries of 2017

Gordon Govier December 28, 2017 7:00 AM



Image: Courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority

Below are the top excavation findings reported in 2017 which have increased our knowledge of the biblical world and the early history of Christianity.

10) Pagan center discovered at Hippos/Sussita

A theater and bath house complex discovered at Hippos/Sussita, overlooking the Sea of Galilee, was part of a pagan cult site. As part of the Decapolis—the pagan Roman cities mentioned in the gospels—Hippos/Sussita was not a focus of Jesus' ministry, but many of its people were likely a part of his audiences (Matthew 4:25). The existence of this cultic center was first suggested by the discovery of a mask of the Roman god Pan in 2015.

9) Byzantine church mosaics found

Mosaic inscriptions found in the remains of churches excavated at the site of Byzantine villages in the Galilee give new evidence for the spread of Christianity in the region after the religion's formal adoption by the Byzantine Empire in A.D. 380. The mosaics date to the fourth and fifth centuries. One includes the mention of a woman who was a donor to the church construction—clear evidence for the prominent role of women in the history of the early church. Then just last week, the discovery of another was announced, drawing more attention to how Christianity spread.

8) Augustus temple altar at Caesarea

Recent excavations at Caesarea Maritima found the base of an altar that stood near the entrance of a temple dedicated to Augustus Caesar that was built by King Herod. The historian Josephus reported that the temple, built high to overlook the harbor, contained a gigantic statue of Augustus and a statue of Roma. Beneath the level of the altar, archaeologists found two large halls and the remains of a large staircase similar in construction to the architecture around the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. A church was later built on the site of the temple during the Byzantine period. (Archaeologists are re-excavating the entrance area to Caesarea as part of a large renovation to make it into a much larger attraction, including the restoration of its 2,000-year-old synagogue.)

7) Merneptah's destruction of Gezer

Ten years of archaeology at Tel Gezer wrapped up in 2017. Archaeologists Steven Ortiz of Southwestern Baptist Seminary and Sam Wolff of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) reported a clear sequence of occupations and destructions dating from the time of the Egyptian pharaoh Merneptah (13th century B.C.) to the Assyrian conquest (eighth century B.C.). The Merneptah destruction affirms the inscription on the Merneptah stele in the Cairo Museum, which states: "Gezer has been captured; Yano'am is made non-existent. Israel is laid waste and his seed is not." Another destruction level corresponds to the biblical account of a pharaoh who captured the city and gave it as dowry for his daughter, who became one of King Solomon's wives (1 Kings 9:16).

6) 12th Dead Sea Scrolls cave confirmed

Seventy years after the first discovery of Dead Sea Scrolls in caves overlooking the famous body of water, archaeologists identified one more cave where scroll materials had been stored. A careful reinvestigation of Qumran Cave No. 53 by a team led by Randall Price of Liberty University and Oren Gutfeld of Hebrew University found broken pottery of the type that had been used to store scrolls. In the remains of one pot, they found a scrap of rolled papyrus but with no writing on it. The archaeologists also found 1950s-era pickaxes in the back of the cave, indicating it had been looted many years ago.

5) Seal impressions and tower redating in City of David

The City of David, the oldest area of Jerusalem, continues to reveal new details of life in biblical times. In September, the IAA exhibited for the first time a collection of clay seal impressions (known as bullae) which came from various excavations. The clay sealings date from roughly the time of King Hezekiah (700 B.C.) to the end of the Judean monarchy (586 B.C.). One of the

sealings bears the name of Achiav ben Menachem, which suggests a connection to two kings of the northern kingdom: Ahab and Menachem. Archaeologists believe this is evidence that refugees from the northern kingdom of Israel found their way into senior positions in the southern kingdom of Judea.

Meanwhile, a tower guarding the Gihon spring in the Kidron Valley may not be as old as archaeologists had believed. When originally excavated a number of years ago, it was dated to the Canaanite period, 1700 B.C., because of pottery and other findings. But an analysis of organic matter by the Weizmann Institute of Science suggests construction around 800–900 B.C., during the Judean Kingdom period.

4) Timna copper camp dated to time of David and Solomon

For several decades, some Bible scholars have suggested that a lack of convincing archaeological evidence raises doubts about the significance of the reign of the Old Testament kings David and Solomon. But the evidence to support a powerful 10th century B.C. centralized authority based in Jerusalem has been piling up. This year, archaeologists from Tel Aviv University announced results on tests of donkey dung discovered at Timna, a site of ancient copper mines along the Rift Valley in southern Israel. The animal waste was 3,000 years old, and the donkeys' diet indicated that their feed came from near Jerusalem—another example of centralized power at the time of David and Solomon.

3) Rethinking the identity of Bethsaida

Hometown to three of the apostles (Peter, Andrew, and Philip), Bethsaida is believed to have been located just east of the outlet of the Jordan River into the northern Sea of Galilee. But its precise location has eluded Bible scholars. Archaeologist Rami Arav of the University of Nebraska–Omaha maintains Bethsaida was located at et-Tell, a site he has been excavating since 1987. But its distance—two kilometers from the current shore of the lake—has always raised questions about that identification. This year, a team led by archaeologist Mordechai Aviam of Kinneret College discovered remains of a Roman-era bathhouse at el-Araj, much closer to the shore. Neither site is convincingly identified as Bethsaida at this point; other archaeologists have weighed in to support each side.

2) A relic from the temple that Jesus knew

Solomon's portico, the double colonnade that surrounded the temple built by Herod, came into a little sharper focus this year with the discovery of an ornamental capital from one of the tops of the columns. Discovered by the Temple Mount Sifting Project, the capital—an architectural feature which mediates between a column and the load it bears—indicates that the 41-foot column had a circumference of 30 inches at its top. Jesus is recorded visiting Solomon's portico during the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) in John 10:23, and the early church used it as a meeting place (Acts 3:11, 5:12).

1) Small Roman theater found next to the Temple Mount's Western Wall

Although this may not be the Jerusalem Roman theater described by the Jewish historian Josephus, it is the first example of a Roman public building discovered in Jerusalem. Its discovery highlights the centrality of the Temple Mount in Jewish history and Roman control of the Jewish holy city. The theater was discovered at the bottom of eight excavated courses of Western Wall stones, 26 feet below Warrens Arch and the current level of the Western Wall plaza. Smaller than the typical Roman theaters seen today at Caesarea and Betshean, this theater could seat about 200 people. It may have been meant for entertainment, or perhaps for government meetings. Its date has not been precisely determined, but IAA archaeologists believe that its construction was halted before it was finished and put into use—perhaps by the beginning of the Bar Kochba revolt, about 100 years after the time of Christ.

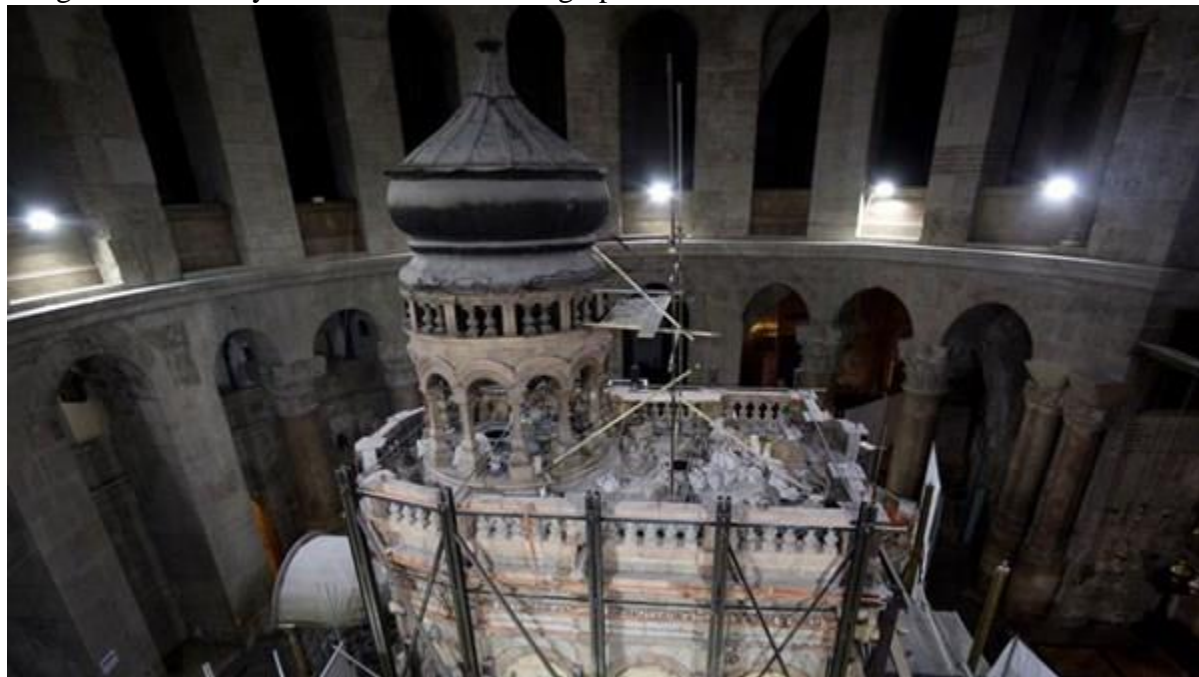
Bonus Item: New dating for the tomb of Jesus: A final note on recent news about last year's top item: The National Geographic-sponsored renovation of the traditional tomb of Jesus at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem has offered new evidence that confirms the tradition linked to the site. Mortar recovered during last year's renovation was dated to as early as A.D. 345, using a scientific process called optically stimulated luminescence. That supports the traditional dating of the construction of the first Church of the Holy Sepulchre, to mark the tomb of Christ, during the reign of the Roman emperor Constantine.

Gordon Govier is editor of ARTIFAX magazine and executive producer of The Book & The Spade radio program and podcast. He thanks Todd Bolen, professor of biblical studies at The Master's University and editor of Bibleplaces.com, and John DeLancey of Biblical Israel Ministries and Tours for assisting with this list, which is subjective and based on news reports rather than peer-reviewed articles in scholarly publications.

Biblical Archaeology's Top 10 Discoveries of 2016

Gordon Govier December 28, 2016 8:00 AM

Image: Oded Balilty / AP for National Geographic



Below are the top findings from the important excavations taking place in the lands of the Bible or that have a biblical connection. (This list is subjective, and based on news reports rather than peer-reviewed articles in scientific publications.)

10. Ancient papyrus mentions Jerusalem

What appears to be the oldest non-biblical Hebrew-language reference to Jerusalem was found on a small piece of papyrus recovered from antiquities robbers who said they had found it in a cave in the Judean desert. The inscription reads, "From the king's maidservant, from Na'arat, jars of wine, to Jerusalem." Dated to the seventh century B.C., the inscription was found four years ago but announced this past October. Only one other papyrus document from Israel's First Temple Period has ever been found. However, some archaeologists and textual scholars have raised questions about the provenance of the text, and have suggested that since it was not found in a supervised excavation, it may be a forgery.

9. Ancient glass factory

Judea was known as one of the centers of glass manufacturing in the Roman world. Archaeologists excavated the remains of a glass production facility at the foot of Mt. Carmel, near Haifa, when it was discovered by workers of the Jezreel Valley Railroad Project.

8. Sunken junk from Caesarea Maritima

Old metal objects were typically melted and recycled, so a ship that sank on the way to the recycler offered a treasure trove of ancient metal objects when its cargo was discovered by scuba divers last summer. Protected by the sand on the sea bottom for 1,600 years, the mostly bronze objects include idols, lamps, and several clumps of coins.

7. Solomon's Palace at Gezer

A monumental residence built in the 10th century B.C. and excavated this past fall has been dubbed “Solomon’s Palace,” even though there’s no direct connection to the Israelite king outside of the dating, which was done through pottery remains and stratigraphic chronology. According to 1 Kings 9:16–17, the Egyptian pharaoh conquered and burned Gezer, and presented it as a dowry for his daughter’s marriage to Solomon, who then rebuilt the city.

6. Hundreds of Roman writing tablets

From the other end of the Roman Empire comes evidence for the ubiquity of writing in the first century. (Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, used a writing tablet in Luke 1:63.) More than 400 ancient wooden tablets were excavated in London, the oldest dating to A.D. 57. The tablets were originally covered with wax and written on with a stylus. The wax is gone, but the impressions of many notes in Latin remain. They are being translated and studied.

5. Temple Mount floor designs identified

The geometric patterns of the stone tile floors of the porticos of the Jewish Temple built by King Herod have been identified from tile fragments recovered by the Temple Mount Sifting Project. Volunteers have been steadily processing tons of dirt illegally excavated from Jerusalem’s Temple Mount in 1999. Seven different tile designs have been recreated so far by Frankie Snyder, a project team member with an academic background in mathematics and Judaic studies.

4. Philistine cemetery excavation

Some of the secrets of the Philistines, the nemesis of the ancient Israelites, are expected to be revealed as archaeologists study remains excavated from a cemetery at Ashkelon. The excavations took place over the last three summers, but were revealed only in 2016. Although most of the main cities of the Philistines have been excavated, there is still a lot of important information that has eluded scholars. But that may change with the new information gleaned from these burials. “It was just a goldmine of a cemetery,” said Daniel Master, a Wheaton College professor who co-directs the excavation.

3. Stone jar factory found near Cana

Halfway between Cana and Nazareth, a cave was discovered where limestone had been mined and carved into cups, bowls, and jars, which were highly valued for their ritual purity during the first century. The cave’s proximity to Cana suggests it may have been the source of the water jars that were used for the wedding in Cana attended by Jesus and his disciples in John 2:1–11.

2. Lachish gate shrine illustrates Hezekiah’s reforms

In the ruins of a shrine excavated next to the gate of Lachish, the largest city of the kingdom of Judah after Jerusalem, archaeologists found an altar with the horns cut off from each corner. They also found a stone toilet that was never used, which had been placed in the holy of holies, apparently to desecrate it. They attributed both discoveries to the religious reforms under King Hezekiah, described in 2 Kings 18:4.

1. Unsealing the tomb of Christ

The most notable aspect of repairs that took place at the traditional tomb of Christ in October—the first look inside the tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre since at least the year 1555—is that the workmen found just what they expected. The badly-in-need-of-repair marble edicule that surrounded the tomb was stripped down to the limestone platform where the body of Jesus was believed to have been laid after his crucifixion. “It appears to be visible proof that the location of the tomb has not shifted through time, something that scientists and historians have wondered for decades,” said Fredrik Hiebert, National Geographic’s archaeologist-in-residence. The original limestone cave walls of the tomb were also preserved to a higher level than expected inside the edicule.

Gordon Govier is editor of ARTIFAX magazine and host of The Book & The Spade radio program.

Biblical Archaeology’s Top Ten Discoveries of 2015

Gordon Govier December 30, 2015 8:54 AM

Image: Courtesy of Seales' Research

A section of the digitally unwrapped Ein Gedi scroll, bearing text from Leviticus.



Below are the top findings from the important excavations taking place in the lands of the Bible. (This list is subjective, and based on news reports rather than peer-reviewed articles in scientific publications.)

10. Beit Shemesh idol head

An Israeli boy enjoying a picnic with his family in mid-November at the ruins of the biblical city of Beit Shemesh found what appeared to be the small head of a statue and showed it to an Israeli tour guide. The guide encouraged the boy to take the find to the Israel Antiquities Authority, which he did. They determined it was the head of a fertility goddess, probably Asherah, dating to the 8th century B.C.

9. Horvat Kur Byzantine menorah mosaic

The 2015 excavation of a Byzantine synagogue at Horvat Kur, overlooking the Sea of Galilee, revealed a mosaic depicting a menorah with a unique oil lamp design. This project is one of several synagogues being excavated near the epicenter of Jesus' ministry, providing new insights into worship communities in the centuries after Jesus.

8. The site of Herod's palace

Early in 2015, archaeologists announced the excavations of a former Turkish prison near Jerusalem's Jaffa Gate would be open to the public via guided tours. The site is believed to have been the location of Herod's palace 2,000 years ago, and possibly the site of the trial of Jesus before Pilate.

7. Iron Age gate at Gath

Excavators of Tell es-Safi (the Philistine city of Gath) have made many discoveries over 20 years of excavations, but in 2015 they found the monumental gate of Gath from the time of Goliath (its most famous resident). It is one of the largest city gates ever found in Israel, attesting to the importance of the city 3,000 years ago.

6. Rare 3,000-year-old seal from Jerusalem found in Temple Mount sifted dirt

Ten-year-old Matvei Tcepliaev, a tourist from Russia, participated in the Temple Mount Sifting Project during his family's visit to Jerusalem. Amidst the dirt that is the focus of this project—illegally excavated from the Temple Mount in 1999—he discovered a seal dating to the time of King David and the Jebusites, 3,000 years ago. Archaeologists called it a rare find from that period of Jerusalem's history.

5. Eshba'al name found at Khirbet Qeiyafa

This year, excavators announced their discovery at Khirbet Qeiyafa in 2012 of a 3,000-year-old jar inscribed with the name of Eshba'al. This is not the same Eshba'al who is referenced in 1 Chronicles 8:33, a son of King Saul, but that's the only other mention of the name in ancient records, both from the identical era.

4. Canaanite ostrakon from Lachish

Excavations at Lachish in 2014 turned up an ostrakon (clay potsherd with writing) dating to around 1130 B.C. The meaning of the nine-letter Canaanite inscription is unclear, but the excavators say it provides significant information about the development of the Canaanite alphabet, and ultimately Hebrew, Greek, and Latin alphabets.

3. Hezekiah seal impression

In 2009, excavations in the Ophel, an area adjacent to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, uncovered the clay impression of the seal of Hezekiah. "It is the first seal impression of an Israelite or Judean king ever exposed in situ in a scientific archaeological excavation," Hebrew University reported. This was one of 34 bullae (seal impressions) turned up in this particular excavation. It took many additional months before it was accurately read, to state, "Belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz king of Judah."

2. The venerated home of Jesus from Nazareth

University of Reading (UK) professor Ken Dark analyzed the results of long-neglected archaeological work done in 1936 and earlier at the convent of the Sisters of Nazareth. While it's impossible to say that the remains of the home at the site belong to the home of Jesus during his childhood, Dark says it is clearly the place that Christians of the Byzantine era believed was the home of Jesus.

1. Carbonized scroll of Leviticus from Ein Gedi synagogue deciphered

In 1970, archaeologists discovered the charred remains of a parchment scroll in the ruins of a Byzantine synagogue at Ein Gedi, along the western shore of the Dead Sea. It was inconceivable, at the time, that this cigar-shaped charcoal briquette could reveal its contents.

But last summer, University of Kentucky professor Brent Seales used digital imaging software he developed to analyze the x-rays from a computer tomography scan of the scroll. Israeli archaeologists were amazed to see the first 8 verses of the book of Leviticus, making the 1,500-year-old Ein Gedi scroll the oldest known book of the Bible outside of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Seales' ability to decode CT scans of ancient carbonized texts may open the door to recovering many more ancient documents, including an entire library of a Roman villa destroyed in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 73 A.D., as well as discarded papyrus documents used to create Egyptian mummy casings.

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Biblical Archaeology's Top Ten Discoveries of 2014

Gordon Govier December 30, 2014 12:39 AM



Image: Herodium Expedition at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

10. Tomb of St. Stephen

The tomb of the first Christian martyr may have been located in an excavation just west of Ramallah. An Orthodox church news service recently reported that a church complex excavation revealed an inscription indicating that the church had been built over the burial site of St. Stephen, who was interred there in 35 AD. However, the lack of news of this discovery from other sources raises questions that bear further investigation.

9. Theater of Smyrna [corrected]

Archaeologists in Izmir, Turkey, are currently uncovering the , one of the seven cities of Revelation. [Editor's note: Due to a source error, CT erroneously reported that the theater was the site where Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna and a disciple of the Apostle John, was martyred. However, ancient texts indicate that Polycarp was martyred in the stadium of Smyrna, not the theater. The location of the stadium of Smyrna is known, but has not been excavated.]

8. Tablet that said the ark was round

The world's potentially oldest clay tablet containing a flood story was found in the British Museum archives and put on display last January. Discovered by the museum's cuneiform curator, Irving Finkel, the tablet makes note of a round ark and is one of several versions of the flood story that have been found in Mesopotamian excavations. Although this tablet from ancient Babylon, dated around 1750 BC, may be the oldest found containing the flood story, it's not necessarily the earliest version of the story.

7. Olive oil from 8,000 years ago

Archaeologists announced in December that organic residue on pottery shards excavated at Ein Zippori, near Nazareth, was olive oil. The vessels were dated around 5800 BC, making them some of the earliest evidence of olive oil production in the region and indicating that it was a diet staple 4,000 years before the time of the biblical patriarchs.

6. Rosh Ha`Ayin farmhouse

Earlier this month, archaeologists announced that they had uncovered a large farmhouse near the headwaters of the Yarkon River at Rosh Ha`Ayin, east of Tel Aviv. In the early Israelite period, houses were typically small, with a standardized 4-room design. But this house, dating to the Assyrian conquest in the 7th century BC, is 100 feet by 130 feet, with 23 rooms. Numerous wine presses and a large silo for storing grain were also found nearby.

The agricultural production continued at this farm through the Persian and Hellenistic periods; a Greek coin with the images of Zeus and Heracles was recovered in one of the rooms.

5. Temple at Tel Burna

The first major temple discovered in Israel in 60 years is being excavated at Tel Burna, near the modern city of Kiryat Gat. It dates back to 1300 BC, approximately the time of the Exodus and Judges. The courtyard of the 2,700-square-foot building yielded remains of sacrificial rituals, perhaps honoring the Canaanite deity Baal.

4. Stone rejected by the builders and Western Wall coins

Over the years archaeologists have been gradually excavating the total length of the Western Wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. At the foundation layer of the southern end of the wall, they recently uncovered a unique stone. While Herodian architecture typically uses stones that have a margin around the edges and a raised-boss center, this one's surface was smooth and rounded. Archaeologists Roni Reich and Eli Shukron believe it was left over from the building of the Second Temple, the temple of Jesus' day. This has led some Bible scholars to suggest it was the literal "stone rejected by the builders," referenced by Jesus in Matthew 21:42, quoting Psalm 118:22-23.

Those two ideas are speculative. But the discovery of coins minted in 17-18 AD under the foundation level has led the archaeologists to conclude that at least part of the Western Wall of the Temple Mount was not built by Herod the Great but by his heirs decades later.

3. Sheshonq's scarab

A scarab bearing the name of the Egyptian pharaoh Sheshonq was discovered in 2006 but not announced until earlier this year. Sheshonq I has been identified as the biblical pharaoh Shishak, a contemporary of Solomon and his son Rehoboam. The scarab provides new evidence for Shishak's raid into Judah as described in II Chronicles 12:2-9.

The scarab was found in the ruins of an ancient copper smelting facility at a site called Khirbat Hamra Ifdan in Jordan, south of the Dead Sea.

Scarabs, coins, seals, and bullae are very small but can have a significant archaeological impact because of the information they reveal. Earlier this year, another Egyptian scarab was found at Khirbet el-Maqatir, from the Hyksos period.

2. Khirbet Summeily bullae

In recent decades, some archaeologists and Bible scholars have argued that David and Solomon were minor or mythological leaders and not the major rulers depicted in the Bible. But the discovery this summer of six clay seal impressions—or bullae—from the 10th century BC indicate significant administrative activity at a remote outpost at Khirbet Summeily near Gaza, on the ancient border between Judah and Philistia. The bullae are the latest in a series of discoveries that support the existence of a major Jerusalem-based kingdom in the 10th century.

1. Herod's Gate at Herodium

The discovery of what was believed to be the tomb of Herod the Great in 2007 ended a 30-year search by the late Israeli archaeologist Ehud Netzer. But this desert palace/fortress still has more secrets to reveal. Earlier this month, Hebrew University archaeologists announced the discovery of a monumental entrance—60 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 60 feet high—providing direct access to the inner courtyard.

Archaeologists say the entryway may never have been used. Instead, Herod ordered the entrance backfilled and the adjacent royal theater covered up, creating the setting for his monumental mausoleum.

Editor's Note: Two of these findings—the circular ark and Herod's gate—are also found on the Biblical Archaeology Society's top 10 list for 2014. CT also compiled the top 10 finds of 2013 and reported on the coin that may have cracked the mystery of Jesus' birthday (spoiler alert: it's

not December 25), a building that might have been King David's palace, and other archaeological stories.

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The material for this ADDENDUM with further comments, is found at:
<https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2018/december/biblical-archaeology-top-10-discoveries-2018-israel.html>

ADDENDUM I

The Ten Oldest Extant Religious Texts, Other Than the Writings of Moses¹⁹⁵

Many ancient texts attest to the fact of there was a written language before, and contemporary with, Moses' writing the Pentateuch (composed in the forty years of the Jewish Exodus, 1447 BC – 1407 BC). The following are the ten oldest extant texts, other than the writing of Moses. Some of these were written after the composition of the Pentateuch.

10. Kesh Temple Hymn

Written: Circa 2600 BC

Location: Sumer

Discovered: 1909

Religion: Various polytheistic beliefs

The Kesh Temple Hymn is one of the oldest surviving pieces of literature in the world. It is often also known as the “Liturgy to Nintud” or “Liturgy to Nintud on the creation of man and woman”.

The first discovered tablets that were a part of this work were found during the excavations of a library temple in Nippur, the most ancient Sumerian city which focused on the worship of the gods Enlil and Nnllil, who Sumerians believed created all things.

The hymn consists of 134 lines, originally split into eight different houses, each ending with a unique rhetorical question.

9. Pyramid Texts

Written: Circa 2400–2300 BC

Location: Ancient Egypt

Discovered: 1881

Religion: Various polytheistic beliefs

The Pyramid Texts are known as one of the oldest religious texts in the world. During the 5th or 6th Dynasties of the Old Kingdom in Ancient Egypt, the text was carved on to the walls and within the sarcophagi of the Saqqara pyramids. These texts were meant to be for the pharaoh and were reserved for him.

The text of this religious script had to do with the protocol of dealing with the pharaoh's body after his death, including how to protect his remains and ensure his reanimation after his passing, which would allow him to carry on to the afterlife and ascend to heaven.

These ways were known as “utterances” or spells and could be used to ask for the help of the gods and even punish or threaten gods who decided not to lend their help.

8. The Coffin Texts

Written: Circa 2100 BC

Location: Ancient Egypt

Discovered: Late 1800s

Religion: Various polytheistic beliefs

Much like the Pyramid Texts, the Coffin Texts are a collection of funerary works consisting of 1,815 spells to help bring the deceased to the afterlife safely and to protect them from danger in their journey. No longer reserved for pharaohs, anyone who could afford to be buried in a coffin could have access to parts of the text.

¹⁹⁵ Source: Oldest.org

Due to often being written on the interior of coffins, the Coffin Texts' spells were often shortened or simplified. More complex, full versions were found in later works that it inspired, such as the Book of the Dead.

The Coffin Texts mainly focus on and describe the afterlife governed by the god Osiris. One of the most important books out of this collection of texts is the Book of Two Ways, which is the first text found that maps out the Ancient Egyptian idea of the underworld.

7. The Epic of Gilgamesh

Written: Circa 2100 BC

Location: Mesopotamia

Discovered: 1853

Religion: Various polytheistic beliefs

Thought it is more of an epic story than a religious text, the Epic of Gilgamesh is often cited as a piece of holy literature. In fact, it is widely considered the earliest great literary work. This great tale tells the story of Gilgamesh, the king of Uruk.

The very first parts of this story, including five Sumerian poems, were written first, then combined with future works to create one large epic. The oldest surviving completed compilation of the completed work is dated to the 18th century BC and is widely known as the Old Babylonian version, which was subtitled *Shūtur eli sharrī*, which translates to “Surpassing All Other Kings”.

The cumulation of the story involves Gilgamesh discovering, after years of dangerous and exhausting travel to discover the secret of eternal life, that “Life, which you look for, you will never find. For when the gods created man, they let death be his share, and life withheld in their own hands.”

6. The Rigveda

Written: Circa 1700 BC

Location: India

Discovered: N/A

Religion: Hinduism

Directly translating as “Praise Knowledge”, the Rigveda is one of the four canonical Hindu sacred texts that collectively make up the Vedas. It is, essentially, a collection of over 1,000 hymns that contain a total of 10,600 verses.

The massive amount of hymns in the Rigveda are arranged into ten books known as Mandalas, with the hymns shortening in length but increasing in number across each book. The first eight books written focused more on worship towards Rigvedan gods, but the final two books bordered on philosophical and discussed charity and morality.

Unfortunately, much of the language used in the Rigveda is obscure and as a result, many parts of it remain untranslated till this day. It remains one of the oldest discovered Indo-European extant texts, and today is one of the oldest religious texts still in use.

5. The Book of the Dead

Written: Circa 1550 BC

Location: Egyptian

Discovered: Middle Ages

Religion: Various polytheistic beliefs

The Book of the Dead isn't exactly a book – it is a large amount of texts compiled. This funerary text describes a list of spells that can be used by individuals to make their journey from the underworld to the afterlife. There are some alternate translations of the title of this work, including the “Book of Coming Forth by Day” and the “Book of Emerging Forth into the Light”.

The book was placed into the coffin or burial chamber of those who had passed away, with its contents derived from years and years of spells written by many different priests. The earliest spells are taken from the aforementioned Pyramid and Coffin texts.

Written on papyrus with hieroglyphic or hieratic script, no canonical version of the Book of the Dead exists due to the countless variations discovered over the years. Knowledge of the existence of this holy text was present since the Middle Ages, so it's not possible to accurately say when it was discovered, and by who.

4. The Instruction of Amenemope

Written: Circa 1300 BC

Location: Egyptian

Discovered: 1888

Religion: Various polytheistic beliefs

While it isn't exactly an extremely religious text, we're including the Instruction of Amenemope is often credited for its strong resemblance and relationship to the Bible's Book of Proverbs. On top of that, it is often considered a masterpiece and an essential part of wisdom literature.

The text consists of a whopping thirty chapters of advice written by a scribe named Amenemope to pass on to his son and provide him with wisdom on how to live a successful life. It discusses values and attitudes needed in order to live happily despite the increasing social and economic difficulties in the world.

The format of the Instruction of Amenemope somewhat resembles that of an earlier, non-religious ancient text called The Maxims of Ptahhotep.

3. The Samaveda

Written: Circa 1200 BC

Location: India

Discovered: N/A

Religion: Hindu

The last three entries on this list are the other three texts in the Vedas apart from the aforementioned Rigveda. Literally translating to “song knowledge”, the Samaveda contains chants and speaks of melodies, comprising of 1,875 verses that are mainly derived from the Rigveda.

Some parts of the Samaveda are believed to date back to the Rigveda period, but the first version of the Samaveda used today surfaced around 1200 BC. This text contains two primary Upanishads, which are essential pillars of Hinduism.

Many traditional Indian dances are said to have their roots in the contents of the Samaveda, which is fitting since the Samaveda is officially considered the Veda of Chants.

2. The Yajurveda

Written: Circa 1200 BC

Location: India

Discovered: N/A

Religion: Hindu

The title of this text literally translates to “prose mantra knowledge”, and as such, this Veda is the Veda of prose chants. It essentially is comprised of ritual chants and formulas and is divided into two.

One part of the text is the Krishna (black) section, which contains verses that are not well arranged. The other part is the Shukla (white) section, which has a much better structure. Four of the former’s recensions and two of the latter’s recensions continue to be used today.

The Yajurveda contains 1,875 verses which, while unique, are based on the foundation built by the Rigveda. The text also holds the largest collection of primary Upanishads.

1. The Atharvaveda

Written: Circa 1200 BC

Location: India

Discovered: N/A

Religion: Hindu

Unlike the other parts of the Vedas, the Atharvaveda has a more complex translation: “knowledge storehouse of atharvāṇas, the procedures for everyday life”. The text is divided into 20 books which share 6,000 mantras and 730 hymns between them.

Some parts of the Atharvaveda discuss ancient medicine and medical procedures, providing some of the earliest evidence and record of religious medical practices.

There are two versions of this religious text that made it into the modern world: the Paippalāda and the Śaunakīya. Like the other Vedas, it continues to have an impact on Hinduism today.

ADDENDUM J

An Example of a Command Related To a Particular Covenant

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. (Exodus 20:8 NAS)

This is the fourth of the Ten Commandments. It was a part of the Covenant that God made with Israel.

In the teaching of Jesus and in the Epistles, all of the Ten Commandments, except this one, are reiterated in some manner. Usually the command is deepened. For example, the commandment to not commit adultery: *"You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14)*

Jesus deepened the command.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery';²⁸ but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28)

The only one of the Ten Commandments that has no counterpart in the New Covenant is Sabbath keeping. For that matter, Paul wrote,

One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind.⁶ He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. (Romans 14:5-6)

Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day-- (Colossians 2:16)

Thus, under the New Covenant, one may keep the Sabbath or not, but whatever one chooses to do about a special day must be done unto the Lord. The Ten Commandments, as a part of the Covenant with Israel, is not binding on Christians, except to the degree that they are reiterated as a part of the New Covenant.

One may choose to observe the Seventh Day (the Sabbath) in response to Genesis 2:2-3

And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.³ Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. (Genesis 2:2-3)

Also, experience has shown that God created man to live by a seven-day rhythm, and it is wise to rest one day out of the week – even wiser to spend that day in focusing on God. Even so, as Paul wrote, this must be a matter of personal conscience and is not a command under the New Covenant.

ADDENDUM K

An Example Of a Specific Word Spoken Concerning a Particular Place

Then the LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.

"If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

"Now My eyes shall be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place. "For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. (2 Chronicles 7:12-16)

Often, these verses have been quoted as an exhortation to American Christians who are upset by the current trends in culture. The exhortation is that if church members would pray diligently, God would turn things around. Indeed, that is a worthy exhortation, but these verses cannot be cited as a promise from God to American Christians.

First, all Israelites were God's people and so this referred to that people and that specific land. Israel as a nation was called upon to pray and seek God's face. Currently, most Americans have no relationship with God, some are even adversaries against God. Thus, they are not "God's people." Even though many American Christians would pray and seek God's face, the nation as a whole would not be doing so.

More importantly, the promise is related to Solomon's temple. God stated that His eyes and His ears would be attentive to the prayers offered in that temple.

Thus, this is not a general promise that Christians of every land can claim, although it is a worthy exhortation. The promise from God related to a specific people, a specific land, and prayers offered in a specific place.

ADDENDUM L

An Example of a Promise Given to a Specific People for a Specific Purpose

'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

This verse has been placed on plaques and other means of display to assure Christians that God plans the best for them. This is not a promise made to Christians. The preceding verse clearly states to whom this is spoken and what God meant by the promise.

"For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. (Jeremiah 29:10)

The promise was given to the Israelites that after seventy years of being in exile in Babylon, God would return them to Israel, because He had plans for their future. His plan was to restore the nation of Judah and to use that nation as the people through whom the Messiah would come into the world.

For a Twenty-first Century Christian in dire circumstances, to claim this verse as a promise has no warrant. This was not spoken to all godly people in every circumstance of life. Even so, every Christian seeks to live in submission to God so that He may accomplish His purposes for why the Christian was born and brought to redemption – whether that purpose requires a hard life or an easy life.

ADDENDUM M

An Example Of The Advantage Of Exploring The Original Language

Matthew 16:13-16 records the good confession by Simon and Jesus' response.

And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."¹⁸ "And I also say to you that you are Peter (i.e. a Stone), and upon this rock (i.e. bedrock) I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it."¹⁹ "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:17-19 NAS)

In this passage, Simon was given a new name, which, in the Greek, is *Stone*.

Jesus declared that the facts of the Good Confession, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God*, are the bedrock upon which the Church will be built – the person of Christ.

Then, Jesus gave to Stone (Peter) the keys to the kingdom of heaven. The personal pronoun in the Greek (I give to *you*) is singular, so it applies only to Peter, not to the rest of the disciples who were present.

It is interesting to note that

- Peter unlocked heaven to the Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2)
- Peter unlocked heaven to the half-breed Jews of Samaria (Acts 8)
- Peter unlocked haven to the Gentiles in the home of Cornelius (Acts 10-11).

Matthew 18 describes a situation in which a church member has an offense against another church member. When one on one conversations do not resolve the issue, then two or more fellow Christians are invited to join in efforts at arbitration and reconciliation. If that effort fails, then the two are to appear before the Church, present their situation, and abide by the Church's ruling. Should one of the contenders refuse to listen to the Church, then the following is the result:

"And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer. "Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 18:17-18)

These two passages, and similar ones, have been the basis for people's going around binding this and binding that, and declaring that heaven has to honor what they have done.

In the Greek, this is not what is said.

In these two passages, and all others making a similar statement in the New Testament, the Greek is periphrastic, future perfect, and imparts the idea that the believer, or the Church, shall bind what already has been bound in heaven. The Church, or individual believer, is not doing something that heaven has to honor, but is honoring and carrying out what heaven has already decreed.

To illustrate: a judge may issue an eviction notice. In response that eviction notice, the sheriff goes to the property and evicts the tenants, on the basis of what the judge has done. The judge does not honor what the sheriff has done, but the sheriff honors what the judge has done.

Thus, when arbitration between two contending members of the church takes place before the Church, and one of the contending parties refuses to hear the Church, then heaven has declared that person to be excommunicated. The Church then formally executes that person, carrying out heaven's decree.

When a Christian preaches the Gospel, and someone accepts it and is immersed into Christ, heaven has declared that person loosed from the guilt of his sin. If he hears and rejects the Gospel, heaven already has declared that person bound in the guilt of his sin. The preacher is carrying out heaven's decree and the response of the person determines heaven's response, which the preacher recognizes.

ADDENDUM N

Comments on the Greek Structure of John 1:1c

James W. Garrett

Because the final phrase of John 1:1 has become a major battleground in the controversy between orthodox Christians and the Jehovah's Witnesses, any serious study of John Chapter One requires the student to spend a bit of time analyzing the Greek of this verse. Here is the rendering of the verse in the most popular English versions of the New Testament:

King James Version: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

New King James Version: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

New American Standard Version: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

New International Version: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Revised Standard Version: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

New Jerusalem Bible: *In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God.*

English Standard Version: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Note that all of these versions have identical language in John 1:1

The Jehovah's Witness, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, renders John 1:1 in the following manner,

*In [the] beginning, the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.*¹⁹⁶

One of the crucial debates between the JWs and orthodox Christianity involves the rendering of the Greek in John 1:1c. This is a crucial theological point, because Jehovah's Witnesses declare that Jesus is divine, as many are divine. Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in the Trinity, thus, Jesus Christ is not a member of the one and only Godhead.

Thus, JWs declare that Jesus was *a god*, whereas, orthodox Christianity declares that Jesus is *God*, with a capitol G.

¹⁹⁶ *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, (Brooklyn, NY, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania and International Bible Students Association) 1984, page 1327

In order to discuss the difference between the two renderings (*the Word was God*, versus, *the Word was a god*) one must be acquainted with the significance of the presence or absence of the definite article in the Greek language of the New Testament.

Both Greek and English have a *definite* article:

English: the man (*the* being a definite article)

Greek: ὁ ἄνθρωπος (*ho* [the] *anthropos* [man], *ho* being a definite article)

English has an *indefinite* article, whereas Greek does not:

English : a man (*A* being the indefinite article)

Greek: ἄνθρωπος (can be rendered in English as either, *a man*, or *man*)

A Greek noun, adjective, or pronoun that does not have a definite article is called *anarthrous* (if a definite article is present, it is called, *anarthrous*).

The Greek word for God, θεός (*theos*) of John 1:1c is anarthrous. Here are the three phrases of John 1:1 in Greek:

- a. Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος,
in beginning was the word
- b. καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν,
and the word was to the god
- c. καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
and god was the word

Observe that the Greek word θεός does not have a definite article in 1c, therefore it is anarthrous.

In translating anarthrous Greek terms into English, a decision has to be made as to whether or not the term should be rendered with an English indefinite article.

Continuing to use ἄνθρωπος as an example, an anarthrous ἄνθρωπος can be rendered as either:

- MAN (without the indefinite article)
- A MAN (with the indefinite article)

In English, *Man* (without the indefinite article in the English rendering) probably would refer to the human race (humanity) or the quality of being human, as contrasted with being animal or divine (i.e., “Is he man, or beast?”).^{197 198}

¹⁹⁷ It also could refer to an individual man, who was being addressed: “Man, get going,” or “Oh, man, what is that to you?”

¹⁹⁸ ἄνθρωπος does not necessarily imply *male*. There is another Greek word, ἀνὴρ [*aner*], that signifies, *male*.

A *man* (with the indefinite article in the English rendering) would refer to an individual.

Thus, when a term is anarthrous, it can be understood in the following manner:

- **Definite anarthrous** - *He is God* (meaning that He is *the God – the one and only God*)
- **Qualitative anarthrous** -
 - (a) *He is God* (meaning that He is of the same essence as the Father).
 - (b) Depending on how one defines, *god*, he has some sort of divinity.
- **Indefinite anarthrous** – *he is a god*, but only one of several (not the one and only God).

The challenge faced in rendering anarthrous Greek terms is in determining whether the term should be rendered as indefinite (*a god*), qualitative (*god*, meaning essence), or definite (He is the one and only *God*).

Some passages contain grammatical clues that help in revealing how to render an anarthrous noun in that particular passage, but, in most instances, the context must guide the decision.

A second bit of knowledge that one must have to evaluate John 1:1c is the significance of word order in Greek. One of techniques whereby Greek communicates emphasis is in the word order in a sentence. When various options are available and one wants to emphasize an idea or concept, the word communicating that idea is placed first in the sentence. By placing a predicate nominative before the verb, rather than after the verb, the writer indicates that the predicate nominative contains the point that he is making.

The following English sentences will illustrate this pattern.

In English, one could write,

- The tank is metal.
- Metal, is the tank.

In these sentences, the subject is *tank*, the predicate noun (stating something about the tank) is *metal*. In the first sentence, the predicate follows the verb (*is*). In the second sentence, the predicate precedes the verb (*is*).

Both of these sentences would be understood as meaning the same thing, although the predicate nominative noun (*metal*) follows the verb (*is*) in the first sentence and precedes the verb (*is*) in the second sentence. Both would be understood to state that the tank is made from metal.

- In Greek, the first statement above would be a simple statement, “the tank is metal.”
- The second sentence, “metal, is the tank,” would emphasize the fact that the material from which the tank is made is metal, as contrasted with fiberglass, wood, plastic, etc.

These nuances (how one renders anarthrous nouns and the position of a term in the phrase) are important to our understanding of what John conveyed when he wrote, *καὶ θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος*.

In the effort to translate correctly John 1:1c, a study must be made of the context. Context begins with the immediate context (the sentence itself), then moves into increasingly remote

contexts (1. the paragraph; 2. the chapter; 3. the book; 4. the entire Bible). What help does this process provide as guidance in the correct rendering of the phrase before us?

RECENT STUDIES CONCERNING

ANARTHROUS PRE-VERBAL PREDICATE NOMINATIVES¹⁹⁹

We are fortunate that detailed and objective studies of this topic, were undertaken by accomplished 20th Century scholars. In 1933, E. C. Colwell completed his doctoral dissertation on “The Character of the Greek in John’s Gospel.” As a result of these studies, he published, in 1933, an article entitled, “A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament.”²⁰⁰

Colwell listed all of the definite predicate nouns that preceded the verb in John’s Gospel. He found that everyone of them was anarthrous. Colwell stated the rule as follows,

“Definite predicate nouns which precede the verb, usually lack the article... a predicate nominative which precedes the verb cannot be translated as an indefinite or a ‘qualitative’ noun solely because of the absence of the article; if the context suggests that the predicate is definite, it should be translated as a definite noun...”²⁰¹

Many conservative scholars, eager to put to rest the question of John 1:1, overstated Colwell’s rule. They took the view that all anarthrous predicate nominatives that preceded the verb were definite nouns. This, of course is poor logic.

- If I studied all of the dogs in Tulsa, I would conclude that all dogs in Tulsa are four-legged animals. I could put that forth as an axiom, as a result of my inductive investigation.
- However, I could not state that all four-legged animals in Tulsa are dogs. The only way that I could do that is to study all four-legged animals in Tulsa and then make that statement, if my investigation proved it to be true.

Thus, Colwell’s rule does not state that all anarthrous predicate nominatives that precede the verb are definite. It does say that all definite predicate nominatives that precede the verb are anarthrous – it does not make a statement about all anarthrous predicate nominatives that precede the verb.

Forty years later, Philip B. Harner, published an article in which he presented his research in connection with the Colwell Rule. Harner demonstrated that anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominatives usually are qualitative, rather than definite or indefinite.²⁰² He demonstrated that 80% of Colwell’s sample involved qualitative nouns, and only 20% of the sample were definite.

¹⁹⁹ In this section, we follow the discussion as presented by Danial B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House) 1996, pages 256-270

²⁰⁰ *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 52 (1933) 12-21, as cited in Daniel B. Wallace, page 257

²⁰¹ Colwell, “A Definite Rule,” 20; Wallace, page 257

²⁰² Philip B. Harner, “Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1”, *JBL* 92 (1973) 76, pages 75-87.

It should be noted that older Greek grammarians saw no difference between qualitative and indefinite nouns, so it is little wonder that Colwell did not take his investigation in that direction.

Two years after the publication of Harner's essay, Paul Stephen Dixon, in his Master's thesis, cited other data and suggested, as Harner had done, that the anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominative in John's Gospel primarily is qualitative, rather than definite.²⁰³ It is significant for our study to note that neither Harner nor Dixon found anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominatives that clearly were indefinite.

Based on these objective studies, the following guidelines are before us.

1. When one encounters an anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominative, one should consider it to be qualitative/definite, unless over-riding evidence demands that it be rendered as indefinite.
2. Because the overwhelming majority of anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominatives can be shown beyond doubt to be qualitative (as contrasted with definite), such a construction should be presumed as qualitative unless there are contextual or other considerations causing it to be considered as definite.

With this background, we proceed to the question,

Is θεός in John 1:1c indefinite (a god)?

Wallace summarizes the evidence as follows:

“According to Dixon's study, if θεός were indefinite in John 1:1, it would be the only anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominative in John's Gospel to be so. Although we have argued that this is somewhat overstated, the general point is valid: The indefinite notion is the most poorly attested for anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominatives. Thus, grammatically, such a meaning is improbable. Also, the context suggests that such is not likely, for the Word already existed in the beginning. Thus, contextually and grammatically, it is highly improbable that the Logos could be “a god” according to John. Finally, the evangelist's own theology militates against this view, for there is an exalted Christology in the Fourth Gospel, to the point that Jesus Christ is identified as God (cf. 5:23; 8:58; 10:30; 20:28; etc.).”²⁰⁴

The next question to be asked is,

Is θεός in John 1:1c definite?

One could argue that since earlier in John 1 θεός has the article (making it definite) that it should also be considered definite in 1c. Not only is this a weak argument, but the result poses some serious theological problems.

- This would mean that if the predicate nominative had followed the verb, it would have had the article, i.e., *The Word was The God*.

²⁰³ Paul Stephen Dixon, “The Significance of the Anarthrous Predicate Nominative in John (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975) cited in Wallace, page 259

²⁰⁴ Wallace, page 267

- Since *the God*, in John 1:1 is the Father, this would indicate that the Father and the Word are the same.
- This is embryonic Sabellianism – i.e., that there is only one personality in the Godhead, who has three manifestations (the Father, in the Old Testament, later as the Son, to redeem man, and then, as the Holy Spirit).

This flies in the face of much of John’s Gospel. Either the Trinity is the accurate picture of the Godhead, or Jesus was a play-actor and deceiver. For example notice that in the following statements, Jesus speaks of Himself, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, as being three separate personalities.

"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; (John 14:16)

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. (John 14:26)

"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, (John 15:26)

This leads us to the third question,

Is θεός in John 1:1c qualitative?

Again, we quote Wallace’s excellent summary of the evidence.

“The most likely candidate for θεός is qualitative. This is true both grammatically (for the largest proportion of pre-verbal anarthrous predicate nominatives fall into this category) and theologically (both the theology of the Fourth Gospel and of the NT as a whole). There is a balance between the Word’s deity, which was already present at the beginning ...and his humanity, which was added later ... (1:14). The grammatical structure of these two statements mirrors each other; both emphasize the nature of the Word, rather than his identity. But θεός was his nature from eternity (hence, εἶμί is used), while σάρξ was added at the incarnation (hence, γίνομαι is used).

Such an option does not at all impugn the deity of Christ. Rather it stresses that, although the person of Christ is not the person of the Father, their *essence* is identical. Possible translations are as follows: ‘What God was, the Word was (NEB)... The *idea* of a qualitative θεός here is that the Word had all the attributes and qualities that “the God” (of 1:1b) had... He shared the essence of the Father, though they differed in person. *The construction that the evangelist chose to express this idea was the most concise way he could have stated that the Word was God and yet was distinct from the Father*”²⁰⁵

I would add a point of clarity to this quote from Wallace. The fact that θεός came first in the phrase (θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος, rather than λόγος ἦν ὁ θεός) is evidence that John was emphasizing that the Word had the same deity, even the same essence, as the Father, but was not the Father.

²⁰⁵ Wallace, page 269. The emphasis is Wallace’s.

A closing point is an examination of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. The NWT translators argued that John 1:1c should be indefinite, since it is anarthrous. Evidence that this version reflects theology, rather than translation is demonstrated by the number of times that they violated their own rule. R. H. Countess pointed out,

“In the New Testament, there are 282 occurrences of the anarthrous θεός. At sixteen places in the NWT has either a god, gods, or godly. Sixteen out of 282 means that the translators were faithful to *their* translation principle only six percent of the time.

“The first section of John 1:1-18 furnishes a lucid example of NWT arbitrary dogmatism. Θεός occurs eight times – verses 1, 2, 6, 12, 13, 18 – and has the article only twice – verses 1, 2. Yet, NWT six times translated “God,” once “a god,” and once “the god.”

In addition to Countess’ comments it should be noted that if the principle advocated by the NWT translators were followed consistently, John 1:1-2 would read, “a beginning”; 1:4 would read, “a life”; 1:6 would read, “from a god; 1:6 would read, “a John”; 1:18 would read, “a god”; etc. Again, noting the inconsistency of the NWT on these points, it seems obvious that theological bias governed their rendering of John 1:1c.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the material summarized above, we can conclude that the traditional rendering of John 1:1c is the best rendering, *and the Word was God*, keeping in mind that the Greek does not allow for a Sabellian understanding (that there was one person manifesting Himself in various forms). The Greek emphasizes the One God Essence of the Word.