

ARMINIAN CONFSSION OF 1621

The Remonstrants constructed the Confession in the brief years following the conclusion of the Synod of Dort. The translator of the work below, Dr. Mark A. Ellis, states: "They intended it as a concise, easily understandable statement of their faith and a corrective to what they viewed as the misrepresentations published in the Acts of the Synod of Dort." (v) Though three Arminian theologians worked on the Confession, one -- the main author -- prevailed, that being Simon Episcopius. When one reads references to "I," the first-person perspective is referring to none other than Episcopius himself.

PREFACE

There is no doubt, godly reader, that the declaration of faith put forth by us will be subject to various and diverse judgments of men. For each will pass judgment upon our [declaration], just as he has determined in his own mind regarding either the necessity and usefulness, or the form and manner of such declarations. . . .

After so many sad, dark, dire [cursings], whereby on every side ferocious hatreds and deadly rages have been irritated and exasperated, let us lay aside inimical and ulcerated minds, and follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of His apostles, by gentleness, longsuffering, kindness, the Holy Spirit of Christ, unfeigned charity, the word of truth, the power of God, the amour of righteousness on the right and on the left. . . .

We humbly beseech God through Jesus Christ in spirit and truth, that gentleness, holy and worthy to be praised, be inspired by the most high God in the hearts either of all, or at least of the majority, of those who preside in churches and republics, and then at last the truth of the gospel will flourish everywhere, and holy peace in the Lord and unity will fix its abode among all that are truly godly, and that this may shortly take place in the whole world, especially the Christian world, but most of all amongst the Reformed. These things thus premised, we now pass directly to the chapters of our declaration, which we always want to be joined with this preface.

The Confession or Declaration of the Pastors which in the Belgian Federation are Called the Remonstrants, on the Principle Articles of the Christian Religion.

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CHAPTER 1:

ON THE SACRED SCRIPTURE, ITS AUTHORITY, PERFECTION, AND PERSPICUITY.

1. Whoever desires to duly honor God, and certainly and undoubtedly obtain eternal salvation, before all else it is necessary that he believe that God is, and that He is a generous rewarder of those who seek Him. Therefore, he must conform himself to the rule and square which was given and prescribed by the true God Himself, the supreme legislator, and stand firm upon the promise of eternal life through undoubting faith.

2. That God is, and that He has spoken to the fathers through the prophets many times and in many ways, and that He has finally in the last times most fully declared and manifested His final will through His only-begotten Son, has been attested by so many and so great proofs, prodigious signs, mighty works, distributions of the Holy Spirit, and other wonderful effects, and the certain predictions of events, and the testimonies of men worthy of belief, that no more certain, solid or perfect reason for faith can be given, or justly desired.

3. The entire declaration of the divine will pertaining to religion is contained in the books of the Old and New Testaments, and indeed authentically only in those which are called canonical. And there is no just reason to doubt that they were written and endorsed by those men who were inspired, instructed and directed by the Spirit of God. Those in the Old Testament are the five books of Moses, the book of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the two books of Samuel, two of the Kings, two of the Chronicles (or Paralipomena), Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. Likewise Job, the Psalms of David, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, the four major Prophets, namely, Isaiah, Jeremiah, with his Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel; the twelve minor Prophets, namely, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

4. In the New Testament are the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the apostles, the Epistles of Paul, namely, Romans, the former and latter to the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, to Titus, to Philemon; also the Epistle to the Hebrews, one Epistle of James, two of Peter, of John three, of Jude one: lastly the Revelation.

5. That all these books, and without any exceptions for the majority, were written or approved by inspired men, has been recognized in the certain and evident testimonies and documents, and was so clearly proven, that nothing more can be justly or reasonably desired. For even if there were doubts about a few of them, that is, whether they were written or approved by those who are said to be their authors, nevertheless after the matter has been explored and the truth sought, it has been abundantly proven that they were truly written or approved by inspired men of infallible authority and whose credibility was undoubted by all believers.

6. Besides these books called the Old Testament, there are also others which for a long time have been held in esteem by many, commonly called the Apocrypha. Although they are not valid for confirming doctrines of faith, still they are useful (some more, some less), and are usually read in the church for the perfecting of faith and life; such are Tobit, Judith, Baruch, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, third and fourth of Esdras, the three Books of Maccabees, and some additions to Esther and Daniel, which are commonly known.

7. That the doctrine contained in the books of the New Testament (by which also the truth and dignity of the Old Testament is abundantly established and confirmed) is completely true and divine, is not only proven by being written or approved by those inspired men whom we named before, and delivered to the church, nor from its being confirmed and established by various and innumerable miracles, and by deeds, signs and wonders exceeding all human and angelic wisdom and power, and even more by the glorious resurrection from the dead of its first author, our Lord Jesus Christ, and His exaltation asserted by many irrefutable testimonies and documents. But primarily because it contains commandments more perfect, just and holy than anyone could have contrived, and such excellent promises that neither a human or angelic mind could conceive of anything more worthy of God.

It adds no small weight to the admirability and efficacy of its doctrine that such an unaccommodating enemy of the flesh was [written] by so few apostles, simple, weak men, free not only from the crime of forgery, but also unworthy of suspicion, with no protection of worldly eloquence, no renown from writs of human authority; without force, without arms, only by the persuasion of reasons and arguments and the demonstration of the Spirit, likewise men armed merely with innocence, holiness of life and patience.

In the shortest time and in all places (although opposed by the whole satanic kingdom and almost the whole world) it was amazingly disseminated, and so spread itself wherever one might turn, so that innumerable myriads of men, of all ranks, classes and conditions, not only of ignorant men, but also not a few of the most learned and wise, leaving their ancient and rites and religions into which they were born and educated, without any hope of any earthly advantage (indeed with a certain expectation of cross, dishonor, and all dangers) most persistently adhered to it. Thus all other religions, although everywhere supported by human protection, faded at the rising of its [radiance], Judaism alone excepted because it was of God.

8. Even if the primitive church which was in the time of the apostles, could most truly, most certainly know and undoubtedly did know that these books were written or at least approved by the apostles, and almost hand-delivered the knowledge of this matter to us and left it as a trust, nevertheless we do not hold these books to be true and inspired because the primitive church has decreed them true by its unbreakable judgment, or that they contain in them inspired meanings, and has by its infallible authority decreed that they be held as such.

For first, it was not necessary that the church by its judgment should define and by its authority establish that those books which were written or approved by the apostles were true and inspired. For both before and after all such manner of judgment, this was altogether certain and undoubted by all

Christians, both in general and particular, precisely in that as soon as any one of them knew that anything was written or approved by the apostles, he could and ought to have known that it was true and inspired. He had no need for any other judgment or decision in the case. Consequently, neither indeed could such a judgment of the church suffice, when indeed the church is not something that has such authority to make the judgment itself, unless first one was certain and convinced that those books by which the authority of the church is said to be bestowed, were true and divine.

And it cannot be known or established for certain that any church is the true church of Christ, and unless whatever is contained in these books is already previously certain and beyond doubt. Because it is through that faith which the church embraces as wholly true that she herself finally holds that she is a true church. For if truly the primitive church itself did not receive such an authority from the apostles, certainly much less is it to be believed that any church received it, much less ought we to believe that it belongs to any other church which succeeded that church, or any church today.

9. Therefore, the doctrine contained in these canonical books is of itself altogether authentic and indeed of divine authority, and unquestionable, and by reason of the infallible veracity of God, entirely deserves undoubted faith, and by virtue of its ... absolute and supreme power, most humble obedience from us.

Any other doctrine, however, lacks this privilege of supreme and divine revelation, and so cannot by any right have equality with that authority, much less that which either decrees something else (whether contrary or different) and that by a usurped authority, or at least commands it to be declared otherwise than is on record in writing in these books, or being declared to be believed, upon the pain and peril of the loss of salvation, since God can neither contradict Himself, and no authority, either human or angelic, ought to be equaled to the divine.

10. Because such divine authority as this belongs to these books alone, it is therefore necessary that controversies and all debates pertaining to religion be examined by them alone, as touchstones and firm and unmovable rules, and to be disputed from them only, and so leave them to be decided by God and Jesus Christ alone as the one supreme and infallible judge. For it must not be supposed that God wanted in the least that they should be decided by any judicial or authoritative right, by some visible judge, and one ordinarily speaking in the church, since it has pleased Him to leave us, not forced judgment, but a rule in His Word so direct or even directed.

But He nowhere indicated that there ought to be an infallible judge always speaking in the church [such as the Roman Catholic Pope], nor has He designated in His Word who that would perpetually be. But He has expressly commanded all and every one alike to examine His laws, or judgments and statutes, to test the spirits, whether they be from God, indeed to test everything, and retain that which is good, since He has promised His grace and Holy Spirit to those who search His laws, and seek to understand them. And He has singularly commended and praised those who have searched the Scriptures, and examined controversies of faith by them, indeed, who have diligently judged those things by the square and rule of Scripture, which was spoken by the apostles themselves.

11. Therefore those who wantonly bestow, or allow to be bestowed, the unquestionable authority to peremptorily judge debates and controversies concerning faith or religion, whether all or some, either

to some certain church, or synod of the learned, or to any human society, or to any single person, who also may be ungodly and profane, as to a visible and speaking judge, and who want to hold and bind consciences by this decision, they are not supported by firm reason, still less by any divine authority. Indeed, they are to be understood as acting equally against both the one and the other. Beyond this, on this account they greatly undermined and wholly diminish the Christian duty of searching the Scriptures, testing the spirits, examining all things, etc., which is both necessary and useful for the prayers of the godly and understanding the Scriptures.

12. Therefore, on account of this most weighty and most just cause, we do not suffer ourselves in controversies of religion or sacred concerns to be pressed by the bare authorities of men, such as the glosses and opinions of those called the "fathers," the determinations of councils or synods [certainly including the Synod of Dordt], articles of confessions, the opinions of theologians, or the conclusions of universities, much less with ancient practices, or with the splendor and number or multitude of men of the same opinion, or lastly by some long-observed rule, etc. For neither ought we to attend to what this or that teacher of the church or assembly of teachers [has said], however famous for their learning or holiness, nor this or that synod or particular church, but what He who is before all and who alone can neither deceive nor be deceived, our Lord Jesus Christ, has said and prescribed in His Word.

13. Nor is this astonishing, for in these books is perfectly contained a full and more than sufficient revelation of all the mysteries of faith, especially those which are simply necessary for each and every man to know, believe, hope, and do in order to obtain eternal salvation, so that there is not one article, not even the least, required for a right understanding of faith, or a life pleasing to God, and absolutely necessary to be held by any Christian, which is not abundantly contained in them. However, for things necessary to salvation we only understand those things without which it would be utterly impossible for any man either to obey the commandments of Jesus Christ rightly and as he ought, or firmly confide in His divine promises, and are such that they cannot be denied, unknown or called in question without a man's manifest guilt.

14. Furthermore, the clarity and understandability of these books, although they are obscure enough in some places (especially to the unlearned and less exercised) is so great, especially in meanings necessary to be understood for salvation, that all readers, not only the learned, but also the ignorant (who are gifted with common sense and judgment), as much as is sufficient, may be able to follow their meaning, if they do not permit themselves to be blinded by prejudice, vain confidence, or other corrupt affections, but piously and carefully search the Scripture (which we believe is not only permitted for all, though untaught, ignorant or lay people, but also commanded and enjoined by God), and study to become familiar with the very phrases of Scripture, and which were most clear and meaningful in the time and language in which these books were written. We say that such [people] as these, truly honest, teachable and fearing God from the heart, are able to perceive everything which pertains to true faith and godliness, not only those things which are necessary, but also the very reason of their necessity, namely, they really do easily perceive that they are necessary and for what purpose.

15. But because there are very many even among Christians who either do not read these books at all or not with sufficient attention, nor consider what they read with care and judgment, or do not frequently

and piously ask for divine aid, as is proper, or else being drenched with prejudice, confidence, hatred, envy, ambition, or other depraved feelings, are busy in the reading of these books, and then next, because not rarely even in these books themselves they meet with some antique matter or phrase from the time period of the Scriptures, and likewise tropes and figurative speech, which in the present time produce for us some obscurity and difficulty, and which are such, that unless one be solidly instructed in all these, or bring with him to the interpretational process a very teachable, honest mind, and not bring emotions, they may easily be twisted to a wrong meaning, indeed to [one that is] perverse and prejudicial to salvation. From this emerges but just one reason (lest we deal with many others now) why the interpretation and explication of the Scriptures may usefully be allowed its place in the church, and indeed always ought to be.

16. But the best interpretation of Scripture is that which most faithfully expresses the native and literal sense thereof, or at least comes nearest to it. Obviously, it alone is the true and living Word of God, and by it, just as by incorruptible seed, we are reborn to the hope of eternal life.

We call, however, the native and literal sense not so much that which the words properly taken bear (as indeed most often occurs), but that which, even if not favorable to a rigid understanding of the words, yet is most agreeable to right reason, and the very mind and intention of the one who uttered the words, whether it was enunciated properly or figuratively. Because this can and ought to be discerned from the scope and occasion of whatever passage, likewise the subject matter, the things which precede and follow, likewise from comparison with similar passages, and from palpable absurdities likely to result from it and other arguments of that kind, or from the judgment of such things.

17. But to desire to beg an exposition from some other source, namely, from any creed of human fabrication or analogy of faith received in this or that place, or any public confession of churches (which we also warned before in our Preface, which we never would want at any time to be separated from this our declaration) or from the decrees of councils, or of this or that father, though even the most or greatest part of them, is very uncertain and often dangerous.

18. And yet do we not therefore easily despise the pious, probable or ancient received interpretations of others, especially the Greek or Latin Fathers. Much less do we proudly or arrogantly reject their unanimous consent. But we do eventually, and then modestly, recede from them if we discover in our conscience that they convey something alien to the true meaning of Scripture, or contrary to it. Nor do we think that by this reasoning to subject them to some injury, since not only every one of them individually, but also the greater of them jointly, indeed all of them taken together, may err in much. For they themselves voluntarily admit this with one accord, and eloquently prohibit that their writings be simply believed, but desire that in the end they be tested by us to what degree they agree with the Sacred Scriptures, and to the contrary, that we freely reject them to the degree that they disagree with the same.

CHAPTER 2:

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE ESSENCE OF GOD.

1. Furthermore, our entire religion contained in these sacred books can be summarized in the correct knowledge of the one true God and Jesus Christ the mediator whom He has sent, and in a legitimate worship of both, under the hope of life eternal and immortal after death, to be certainly obtained in heaven according to the free promise of the same.

2. But that God may be rightly known and piously worshiped according to the Scriptures, three things must be considered and necessarily held by us: His nature, works, and will. By the nature of God, we may rightly understand that in and of Himself He is most worthy to be worshiped by us. By His works, we may truly know that He may rightfully and deservedly demand of us whatever manner of worship He desires. Finally, by His will, we may be convinced that He wills to be worshiped by us, and at the same time it may be known after what manner He desires, and ought to be worshiped, that one may certainly hope for eternal salvation from Him.

However, it is not necessary to hold [know] everything concerning the nature and works of God in every respect (at least whatever pertains to the divine essence and all the modes of its working and kinds of operations, much less all those things, which either according to the hypothetical and specious opinions of the schools, or the probable discourse of reason, are customarily affirmed by them, but those only, without which the divine will, revealed in the Scriptures, either cannot be rightly understood or attended to by us), since it is said throughout Scripture that only those who obey the divine will and serve His commandments truly know God, and on the contrary, they who do not obey Him do not know God.

Indeed, that alone deserves to be called the saving knowledge of God which is joined with the practice of godliness. To be sure, other things pertaining to this are more or less useful, either for promoting godliness or for better understanding and successfully settling whatever religious controversies may occur, yet they should not be held as necessary doctrines of faith which cannot be ignored without the loss of salvation.

[Concerning] what pertains to the nature of God, the Scripture presents God to us under a twofold consideration: 1. absolutely and generally in His essential attributes, namely, by which it unfolds to us His spiritual nature and glorious majesty common to distinct persons, so far as is sufficient for our faith and salvation in this life; 2. distinctly and relatively in the mystery of the Holy Trinity, which concerns the internal and mutual condition of the persons among themselves, and their proper division.

4. The following are those attributes, so far as they necessarily pertain to [His nature].

5. (1.) God is one, in that He is alone, without associate, most supreme and high, who has neither any before Him, nor above Him to whom He depends for being, willing, or acting, but He has His deity and divine sovereignty over all from Himself. There neither is nor can be another who can compete with all

His attributes of a true deity. Because of this utterly absolute authority or irresistible power, He can decide whatever He wants for all of His creatures and goods, namely, to give, take away, preserve, destroy, make alive, kill, command, prohibit, permit, punish, pardon, increase, diminish, change, translate, etc., as He knows is fitting for His glory and the salvation of those that are His, and sees it to agree with His wisdom, goodness and justice.

6. (2.) He is eternal, because He always was, ever is, and likewise will be, without any beginning or end, or any alteration. Indeed [He is] the only [being] who is necessarily living by nature, or having life and immortality from Himself, and therefore in Himself [is] forever unchangeably incorruptible, and in every way immutable. Finally, [He is] the supreme author and only bestower of eternal life, graciously promised to us in Jesus Christ.

7. (3.) He is infinite and immense, because He so fills heaven and earth that He cannot be limited to any certain space of places, nor confined within any boundaries, but He is present everywhere in all places, although most hidden or remote, in a general and incomprehensible manner. Even so, in a certain specific way He especially, gloriously inhabits the heaven of the blessed, then exerts the special efficacy of His grace in His saints, however unevenly. From this the various degrees of divine presence is understood without difficulty by the diverse things of creation.

8. (4.) He is omniscient, and certainly of infallible knowledge, because He not only intimately knows absolutely everything which has being, just as they are individually in themselves, whether good or evil, past, present, future, likewise possible and hypothetical, indeed even the most intimate thoughts of the heart, the most secret words, the most hidden deeds (under which also we will include matters of omission), but also because He keeps them most present in memory, and sees whatever is done by us, correctly or otherwise, as if set before His eyes, so that this knowledge cannot be erased either by ignorance or oblivion, nor fraud or tickery, nor any deceit or deception. Finally, He most wisely knows how to order, dispose, direct and manage all things, and so perpetually.

9. (5.) His will is completely free, because He cannot be forced to will, reject or permit [anything] either by the inward necessity of His nature, nor by external power either of some force or the efficacy of an object which either are outside Himself, or will be. But according to His most free judgment or the mere counsel of His will, or good pleasure, He extends Himself either to will, reject or permit them all. And indeed everything good He so wills them that He also approves and seeks them.

Some things also He commands, counsels, wishes, desires and always in His own way effects. But He truly does not will evil things of guilt or sins (that is, not only the wickedness itself, but also vicious acts, so far indeed as wickedness or guilt necessarily adheres to them, either in themselves or established law), but hates, recoils, prohibits, dissuades, punishes and often inhibits them, but never causes or seeks them. Yet He willingly permits them and wills to permit them, not because He wills them to be done by us or efficaciously ordains that they be done, but because He permits and does not hinder our actions to proceed as He might. And [He does] this not to overthrow the order once constituted by Himself, that He might neither destroy nor rescind the freedom He gave to His creature.

10. (6.) He is most good, first in Himself, then towards His creatures. Because He is not only completely perfect by nature, and so completely lovely, but He is also very kind and liberal toward His creatures, although unequally, indeed sometimes also toward sinners. Toward His believers, He is truly most gracious, gentle, longsuffering, and merciful. Indeed, He is most eagerly disposed to communicate to them the highest and eternal good, of which there is nothing better or greater which can either be desired or had by them.

11. (7.) He is most just and impartial, and indeed of inflexible justice and equity, not so much because He always loves that in us which is right and equal, and hates all iniquity. It is for this He is called "holy" in Scripture. But also because He never causes injury to any, and in all His works and judgments (especially in making laws, distributing rewards and inflicting punishments) He always exactly preserves uprightness and justice, by which He gives everyone his due, He exercises a most impartial justice. Finally, because He is true, sincere and in no way deceiving in His words, and most faithful and constant in following His covenants and promises.

12. (8.) He is omnipotent, or of invincible and insuperable power, because He can do whatever He wills, even though all creatures be unwilling. Indeed He can always do more than He really wills, and therefore He can simply do whatever does not involve contradiction, that is, which are not necessarily and of themselves repugnant to the truth of certain things, nor to His own divine nature.

13. (9.) Finally, He is most blessed or happy, and indeed of perfect and incomprehensible blessedness, because He possesses both a nature in all respects absolute and a majesty glorious in the highest degree and abounds with the treasures of all good. Neither does He fear any evil from anyone, nor require any good outside Himself at any time, but bountifully grants of His own as He pleases, since He is the foremost and ever inexhaustible fountain of good.

14. And so [we conclude with] what pertains to the essential attributes of God, about which the knowledge of each and every one we believe to be most useful, and indeed to this extent necessary, insomuch that without their knowledge we cannot correctly worship God, but by it we may. For because God is one, it is entirely just and necessary for us, that in every way we depend upon Him alone with soul and body as the foremost author of our salvation, and again likewise, that our entire worship terminate and stop in Him alone.

15. Because He is of irresistible power and supreme authority, let us submit ourselves to Him in all humility as to the King of kings and Lord of Lords, whoever or wherever we are, sworn nowhere to anyone, nor subject to any. Let us pray continually to Him for His benefits and other necessities, or certain things useful for us. Let us give Him thanks for things received, also patiently bear with a quiet mind all adversity whatever He sends, and never abuse our prosperity nor grow proud.

16. Because He is eternal and immutable, with resolved faith let us dare to expect and firmly hope for the prize of eternal life, graciously promised to us by Him in Christ, and certainly believe that He will never at any time either overthrow it Himself, nor [allow it] to be violently taken from us by others.

17. Because He is immense and omnipresent, let us everywhere walk circumspectly, reverently, and carefully, as in His sight. Let us always pour out to Him our prayers and supplications, with all humility and submission, and a firm confidence of being heard. Let us not think, speak or do anything unless it is serious, grave and worthy of the presence of so great a deity.

18. Because He is of infallible knowledge, let us live blamelessly and sincerely and walk prudently before Him. Let us desire to test our thoughts, words and actions by Him. Let us continually commend our good cause to Him. With confidence, let us offer our prayers, groans and sighs to Him. And finally, let us be thoroughly persuaded that He always cares for us and all our concerns.

19. Because He is of most free power and will, whatever good things we have, either in common with others or in private before other men or people (physical or spiritual) let us attribute it to His alone spontaneous liberality and most free generosity. Let us always diligently and seriously seek His grace and favor and carefully seek to retain the same. Let us humbly intercede against His punishments and threats and not judge by our own perceptions whatever He either does Himself, or permits to be done by others, or wills to be done by us, but let us always religiously respect it as proceeding from His best and most free will.

20. Because He is the best and most generous, let us love and delight in Him with all our heart, soul, and all strength. Let us boldly confide in His promises and confidently implore His grace and mercy. Let us willingly and eagerly conform ourselves to His most kind will, even under the cross, and always and everywhere obey Him.

21. Because of His unbending fairness and justice, and also truth, let us never murmur against His commands, trials, visits, punishments, permitting of evils, etc., and let us never at any time doubt concerning His promises and threats and His other sayings. And because He is most holy let us also imitate Him in a serious pursuit and exercise of holiness.

22. Because He is of insuperable power, let us fear Him who is able to cast body and soul into Gehenna [the place of the dead, hell], and let us dread His terrible wrath, and let us seriously fear the evils indeed which He threatens. Let us look for the good things which He promises, with a firm and undoubting faith. Finally, so long as we serve Christ, let us not greatly fear the force and power either of the devil, or death, or hell, or tyrants, or any other enemies, nor for their sakes ever commit anything unworthy of the name of Christ.

23. Because He is most blessed, and indeed of perfect blessedness and glorious majesty, let us carefully aspire to participation in His glory and joy according to our measure, and therefore desire to be perfectly united with Him after this life, to see Him face to face, and let us desire to be blessed and satisfied with the fullness of His house and of all the goodness of heaven, and being supported with this desire and unshaken hope, let us sincerely do all that He commands. Let us carefully flee those things which He forbids. Lastly, let us bear with courage whatever He will have us bear, even if they be the most bitter distresses and most shameful deaths borne for His name. And thus the nature of God has been considered commonly and absolutely.

CHAPTER 3:

ON THE HOLY AND SACRED TRINITY.

1. But God is considered distinctly and relatively under a three-fold hypostasis, or under three persons, under which indeed He Himself has made known His own deity in His Word, to be considered by us economically and with respect to itself. And this trinity is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One hypostasis of the deity is ... unproduced and unbegotten [the Father]. Another is produced of the Father by generation, or the only begotten of the Father [the Son]. Finally, another in a peculiar manner proceeds from the Father and the Son, or emanates from the Father by the Son [the Holy Spirit].

2. For the Father alone is void of all origin, or entirely unbegotten and proceeding from no other, but who nevertheless has from eternity communicated His own deity, whether to His only begotten Son, indeed not by creation (respecting which the angels are called the sons of God) nor by gracious adoption (by which we believers are also the sons of God) nor only by the gracious communication of divine power (or authority) and supreme glory, by which He is the mediator, but also by a true yet secret and ineffable generation; and also to the Holy Spirit, proceeding from both by a mysterious emanation or spiration. And so the Father is most justly considered the fountain and origin of the whole deity.

3. Therefore, the Son and the Holy Spirit, although both are divine with respect to their hypostasis, manner, and order, are truly distinct from the Father; yet they are truly partakers with the Father of the same deity or divine essence and nature absolutely and commonly considered, just as is certainly proved from the divine names or titles, likewise from the divine properties and operations which are clearly attributed to them both throughout the Sacred Scriptures, among other things. And here is the sum total of the Apostles Creed, by which we profess that "we believe in one God the Father Almighty," etc. "And in His only begotten Son," etc. And lastly, "in the Holy Spirit."

4. And these are sufficient for this mystery, which indeed is completely necessary to treat soberly, prudently and religiously, and as far as possible, to enunciate the same in the proper and express phrases of the Holy Spirit, which we judge to be most safe, since the Spirit of God Himself best knows and is most correctly able to express His own nature. Indeed, as far as is necessary and sufficient, He willed to express [it] to us in His word, whom it is fitting reverently and most religiously to follow for the present, until we see God Himself in person, and know Him perfectly. Then, indeed, in that glorious world, He will grant that He may be most clearly known by us. And thus far indeed [is sufficient] regarding God Himself.

CHAPTER 4:

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORKS OF GOD.

1. In the second place we come to consider the works of God by which He revealed His own glory and communicates what is good to us, and to some degree exhibits Himself to be known to us. Consequently these are a certain foundation built upon the right and authority of God by which He can, and usually,

does, justly impose our worship, what and how He pleases; likewise justice and equity, by which we are obliged to yield to Him wholly and entirely such worship as He Himself demands according to His right.

2. These works come under a twofold manner of consideration: 1. as they were foreknown and foreordained by the deity before the ages, or before the foundations of the world were laid, which are customarily in one word called "decrees;" 2. as far as they are manifested in time, or their most wisely established mode and order, now long since commissioned by that divine decree (whether general or special, whether absolute or conditional). The decrees themselves must be judged from this execution and its method and manner. For the decrees are entirely such as their execution, nor could the execution not correspond to the decree without a mark of inconsistency, much more that it should fight or oppose the decree.

CHAPTER 5:

ON THE CREATION OF THE WORLD, ANGELS, AND MAN.

1. The creation of the world is the initial and most powerful production of all things made from nothing, namely, the primeval, perfect formation of heaven, earth, sea and all things which are in them in the space of six days, which is also mentioned in the Apostles Creed when we say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth."

2. Among the creatures, angels and men are the most excellent, the first of the heavens, the second of the Earth, the first invisible, the second visible. The angels are ministering spirits, ordinarily dwelling in the heavens beyond the world, and standing there before God as officers or servants and messengers, first to proclaim continually His praises and then either to announce or powerfully execute His orders throughout the whole world.

3. But we judge that it is neither necessary nor useful and even dangerous to go beyond the Scriptures to define minutely their essence, orders, degrees, number and many other things. It is sufficient for us that we piously believe what the Scriptures clearly assert about them. Evidently some of them, retaining their principality and steadfastly clinging to God their Lord Creator, are called holy, elect and angels of light, distinguished indeed by various orders into thrones, powers, dominions, etc., but which no man in this mortality can easily determine.

Others, sinning against God, did not persist in the truth, but now long ago deserted their original, primeval estate, home and duty, and having been pulled down from the heaven of the blessed to Tartaros and bound under chains of darkness, they wander in the air throughout that lower world under their prince (who is called that old Serpent, the great dragon, also the god and prince of the world, the tempter, devil and Satan).

By their own fault they are evil demons and impure spirits, everywhere adversaries to the glory of God, and the salvation of the godly. But they powerfully dominate and reign over the wicked and those who stubbornly refuse to obey the divine will through seductions or errors and through wickednesses,

shameful acts, worldly lusts and various tricks, deceits, power, idolatry, tyranny and other works proper to the world. In the future, all [these], together with ungodly men, will be cast into eternal fire.

4. In the beginning, God made two people, a man and a woman, and He formed the body of the man from earth, but [that] of the woman from a rib of the man, and gave to them both a rational and immortal spirit. Indeed, He created them in His own image and likeness and placed them in this world, adorned like a most beautiful kingdom for them, even more, in the most pleasant paradise of this world, just as in some majestic palace, and appointed them as lords and princes over the other created things.

5. God also truly adorned them with unclouded understanding, an upright mind, a free will and other sound affections. In fact in that state He sufficiently provided wisdom, integrity and a diversity of grace, not only that they might know correctly to use their glorious authority and dominion over the other creatures, but also that they could, above all, correctly understand the will of God their creator towards themselves and freely subject their own will (by which they would freely rule not just over the other creatures but over their own proper actions) to God as their supreme Lord and Legislator; and by constant obedience they would live not only as they wished but also in the future be blessed with perpetual happiness.

6. Thus this work of creation principally leads man to understand that whatever good he has, he owes all solidly to God and that he is obligated, if He require, to render and consecrate the same wholly to Him. Finally, he is obliged by highest right always to give thanks to Him. For he who has nothing good of himself owes all to Him from whom he has whatever he has, and he ought to glory in Him alone and not in himself.

7. But those who truly advance not only the absolute [i.e., unconditional] election of certain individual men to eternal salvation but also the reprobation of the greatest part of all others to eternal tortures [i.e., supralapsarian Calvinism, which was condemned as heresy, and its advocates anathematized, at the Second Council of Orange in 529 CE], and both indeed peremptory, and did so concerning every individual person by name from all eternity, they not only invert the natural order of things but also deny the true use of creation and plainly take away the native ability resulting from this work, namely, of obligating man to obey God in all things.

For God cannot demand that a man should wholly divest himself of the exercise of his liberty which he received by creation and deprive himself of the use of various pleasures, and in all things subject himself with the greatest labor and trouble, if He already, now before-hand, for no preceding guilt of his own, determined to inflict upon him a much greater and more grievous evil than the good which He gave him through creation, nor indeed, if He bestowed on him that temporal and lighter good in order that He might, under some pretense, inflict an eternal and truly lamentable evil absolutely destined to him before. And neither is a man now justly held to obeying Him who before he was disobedient, indeed before he was able to obey, fatally destined him to this eternal evil.

In addition, not only do the authors of this opinion make God foolish but also most unjust, who certainly destines him who does not yet exist (especially of one whose being is nothing but decreed) to eternal life or death, and consequently the true and proper author of sin. For if God, as they like to say, has predestinated [i.e., unconditionally elected] His innocent creature to an eternal and truly horrendous destruction, it is also necessary that He destined him also to sin, because where there is no sin or transgression there can be no place for punishment or penal perdition [cf. Rom. 5:13], nor a just destination or appointment to any punishment, much less to eternal torments and eternal, endless weeping. Therefore, according to them, even God Himself most properly, and from His first intention, will be the truest cause of sin, for He is the sole cause of destination both for destruction and sin.

Nor can a man now be justly punished for such a sin to which he was absolutely [i.e., unconditionally] divinely destined, and consequently to which, in the end, he was compelled by that most powerful will or decree and ordination of God.

CHAPTER 6:

ON THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

1. Creation is immediately followed by the actual providence of God, which in the interim also extends itself to the work of redemption, first to all ages, then the works and things which are or will be in this world. For this is nothing else than a serious and continual inspection, care and control of the entire universe, but especially of man (for whose good, to the glory of God, all things were composed), or the preservation and sustenance of all creatures, namely, of things and persons, likewise the governing and directing of our actions and of all events (whether they be good or evil) which happen in time by whatever manner to His creatures, but especially to men and most of all to the godly. And this was instituted according to the most exact rule of divine wisdom, justice and equality.

2. This therefore is partly general with respect to all creatures, partly special with respect to angels and men, but most certainly with respect to godly and holy people. By His general providence God cares for and rules all things, whoever and wherever they are, but in different ways and various degrees of action, and that for His own eternal good pleasure and truly admirable wisdom. For He not only conserves their natures or properties and powers, but also uses them according to His will, either for the good or punishment of man, especially seen by God denying, removing, transferring, agitating, stopping, repressing, controlling, multiplying, lessening, stretching, or remitting them, etc., either as [an act of] goodness or grace or mercy and longsuffering, or the contrary, by His revenge or wrath and severity.

The special providence of God about angels, so far indeed as is revealed to us in the Scriptures, was already sufficiently shown concerning their creation. For God uses their service first to manifest His own glory, then to govern all parts of the world; and their excellent wisdom, power, swiftness, number or multitude, etc., certainly that they might instruct, attend, observe, guard [and] console men, or even also to punish them as He judges it by His own glory, or the salvation of His people.

Concerning men, however, or rather about the free and especially religious operations of men, it moves in various manners. For first He limits and circumscribes the liberty of their will by legislation, that man cannot either will or do whatever he wants without sin, and principally for this end, that he may not will nor do except that which is right and just, and this so that, just like a living image, he might reflect his creator, and always remain subject to Him. Then, in order that man might willingly and cheerfully render that obedience, God consecrates a law which He makes with him by notable and great promises and threats. And that He may the more and better elicit and seek the same, He employs various persuasions, exhortations, entreaties, signs, mighty works, etc., with regard to man. He always incites, stimulates, helps and strengthens him, as far indeed as is sufficient, that man might really obey Him and persevere in obedience to the end.

Thirdly, his obedience and actions obediently rendered, with singular care [God] observes, approves and delights in them and always faithfully holds them in memory as worthy of the promised gracious reward, and as such continually sets them before His eyes.

3. Concerning disobedience or sin, in the first place, although He has greatest hatred for it yet He knowingly and willingly permits it, but not with such permission, that being granted, disobedience cannot but follow. For thus disobedience would as necessarily follow from God's permission as an effect from its cause and God would be altogether the author of sin. Indeed sin would no longer be considered sin, much less worthy of eternal punishment. But being granted, man may become actually disobedient (yet not unpunished) if He indeed so wills. For true permission requires not just that the power of the will be free in itself, but also that the use of the power be free with the power of contrary choice, or that it remain immune to all necessity, internal as well as external.

Second, the actions that flow from disobedience according to His infinite wisdom, He variously directs either to this or that object, and to some certain end, to whom and what He pleases. Man himself often knows nothing about it nor suspects any such thing, indeed sometimes against His will. And He so determines them, that they do not always happen when the devil and wicked men would want them to be, neither are so many, nor so grievous, nor last so long, as they would desire.

Third, being done, He punishes or forgives as seems good to Himself. But He never decrees that evil actions should happen, nor does He approve or love them. Neither does He ever properly order or command them, nor cause or seek them, nor incite or compel them, nor does He Himself administer it so that He could punish and revenge it. But He always seriously hates and refuses them, and for this reason also, in holiness, He prohibits and forbids them and in the end severely punishes sinners for them, especially the rebellious and obstinate.

4. The method of this providence varies, first in quantity, then in quality. Regarding quantity, because first it does not primarily nor equally extend its care and affection to all objects. For it attends first to men and then other animals, and among men, to the godly more than the ungodly, and among those that are excellent, that is, those who excel above others in virtues, or ministries, or divine gifts, whether in the church or the republic, who belong to that saying of the Apostle, "Does God not care for oxen?"

Secondly, He delights in and favors more internal actions which are morally good in themselves, than of just any persons. For not because some person pleases Him is He pleased about such actions. But to the contrary, because He is pleased with these actions, therefore He is pleased about the person.

Third, He often employs greater patience, longsuffering and tolerance with people not yet doing their duty, whether because of crass ignorance due to the corruption of the times [in which] they labor, or because of a sinful habit, perhaps more profoundly rooted, which is difficult to put off, than with who are illuminated and resist against an enlightened conscience either constantly or repeatedly, or frequently relapse.

Fourth, concerning the truly godly and those already doing their duty, He ordinarily employs greater affection, pleasure, zeal and care about them than others. Whence also He affords them more and greater assistances of grace, gifts of His Holy Spirit and means of salvation than to others. Indeed when they fall through infirmity He is accustomed to bear them with greater tolerance and patience and more ardent zeal than the rest.

Fifth and finally, about those who plainly do not do their duty, and are guilty of prolonged defiance and rebellion, He almost employs greater hatred and wrath towards them than towards any other sinners, namely, not rarely sending upon them heavier curses, sometimes even by blinding, hardening, or delivering them to the efficacy of error, to their own corrupt desires and to a reprobate mind (which can neither commend what is right, nor justly commend itself to any other), indeed to the power of Satan himself who powerfully works in the sons of defiance.

Lastly, sometimes He magnificently displays of His just wrath and terrible power in them by punishing them exemplarily and openly, just as in the theatre of the world in broad daylight and in the sight of others.

5. It varies in quality, because, first, concerning some objects, either in effecting or impending or controlling them. God uses His absolute and irresistible omnipotence; concerning others He uses concourse and assistance, truly accommodated to things, almost tempered to our own nature. Second, some things He works immediately by Himself, some things [He works] mediately by angels, men or other creatures. Third, some things He accomplishes by an almost physical action. Some He executes by an ethical or moral one. And both are done according to the natures and faculties implanted in things through creation, rarely above, but never against. Finally, He optimally administers all things, that is, almost always consistent to His own nature and the nature of things.

6. Therefore, although divine providence always intervenes in all human deeds, words and thoughts, and through it God manages all outward actions and events of all things according to His will alone, still, by it He never takes away the natural contingency of things and the innate liberty of the human will, once given long ago in creation, but ordinarily He leaves the natures of things safe. And thus it concurs with the will of man in acting that He permits it also to act according to its own nature and freely performs its part, and therefore does not at any time impose on it the absolute necessity of doing well, much less of doing evil.

7. Therefore nothing happens anywhere in the entire world rashly or by chance, that is, God either not knowing, or ignoring, or idly observing it, much less looking on, still less together reluctantly even unwillingly and not even willing to permit it. For truly there is nothing either good or evil which is fatally or not contingently done by man or by absolute necessity, that is, God either violently compelling their wills to this or that, by offering some irresistible power, some absolute and always efficacious decree (whether you will call it effective or permissive, as some foolishly say), or some other way of acting.

8. Therefore, through the true providence of God wisely and righteously governing all things in a holy manner, no place is ever left in the world either for the blind fortune and brute rashness of the Epicureans, nor for the unyielding, fatal necessity of the Stoics, Manicheans, or Predestinarians [those who vie for the error of unconditional election]. These two rocks, extremely prejudicial and dangerous indeed in this subject, are especially to be avoided. Furthermore, those who are truly godly, being rightly informed about all these things and patient in whatever adversity, will always give thanks to God in prosperity, and in addition, in the future they will freely and continuously place their greatest hope in God, their most faithful Father.

CHAPTER 7:

ON THE SIN AND MISERY OF MAN.

1. Both these works of the divine goodness about which we spoke, namely creation and providence, are followed by the special work of grace and mercy, when sin itself was granted a certain occasion, and that which followed the sin, the just punishment or the penal or miserable condition of man, from which believers are freely delivered by Christ, concerning which things we will pursue later in order.

2. Sin was brought into the world on this account. God gave to the man, being created with such faculties as we have said, a law of not eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, placed in the middle of the garden, under the pain of eternal death and various other miseries. That law was broken, however, by Adam, together with his wife, who was seduced by Satan and deceived by his false persuasions.

It was broken, I say, not so much by a spontaneous will, but by a truly free one. Because he was not forced either by any outward violent impulse or some secret and hidden determination or necessity (whether proceeding from God [by decree], or the devil) to will to pluck or eat the forbidden fruit. Nor did he fall into sin through any subtraction or negation of some divine virtue or action [such as grace] necessary for avoiding sin (which some amateurishly call permission or an efficacious permissive decree).

Finally, he was not impelled or moved to transgression by God through any command, order or instinct, however secret or hidden (namely, that God might have an opportunity of exercising His forbearing mercy, and punitive justice), as some perversely teach. For God would truly, properly and especially, in fact solely, be the author of sin. Indeed, such a transgression would not be a true sin, neither could the man by that sin be truly guilty or justly miserable.

Furthermore, God was not seeking from this an opportunity of exercising His true mercy or true justice. But the man committed this sin by the pure liberty of his will, immune to any internal or external necessity. On God's part, only His permission entered in, and on the devil's, only his persuasion, which the man could easily have resisted and not given ear, and the external beauty and grace of the fruit going before and enticing.

3. Through this transgression the man was made liable to eternal death and multiple miseries from the power of the divine threat and was stripped of that primeval happiness which he received in creation. Thus he was ejected from that most delightful garden (a type of the heavenly paradise) in which he otherwise happily conversed with God, and was perpetually barred from the tree of life, which was a symbol of blessed immortality.

4. Because Adam was the stock and root of the whole human race, he therefore involved and implicated not only himself, but also all his posterity (as if they were contained in his loins and went forth from him by natural generation) in the same death and misery with himself, so that all men without any discrimination, only our Lord Jesus Christ excepted, are by this one sin of Adam deprived of that primeval happiness, and destitute of true righteousness necessary for achieving eternal life, and consequently are now born subject to that eternal death of which we spoke, and manifold miseries.

And this is customarily and vulgarly [of one's natural tongue or language] called original sin, concerning which it must also be held that the most kind God, in His beloved Son Jesus Christ, just as a second and new Adam, has prepared for all a remedy for this general evil which we derived from Adam. So even from this [original sin] sufficiently appears the hurtful error of those who are accustomed to lay a foundation for the decree of absolute reprobation in this sin.

5. Besides this sin are the proper or actual sins of each and every man, which also really multiply our guilt before God and obscure our mind concerning spiritual matters. Indeed little by little they blind [us], and finally deprave our will more and more by the habit of sinning.

6. Of this manner of sins there are various species and degrees, as may be understood from their various objects, subjects, causes, modes, effects and circumstances, namely, one of commission [doing what ought not be done], another of omission [not doing what ought to be done], one of the flesh, another of the spirit; one from ignorance, another from sudden passion or infirmity, and another originating from resolute malice; one against conscience, another not against conscience; one reigning, another not reigning; one to death, another not to death; one against the Holy Spirit, another not against the Holy Spirit, etc.

It must always be held concerning them that there are some actual sins of which it is either expressly written or not obscurely indicated that he who does them cannot share in the kingdom of heaven and eternal life, such as all the works of the flesh which are described in Galatians 5, 1 Corinthians 6 and Ephesians 5, Titus 3 and others, and those that are similar to them, whether they are accompanied with contempt of God and a manifest abuse of right reason, or whether they are at least [such as] are not the least becoming for one who desires eternal and heavenly good. Such are the love of the world, and

worldly things, anxious and perpetual cares and concerns about getting them, possessing and retaining them, etc.

For truly there are others which deserve to be called lighter slips rather than crimes, for which, in consequence of the gracious covenant of God and His fatherly kindness, a man is not excluded from the hope of eternal life, although he is not entirely set free from some of them if he does not knowingly and foreseeingly cast this difficulty of freeing himself from them upon himself, or by any other means whatever of continuing in them, but that he falls into them only through thoughtlessness, frailty, lack of attention, or some sudden passion, whether it arises from some natural temperament, or evil practice, or some unexpected chance, etc.

Therefore acts here are almost always accurately to be distinguished from habits and, in that respect, manifest imperfections and frailties from those acts committed against the express and ready dictate of natural reason or supernatural revelation, and accompanied with an open transgression of some commandment and injury of our neighbor (especially according to the sense of the New Testament).

7. Various punishments are ordained by God for the diverse quantity or quality of sins, namely, first of condemnation, then of sense, whether temporal or eternal; finally, whether bodily or spiritual, etc.

8. For that twofold power and efficacy of sin of which mention was made above (indeed damnation or eternal death, and the servitude of sin, or captivity under the practice of sin), most clearly appeared long ago, in that God did not plainly and fully reveal His saving grace, destined before the ages for sinners, but revealed it only from afar, obscurely and almost as if through a Lattice, namely, under a general promise of His grace and favor, under the type and shadow of corporal things.

For even if in the Old Testament they were not entirely lacking those who believed in God by the assistance of that divine grace and by faith walked blamelessly and sincerely before Him; and by a life ordered according to the will of God, shook off the dominion of sin, and by that living faith also were truly justified or absolved from the guilt of their sins, and granted the reward of eternal life, as is clear in the examples of Abel, Enoch, and Abraham the father of all who believe, etc.

Yet most were burdened by sin and overwhelmed with the weight of their misery. For in the beginning, when there was as yet no written law received, still the dictates of natural reason, paternal traditions and some other God-ordained divine and angelic revelations and apparitions did thrive among men. Sin was not only in the world, but also so exerted its power, that all flesh (with few excepted, who were just and by faith walked before God in holiness) corrupted its way, and every imagination of man was only evil from childhood. By this, the guilt of sin was so increased at that time that a universal flood was brought upon the world of the ungodly.

9. Then, after the flood, sin was not only not washed away, but rather like leaven, diffused and spread throughout the whole human race so that all peoples, nations and regions thoroughly polluted themselves with idolatry and other foul and abominable sins. In the greatest and most ample communities there hardly existed ten righteous men.

Finally, when God passed by other nations, He chose some certain men to Himself from the mob of idolaters and sinners to Himself, and out of His special grace established with their posterity a written law of many and various commandments (moral, ceremonial, political) as a burdensome and insupportable yoke and garrison, that they might be better restrained from sinning, and compelled to do their duty, also consecrated it with most severe threats and multiplied promises. In fact, He constantly provided messages of His gracious will and pleasure to be repeated and pressed upon them by the prophets and His other servants for the ample impeding of transgressions.

Nevertheless, sin conquered, its dominion was by no means destroyed by that law, the guilt was not removed by the blood of bulls and goats and other sacrifices of that kind. But sin increased more and more, stimulated by the law like an embedded thorn, and the guilt of death and condemnation were so aggravated that the whole world was shut up under sin and liable to condemnation.

10. It was from this that the highest necessity and also advantage of divine grace, prepared for us in Christ the Savior before the ages, clearly appeared. For without it we could neither shake off the miserable yoke of sin, nor do anything truly good in all religion, nor finally ever escape eternal death or any true punishment of sin. Much less could we at any time obtain eternal salvation without it or through ourselves.

CHAPTER 8:

ON THE WORK OF REDEMPTION, AND THE PERSON AND OFFICES OF CHRIST.

1. Wherefore it seemed good to the most merciful God, in the end of the age or in the fullness of time, to begin and properly execute that most excellent work which He had foreknown or proposed [purposed] in Himself before the foundation of the world, and [which] in passing ages He had indicated under various figures, shadows and types (almost as in a rude sketch), that it might be seen at a distance and obscurely known by mortals, namely, the work of Redemption or a New Covenant, by which He would deliver man, made liable to eternal death and condemnation and lying under the miserable bondage of sin, from that guilt by His mercy and grace alone, restore him to the hope of an eternal and immortal life and supply sufficient, indeed super-abundant, powers for shaking off the dominion of sin and obeying the will of God with a whole heart.

2. God accomplished this work through His unique, only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom He manifestly sent into the world, not only that He might by Him most openly declare to us and in various ways confirm His most merciful will concerning His freely bestowing eternal life upon sinners who seriously repent and truly believe, but also indeed, that as far as it is in Him, He might gradually lead us to that desired end through His most holy obedience and the efficacious operation of His Holy Spirit.

3. Furthermore, the entire knowledge about the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, as far indeed as is necessary for salvation, is chiefly contained in two parts. For it pertains partly to the person and partly to the office. In respect of His person, Jesus Christ is true and perfectly just man, in one and the same person. For as the natural, only begotten, and proper Son of God, [seen] in 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Pet. 2:22; 3:18,

in the fullness of time, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, He was made man true and complete and born of the Virgin Mary, without any stain of sin.

4. And He was made not only a true or complete man with respect to His substance, consisting certainly of a truly human body and rational soul, but also truly subject to the same infirmities, passions, labors, afflictions, straits, pains, griefs, shames, reproaches and even the most bitter, to death, and for the very purpose that being in all things made like to His brothers (yet without sin) He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, for expiating the sins of the people, etc. And this is proposed by that Article of the Apostles' Creed concerning Christ Jesus, "I believe in Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary."

5. The office of Jesus Christ is threefold: prophetic, priestly, and kingly, which the whole, in part, He faithfully administered now long ago in this world under that state of humiliation and abasement, and now also in part gloriously administers in heaven in a state of glory and exaltation. To the prior state pertain the following articles: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, He descended into hell." By these, as if by certain degrees, the entire humiliation of Jesus Christ, which was gradually consummated, clearly became Him as our prophet, and priest. To the latter these are to be referred: "The third day He arose from the dead, ascended to Heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." By these things is excellently described, partly a certain preparation to both the regal and priestly dignity of Jesus Christ and partly His very dignity in Himself, and of the magnificent display of the same.

6. He has entirely fulfilled His prophetic ministry, not only when He openly explained to us the will of God through sharing the Gospel of true salvation or eternal life after death to all who truly believe and obey, but also brilliantly confirmed by manifest signs and miracles too great to be questioned, and also by the example of His own proper obedience, brilliantly confirmed in both His life and death, and moreover after His death solidly asserted and proved by various arguments for forty days.

7. His priestly ministry He partly attended to long ago, when by the Father's command, whose will humbly bearing, He submitted to the cursed death of the cross for us, and offered Himself to God the Father as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the entire human race, and though innocent, suffered Himself to be sacrificed upon the alter of the cross. In part, He still daily performs the same, while resurrected He continually appears before the face of God in heaven for the sake of men and effectively and gloriously intercedes for believers, exhibiting Himself indeed always and everywhere as a most faithful advocate and patron to them.

8. His kingly office He already perpetually exercises, since, being once revived from death by the Father and raised to the throne of supreme majesty in heaven, and placed at the right hand of God in the highest, and having gained all power in heaven and earth, He magnificently rules everywhere.

Indeed He administrates all things according to His own will, that in the first place He may consider the safety of His believers, namely, since not only has He long ago instituted the ministry of the Gospel for our good, but also powerfully preserves it uninterrupted against all types of obstacles and therein still admirably exerts His own spiritual efficacy. And He powerfully guards, protects and defends His faithful

subjects in this life by the Spirit and His ministering angels against the schemes, frauds, snares, force and power of Satan, tyrants and all their other enemies, until in the last judgment He utterly destroys the latter, and takes the former up into His heavenly and immortal glory and renders them eternally happy and blessed. And indeed upon these offices is built both the knowledge and worship of Jesus Christ Himself, insofar as He is the Mediator, about which [we will say] more later, in its place.

9. But from this it appears that Jesus Christ is not our Savior for just one reason, namely, for His office, example and suffering; nor only because He declared to us the way of eternal salvation and confirmed it by miracles; likewise the example of His life and death and in this way acquired for Himself supreme power and virtue to save us; but indeed it rises from His virtue of merit and efficacy before God, and immediately provided for us.

Indeed by this merit, whether He earned eternal salvation for us because of His obedience, or because of that mediation, especially of His violent and bloody death (just as a λουτρόν, or price of redemption, and propitiatory sacrifice), God has thus far reconciled all sinners to Himself [2 Cor. 5:19], in order to restore them by His grace through and because of this ransom and sacrifice [by means of faith in Christ], and He willed to open the door of eternal salvation [which was previously shut] and the way of immortality to them, even as it was prefigured many ages before under various types, figures and shadows of the Old Testament, and especially under the type of that solemn sacrifice, which the high priest performed once every year in the holy of holies.

Truly He is our Savior by efficacy, in as much as He efficaciously applies the virtue and fruit of His merit to His believers, and really gives them to enjoy of all the benefits gained by His obedience, and makes them partakers of these things by faith, about which [we will say] more later.

10. But they enervate, indeed they completely overthrow, the universal power of His merit and the truth of its efficacy, who assert that both the absolute [decreed, unconditional] election and reprobation of certain persons (whether considered before the fall [supralapsarianism], or only in or under the Fall [infralapsarianism], without regard for faith in Christ, or to the contrary, disobedience) was made first in order, before Jesus Christ was designated by the Father to be a Mediator for them. For neither was it necessary that there be any true expiation of sins by the ransom of Christ for them, nor indeed was it even possible (if truth may be frankly spoken) for those who were long before by name peremptorily and absolutely [unconditionally] predestined, part to life, part to death.

For the Elect, as they call them, or those who are predestinated to life, have no need of any such expiation and reconciliation because they have been absolutely elected to salvation. They are in the flaming grace of God and are already esteemed by God with the highest and immutable love that belongs to sons and heirs of God.

But concerning the reprobate, as they call them, they themselves deny any atonement was truly made for them, and besides being something absurd in itself, of course it implies a contradiction. For once they were reprobated, according to the opinion of these men, they are thereupon wholly altogether excluded from the atonement made by Christ. Because those whom God has by an immutable decree once reprobated from salvation or cursed to eternal destruction, He does not seriously will, nor can will,

that anything good should really be conferred for salvation, much less that the atonement should be shared by them with the elect. And this concludes the summation of the special works of God.

CHAPTER 9:

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL, REVEALED IN THE NEW COVENANT.

1. Further, the will of God, comprehended in the gracious covenant which our greatest prophet, the only begotten Son of God, clearly and fully revealed to us in His Gospel, is embraced in two principle heads. First, those things which God for His part decreed to do in us or about us [or through us] by His Son Jesus Christ, that we may be made partakers of that eternal salvation offered by Him. Second, those things which He wholly wills to be done by us through His own grace, if we really want to obtain eternal salvation.

2. Those things which God decreed to do for His part in order to provide our salvation, are principally two. 1. He decreed for the honor of His beloved Son to choose for Himself sons [and daughters] through Him to salvation and life eternal, to adopt, justify, seal with His Holy Spirit and finally to glorify all those and only those truly believing in His name, or obeying His Gospel, and persevering in faith and obedience until death, and to the contrary, to reprobate unbelievers and the impenitent from life and salvation and to damn them perpetually. 2. He has decreed through His same Son, to confer to all that are called, although miserable sinners, such efficacious grace through which they may really believe in their Christ the Savior, obey His gospel and be freed from the dominion and guilt of sin, indeed also through which they may really believe, obey and be freed, unless by a new defiance and rebellion they reject the grace offered by God.

3. The first decree is the decree of predestination to salvation, or election to glory, by which is established the true necessity and at the same time the usefulness of our faith and obedience for obtaining salvation and glory. But to dogmatically establish some other anterior, prior decree by which certain individual people were peremptorily [without debate] elected by name to glory and all others were reprobated to eternal torture, is indeed to deny the true nature of this decree, to invert right order, to take away the merit of Jesus Christ, to obscure the glory of divine goodness, righteousness and wisdom, and indeed utterly to subvert the true power and efficacy of the whole sacred ministry, and thus of all religion.

4. The second decree is the decree of calling to faith or election to grace, by which is established the necessity and at the same time the usefulness of divine grace, or of the means necessary for us to yield faith and obedience to Jesus Christ according to the will of God, revealed in His Gospel. Because truly we ought first to be sure about that will of God which He wants us to yield to Him, than of the grace necessary for fulfilling that will, of the glory promised to be conferred to those performing the divine will. It is for this that we shall treat them all henceforth in the same order in which they have been proposed.

CHAPTER 10:

ON THE COMMANDMENTS OF CHRIST IN GENERAL: FAITH AND REPENTANCE, OR TURNING TO GOD.

1. The will of God, which He desires to be performed by us that we might obtain eternal salvation through Christ, is fully contained in the commandments of Jesus Christ, all of which, although they may be many and varied, still may be comprehended under this one commandment of faith in Jesus Christ (but true or living faith, working through charity) and usually are comprehended under it in the Sacred Scripture. At the same time, it must be granted that often the commandment of repentance or conversion ought to be closely connected, in order to clarify the exegesis of the matter.

2. But we call living and true faith that which necessarily has joined to itself good works and a sincere correction of the whole life, structured upon the commandments of Jesus Christ. For because the promise of eternal life is everywhere joined by our Savior to true faith, indeed faith itself is said to be imputed for righteousness to the one who believes, yet nevertheless James affirms that we are justified by works also and not by faith alone [cf. also Eph. 2:10].

For Paul also asserts that godliness has promise for the present and the future life. Indeed further, the author to the Hebrews [which the Remonstrants did not name as being Paul] peremptorily [dogmatically] declares that without holiness none will see the Lord and not a few others of the same opinion are expressly read in the Holy Scriptures. It is certainly necessary that the prescription of faith is not to be considered in any other way than as to include the obedience of faith in its own natural property, and is like a fruitful mother of all good works and the fountain or spring of all Christian godliness and holiness. There is no reason why it ought or rightly may be opposed to obedience and godliness.

3. Therefore, for this reason faith encompasses the whole conversion of man as prescribed by the Gospel, which not only contains what is vulgarly [in one's own tongue or language] called penitence or contrition and serious sorrow for past sins, but also repentance plainly and properly taken, or a sincere change for the better of the mind, soul and the whole life according to the Scriptures. Sometimes, however, in order to fuller explain them both, they are distinguished from one another.

4. For concerning this, every Christian in general must hold that for repentance or conversion to be pleasing to God for salvation, three things are ordinarily necessary.

That it be effectual and therefore is not completed by willing alone and mere emotion, or bare zeal for godliness. But it must always outwardly exert itself through acts of virtue, as often as there is occasion and can be done, clearly so that one does not neglect what is commanded, nor willfully does works which he knows are evil or forbidden or which he doubts is pleasing to God, neither easily overlooks the sins of others and approves them by his consent, silence, disregard or by other means.

That it be sincere and therefore not only proceed from a certain and solid knowledge of the divine will, but it also supposes a true and honest soul, that is, which does not arise from a divided, dissembling, feigned heart, but from one which is complete and whole.

That it be continual and therefore that it not be performed only once, or for certain times, almost at intervals, nor endure only for a time, but that it persists to the end of our life, that is, until God Himself puts an end to our obedience. But it is a rewarding work that we give special consideration to these heads of faith and good works.

CHAPTER 11:

ON FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

1. Faith in Jesus Christ is a deliberate and firm assent of the mind placed in the Word of God, joined with true trust in Christ by which we not only firmly assent to the doctrine of Jesus Christ as true and divine, but whereby we totally rest in Jesus Christ Himself as our only prophet, priest, and king, given to us by God for salvation purely by grace, so that we do not doubt to expect from Him alone, as our only redeemer, salvation and eternal life, but unobtainable except by reason of that way which He Himself has revealed in His Word.

2. Therefore knowledge alone of the divine will does not suffice for true and saving faith, or understanding of all the concepts are contained in the Gospel. For this is possible without assent and trust. Indeed, it really is in the demons [James 2:19], and in many of the ungodly and unbelieving. Nor indeed is it any assent whatever, namely sudden, perfunctory [acting with indifference], implicit, brutish or blind, ungrounded in reason and yielded without judgment. For this by itself, is not saving, nor can it ever sufficiently move the will to any rational and free obedience. And therefore [assent] is not rarely found in those who live little like Christians, but it must be entirely firm and solid, strengthened by the command of a deliberate will.

Finally, assent which is faithful and obedient is called faith, not just in absolute confidence of special mercy, almost as if already secured, namely, by which I believe that my sins are already forgiven me (for this is not the essential form which constitutes justifying faith, but only a certain additional consequent, indeed it necessarily presupposes saving faith itself, as its prerequisite condition), but by which I firmly establish that it is impossible that I should escape eternal death and to the contrary obtain eternal life by any other means than Jesus Christ, and in any other way than by that prescribed by Him. And hence this has always had joined to it our debt of new obedience to Jesus Christ, that is, not some sterile purpose of obeying or feelings without effect, but which continually brings forth of itself true and actual obedience.

3. From these things we conclude, if faith is such assent as we have said, namely, that which was seriously commanded by God under the promise of eternal life and the contrary threat of death and performed by man according to the commandment of God, then it cannot therefore be effected in us without us, neither is it produced through an irresistible power or omnipotent operation of God (by

whatever name or title it is called) in our wills, which we cannot oppose. For what we merely, purely suffer from God and whatever are produced in us by God's invincible omnipotence without us, these do not fall under any commandment properly called, nor can they justly come under the name of obedience. Hence, they cannot be justly bestowed reward or recompense or judged worthy of any praise or consideration.

4. And that this assent may be commodiously drawn from us, two things are necessary. 1. Such arguments proposed to by God which cannot be opposed as incredible or unworthy of being believed. 2. Godly teachableness or honesty of mind in the one of whom this faith is demanded. "For all do not have faith. And he who wants to do the will of God will recognize" (or understand) "whether a doctrine of Christ is from God or not. But he who does what is evil, he hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds be reprov'd. But he who does the truth, he comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested, that they are done by God." Likewise, "He who is of God, hears the Word of God. For this reason you" (the wicked) "do not hear, because you are not from God." Likewise, "You do not believe, because you are not my sheep."

5. Therefore, this understanding of this type of confident assent or obedient trust is precisely true and living faith, which necessarily draws with it the observation of the commandments of Jesus Christ or good works. For he who truly trusts and is certainly persuaded that Jesus Christ is ordained by God to be the author of salvation for all and only those who obey Him, live godly and holy lives, and that it is impossible that men should arrive at eternal salvation or escape eternal death but through the way of true obedience or good works, he, far from doubt and filled with good hope, will both willingly and cheerfully enter this way. And by true repentance, or a change of mind, will and all his actions for the better, he will contend for eternal glory, if he rightly and duly has considered within himself what is eternal salvation and eternal death.

6. Nevertheless, because those who are recently converted to the faith for the most part usually labor under the practice of sinning, from this it happens that this assent, although deliberate and strong, does not immediately, entirely shake off that habit of sin, especially having now been deeply rooted by long practice. But he acquires greater strength by steps and degrees, and there arise from this three classes or orders for those who believe and repent, or are regenerate, that is, of those who by faith do good works.

The first order are the beginners, which indeed truly assent to the Gospel but because of the long practice of sin, and the ingrown habit of it, with great labor, trouble and wrestling with the flesh, ever boiling up and resisting against the Spirit (or their mind illuminated by the Spirit of God through the Gospel) dominate and subjugate their [soul] and subdue their assaults and motions. The second are the proficient, who, by the benefit of faith have for some time accustomed themselves to some more strict and confined life and exercised themselves somewhat more in godliness, more easily and with less resistance restrain themselves from the practice of sinning, even if sometimes they feel no light struggle about it within themselves. The third are adults, or those who are in some respects mature, that is, those who work at holiness with pleasure, joy and a certain delight, and love justice and truth with all

their heart, all their soul and with all their strength, so that the Scripture affirms principally about them, that they do not sin, indeed, that they cannot sin, etc.

Not that they never could commit or never really do commit some failure, however small, through some error or some sudden passion, or other similar infirmity (especially in some grave temptation) any offense or miscarriage ("for there is no man on Earth who does not sin"), but that they have now entirely put off all vicious habits, and abstain from the practice of sinning. And therefore, if by chance they fall into some sin (which still does not happen except very rarely, and they truly remain regenerate), it happens only through error or surprise, or some clouding each and every one, that they are truly born again through the grace and Spirit of God, or they are truly believers and repenters, provided that they diligently labor in order that they may be entirely free from the vicious practice of sinning, and continually strive more and more to correct those infirmities which for the most part all are more or less liable, depending on their age, temperament, place, state, condition and of other circumstances. Both indeed we religiously believe are possible to do through entirely necessary grace of God.

7. Even if it is true that those who are adept in the habit of faith and holiness can only with difficulty fall back to their former profaneness and dissoluteness of life, yet we believe that it is entirely possible, if not rarely done, that they fall back little by little and until they completely lack their prior faith and charity. And having abandoned the way of righteousness, they revert to their worldly impurity which they had truly left, returning like pigs to wallowing in the mud and dogs to their vomit, and are again entangled in lusts of the flesh which they had formerly, truly fled. And thus totally and at length also they are finally torn from the grace of God unless they seriously repent in time.

And yet in the meantime we do not absolutely deny it is possible that those who have once truly believed, when they fall back to their former profanity of life, may be renewed again by [the benefit of] divine grace, become good men, even if we believe that it usually rarely happens and with great difficulty. But as often as it happens by the grace of God with such as these, we judge that they are placed entirely among the number of the truly godly, repentant and truly saved, if indeed they persevere in this renewed conversion.

CHAPTER 12:

ON TYPES OF GOOD WORKS, AND AN EXPOSITION OF THE DECALOGUE.

1. Some good works are common to all Christians in general; others are proper to certain vocations [callings]. The sum of those which are common to all Christians alike without distinction may be comprised under these three headings: 1. In our loving of God and our neighbor [as ourselves], which is wholly contained in the moral law as it was expounded by Jesus Christ. 2. In the directing or denying ourselves. 3. In daily praying to God, and giving Him thanks for His benefits received.

2. The Decalogue [the Ten Commandments] is the epitome of the moral law, which is contained in two tables, of which the first contains four commandments and the second six. The one immediately and

firstly refers to loving God, the other entirely to the love of our neighbor. For the most part, both of them have general and entirely negative commandments, which are absolutely binding everywhere and always, but under which are also comprehended affirmative and not a few special commandments everywhere in the Scriptures, to both of which it is necessary that a Christian soul always carefully attend.

3. The first commandment of the former tablet commands that we have no other god (much less other gods) before Him, the one true God; or beyond Him, that is, neither do we devise one according to our will, or by tradition from others, without the express command of God, admit anything (whether true or feigned or fabricated, whether alive or dead, whether rational or irrational) to which we would either directly or indirectly attribute either natural or divine power or properties or actions or divine authority or rule over us.

Nor that we honor it with any actions, either internal or external, which may show a certain opinion of divinity attributed to it. Such are acts of religious worship, namely, of due faith in God and Christ, together with hope, trust, love, fear, adoration, invocation and from this arise proportional praise and thanksgiving; likewise external sacrifice, oaths, vows, or other similar acts of holy devotion. For whoever gives such an honor to any thing or person, or performs such acts as these, he is said in Scripture to hold that thing or person for his god.

Therefore the meaning of the commandment is that we must carefully avoid all idolatry, both internal and external, and on the contrary, that we must make religious worship to the one true God who revealed Himself to us in His Word, that is, that we correctly know, love and fear with holiness, submissively adore, humbly invoke, praise and celebrate Him with a grateful mind, and perpetually place all our hope and trust in Him alone as the only author and fountain of all good.

4. The second commandment is that "we neither worship nor reverence images, or likenesses of any type." That is, that we do not fall prostrate before statues, pictures or any other images (whether true or imagined, whether something which really is or a figment which is not, whether man, beast, angel or anything else, in heaven or on earth), or perform for them or concerning them any manner of external works which the Sacred Scripture clearly affirms to be signs of religious worship due only to God; indeed even when a man professes and openly declares that he does not hold as a god those images or likenesses before whom he does those things.

For in this manner of forbidden worship, God does not judge actions according to the mind of the worshiper, but rather judges the mind by the actions, so that men are said to make that an idol, and really call it their god and father, which they venerate in this manner, even if they know it is nothing but stone or wood, and indeed also protest that they hold it [as] such. But to the contrary, we are warned against every kind of external idolatry, just as the Apostle John warns us, and that we "flee from idols," namely, being assured by the Apostle Paul that "the temple of God has no communion with idols." Finally, that in spirit and truth, wherever we may be, we always worship, adore and venerate the one true God, who is most severely zealous of His glory, according to what was prescribed in His Word, even in an outward manner.

5. The third commandment is that "we do not use the name of God in vain or rashly," that is, that in our words or speech (whether we want to either affirm or deny, promise or threaten anything) we do not use the magnificent name of God irreverently or lightly. But especially that we never blaspheme it, or swear rashly, inconsiderately or falsely by it. And finally, that we do not deceive or seduce others by boasting in the divine name (as the false prophets of old often did).

But on the contrary, that when speaking of God and divine things, we use those words and that speech which are fullest both of holiness and godly dignity, and also most reverential of God and the sacred Scripture. And that our speech, as instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, be yes and no; or if at any time it is necessary to take an oath (which indeed even now is entirely permitted for Christians in case of true necessity, namely, when the glory of God and the salvation of men is concerned), that by no means we falsely, rashly or without truth or necessity invoke that most holy and tremendous majesty as witness and avenger of truth against our souls; but also not without the highest reverence, godly submission of mind, decorous gesture and sincere and candid words.

6. As far as what pertains to the fourth commandment concerning sanctifying the seventh day or the Sabbath, it was indeed strictly to be observed in the Old Testament; but because the difference of days was entirely removed by Jesus Christ in the times of the New Testament (Rom. 14:5, 6; Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:16), no Christian is absolutely bound to its observation.

But in the interim, because we read that the first day of the week, which is usually called the Lord's, was dedicated by the primitive church for sacred assemblies and exercises, and mostly because to be unoccupied for external and godly exercises is a thing worthy of praise in itself, we judge that Christians do rightly and piously following the example of the primitive church not to neglect to preserve this pious practice (unless some more grave necessity forces them to do otherwise), and set apart the first day of the week; yet far from all Jewish superstition, as almost holy from the rest, and to that end refrain from all unnecessary works in order that they may be able to attend attentively to divine and celestial meditations and other godly duties without any distraction.

And to the contrary, those who do otherwise we consider as violators of the public order and decency. And this concludes the commandments of the first tablet. The second follows.

7. The first commandment of the second tablet, or fifth in order, is honor to parents; that is, that we furnish to them due reverence or honor and love, not only with external words and gestures, but also a submissive mind and sincere affection. Indeed, that we commend ourselves to them by prompt obedience and free and cheerful compliance.

However, always in the Lord, that is, in nothing but those things which rightly agree with the commandments of the Supreme Lord of all, Jesus Christ, or at least not repugnant to them. (For when there is a conflict [between obeying Christ or our parents], we are even commanded to hate and forsake our parents.)

Finally, that we repay them in turn and render all gratitude from the heart for the benefits which we have formerly received, namely, by helping their necessities, living with their infirmities, modestly hiding

or kindly excusing and leniently interpreting their faults, tolerating especially their harshness and fussiness with patience and forbearance and, as far as possible, gently and humanely correcting them.

8. But under the name of "parents" are customarily included not only parents properly called, but also all other superiors, namely, lords or owners, tutors or guardians, schoolmasters, pastors, elders, especially good and godly magistrates, who indeed bear the place of parents; that is, who rule their subjects by just laws and fair judgments and indeed defend the good and innocent against the injuries of the wicked, but repress and restrain criminals and profligates with just terror.

Indeed, out of love for the public good and zeal of true justice (yet always having regard for Christian clemency, moderation and lenience) they do not let them go unpunished. And so they bestow rewards on the good, punishments to the evil, and to each whatever is just.

And finally, they protect and defend their faithful subjects when necessity plainly so requires it, and when after all calm remedies are tried in vain and it cannot be otherwise, even by the sword against all unjust power (as far as they can preserve Christian godliness and charity). To whom in return their subjects are held to render not just honor and respect, but also to pay tribute, and taxes, and other duties of obedience in kind. This is so very true that they ought not to deny this even with hard and unjust magistrates, as long as they can do so with the preservation of a clear conscience.

9. The sixth commandment is that "we do not kill," that is, that we never by design prejudice the life or health of our neighbor. And if perhaps he is our enemy by whom we have been wounded or injured, that we do not harm him from a feeling of revenge, nor pray for any evil, much less inflict it. But we must be always averse to all unjust wrath, hatred and spirit of revenge, and everywhere declare the same by our words, gestures, and deeds.

And to the contrary, not only do we wish him well with the mind, but also that we bless him with our mouth and tongue, and wish, vow and pray for all things healthful to him in both body and soul; and furthermore, that we really do good to him by our strengths and faculties and come to his need. If he hungers, by feeding him. If he thirsts, by giving him drink. If he is naked, by clothing him. If he is sick, by visiting him. If he is a captive, by consoling him. If he offended us, by forgiving him. And finally, if he wills, wishes and does evil to us, that we do all the contrary to him and so conquer evil with good.

10. The seventh commandment is that "we do not commit adultery," that is, that we do not for any reason, whether we are free or bound, lustfully defile our neighbor's bed or violate his purity. And in particular that we carefully avoid polygamy and all voluntary divorces (except in case of adultery), and we take precautions against marrying a person deserted for any other cause than adultery. That we keep far from fornication, wandering lust and all impurity, and their occasions and provocations, whether in marriage or a life of celibacy. And to the contrary, that we always and everywhere anxiously exercise continence, chastity, modesty and honesty, even in words and gestures.

11. The eighth commandment that "we do not steal," that is, that we do not strive to take or retain for ourselves the goods of our neighbor (whether public or private, whether sacred or profane) by any

illegitimate means, whether by force, fraud or deceit. Instead, we avert and prevent all damage to him, as far as it lies with us.

Therefore, if he happen to be simple, we will not cheat him. If he is imprudent, we will not circumvent him. If he is weak, we will not crush him. We will not compel him to give to us, or compel him to lend to us by terror, threats or other unjust methods. If he is destitute and needy, we will not oppress him with usury and interest. Rather, we will assist him with our alms, abundant counsel and enthusiasm, and we will freely and liberally make available those things which are not precisely necessary for our own needs; lest perhaps while retaining something for ourselves which are justly owned to him, especially in his greatest necessity, first by the law of nature, and then the law of God, we commit some indirect or hidden theft before God.

12. The ninth commandment is that "we do not speak false testimony against our neighbor," that is, that we not only lay aside lies, slanders, disparagements and rash judgments of others (especially if they may bring any harm to them) but also that we do not give ears to the lies, slanders and false testimonies of others; nor do we allow our neighbor to be oppressed through our silence, as a mute testimony or tacit agreement. But on the contrary, we should protect his honor, reputation and esteem both in public and in private. And finally, that we must everywhere earnestly pursue candor, truth, and sincere faithfulness in words, contracts, deeds, and testimonies, whether in court or out.

13. The tenth commandment is that "we do not covet either our neighbor's wife, or home, or any of his things," that is, that we not only do not inflict injury to our neighbor, but also that we do not long for any of his goods, whether necessary, useful or delightful to him, to his harm and injury; or at least by any unjust way, however hidden, desire to seize or make them our own. Rather, that we turn away our minds, thoughts, desires and lusts from all those things which the most good and most wise God would have subject to the right or use of another.

And so we must always piously contain our affections within those limits of justice prescribed by God, thinking constantly of these two: 1. that it is our duty to love our neighbor as ourselves; 2. that we do not do to another what we do not want done to ourselves. To all of which ought to be added, as a colophon, end or complement, that ultimate act of charity which Christ Himself teaches through His Apostle John, that we do not hesitate to lay down our lives for our brothers.

CHAPTER 13:

ON GOVERNING AND DENYING OURSELVES, AND BEARING THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

1. Besides the commandments about which we [possess] already, still it is required that we direct ourselves, or studiously compose ourselves according to the rule and order of the divine will. This indeed may chiefly be done in two ways. 1. If we utterly deny ourselves and everything that is ours. 2. If we do in the least love this present world and its lusts, but instead voluntarily give up everything most dear for God, and so to not refuse to bear the cross of Jesus Christ, continually following in His steps.

2. We correctly deny ourselves in this manner. First, when in divine worship we do not consult our own carnal reason and worldly prudence, but follow only His leadership and command in all things (and that willingly and without any scruple) He who alone cannot err nor wills to deceive. Then, when we wholly subject our corrupt affections to the will of God and especially that particular affection by which we are struck down to some certain vices (or sometimes to some one), and by those opposite virtues and the works of the Spirit, which the Apostle [Paul] lists in Galatians 5, we crucify them and reduce them in turns, namely, anger by gentleness and meekness, fussiness by courtesy, laziness by zeal and fervor, sadness by joy, contentiousness by cooperation and a peaceable spirit.

And finally, the greatest and most personal, we deny ourselves when we are ready for Christ to lay aside that first and most natural love by which we are totally inclined to favor our lives and our happiness in life or its accommodation, that we do not refuse to forsake life itself, indeed to lose it with greatest pain and violent torment, rather than endure to commit anything unworthy of our profession and the glorious religion of Christ.

3. We then deny or not love this world and its lusts, not only when we say goodbye to gross and foul vices, together with those that have been condemned by the better Gentiles themselves, namely, which fight against civil honesty and justice and which are closely joined with injury to God and neighbor, and we do not lust for things which are good with respect to our physical life in this world and gratifying and pleasing to our flesh, that we be mentally induced in any way (to the disadvantage and detriment of our health, and the injury and wounding of our neighbor) to pursue, possess or enjoy them, but also we must not love and long immoderately or more than is proper for things of that kind which are not good, namely, to the hindrance of our duty imposed on us by the divinity or to the loss and detriment of heavenly concerns.

Then it usually happens when we either utterly neglect true, heavenly and eternal goods, or at leastwise coldly, lukewarmly, perfunctorily and only when convenient, or we are worried in passing by some sudden ... violent assault, or when we are stuck, entangled and entwined in continual care of worldly things and the cares of this life, as if we placed either our whole or principle happiness in them, and as if the love and care of heaven hardly or not even hardly, touched or affected our souls.

4. And indeed we do not immoderately love the goods of this world when we neither desire to enjoy the world itself nor its goods, as if something good, true and solid, or stable and lasting were placed in them. But on the contrary, we only desire to use them no further than is sufficient to satisfy necessity and living a life worthy of a Christian (that is, without the wounding or burdening of another, and transgressing of the commands of Jesus Christ). And finally, when we are content with necessary food and clothing and do not anxiously seek or desire anything further.

5. There are three kinds of worldly goods, according to the Apostle John, to which all others may easily enough be reduced, namely, riches, honors and pleasures. The immoderate desire or excessive love for them is called the lust of the eyes, the pride of life and the lust of the flesh. These very things are seriously to be rejected by the truly godly man because they war against solid godliness and the salvation of the soul.

6. The immoderate love of riches is avarice. ... This is the desire of having more ... the love of money. He truly denies this who does not anxiously and eagerly want more monies, wealth or possessions, if perhaps he does not have them, than is necessary for him, that is, always being content only with food and covering. Nor, when they flow upon him through the blessing of God, does he secure them with his teeth and greedily possess them, but whatever abounds to him over and above what is necessary for the support of himself and his, he willingly pays out and distributes (if indeed it is necessary) to all who have need, especially to brothers, and those who are of the household of faith.

Nor, when they are snatched away by God's will or permission, or flow away by some adverse misfortune, he is so grieved and saddened as if he had lost any true and principle good. But relying on God and His fatherly kindness, whether he has or lack this wealth, he has a continual and careful [eye] for his duty. And finally, he who gets, possesses and loses the goods of this life, [lives] as if he had not gotten, possessed and lost them.

7. An immoderate love of honors or pride of life is ambition and arrogance. He truly denies this who by no means seeks honors, high places, dignities and the applauses of the people, nor, if perhaps they happen, he does so delight in them as if some true and solid happiness depended upon them. Hence, he does not raise and exalt himself above others (for whatever reason) by word, expression, gesture, manner of walking, habit, etc. And if he is praised by others, he does not delight in them as some true and stable good, but in every condition of life he always reminds himself of divine grace and his own unworthiness before God, and indignity and Christian humility.

So then he must keep himself modest, courteous, friendly and kind, indeed lowly, in all places and towards all (except sometimes magistrates must have their due grandeur and authorities their rights), and therefore he must preserve modesty in his gestures and words, in clothes, food, house and furniture, so that clearly he does not rashly render himself contemptible through aspirations of filth, nor try for vain glory from immoderate and proud splendor; and finally, so that in all things he shows such demeanor as is fitting for true and serious holiness and always clothes himself with that disposition which is not ashamed to follow Jesus Christ, who washed His disciples' feet.

8. An immoderate love of pleasures is the lust of the flesh. He denies it who does not at all take advantage of delighting his external senses, through which the flesh enjoys pleasures, and accordingly does not feed his eyes with a sight vain or forbidden for the godly, and utterly useless, nor strokes his ears with obscene, demeaning and futile jokes and lascivious stories, nor offers scurrilous and shameless songs. Likewise, he pursues sobriety and temperance, does not act with painstaking care for his gullet and stomach, and does not seek food or drink which are in excess, sumptuous or splendid, nor so burden his heart with them that he renders himself inept to attend his calling rightly and correctly.

Moreover, he seeks to possess his vessel [body] in honor and always and everywhere protect that true chastity such as prescribed by Christ, and earnestly avoids occasions and stimulating of desire (namely, drunkenness, luxury, carousing, leisure and all vanity in words and gestures), and to the contrary, he seriously presses and desires all suitable aids of self-control and chastity (such as in vigilance, studies, pious conferences and in holy and honest conversation).

And finally, he gives himself exceptionally to fasting for the better subjugating of the flesh and greater exciting of the spirit, especially in time of persecution or public or private calamity, and accordingly does not make much of the quiet nor convenience nor sweetness of any of these things which may enter the external senses, that he would prefer to lack and be destitute of all those things than depart even a fingernail's breadth from the commands of Jesus Christ.

9. Whosoever is motivated in this manner will in the end rightly imitate Christ. And it will not be especially grievous for him to patiently bear the cross of Christ, that is, through shame, reproach, spoiling of goods, poverty, famine, nakedness, indeed through prisons, fires, wheels [of torture], crosses and swords, etc., after the example of his Commander and Lord (as often as is necessary and seems good to God), and proceed in this way to eternal and immortal glory and to a stable rest and happiness.

For the pious meditation of this matter has added such courage and such enormous spirit to the ancient apostles and prophets, and other holy men of God (and to not a few faithful martyrs of Jesus Christ in our own age), that they often went rejoicing and cheerful to torments, be they ever so cruel. And in the midst of fires and flames have blessed God, and Jesus Christ His Son, with songs and hymns. In fact, they went into these afflictions to be honored (and that under the hope of the glory of the Sons of God) that they were considered worthy to suffer those evils for the sake of their Lord Jesus Christ, and by their blood to seal His truth and illuminate His glory.

CHAPTER 14:

ON PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING AND THE LORD'S PRAYER.

1. But because the whole life of believers . . . and especially their obedience of faith which they constantly render to Jesus Christ, is daily exposed to various dangers, temptations and assaults of Satan, the flesh, and the world, and liable to not a few necessities, Jesus Christ has willed -- lest in such difficult conflict they should faint or despair -- that each and every believer should appeal to His perpetual grace and power, in His name alone, with untiringly and undivided [faith], and that always and without ceasing, especially in grave temptations and adversities.

And they should continually give thanks for the benefits received, testifying in this manner that they owe to God, as the greatest and first author, their whole happiness, and that by His aid alone and free benefit, they are able to perform, indeed really do perform, whatever are necessary to be done or performed for obtaining it. From this appear the two principal parts or kinds of divine worship. First, prayer, strictly and properly called, or the imploring of divine power for good consequences or the averting of evil ones, then thanksgiving for benefits received and celebration of the divine name.

2. God commends both parts or kinds to us everywhere in His Word, but especially Jesus Christ in the New Testament, while anywhere, whether in public or private, as the matter or occasion offers, He commands both be exercised in spirit and truth. And indeed what touches prayer or invocation, Jesus Christ has not just commanded it in words, but also has commended it by His own example.

And so He also has prescribed the manner and correct form of exercising it, according to which our petitions (whether they be uttered for ourselves or for others) ought to be perpetually conformed as to infallible and indubitable rules, if done in a manner according to the will of God -- exactly as accompanied with a due disposition of those who pray, according to both our inward and outer man . . . with true repentance for sins formerly committed, firm trust in the grace of God acquired by Christ, a sincere zeal for holiness and especially for brotherly love; likewise, serious attention, devout submission, and finally, with an untiring attention in prayer -- shall most certainly be clearly heard by God.

3. This formula of prayer is called the Lord's Prayer from its author, our Lord Jesus Christ. It has three principle parts: the preface, the narration, and the conclusion, although the latter is completely lacking in Luke, although this by itself does not pertain to the substance of it.

4. In the preface is taught who ought to be perpetually invoked by us and with what heart and manner, namely, "our Heavenly Father," or "who is in heaven," that is, to whom we are compelled to speak with a humble yet son-like affection, who is obviously not only by nature most high and powerful or the greatest good -- and now not dwelling as in the past, in the tabernacle of Moses or in the temple of Solomon beneath the cherubim, but gloriously dwelling only in the highest heavens themselves, in the truest seat of eternity and immortality, and almost a citadel, from where all good things flow to us -- but who presents Himself as merciful and kind to all, and really has fatherly affections toward all His believing ones, as those whom He always graciously loves in Christ.

For thus they all and only were written down for sons and heirs of His celestial glory and immortality. Thus He easily can and freely wills to grant us everything necessary for salvation. Therefore, in return, we safely can and ought to trust in Him with highest reverence and brotherly affection, and that indeed as we have been joined together as one by the chain of brotherly love by the same Jesus Christ, our only patron and mediator.

5. The narration contains six petitions, of which the three former immediately and properly consider the glory of God, and the three following greatly consider our advantage and salvation. Although both aim at the same mark by mutual relation and certain consequence, since the glory of God cannot be disjoined from salvation, and the latter ought totally be referred to the former.

6. And so in the first petition we are commanded to pray, that "the name of God may be sanctified," that is, that the glory of the divine goodness, wisdom and power, especially as revealed in the gospel, might every where be correctly rightly known and worthily celebrated, and therefore that God would assist us and others with His aid by which both they and all other mortals, incited by our example and encouragement, abandon all idols or profane deities and goddesses, and above all, that as if with one mouth, we may praise and extol the one true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in words, deeds, hymns, prayers, writings, constantly singing with heart and voice, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; to Him be praise, honor and blessing forever and ever, Amen."

7. The second petition is that "the kingdom may come," that is, that through a true and full knowledge of the Christian religion, which as yet was then tenuous and sparing and coming from afar, more and more would direct our hearts to a solid sanctifying of His divine name, and that He would be willing to

grant to many others His grace by which they may deliver themselves to be ruled by Him, or voluntarily subject themselves to His laws and commandments, so that more and more each day we may be both fit and suitable for the kingdom of heaven, most fully possessed by blessed immortality.

8. The third is that "the will of God be done in earth as in heaven," that is, that God would grant His grace to us and to other mortals, that we might every one do His will, now already expressed in His commandments, as promptly and cheerfully as the holy angels in heaven are accustomed to perform it. Then, that we may patiently bear those evils that come to us which God either allows, suffers, wills, or arranges, and without any murmuring we turn them to our spiritual advantage or proficiency in faith and obedience, and further on to our salvation.

9. The fourth is that "He would give us this day our daily bread," that is, that He would deign to grant us all things which are necessary for us to pass this life without any true [lack] or weakness of body, and to the contrary, that it be passed in peace and tranquility, and to attend upon, and (with a serious cheerfulness of mind and spirits) diligently to apply ourselves, and to mind those things that are most sacred and holy. And those things which He has already given and kindly conveyed, He would always bless further, that being sustained by their support as by a staff, we may be better occupied with sanctifying His divine name, propagating His kingdom and executing His will, and without any distraction from godliness.

10. The fifth is that "He would forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors," that is, that in Christ He would graciously pardon us all our sins, committed either through error or infirmity, or principally through wickedness and malice, just as we also pardon from the heart and are always ready to pardon all injuries and offenses -- and that for this reason alone, because He so wills and commands it -- all those who at any time wound us.

11. The sixth is that "He would not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil," that is, that He would never permit us to be oppressed too much by grave and lasting temptations, much less defeated, or to be tested beyond our strength, but that He would always strengthen and sustain us by His Holy Spirit according to His singular power and also fatherly love, especially in grave afflictions, arduous dangers and calamities, and other evils of that kind, through which Satan tries to utterly destroy us, and turn us from God, lest perhaps being too pressed by them, we choose something contrary to His divine will and harmful to our salvation or a good conscience.

And finally, that always together with the temptation He would will to grant a happy outcome, that we would be able to suffer it and so finally be gloriously freed from all the snares and enticements and all the fraud and power of Satan, indeed that we may be rendered immune from all danger of eternal perdition.

12. The conclusion has a threefold foundation or reason why we should dare to ask or pray to God about those things which we have already spoken. Because indeed His is the kingdom, that is, because He only is absolute king and Lord of all, and liable to no one, and who has command and right in all, and therefore even over Satan himself, although god and prince of this world.

Likewise, because His is the power, that is, because He alone is able to do (namely, give, take away, send, avert, permit or impede) whatever He wills, and that according to His own will and good pleasure, and therefore is He one against whom Satan, with the entire world, cannot prevail in order to destroy us. And finally, because "His is the glory," that is, because He is the only one to whom we ought to ascribe whatever good we either wish and desire or already have and possess and to whose alone glory, as to its final purpose, our whole good is always to overflow.

13. But because pious worshipers of God are certainly persuaded of the hearing of their prayers which they pour out according to the will of God, and because they wish and very much desire that the everlasting glory of the divine name and their own salvation may be promoted more and more by the same, for this [purpose] is subjoined the word "Amen," which in part contains a certain affirmation of the things proposed and in part a pious wish and religious vow of the believing soul.

14. The other part or kind of prayer widely accepted is thanksgiving, by which we give thanks to God for benefits already received through Jesus Christ, whether pertaining to this or the future life, and whether in public or private, especially in His church. And we testify and declare a thankful and mindful soul, first by a singular zeal and exercise of holiness, then by praises, psalms, hymns, love and other godly deeds, doing our duty to the glory of God and the advantage of our neighbor, in quality and quantity, first of our own abilities and then of the benefits received.

CHAPTER 15:

ON SPECIAL CALLINGS AND THE COMMANDMENTS AND TRADITIONS OF MEN.

1. And this indeed is the sum of those commandments which are taught to us by Jesus Christ, or which are necessary for all Christians to observe equally in order to gain eternal salvation. Nevertheless, aside from these every believer has his particular calling, which is to be carefully observed by everyone. Of such are magistrates, subjects, parents, children, masters and servants; likewise of the married, bachelors, virgins and widows; or rich, poor, etc. Some of them were already treated in the exposition of the Decalogue, and for the rest special instructions or admonitions (but proportionable to those already spoken and suitable to every individual's state) are obvious throughout the Holy Scriptures.

2. Of these in general we must hold to the rule of the Apostle: let every one remain in that calling in which he was called. Yet as much as possible, if we can do better, it is permitted for us to do so, preserving piety. For all these conditions in themselves are indifferent and therefore neither commend us to Christ nor make us hostile or less pleasing to Him. Wherefore (for instance) more holiness is not to be ascribed to virginity or celibacy than to a married estate, neither more to poverty than to wealth, etc. Neither are rash vows to be made to God concerning these things by which we perpetually bind ourselves to this or that, indeed through which we test God and cast a snare to ourselves and our liberty.

3. Truly all other works, especially the merely external, which are considered religious, and which are invented by the human spirit above and beyond the Word of God (as when some opinion regarding

worship, if not utterly necessary, then at least meritorious or satisfactory, is imposed on men's consciences by the authority of others, especially the church, under the pretense of traditions, or whether they be freely and voluntarily performed by us), they certainly are not necessary for salvation.

Indeed besides, they cannot be considered worthy of the respectable title of truly good works or of divine worship (much less of supererogation [to do more than required or expected] or any excellent religion) because they cannot come under the solemn name of true obedience, which is of itself acceptable and of right due to God and Christ, our only lawgiver (and therefore is commanded under the promise of eternal life). For indeed not rarely they are a great impediment to the principal part of divine worship (namely loving God and neighbor) and hurtful to true godliness, especially if, as often happens, they are not only made equal to divine commandments but even preferred.

CHAPTER 16:

ON THE WORSHIP AND VENERATION OF JESUS CHRIST, THE ONLY MEDIATOR, AND THE INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS.

1. Thus far we have principally deliberated the knowledge and worship of God alone. Now follows this part the knowledge and worship of Jesus Christ proper, in that He is mediator. For eternal life itself is expressly said to consist in the knowledge and from the worship that follows (John 17:3). For to Jesus Christ, as the only mediator of the New Testament, "is given all power in heaven and earth, and all judgment, or universal control, given by the Father Himself, that all men honor Him, just as they also honor the Father. And authority was given Him to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Therefore also God crowned Him with glory and honor, and put all things under His feet, and made Him the head of His Church over all, etc."

In truth, "He gave Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," etc. This majesty was reasonably and properly conferred on Him by God the Father, especially for our consolation, and is to be acknowledged with religious and thankful souls and continually announced by us to the glory of God and Christ Himself.

2. Therefore he who religiously worships Jesus Christ in a holy manner, inasmuch as He is our mediator with God (especially from the time He was exalted and placed on the throne at the right hand of His Father), that is, He that adores, invokes, places his hope and trust in Him, and humbly gives thanks and blesses Him for the salvation purchased on his part for us, acts according to the most certain will of God. For He who does not acknowledge His prescribed majesty and glory and so refuses to render to Him this worship and veneration he makes no light injury to God and Christ, especially if he reproaches it, or rather, defames it, under the name of idolatry or false worship and superstition.

3. Truly we think it utterly illicit and ungrateful to God to worship religiously any others apart from this one mediator between God and man, whether angels or men, whether living or dead, especially concerning the dead however holy (whether they were really holy or only so in our opinion), that is, to

adore them more than is civil or [invoke] them as our patrons and advocates with God or consecrate temples, altars, feasts to them, offer sacrifices, utter vows to them, or trust in either their merits and power or their grace and favor with God, etc.

For the Holy Scriptures everywhere affirm that [the dead] do not know our concerns or have the least interest in those things that occur under the sun. Yet we rightly think that their memory is to be kept in a holy manner, their virtues celebrate with deserved praise and put forth to us and others to imitate. Yet far be it from us that we should condemn or reproach in any way the mutual intercession of believers who are still alive for one another before God.

CHAPTER 17:

ON THE BENEFITS AND PROMISES OF GOD, PRINCIPALLY OF ELECTION TO GRACE, OR CALLING TO FAITH.

1. But that man may not just perform the commandments of God thus far explained, but also willingly want to perform them from the mind, God willed for His part to do everything necessary for effecting both in man, that is, He determined to confer such grace to sinful man by which he might be suitable and apt to render everything which is required of him in the Gospel, and even more, to promise such good things to him, whose excellence and beauty might far exceed the capacity of human understanding, and that the desire and certain hope of this might kindle and inflame the will of man to render obedience in acts to Him. Indeed, God habitually both makes known and bestows all these benefits to us by His Holy Spirit (about which we have declared more fully above).

2. Therefore, in the first place, when God calls sinners to Himself through the Gospel and seriously commands faith and obedience either under the promise of eternal life, or to the contrary, under the threat of eternal death, He not only bestows necessary but also sufficient grace for sinners to render faith and obedience.

This calling is sometimes called election in Scriptures, namely, to grace as the means of salvation, very different from election to glory or to salvation itself; more on this below. This calling, however, is effected and executed by the preaching of the Gospel, together with the power of the Spirit, and that certainly with a gracious and serious intention to save and so to bring to faith all those who are called, whether they really believe and are saved or not, and so obstinately refuse to believe and be saved.

3. For there is one calling that is effective, so called because it attains its saving effect from the event rather than from the sole intention of God. Indeed, it is not administered by some special and hidden wisdom of God from an absolute intention of saving, so as to fruitfully unite with the will of the one who is called, nor so that by it the will of the one who is called is so efficaciously determined to believe through an irresistible power or some omnipotent force (which is nothing less than creation, or raising from the dead) that he could not but believe and obey, but because it is not resisted by the one who is now called and sufficiently prepared by God; nor is a barrier placed against divine grace which otherwise was able to be placed by Him. Indeed there is another which is sufficient, but nevertheless ineffective,

namely, which on man's part is without saving effect and through the will and avoidable fault of man alone it is unfruitful, or does not attain its desired and due effect.

4. The former, when either joined with its saving effect or already constituted by its exercised act, is sometimes called in Scripture conversion, regeneration, a spiritual rising from the dead and a new creation, clearly because by it we are efficaciously turned from a corrupt style of living to live justly, soberly and godly, and are raised on a heavenly account from a death of sin or a deadly custom of sinning to a spiritual life or holy way of living. And finally, being reformed by the spiritual effectiveness of the Word according to the image first of the teaching and then of the life of Christ, it is as if we were born again and made new creatures through repentance and true faith.

5. Man therefore does not have saving faith from himself, nor is he regenerated or converted by the powers of his own free will, seeing that in the state of sin he cannot of himself or by himself either think or will or do anything that is good enough to be saved (of which first of all is conversion and saving faith), but it is necessary that he be regenerated and totally renewed [persuasively, preveniently graced] by God, in Christ, through the word of the Gospel joined with the power of the Holy Spirit, namely, in his understanding, affections, will and all his strengths, that he may be able to understand, meditate on, will and finish correctly these things that are savingly good.

6. We think therefore that the grace of God is the beginning, progress and completion of all good, so that not even a regenerate man himself can, without this preceding or preventing [i.e., prevenient grace -- the grace that precedes or comes before], exciting, following and cooperating grace, think, will, or finish any good thing to be saved, much less resist any attractions and temptations to evil. Thus faith, conversion, and all good works, and all godly and saving actions which are able to be thought, are to be ascribed solidly to the grace of God in Christ as their principal and primary cause.

7. Yet a man may despise and reject the grace of God and resist its operation, so that when he is divinely called to faith and obedience, he is able to render himself unfit to believe and obey the divine will, and that by his own true and conquerable fault, either by secure carelessness, or blind prejudice, or thoughtless zeal, or an inordinate love of the world or of himself, or other inciting causes of that kind.

For such an irresistible grace or force, which, as to its effectiveness, is no less than creation, nor generation properly called, nor raising from the dead (and causes the very act of faith and obedience in such a way that, being granted, a man cannot not believe or obey) certainly cannot be but ineptly and foolishly applied where free obedience is seriously commanded, and that under the promise of vast reward if performed and the threat of the gravest punishment if neglected. For in vain He commands this obedience and requires it of another, and without cause promises to reward the obedience, who Himself alone both ought and wills to cause the very act of obedience by such a force as cannot be resisted. And it is silly and irrational to reward someone as truly obedient in whom this very obedience was caused through such an alien power.

And finally, punishment, especially eternal, is unjustly and cruelly inflicted on him as disobedient by Whom this obedience was not performed solely through the absence of that irresistible and truly necessary grace, who really is not disobedient. We cannot here state how everywhere in the Scriptures

it is affirmed of some, that they resisted the Holy Spirit; that they judged, or rather made, themselves unworthy of eternal life; that they made void the counsel of God concerning themselves; that they would not hear, come, obey; that they closed their ears and hardened their hearts, etc.

And of others, that they promptly and freely believed; that they obeyed the truth and the faith; that they showed themselves attentive and teachable; that were attentive to the evangelical doctrine; that received the Word of God with cheerfulness; and that they were more generous in this than those who rejected the same; and finally, lastly, that obeyed the truth, or the Gospel, from the heart, etc. To attribute all this to those who in no way can either believe or obey, or cannot not believe and obey when they are called, is very certainly foolish, and plainly ridiculous.

8. And even if there truly is the greatest disparity of grace, clearly according to the most free dispensation of the divine will, still the Holy Spirit confers such grace to all, both in general and in particular, to whom the Word of faith is ordinarily preached, as is sufficient for begetting faith in them, and for gradually carrying on their saving conversion. And therefore sufficient grace for faith and conversion not only comes to those who actually believe and are converted, but also to those who do not believe and are not really converted.

For whoever God calls to faith and salvation, He calls them seriously, that is, not only by an external show, or in words alone (that is, when His serious commandments and promises are declared to those that are called in general) but also with a sincere and unfeigned intention of saving them and the will of converting them. Thus He never willed any prior decree of absolute reprobation or undeserved blinding or hardening concerning them.

CHAPTER 18:

ON THE PROMISES OF GOD THAT ARE PERFORMED IN THIS LIFE TO THOSE WHO ARE CONVERTED AND ARE BELIEVERS, THAT IS, ELECTION TO GLORY, ADOPTION, JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION AND SEALING.

1. Concerning men who are sinners but already efficaciously called by divine grace and converted to faith in Jesus Christ, and who by the aid of the same grace through true faith order their life according to the commandments of Jesus Christ, God wills and wants [them] to be occupied with two kinds of saving acts, those which indeed pertain to this life, and the others [which pertain] to the future.

2. Five acts pertain to this life, two of which are prior, election to glory, and adoption. ... By the first they are already converted, and truly believe, separated from the multitude of those who perish and exempted from the damned (as their present estate), separated just as God's own flock. By the other they are taken into the family of God and hence into the right of heavenly inheritance into which they will enter in due time. Thus they are placed among those who will be saved, but will forgive their sins by grace through Christ. Nevertheless, adoption throughout Scripture usually denotes the very redemption itself of our bodies or the blessed resurrection, because the fulfillment and consummation of it will certainly appear [then].

3. These are directly connected with three other acts, justification, sanctification, and finally, the unique act of sealing by the Holy Spirit. Justification is a merciful, gracious and indeed full remission of all guilt before God to truly repenting and believing sinners, through and because of Jesus Christ, apprehended by true faith, indeed, even more, the liberal and bountiful imputation of faith for righteousness. For indeed in the judgment of God we cannot obtain to it except by the pure grace of God and only by faith in Jesus Christ (but nevertheless a living one, operating through love) without any merit of our own works. And this is the meaning of that article of the creed, when we say, "I believe in the remission of sins."

4. Sanctification specifically called (for in some places in the Holy Scriptures it is sometimes accepted for regeneration or conversion), or effectual calling (about which, see above), or finally for any spiritual cleansing, even if only external, is a certain, more complete continually increasing separation of the sons of God from this impure world, being partly a richer and fuller enlightening of true believers in the knowledge of divine truth and the careful performance of their duty by faith (which even God often effects in many and admirable manners), in part through stimulation to a sharper and deeper abiding hatred of sin and zeal for holiness and true godliness and their establishment in his zeal, so that the will of the truly believing man is rendered more prone and inclined, indeed more cheerful to daily virtue, and these obstacles or hindrances which otherwise he usually meets with in his zeal for piety and virtue, He either does not permit them to be thrown before him or He diligently removes the object and courageously and cheerfully overcomes them.

5. Sealing by the Holy Spirit is a more solid and strong confirmation in a true confidence and hope of the heavenly glory and the certainty of divine grace by which believers are rendered more and more certain of their adoption, justification and glorification, as if by a deposit or pledge, and if they keep themselves in it, they may be preserved even to the end in a sense of the grace of God and in true faith against all kinds of temptations, being granted total, final perseverance.

6. And God is occupied with these kinds of gracious acts towards all those, and only those (although unequally and in different measure) who truly believe and repent. We find three kinds of orders of these in the Scriptures: 1. Those who can be called novices, and who are recently converted to the faith, who together with a sincere assent bring indeed a serious and deliberate will to obey the divine will.

But when persecution, afflictions and other dangerous temptations arise which [this kind] is not able to resist, it immediately grows weak once again, and utterly dies. 2. Those who remain constant for some time in the true faith and in a certain holy purpose and demonstrate for a while the truth of their faith by good and holy works; but finally, whether by the enticements of the world, the flesh or Satan, or conquered and broken by some violent tyranny, they defect and desert from the faith. 3. Those who either without any defection or interruption continually persevere to the end in that godly purpose and in holy works, or who have fallen again or even often departed, having once again lapsed or fallen, again are led to serious repentance and so being restored.

Therefore the two former orders of believers are indeed truly elected, adopted and justified, but not absolutely, but only for a time, namely, as far and as long as they are and finally and thoroughly such, that is, according to that which we read in the Gospel; he who perseveres to the end will be saved.

7. For these are divine acts, sometimes continuous, sometimes interrupted, that is, for as long and as often as the requisite conditions (that is, the faith and holiness of the covenant) continue to be present within us. But they are interrupted when we no longer stand in our covenant, or when such acts are committed by us which can in no way be consistent with true faith and a good conscience, according to Ezekiel, "If the righteous turns away from his righteousness, and does iniquity, according to all the iniquities which the wicked do, will he do it and live? All the righteousness which he has done will not be remembered because of his transgressions by which he has transgressed. And because of his iniquities which he sinned, I say, he shall die." This is in keeping with many other sacred testimonies and examples of the same kind.

CHAPTER 19:

ON THE PROMISES OF GOD PERTAINING TO THE LIFE TO COME, OR THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND ETERNAL LIFE.

1. The divine acts pertaining to the future life are the resurrection from death (instead of a sudden change of our mortal nature) and glorification, or the granting of heavenly glory and life eternal, according to the two last articles of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe the resurrection of the flesh, and eternal life."

2. This resurrection will happen at the second and glorious coming of Jesus Christ for the judgment of all, that is, when He will call all the dead to life, first both the just and the unjust, and then those who remain alive, at the judgment seat of His Father. There the just reward or appropriate penalty will be assigned according to the quality and quantity of their works which they have done in the body, whether good or bad. For at that time, He will awaken out of the dust of the earth His faithful and holy ones who were indeed dead to [a realized] eternal and blessed life, and give to them alone a glorious and incorruptible body. But those whom He finds alive and surviving will be changed suddenly and almost in a moment, and with the others blessed with immortality.

3. This manner of awakening and partial alteration will be immediately followed by that blessed glorification which is the completion of all the other acts, in which the Lord Jesus (after He descends from heaven with a shout of encouragement, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God to the aforementioned judgment) receives those who have [been] awakened by the angels through His power to be with Him in the air, and most powerfully transfers them from the universal corruption and total destruction of the whole world (being then entirely in flames) into the eternal and glorious habitations of heaven (which in Scripture are called the new heavens, the new earth and the future world) and will perpetually give them unspeakable glory and joy to enjoy together with Himself, with God, and with His holy angels.

CHAPTER 20:

ON DIVINE THREATS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE WICKED PERTAINING BOTH TO THIS LIFE, AND THE LIFE TO COME: REPROBATION, HARDENING, BLINDING AND ETERNAL DEATH AND DAMNATION.

1. Concerning the wicked and unbelievers, or those who are unwilling to believe and repent, and who, although they have been long and much called, warned, reprov'd, chastised, etc., nevertheless still continue to disobey the Gospel, God wills to employ the action completely to the contrary, and no less severe than just and holy, with which He threatened them in His Word, pertaining in part to this life and in part to the future.

2. The acts pertaining to this life are reprobation and desertion, likewise blinding and hardening and other temporal punishments of this kind, of which the first is the just casting away of wicked men, that is, when God will no longer desire to have them for His people and therefore rightly withdraws from them the often-spurn'd grace of His Holy Spirit. Indeed He sometimes refuses to confer upon them those outward means which He usually employs for the salvation of His people, namely, leaving them in their own darkness and sins, without true pastors, godly teachers or counselors and diligent searchers of truth.

3. Then follows blinding and hardening, namely, when these sinners, now being deprived of the light of heavenly truth, by God's permission and just judgment are profoundly involved in gross ignorance and errors and seduced in surprising and diverse manners. And when they are given up to their own impure lusts, or permitted their filthy affections, or are exposed on every side to the temptations, delusions and snares of Satan, or likewise, when their wicked counsels, pursuits and deeds are allowed to flow with some happy success, and they themselves sin with impunity, and finally, when multiplied occasions of erring and sinning are cast before them, and their consciences in the meanwhile are not moved to some sad remorse or serious sorrow for their sins, etc., all such things indeed, and very many more of the same, profane men often turn to their own destruction.

From this there grows more and more a strange blindness of mind, an enduring hardness of soul and filthy zeal for sinning, and finally a dense, thick darkness, that is, some brutish ignorance of God, and secure profanity of life totally seizes and possesses them. And sometimes indeed those acts are followed by some exemplary and public punishment of these men in this life, occurring before the eyes of all.

4. The penal acts pertaining to the future life are most usually contained in the words of divine wrath and vengeance, likewise of judgment and condemnations by which God will not only irrevocably deprive the wicked and unbelievers of immortal glory, but will also inflict hellish torments and eternal punishments. That indeed will be openly done in the last day, when He will throw them, together with the devil and his angels, into everlasting fire where they will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, expelled from the face of God and His glorious power.

5. And these things being thus finished, then the new world will appear, in which justice dwells, and where Jesus Christ will restore the kingdom to His God and Father, that God from then on may be all in all.

CHAPTER 21:

ON THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD, AND THE ORDERS OF MINISTERS.

1. And this indeed is the divine will which is necessary for us to discharge, consisting of such most holy commandments and so excellent promises that they must be made known to miserable mortals and be always set before their eyes. He who has great mercy for the human race wanted that it not so much be only tacitly pressed to them by private reading of the Sacred Scripture, but also that it should be everywhere proclaimed through open and public preaching, and daily and openly as it were implanted and inculcated into them.

2. And that it might be done rightly, first was necessary a solemn and immediate election or separation, then the sending and dispatching of certain men, to attend to this service, and indeed conjoined with infallible instruction and a certain irresistible authority or spiritual power. For this [reason], in the beginning the Lord Jesus designated certain extraordinary ambassadors as His eminent and special ministers and furnished them with all the gifts and virtues of the Holy Spirit necessary for the discharge of their mission.

And thus He so continually ruled, governed, strengthened and confirmed them, that they not only many times openly and publicly declared this divine will and solidly established and confirmed the same by all kinds of signs and miracles, but also everywhere gathered to themselves congregations of godly men, among whom they preached His will, that as far as possible, it might perpetually flourish and be preserved whole and protected, namely, for the continual edification of all who were called to true and saving faith in Jesus Christ.

3. And indeed these first and principle heralds were the apostles, who used the authority which they had immediately received from the Lord Jesus as much for teaching and gathering churches as in governing and protecting them, which was obviously irrefutable ... and to which all believers were absolutely bound to obey and bear. And to these indeed were joined first prophets and evangelists, then teachers and pastors, and others like them, who did their best and devoted themselves either to the gathering of new churches or assemblies, or later to the nourishing, feeding and further instructing of these already gathered through the apostles.

4. But when such foundations and first beginnings had now been laid by them, lest by their absence or death these congregations were again scattered and dispersed and so this divine and saving doctrine should disappear little by little, they everywhere in those places where congregations were already gathered, appointed them their successors: bishops, elders and deacons, by whose labors and zeal those congregations might continually be preserved, and as much as possible, multiplied in number. And they were expressly commanded that what was always done in all places afterwards should be done in all

congregations, giving an accurate description of what kind of persons they ought to be who were later to be put in charge among them.

5. And they therefore indeed designated bishops and elders, that by preaching the Gospel, teaching saving truth, refuting opposing errors and likewise exhorting, comforting, reproofing, correcting, ruling and finally by their example shining before the others, etc., they would preserve those churches already planted, and in a continual succession, propagate more of the same by their strength. And [they designated] deacons, that after they had first been tested, they might diligently be occupied with gathering and distributing alms, and in godly concern and care of the poor in those congregations. From this was born the perpetual necessity and multiple usefulness of the whole ministry of the church.

6. However, after the time of the apostles, those first heralds of the Gospel and founders of the church, when the doctrine of the Gospel had already been sufficiently proposed and in the judgment of God abundantly confirmed, and finally, clearly committed to writing, the immediate sending of ministers ceased and with it the infallible instruction and the unquestionable assistance of the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, the irresistible power or infallible authority in teaching and ruling no longer has any place. The apostles themselves wanted to testify about this, when they gave to the bishops and elders a sure and perpetual rule of doctrine and left a form of discipline, according to which they were later to teach and rule the churches. They expressly commanded and seriously charged them that they should carefully retain the ... pattern of sound words which they had heard from them, and that they might hold and remember the faithful doctrine which they had learned. And from this they called "anathema" those who brought a doctrine different than that which they themselves had given, and at the same time, enjoined the churches that they should not admit any other doctrine except that which they had admitted from the apostles, even if it were brought by an angel from heaven.

7. Since, however, it is the duty of all bishops and elders to teach and rule the churches according to that form proposed by the apostles, it appears sufficiently manifest that they are not permitted by any divine right to any command and authority properly called over one another. And yet concerning this we do not utterly disallow, much less proudly reject, those degrees of teachers and rulers who were appointed long ago in various churches of Christ, and obtained it throughout, for preserving the cause of order and decorum ... or for preferring good order. For indeed God is not the author of confusion but order. In the end, they were not to denigrate into tyranny and make a showing of some worldly dignity and power, rather than of a spiritual ministry, and the modesty and moderation of disciples of Christ.

8. But if anyone abuses this order as a pretext for pride and arrogance, and in particular, if any by these steps does not hesitate to ascend so high so as arrogantly to assume to Himself not only the supreme right of determining matters of religion and deciding all controversies of faith, but also to seize lordship over the Lord's possession and his fellow-servants, indeed over kings, and princes; indeed further, whether directly or indirectly, oppressive power (that is, the power of external arms, or supported by the secular arm) for judging others, indeed punishing with sword and death those who cannot out of conscience defer to him this authority (or who hesitates to subscribe to his dogmas, decrees and statutes), although in all other respects they are good and loyal subjects of the republic. If any, we say,

usurp such power in the church of Christ, through pretense or anything similar, or at least verbally attribute it to himself, or permit it to be attributed by others, truly he appears to us to withdraw very far from the office of a true bishop.

CHAPTER 22:

ON THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST, AND ITS MARKS.

1. Furthermore, those congregations which are gathered as it were into one body either by the public labor of these ministers or otherwise by the word of the Gospel preached, read or heard in whatever way (whose members, each and every one, obtain a certain mutual communion with one another and a spiritual communion with their one and only true Head, our Lord Jesus Christ), as they really are, so also are they rightly called the church of Jesus Christ. We speak concerning both, namely, the church and its communion, in the Apostles Creed: "I believe in the holy Catholic church, the communion of saints."

2. For this church is nothing else but an assembly of men called by the Gospel, and believing on Jesus Christ, or at least professing with their mouth His saving name and doctrine although some more [and] others less, whether sincerely and purely, or firmly and constantly, believe on Christ or at least outwardly in words and rites profess Christ.

3. For the church, while it battles on earth, is customarily considered in a two-fold manner according to the Scriptures. First, as an assembly of the truly godly and believing, who they embrace with the mind and hold it with their whole heart the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ, which they confess with their mouth and build their lives according to it. This assembly is visible and certainly known only to God, but invisible to us, since true faith and piety, which lie hidden within the heart, none but God can behold, the only searcher of the hearts and inward parts.

4. But to hold the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ is not necessarily all that which is contained in the doctrine of Christ in whatever manner, so as to have such perfect knowledge as to never err or hesitate in absolutely any article of faith, sacred history or meaning of Holy Scripture, but to hold properly all that without which the commandments of faith and obedience cannot be rightly kept, so the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation cannot be obtained from God. Therefore we believe that all those churches which consent to the belief and profession of necessary truth ought to be held as churches of Jesus Christ, even if, in the interim, they dissent in many other things and not lightly deviate from the truth.

5. Secondly, the church is considered as a visible multitude publicly professing the faith and doctrine of Jesus Christ, even if they do not truly believe in Him; as long as the outward oral confession and other indications of that kind of faith is of itself sufficiently known, and so is visible to us even if sometimes it appears less evident or splendid.

6. Again, both may be considered either as catholic or universal, which being diffused throughout the whole world, contains all congregations together which either truly believe or at least profess faith, or as

local or individual church which is gathered in a certain location in smaller groups, for instance, at Corinth, in Galatia, at Ephesus, etc. Whether universal or local, both may not only err in doctrine, but also fall away from the true faith and its profession.

Indeed it often really does fall away from the same (the catholic church in the meantime remaining safe and whole). Nor indeed does any divine promise exist by which a certain particular church or congregation is promised the uncorrupted profession of true doctrine and a continual succession in it, or continual assistance of the Holy Spirit and an uninterrupted and uniform duration of orthodox faith (and that to be always clearly seen). Indeed both examples and prophecies of the falling away of many are obvious everywhere throughout the Holy Scriptures.

7. Again, the marks which are certain and least fallible, which clearly indicate to us and make visible a church or Christian assembly which is already gathered by the preaching of the Word, may be reduced to one in general, that is, the profession of that sacred and saving doctrine delivered by Jesus Christ, in conjunction with at least the external observing of the commandments of Jesus Christ. For while true faith which partakes of the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ constitutes the more inward form and almost the soul of the true and invisible church of Jesus Christ, it is certainly true that the profession of that true and saving faith alone, of which we have spoken, makes the same visible to us.

8. But it is altogether vain and foolish to painstakingly seek or show to others the other marks through which they who are plainly ignorant of what may be the true church of Christ, or of that doctrine of salvation in the true church may certainly and undoubtedly arrive at the truth itself. For to proceed so is neither necessary or useful, nor possible that it could be rightly done. But far be it that the marks of a true church would be localized in such things which the world and carnal reason is accustomed to value so greatly, namely, antiquity, majority, consent, succession of persons, external splendor of congregations, or worldly happiness, etc., in which many recently boast in vain.

9. Furthermore, the duty of those who belong to this visible church does not just consist in every individual professing with their mouth and life in this saving doctrine of Christ for themselves, but also in believers being united and joined together among themselves, whether they be many or few, in their doing these things which ordinarily cannot be completed except by a group, which renders such groups more illustrious and visible.

10. The other duties, aside from the hearing of the Word preached and the profession of faith already mentioned, are primarily two: the use of the sacraments, as they are called, and the exercise of Christian discipline, about which more immediately [follows].

CHAPTER 23:

ON THE SACRAMENTS AND OTHER SACRED RITES.

1. When we speak of the sacraments, we understand the outward ceremonies of the church, or those sacred and solemn rites, by which as by covenantal signs and visible seals God not only represents and

sketches out His gracious benefits to us, especially those promised in the covenant of the Gospel, but also in a certain way exhibits and seals them to us. And in response we openly and publicly declare and testify that we embrace all the promises of God with a true, firm obedient faith, and that we will always celebrate His grace and benefits.

2. If we speak properly and accurately, there are only two rites of this manner in the New Testament: baptism and the sacred supper. Of them, the first corresponds as a good analogy to the seal of circumcision, which was a seal under the Old Testament of sacred initiation or a certain ingressing [right or permission to enter] into the people of God. The other corresponds to the eating of the Passover lamb, which was a rite of solemn blessing or public thanksgiving to God, as a symbol for the redemption of the Israelite people, openly praising and celebrating their liberation from Egypt.

3. Baptism is the first public and sacred rite of the New Testament, by which all who belonged to the covenant were engrafted [incorporated] into the church by the solemn washing with water without distinction of age or gender, and initiated into the worship of God. For this, they were immersed [submerged] or washed in water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, that by a symbolic sign and sacred token, they were confirmed concerning the gracious will of God toward them, that just as the filth of their bodies is washed away by water, so they themselves were purged within by the blood and Spirit of Christ (if they do not make this gracious covenant void through their own fault), and most fully delivered from the guilt of all their sins, and finally were granted the glorious immortality and eternal happiness of the sons of God.

And at the same time, they for their part were obligated openly to declare that they constantly look to God alone and the Lord Jesus Christ, their only mediator, priest and king, for all their salvation, and to reflect on Him from the soul, and casting off all the filthiness and iniquities of sins to desire to obey through the power of the Holy Spirit for their whole life.

4. The Holy Supper is the other sacred rite of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ the night in which He was betrayed, for a eucharistic [thankful] celebration and solemn commemoration of His death by which believers, after they have examined themselves and truly proved themselves to be in true faith, eat the sacred bread publicly broken in the congregation, and at the same time drink the wine publicly poured, and that to declare with solemn thanksgiving the Lord's bloody death, a death for us, undergone for us (just as our bodies are sustained by food and drink, or bread and wine, so our hearts are fed and nourished in the hope of eternal life).

In return, they testify publicly before God and the church of their enlivening and spiritual communion with the body of Christ crucified, and His shed blood (or with Jesus Christ Himself, who was crucified and died for us) and all the benefits acquired through His death and at the same time their mutual charity for one another.

5. Certainly the following can be easily seen from those things which are read throughout Scripture concerning this whole sacred rite and the things signified by them, and which the articles of faith (concerning the truly human body of Christ and His true ascension into heaven and exaltation, etc.) themselves suggest to us, and finally what right reason itself dictates. 1. There is no change of substance

made of the signs into the things signified, namely, of the bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord. 2. Neither is there any local conjunction or bodily inclusion, or some physical bond. 3. Far be it that under this context one of the signs (namely, the use of the chalice or sacred cup) be taken away from believers; 4. that the true and life-giving or expiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ, now long since offered once for our sins by Christ Himself, our only High Priest, is to be believed to be really repeated or daily performed again; and finally, 5. that the symbols themselves are to be adored and worshiped by us, and for this same purpose, either publicly displayed in temples, or enclosed in coffers, or carried about in processions, etc.

6. Besides these there are also other sacred rites, generally so called, which even if they are not necessarily and perpetually kept by believers from some expressed commandment of Christ, yet for the cause of good order or external discipline, have now long since been generally observed by the apostles and their disciples, and may be even observed freely now without the least ungodliness and superstition, and indeed profitably.

For example, laying on of hands for various reasons, such as in ordaining ministers, in examining and confirming new converts or learners, in the public reception or reconciliation of penitents who had fallen grievously before, likewise in the solemn joining of marriage and the blessing of the couple in the congregation of the church, etc. Such a case is far removed from either vain superstition, or an absolutely necessary opinion regarding divine worship, etc.

On the contrary, they are justifiable for order, decency and public edification, and finally that true liberty and Christian charity may always be preserved in such things (and also a true [assembly] and mutual toleration between those who disagree), and the peace of the church not be rashly disturbed for the sake of such outward and unnecessary rites.

7. At this point we may make reference to those ecclesiastical or liturgical observations which are not required in themselves, but without which the external and public congregations of believers can hardly be without, such as public order and methods of churches, reading, praying; singing, prophesying, gathering alms, and kneeling in prayer, etc. Likewise [there are] public fasts and solemn days of supplication or prayers, and other external things of that kind, in themselves mere ritual, but still godly exercises, not indeed divinely prescribed in kind (much less deserving the grace of God or eternal life) but yet profitably serving for the outward discipline of the church, or of decent conduct, indeed also for a certain stirring or warming pious devotion in our minds, and therefore not lightly to be condemned for themselves, nor, where they are publicly received, rashly abrogated to the scandal of the godly.

8. For in all these things, as in all of sacred worship and the whole external governing of the church, this only is to be sought, that all things in the house of the Lord be done decently and in order, and always serves for the edification of all, especially the weak which are none the less zealous for godliness, but not cast a snare upon anyone, or infringe Christian liberty, or finally offer any scandal to the weak. For the better and easier achieving of this end, there must be an exact regard for externals, and acceptance, order, honor and decorum, likewise of diverse places, times, and other circumstances. In particular, the

authority of the Christian magistrate, wherever it exists, must always be obeyed in such things for the public tranquility of the church.

CHAPTER 24:

ON CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

1. Because no society, however well established and shaped by good laws, can long subsist unless it is governed by a certain reason and discipline, through which those who belong to it may be continually kept to their duty, hence it is that in the visible church of God (which is the household, family, city and kingdom of God), we think it first most profitable and then most just that such a discipline as was prescribed by our Lord and King should flourish and be exercised.

2. For this consists in fraternal and mutual regard, in reproof and correction of those who have fallen into any sin known to us, and especially into any enormous crime, that they may repent quickly and return to being honest men.

Or, if having been admonished several times they still obstinately go on and refuse to repent, [it consists] in avoiding them and withdrawing ourselves from fraternal relations with them as those who have now rendered themselves unworthy of the pleasant name of "brothers," or of those who invoke the most holy name of Christ and profess themselves as most holy learners of godliness. And all this is to this end, that the religion of Christ and His church may not be maligned and receive some detriment by their partnership, but rather that the health of all the members of the church may be carefully sought.

3. And this discipline includes both pastors and leaders of churches as well as the sheep themselves or hearers. Concerning pastors and leaders, they must profitably conduct their office in the church, whether in ministering, teaching and ruling the church, or themselves, or their families, without generating scandal.

For example, in teaching, they must not demand those things which are forbidden by the laws of Jesus Christ, or forbid what they command, or allow what is prohibited, or require things which are free and indifferent, or strive too sharply obstinately for things unnecessary or of no great use and disturb the church with factions and to tear it in pieces.

In their teaching, they must maintain that method which is fitting for serious teachers of godliness, and which does not foment [stir up] contentions, quarrels and strife rather than promoting spiritual edification, and more for the cooling of pious zeal than inflaming. In governing themselves, they must be blameless, husbands of one wife, vigilant, temperate, grave [serious], well-ordered, hospitable, moderate, just and impartial, and free from drunkenness, anger, the love of money, fighting, hypocrisy and avarice. In governing their own family, they must keep their children in subjection, will all honesty. And finally, in ministering, they must faithfully, cheerfully and prudently manage those things that are committed to them.

4. Concerning the sheep or hearers, they must not carelessly neglect or knowingly and willfully disregard those things which are divine commands, or commit acts which are not agreeable to the commands of Jesus Christ. In matters otherwise indifferent, they must not disturb the public order and peace of the church and consequently do things which are prejudicial both to their own salvation and the edification of their neighbor.

5. Otherwise, this discipline must be exercised with all charity, prudence and discretion, according to diverse qualities and various reasons, whether of persons and sins, to the greatest profit both of the sinners, themselves, or of all others, and that, by certain steps indicated in the Word of God. And first indeed there must be had a just regard of persons. Older men are not to be rebuked, but entreated as fathers; younger men as brothers; older women as mothers, etc. But one must have a special regard for those people who are constituted in authority, and public office. Accusations are not to be easily admitted charges against elders, but if they have sinned (that is, they are plainly discovered to have sinned) they are to be rebuked before all, that the rest may fear. One must also have similar regard for magistrates, and all who are set in high places.

6. In truth, an accurate understanding of the diversity of sins is of principle importance. For if the sin is secret or yet not publicly known, only a private admonition is needed, and that sometimes repeated, summoning accomplices or witnesses if useful. But if the crime is truly public, that is, not just a grave sin, but also perpetrated to the public scandal of the church itself, or if otherwise all private admonitions be obstinately rejected, then an admonition is to be made before all, or in the assembly of presbyters, that the perpetrator may be ashamed and that by his example others may be deterred from sinning.

But if he adds notorious obstinacy of sinning and contempt of all admonitions to the enormous weight of sin, so that no amendment of life follows, then all familiar or brotherly consorting with the offender is to be avoided (if perhaps for this reason shame may be instilled in him and he himself may be brought back to saving repentance); adding, if extreme necessity require it, an expressed and serious declaration of the church that as long as they remain impenitent they are not worthy for the kingdom of heaven, as one that knowingly and foreseeingly perseveres in a manifest crime or work of the flesh.

But the peace and communion with the church must always be promptly restored to those who have been shunned or excluded from brotherly communion, after probable testimony of repentance, especially if they seriously desire it.

7. But from this shunning about which we have spoken, they who are either obligated and bound by some divine and indissoluble contract, such as couples, or by law of nature, such as children, or the necessity of duty, such as servants or maids, are exempted as far as domestic customs of life, whether reciprocally, or merely one to the other.

8. Further, this discipline is not that manner of action which is exercised by the church with carnal power, or worldly authority, or some coercive power, but it is only the church's own voluntary withdrawal or separation from him with whom they may no longer live as with a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Thus the leaders of the church must exclude and separate the said person from themselves, or sever and separate themselves from him, together with their people (and that by the command of Jesus Christ Himself, their Lord), and cannot nor will not converse with him [any more] than as with a Gentile and a Publican, or with any public and profane sinner, so long indeed as he remains unrepentant.

9. Those who exercise this discipline not only with a carnal power and coercive force, but who also extend it to corporal and capital punishments (especially under the pretext of heresy, so [commonly] called), claim for themselves a power of threatening indeed utterly [foreign] and illegitimate, and in fact truly oppress liberty of consciences and preaching, and change that healing remedy wisely instituted by our Savior for correcting sinners into a most deadly poison.

And that which was destined for their salvation, they twist to their overthrow and destruction. But concerning those who in some way sponsor the killing of heretics or similar tyranny or persecution for the sake of conscience, we judge that they are utterly foreign to the most gentle Spirit of Christ, and also fight against heresies with inept and preposterous weapons and consequently bind themselves to a most grave sin before God.

CHAPTER 25:

ON SYNODS OR COUNCILS, AND THEIR MANNER AND USE.

1. Individual churches are to be ruled by their own ministers, that is, by bishops and elders. But if in the interim anything more difficult in doctrine, or customs, or rites proper to the church, which concerns either all or at least many of the churches should happen to be debated, then synods or ecclesiastical gatherings may be, and sometimes ought to be, usefully appointed (and that by the example of the apostles themselves), whether large or small, as the necessity of the matter appears to demand. They may, we say, usefully be appointed and held, if indeed a legitimate order and manner be preserved in them, first and foremost if what follows is diligently observed.

2. (1.) If in them first the truth, and then the usefulness and necessity of all dogmas are weighed and examined, not by any human square [measure] or counterfeit rule of whatever sort, but only by the Word of God. (2.) Full liberty must be granted to everyone to speak his opinion, without scruple or fear of danger and to inquire into the opinions of others and rightly examine the whole matter which is being questioned. (3.) No one is to be admitted into them except men who are able and suitable, that is, who are experts in matters of divinity and powerful in the Scriptures and have their senses exercised to discern between true and false, but especially godly, prudent, grave, moderate men who are loyal to the truth and zealous for peace.

Likewise [they must be] truly free, and during the time of the elimination of the controversy, simply bound to no one, whether a person, church or confession, etc., but only to God, Christ and His sacred Word, and finally, utterly foreign to all corrupt affections, wrath, hatred, and love of divisions. (4.) In them, it must not be absolutely or principally urged that controversies of faith be removed by any means whatever, or decided for one party or the other, only for the seeking and preserving the external

quiet and political tranquility of the republic. Instead, in them it must be principally paid attention that heresies, schisms and other such public faults and scandals, before all else, be kept out of the churches, or removed if already brought in, and thus godliness and truth, likewise liberty and Christian charity always be consulted.

And therefore (5.) plain, saving and necessary truth must be certainly, strictly retained by them, and yet so that no danger is created for those who dissent or are still ignorant of the truth, nor any violence inflicted upon their consciences, but that they be persuaded of the truth of salvation only with highest gentleness and meekness of mind. But in the things remaining, a sober liberty of dissenting must remain safe on certain conditions and the remedies of mutual peace and oneness suitably sought out. (6.) And finally, that which is established by them must always be left open to a free examination and later revision, indeed, it must be seriously ordered and commanded that their decrees be diligently examined by the Word of God, not any hatred or danger ever be created to anyone on that account.

3. But after the supreme authority of God and Christ, the authority of the Christian magistrate ought also to intervene in these synods as one who looks after the church, if there be such a person in the church whose duty, following the example of godly kings and princes of the Old Testament, is architecturally to moderate the outward order and rule of the church, and preserve the public worship of God whole and complete therein. And for this, as often as is beneficial, by the powers of his office, he himself ought to and rightly can convoke [convene] synods, and preside over them, propose together with ecclesiastic persons the things which must be treated, peacefully hear all opinions, even of dissenters, carefully search out the truth of God's Word for himself and collect the free votes of others, that everything in them be conducted according to God, and through His power to provide for such.

4. Nevertheless, it is neither his right nor duty to command the execution of the decrees of synods by any secular power, and to coerce and repress those who hesitate to subscribe to them for conscience's sake, either with threats or fines, still less with exiles, imprisonments, chains and finally death or other such kinds of atrocious punishments [as the Remonstrants experienced at the hands of Dutch Calvinists following the Synod of Dort in 1619].

Moreover, neither ought he nor rightly can he trouble with edicts, proscriptions, attacks by soldiers and other violent means of acting, those who desire for the sake of religion and conscience to meet outside in public, while modestly and always preserving due obedience to their superiors, which always remain subject to the right of the magistrates, but he is held to care for and pay attention to preserve whole and protected their liberty of publicly worshiping God, and that religious divine truth be protected by spiritual arms alone, and to be persuaded only by reason, lest otherwise he appears to bring violence to the consciences of his subjects, and crush Christian liberty, and finally, to will to usurp the rule which belongs to God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

And this at last is our opinion of all, or at least the principle, articles of the Christian religion, by which, Christian reader, whoever you are, you may easily understand and most clearly examine that we are

free and unworthy of all the heresies, schisms and other noxious and ungodly opinions which have previously been thrown against us through their [the ungodly Calvinists of Holland] slander.

And neither do we dig up or, as they say, hang on a new peg any errors which were decidedly condemned by the ancient and early Christian leaders, nor likewise convulse and shake those things which were established by the universal consent of the church, nor define or abruptly and proudly make decision regarding things which were settled long ago by doubtful controversy nor greatly promote the glory of God nor our salvation or neighbor's, and finally, laboriously and subtly scrutinize those things which were not revealed to us, lest indeed we stick our feet into that which the most wise God wants to be kept secret.

But we give attention only that truth which is according to godliness, and preserve whole and protected that which solidly concerns us all to know, and that we everywhere pursue and, as much as we can, promote those things which make both for the cherishing and restoration of mutual peace and unity between all Christians, remembering that which the Apostle admonished in Titus 3:8, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to declare, that those who have believed in God be careful to render good works to others. For these are noble and useful to men." And that which he elsewhere exhorts, "Pursue peace with all men, and the holiness, without which no one will see the Lord."

The glory of the Christian religion is especially placed in these two. Therefore we have been wholly concerned with these things. But concerning things unnecessary nor especially useful for salvation, we do not want to draw back and forth the saw of contention, and the mysteries that are truly lofty and hidden, we receive with a simple faith, free from all scrupulous subtleties, and as one of the ancients is reported to have said well, we do not handle the glowing iron without tongs, unless soberly and sparingly.

However, we hold at a distance unproductive speculations and inane word games, because they engender quarrels and questions, rather than "the edification of God which is by faith." [1 Tim. 1:4] Concerning non-essentials and likewise rites and ceremonies, we make trouble for no one lightly, so that scandalizing the weak may be carefully avoided. And finally, we direct all our studies to this, that we may firmly retain those things which are either necessary or very useful to real godliness and our eternal salvation. And in other things we freely tolerate all those who disagree with us, and from the soul we honor and cherish peace and unity with all the churches of Jesus Christ, even if in our opinion they are in error [which is far more grace than the Calvinists of Dort ever granted to the Remonstrants].

These things being this way, we resolutely ask and implore you by the Lord, Christian reader, that you not give any place in yourself for any suspicions to the contrary, nor receive the unjust accusations and slanders of our enemies, or easily give an ear to those whose greatest interest it is that we should be heard evilly, lest they should be seen to have condemned and banished us without cause, [we who are] undeserving and innocent.

But [we pray] that, having a careful regard for justice, you would judge us according to this our public confession or declaration of faith. If at any place you happen to believe that we have erred, instruct us in a spirit of gentleness and meekness which [is] most fitting for the servants of Jesus Christ. We are prepared at any place and time to yield to those who shall show us better, and give place to divine truth, which is more precious to us than anything else. If at any place we disagree in things not necessary to be known, let us bear with one another in the Lord; and remembering both Christian charity and prudence, let us be zealous "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." But in that to which we have arrived by the guidance [of] Christ [our] leader, let us walk by the same rule, and be like-minded. "And if in anything we think otherwise, God will reveal even this to us."

May He grant that we, to His glory, daily progress more and more in truth faith, godliness, charity, prudence, gentleness, meekness and in the other holy gifts and Christian virtues, and strive patiently to bear and peaceably amend one another's infirmities, errors, and failings, that being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to understand, together with all saints, what is that width and length, and depth and height and the love of Jesus Christ which is superior to all understanding, that we may thus be filled up with all the fullness of God.

To Him, who with infinite abundance is able to do beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power working within us, to Him be glory in the church through Jesus Christ, in all ages, forever and ever. Amen.

The Arminian Confession of 1621, trans. and ed. Mark A. Ellis (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2005).