

The Canons of Dordt

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Main subjects of the Canons of Dordt

The First Main Point of Doctrine:

Divine Election and Reprobation, The Judgment Concerning Divine Predestination

The Second Main Point of Doctrine

Christ's Death, and Human Redemption Through His death

The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine:

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

The Fifth Main Point of Doctrine:

The Perseverance of the Saints

Historical setting

The Decision of the Synod of Dordt on the Five Main Points of Doctrine in Dispute in the Netherlands is popularly known as the Canons of Dordt. It consists of statements of doctrine adopted by the great Synod of Dordt which met in the city of Dordrecht in 1618-19. Although this was a national synod of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands, it had an international character, since it was composed not only of Dutch delegates but also of twenty-six delegates from eight foreign countries.

The Synod of Dordt was held in order to settle a serious controversy in the Dutch churches initiated by the rise of Arminianism. Jacob Arminius, a theological professor at Leiden University, questioned the teaching of Calvin and his followers on a number of important points. After Arminius's death, his own followers presented their views on five of these points in the Remonstrance of 1610. In this document or in later more explicit writings, the Arminians taught election based on foreseen faith, universal atonement, partial depravity, resistible grace, and the possibility of a lapse from grace. In the Canons the Synod of Dordt rejected these views and set forth the Reformed doctrine on these points, namely, unconditional election, limited atonement, total depravity, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of saints.

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The Canons have a special character because of their original purpose as a judicial decision on the doctrinal points in dispute during the Arminian controversy. The original preface called them a "judgment, in which both the true view, agreeing with God's Word, concerning the aforesaid five points of doctrine is explained, and the false view, disagreeing with God's Word, is rejected." The Canons also have a limited character in that they do not cover the whole range of doctrine, but focus on the five points of doctrine in dispute.

Each of the main points consists of a positive and a negative part, the former being an exposition of the Reformed doctrine on the subject, the latter a repudiation of the corresponding errors. Each of the errors being rejected is shown in **bold maroon** type. Although in form there are only four points, we speak properly of five points, because the Canons were structured to correspond to the five articles of the 1610 Remonstrance. Main Points 3 and 4 were combined into one, always designated as Main Point III/IV.

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This translation of the Canons, based on the only extant Latin manuscript among those signed at the Synod of Dordt, was adopted by the 1986 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. The biblical quotations are translations from the original Latin and so do not always correspond to current versions. Though not in the original text, subheadings have been added to the positive articles and to the conclusion in order to facilitate study of the Canons.

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Notes by editor of this document:

This copy of the Canons has been downloaded from
<http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html>.

This copy is a direct translation by the Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics from the original Latin text to English.

Copies in other formats are available from several other websites simply by searching for "Canons of Dordt".

Improvements for user friendliness by this editor:

1. The appearance of the document has been enhanced to make the ever fresh Canons a **more user friendly reference work for believers**. It has answers to so many current religious contentions and questions. As will be seen, the current ("modern") issues are not new and have been answered very clearly and dependably many, many years ago, from Scripture. The Canons, and other confessions of faith, have been neglected partly because of the documents' format. This document has therefore been reformatted for easy reference and understanding, without changing any of the content. Modern technology has made it easy to handle large documents, e.g. by being able to jump around within a document.
2. **Bible verses** have been expanded, where not fully quoted in the text of the Canons. They are taken from the King James version Bible (public domain). Verses and references that were added by the editor, are in *cursive* and in {}.
3. To **enhance readability**, some text have been highlighted. Some additional text have been appended to improve understanding of doctrines referred to in the Canons. References to these have been underlined and are hypertexted such as Socinian, Pelagius, Pelagian. Some hypertexts within these explanations jump to internet websites and need an internet browser to comply. Just exit the browser to return. Short explanations are given to understand these doctrines. It is notable that these doctrines/disputes have been regularly popping up again, like in our times too.
The reader should note the **current page** before going there, as returning to the place where he/she was reading when jumping to the hypertext contents, is not available in current standard hypertext technology. Returning to the table of contents, will make finding the page easy.
4. **Spacing** has been improved.
5. **A table of contents** has been added. Entries are hypertexted to jump straight to the contents referred to.

6. **Verses have been added** from the KJV or AJKV Bibles (no copyright) in braces {} and small print where deemed applicable. Bible references from an approved Canadian translation have been added. Any recommendation for inclusion of other supplementary Biblical references, is welcome and will be included after suitable consultation. All changes have been made between braces and in *cursive font*.
7. **Paragraph headings** have been inserted, that, together with the table of contents makes the document very accessible for quick reference purposes. It also helps to grasp the logic of the document when studying the table of contents. Where some of these paragraph headings do not give a good reflection of the paragraph content, please send an improved heading to be considered. Headings must not exceed two lines. The right to include such improvements is reserved, but they will be seriously considered. The improved document will periodically be made available on the website below.
8. **This improved document is freely available** in Microsoft document .doc format, .pdf format (readable by MS Word, Adobe Reader and other software) and as an eBook (in .epub format). It will eventually be made available also in .mobi format.
9. **Recommendations for improving user friendliness** will be appreciated. However, as in my improvements, no changes will be made to the original text, unless it can be proven that **the original English translation of some text is wrong**. In this case, the original Latin wording of the affected part and the improved wording, as approved by some reputable church body (such as a reformed church synod) need to be supplied, before it will be considered to change this document. I cannot decide on behalf of the ecumenical church on such a serious matter. I will consult appropriately before making such a change will be made.
10. **The Heidelberg Confession of Faith** (all referenced verses expanded and extensive hypertext added) and the Belgic Confession (Netherlands Confession of Faith) has been similarly enhanced and are also available on the website below. Although the website is in Afrikaans, it has a download section with English wording for English documents.
11. Please note that the **number of pages** should be seriously considered when printing these documents. Some of them are large because of the expanded verses included.

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The Canons of Dordt

Formally Titled

The Decision of the Synod of Dordt on the Five Main Points of Doctrine in Dispute in the Netherlands

The First Main Point of Doctrine

Divine Election and Reprobation, The Judgment Concerning Divine Predestination

Which the Synod Declares to Be in Agreement with the Word of God and Accepted Till Now in the Reformed Churches, Set Forth in Several Articles

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Article 1: All mankind sinned and is condemnable before God

Since all people have sinned in Adam and have come under the sentence of the curse and eternal death, God would have done no one an injustice if it had been his will to leave the entire human race in sin and under the curse, and to condemn them on account of their sin. As the apostle says: "The whole world is liable to the condemnation of God" (**Rom. 3:19**),

- "All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God (**Rom. 3:23**), and The wages of sin is death" (**Rom. 6:23**).*
- *All quotations from Scripture are translations of the original Latin manuscript. -

- **{Rom 3:19 (AKJV)}** Now we know that what things soever the law said, it said to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.
- **Rom 3:23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
- **Rom 6: 23** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.}

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Article 2: The Manifestation of God's Love by sending His Son as Saviour

But this is how God showed his love: he sent his only begotten Son into the world, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (**Joh 3:16; 1 Joh 4:9**)

{John 3:16} For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 Joh 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.}

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Article 3: God mercifully sends preachers as He wishes

In order that people may be brought to faith, God mercifully sends proclaimers of this very joyful message to the people he wishes and at the time he wishes. By this ministry people are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified.

- “For how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without someone preaching? And how shall they preach unless they have been sent?” (**Rom. 10:14-15**).

{Rom 10:14-15 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!}

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Article 4: A Twofold Response to the Gospel

God's anger remains on those who do not believe this gospel.

- But those who do accept it and embrace Jesus the Saviour with a true and living faith are delivered through him from God's anger and from destruction, and receive the gift of eternal life (**Joh 3:36; Mark 16:16**).

{Joh 3:36 He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God stays on him.

Mark 16:16 He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.}

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Article 5: The Cause for Unbelief, the Source of Faith

The cause or blame for this unbelief, as well as for all other sins, is not at all in God, but in man.

- Faith in Jesus Christ, however, and salvation through him is a free gift of God. As Scripture says, “It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is a gift of God” (**Eph. 2:8**). Likewise: “It has been freely given to you to believe in Christ” (**Phil. 1:29**).

{Eph 2:8 For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Phil 1:29 For to you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;}

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Article 6: God's Eternal Decision

The fact that some receive from God the gift of faith within time, and that others do not, stems from his eternal decision. “For all his works are known to God from eternity” (**Acts 15:18; Eph. 1:11**).

- In accordance with this decision he graciously softens the hearts, however hard, of his chosen ones and inclines them to believe, but by his just judgment he leaves in their wickedness and hardness of heart those who have not been chosen.

- And in this especially is disclosed to us his act - unfathomable, and as merciful as it is just - of distinguishing between people equally lost.
- This is the well-known decision of election and reprobation revealed in God's Word. This decision the wicked, impure, and unstable distort to their own ruin, but it provides holy and godly souls with comfort beyond words.
- *{Acts 15:18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*
- *Eph. 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will}*
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Article 7: Election defined

Election [or choosing] is God's unchangeable purpose by which he did the following: Before the foundation of the world, by sheer grace, according to the free good pleasure of his will, he chose in Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out of the entire human race, which had fallen by its own fault from its original innocence into sin and ruin.

- Those chosen were neither better nor more deserving than the others, but lay with them in the common misery. He did this in Christ, whom he also appointed from eternity to be the mediator, the head of all those chosen, and the foundation of their salvation. And so he decided to give the chosen ones to Christ to be saved, and to call and draw them effectively into Christ's fellowship through his Word and Spirit. In other words, he decided to grant them true faith in Christ, to justify them, to sanctify them, and finally, after powerfully preserving them in the fellowship of his Son, to glorify them.
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God did all this in order to demonstrate his mercy, to the praise of the riches of his glorious grace.

As Scripture says, "God chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, so that we should be holy and blameless before him with love; he predestined us whom he adopted as his children through Jesus Christ, in himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, by which he freely made us pleasing to himself in his beloved" (**Eph. 1:4-6**). And elsewhere, "Those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified" (**Rom. 8:30**).

{ Eph. 1:4-6 4 According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved.

Rom. 8:30 *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

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Article 8: One Decree of Election, not many

This election is not of many kinds; it is one and the same election for all who were to be saved in the Old and the New Testament *{Deut 7:7; Deut 9:6}*. For Scripture declares that there is a single good pleasure, purpose, and plan of God's will, by which he chose us from eternity both to grace and to glory, both to salvation and to

the way of salvation, which he prepared in advance for us to walk in. **{Eph 1:4-5, Eph 2:10}**.

{Deut 7:7} *The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:*

Deut 9:6 *Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.*

Eph 1:4-5 **4** *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:* **5** *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

Eph 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. }*

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Article 9: Election Not Based on Foreseen Faith

This same election took place, not on the basis of foreseen faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, or of any other good quality and disposition, as though it were based on a prerequisite cause or condition in the person to be chosen, but rather for the purpose of faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, and so on. Accordingly, election is the source of each of the benefits of salvation. Faith, holiness, and the other saving gifts, and at last eternal life itself, flow forth from election as its fruits and effects **{Rom 8:30}**. As the apostle says, He chose us (not because we were, but) so that we should be holy and blameless before him in love (**Eph. 1:4**).

- **{Rom 8:30}** *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*
- **Eph 1:4** *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: }*

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Article 10: Election Based on God's Good Pleasure

But the cause of this undeserved election is exclusively the good pleasure of God. This does not involve his choosing certain human qualities or actions from among all those possible as a condition of salvation, but rather involves his adopting certain particular persons from among the common mass of sinners as his own possession.

- As Scripture says, When the children were not yet born, and had done nothing either good or bad..., she (Rebecca) was told, "The older will serve the younger." **{Gen 25:23}**. As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (**Rom 9:11-13**). Also, All who were appointed for eternal life believed (**Acts 13:48**).
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{Gen 25:23} *And the LORD said to her, Two nations are in your womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from your bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.*
- **Rom 9:11-13** **11** *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;* **12** *It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.* **13** *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*
- **Acts 13:48** *And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.}*

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Article 11: Election Unchangeable

Just as God himself is most wise, unchangeable, all-knowing, and almighty, so the election made by him can neither be suspended nor altered, revoked, or annulled; neither can his chosen ones be cast off, **{John 6:37}** nor their number reduced. **{John 10:28}**.

•

{John 6:37} *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

John 10:28 *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

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Article 12: The Assurance of Election

The elect in due time, though in various stages and in different measure, are made certain of this their eternal and unchangeable election to salvation. They attain this assurance, however, not by inquisitively prying into the hidden and deep things of God, **{Deut 29:29, 1 Cor 2:10-11}** but by observing in themselves **{2 Cor 13:5}**, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unfailing fruits of election pointed out in the Word of God – such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins **{2 Cor 7:10}**, and a hunger and thirst for righteousness **{Mat 5:6}**.

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{Deut 29:29} *The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

1 Cor 2:10-11 **10** *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.* **11** *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*

2 Cor 7:10 *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death*

Mat 5:6 *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

2 Cor 13:5 *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? }*

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Article 13: The Fruit of This Assurance

In their awareness and assurance of this election God's children daily find greater cause to humble themselves before God, to adore the fathomless depth of his mercies, to cleanse themselves **{1 John 3:3}**, and to give fervent love in return to him who first so greatly loved them **{1 John 4:19}**. This is far from saying that this teaching concerning election, and reflection upon it, make God's children lax in observing his commandments or carnally self-assured. By God's just judgment this does usually happen to those who casually take for granted the grace of election or engage in idle and brazen talk about it but are unwilling to walk in the ways of the

chosen.

- {**1 John 3:3** And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.
1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us. }

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Article 14: Teaching Election Properly

Just as, by God's wise plan, this teaching concerning divine election has been proclaimed through the prophets, Christ himself, and the apostles, in Old and New Testament times, and has subsequently been committed to writing in the Holy Scriptures, so also today in God's church {**Acts 20:27; Job 36:23-26**}, for which it was specifically intended, this teaching must be set forth with a spirit of discretion, in a godly and holy manner, at the appropriate time and place, without inquisitive searching into the ways of the Most High. This must be done for the glory of God's most holy name, and for the lively comfort of his people. {**Rom 11:33; 12:3; Heb 6:17-18; 1 Cor 4:6**}

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- {**Acts 20:27** For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.
- **Job 36:23-26** **23** Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity? **24** Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold. **25** Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off. **26** Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.
Rom 11:33-34 **33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! **34** For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?
- **Rom 12:3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.
Heb 6:17-18 **17** Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: **18** That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:
1 Cor 4:6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.}

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Article 15: Reprobation explained

Moreover, Holy Scripture most especially highlights this eternal and undeserved grace of our election and brings it out more clearly for us {**Rom 9:22**}, in that it further bears witness that not all people have been chosen but that some have not been chosen or have been passed by in God's eternal election - those, that is, concerning whom God, on the basis of his entirely free, most just, irreproachable, and unchangeable good pleasure, made the following decision: to leave them in the common misery into which, by their own fault, they have plunged themselves {**1 Pet 2:8**}; not to grant them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but finally to condemn and eternally punish them (having been left in their own ways and under

his just judgment) **{Acts 14:16}**, not only for their unbelief but also for all their other sins, in order to display his justice. And this is the decision of reprobation, which does not at all make God the author of sin (a blasphemous thought!) but rather its fearful, irreproachable, just judge and avenger.

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- **{Rom 9:22}** *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*
1 Pet 2:8 *And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*
Acts 14:16 *Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.*
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Article 16: Responses to the Doctrine of Reprobation

Those who do not yet actively experience within themselves a living faith in Christ **{James 2:26}** or an assured confidence of heart, peace of conscience, a zeal for childlike obedience, and a glorying in God through Christ **{2 Cor 1:12; Rom 5:11}**, but who nevertheless use the means by which God has promised to work these things in us -such people ought not to be alarmed at the mention of reprobation, nor to count themselves among the reprobate; rather they ought to continue diligently in the use of the means, to desire fervently a time of more abundant grace, and to wait for it in reverence and humility.

- On the other hand, those who seriously desire to turn to God, to be pleasing to him alone, and to be delivered from the body of death **{Phil 3:3; Rom 7:24}**, but are not yet able to make such progress along the way of godliness and faith as they would like - such people ought much less to stand in fear of the teaching concerning reprobation, since our merciful God has promised that he will not snuff out a smoldering wick and that he will not break a bruised reed **{Isa 42:3; Mt 12:20}**. However, those who have forgotten God and their Savior Jesus Christ and have abandoned themselves wholly to the cares of the world and the pleasures of the flesh **{Mat 13:22}** - such people have every reason to stand in fear of this teaching, as long as they do not seriously turn to God **{Heb 12:29}**.

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{James 2:26} *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

2 Cor 1:12 *For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.*

Rom 5:11 *And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

Phil 3:3 *For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

Rom 7:24 *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

Isa 42:3 *A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.*

Mat 12:20 *A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.*

Mat 13:22 *Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.*

Heb 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.}

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Article 17: The Salvation of the Infants of Believers

Since we must make judgments about God's will from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but by virtue of the gracious covenant in which they together with their parents are included, *{Gen 17:7; Isa 59:21}* godly parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in infancy. *{Acts 2:39; 1 Cor 7:14}*

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{Gen 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Isa 59:21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

Acts 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

1 Cor 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.}

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Article 18: The Proper Attitude Toward Election and Reprobation

To those who complain about this grace of an undeserved election and about the severity of a just reprobation, we reply with the words of the apostle, "Who are you, O man, to talk back to God?" (**Rom. 9:20**), and with the words of our Savior, "Have I no right to do what I want with my own?" (**Matt. 20:15**).

- We, however, with reverent adoration of these secret things, cry out with the apostle: "Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond tracing out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Or who has first given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen" (**Rom. 11:33-36**).

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{Rom 9:20 No but, O man, who are you that reply against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus?

Matt 20:15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is your eye evil, because I am good?

Rom 11:33-36 33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been his counselor? 35 Or who has first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

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{Rejection of Errors concerning election and reprobation}

by Which the Dutch Churches Have for Some Time Been Disturbed

Having set forth the orthodox teaching concerning election and reprobation, the Synod rejects the errors of those

1- Reject: God decided to elect for salvation those people who would persevere in faith and obedience

Who teach that the will of God to save those who would believe and persevere in faith and in the obedience of faith is the whole and entire decision of election to salvation, and that nothing else concerning this decision has been revealed in God's Word.

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1.1- True teaching: God chooses and predestinates certain people from eternity

For they deceive the simple and plainly contradict Holy Scripture in its testimony that God does not only wish to save those who would believe, but that he has also from eternity chosen certain particular people to whom, rather than to others, he would within time grant faith in Christ and perseverance. As Scripture says, I have revealed your name to those whom you gave me (**John 17:6**). Likewise, All who were appointed for eternal life believed (**Acts 13:48**), and He chose us before the foundation of the world so that we should be holy... (**Eph. 1:4, etc.**).

{ John 17:6 I have manifested your name to the men which you gave me out of the world: your they were, and you gave them me; and they have kept your word.

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Eph 1:4 According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:}

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2- Reject: Election is of many kinds

Who teach that God's election to eternal life is of many kinds: one general and indefinite, the other particular and definite; and the latter in turn either incomplete, revocable, non-peremptory (or conditional), or else complete, irrevocable, and peremptory (or absolute). Likewise, who teach that there is one election to faith and another to salvation, so that there can be an election to justifying faith apart from a peremptory election to salvation.

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2.1- True teaching: Those that God predestined, He also has called, justified and glorified

For this is an invention of the human brain, devised apart from the Scriptures, which distorts the teaching concerning election and breaks up this golden chain of salvation: Those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified (**Rom. 8:30**).

{Rom 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.}

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3- Reject: God does not choose certain people above others, but those with faith and obedience

Who teach that God's good pleasure and purpose, which Scripture mentions in its teaching of election, does not involve God's choosing certain particular people rather than others, but involves God's choosing, out of all possible conditions (including the works of the law) or out of the whole order of things, the intrinsically unworthy act of faith, as well as the imperfect obedience of faith, to be a condition of salvation; and it involves his graciously wishing to count this as perfect obedience and to look upon it as worthy of the reward of eternal life.

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3.1- True teaching: This error negates the good pleasure of God and the merit of Christ

For by this pernicious error the good pleasure of God and the merit of Christ are robbed of their effectiveness and people are drawn away, by unprofitable inquiries, from the truth of undeserved justification and from the simplicity of the Scriptures. It also gives the lie to these words of the apostle: "God called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of works, but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time" (2 Tim. 1:9).

{ 2 Tim. 1:9 Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, }

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4- Reject: Election depends on the good attributes of a person

Who teach that in election to faith a prerequisite condition is that man should rightly use the light of nature, be upright, unassuming, humble, and disposed to eternal life, as though election depended to some extent on these factors.

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4.1- True teaching: God saves us by grace through Christ and not because of good attributes

For this smacks of [Pelagius](#), and it clearly calls into question the words of the apostle: "We lived at one time in the passions of our flesh, following the will of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in transgressions, made us alive with Christ, by whose grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with him and seated us with him in heaven in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages we might show the surpassing riches of his grace, according to his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith (and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God) not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:3-9).

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{ Eph. 2:2-9 2 Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according

to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;) 6 And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.}

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5- Reject: A godly life and foreseen faith are prerequisites for choosing the Elected

Who teach that the incomplete and non-peremptory election of particular persons to salvation occurred on the basis of a foreseen faith, repentance, holiness, and godliness, which has just begun or continued for some time; but that complete and peremptory election occurred on the basis of a foreseen perseverance to the end in faith, repentance, holiness, and godliness. And that this is the gracious and evangelical worthiness, on account of which the one who is chosen is more worthy than the one who is not chosen. And therefore that faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, godliness, and perseverance are not fruits or effects of an unchangeable election to glory, but indispensable conditions and causes, which are prerequisite in those who are to be chosen in the complete election, and which are foreseen as achieved in them.

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5.1- True teaching: Election is not by works or characteristics, but by him who calls

This runs counter to the entire Scripture, which throughout impresses upon our ears and hearts these sayings among others: "Election is not by works, but by him who calls (**Rom. 9:11-12**); All who were appointed for eternal life believed (**Acts 13:48**); "He chose us in himself so that we should be holy" (**Eph. 1:4**); "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (**John 15:16**); "If by grace, not by works" (**Rom. 11:6**); "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son" (**1 John 4:10**).

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{ **Rom. 9:11-12 11** (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls;) **12** It was said to her, The elder shall serve the younger.

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Eph. 1:4 According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

John 15:16 You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Rom. 11:6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.}

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6- Reject: The elected is changeable – the chosen can be lost

Who teach that not every election to salvation is unchangeable, but that some of the chosen can perish and do in fact perish eternally, with no decision of God to prevent it.

6.1- True teaching: God is not changeable

By this gross error they make God changeable, destroy the comfort of the godly concerning the steadfastness of their election, and contradict the Holy Scriptures, which teach that the elect cannot be led astray (**Matt. 24:24**), that Christ does not lose those given to him by the Father (**John 6:39**), and that those whom God predestined, called, and justified, he also glorifies (**Rom. 8:30**).

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{Matt 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Joh 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Rom 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.}

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7- Reject: That in this life one cannot be sure of own election

Who teach that in this life there is no fruit, no awareness, and no assurance of one's unchangeable election to glory, except as conditional upon something changeable and contingent.

7.1- True teaching: Scripture teaches that in this life man can be joyfully sure that he has been elected.

For not only is it absurd to speak of an uncertain assurance, but these things also militate against the experience of the saints, who with the apostle rejoice from an awareness of their election and sing the praises of this gift of God **{ Eph 1:4-9 }**; who, as Christ urged, rejoice with his disciples that their names have been written in heaven (**Luke 10:20**); and

finally who hold up against the flaming arrows of the devil's temptations the awareness of their election, with the question Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? (**Rom. 8:33**).

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{Eph 1:3-9 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Luke 10:20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Rom 8:33 *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. its are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.}*
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8- Reject: That God does not pass anyone in imparting grace needed for faith, based on His will alone.

Who teach that it was not on the basis of his just will alone that God decided to leave anyone in the fall of Adam and in the common state of sin and condemnation or to pass anyone by in the imparting of grace necessary for faith and conversion.

8.1- True teaching: God has mercy on whom He will and He hardens whom He wishes

For these words stand fast: "He has mercy on whom he wishes, and he hardens whom he wishes" (**Rom. 9:18**). And also: "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (**Matt. 13:11**). Likewise: "I give glory to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and have revealed them to little children; yes, Father, because that was your pleasure" (**Matt. 11:25-26**).

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{ **Rom. 9:18** *Therefore has he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens.*

Matt. 13:11 *He answered and said to them, Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*

Matt. 11:25-26 *25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes. 26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in your sight.}*

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9- Reject: God sends the gospel to better and worthier people than others

Who teach that the cause for God's sending the gospel to one people rather than to another is not merely and solely God's good pleasure, but rather that one people is better and worthier than the other to whom the gospel is not communicated.

9.1- True teaching: God chooses peoples as He wishes

For Moses contradicts this when he addresses the people of Israel as follows: "Behold, to Jehovah your God belong the heavens and the highest heavens, the earth and whatever is in it. But Jehovah was inclined in his affection to love your ancestors alone, and chose out their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as at this day" (**Deut. 10:14-15**).

And also Christ: "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! for if those mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (**Matt. 11:21**).

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{ **Deut. 10:14-15** *14 Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's your God, the earth also, with all that therein is. 15 Only the LORD had a delight in your fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.*

Matt. 11:21 *Woe to you, Chorazin! woe to you, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.}*

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The Second Main Point of Doctrine

Christ's Death, and Human Redemption Through His death

Article 1: Punishment is inescapable unless satisfaction is given to God's justice

God is not only supremely merciful, but also supremely just.

His justice requires (as he has revealed himself in the Word **{Ex 34:6-7}**) that the sins we have committed against his infinite majesty be punished **{Rom 5:16.; Gal 3:10}** with both temporal and eternal punishments, of soul as well as body.

We cannot escape these punishments unless satisfaction is given to God's justice.

{Ex 34:6-7 6} *And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth; 7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin: and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation.*

Rom 5:16 *And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification.*

Gal 3:10 *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.}*

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Article 2: The Satisfaction made by Christ only, not by us

Since, however, we ourselves cannot give this satisfaction or deliver ourselves from God's anger, God in his boundless mercy has given us as a guarantee **{Joh 3:16; Rom 5:8}** his only begotten Son, who was made to be sin **{2 Cor 5:21}** and a curse for us, in our place, on the cross **{Gal 3:13}**, in order that he might give satisfaction for us.

{Joh 3:16} *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Rom 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

2 Cor 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

Gal 3:13 *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.}*

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Article 3: Only the sacrifice of the Son can give satisfaction for the sins of the whole world

This death of God's Son is the only and entirely complete sacrifice and satisfaction for sins **{Heb 9:26, 28; Heb 10:14}**; it is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for

the sins of the whole world {**1 Joh 2:2**}.

{Heb 9:26, 28. 26} For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

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

1 Joh 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. }

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Article 4: Reasons for This Infinite Value of His Death

This death is of such great value and worth for the reason that the person who suffered it is - as was necessary to be our Savior - not only a true and perfectly holy man **{Heb 4:15; 7:26}**, but also the only begotten Son of God **{1 Joh 4:9}**, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Another reason is that this death was accompanied by the experience of God's anger **{Mat 27:46}** and curse, which we by our sins had fully deserved.

{ 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.

Heb 7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

1 Joh 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Mat 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? }

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Article 5: This Gospel and mandate to repent and believe, ought to be announced to All People to whom God wishes

Moreover, it is the promise of the gospel that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life **{Jn 3:16.}**.

This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be announced and declared without differentiation or discrimination to all nations and people **{1 Cor 1:23; Mt 28:19}**, to whom God in his good pleasure sends the gospel **{ Acts 2:38; 16:31}**.

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{Joh 3:16} For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1 Cor 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

Mat 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:

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Hand 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.}

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Article 6: Perishing by Unbelief and lack of repentance is Man's own fault, not by insufficiency of the cross

However, that many who have been called through the gospel do not repent or believe in Christ but perish in unbelief {*Mt 22:14; Ps 95:11; Heb 4:6*} is not because the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross is deficient or insufficient, but because they themselves are at fault.

{Mat 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

Ps 95:11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

Heb 4:6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: }

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Article 7: True faith and salvation is God's gift of grace in Christ from eternity

But all who genuinely believe and are delivered and saved by Christ's death from their sins and from destruction receive this favor solely from God's grace - which he owes to no one {*Eph 2:8-9*} - given to them in Christ from eternity {*2 Cor 5:18*}.

{2 Cor 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

Eph 2:8-9 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.}

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Article 8: It is God's will that through His Son people from all nations be reconciled, cleansed and preserved for Him

For it was the entirely free plan and very gracious will and intention of God the Father that the enlivening and saving effectiveness of his Son's costly death should work itself out in all his chosen ones {*John 17:9*},

in order that he might grant justifying faith to them only and thereby lead them without fail to salvation {*Eph 5:25-27; Lk 22:20*}. In other words, it was God's will that Christ through the blood of the cross (by which he confirmed the new covenant) {*Lk 22:20; Heb 8:6*} should effectively redeem from every people, tribe, nation, and language {*Rev 5:9*} all those and only those who were chosen from eternity to salvation and given to him by the Father; that he should grant them faith {*Phil 1:29*} (which, like the Holy Spirit's other saving gifts, he acquired for them by his death); that he should cleanse them by his blood from all their sins {*1 John 1:7*}, both original and actual, whether committed before or after their coming to faith; that he should faithfully preserve them to the very end {*John 10:28*}; and that he should finally present them to himself, a glorious people, without spot or wrinkle {*Eph 5:27*}.

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{Lk 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you

Jn 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

John 17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

Eph 5:25-27 25 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 26 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the

children of disobedience. **27** Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

Phil 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

Heb 8:6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Rev 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; }

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Article 9: The God's Plan is fulfilled from the beginning till the end and the church must persevere till the end

This plan, arising out of God's eternal love for his chosen ones, from the beginning of the world to the present time has been powerfully carried out and will also be carried out in the future, the gates of hell seeking vainly to prevail against it **{Mt 16:18}**.

As a result the chosen are gathered into one **{John 11:52}**, all in their own time, and there is always a church of believers **{1 Kings 19:18}** founded on Christ's blood, a church which steadfastly loves, persistently worships, and - here and in all eternity - praises him as her Savior who laid down his life for her on the cross **{Eph 5:25}**, as a bridegroom for his bride.

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{Mt 16:18} And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

John 11:52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

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.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;}

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Rejection of the Errors

{Over Christ's Death, and Human Redemption Through His death}

Having set forth the orthodox teaching, the Synod rejects the errors of those

1- Reject: God sent His Son without a specific plan to save anyone, even if nobody was redeemed through His death

Who teach that God the Father appointed his Son to death on the cross without a fixed and definite plan to save anyone by name, so that the necessity, usefulness, and worth of what Christ's death obtained could have stood intact and altogether perfect, complete and whole, even if the redemption that was obtained had never in actual fact been applied to any individual.

1.1- True teaching: This insults God's wisdom and merit of Jesus: He knows and saves his sheep

For this assertion is an insult to the wisdom of God the Father and to the merit of Jesus Christ, and it is contrary to Scripture. For the Savior speaks as follows: "I lay down my life for the sheep, and I know them" (**John 10:15, 27**).

And Isaiah the prophet says concerning the Savior: "When he shall make himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days, and the will of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand" (**Isa. 53:10**).

Finally, this undermines the article of the creed in which we confess what we believe concerning the Church.

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{ John 10:15, 27 15 As the Father knows me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Isa. 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he has put him to grief: when you shall 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 hand.}

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2- Reject: The blood of Christ does not confirm the covenant of grace

Who teach that the purpose of Christ's death was not to establish in actual fact a new covenant of grace by his blood, but only to acquire for the Father the mere right to enter once more into a covenant with men, whether of grace or of works.

2.1- True teaching: Through His death Christ is the guarantee and mediator of a new covenant

For this conflicts with Scripture, which teaches that Christ has become the guarantee and mediator of a better - that is, a new - covenant (**Heb. 7:22; 9:15**), and that a will is in force only when someone has died (**Heb. 9:17**).

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{Heb 7:22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Heb 9:15-17 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.}

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3- Reject: Satisfaction given by Christ did not certainly merit salvation, but serves to enable God to put new conditions to man, who will choose or reject it as he wills

Who teach that Christ, by the satisfaction which he gave, did not certainly merit for anyone salvation itself and the faith by which this satisfaction of Christ is effectively applied to salvation, but only acquired for the Father the authority or plenary will to relate in a new way with men and to impose such new conditions as he chose, and that the satisfying of these conditions depends on the free choice of man; consequently, that it was possible that either all or none would fulfill them.

3.1- True teaching: This is a low opinion of Christ's death

For they have too low an opinion of the death of Christ, do not at all acknowledge the foremost fruit or benefit which it brings forth, and summon back from hell the [Pelagian](#) error.

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4- Reject: God counts faith itself and imperfect obedience of faith as worthy for eternal life

Who teach that what is involved in the new covenant of grace which God the Father made with men through the intervening of Christ's death is not that we are justified before God and saved through faith, insofar as it accepts Christ's merit, but rather that God, having withdrawn his demand for perfect obedience to the law, counts faith itself, and the imperfect obedience of faith, as perfect obedience to the law, and graciously looks upon this as worthy of the reward of eternal life.

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4.1- True teaching: Man is justified by grace through redemption by Christ through faith in His sacrifice.

For they contradict Scripture: They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ, whom God presented as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood (**Rom. 3:24-25**).

And along with the ungodly [Socinus](#), they introduce a new and foreign justification of man before God, against the consensus of the whole church.

{Rom 3:23-25 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;}

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5- Reject: That all people received reconciliation. No one is condemned on account of original sin. All are free from guilt of original sin.

Who teach that all people have been received into the state of reconciliation and into the grace of the covenant, so that no one on account of original sin is liable to condemnation, or is to be condemned, but that all are free from the guilt of this sin.

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5.1- True teaching: Scripture asserts that we are by nature children of wrath

For this opinion conflicts with Scripture which asserts that we are by nature children of wrath {**Eph 2:3**}.

{Eph 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. }.

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6- Reject: That God bestows His benefits of forgiveness of sins and eternal life equally to all mankind, who then chooses by his own free will

Who make use of the distinction between obtaining and applying in order to instill in the unwary and inexperienced the opinion that God, as far as he is concerned, wished to bestow equally upon all people the benefits which are gained by Christ's death; but that the distinction by which some rather than others come to share in the forgiveness of sins and eternal life depends on their own free choice (which applies itself to the grace offered indiscriminately) but does not depend on the unique gift of mercy which effectively works in them, so that they, rather than others, apply that grace to themselves.

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6.1- True teaching: This is [Pelagian](#) error

For, while pretending to set forth this distinction in an acceptable sense, they attempt to give the people the deadly poison of [Pelagianism](#).

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7- Reject: Christ did not die, nor needed to die, for the Chosen. They don't need it.

Who teach that Christ neither could die, nor had to die, nor did die for those whom God so dearly loved and chose to eternal life, since such people do not need the death of Christ.

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7.1- True teaching: Christ justifies and lay down His life for His selected friends

For they contradict the apostle, who says: Christ loved me and gave himself up for me (**Gal. 2:20**), and likewise: Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died, that is, for them (**Rom. 8:33-34**).

They also contradict the Savior, who asserts: "I lay down my life for the sheep" (**John 10:15**), and

"My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (**John 15:12-13**).

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{Gal 2:20} *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Rom 8:33,34 *33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

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*

Jn 10:15 *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

Jn 15:12,13 *12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

13 *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. }*

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The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine

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

Article 1: The Effect of the Fall on Human Nature

Man was originally created in the image of God

- and was furnished in his mind with a true and salutary knowledge of his Creator and things spiritual, in his will and heart with righteousness,
- and in all his emotions with purity; indeed, the whole man was holy **{Gen 1:26-27}**.
- However, rebelling against God at the devil's instigation and by his own free will, he deprived himself of these outstanding gifts **{Gen 3:1-7}**.
- Rather, in their place he brought upon himself blindness, terrible darkness, futility, and distortion of judgment in his mind; perversity, defiance, and hardness in his heart and will; and finally impurity in all his emotions **{Eph 4:17-19}**.

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- **{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.
- **Gen 3:1-7** Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? **2** And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: **3** But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. **4** And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: **5** For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. **6** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. **7** And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.
- **Eph 4:17-19 17** This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, **18** Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: **19** Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.}

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Article 2: The Spread of Corruption – whole humankind corrupted

Man brought forth children of the same nature as himself after the fall **{Job 14:4, Ps 51:5}**. That is to say, being corrupt he brought forth corrupt children. **{Heb 4:15}**

- The corruption spread, by God's just judgment, from Adam to all his descendants **{Rom 5:12}** - except for Christ alone **{Heb 4:15}** - not by way of imitation (as in former times the [Pelagians](#) would have it) but by way of the propagation of his perverted nature.

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- **{Job 14:4}** *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*
- **Ps 51:5** *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*
- **Rom 5:12** *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*
- **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.}*
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Article 3: All people born unwilling to improve their totally corrupted nature

Therefore, all people are conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, unfit for any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin **{Eph 2:1, 3; Jn 8:34; Rom 6:16-17}**;

- without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit **{Jn 3:3-6; Tit 3:5}** they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted nature, or even to dispose themselves to such reform.
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- **{Eph 2:1-3}** **1** *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*
- **2** *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*
- **3** *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*
- **Jn 8:34** *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*
- **Rom 6:16-17** **16** *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? **17** But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*
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- **Jn 3:3-6** **3** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. **4** Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? **5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*
- **Tit 3:5** *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;}*
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Article 4: The remaining light of nature in mankind is unable to save him

There is, to be sure, a certain light of nature remaining in man after the fall, by virtue of which he retains some notions about God **{Rom 1:19-20}**, natural things, and the difference between what is moral and immoral, and demonstrates a certain eagerness for virtue and for good outward behavior **{Rom 2:14-15}**.

- But this light of nature is far from enabling man to come to a saving knowledge of God and conversion to him - so far, in fact, that man does not use it rightly even in matters of nature and society. Instead, in various ways he completely distorts this light, whatever its precise character, and suppresses it in unrighteousness. In doing

so he renders himself without excuse before God {**Rom 1:18, 20**}.

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{Rom 1:18-20 18} For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; **19** Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. **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:

Rom 2:14-15 14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: **15** Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;}

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Article 5: The Law convicts of sin and cannot save man from his misery

In this respect, what is true of the light of nature is true also of the Ten Commandments given by God through Moses specifically to the Jews.

- For man cannot obtain saving grace through the Decalogue, because, although it does expose the magnitude of his sin and increasingly convict him of his guilt, yet it does not offer a remedy or enable him to escape from his misery, and, indeed, weakened as it is by the flesh, leaves the offender under the curse. {**Rom 3:19-20; 7:10, 13; Rom 8:3; 2 Cor 3:6-7**}

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- **{Rom 3:19-20 19}** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. **20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.
- **Rom 7:10** And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.
- **Rom 7:13** Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.
- **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:
- **2 Cor 3:6-7 6** Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. **7** But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: }

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Article 6: God decides to save by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel about the Messiah

What, therefore, neither the light of nature nor the law can do, God accomplishes by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Word or the ministry of reconciliation {**2 Cor 5:18-19**}.

- This is the gospel about the Messiah, through which it has pleased God to save believers, in both the Old and the New Testament {**1 Cor 1:21**}.

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- {**2 Cor 5:18-19** **18** And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; **19** To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
1 Cor 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.}
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Article 7: God's Freedom in Revealing the Gospel when, and to whom He wills

- In the Old Testament, God revealed this secret of his will to a small number; in the New Testament (now without any distinction between peoples) he discloses it to a large number {**Eph 1:9; Eph 2:14; Col 3:11**}.
- The reason for this difference must not be ascribed to the greater worth of one nation over another, or to a better use of the light of nature, but to the free good pleasure and undeserved love of God {**Rom 2:11; Mt 11:26**}.
 - Therefore, those who receive so much grace, beyond and in spite of all they deserve, ought to acknowledge it with humble and thankful hearts {**Rom 11:22-23**}; on the other hand, with the apostle they ought to adore (but certainly not inquisitively search into) the severity and justice of God's judgments {**Rev 16:7**} on the others, who do not receive this grace. {**Deut 29:29**}
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- - {**Eph 1:9** Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:
 - **Eph 2:14** For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
 - **Col 3:11** Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.
Rom 2:11 For there is no respect (partiality, favoritism) of persons with God.
 - **Mt 11:26** *Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.*
 - **Rom 11:22-23** **22** Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. **23** And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.
 - **Rev 16:7** And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.
 - **Deut 29:29** The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law }
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Article 8: All who are called through the gospel are called seriously.

- Nevertheless, all who are called through the gospel are called seriously {**Isa 55:1; Mt 22:4**}. For seriously and most genuinely God makes known in his Word what is pleasing to him: that those who are called should come to him {**Rev 22:17**}. Seriously he also promises rest for their souls and eternal life to all who come to him and believe {**Jn 6:37; Mt 11:28-29**}.
- - {**Isa 55:1** Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without

- price.
- **Mt 22:4** Again he sent forth other servants, saying, 'Tell them that are bidden, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come unto the marriage."'
 - **Rev 22:17** And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.
 - **Jn 6:37** All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.
 - **Mt 11:28-29** 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.}
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Article 9: Many ignore or reject the Gospel and so stays guilty

- The fact that many who are called through the ministry of the gospel do not come and are not brought to conversion must not be blamed on the gospel, nor on Christ, who is offered through the gospel {**Mt 11:20-24; Mat 22:1-8; Mat 23:37**}, nor on God, who calls them through the gospel and even bestows various gifts on them, but on the people themselves who are called.
- Some in self-assurance do not even entertain the Word of life; others do entertain it but do not take it to heart, and for that reason, after the fleeting joy of a temporary faith, they relapse;
 - others choke the seed of the Word with the thorns of life's cares and with the pleasures of the world and bring forth no fruits. This our Savior teaches in the parable of the sower (**Matt. 13:1-58**).
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- {**Mt 11:20-24** 20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: 21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. 23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.
 - **Mt 22:1-8** 1 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,
 - 2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,
 - 3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. 5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: 6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. 7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.
 - **Mt 23:37** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!
 - **Matt. 13:1-58** Please read in your Bible. Too large.}
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Article 10: Others' Conversion is by God's Election and Work in them

The fact that others who are called through the ministry of the gospel do come and are brought to conversion must not be credited to man, as though one distinguishes himself by free choice from others who are furnished with equal or sufficient grace for faith and conversion (as the proud heresy of [Pelagius](#) maintains).

- No, it must be credited to God **{Rom 9:16}**: just as from eternity he chose his own in Christ, so within time he effectively calls them, grants them faith and repentance, and, having rescued them from the dominion of darkness, brings them into the kingdom of his Son **{Col 1:13; Gal 1:4}**, in order that they may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called them out of darkness into this marvelous light **{1 Pet 2:9}**, and may boast not in themselves, but in the Lord **{1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17; Eph 2:8-9}**, as apostolic words frequently testify in Scripture.

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- **{Rom 9:16}** *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*
- **Col 1:13** *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*
- **Gal 1:4** *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*
- **1 Pet 2:9** *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*
- **1 Cor 1:31** *That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*
- **2 Cor 10:17** *But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*
- **Eph 2:8-9** **8** *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.}*

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Article 11: God regenerates His elected to a new man by His Holy Spirit's Work

Moreover, when God carries out this good pleasure in his chosen ones, or works true conversion in them, he not only sees to it that the gospel is proclaimed to them outwardly, and enlightens their minds powerfully by the Holy Spirit so that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God **{Heb 6:4-5; 1 Cor 2:10-14}**, but, by the effective operation of the same regenerating Spirit, he also penetrates into the inmost being of man **{Heb 4:12}**, opens the closed heart, softens the hard heart **{Acts 16:14}**, and circumcises the heart that is uncircumcised. He infuses new qualities into the will **{Deut 30:6}**, making the dead will alive, the evil one good, the unwilling one willing, and the stubborn one compliant **{Ez 11:19; Ez 36:26}**; he activates and strengthens the will so that, like a good tree, it may be enabled to produce the fruits of good deeds **{Mt 7:18}**.

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- **{Heb 6:4-5}** **4** *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,*
- **1 Cor 2:10-14** **10** *To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11 Lest*

Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. **12**

Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, **13** I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. **14** Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

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Heb 4:12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Acts 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Deut 30:6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Ez 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

- **Ez 36:26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.
- **Mt 7:18** A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.}

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Article 12: Regeneration is a mighty deed by God alone, with no human input

And this is the regeneration, the new creation, the raising from the dead, and the making alive **{Jn 3:3; 2 Cor 4:6; 5:17; Eph 5:14}** so clearly proclaimed in the Scriptures, which God works in us without our help.

- But this certainly does not happen only by outward teaching, by moral persuasion, or by such a way of working that, after God has done his work, it remains in man's power whether or not to be reborn or converted.
- Rather, it is an entirely supernatural work, one that is at the same time most powerful and most pleasing, a marvelous, hidden, and inexpressible work, which is not lesser than or inferior in power to that of creation or of raising the dead **{Jn 5:25; Rom 4:17}**, as Scripture (inspired by the author of this work) teaches.
- As a result, all those in whose hearts God works in this marvelous way are certainly, unfailingly, and effectively reborn and do actually believe **{Phil 2:13}**. And then the will, now renewed, is not only activated and motivated by God but in being activated by God is also itself active. For this reason, man himself, by that grace which he has received, is also rightly said to believe and to repent.

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- **{Jn 3:3}** Jesus answered and said unto him, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*
2 Cor 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
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.
Eph 5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Jn 5:25 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*

Rom 4:17 *(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*

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

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Article 13: Although this work is incomprehensible, it gives peace of mind

In this life believers cannot fully understand the way this work occurs; meanwhile, they rest content with knowing and experiencing that by this grace of God they do believe with the heart and love their Savior. **{Jn 3:18; Rom 10:9}**

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- **{Jn 3:18}** *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*
- **Rom 10:9** *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

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Article 14: God produces in man both the will to believe and the belief itself; not presented to man's choice

In this way, therefore, faith is a gift of God **{Eph 2:8}**, not in the sense that it is offered by God for man to choose, but that it is in actual fact bestowed on man, breathed and infused into him.

- Nor is it a gift in the sense that God bestows only the potential to believe, but then awaits assent - the act of believing - from man's choice; rather, it is a gift in the sense that he who works both willing and acting **{Phil 2:13}** and, indeed, works all things in all people produces in man both the will to believe and the belief itself.

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- **{Eph 2:8}** *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*
- **Phil 2:13** *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

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Article 15: This grace God owes to nobody – just thank Him for it

God does not owe this grace to anyone. For what could God owe to one who has nothing to give that can be paid back **{Rom 11:35}**? Indeed, what could God owe to one who has nothing of his own to give but sin and falsehood?

- Therefore the person who receives this grace owes and gives eternal thanks to God alone; the person who does not receive it either does not care at all about these spiritual things and is satisfied with himself in his condition, or else in self-assurance foolishly boasts about having something which he lacks **{Amos 6:1; Jer 7:4}**.
- Furthermore, following the example of the apostles, we are to think and to speak in the most favorable way **{Rom 14:10}** about those who outwardly profess their faith and better their lives, for the inner chambers of the heart are unknown to us.
- But for others who have not yet been called, we are to pray to the God who calls things that do not exist as though they did **{Rom 4:17}**. In no way, however, are we

to pride ourselves as better than they {1 Cor 4:7}, as though we had distinguished ourselves from them.

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- **{Rom 11:35}** Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?
- **Amos 6:1** Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, *which are* named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!
- **Jer 7:4** Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, *are* these.
- **Rom 14:10** But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
- **Rom 4:17** (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.
- **1 Cor 4:7** For who maketh thee to differ from *another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? }

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Article 16: The grace reforms the will spiritually alive so that it obeys

However, just as by the fall man did not cease to be man, endowed with intellect and will, and just as sin, which has spread through the whole human race, did not abolish the nature of the human race but distorted and spiritually killed it {Rom 8:2; Eph 2:1}. so also this divine grace of regeneration does not act in people as if they were blocks and stones; nor does it abolish the will and its properties or coerce a reluctant will by force, but spiritually revives, heals, reforms, and - in a manner at once pleasing and powerful - bends it back {Ps 51:12; Phil 2:13}.

- As a result, a ready and sincere obedience of the Spirit now begins to prevail where before the rebellion and resistance of the flesh were completely dominant. It is in this that the true and spiritual restoration and freedom of our will consists.
- Thus, if the marvelous Maker of every good thing were not dealing with us, man would have no hope of getting up from his fall by his free choice, by which he plunged himself into ruin when still standing upright.

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- **{Rom 8:2}** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
- **Eph 2:1** And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
- **Ps 51:12** Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy free spirit*.
- **Phil 2:13** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure }

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Article 17: God uses the means of the Gospel, teachers, sacraments, discipline in His almighty work

Just as the almighty work of God by which he brings forth and sustains our natural life does not rule out but requires the use of means, by which God, according to his infinite wisdom and goodness, has wished to exercise his power {Isa 55:10-11; 1 Cor 1:21}, so also the aforementioned supernatural work of God by which he regenerates us {Jas 1:18} in no way rules out or cancels the use of the gospel, which God in his great wisdom has appointed to be the seed of regeneration and

the food of the soul **{1 Pet 1:23, 25; 1 Pet 2:2}**.

- For this reason, the apostles and the teachers who followed them taught the people in a godly manner about this grace of God, to give him the glory and to humble all pride, and yet did not neglect meanwhile to keep the people, by means of the holy admonitions of the gospel, under the administration of the Word, the sacraments, and discipline **{Acts 2:42; 2 Cor 5:11-21; 2 Tim 4:2}**.
- So even today it is out of the question that the teachers or those taught in the church should presume to test God by separating what he in his good pleasure has wished to be closely joined together.
- For grace is bestowed through admonitions **{Rom 10:14-17}**, and the more readily we perform our duty, the more lustrous the benefit of God working in us usually is and the better his work advances. To him alone, both for the means and for their saving fruit and effectiveness, all glory is owed forever **{Jude 24,25}**. Amen.

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{Is 55:10-11 10} For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: **11** So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

1 Cor 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Jas 1:18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

1 Pet 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 Pet 1:25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

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Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

2 Cor 5:11-21 11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. **13** For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. **14** For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: **15** And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. **16** Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. **17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. **18** And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; **19** To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. **20** Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. **21** For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

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2 Tim 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Rom 10:14-17: **14** How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? **15** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! **16** But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? **17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Jude 24,25 **24** Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, **25** To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.}

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Rejection of the Errors

{Over Human Corruption, Conversion to God, and the Way It Occurs}

Having set forth the orthodox teaching, the Synod rejects the errors of those

1- Reject: That original sin is not enough to condemn and punish the whole human race

Who teach that, properly speaking, it cannot be said that original sin in itself is enough to condemn the whole human race or to warrant temporal and eternal punishments.

1.1- True teaching: Sin entered the world through one man; the wages of sin is death

For they contradict the apostle when he says:

“Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death passed on to all men because all sinned” (**Rom. 5:12**); also:

“The guilt followed one sin and brought condemnation” (**Rom. 5:16**); likewise:

“The wages of sin is death” (**Rom. 6:23**).

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2- Reject: Goodness could not have resided in the created man's will and could therefore not later be separated from his will at the fall

Who teach that the spiritual gifts or the good dispositions and virtues such as goodness, holiness, and righteousness could not have resided in man's will when he was first created, and therefore could not have been separated from the will at the fall.

2.1- True teaching – The image of God viz. righteousness and holiness, definitely reside in the will

For this conflicts with the apostle's description of the image of God in **Ephesians 4:24**, where he portrays the image in terms of righteousness and holiness, which definitely reside in the will.

(**Eph. 4:24** *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*)

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3- Reject: The will has never been corrupted and is able of itself to choose for good, or not

Who teach that in spiritual death the spiritual gifts have not been separated from man's will, since the will in itself has never been corrupted but only hindered by the darkness of the mind and the unruliness of the emotions, and since the will is able to exercise its innate free capacity once these hindrances are removed, which is to say, it is able of itself to will or choose whatever good is set before it, or else not to will or choose it.

3.1- True teaching: The heart itself is deceitful above all things and wicked following the fleshly disobedient will

This is a novel idea and an error and has the effect of elevating the power of free choice, contrary to the words of Jeremiah the prophet:

“The heart itself is deceitful above all things and wicked” (Jer. 17:9); and of the words of the apostle:

“All of us also lived among them (the sons of disobedience) at one time in the passions of our flesh, following the will of our flesh and thoughts” (Eph. 2:3).

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4- Reject: Unregenerate man is not totally dead in sins and can still please God with offers

Who teach that unregenerate man is not strictly or totally dead in his sins or deprived of all capacity for spiritual good but is able to hunger and thirst for righteousness or life and to offer the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit which is pleasing to God.

4.1- True teaching: Unregenerated man is dead and his thoughts are evil. Only Regenerated man hungers and thirsts for deliverance and offers his broken spirit

For these views are opposed to the plain testimonies of Scripture: “You were dead in your transgressions and sins” (Eph. 2:1, 5); “

The imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil all the time” (Gen. 6:5; 8:21).

Besides, to hunger and thirst for deliverance from misery and for life, and to offer God the sacrifice of a broken spirit is characteristic only of the regenerate and of those called blessed (Ps. 51:10,17; Matt. 5:6).

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{Eph 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;

Gén 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Gén 8:21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

Psa 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Psa 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Mat 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.}

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5- Reject: God reveals Christ to all man sufficiently for saving grace because of the remaining light in man after the fall

Who teach that corrupt and natural man can make such good use of common grace (by which they mean the light of nature) or of the gifts remaining after the fall that he is able thereby gradually to obtain a greater grace - evangelical or saving grace - as well as salvation itself; and that in this way God, for his part, shows himself ready to reveal Christ to all people, since he provides to all, to a sufficient extent and in an effective manner, the

means necessary for the revealing of Christ, for faith, and for repentance.

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5.1- True teaching: Scripture and history prove this to be false

For Scripture, not to mention the experience of all ages, testifies that this is false:

“He makes known his words to Jacob, his statutes and his laws to Israel; he has done this for no other nation, and they do not know his laws” **(Ps. 147:19-20)**;

“In the past God let all nations go their own way **(Acts 14:16)**;

“They (Paul and his companions) were kept by the Holy Spirit from speaking God's word in Asia; and When they had come to Mysia, they tried to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit would not allow them to” **(Acts 16:6-7)**.

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6- Reject: God does not put new qualities into man's will – Faith is an act of man himself

Who teach that in the true conversion of man new qualities, dispositions, or gifts cannot be infused or poured into his will by God, and indeed that the faith [or believing] by which we first come to conversion and from which we receive the name "believers" is not a quality or gift infused by God, but only an act of man, and that it cannot be called a gift except in respect to the power of attaining faith.

6.1- True teaching: God does infuse conversion and new qualities, a will to do His will, into believers

For these views contradict the Holy Scriptures, which testify that God does infuse or pour into our hearts the new qualities of faith, obedience, and the experiencing of his love:

“I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts” **(Jer. 31:33)**;

“I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring” **(Isa. 44:3)**;

“The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given” to us **(Rom. 5:5)**.

They also conflict with the continuous practice of the Church, which prays with the prophet:

“Convert me, Lord, and I shall be converted” **(Jer. 31:18)**.

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7- Reject: Man is converted by God's grace that is only the gentle persuasion of and promises of eternal benefits

Who teach that the grace by which we are converted to God is nothing but a gentle persuasion, or (as others explain it) that the way of God's acting in man's conversion that is most noble and suited to human nature is that which happens by persuasion, and that nothing prevents this grace of moral suasion even by itself from making natural men spiritual; indeed, that God does not produce the assent of the will except in this manner of moral suasion, and that the effectiveness of God's work by which it surpasses the work of Satan consists in the fact that God promises eternal benefits while Satan promises temporal ones.

7.1- True teaching: This is [Pelagian](#) teaching denying the Spirit's action of replacing the old spirit with a new one

For this teaching is entirely [Pelagian](#) and contrary to the whole of Scripture, which recognizes besides this persuasion also another, far more effective and divine way in which the Holy Spirit acts in man's conversion. As **Ezekiel 36:26** puts it: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; and I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh...."

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8- Reject: That regeneration is not applied by God, but man decides to allow rebirth or not.

Who teach that God in regenerating man does not bring to bear that power of his omnipotence whereby he may powerfully and unfailingly bend man's will to faith and conversion,

but that even when God has accomplished all the works of grace which he uses for man's conversion, man nevertheless can, and in actual fact often does, so resist God and the Spirit in their intent and will to regenerate him, that man completely thwarts his own rebirth; and,

indeed, that it remains in his own power whether or not to be reborn.

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8.1- True teaching: It errs by making man's will superior to God's will. God alone, not the will of man, provides everything we need for life and godliness

For this does away with all effective functioning of God's grace in our conversion and subjects the activity of Almighty God to the will of man; it is contrary to the apostles, who teach that we believe by virtue of the effective working of God's mighty strength (**Eph. 1:19**), and that God fulfills the undeserved good will of his kindness and the work of faith in us with power (**2 Thess. 1:11**), and likewise that "his divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness" (**2 Pet. 1:3**).

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(Eph. 1:19) *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*

2 Thess. 1:11 *Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:*

2 Pet. 1:3 *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.}*

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9- Reject: God's grace and primarily the human will cooperate toward conversion

Who teach that grace and free choice are concurrent partial causes which cooperate to initiate conversion, and that grace does not precede - in the order of causality - the effective influence of the will; that is to say, that God does not effectively help man's will to come to conversion before man's will itself motivates and determines itself.

9.1- True teaching: Conversion does not depend on man's willing or running but on God's merciful will

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For the early church already condemned this doctrine long ago in the [Pelagians](#), on the basis of the words of the apostle:

"It does not depend on man's willing or running but on God's mercy" (Rom. 9:16);

also:

"Who makes you different from anyone else? And What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7);

likewise:

"It is God who works in you to will and act according to his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

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The Fifth Main Point of Doctrine

The Perseverance of the Saints

Article 1: The Regenerate is freed from slavery of sin, but not entirely from the flesh in this life

Those people whom God according to his purpose calls into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord and regenerates by the Holy Spirit, he also sets free from the reign and slavery of sin {Jn 8:34; Rom 6:17},

- though in this life not entirely from the flesh and from the body of sin {Rom 7:21-24}.
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- {Jn 8:34} Jesus answered them, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*
- Rom 6:17 *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*
- Rom 7:21-24 21 *I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*
- 22 *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? }*

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Article 2: Therefore the Believers still sin daily and must constantly strain against it

Hence daily sins of weakness arise, and blemishes cling to even the best works of God's people {1 Jn 1:8}, giving them continual cause to humble themselves before God, to flee for refuge to Christ crucified, to put the flesh to death more and more by the Spirit of supplication and by holy exercises of godliness {Col 3:5}, and to strain toward the goal of perfection {1 Tim 4:7; Phil 3:12, 14}, until they are freed from this body of death and reign with the Lamb of God in heaven {Rev 5:6, 10}.

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- **{1 Jn 1:8}** *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*
- **Col 3:5** *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*
- **1 Tim 4:7** *But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.*
- **Phil 3:12-14** *12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.
13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this one thing I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,
14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*
- **Rev 5:6, 10: 6** *And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.*
- **Rev 5:10** *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.}*

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Article 3: The converted cannot remain standing by themselves, but God preserves them to the end

Because of these remnants of sin dwelling in them and also because of the temptations of the world and Satan, those who have been converted could not remain standing in this grace if left to their own resources **{Rom 7:20}**. But God is faithful, mercifully strengthening them in the grace once conferred on them and powerfully preserving them in it to the end **{1 Cor 10:13; 1 Pet 1:5}**.

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- **{Rom 7:20}** *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*
- **1 Cor 10:13** *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*
- **1 Pet 1:5** *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.}*

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Article 4: True believers can fall into sins, and must watch and pray not to be led into temptations

Although that power of God strengthening and preserving true believers in grace is more than a match for the flesh **{Eph 1:19}**, yet those converted are not always so activated and motivated by God that in certain specific actions they cannot by their own fault depart from the leading of grace, be led astray by the desires of the flesh, and give in to them. For this reason they must constantly watch and pray that they may not be led into temptations **{Mt 26:41}**. When they fail to do this **{1 Thess 5:6, 17}**, not only can they be carried away by the flesh, the world, and Satan into sins, even serious and outrageous ones, but also by God's just permission they sometimes are so carried away - witness the sad cases, described in Scripture, of David, Peter, and other saints falling into sins **{2 Sam 11; Mt 26}**.

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- **{Eph 1:19}** *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*

- **Mt 26:41** *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*
- **1 Thess 5:6** *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*
- **1 Thes 5:17** *Pray without ceasing.*
- **2 Sam 11:1-27** *(Dawid and Bathseba) and*
- **Mt 26:1-75** *(Peter and disciples forsake Jesus) – Both are long chapters. Please read them in your Bible.}*
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Article 5: Their Serious Sins offend God, who nevertheless lets His light shine on them after their genuine repentance

By such monstrous sins, however, they greatly offend God, deserve the sentence of death, grieve the Holy Spirit, suspend the exercise of faith, severely wound the conscience, and sometimes lose the awareness of grace for a time {**2 Sam 12; Eph 4:30**} - until, after they have returned to the way by genuine repentance, God's fatherly face again shines upon them {**Ps 32:3-5; Num 6:25**}.

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- {**2 Sam 12** *God sends Nathan to David, his repentance, forgiveness and punishment. Please read the long chapter in your Bible.*
- **Eph 4:30** *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*
Ps 32:3-5 *3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. 4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. 5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*
- **Num 6:25** *The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:}*
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Article 6: God does not forsake the elected and does not let them fall into eternal ruin

For God, who is rich in mercy {**Eph 2:4,5**}, according to his unchangeable purpose of election {**Eph 1:11**} does not take his Holy Spirit from his own completely, even when they fall grievously {**Ps 51:13**}. Neither does he let them fall down so far that they forfeit the grace of adoption and the state of justification {**Gal 4:5**}, or commit the sin which leads to death (the sin against the Holy Spirit) {**1 Jn 5:16-18**}, and plunge themselves, entirely forsaken by him, into eternal ruin.

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- {**Eph 2:4,5** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*
- **5** *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*
- **Eph 1:11** *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*
- **Ps 51:13** *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*
- **Gal 4:5** *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*
- **1 Jn 5:16-18** *If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do*

not say that he shall pray for it.

- **17** All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.
- **18** We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

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- **Mt 12:31-32** **31** Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. **32** And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.}

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Article 7: When saints fall, God renews them to repentance and greater dedication

For, in the first place, God preserves in those saints when they fall his imperishable seed from which they have been born again, lest it perish or be dislodged **{1 Pet 1:23}**.

- Secondly, by his Word and Spirit he certainly and effectively renews them to repentance **{1 Jn 3:9}** so that they have a heartfelt and godly sorrow for the sins they have committed **{2 Cor 7:10}**; seek and obtain, through faith and with a contrite heart, forgiveness in the blood of the Mediator; experience again the grace of a reconciled God; through faith adore his mercies **{Ps 32:5; 51:19}**; and from then on more eagerly work out their own salvation with fear and trembling **{Phil 2:12}**.

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- **{1 Pet 1:23}** Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.
- **1 Jn 3:9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.
- **2 Cor 7:10** For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.
- **Ps 32:5** I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.
- **Ps 51:19** Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.
- **Phil 2:12** Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.}

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Article 8: The Certainty of This Preservation lies within the reliability of God's mercy

So it is not by their own merits or strength but by God's undeserved mercy that they neither forfeit faith and grace totally nor remain in their downfalls to the end and are lost. With respect to themselves this not only easily could happen, but also undoubtedly would happen; but with respect to God it cannot possibly happen, since his plan cannot be changed **{Ps 33:11}**, his promise cannot fail, the calling according to his purpose cannot be revoked **{Heb 6:17; Rom 8:30,34; 9:11}**, the

merit of Christ as well as his interceding and preserving cannot be nullified **{Lk 22:32}**, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit can neither be invalidated nor wiped out **{Eph 1:13}**.

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- **{Ps 33:11}** *The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*
- **Heb 6:17** *Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:*
- **Rom 8:30** *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*
- **Rom 88:34** *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.*
- **Rom 9:11-13** **11** *(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)* **12** *It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.* **13** *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*
- **Lk 22:32** *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*
- **Eph 1:13** *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, }*

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Article 9: Believers can be assured of this preservation

Concerning this preservation of those chosen to salvation and concerning the perseverance of true believers in faith **{Rom 8:31-39}**, believers themselves can and do become assured in accordance with the measure of their faith **{2 Tim 4:8}**, by which they firmly believe that they are and always will remain true and living members of the church, and that they have the forgiveness of sins and eternal life **{2 Tim 4:18}**

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- **{Rom 8:31-39}** **31** *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* **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?* **33** *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.* **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.* **35** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*
- **36** *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* **37** *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.* **38** *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,* **39** *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- **2 Tim 4:8** *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*
2 Tim 4:18 *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. }*

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Article 10: This Assurance has no source outside the Word, but comes through the testimony by the Spirit using the Word

Accordingly, this assurance does not derive from some private revelation beyond or outside the Word, but from faith in the promises of God which he has very plentifully revealed in his Word for our comfort, from the testimony of the Holy Spirit testifying with our spirit that we are God's children and heirs (**Rom. 8:16-17**, **{1 Jn 3:1-2}**), and

- finally from a serious and holy pursuit of a clear conscience **{Acts 24:16}** and of good works.
- And if God's chosen ones in this world did not have this well-founded comfort that the victory **{Rom 8:37}** will be theirs and this reliable guarantee of eternal glory, they would be of all people most miserable. **{1 Cor 15:19}**.

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- **{ Rom. 8:16-17 16** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*
- **1 Jn 3:1-2 1** *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*
- **Acts 24:16** *And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*
- **Rom 8:37** *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*
- **1 Cor 15:19** *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.}*

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Article 11: Doubts Concerning This Assurance. God does not allow believers to be tempted beyond their power, but gives perseverance

Meanwhile, Scripture testifies that believers have to contend in this life with various doubts of the flesh and that under severe temptation they do not always experience this full assurance of faith and certainty of perseverance.

- But God, the Father of all comfort **{2 Cor 1:3}**, does not let them be tempted beyond what they can bear, but with the temptation he also provides a way out (**1 Cor 10:13**), and by the Holy Spirit revives in them the assurance of their perseverance.

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- **{2 Cor 1:3** *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 1 Cor. 10:13* *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.}*

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Article 12: This Assurance as an Incentive to godliness

This assurance of perseverance, however, so far from making true believers proud

and carnally self-assured, is rather the true root of humility, of childlike respect **{Rom 12:1}**, of genuine godliness, of endurance in every conflict, of fervent prayers, of steadfastness in cross-bearing and in confessing the truth, and of well-founded joy in God **(Ps 56:12-13)**. Reflecting on this benefit provides an incentive to a serious and continual practice of thanksgiving and good works **{Ps 116:12; Tit 2:11-14; 1 Jn 3:3}** as is evident from the testimonies of Scripture and the examples of the saints.

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- **{Rom 12:1}** *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*
- **Ps 56:12-13** **12** *Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.* **13** *For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?*
- **Ps 116:12** *What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?*
- **Tit 2:11-14** **11** *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,*
- **12** *Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;* **13** *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;* **14** *who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.*
- **1 Jn 3:3** *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.)*

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Article 13: Assurance does not induce to carelessness but to a respectful life for God

Neither does the renewed confidence of perseverance produce immorality or lack of concern for godliness in those put back on their feet after a fall **{2 Cor 7:10}**, but it produces a much greater concern to observe carefully the ways of the Lord which he prepared in advance **{Eph 2:10}**.

- They observe these ways in order that by walking in them they may maintain the assurance of their perseverance, lest, by their abuse of his fatherly goodness, the face of the gracious God (for the godly, looking upon his face is sweeter than life, but its withdrawal is more bitter than death) turn away from them again **{Ps 63:4; Is 64:7}**, with the result that they fall into greater anguish of spirit **{Jer 33:5}**.

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- **{2 Cor 7:10}** *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*
- **Eph 2:10** *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*
- **Ps 63:4** *Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.*
- **Is 64:7** *And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.*
- **Jer 33:5** *They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but it is to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine anger and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city.}*

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Article 14: God begins and strengthens His grace, using the gospel to be heard, read, meditated, exhorted and with His promises and sacraments

And, just as it has pleased God to begin this work of grace in us by the proclamation of the gospel, so he preserves, continues, and completes his work by the hearing and reading of the gospel **{Deut 6:20-25}**, by meditation on it, by its exhortations **{2 Tim 3:16-17}**, threats, and promises, and also by the use of the sacraments **{Acts 2:42}**.

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- **{Deut 6:20-25}** **20** *And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? **21** Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: **22** And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: **23** And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. **24** And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. **25** And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.*
- **2 Tim 3:16-17** **16** *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **17** That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*
- **Acts 2:42** *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.}*

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Article 15: The teaching of perseverance honors God and comforts the church; Satan and the ungodly rejects it

This teaching about the perseverance of true believers and saints, and about their assurance of it **{Rev 14:12}** - a teaching which God has very richly revealed in his Word for the glory of his name and for the comfort of the godly and which he impresses on the hearts of believers - is something which the flesh does not understand, Satan hates, the world ridicules, the ignorant and the hypocrites abuse, and the spirits of error attack. The bride of Christ, on the other hand, has always loved this teaching very tenderly and defended it steadfastly as a priceless treasure **{Eph 5:32}**; and God, against whom no plan can avail and no strength can prevail **{Ps 33:10-11}**, will ensure that she will continue to do this. To this God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever **{1 Pet 5:10-11}**. Amen.

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- **{Rev 14:12}** *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*
- **Eph 5:32** *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*
- **Ps 33:10-11** **10** *The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. **11** The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*
- **1 Pet 5:10-11** **10** *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. **11** To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.}*

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Rejection of the Errors

Concerning the Teaching of the Perseverance of the Saints

Having set forth the orthodox teaching, the Synod rejects the errors of those

1- Rejects: Perseverance of true believers is not an effect of election, but a condition of the new covenant, fulfilled by free will

Who teach that the perseverance of true believers is not an effect of election or a gift of God produced by Christ's death, but a condition of the new covenant which man, before what they call his "peremptory" election and justification, must fulfill by his free will.

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1.1- True teaching: Perseverance comes after election and is granted through Christ's death, resurrection and intercession

For Holy Scripture testifies that perseverance follows from election and is granted to the chosen by virtue of Christ's death, resurrection, and intercession: The chosen obtained it; the others were hardened (**Rom. 11:7**); likewise, "He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not, along with him, grant us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died - more than that, who was raised - who also sits at the right hand of God, and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (**Rom. 8:32-35**).

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{Rom. 11:7-8 **7** What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded **8** (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

Rom. 8:32-35: **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? **33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. **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.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* }

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2- Reject: God provides sufficient strength, but perseverance depends on man's choice of will to persevere or not

Who teach that God does provide the believer with sufficient strength to persevere and is ready to preserve this strength in him if he performs his duty, but that even with all those things in place which are necessary to persevere in faith and which God is pleased to use

to preserve faith, it still always depends on the choice of man's will whether or not he perseveres.

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2.1- True teaching: It is only God's grace that keeps us strong to the end, so that we will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ

For this view is obviously [Pelagian](#) and though it intends to make men free it makes them sacrilegious. It is against the enduring consensus of evangelical teaching which takes from man all cause for boasting and ascribes the praise for this benefit only to God's grace. It is also against the testimony of the apostle: "It is God who keeps us strong to the end, so that we will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:8).

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3- Reject: The born again can forfeit the justifying faith and get lost forever

Who teach that those who truly believe and have been born again not only can forfeit justifying faith as well as grace and salvation totally and to the end, but also in actual fact do often forfeit them and are lost forever.

3.1: True teaching: Jesus says that He gives life and no sheep of His can be snatched out of his Father's hand

For this opinion nullifies the very grace of justification and regeneration as well as the continual preservation by Christ, contrary to the plain words of the apostle Paul: "If Christ died for us while we were still sinners, we will therefore much more be saved from God's wrath through him, since we have now been justified by his blood" (Rom. 5:8-9); and contrary to the apostle John: "No one who is born of God is intent on sin, because God's seed remains in him, nor can he sin, because he has been born of God" (1 John 3:9); also contrary to the words of Jesus Christ: "I give eternal life to my sheep, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (John 10: 28-29).

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4- Reject: The born again can commit the sin to death against the Holy Spirit, that leads to death

Who teach that those who truly believe and have been born again can commit the sin that leads to death (the sin against the Holy Spirit).

4.1: True teaching: We know that anyone born of God does not commit this sin and cannot be touched by Satan, because the Son keeps him safe

For the same apostle John, after making mention of those who commit the sin that leads to death and forbidding prayer for them (1 Jn 5:16-17), immediately adds: We know that anyone born of God does not commit sin (that is, that kind of sin), but the one who was born of God keeps himself safe, and the evil one does not touch him (1 Jn 5:18).

{1 Jn 5:16-18 16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. 18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself,

and that wicked one toucheth him not.}

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5- Reject: No one can, in this life, have assurance of future perseverance

Who teach that apart from a special revelation no one can have the assurance of future perseverance in this life.

5.1: True teaching: Assurance is the hallmark of a child of God

For by this teaching the well-founded consolation of true believers in this life is taken away and the doubting of the Romanists is reintroduced into the church.

Holy Scripture, however, in many places derives the assurance not from a special and extraordinary revelation but from the marks peculiar to God's children and from God's completely reliable promises.

So especially the apostle Paul: "Nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (**Rom. 8:39**);

and John: "They who obey his commands remain in him and he in them. And this is how we know that he remains in us: by the Spirit he gave us" (**1 John 3:24**).

{Rom 8:38-39 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. }

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6- Reject: That teaching this assurance is an opiate of the flesh and harmful for a healthy life of faith

Who teach that the teaching of the assurance of perseverance and of salvation is by its very nature and character an opiate of the flesh and is harmful to godliness, good morals, prayer, and other holy exercises, but that, on the contrary, to have doubt about this is praiseworthy

6.1: True teaching: Now we are children of God, everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself

For these people show that they do not know the effective operation of God's grace and the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit,

and they contradict the apostle John, who asserts the opposite in plain words: "Dear friends, now we are children of God, but what we will be has not yet been made known.

But we know that when he is made known, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure" (**1 John 3:2-3**).

Moreover, they are refuted by the examples of the saints in both the Old and the New Testament, who though assured of their perseverance and salvation yet were constant in prayer and other exercises of godliness.

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7- Reject: Temporary belief differs only in duration from saving faith

Who teach that the faith of those who believe only temporarily does not differ from justifying and saving faith except in duration alone.

7.1: True teaching: Christ teaches that temporary faith does not save in the parable of the sower

For Christ himself in **Matthew 13:20ff.** And **Luke 8:13ff.** clearly defines these further differences between temporary and true believers: he says that the former receive the seed on rocky ground, and the latter receive it in good ground, or a good heart; the former have no root, and the latter are firmly rooted; the former have no fruit, and the latter produce fruit in varying measure, with steadfastness, or perseverance.

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{Mat 13:20-23 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Luke 8:13-15 13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. }

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8- Reject: That a person. after losing his regeneration, can even quite often be born again

Who teach that it is not absurd that a person, after losing his former regeneration, should once again, indeed quite often, be reborn.

8.1: True teaching: God's seed is imperishable

For by this teaching they deny the imperishable nature of God's seed by which we are born again, contrary to the testimony of the apostle Peter: "Born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable" (1 Pet. 1:23).

{ 1 Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. }

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9- Reject: That Christ nowhere prayed for unfailing perseverance of believers

Who teach that Christ nowhere prayed for an unfailing perseverance of believers in faith.

9.1: True teaching: Christ Himself prayed for all who believe not to fail in faith and to be preserved

For they contradict Christ himself when he says: "I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:32); and John the gospel writer when he testifies in John 17 that it was not only for the apostles, but also for all those who were to believe by their message that Christ prayed: "Holy Father, preserve them in your name" (v. 11); and "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you preserve them from the evil

one" (v. 15).

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{John 17:11,15,20

11 *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are....*

15 *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

20 *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; }*

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Conclusion

Rejection of False Accusations

And so this is the clear, simple, and straightforward explanation of the orthodox teaching on the five articles in dispute in the Netherlands, as well as the rejection of the errors by which the Dutch churches have for some time been disturbed. This explanation and rejection the Synod declares to be derived from God's Word and in agreement with the confessions of the Reformed churches. Hence it clearly appears that those of whom one could hardly expect it have shown no truth, equity, and charity at all in wishing to make the public believe:

1- That the Reformed churches' teaching on predestination draws people away from godliness

- that the teaching of the Reformed churches on predestination and on the points associated with it by its very nature and tendency draws the minds of people away from all godliness and religion, is an opiate of the flesh and the devil, and is a stronghold of Satan where he lies in wait for all people, wounds most of them, and fatally pierces many of them with the arrows of both despair and self-assurance;

2- This teaching makes God the author of sin

- that this teaching makes God the author of sin, unjust, a tyrant, and a hypocrite; and is nothing but a refurbished Stoicism, Manicheism, Libertinism, and Mohammedanism;

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3- This makes people self-assured and endangers salvation

- that this teaching makes people carnally self-assured, since it persuades them that nothing endangers the salvation of the chosen, no matter how they live, so that they may commit the most outrageous crimes with self-assurance; and that on the other hand nothing is of use to the reprobate for salvation even if they have truly performed all the works of the saints;

4- Teaches that God takes no account of state, deeds or unbelief when He predestines people

- that this teaching means that God predestined and created, by the bare and unqualified choice of his will, without the least regard or consideration of any sin, the greatest part of the world to eternal condemnation; that in the same manner in which election is the source and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and ungodliness; that many infant children of believers are snatched in their innocence from their mothers' breasts and cruelly cast into hell so that neither the blood of Christ nor their baptism nor the prayers of the church at their baptism can be of any use to them; and very many other slanderous accusations of this kind which the Reformed churches not only disavow but even denounce with their whole heart.

The Synod refutes these views

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Decision

1- Judge the Reformed churches' faith upon the basis of their own official confessions, not on hearsay or perceptions

Therefore this Synod of Dordt in the name of the Lord pleads with all who devoutly call on the name of our Savior Jesus Christ to form their judgment about the faith of the Reformed churches, not on the basis of false accusations gathered from here or there, or even on the basis of the personal statements of a number of ancient and modern authorities - statements which are also often either quoted out of context or misquoted and twisted to convey a different meaning - but on the basis of the churches' own official confessions and of the present explanation of the orthodox teaching which has been endorsed by the unanimous consent of the members of the whole Synod, one and all.

2- God will judge those who falsely accuse and cause prejudice against the churches

Moreover, the Synod earnestly warns the false accusers themselves to consider how heavy a judgment of God awaits those who give false testimony against so many churches and their confessions, trouble the consciences of the weak, and seek to prejudice the minds of many against the fellowship of true believers.

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3- Ministers are urged to deal with this teaching in a godly and reverent manner in truth according to Scripture

Finally, this Synod urges all fellow ministers in the gospel of Christ to deal with this teaching in a godly and reverent manner, in the academic institutions as well as in the churches; to do so, both in their speaking and writing, with a view to the glory of God's name, holiness of life, and the comfort of anxious souls; to think and also speak with Scripture according to the analogy of faith; and, finally, to refrain from all those ways of speaking which go beyond the bounds set for us by the genuine sense of the Holy Scriptures and which could give impertinent [Sophists](#) a just occasion to scoff at the teaching of the Reformed churches or even to bring false accusations against it.

4- Blessing

May God's Son Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of God and gives gifts to men, sanctify us in the truth, lead to the truth those who err, silence the mouths of those who lay false accusations against sound teaching, and equip faithful ministers of his Word with a spirit of wisdom and discretion, that all they say may be to the glory of God and the building up of their hearers.

Amen.

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Additional material:

These are included by HM Stander from several sources, to explain some references in the Canons.

Note 1: Pelagius

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelagianism>

Pelagianism is the belief that original sin did not taint human nature and that mortal will is still capable of choosing good or evil without special Divine aid. This theological theory is named after Pelagius (354 - 420 or 440), although he denied, at least at some point in his life, many of the doctrines associated with his name.

The teachings of Pelagius are generally associated with the rejection of original sin and the practice of infant baptism. Although the writings of Pelagius are no longer extant, the eight canons of the Council of Carthage provided corrections to the perceived errors of the early Pelagians. These corrections include:

- 1 **Death** did not come to Adam from a physical necessity, but through sin.
- 2 New-born children must be baptized on account of original sin.
- 3 **Justifying grace** not only avails for the forgiveness of past sins, but also gives assistance for the avoidance of future sins.
- 4 **The grace of Christ** not only discloses the knowledge of God's commandments, but also imparts strength to will and execute them.
- 5 **Without God's grace** it is not merely more difficult, but absolutely impossible to perform good works.
- 6 Not out of humility, but **in truth** must we confess ourselves to be sinners.
- 7 The saints refer the petition of the Our Father, "Forgive us our trespasses", not only to others, but also to themselves.
- 8 The saints pronounce the same supplication not from mere humility, but from truthfulness.[2]

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9. Some codices containing a ninth canon (Denzinger, loc. cit., note 3): Children dying without baptism do not go to a "middle place" (mediums locus), since the non reception of baptism excludes both from the "kingdom of heaven" and from "eternal life".

Pelagianism stands in contrast to the official [hamartiological](#) system of the Catholic Church that is based on the theology of Saint Augustine of Hippo. Semi-Pelagianism is a modified form of Pelagianism that was also condemned by the Catholic Church at the Second Council of Orange in 529.

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Hamartiology: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamartiology>

Substantial branches of hamartiological understanding, including Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Continental Reformed, and Reformed Baptist subscribe to the doctrine of original sin, which the Apostle Paul espouses in **Romans 5:12-19** and which Augustine of Hippo popularized in the West and developed into a notion of "hereditary guilt". The North African bishop taught that God holds all the descendants of Adam and Eve accountable for

Adam's sin of rebellion, and as such all people deserve God's wrath and condemnation - apart from any actual sins they personally commit.

{Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13 For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous}.

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Another source on Pelagius:

According to Pelagius (354 - 420 or 440 AC) is the belief that the fall of Adam did not corrupt human nature and that man is able to choose between good and evil without God's help. Man is therefore not corrupted from birth and can choose between good and bad by himself. This has implications that on face value may sometimes be difficult to discern from Biblical truth.

Typical Pelagian view, often heard:

A newborn baby is innocent, without sin, since he could not even think or has done any evil. A baby is therefor innocent till his first sin and will therefor go to heaven, irrespective of his parents' faith.

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The Bible teaches:

Psa 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Joh 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Eph 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Job 14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

Rom 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
Babies are sanctioned by the faith of parents within the covenant.

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See:

1. The Heidelberg Confession of faith **Question 74**.
2. **The Belgic Confession of faith**.

Read **article 15** and on original sin and **Article 16** on election.

3. **1 Cor. 7:14** For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. {*"Sanctified = made acceptable to God"*.

This does not imply personal sanctity, but only being brought under the acceptability of the people of God for His grace – same as the parents even though one parent may be an unbeliever. Personal sanctity comes when Jesus is accepted as personal Redeemer. (As explained in most commentaries like Gill, Barnes, etc.)

4. **The Canons of Dordt** "The First Main Point of Doctrine" **article 17** above.

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Note 2: Socinus

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socinianism>

Socinian theology, as summarised in the [Racovian Catechism](#), rejected the views of [orthodox Christian theology](#) on God's knowledge, on the [doctrine of the Trinity](#) and the divinity of [Christ](#), and on [soteriology](#).

The satisfaction view of the [atonement](#) is a theory in [Christian theology](#) related to the meaning and effect of the death of [Jesus Christ](#) and has been traditionally taught in [Western Christianity](#). Specifically in the [Roman Catholic](#), [Lutheran](#), and [Reformed](#) circles. Theologically and historically, the word "satisfaction" does not mean gratification as in common usage, but rather "to make restitution": mending what has been broken, paying back what was taken. Since one of God's characteristics is justice, affronts to that justice must be atoned for. It is thus connected with the legal concept of balancing out an injustice.

Drawing primarily from the works of [Anselm of Canterbury](#), the satisfaction theory teaches that Christ suffered as a [substitute](#) on behalf of humankind satisfying the demands of God's honor by his infinite merit. Anselm regarded his satisfaction view of the atonement as a distinct improvement over the older [ransom theory of the atonement](#), which he saw as inadequate. Anselm's theory was a precursor to the refinements of [Thomas Aquinas](#) and [John Calvin](#) which introduced the idea of punishment to meet the demands of divine justice.

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Sophism

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophism>

Sophism is a method of teaching. In ancient Greece, sophists were a category of teachers who specialized in using the techniques of philosophy and rhetoric for the purpose of teaching arete—excellence, or virtue—predominantly to young statesmen and nobility. The practice of charging money for education and providing wisdom only to those who could pay led to the condemnations made by Socrates, through Plato in his dialogues, as well as Xenophon's Memorabilia. Through works such as these, Sophists were portrayed as "specious" or "deceptive", hence the modern meaning of the term.

The term originated from Greek σόφισμα, sophisma, from σοφίζω, sophizo "I am wise"; confer σοφιστής, sophistēs, meaning "wise-ist, one who does wisdom," and σοφός, sophós means "wise man".

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