

The Belgic Confession

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History of the Confession of faithful

The oldest of the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church is the Confession of Faith, popularly known as the Belgic Confession, following the seventeenth-century Latin designation "Confessio Belgica." "Belgica" referred to the whole of the Netherlands, both north and south, which today is divided into the Netherlands and Belgium. The confession's chief author was Guido de Bräs, a preacher of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands, who died a martyr to the faith in the year 1567.

During the sixteenth century the churches in this country were exposed to the most terrible persecution by the Roman Catholic government. To protest against this cruel oppression, and to prove to the persecutors that the adherents of the Reformed faith were not rebels, as was laid to their charge, but law-abiding citizens who professed the true Christian doctrine according to the Holy Scriptures, de Bräs prepared this confession in the year 1561. In the following year a copy was sent to King Philip II, together with an address in which the petitioners declared that they were ready to obey the government in all lawful things, but that they would "offer their backs to stripes, their tongues to knives, their mouths to gags, and their whole bodies to the fire," rather than deny the truth expressed in this confession.

Although the immediate purpose of securing freedom from persecution was not attained, and de Bräs himself fell as one of the many thousands who sealed their faith with their lives, his work has endured and will continue to endure. In its composition the author availed himself to some extent of a confession of the Reformed churches in France, written chiefly by John Calvin, published two years earlier.

The work of de Bräs, however, is not a mere revision of Calvin's work, but an independent composition. In 1566 the text of this confession was revised at a synod held at Antwerp. In the Netherlands it was at once gladly received by the churches, and it was adopted by national synods held during the last three decades of the sixteenth century.

The text, not the contents, was revised again at the Synod of Dordt in 1618-19 and adopted as one of the doctrinal standards to which all office bearers in the Reformed churches were required to subscribe. The confession stands as one of the best symbolical statements of Reformed doctrine. The translation presented here is based on the French text of 1619.

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This document

The layout has been adapted for ease of electronic use, with no changes to the contents. In the original text the meaning or parts of verses are used.

The full verses from the King James translation have been pasted below each article as quoted within the articles. This has been compared with the Afrikaans translation and some verse references have consequently been added, as well as a table of contents. For additional references, a list of supporting texts have been added to most parts. These texts will in due time also be expanded. If the reader can help with this huge task, it will be appreciated. Please contact the person below to prevent duplication of the task .

All changes have been marked in bold cursive and/or braces. No part of the original translation have been changed.

The document is available in English and Afrikaans in an easy to use format, viz. .pdf (use Adobe reader, above version 6, or Foxit . Both are free.). It They are available on websites www.bergsigdv.co.za and www.bybelwaarheid.com. By turning on the Bookmarks feature of Reader, the table of contents becomes accessible.

The unchanged original texts are available on www.kerkargief.co.za and various American reformed church websites.

The Heidelberg Confession of Faith and the Canons of Dordt are also available in similar format (extended verses). These documents is also available in Afrikaans on the same websites.

Before printing any of these, please take note that these documents have many pages because of the expanded texts.

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The documents will be changed as needed. Please send any improvements to the contact given below. Use the Adobe sticky notes facility directly in the text to indicate your recommended amendments.

HM Stander
hervat358@mweb.co.za
09 June 2014
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Belgic Confession of Faith

Article 1: The Only God

We all believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that there is a single and simple spiritual being, whom we call God -- eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, unchangeable, infinite, almighty; completely wise, just, and good, and the overflowing source of all good.

Other

Isa 40:14; Joh 4:24; 2 Cor 3:17.

{ Isa 40: 14 With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

Joh 4: 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

2 Cor 3: 17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is here is liberty. }

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Article 2: The Means by Which We Know God

We know him by two means:

First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, since that universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God: his eternal power and his divinity, as the apostle Paul says in **Romans 1: 20**.

All these things are enough to convict men and to leave them without excuse.

Second, he makes himself known to us more openly by his holy and divine Word, as much as we need in this life, for his glory and for the salvation of his own.

Other

Deut. 6:4 Ps. 19: 1 Mal. 2:10 Rom1: 20 1 Cor. 1
1 Cor. 8:4 1 Cor 8: 6 1 Cor. 12 Eph. 4:6 1 Tim. 2: 5

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{Deut 6: 4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

Ps 19: 1 ... The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Mal 2: 10 Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

Rom 1: 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse;

1 Cor 1 Please read the whole chapter in the Bible.

1 Cor 8: 4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one....

1 Cor 8: 6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and

one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him

1 Cor 12 Please read the whole chapter in the Bible.

Eph 4: 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

1 Tim 2: 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus}

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Article 3: The Written Word of God

We confess that this Word of God was not sent nor delivered by the will of men, but that holy men of God spoke, being moved by the Holy Spirit, as Peter says. ^{^1}**{2 Pet. 1:21}**

Afterwards our God-- because of the special care he has for us and our salvation-- commanded his servants, the prophets and apostles, to commit this revealed Word to writing. He himself wrote with his own finger the two tables of the law.

Therefore we call such writings holy and divine Scriptures.

Other

Ex. 17: 14 (Deut. 3); Ex. 31: 18; Ex. 34: 27; Deut. 5: 22; Ps. 102: 18; 2 Pet. 1:21

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{Ex 17: 14 And the LORD said unto Moses, "Write this for a memorial in a book, and recount it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

Deut 3 Please read this chapter in the Bible.

Ex 31: 18 And when his talk with Moses on Mount Sinai was ended, he gave him the two stones of the law, two stones on which was the writing made by the finger of God.

Ex 34: 27 And the LORD said unto Moses, "Write thou these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel."

Deut 5: 22 "These words the LORD spoke unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone, and delivered them unto me.

Ps 102: 18 This will be recorded for a generation yet unborn: so a people still to be created will praise the LORD.

^{^1}2 Pet. 1: 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. }

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Article 4: The Canonical Books of the holy Scripture

We include in the Holy Scripture the two volumes of the Old and New Testaments. They are canonical books with which there can be no quarrel at all.

In the church of God the list is as follows: In the Old Testament, the five books of Moses-- Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth; the two books of Samuel, and two of Kings; the two books of Chronicles, called Paralipomenon; the first book of Ezra; Nehemiah, Esther, Job; the Psalms of David; the three books of Solomon-- Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song; the four major prophets-- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel; and then the other twelve minor

prophets-- Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

In the New Testament, the four gospels-- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles; the fourteen letters of Paul-- to the Romans; the two letters to the Corinthians; to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians; the two letters to the Thessalonians; the two letters to Timothy; to Titus, Philemon, and to the Hebrews; the seven letters of the other apostles-- one of James; two of Peter; three of John; one of Jude; and the Revelation of the apostle John.

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Article 5: The Authority of Holy Scripture

We receive all these books and these only as holy and canonical, for the regulating, founding, and establishing of our faith.

And we believe without a doubt all things contained in them-- not so much because the church receives and approves them as such but above all because the Holy Spirit testifies in our hearts that they are from God, and also because they prove themselves to be from God.

For even the blind themselves are able to see that the things predicted in them do happen.

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Article 6: The Difference Between Canonical and Apocryphal Books

We distinguish between these holy books and the apocryphal ones, which are the third and fourth books of Esdras; the books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Jesus Sirach, Baruch; what was added to the Story of Esther; the Song of the Three Children in the Furnace; the Story of Susannah; the Story of Bell and the Dragon; the Prayer of Manasseh; and the two books of Maccabees.

The church may certainly read these books and learn from them as far as they agree with the canonical books. But they do not have such power and virtue that one could confirm from their testimony any point of faith or of the Christian religion. Much less can they detract from the authority of the other holy books.

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Article 7: The Sufficiency of Holy Scripture

We believe that this Holy Scripture contains the will of God completely and that everything one must believe to be saved is sufficiently taught in it. ^1 {2 Tim 3:16-17}

For since the entire manner of service which God requires of us is described in it at great

length **^{^1.1} {1 Cor 3: 11; 1 Cor 15: 1-2, 1 Pet 1: 11-12}**, "no one-- even an apostle or an angel from heaven", as Paul says-- **^{^2} {Gal. 1:8-11}** ought to teach other than what the Holy Scriptures have already taught us. For since it is forbidden to add to or subtract from the Word of God, **^{^3} {Deut 6: 9; Deut. 12: 32; Prov. 30: 5-6; Gal. 3: 15; 1 Tim. 1: 3; Rev 22: 18-19}** this plainly demonstrates that the teaching is perfect **^{^3.1} {Ps 19:8-9,12; Ps. 12:7}** and complete in all respects **^{^3.2} {Deut 4: 6}**.

Therefore we must not consider human writings-- no matter how holy their authors may have been-- equal to the divine writings **^{^3.3} (Acts 4: 19)**; nor may we put custom, nor the majority, nor age, nor the passage of time or persons **^{^3.4} {1 Cor. 8: 6; Eph. 4: 5; Col. 1: 16, 18; }**, nor councils, decrees, or official decisions above the truth of God, for truth is above everything else. **^{^3.5} {Mark. 7: 7; Acts 4: 19; Col. 2: 8; 2 Tim. 4: 3-4; 2 Pet. 2: 15-16}**

For all human beings are liars by nature and more vain than vanity itself. **^{^3.6} {Ps 62: 9; Rom 3: 4; 2 Tim 4: 3-4}**

Therefore we reject with all our hearts everything that does not agree with this infallible rule, as we are taught to do by the apostles when they say, "Test the spirits to see if they are of God," **^{^4} {1 John 4: 1}** and also, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house." **^{^5} {2 John 1: 10}**

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^{^1} (2 Tim 3:16-17)

^{^1.1} {1 Cor 3: 11; 1 Cor 15: 1-2; 1 Pet 1: 11-12};

^{^2} {Gal. 1: 8-11}

^{^3} {Deut 6: 9; Deut. 12: 32; Prov. 30: 5-6; Gal. 3: 15; 1 Tim. 1:3; Rev 22: 18-19};

^{^3.1} {Ps 19: 8-9,12; Ps. 12:7}

^{^3.2} {Deut 4: 6}

^{^3.3} (Acts 4: 19);

^{^3.4} {1 Cor. 8: 6; Eph. 4: 5; Col. 1: 16 - 18; };

^{^3.5} {Mark. 7: 7; Acts 4: 19; Col. 2: 8; 2 Tim. 4: 3-4; 2 Pet. 2: 15-16}

^{^3.6} {Ps 62: 9; Rom 3: 4; 2 Tim 4: 3-4}

^{^4} {1 John 4: 1}

^{^5} {2 John 1: 10}

Additional verses:

Acts 26:22 Rom. 15:4 Acts 18:28 1 Pet. 4 Luke 11:13 2 Tim. 1:13

John 3:13 John 15:15 1 John 1:5 Acts 20:27 2 John 1 John 4:25

Heb 8:9 Mat 15:3 Mat 17:5 Isa 1:12 Acts 1:21 Isa 8:20

1 Cor. 1:13 1 Cor 2:4 1 Pet. 5:12 2 Thes. 2:2 John 5

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^{^1} 2 Tim 3: 16-17 16 All scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **17** That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

^{^1.1} 1 Cor 3: 11 For no man can lay any foundation other than the one that is already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 15: 1-2 1 Now, brethren, I want to remind you of the gospel that I preached to you, that you believed, and upon which your faith rests; **2** You are saved by it, if you still believe the Word that I preached unto you, unless you never really believed.

1 Pet 1: 11-12 **11** Seeking to know what person, or period of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating, when it testified in advance about the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that would follow. **12** Unto whom it was revealed, that they were not serving themselves, but you in reporting the things, that have now been proclaimed to you by those who are preaching the gospel to you with the Holy Spirit sent from heaven; things which angels long to look into.

^2 Gal. 1:8-11 **8** But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. **9** As we have told you before, I tell you again, If anyone preaches any gospel to you other than the one you received, let him be accursed. **10** Am I now trying to win the favor of men, or God? Am I striving to please men? If I were yet seeking the favor of men, I would not be the servant of Christ. **11** But I want you to know, brethren, that the gospel I preached was not devised by man.

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^3 Deut 6:9 And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates.
Deut. 12:32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Prov. 30: 5-6 **5** Every word of God is true: he is a shield to those who put their trust in him. **6** Do not add to his words, lest he reprove you, and you are found to be a liar.

Gal. 3: 15 Brethren, What I am saying happens in everyday life; Even if a covenant is but a human agreement, once it is enacted, no man sets it aside, or adds to it.

1 Tim. 1:3 When I went to Macedonia, I urged you to remain at Ephesus, and still do, so that you might warn certain people not to teach any other doctrine,

Rev. 22:18-19 **18** For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: **19** And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

^3.1 Ps 19:8-9, 12 **8** The statutes of the LORD are right, delighting the mind: the commandment of the LORD is pure, giving light to the eyes. **9** The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. **12** Who can understand his errors? cleanse me O Lord from hidden faults.
Ps. 12:7 You shall keep them, O LORD, you will preserve them from this generation forever.

^3.2 Deut 4: 6 So keep them and do them; for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, who shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people

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^3.3 Acts 4: 19 But Peter and John responded by saying, Decide for yourselves whether it is right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God.

^3.4 1 Cor. 8: 6 Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we for him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him.

Eph. 4: 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Col. 1: 16 - 18 **16** For all things in heaven and earth, both visible and invisible, were created by him, whether they be thrones, or jurisdictions, or provinces, or authorities: all things were created by him, and for him: **17** And he is before all things, and by him all things have their existence. **18** And he is the head of the body, the church: he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; so that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

^3.5 Mark. 7: 7 They worship me in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
Acts 4: 19 But Peter and John responded by saying, Decide for yourselves whether it is right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God.

Col. 2: 8 Beware lest any man take you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, after the tradition of men, after the basic principles of this world, and not after Christ.

2 Tim. 4: 3-4 **3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but

according to their own lusts, will surround themselves with teachers who tell them what their ears itch to hear; **4** And they will turn their ears away from the truth, and will be turned to fables.

2 Pet. 2: 15-16 **15** Who having forsaken the right way, have gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; **16** But was rebuked for his iniquity: for a dumb donkey speaking with the voice of a man constrained the prophet's madness.

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^3.6 Ps 62: 9 Surely men of low degree are but a vapor, and men of high degree are an illusion: when they are laid in the balances, they go up, they are lighter than air.

Rom 3: 4 Absolutely not: on the contrary, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That you might be justified in your sayings, and might overcome when you are judged.

2 Tim 4: 3-4 (See 3 verses above.)

^4 1 John 4: 1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are of God: because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

^5 2 John 1: 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

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Article 8: The Trinity: God is One being in three Persons

In keeping with this truth and Word of God we believe in one God, who is one single essence, in whom there are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct according to their incommunicable properties-- namely, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Father is the cause, origin, and source of all things, visible as well as invisible.

The Son is the Word, the Wisdom, and the image of the Father.

The Holy Spirit is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

Nevertheless, this distinction does not divide God into three, since Scripture teaches us that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each has his own subsistence distinguished by characteristics-- yet in such a way that **these three persons are only one God.**

It is evident then that the Father is not the Son and that the Son is not the Father, and that likewise the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son.

Nevertheless, these persons, thus distinct, are neither divided nor fused or mixed together.

For the Father did not take on flesh, nor did the Spirit, but only the Son.

The Father was never without his Son, nor without his Holy Spirit, since all these are equal from eternity, in one and the same essence.

There is neither a first nor a last, for all three are one in truth and power, in goodness and mercy.

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Other

Prov. 8:22 Micah 5:1 Matt. 28:19 John 1:14 1 Cor. 1:24

Col. 1:15 Col 3:16-17 1 John 1:1 Rev. 19:13.

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Prov. 8:22 The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his creation, before his works of old.

Micah 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you will come one who will rule in Israel for me; whose origin is from long ago, from

everlasting.

Matt. 28:19 Therefore go, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

1 Cor. 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Col. 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation:

Col 3:16-17 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; as you teach and counsel one another singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to the Lord, with grace in your hearts.

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, we declare concerning the Word of life;

Rev. 19:13 And he was clothed with a garment dipped in blood: and his name is The Word of God.

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Article 9: The Scriptural Witness on the Trinity

All these things we know from the testimonies of Holy Scripture as well as from the effects of the persons, especially from those we feel within ourselves.

The testimonies of the Holy Scriptures, which teach us to believe in this Holy Trinity, are written in many places of the Old Testament, which need not be enumerated but only chosen with discretion.

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In the book of Genesis God says, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness." So "God created man in his own image"-- indeed, "male and female he created them." **^6 {Genesis 1:26,27}** "Behold, man has become like one of us." **^7 {Gen. 3:22}**

It appears from this that there is a plurality of persons within the Deity, when he says, "Let us make man in our image"-- and afterwards he indicates the unity when he says, "God created."

It is true that he does not say here how many persons there are-- but what is somewhat obscure to us in the Old Testament is very clear in the New.

For when our Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the voice of the Father was heard saying, "This is my dear Son"; **^8 {Matt. 3:17}** the Son was seen in the water; and the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove.

So, in the baptism of all believers this form was prescribed by Christ: "Baptize all people in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." **^9 {Matt. 28:19}**

In the Gospel according to Luke the angel Gabriel says to Mary, the mother of our Lord: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and therefore that holy one to be born of you shall be called the Son of God." **^10 {Luke 1:35}**

And in another place it says: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you."¹¹ {2 Cor. 13:14}

"There are three who bear witness in heaven-- the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit-- and these three are one."¹² {1 John 5:7}

In all these passages we are fully taught that there are three persons in the one and only divine essence. And although this doctrine surpasses human understanding, we nevertheless believe it now, through the Word, waiting to know and enjoy it fully in heaven.

Furthermore, we must note the particular works and activities of these three persons in relation to us. The Father is called our Creator, by reason of his power. The Son is our Savior and Redeemer, by his blood. The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier, by his living in our hearts.

This doctrine of the holy Trinity has always been maintained in the true church, from the time of the apostles until the present, against Jews, Muslims, and certain false Christians and heretics, such as Marcion, Mani, Praxeas, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, Arius, and others like them, who were rightly condemned by the holy fathers.

And so, in this matter we willingly accept the three ecumenical creeds-- the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian-- as well as what the ancient fathers decided in agreement with them.

Other

Gen. 5:1	Matt. 3:16	Matt 28:19	Luke 1:35	Acts. 2:32	2 Cor. 13:13
1 John 5:7	Acts 2:32-33	1 Pet. 1:2	1 John 4:13-14	Gal. 4:6	Eph. 3:14, 16
Tit. 3:4-6	Jude :20-21	Rom. (6) 8:9	Acts 10:38	Acts 8:29, 37	John 14:16
John 15:26	John 1:33	Prov. 25:27			

{⁶ Gen. 1:26-27 26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

⁷ Gen. 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

⁸ Matt. 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

⁹ Matt. 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

¹⁰ Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

¹¹ 2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

¹² 1 John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the

Holy Ghost: and these three are one}

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Article 10: The Deity of Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, according to his divine nature, is the only Son of God--eternally begotten, not made nor created, for then he would be a creature.

He is one in essence with the Father; coeternal; the exact image of the person of the Father and the "reflection of his glory," **^13 {Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3}** being in all things like him (**Phil 2:6**).

He is the Son of God not only from the time he assumed our nature but from all eternity, as the following testimonies teach us when they are taken together.

Moses says that God "created the world"; **^14 {Gen. 1:1}** and John says that "all things were created by the Word," **^15 {John 1:3}** which he calls God. The apostle says that "God made the world by his Son." **^16 {Heb. 1:2}** He also says that "God created all things by Jesus Christ." **^17 {Col. 1:16}**

And so it must follow that he who is called God, the Word, the Son, and Jesus Christ already existed when all things were created by him.

Therefore the prophet Micah says that his origin is "from ancient times, from eternity." **^18 {Mic. 5:2}** And the apostle says that he has "neither beginning of days nor end of life." **^19 {Heb. 7:3}**

So then, he is the true eternal God, the Almighty, whom we invoke, worship, and serve.

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Other

John 1:18, 34, 49	John1:14	Col 1:15	Heb. 1:3	Matt. 3:17
Matt 17:5	John 8:24	John 10:30	John9:36	Acts 8:34
Isa.7:14	Rom.9:5	1 Thess. 3:11	Phil.2:11	2 Kor 5:19
Acts20	Eph3:9	Rom. 14	Tit.2	1 Cor. 8:6
Heb.1:1	Heb3:4	John 1:3	1 John 5:7, 14, 20	Rev.1-6
John8:58	John 17:5	1 Cor. 10:9	Gal 4:4	Mic.5:2
Col1:15	Ps. 2:7,12	Heb. 13:8.		

{^13 Col. 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

Heb. 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Phil 2:6 Who, being by nature God, did not see equality with God as something to be used for self-glorification:

^14 Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

^15 John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

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[^]16 Heb. 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

[^]17 Col. 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

[^]18 Mic. 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

[^]19 Heb. 7:3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.}

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Article 11: The Deity of the Holy Spirit

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

He is true and eternal God, as the Holy Scriptures teach us.

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Other

Gen1:1 Heb. 1:3 Heb 11:3 John 1:3 Ps.33:6

Jer 32:17 Mal. 2:10 John 1:3 John 16:26 Ps.104

Amos 4:13 John 14:16, 26.

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Gen 1:1-2 **1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. **2** And the earth was without form, and empty; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Heb. 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the true image of his nature, and sustaining all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself made purification for our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Heb 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of what is visible.

John 1:3 All things were created by him; and apart from him nothing was created that was created.

Ps. 33:6 The LORD made the heavens by his word; and all the stars by the breath of his mouth.

Jer 32:17 Ah Lord GOD! behold, you have made the heaven and the earth by your great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for you:

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Mal. 2:10 Don't we all have one father? Hasn't one God created us? why then does every man deal treacherously against his brother, thus profaning the covenant of our fathers?

John 1:3 All things were created by him; and apart from him nothing was created that was created.

John 16:26 In that day you will ask in my name: and I am not saying that, I will pray to the Father for you:

Ps. 104 *(Please read it in your Bible.)*

Amos 4:13 And know that the name of the one who formed the mountains, and created the wind; who reveals his thoughts to man, and makes the dawn dark, and walks on the high places of the earth, is Jahweh, The God of hosts.

John 14:16, 26 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may remain with you forever; 26 But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and cause you to remember everything that I have said to you.

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Article 12: The Creation of All Things, also of angels

We believe that the Father created heaven and earth and all other creatures from nothing, when it seemed good to him, by his Word-- that is to say, by his Son.

He has given all creatures their being, form, and appearance, and their various functions for serving their Creator.

Even now he also sustains and governs them all, according to his eternal providence, and by his infinite power, that they may serve man, in order that man may serve God.

He has also created the angels good, that they might be his messengers and serve his elect.

Some of them have fallen from the excellence in which God created them into eternal perdition; and the others have persisted and remained in their original state, by the grace of God.

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The devils and evil spirits are so corrupt that they are enemies of God and of everything good. They lie in wait for the church and every member of it like thieves, with all their power, to destroy and spoil everything by their deceptions.

So then, by their own wickedness they are condemned to everlasting damnation, daily awaiting their torments.

For that reason we detest the error of the Sadducees, who deny that there are spirits and angels, and also the error of the Manicheans, who say that the devils originated by themselves, being evil by nature, without having been corrupted.

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Other

<i>Ps</i> 34:8	<i>Ps.</i> 103:21	<i>Is.</i> 40:26	<i>Matt.</i> 4	<i>Matt.</i> 25:41
<i>Matt.</i> 28:19	<i>Luke</i> 8:31	<i>John</i> 8:44	<i>Acts</i> 5:3	<i>Acts</i> 23:8
<i>Rom.</i> 8:9	<i>1 Cor.</i> 3:16	<i>1 Cor.</i> 6:11	<i>Col.</i> 1:16	<i>1 Tim.</i> 4:3
<i>Heb.</i> 1:14	<i>Heb.</i> 3:4	<i>2 Pet.</i> 2:4	<i>1 John</i> 5:15	<i>Rev.</i> 4:11
<i>Rev.</i> 11:16.				

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Ps 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man who trusts in him.

Ps. 103:21 Praise the LORD, all his armies; his servants, who do his will.

Is. 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high, and consider who has created these things, who brings out their multitude by number: he calls them all by name. Because he is so strong and powerful; not one star is missing.

Matt. 4 (Please read it in your Bible.)

Matt. 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Matt. 28:19 Therefore go, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Luke 8:31 And they begged him not to order them to go into the bottomless pit.

John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and you will do what your father desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and did not abide in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks on his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Acts 5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price of the land?

Acts 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are no angels, or spirits: but the Pharisees believe in those things.

Rom. 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God truly dwells in you. Now if any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not one of his.

1 Cor. 3:16 Don't you know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

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1 Cor. 6:11 And that is what some of you were: but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Col. 1:16 For all things in heaven and earth, both visible and invisible, were created by him, whether they be thrones, or jurisdictions, or provinces, or authorities: all things were created by him, and for him:

1 Tim. 4:3-41 3 Forbidding to marry, or commanding to abstain from certain foods, that God has created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing has to be rejected,.....

Heb. 1:14 Are they not all spirits who serve him, and are sent forth to help those who will be heirs of salvation?

Heb. 3:4 For every house is made by someone; but God made everything.

2 Pet. 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them to be kept in chains of darkness, until judgement;

1 John 5:15 And if we know that he hears us, in whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of him.

Rev. 4:11 You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for you have created all things, and by your will they were created and exist.

Rev. 11:16 And the twenty-four elders, who sit before God on thrones, fell on their faces, and worshipped God,

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Article 13: The Doctrine of God's Providence

We believe that this good God, after he created all things, did not abandon them to chance or fortune but leads and governs them according to his holy will, in such a way that nothing happens in this world without his orderly arrangement.

Yet God is not the author of, nor can he be charged with, the sin that occurs. For his power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible that he arranges and does his work very well and justly even when the devils and wicked men act unjustly.

We do not wish to inquire with undue curiosity into what he does that surpasses human understanding and is beyond our ability to comprehend. But in all humility and reverence we adore the just judgments of God, which are hidden from us, being content to be Christ's disciples, so as to learn only what he shows us in his Word, without going beyond those limits.

This doctrine gives us unspeakable comfort since it teaches us that nothing can happen to us by chance but only by the arrangement of our gracious heavenly Father. He watches over us with fatherly care, keeping all creatures under his control, so that not one of the hairs on our heads (for they are all numbered) nor even a little bird can fall to the ground **^20 (Matt 10:29,30)** without the will of our Father.

In this thought we rest, knowing that he holds in check the devils and all our enemies, who cannot hurt us without his permission and will.

For that reason we reject the damnable error of the Epicureans, who say that God involves himself in nothing and leaves everything to chance.

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Other:

John 5:17	Heb. 1:3	Prov. 16	Eph. 1:11	James 4:13
Job 1:21	2 Kings 22:20	Acts 4:28	Acts 2:23	1 Sam. 2:25
Ps. 115:13	Isa .45:7	Amos 3:6	Deut. 19:5	Prov. 21:1
Ps. 105:25	Isa. 10:9	2 Thess. 2:11	Ezech. 14:9	Matt. 10:29
Rom. 1:28	1 Kings 11:23	Gen. 45:8	Gen 50:20	2 Sam. 16:10
Matt . 8:31	1 John 2:16	Ps. 5:5	1 John 3:8	Gen 1:26
Col. 1:15	Col 3:10.			

{ **^20 Matt. 10:29-30** *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* }

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John 5:17 *But Jesus said to them, My Father has worked until now, and I work.*

Heb. 1:3 *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the true image of his nature, and sustaining all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself made purification for our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

Prov. 16 *(Please read in your Bible.)*

Eph. 1:11 *In whom we have also obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will:*

James 4:13 *Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to a city, and remain there a year, and buy and sell, and make a profit:*

Job 1:21 *And said, I came out of my mother's womb naked, and I will depart from this world naked: the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.*

2 Kings 22:20 *Therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be taken to your grave in peace; and your eyes will not see all the evil that I will bring upon this place. And they brought back word to the king.*

Acts 4:28 *To do everything your hand and counsel long ago decided should be done.*

Acts 2:23 *This Jesus, being delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain:*

1 Sam. 2:25 *If one man sins against another, the judge will judge him: but if a man sins against the LORD, who shall intercede for him? Nevertheless they did not listen to the voice of their father,*

because the LORD wanted to slay them.

Ps. 115:13 *He will bless those who fear the LORD, both small and great.*

Isa. 45:7 *I form light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create disaster: I the LORD do all these things.*

Amos 3:6 *Can a trumpet be blown in the city, without the people being alarmed? will any disaster happen to a city, if it is not the LORD'S will?*

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Deut. 19:5 *As when a man goes into the woods with his neighbor to chop wood, and his hand swings the axe to cut down a tree, and the head slips from the handle, and hits his neighbor, causing him to die; he shall flee to one of those cities, and live:*

Prov. 21:1 *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water: he turns it whichever way he wants.*

Ps. 105:25 *They changed their minds so that they hated his people, and dealt treacherously with his servants.*

Isa. 10:9 *Is not Calno like Carchemish? or Hamath like Arpad? or Samaria like Damascus?*

2 Thess. 2:11 *And for this reason God will send them a powerful delusion, so that they will believe lies:*

Ezech. 14:9 *And if the prophet is deceived when he has spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.*

Matt. 10:29 *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father.*

Rom. 1:28 *Being filled with unrighteousness of every kind, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; whisperers,*

1 Kings 11:23 *And God raised up another adversary against him, Rezon the son of Eliadah, who had ran away from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah.*

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Gen. 45:8 *So now it was not you who sent me here, but God: and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.*

Gen 50:20 *But as for you, you planned evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring about that many people should be kept alive, as they are to this day.*

2 Sam. 6:10 *So David was not willing to take the ark of the LORD into the city of David: but David took it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite.*

Matt. 8:31 *So the devils pleaded with him, saying, If you cast us out, allow us to enter the herd of pigs.*

1 John 2:16 *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

Ps. 5:5 *The foolish will not stand in your sight: you hate all who do evil.*

1 John 3:8 *He who does what is sinful is of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared, was to destroy the works of the devil.*

Gen. 1:26 *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.*

Col. 1:15 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation:*

Col. 3:10 *And have put on the new man, who is renewed in knowledge after the image of the One who created him:*

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Article 14: The Creation and Fall of Man, and its consequences

We believe that God created man from the dust of the earth and made and formed him in his image and likeness-- good, just, and holy; able by his own will to conform in all

things to the will of God.

But when he was in honor he did not understand it **^21 {Ps. 49:20}** and did not recognize his excellence. But he subjected himself willingly to sin and consequently to death and the curse, lending his ear to the word of the devil.

For he transgressed the commandment of life, which he had received, and by his sin he separated himself from God, who was his true life, having corrupted his entire nature.

So he made himself guilty and subject to physical and spiritual death, having become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways. He lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and he retained none of them except for small traces which are enough to make him inexcusable.

Moreover, all the light in us is turned to darkness, as the Scripture teaches us: "The light shone in the darkness, and the darkness did not receive it." **^22 {John 1:5}** Here John calls men "darkness."

Therefore we reject everything taught to the contrary concerning man's free will, since man is nothing but the slave of sin and cannot do a thing unless it is "given him from heaven." **^23 {John 3:27}**

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For who can boast of being able to do anything good by himself, since Christ says, "No one can come to me unless my Father who sent me draws him"? **^24 {John 6:44}**

Who can glory in his own will when he understands that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God"? **^25 {Rom. 8:7}** Who can speak of his own knowledge in view of the fact that "the natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit of God"? **^26 {1 Cor. 2:14}**

In short, who can produce a single thought, since he knows that we are "not able to think a thing" about ourselves, by ourselves, but that "our ability is from God"? **^27 {2 Cor. 3:5}**

And therefore, what the apostle says ought rightly to stand fixed and firm: "God works within us both to will and to do according to his good pleasure." **^28 {Phil. 2:13}**

For there is no understanding nor will conforming to God's understanding and will apart from Christ's involvement, as he teaches us when he says, "Without me you can do nothing." **^29 {John 15:5}**

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Other:

1 Pet. 2:9	Eccl. 12:7	Ps. 8:5	Ps. 49:21	Isa. 59:2
Gen. 3:17, 19	Eccl. 7:30	Rom. 5:12	John 8:7	Eph. 4:24
Rom. 12:2	Ps. 3:10	Ps. 8:6	Acts 14:17	Rom. 1:20-21
Acts 17:27	Eph. 4:18	Eph. 5:8	John 1:5	Ps. 37:9
Isa. 26:12	Ps. 94:11	Rom. 8:3	1 Kings 20:9	Ps. 28:8
Isa. 45:25	John 3:27	Ps. 6:44	2 Cor. 3:5	Phil. 2:13.

(1 Cor. 2:14)

{^21 Ps. 49:20} Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.

^22 John 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

^23 John 3:27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

^24 John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

^25 Rom. 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

^26 1 Cor. 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

^27 2 Cor. 3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

^28 Phil. 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

^29 John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.}

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Article 15: The Doctrine of Original Sin

We believe that by the disobedience of Adam original sin has been spread through the whole human race.

It is a corruption of all nature-- an inherited depravity which even infects small infants in their mother's womb, and the root which produces in man every sort of sin. It is therefore so vile and enormous in God's sight that it is enough to condemn the human race, and it is not abolished or wholly uprooted even by baptism, seeing that sin constantly boils forth as though from a contaminated spring.

Nevertheless, it is not imputed to God's children for their condemnation but is forgiven by his grace and mercy-- not to put them to sleep but so that the awareness of this corruption might often make believers groan as they long to be set free from the "body of this death."**^30 {Rom. 7:24}**

Therefore we reject the error of the Pelagians who say that this sin is nothing else than a matter of imitation.

Other

Ps. 51:7	Rom. 3:10	John 3:6	Gen. 6:3
Eph 2:5	Job 14:4	Rom. 5:14	Rom 7:18-19.

{^30 Rom. 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? }

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Article 16: The Doctrine of Eternal Election by God

We believe that-- all Adam's descendants having thus fallen into perdition and ruin by the sin of the first man-- God showed himself to be as he is: merciful and just.

He is merciful in withdrawing and saving from this perdition those whom he, in his eternal and unchangeable counsel, has elected and chosen in Jesus Christ our Lord by his pure goodness, without any consideration of their works.

He is just in leaving the others in their ruin and fall into which they plunged themselves.

Other:

Rom. 3:12	Rom 9:16	Deut. 32:8	1 Sam. 12:22	Ps. 65:5
Mal. 1:2	2 Tim. 1:9	Rom. 9:29	Tit. 3:4-5	Eph. 1:4-5
Rom. 11:5	Acts 2:47	Acts 13:48	2 Tim. 2:20	Rom. 9:11
1 Pet. 1:2	Rom. 9:21	John 6:27, 44	John 17:9, 12	John 13:9
John 15:16	Rom. 11:34-35	John 18:20	John 15:19	Tit. 1:1
Eph. 1:3	John 10:29	Matt. 15:24	Matt 20:23.	

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Article 17: God promises a Redeemer to Recover Fallen Man

We believe that our good God, by his marvelous wisdom and goodness, seeing that man had plunged himself in this manner into both physical and spiritual death and made himself completely miserable, set out to find him, though man, trembling all over, was fleeing from him.

And he comforted him, promising to give him his Son, "born of a woman,"^{^31} {Gal. 4:4} to crush the head of the serpent,^{^32} {Gen. 3:15} and to make him blessed.

Other:

Rom. 3:12	Rom 9:16	Deut. 32:8	1 Sam. 12:22	Ps. 65:5
Mal. 1:2	2 Tim. 1:9	Rom. 9:29	Tit. 3:4-5	Eph. 1:4-5
Rom. 11:5	Acts 2:47	Acts 13:48	2 Tim. 2:20	Rom. 9:11
1 Pet. 1:2	Rom. 9:21	John 6:27, 44	John 17:9, 12	John 13:9
John 15:16	Rom. 11:34-35	John 18:20	John 15:19	Tit. 1:1
Eph. 1:3	John 10:29	Matt. 15:24	Matt 20:23.	

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{^{^31} Gal. 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

^{^32} Gen. 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.}

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Article 18: The Incarnation of Jesus Christ, God's Son

So then we confess that God fulfilled the promise which he had made to the early fathers by the mouth of his holy prophets when he sent his only and eternal Son into the world at the time set by him.

The Son took the "form of a servant" and was made in the "likeness of man," ^{^33} {Phil. 2:7} truly assuming a real human nature, with all its weaknesses, except for sin; being conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, without male participation.

And he not only assumed human nature as far as the body is concerned but also a real human soul, in order that he might be a real human being. For since the soul had been lost as well as the body he had to assume them both to save them both together.

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Against the heresy of the Anabaptists who deny that Christ assumed human flesh from his mother,

{we therefore confess:}

that he "shared the very flesh and blood of children";^{^34} *{Heb. 2:14}*

that he is "fruit of the loins of David" according to the flesh;^{^35} *{Acts 2:30}*

"born of the seed of David" according to the flesh;^{^36} *{Rom. 1:3}*

"fruit of the womb of the virgin Mary";^{^37} *{Luke 1:42}*

"born of a woman";^{^38} *{Gal. 4:4}*

"the seed of David";^{^39} *{2 Tim. 2:8; Jer 33:15}*

"a shoot from the root of Jesse"; ^{^40} *{Rom. 15:12; Isa 11:1}*

"the offspring of Judah,"^{^41} *{Heb. 7:14}*

having descended from the Jews according to the flesh *{Rom 9:5}*;

"from the seed of Abraham"-- for he "assumed Abraham's seed"

and was "made like his brothers except for sin."^{^42} *{Heb. 2:17; Heb 4:15}*

In this way he is truly our **Immanuel**-- that is: "God with us."^{^43} *{Matt. 1:23}*

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Other:

Phil. 2:7 1 Tim. 3:16 Luke 1:55 Gen. 26:4 2 Sam. 7:12

Ps. 132:11 Acts 13:23 1 Tim. 2:5 1 Cor. 12:3 Deut. 29:2

Ps. 119:34 Rom. 7:19 Jer. 33:15 Heb. 7:14 Rom. 9:5

Gal. 3:16 Heb. 2:16 Matt. 1:16.

^{^33} *Phil. 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

^{^34} *Heb. 2:14 For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

^{^35} *Acts 2:30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;*

^{^36} *Rom. 1:3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;*

^{^37} *Luke 1:42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*

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^{^38} *Gal. 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*

^{^39} *2 Tim. 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:*

Jer 33:15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

^{^40} *Rom. 15:12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.*

Isa 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

^{^41} *Heb. 7:14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.*

Rom 9:5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

^{^42} *Heb. 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

^43 Matt. 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.}

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Article 19: The Two Natures of Christ

We believe that by being thus conceived the person of the Son has been inseparably united and joined together with human nature, in such a way that there are not two Sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures united in a single person, with each nature retaining its own distinct properties.

Thus his divine nature has always remained uncreated, without beginning of days or end of life, **^44 {Heb. 7:3}** filling heaven and earth.

His human nature has not lost its properties but continues to have those of a creature-- it has a beginning of days; it is of a finite nature and retains all that belongs to a real body. And even though he, by his resurrection, gave it immortality, that nonetheless did not change the reality of his human nature; for our salvation and resurrection depend also on the reality of his body.

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But these two natures are so united together in one person that they are not even separated by his death.

So then, what he committed to his Father when he died was a real human spirit which left his body. But meanwhile his divine nature remained united with his human nature even when he was lying in the grave; and his deity never ceased to be in him, just as it was in him when he was a little child, though for a while it did not show itself as such.

These are the reasons why we confess him to be true God and true man-- true God in order to conquer death by his power, and true man that he might die for us in the weakness of his flesh.

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Other:

Matt. 28:20 John 10:13 Eph. 4:8, 12 Heb. 7:3 Matt. 26:11 Acts 1:11

Acts 3:21 Luke 24:39 John. 20:25 Acts 1:3 Matt. 27:50.

{ ^44 Heb. 7:3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.}

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Article 20: The Justice and Mercy of God in Christ

We believe that God-- who is perfectly merciful and also very just-- sent his Son to assume the nature in which the disobedience had been committed, in order to bear in it the punishment of sin by his most bitter passion and death.

So God made known his justice toward his Son, who was charged with our sin, and he

poured out his goodness and mercy on us, who are guilty and worthy of damnation, giving to us his Son to die, by a most perfect love, and raising him to life for our justification, in order that by him we might have immortality and eternal life.

Other

Heb 2:14; **Rom: 8:3, 32;** **Rom 4:25.**

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{Heb 2:14-15 14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Rom 8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Rom 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. }

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Article 21: The Atonement by Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek-- made such by an oath-- and that he presented himself in our name before his Father, to appease his wrath with full satisfaction by offering himself on the tree of the cross and pouring out his precious blood for the cleansing of our sins, as the prophets had predicted.

For it is written that "the chastisement of our peace" was placed on the Son of God and that "we are healed by his wounds." . He was "led to death as a lamb"; he was "numbered among sinners"^{^45} *{Isa. 53:4-12}* and condemned as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, though Pilate had declared that he was innocent. *{Joh 18:38; Luke 23:4}*

So he paid back what he had not stolen, ^{^46} *{Ps. 69:4}* and he suffered-- the "just for the unjust," ^{^47} *{1 Pet. 3:18}* in both his body and his soul-- in such a way that when he senses the horrible punishment required by our sins his sweat became like "big drops of blood falling on the ground." ^{^48} *{Luke 22:44}* He cried, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" ^{^49} *{Matt. 27:46}*

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And he endured all this for the forgiveness of our sins.

Therefore we rightly say with Paul that we "know nothing but Jesus and him crucified"; ^{^50} *{1 Cor. 2:2}* we consider all things as "dung for the excellence of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." ^{^51} *{Phil. 3:8}* We find all comforts in his wounds and have no need to seek or invent any other means to reconcile ourselves with God than this one and only sacrifice, once made, which renders believers perfect forever. (**Heb 10:14**)

This is also why the angel of God called him Jesus-- that is, "Savior"-- because he

would save his people from their sins. **^52 {Matt. 1:21}**

Other:

Ps. 110:4	Heb. 5:10	Rom. 5:8-9	Col. 2:14	Heb. 2:9, 17
Rom. 4:25	John 15:13	Acts 2:24	John 3:16	Rom. 8:32
1 Tim. 1:15	Isa. 53:5, 7	Heb. 9:14	1 Pet. 2:24	Matt. 15:28
John 18:38	Ps. 69:5	Ex. 12:6	Ps. 22:16	Dan. 9:26
1 Cor. 2:2	Rom. 5:6	Phil. 2:8	Heb. 9:12	1 Pet. 1:18-19
John 10:9	Heb. 9:25-26	Heb 10:14	John 5:10	Matt. 1:21
Acts 4:12	Luke 1:31			

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{^45 Isa. 53:4-12: 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his Acts

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

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John 18:38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

Luke 23:4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

^46 Ps. 69:4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.

^47 1 Pet. 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

^48 Luke 22:44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

^49 Matt. 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

^50 1 Cor. 2:2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

^51 Phil. 3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Heb 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

^52 Matt. 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.}

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Article 22: Our Righteousness before God

We believe that for us to acquire the true knowledge of this great mystery the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith that embraces Jesus Christ, with all his merits, and makes him its own, and no longer looks for anything apart from him.

For it must necessarily follow that either all that is required for our salvation is not in Christ or, if all is in him, then he who has Christ by faith has his salvation entirely.

Therefore, to say that Christ is not enough but that something else is needed as well is a most enormous blasphemy against God-- for it then would follow that Jesus Christ is only half a Savior. And therefore we justly say with Paul that we are justified "by faith alone" or by faith "apart from works." ^{^53} {**Rom. 3:28**}

However, we do not mean, properly speaking, that it is faith itself that justifies us-- for faith is only the instrument by which we embrace Christ, our righteousness.

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But Jesus Christ is our righteousness in making available to us all his merits and all the holy works he has done for us and in our place. And faith is the instrument that keeps us in communion with him and with all his benefits.

When those benefits are made ours they are more than enough to absolve us of our sins.

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Other:

Ps. 51:8	Eph. 1:17-18	1 Thess. 1:6	1 Cor. 2:12	Gal 2:21
Jer. 23:6	1 Cor. 1:20	Jer. 51:10	1 Cor. 15:3	Matt. 1:21
Rom. 8:1	Rom 3:20, 28	Gal. 2:16	Heb. 7:19	Rom. 8:29, 33
Acts 13:28	1 Pet. 1:4	Rom. 10:3, 5, 9	Luke 1:77	Tit. 3:5
Ps. 32:1	Rom. 4:5	Rom 3:24, 27	Phil. 3:9	2 Tim. 1:9
Ps. 115:1	1 Cor. 4:7	Rom. 4:2.		

{^{^53} **Rom. 3:28** Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.}

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Article 23: The Justification of Sinners by God's grace

We believe that our blessedness lies in the forgiveness of our sins because of Jesus Christ, and that in it our righteousness before God is contained, as David and Paul teach us when they declare that man blessed to whom God grants righteousness apart from works. ^{^54} {**Ps. 32:1-2; Rom. 4:6-7**}

And the same apostle says that we are justified "freely" or "by grace" through redemption in Jesus Christ. ^{^55} {**Rom. 3:24**} And therefore we cling to this foundation, which is firm forever, giving all glory to God, humbling ourselves, and recognizing ourselves as we are; not claiming a thing for ourselves or our merits and leaning and

resting on the sole obedience of Christ crucified, which is ours when we believe in him.

That is enough to cover all our sins and to make us confident, freeing the conscience from the fear, dread, and terror of God's approach, without doing what our first father, Adam, did, who trembled as he tried to cover himself with fig leaves.

In fact, if we had to appear before God relying-- no matter how little-- on ourselves or some other creature, then, alas, we would be swallowed up.

Therefore everyone must say with David: "Lord, do not enter into judgment with your servants, for before you no living person shall be justified."⁵⁶ {Ps. 143:2}

Other:

Heb. 11:7	Eph. 2:8	2 Cor. 5:19	1 Tim. 2:6	1 John 2:1
Gen. 3:7	Rom 4:6	Acts 4:12	Ezech. 36:23, 32	Deut. 27:26
(Rom. 5:19)				
James 2:10	Ps. 143:2	Luke 16:15	Job 1	1 Cor. 4:4
Ps. 18:28	Zeph. 3:11	Heb. 10:20.		

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⁵⁴ **Ps. 32:1-2;** **1** A Psalm of David, Maschil. *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

Rom. 4:6-7: **6** *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*

⁵⁵ **Rom. 3:24** *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

⁵⁶ **Ps. 143:2** *And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.}*

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Article 24: The Sanctification of Sinners and place of good works

We believe that this true faith, produced in man by the hearing of God's Word and by the work of the Holy Spirit, regenerates him and makes him a "new man," ⁵⁷ {2 Cor. 5:17} causing him to live the "new life" ⁵⁸ {Rom. 6:4} and freeing him from the slavery of sin.

Therefore, far from making people cold toward living in a pious and holy way, this justifying faith, quite to the contrary, so works within them that apart from it they will never do a thing out of love for God but only out of love for themselves and fear of being condemned.

So then, it is impossible for this holy faith to be unfruitful in a human being, seeing that we do not speak of an empty faith but of what Scripture calls "faith working through love," ⁵⁹ {Gal. 5:6} which leads a man to do by himself the works that God has commanded in his Word.

These works, proceeding from the good root of faith, are good and acceptable to God, since they are all sanctified by his grace. Yet they do not count toward our justification-- for by faith in Christ we are justified, even before we do good works. Otherwise they could not

be good, any more than the fruit of a tree could be good if the tree is not good in the first place.

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So then, we do good works, but not for merit-- for what would we merit? Rather, we are indebted to God for the good works we do, and not he to us, since it is he who "works in us both to will and do according to his good pleasure" **^60 {Phil. 2:13}**-- thus keeping in mind what is written: "When you have done all that is commanded you, then you shall say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have done what it was our duty to do.'" **^61 {Luke 17:10}**

Yet we do not wish to deny that God rewards good works-- but it is by his grace that he crowns his gifts.

Moreover, although we do good works we do not base our salvation on them; for we cannot do any work that is not defiled by our flesh and also worthy of punishment. And even if we could point to one, memory of a single sin is enough for God to reject that work.

So we would always be in doubt, tossed back and forth without any certainty, and our poor consciences would be tormented constantly if they did not rest on the merit of the suffering and death of our Savior.

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Other

Rom. 10:17	John 5:26	Eph. 2:4	John 8:36	Tit. 2:12
John 15	Heb. 11:6	1 Tim. 1:5	Gal. 5:6	Tit. 3:8
Rom. 9:32	Tit. 3:5	Matt. 7:17	Rom. 14:23	Heb. 11:4
Gen. 4:4	1 Cor. 4:7	Phil. 3:13	Isa. 26:12	Gal. 3:5
1 Thess. 2:13	Luke 17:10	Rom. 2:6	Rev. 2:13	2 John :8
Rom. 11:5 (6-7)	(Eph. 2:5)	Isa. 64:6	1 Cor. 3:11	Isa. 28:26
Rom. 10:11	Hab. 2:4.			

{^57 2 Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

^58 Rom. 6:4 *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

^59 Gal. 5:6 *For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

^60 Phil. 2:13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

^61 Luke 17:10 *So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.}*

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Article 25: The Fulfillment of the ceremonial Law and symbols in Christ

We believe that the ceremonies and symbols of the law have ended with the coming of Christ, and that all foreshadowings have come to an end, so that the use of them ought to be abolished among Christians. Yet the truth and substance of these things remain for us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have been fulfilled.

Nevertheless, we continue to use the witnesses drawn from the law and prophets to confirm us in the gospel and to regulate our lives with full integrity for the glory of God, according to his will.

Other:

Rom. 10:4; Gal. 3, 4; Col. 2:17; 2 Pet. 1:19; 2 Pet 3:2, 2 Pet 3:18.

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{Rom 10:4} For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Gal 3 and 4 Please read in your Bible,

Col. 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

2 Pet 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

2 Pet 3:2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

2 Pet 3:18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

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Article 26: The Intercession of Christ

We believe that we have no access to God except through the one and only Mediator and Intercessor: Jesus Christ the Righteous.^{^62 {1 John 2:1}}

He therefore was made man, uniting together the divine and human natures, so that we human beings might have access to the divine Majesty. Otherwise we would have no access.

But this Mediator, whom the Father has appointed between himself and us, ought not terrify us by his greatness, so that we have to look for another one, according to our fancy. For neither in heaven nor among the creatures on earth is there anyone who loves us more than Jesus Christ does. Although he was "in the form of God," he nevertheless "emptied himself," taking the form of "a man" and "a servant" for us;^{^63 {Phil. 2:6-7}} and he made himself "completely like his brothers."^{^64 {Heb. 2:17}}

Suppose we had to find another intercessor. Who would love us more than he who gave his life for us, even though "we were his enemies"?^{^65 {Rom. 5:10}}

And suppose we had to find one who has prestige and power. Who has as much of these as he who is seated "at the right hand of the Father,"^{^66 {Rom. 8:34 ;Heb. 1:3}} and who has all power "in heaven and on earth" ^{^67 {Matt. 28:18} ?}

And who will be heard more readily than God's own dearly beloved Son?

So then, sheer unbelief has led to the practice of dishonoring the saints, instead of honoring them. That was something the saints never did nor asked for, but which in keeping with their duty, as appears from their writings, they consistently refused.

We should not plead here that we are unworthy-- for it is not a question of offering our prayers on the basis of our own dignity but only on the basis of the excellence and dignity

of Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is ours by faith.

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Since the apostle for good reason wants us to get rid of this foolish fear-- or rather, this unbelief-- he says to us that Jesus Christ was "made like his brothers in all things," that he might be a high priest who is merciful and faithful to purify the sins of the people. ^{^68} {**Heb. 2:17**} For since he suffered, being tempted, he is also able to help those who are tempted. ^{^69} {**Heb. 2:18**}

And further, to encourage us more to approach him he says, "Since we have a high priest, Jesus the Son of God, who has entered into heaven, we maintain our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to have compassion for our weaknesses, but one who was tempted in all things, just as we are, except for sin. Let us go then with confidence to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace, in order to be helped." ^{^70} {**Heb. 4:14-16**}.

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The same apostle says that we "have liberty to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus. Let us go, then, in the assurance of faith...." ^{^71} {**Heb. 10:19, 22**}.

Likewise, "Christ's priesthood is forever. By this he is able to save completely those who draw near to God through him who always lives to intercede for them." ^{^72} {**Heb. 7:24-25**}.

What more do we need? For Christ himself declares: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to my Father but by me." ^{^73} {**John 14:6**} Why should we seek another intercessor?

Since it has pleased God to give us his Son as our Intercessor, let us not leave him for another-- or rather seek, without ever finding. For when God gave him to us he knew well that we were sinners.

Therefore, in following the command of Christ we call on the heavenly Father through Christ, our only Mediator, as we are taught by the Lord's Prayer, being assured that we shall obtain all we ask of the Father in his name [**Joh 16:23**].

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Other:

1 Tim. 2:5	1 John 2:1	Rom. 8:26	Deut. 4:24	Gen. 3:10
Ex. 20:19	Jer. 2:33	Isa. 43:22	Hos. 13:9	Luke 18:19
Eph. 3:20	1 John 4:10	Eph. 3:19	Phil. 2:7	John 15:13
Matt. 28	Heb. 1:3, 7	Isa. 55:1-3	Matt. 11:28	James. 5:17
Ps. 115:1	Acts 14:15	Acts 10:26	Heb. 9:24	John 11:9
Acts 4:12	1 Cor. 1:30	Ps. 34:7	Jer. 2:5	Heb. 4:14, 16
Jer. 17:5, 7	Heb. 2:17-18	Heb. 4:14-16	Eph. 2:18	Heb. 10:19
Heb. 7:25	John 14:6	Ps. 44:(21) 6	1 Tim. 2:5	1 John 2:1
Rom. 8:34	Luke 11:2	John 14:13	Jer. 16:20	Heb. 13:15
Rom. 5:8.				

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^{^62} **1 John 2:1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

^{^63} **Phil. 2:6-7** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

***^64 Heb. 2:17,18** Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

***18** For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

***^65 Rom. 5:10** For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

***^66 Rom. 8:34** Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

***Heb. 1:3** Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

***^67 Matt. 28:18** And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

^68 Heb. 2:17** See above.at **^64

^69 Heb. 2:18** See above at **^64

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***^70 Heb. 4:14-16: 14** Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

***15** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

***16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

***^71 Heb. 10:19, 22: 19** Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,*

***22** Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

***^72 Heb. 7:24-25: 24** But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

***25** Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

***^73 John 14:6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

***John 16:23** And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.}*

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Article 27: The Holy Catholic Christian Church

We believe and confess one single catholic or universal church-- a holy congregation and gathering of true Christian believers, awaiting their entire salvation in Jesus Christ being washed by his blood, and sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

This church has existed from the beginning of the world and will last until the end, as appears from the fact that Christ is eternal King who cannot be without subjects.

And this holy church is preserved by God against the rage of the whole world, even though for a time it may appear very small in the eyes of men-- as though it were snuffed out.

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For example, during the very dangerous time of Ahab the Lord preserved for himself seven thousand men who did not bend their knees to Baal. ^{^74} {**1 Kings 19:18**}

And so this holy church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or certain persons. But it is spread and dispersed throughout the entire world, though still joined and united in heart and will, in one and the same Spirit, by the power of faith.

Other

Ps. 46:6	Jer. 31:36	Ps. 102:14	Matt. 28:20	2 Sam. 7:16
Luke 1:32	Ps. 89:37	Ps 110:4	Gen. 22	Rom. 11
1 Kings 19:18	2 Tim. 2:19	Luke 17:21	Matt. 11:25	Acts 4:32
Eph. 4:4	1 Pet. 3:20	Gen. 22:18	Matt. 16:18	Isa. 1:9
Rom. 9:29	Joel 2:32	Acts. 2:21.		

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{^{^74} 1 Kings 19:18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.}

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Article 28: The Obligations of Church Members

We believe that since this holy assembly and congregation is the gathering of those who are saved and there is no salvation apart from it, no one ought to withdraw from it, content to be by himself, regardless of his status or condition.

But all people are obliged to join and unite with it, keeping the unity of the church by submitting to its instruction and discipline, by bending their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ, and by serving to build up one another, according to the gifts God has given them as members of each other in the same body.

And to preserve this unity more effectively, it is the duty of all believers, according to God's Word, to separate themselves from those who do not belong to the church, in order to join this assembly wherever God has established it, even if civil authorities and royal decrees forbid and death and physical punishment result.

And so, all who withdraw from the church or do not join it act contrary to God's ordinance.

Other

Ps. 5:6	Ps 22:23	Eph. 4:12	Heb. 2:12	Matt. 24:28
Isa. 49:22	Isa 52:11-12	Acts 4:17,19	Heb. 10:25	Rev. 17:2
Acts 17:7	Acts 18:13			

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Article 29: The Marks of the True Church and false church

We believe that we ought to discern diligently and very carefully, by the Word of God, what is the true church-- for all sects in the world today claim for themselves the name of "the church."

We are not speaking here of the company of hypocrites who are mixed among the good in the church and who nonetheless are not part of it, even though they are physically there. But we are speaking of distinguishing the body and fellowship of the true church from all sects that call themselves "the church."

The true church can be recognized if it has the following marks:

- * The church engages in the pure preaching of the gospel;
- * it makes use of the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them;
- * it practices church discipline for correcting faults.

In short, it governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it and holding Jesus Christ as the only Head. By these marks one can be assured of recognizing the true church-- and no one ought to be separated from it.

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As for those who can belong to the church, we can recognize them by the distinguishing marks of Christians: namely by faith, and by their fleeing from sin and pursuing righteousness, once they have received the one and only Savior, Jesus Christ. They love the true God and their neighbors, without turning to the right or left, and they crucify the flesh and its works.

Though great weakness remains in them, they fight against it by the Spirit all the days of their lives, appealing constantly to the blood, suffering, death, and obedience of the Lord Jesus, in whom they have forgiveness of their sins, through faith in him.

As for the false church, it assigns more authority to itself and its ordinances than to the Word of God; it does not want to subject itself to the yoke of Christ; it does not administer the sacraments as Christ commanded in his Word; it rather adds to them or subtracts from them as it pleases; it bases itself on men, more than on Jesus Christ; it persecutes those who live holy lives according to the Word of God and who rebuke it for its faults, greed, and idolatry.

These two churches are easy to recognize and thus to distinguish from each other.

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Other

<i>Matt.</i> 13	<i>2 Tim.</i> 2:18-20	<i>Rom.</i> 9:6	<i>Eph.</i> 2:20	<i>John</i> 10:4,14
<i>Matt.</i> 28:20	<i>Gal.</i> 1:8	<i>1 Cor.</i> 11:20	<i>Col.</i> 1:23	<i>Acts</i> 17:11
<i>John</i> 18:37	<i>Eph.</i> 1	<i>John</i> 8:47	<i>Joh</i> 17:20	<i>1 John</i> 4:2 (en 3:9)
<i>Rom.</i> 6:2	<i>Gal.</i> 5:17, 24	<i>Rom.</i> 7:5	<i>Col.</i> 1:12	<i>Col</i> 2:18-19
<i>Ps.</i> 2:3	<i>Rev.</i> 2:9	<i>Rev</i> 17:3	<i>John</i> 16:2	

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Article 30: The Government of the Church

We believe that this true church ought to be governed according to the spiritual order that our Lord has taught us in his Word. There should be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments. There should also be elders and deacons, along with the pastors, to make up the council of the church.

By this means true religion is preserved;
 true doctrine is able to take its course;
 and evil men are corrected spiritually
 and held in check,
 so that also the poor and all the afflicted may be helped and comforted according to their need.

By this means everything will be done well and in good order in the church, when such persons are elected who are faithful and are chosen according to the rule that Paul gave to Timothy.^{^75} {1 Tim. 3 }

Other

1 Cor. 4:1-2 2 Cor. 5:19 John 20:23 Acts 26:18 1 Cor. 15: 10
 Matt. 5:14 Luk 10:16 Gal. 2:8 Tit. 1:5 1 Tim. 3.

{^{^75} 1 Tim. 3 Please read in your Bible – it states who should serve and lead the church such as deacons and elders.}

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Article 31: The Officers of the Church

We believe that ministers of the Word of God, elders, and deacons ought to be chosen to their offices by a legitimate election of the church, with prayer in the name of the Lord, and in good order, as the Word of God teaches.

So everyone must be careful not to push himself forward improperly, but he must wait for God's call, so that he may be assured of his calling and be certain that he is chosen by the Lord.

As for the ministers of the Word, they all have the same power and authority, no matter where they may be, since they are all servants of Jesus Christ, the only universal bishop, and the only head of the church.

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Moreover, to keep God's holy order from being violated or despised, we say that everyone ought, as much as possible, to hold the ministers of the Word and elders of the church in special esteem, because of the work they do, and be at peace with them, without grumbling, quarreling, or fighting.

Other

Acts 6:3-4 1 Tim. 4:13 Acts 1:23 Acts 13:2 1 Tim. 5:22
 1 Cor. 12:28 Rom. 12:8 1 Tim. 4:14 Matt. 18:26 1 Cor. 3:8
 Rom. 12:7-8 2 Cor. 5:19 Acts 26:18 Isa. 61:1 Eph. 1:22
 Col. 1:28 1 Thess. 5:12-13 Heb. 13:7,17

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Article 32: The Order and Discipline of the Church

We also believe that although it is useful and good for those who govern the churches to establish and set up a certain order among themselves for maintaining the body of the church, they ought always to guard against deviating from what Christ, our only Master, has ordained for us.

Therefore we reject all human innovations and all laws imposed on us, in our worship of God, which bind and force our consciences in any way.

So we accept only what is proper to maintain harmony and unity and to keep all in obedience to God.

To that end excommunication, with all it involves, according to the Word of God, is required.

Other

1 Cor. 7:57 Col. 2:6-7 Matt. 15:9 Isa. 29:13 Gal. 5:1
Rom. 16:17-18 Matt. 18:17 1 Cor. 5:5 1 Tim 1:20

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Article 33: The Sacraments

We believe that our good God, mindful of our crudeness and weakness, has ordained sacraments for us to seal his promises in us, to pledge his good will and grace toward us, and also to nourish and sustain our faith.

He has added these to the Word of the gospel to represent better to our external senses both what he enables us to understand by his Word and what he does inwardly in our hearts, confirming in us the salvation he imparts to us.

For they are visible signs and seals of something internal and invisible, by means of which God works in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. So they are not empty and hollow signs to fool and deceive us, for their truth is Jesus Christ, without whom they would be nothing.

Moreover, we are satisfied with the number of sacraments that Christ our Master has ordained for us. There are only two: the sacrament of baptism and the Holy Supper of Jesus Christ.

Other

Rom. 4:11 Gen. 9:13 Gen 17:10-11 Ex. 12 Col. 2:11
1 Cor. 5:7 Matt. 28:19 Matt 26:26 Rom. 10:9 Col. 1:11
1 Pet. 3:20 1 Cor. 10:2

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Article 34: The Sacrament of Baptism

We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, in whom the law is fulfilled **{Rom 10:4}**, has by his shed blood put an end to every other shedding of blood, which anyone might do or wish to do in order to atone or satisfy for sins.

Having abolished circumcision, which was done with blood, he established in its place the sacrament of baptism. By it we are received into God's church and set apart from all other people and alien religions, that we may be dedicated entirely to him, bearing his mark and sign. It also witnesses to us that he will be our God forever, since he is our gracious Father.

Therefore he has commanded that all those who belong to him be baptized with pure water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.⁷⁶ **(Matt 28:19)**

In this way he signifies to us that just as water washes away the dirt of the body when it is poured on us and also is seen on the body of the baptized when it is sprinkled on him, so too the blood of Christ does the same thing internally, in the soul, by the Holy Spirit. It washes and cleanses it from its sins and transforms us from being the children of wrath into the children of God.

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This does not happen by the physical water but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God, who is our Red Sea, through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, who is the devil, and to enter the spiritual land of Canaan.

So ministers, as far as their work is concerned, give us the sacrament and what is visible, but our Lord gives what the sacrament signifies-- namely the invisible gifts and graces; washing, purifying, and cleansing our souls of all filth and unrighteousness; renewing our hearts and filling them with all comfort; giving us true assurance of his fatherly goodness; clothing us with the "new man" and stripping off the "old," with all its works.

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For this reason we believe that anyone who aspires to reach eternal life ought to be baptized only once without ever repeating it-- for we cannot be born twice. Yet this baptism is profitable not only when the water is on us and when we receive it but throughout our entire lives.

For that reason we detest the error of the Anabaptists who are not content with a single baptism once received and also condemn the baptism of the children of believers. We believe our children ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as little children were circumcised in Israel on the basis of the same promises made to our children.

And truly, Christ has shed his blood no less for washing the little children of believers than he did for adults.

Therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of what Christ has done for them, just as the Lord commanded in the law that by offering a lamb for them the sacrament of the suffering and death of Christ would be granted them shortly after their birth. This was the sacrament of Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, baptism does for our children what circumcision did for the Jewish people. That is why Paul calls baptism the "circumcision of Christ."^{^77} {Col 2:11}

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Others

Matt. 28:19	Rom 10:4	1 Cor. 6:11	Tit. 3:5	Heb. 9:14
1 John 1:7	(Rev. 1:5)	1 Pet. 1:2	1 Pet 2:24	1 John 5:16
John 19:34	Matt. 3:11	1 Cor. 3:7	Rom. 6:3	Eph. 5:26
Acts 22:16	1 Pet. 3:21	Gal. 3:27	1 Cor. 12:13	Eph. 4:5
Heb. 6:1-2	Acts 8:16	Acts 2:38, 41	Matt. 19:14	1 Cor. 7:14
Gen. 17:11	Col. 2:11	Lev. 12:6.		

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{Rom 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

^{^76} Matt. 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

^{^77} Col. 2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:}

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Article 35: The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

We believe and confess that our Savior Jesus Christ has ordained and instituted the sacrament of the Holy Supper to nourish and sustain those who are already born again and ingrafted into his family: his church.

Now those who are born again have two lives in them. The one is physical and temporal-- they have it from the moment of their first birth, and it is common to all. The other is spiritual and heavenly, and is given them in their second birth; it comes through the Word of the gospel in the communion of the body of Christ; and this life is common to God's elect only.

Thus, to support the physical and earthly life God has prescribed for us an appropriate earthly and material bread, which is as common to all as life itself also is. But to maintain the spiritual and heavenly life that belongs to believers he has sent a living bread that came down from heaven: namely Jesus Christ, who nourishes and maintains the spiritual life of believers when eaten-- that is, when appropriated and received spiritually by faith.

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To represent to us this spiritual and heavenly bread Christ has instituted an earthly and visible bread as the sacrament of his body and wine as the sacrament of his blood. He did this to testify to us that just as truly as we take and hold the sacraments in our hands and eat and drink it in our mouths, by which our life is then sustained, so truly we receive into our souls, for our spiritual life, the true body and true blood of Christ, our only Savior. We receive these by faith, which is the hand and mouth of our souls.

Now it is certain that Jesus Christ did not prescribe his sacraments for us in vain, since he works in us all he represents by these holy signs, although the manner in which he does it goes beyond our understanding and is incomprehensible to us, just as the operation of God's Spirit is hidden and incomprehensible.

Yet we do not go wrong when we say that what is eaten is Christ's own natural body and what is drunk is his own blood-- but the manner in which we eat it is not by the mouth but by the Spirit, through faith.

In that way Jesus Christ remains always seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven-- but he never refrains on that account to communicate himself to us through faith.

This banquet is a spiritual table at which Christ communicates himself to us with all his benefits. At that table he makes us enjoy himself as much as the merits of his suffering and death, as he nourishes, strengthens, and comforts our poor, desolate souls by the eating of his flesh, and relieves and renews them by the drinking of his blood.

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Moreover, though the sacraments and thing signified are joined together, not all receive both of them. The wicked person certainly takes the sacrament, to his condemnation, but does not receive the truth of the sacrament, just as Judas and Simon the Sorcerer both indeed received the sacrament, but not Christ, who was signified by it. He is communicated only to believers.

Finally, with humility and reverence we receive the holy sacrament in the gathering of God's people, as we engage together, with thanksgiving, in a holy remembrance of the death of Christ our Savior, and as we thus confess our faith and Christian religion. Therefore no one should come to this table without examining himself carefully, lest "by eating this bread and drinking this cup he eat and drink to his own judgment."⁷⁸ { 1 Cor. 11:27, 29 }

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In short, by the use of this holy sacrament we are moved to a fervent love of God and our neighbors.

Therefore we reject as desecrations of the sacraments all the muddled ideas and damnable inventions that men have added and mixed in with them. And we say that we should be content with the procedure that Christ and the apostles have taught us and speak of these things as they have spoken of them.

Other

Matt. 26:26	Mark 14:17	Luke 22:19	1 Cor. 11:24, 28	John 3:6
John 10:10	John 5:25	John 6:48, 51, 63	1 Cor. 10:16, 27	Eph. 3:17
John 6:35	Acts 3:21	Mark 16:14	Matt. 26:11	1 Cor. 10:3-4
1 Cor 11:27, 29	Rom. 8:22	2 Cor. 6:15	1 Cor. 2:14	Acts 2:42
Acts 20:7				

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⁷⁸ 1 Cor. 11:27, 29: 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.}

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Article 36: The Civil Government

We believe that because of the depravity of the human race our good God has ordained kings, princes, and civil officers. He wants the world to be governed by laws and policies so that human lawlessness may be restrained and that everything may be conducted in good order among human beings. **(Rom 13:4)**

For that purpose he has placed the sword in the hands of the government, to punish evil people and protect the good.

And being called in this manner to contribute to the advancement of a society that is pleasing to God, the civil rulers have the task, subject to God's law, of removing every obstacle to the preaching of the gospel and to every aspect of divine worship.

They should do this while completely refraining from every tendency toward exercising absolute authority, and while functioning in the sphere entrusted to them, with the means belonging to them.

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And the government's task is not limited to caring for and watching over the public domain but extends also to upholding the sacred ministry, with a view to removing and destroying all idolatry and false worship of the Antichrist; to promoting the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and to furthering the preaching of the gospel everywhere; to the end that God may be honored and served by everyone, as he requires in his Word.

Moreover everyone, regardless of status, condition, or rank, must be subject to the government, and pay taxes, and hold its representatives in honor and respect, and obey them in all things that are not in conflict with God's Word, praying for them that the Lord may be willing to lead them in all their ways and that we may live a peaceful and quiet life in all piety and decency. **(1 Tim 2:2)**

And on this matter we denounce the Anabaptists, other anarchists, and in general all those who want to reject the authorities and civil officers and to subvert justice by introducing common ownership of goods and corrupting the moral order that God has established among human beings.

Other

Ex. 18:20	Rom. 13:1	Prov. 8:15	Jer. 22:3	Ps. 82
Deut. 1:16	Deut. 16:19	Deut. 17:16	2 Cor. 10:6	Ps. 101
Jer. 21:12	Judg. 21:25	Jer. 22:3	Dan. 2:21-22	(Dan 5:8)
Isa. 49:23	2 Chron. 23	1 Chron. 15:12	Luk. 22:1	1 Pet. 2:17
Tit. 3	Matt. 17:27	Acts. 4:17-19	Acts. 2, 5	Hos. 5:11
Jer. 27:5	2 Pet. 2:10	Jude 1:10	1 Tim. 2:2.	

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{Rom 13:4 *For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

1 Tim 2:1-2 *1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;*

2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.}

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Article 37: The Last Judgment, resurrection and eternal life

Finally we believe, according to God's Word, that when the time appointed by the Lord is come (which is unknown to all creatures) and the number of the elect is complete, our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, bodily and visibly, as he ascended **{Acts 1:11}**, with great glory and majesty, to declare himself the judge of the living and the dead. He will burn this old world, in fire and flame, in order to cleanse it.

Then all human creatures will appear in person before the great judge-- men, women, and children, who have lived from the beginning until the end of the world. They will be summoned there by the voice of the archangel and by the sound of the divine trumpet. **^79 (1 Thess 4:16)**

For all those who died before that time will be raised from the earth, their spirits being joined and united with their own bodies in which they lived. And as for those who are still alive, they will not die like the others but will be changed "in the twinkling of an eye" from "corruptible to incorruptible." **^80 (1 Cor. 15:51-53)**

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Then "the books" (that is, the consciences) will be opened, and the dead will be judged according to the things they did in the world, **^81 {Rev. 20:12}** whether good or evil. Indeed **{2 Cor 5:10}**, all people will give account of all the idle words they have spoken, **^82 {Matt. 12:36}** which the world regards as only playing games. And then the secrets and hypocrisies of men will be publicly uncovered in the sight of all.

Therefore, with good reason the thought of this judgment is horrible and dreadful to wicked and evil people. But it is very pleasant and a great comfort to the righteous and elect, since their total redemption will then be accomplished. They will then receive the fruits of their labor and of the trouble they have suffered; their innocence will be openly recognized by all; and they will see the terrible vengeance that God will bring on the evil ones who tyrannized, oppressed, and tormented them in this world.

The evil ones will be convicted by the witness of their own consciences, and shall be made immortal-- but only to be tormented in the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **^83 (Matt 25:41)**

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In contrast, the faithful and elect will be crowned with glory and honor. The Son of God will "confess their names" **^84 (Matt 10:32)** before God his Father and the holy and elect angels; all tears will be "wiped from their eyes"; **^85 (Rev 21:4)** and their cause-- at present condemned as heretical and evil by many judges and civil officers-- will be acknowledged as the "cause of the Son of God."

And as a gracious reward the Lord will make them possess a glory such as the heart of man could never imagine. **{Rev 7:17}**

So we look forward to that great day with longing in order to enjoy fully the promises of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Other

Matt. 13:23	Matt 25:13	1 Thess. 5:1-2	Matt. 24:36	Rev. 6:11
Acts. 1:11	2 Pet. 3:10	Matt. 24:30	Rev. 21:11	Matt. 25:31
Jude 1:15	1 Pet. 4:5	2 Tim. 4:1	1 Thess. 4:16	1 Cor. 15:51
Matt. 11:22	Mark. 12:18	Matt. 23:23	John 5:29	Rom. 2:5
Heb. 6:2	Heb 9:27	Matt. 12:36	2 Thess. 1:5	(Heb. 10:27)
1 John 4:17	Rev. 14:7	Luke 14:14	2 Cor. 5:10	Rev. 21:8
Rev 22:12	Dan. 7	Matt. 25:41	2 Pet. 2:9	Isa. 25:8
Matt. 10:32	Rev. 21:4	Isa. 66:5	1 Cor. 2:9.	

{Acts 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

^79 1 Thess. 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

^80 1 Cor. 15:51-53: 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

^81 Rev. 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

^82 Matt. 12:36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

^83 Matt. 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

^84 Matt. 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

^85 Rev 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Rev. 7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.}