

**Reports to
General Synod Smithers
2007**

Table of Contents

Standing Committee for the Publication of the <i>Book of Praise</i>	1
Committee on Bible Translation	215
Committee for the Official Website	247

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**Standing Committee for the Publication
of the *Book of Praise***

Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*

c/o 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton ON, L9C 5A1

REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD SMITHERS 2007

Hamilton, September 2006

Esteemed brothers,

The Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) (hereafter referred to as the Committee) hereby submits the report on its activities regarding the mandate given to the Committee by General Synod Chatham 2004.

Recommendations are to be found throughout the report, however, all recommendations are summarized in section 17.

The report is organized under the following headings and subheadings:

- 1.0 *Mandate received from Synod Chatham 2004*
- 2.0 *Printing and Distribution*
- 3.0 *Fostering Awareness*
- 4.0 *Input Australian Sister Churches*
- 5.0 *Corporate Status*
- 6.0 *Committee Mailing Address*
- 7.0 *Inclusion of the Apostles' Creed in the Baptismal Forms*
 - 7.1 *Form for the Baptism of Infants*
 - 7.2 *Form for the Baptism of Adults*
- 8.0 *Form of Subscription*
 - 8.1 *Introduction*
 - 8.2 *Input from the Churches*
 - 8.3 *Proposed Subscription Forms*
- 9.0 *Use of Initial Capitals for Pronouns Referring to God.*
- 10.0 *Prose Section With the NIV Bible References*
 - 10.1 *Confessions*
 - 10.2 *Liturgical Forms*
 - 10.3 *Prayers*
- 11.0 *Expanded Hymn Section*
- 12.0 *Overleaf Notation*
- 13.0 *Other Matters Dealing with Changes in the Book of Praise*
 - 13.1 *Lord's Day 27 (also Form for the Excommunication of Non-Communicant Members)*
 - 13.2 *Phrasing in Lord's Day 37, Answer 102*
 - 13.3 *Lord's Supper Form*
 - 13.4 *Introduction to the Form for Public Profession of Faith*
 - 13.5 *Corrections in Book of Praise*
- 14.0 *Working Together With the URCNA Songbook Committee*
- 15.0 *Review/ Revision of the Psalms*
- 16.0 *Further Recommendations*
 - 16.1 *Committee Membership*
 - 16.2 *Committee Mandate*

17.0 Summary

17.1 Summary of Recommendations

1.0 **Mandate received from Synod Chatham 2004**

1.1 **Article 115, Par. 8, Mandate**

Synod decide to instruct the SCPB to implement the recommendations found in sections 3-7 above.

These are as follows:

- 1.1.1 "3.3.1 To authorize the Committee to renew the contract for the printing of the *Book of Praise* in 2006."
- 1.1.2 "3.3.2 To authorize the Committee to continue to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* and to promote its availability."
- 1.1.3 "3.3.5 To encourage the Committee to welcome input from the Australian sister churches."
- 1.1.4 "3.3.6 To maintain the corporate status of the Committee."
- 1.1.5 "3.3.7 To continue to have the Committee as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed."
- 1.1.6 "4.1.3 Synod decide to mandate the SCBP to present a proposal with the inclusion of the Apostles' Creed in the Baptismal Forms to the next General Synod."
- 1.1.7 "4.2.3 Synod decide to mandate the SCBP to submit a final proposal for a Form of Subscription, one for the local congregations and one for Classis, to the next General Synod."
- 1.1.8 "5.1.9 The Church at Chatham requests Synod to decide that all pronouns referring to God in all of the *Book of Praise* remain capitalized"
"5.2.7 Synod acknowledges that the Church at Chatham may have a valid point; however, Synod is of the opinion that it should send this request to the SCBP."
- 1.1.9 "5.3.1 To continue the mandate of Synod Fergus to prepare the prose section of the *Book of Praise* with the NIV Bible references."
- 1.1.10 "6.3 Synod decide to mandate the SCBP to deal with the submissions re: Hymn section as outlined in Observation 6.1.1 and to present a proposal to the next General Synod.
These are:
 - Maintain the current structure of our hymn section;
 - Identify and correct deficiencies and/or weaknesses in the existing hymn section and come with a proposal for change, addition or improvement;
 - Select suitable hymns using the *Guidelines and Principles* agreed upon by the Committee together with the *Psalter-Hymnal* Committee of the URCNA;
 - Set the limit at 100 hymns since Psalms have a predominant place in the liturgy of the Reformed Churches;

- Publish a revised section proposed for testing by the churches.”

1.1.11 “7.3.1 To recommend that the SCBP proceed with the Overleaf Musical Notation Edition.”

2.0 Printing and Distribution (Reference: Par.1.1.1)

2.1 Contract

Presently, the Committee operates under a contractual relationship with *Premier Printing Ltd.*, Winnipeg MB. This contract was due for review in the year 2006 and has been extended for an additional five years to February 28, 2012.

2.2 Printing

For period May 16, 2003 – July 3, 2006

Books Printed:	2003 – 3517
	2004 – 4078
Inventory:	2003 – <u>6</u>
<u>Total:</u>	<u>7601</u>

Since the entire stock was depleted, 4200 additional books were to be printed in 2006 after 3 July. This quantity will be sufficient until 2008. The retail price of the *Book of Praise* will increase to \$22.00 each with this printing run.

2.3 Distribution

During the past three years, the distribution and sales may be summarized as follows:

By geographic area:

Canada:	6751
United States of America:	318
International*:	<u>496</u>
Total Sales	7565
Rejects:	36

* Most of the international sales were to Australia, with minor sales to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Japan.

By distribution ‘centres’

Churches:	1848
Schools:	826
Bookstores:	4603
Miscellaneous	288

3.0 Fostering Awareness (Reference: Par.1.1.2)

3.1 Interest in Book of Praise

With gratitude the Committee notes the expressions of interest in our *Book of Praise*. During the past three years, the Committee responded to various requests for information regarding the *Book of Praise*, and also dealt with about one dozen requests to copy, in

whole or in part the Psalms and Hymns as well as other parts of the *Book of Praise*.

These requests originated from within as well as from outside of our federation of churches. The Committee is delighted that there remains considerable interest at home and abroad in the Anglo-Genevan Psalter.

Realizing that the original Genevan Psalter was published in French, a request regarding copyright from an ERQ brother was of particular interest. He and others are interested in developing a French Book of Praise.

3.2 **Copyright**

In connection with the requests it received, the Committee continued to protect the copyright of the *Book of Praise*. It maintained its position that, when granting permission to copy material from the *Book of Praise*, all copies clearly state that copyright rests with the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*.

No written documentation exists with respect to copyrights assigned to the Committee by the authors. The process to obtain formal assignments was initiated.

3.3 **Electronic Availability**

Some requests were received to make *Book of Praise* material available electronically via links to Websites. Where permission is granted the Committee insists that a link to the churches' official website at www.canrc.org be provided. One such effort seeks to publish all 150 Genevan Psalms of the *Book of Praise* in 4-part harmony on a website.

3.4 **Other Matters**

In the Committee's report to Synod Chatham mention was made that a brother in Coaldale, Alberta, requested permission to record the music of all the Psalms and Hymns and to make this available to the public via a CD six-pack. This has now been published as "Daily Will I Praise You".

4.0 **Input Australian Sister Churches (Reference: par. 1.1.3)**

4.1 **Official Communication**

Since granting our Australian sister churches permission to use *Book of Praise* materials for eventual publishing of their own Book of Praise, (with the proviso that a different name be chosen and the copyright to all parts of the *Book of Praise* be acknowledged and maintained), official communication has taken place.

4.2 **Other Communication**

The Committee sought and received advice from individual Australian brothers, i.e., Rev. G. van Rongen and Dr. J. Smith, on various subjects relating to the *Book of Praise*.

5.0 **Corporate Status: (Reference: Par. 1.1.4)**

The Committee has maintained its status as a corporation, and all necessary documents for this purpose have been kept up to date. This also includes filing the *Annual Income Tax* forms with Revenue Canada, even though the Committee does not operate under an annual budget, and the Corporation does not generate an income or profit.

6.0 **Committee Mailing Address (Reference: Par. 1.1.5)**

6.1 **Mailing Address**

Standing Committee for the Book of Praise (SCBP)
c/o Theological College
110 West 27th Street
Hamilton, Ontario, L9C 5A1

6.2 **eMail Address**

In addition to the regular mailing address, correspondence may be sent electronically to:

6.3 **Meetings and Place of Meeting**

The committee regularly meets at the facilities of the Church at Ancaster, as it is a central location for the current committee members. The committee is grateful to the Council of the Church at Ancaster for the opportunity to use these facilities. Since March 2004 (not including the combined meetings with our URCNA counterparts) the committee has met 22 times. All of these meetings were conducted in harmony.

6.4 **Archives**

Until recently, the SCBP was without a central archive. An effort was made to collect as much historical information as possible about the work of the SCBP. Much was found and hence official archives were established. These are located at the official address noted above. The Committee appointed Rev. C. Bosch as its archivist.

7.0 **Inclusion of the Apostles' Creed in the Baptismal Forms (Reference: Par. 1.1.6)**

The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the insertion of the Apostles' Creed in the Baptismal Forms as outlined in Par. 7.1 and 7.2. **NOTE:** *The changes proposed in this section are not yet included in the Prose section with the NIV Bible references. (Reference: Par. 1.1.9) and, if adopted by Synod, are to be added.*

7.1 **Form for the Baptism of Infants**

The Committee proposes that the congregation profess the faith between the first prayer and the address to the parents, and that the profession of faith be introduced with:

Let us now together profess our faith in God in whose Name this child will be baptized. (The Apostles' Creed may be recited by the minister, said in unison, or sung by the congregation.)

The rubric in the margin beside the Apostles' Creed should read "Profession of Faith."

Rationale: This gives the congregation some indication why they are professing the faith and of the connection between the Apostles' Creed and the baptism.

7.2 **Form for the Baptism of Adults**

The Committee proposes that the congregation profess the faith after the administration of the baptism and before the prayer of thanksgiving, and that the profession of faith be introduced with:

Let us now together profess our faith in God in whose Name this brother (sister) was baptized. (The Apostles' Creed may be recited by the minister, said in unison, or sung by the congregation.)

The rubric in the margin beside the baptizant's public profession of faith should stay as "Public Profession of Faith" (p. 590). The rubric beside the Apostles' Creed should read "Profession of Faith."

Rationale: The person baptized first professes his/her faith. Note that the first question speaks about the Triune God and the baptizant's faith in Him. Once the baptizant professes his/her faith and is baptized, it is natural and fitting for him/her to join in with the whole congregation professing the Christian faith. Likely the Apostles' Creed would be sung.

Other matters re baptism forms:

- 1) The text reference, Rom 8:5, needs to be added in the form for adult baptism similar to that in the form for the baptizing of infants, i.e., near the top of (current) page 589.

8.0 **Form of Subscription (Reference: Par. 1.1.7)**

8.1 **Introduction**

Forms of Subscription (*Acts Neerlandia 2001*, Art. 72, p. 79) General Synod Neerlandia 2001 instructed the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* to prepare standardized subscription forms to be used by local councils/consistories, classes, and for the professors of theology.

The history of Forms of Subscription for ministers can be found in H.H. Kuyper's study: *De Post-Acta of nahandelingen van de nationale Synode van Dordrecht* (Amsterdam, Pretoria: Hoveker & Wormser, 1899) 193-203. It was adopted during the 175th session of the Synod of Dordrecht.

Concerning the elders and deacons, the Reformed Churches required them to subscribe to the confessions already during the 16th Century, see P. Biesterveld, H.H. Kuyper, *Kerkelijk Handboekje bevattende de bepalingen der Nederlandsche Synoden* (Kampen: Kok, 1905) 71, 205. However, no specific Form of Subscription was made for the purpose. This was left in the freedom of the churches. Usually, elders and deacons simply wrote their signature in a copy of the confession, see F.L. Bos, *De orde der kerk* ('s Gravenhage: Uitgeverij Guido de Brès, 1950) 202.

Concerning the Form of Subscription for the professors of theology, the Committee notes that this falls under the *Act Respecting the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, By-law 1, Section 8.02* (Acts Cloverdale 1983, Appendix XC, p.376).

8.2 **Input from the Churches**

The Committee submitted several proposals for forms of subscription to General Synod 2004. General Synod decided that there should be one form for ministers, elders and deacons to be used in the local congregation, and another form for ministers to be used at classis.

General Synod 2004 also received several suggestions regarding these forms and requested the Committee to evaluate them. For the sake of clarity we will first quote the proposed (i.e. to General Synod 2004) Form of Subscription for Ministers to be used by the local congregations, then evaluate the suggestions of the churches, to conclude with our recommendations to General Synod 2007.

8.2.1 *Form as proposed to Synod Chatham 2004*

We, the undersigned, ministers of God's Word of the Canadian Reformed Church at, do, by our subscription, declare sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord that we heartily believe that the whole doctrine contained in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort fully agrees with the Word of God.

We promise, therefore, that we will diligently teach this doctrine and faithfully defend it without contradicting it publicly or privately in teaching or writing. We also declare that we reject all errors conflicting with the doctrine expressed in these confessions and promise to oppose, refute and help prevent such errors.

If at any time it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly or privately. Rather, we will first make this known to the consistory and the classis, and if necessary to the major

assemblies, so that they can investigate the issue. We are willing to submit to their decision; if we refuse we will by that very fact be suspended from our office.

If at any time the consistory, classis or regional synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and in order to maintain the unity and purity of the teaching, would decide to require of us a further explanation of our views, we do hereby promise that we are always willing and ready to comply under the penalty mentioned above.

However, we reserve the right of appeal if we believe ourselves wronged. During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of classis or regional synod.

8.2.2 *Suggestions from the Churches and the Committee's evaluation*

8.2.2.1 Abbotsford:

Replace in the first paragraph "...believe that the whole doctrine contained in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort ." with:

"...believe the doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the confessions ..."

Reasons: This would bring this form in line with the Form for the Public Profession of Faith and "we would like to see the whole doctrine be the doctrine of the Word of God rather than the doctrine of the confessions."

Committee's response:

The purpose of subscription is to bind the office-bearers to our confessions. This is in agreement with Art. 26 of the Church Order. The office-bearers are not subscribing to the doctrine of God's Word, which in itself would not be wrong, but they subscribe to the confessions of the churches. This is why a comparison to the Form for Public Profession of Faith is not to the point. Abbotsford's suggestion would change the meaning of the word "doctrine." The Committee maintains the proposed wording.

8.2.2.2 Abbotsford:

The expression "this doctrine or any part of it" in paragraph three does not make sense. How can there be a distinction between "this doctrine" and "any part of it"?

Committee's response:

1. This form has a legal function and thus wants to cover all possibilities.
2. The doctrine can be divided into parts. One could therefore argue that in disagreeing with one part of the confession he is not contradicting the confession as a whole.
- 3 This formulation has historical background. The proposed formulation has been tried over time and shown its importance.

8.2.2.3 Abbotsford:

In the second paragraph the minister is asked to defend the doctrine without contradicting it. Why does this need to be repeated in a next paragraph?

Committee's response:

This is not a repetition. Paragraph two deals with the time of signing this form, whereas paragraph three addresses the future. It could happen that a person at the time of signing agrees but later comes to different views. Again, this has historical background; the Form wants to close all possible loopholes. In the line of Abbotsford's suggestion we changed our proposal of paragraph three to read:

If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly or privately.

8.2.2.4 Chatham:

Remove the word "preach" in third paragraph. The word "teach" should cover the word "preach" as it does in paragraph two.

Committee's response:

General Synod 2004 decided to have one form for elders, deacons and ministers. Ministers are preachers and thus in one form for all office-bearers, the word preach has to be mentioned.

8.2.2.5 Abbotsford:

Weak pronoun reference is present in the second sentence in paragraph three: "... we will first make this known to the consistory ..."

Committee's response:

Abbotsford raises a good point. We have linked the thoughts more closely by replacing the period after "privately" with a semi colon. It reads now:

If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly or privately; rather, we will first make this known to the consistory and the classis, and if necessary to the major assemblies, for judgment.

8.2.2.6 Abbotsford:

Is the Classis not a major assembly? Why does it read in the third paragraph "to the consistory and the classis, and if necessary to the major assemblies."

Committee's response:

The person who signs has to inform the assembly where he signed that he has reservations about this signature. The Form also indicates that it may be necessary to appeal the matter. For the elders or deacons the classis is the assembly to appeal to since they only sign the local form. Because a minister signs the local form as well as the classical form, the regional synod need to be mentioned. Perhaps the best way to resolve this is by using a different formulation in the two forms, the one for council and the one for classis.

Suggestion:

Form for Council: "...make this known to the consistory and if necessary to the major assemblies, .."

Form for Classis: "...make this known to the consistory and the classis and if necessary to the major assemblies..."

8.2.2.7 Abbotsford:

The word "above" in the expression "the penalty mentioned above" (paragraph four) is linguistically speaking far too removed from what it refers to.

Committee's response:

It is true that paragraph four is a long sentence, but the penalty is mentioned in the previous sentence ("we will by that fact be suspended from our office"). The Committee does not feel it is too far. The other way would be to read: "under the penalty of suspension"

8.3 **Proposed Subscription Forms**

The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the Subscription Forms as presented in par. 8.3.1 and 8.3.2, and instruct the Committee to have them printed in the next edition of the *Book of Praise*.

8.3.1 *Form for use in the local Congregation:*

We, the undersigned, ministers of God's Word, elders and deacons of the Canadian Reformed Church at, do, by our subscription, declare sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord that we heartily believe that the whole doctrine contained in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort fully agrees with the Word of God.

We promise, therefore, that we will diligently teach this doctrine and faithfully defend it without contradicting it publicly or privately in teaching or writing. We also declare that we reject all errors conflicting with the doctrine expressed in these confessions and promise to oppose, refute and help prevent such errors.

If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly or privately. Rather, we will first make this known to the consistory and if necessary to the major assemblies, for judgement. We are willing to submit to their decision; if we refuse we will by that very fact be suspended from our office.

If at any time the consistory, classis or regional synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and in order to maintain the unity and purity of the teaching, would decide to require of us a further explanation of our views, we do hereby promise that we are always willing and ready to comply under the penalty of suspension.

However, we reserve the right of appeal if we believe ourselves wronged. During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of classis or regional synod.

8.3.2 *Form for use at Classis:*

We, the undersigned, ministers of God's Word belonging to Classis, do, by our subscription, declare sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord that we heartily believe that the whole doctrine contained in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort fully agrees with the Word of God.

We promise, therefore, that we will diligently teach this doctrine and faithfully defend it without contradicting it publicly or privately in teaching or writing. We also declare that we reject all errors conflicting with the doctrine expressed in

these confessions and promise to oppose, refute and help prevent such errors.

If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly or privately. Rather, we will first make this known to the classis, and if necessary to the major assemblies, for judgment. We are willing to submit to their decision; if we refuse we will by that very fact be suspended from our office.

If at any time the classis or regional synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and in order to maintain the unity and purity of the teaching, would decide to require of us a further explanation of our views, we do hereby promise that we are always willing and ready to comply under the penalty of suspension.

However, we reserve the right of appeal if we believe ourselves wronged. During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of classis or regional synod.

9.0 Use of Initial Capitals for Pronouns Referring to God. (Reference: Par. 1.1.8)

The Church at Chatham requested Synod Chatham to decide that all pronouns referring to God in all of the *Book of Praise* remain capitalized. In accordance with the advice received from Synod the Church at Chatham placed this request before the SCBP.

The committee requested permission from the copyright holder of the NIV who has allowed us to use such capitals for quotations from the NIV. For the sake of consistency, the Committee has incorporated the use of initial capitals for pronouns referring to God for all material to be published in the *Book of Praise*.

10.0 Prose Section With the NIV Bible References. (Reference: Par. 1.1.9)

The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the updated prose section of the *Book of Praise* with the NIV Bible references, as presented in par. 10.1 through 10.3.

The *Book of Praise* will include the following copyright statement:

”Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright©© 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.”

10.1 *The Confessions***THE THREE FORMS OF UNITY****THE BELGIC CONFESSION**

The first of the doctrinal standards of the Canadian Reformed Churches is the Confession of Faith. It is usually called the Belgic Confession because it originated in the Southern Netherlands, now known as Belgium. Its chief author was Guido de Brès, a preacher of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, who died a martyr to the faith in the year 1567. During the sixteenth century the churches in this country were exposed to the most terrible persecution by the Roman Catholic government. To protest against this cruel oppression, and to prove to the persecutors that the adherents of the Reformed faith were no rebels, as was laid to their charge, but law-abiding citizens who professed the true Christian doctrine according to the Holy Scriptures, de Brès prepared this confession in the year 1561. In the following year a copy was sent to King Philip II, together with an address in which the petitioners declared that they were ready to obey the government in all lawful things, but that they would “offer their backs to stripes, their tongues to knives, their mouths to gags, and their whole bodies to fire,” rather than deny the truth expressed in this confession.

Although the immediate purpose of securing freedom from persecution was not attained, and de Brès himself fell as one of the many thousands who sealed their faith with their lives, his work has endured and will continue to endure for ages. In its composition the author availed himself to some extent of a confession of the Reformed Churches in France, written chiefly by John Calvin and published two years earlier. The work of de Brès, however, is not a mere revision of Calvin’s work, but an independent composition. In the Netherlands it was at once gladly received by the churches, and adopted by the National Synods, held during the last three decades of the sixteenth century. After a careful revision, not of the contents but of the text, the great Synod of Dort in 1618-19 adopted this confession as one of the doctrinal standards of the Reformed churches, to which all office-bearers of the churches were required to subscribe. Its excellence as one of the best symbolical statements of Reformed doctrine has been generally recognized.

TRUE CHRISTIAN CONFESSION**Containing the Summary of the Doctrine of God and of the Eternal Salvation of Man****ARTICLE 1****THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD**

We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth¹ that there is only one God,² who is a simple and spiritual being;³ He is eternal,⁴ incomprehensible,⁵ invisible,⁶ immutable,⁷ infinite,⁸ almighty,⁹ perfectly wise,¹⁰ just,¹¹ good,¹² and the overflowing fountain of all good.¹³

¹ Rom 10:10.

² Deut 6:4; 1 Cor 8:4, 6; 1 Tim 2:5.

- 3 Jn 4:24.
- 4 Ps 90:2.
- 5 Rom 11:33.
- 6 Col 1:15; 1 Tim 6:16.
- 7 Jas 1:17.
- 8 1 Kings 8:27; Jer 23:24.
- 9 Gen 17:1; Mt 19:26; Rev 1:8.
- 10 Rom 16:27.
- 11 Rom 3:25, 26; Rom 9:14; Rev 16:5, 7.
- 12 Mt 19:17.
- 13 Jas 1:17.

ARTICLE 2

HOW GOD MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO US

We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most beautiful book,¹ wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many letters leading us to perceive clearly *God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature*, as the apostle Paul says in Rom 1:20. All these things are sufficient to convict men and leave them without excuse. Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word² as far as is necessary for us in this life, to His glory and our salvation.

¹ Ps 19:1-4.

² Ps 19:7, 8; 1 Cor 1:18-21.

ARTICLE 3

THE WORD OF GOD

We confess that this Word of God did not come by the impulse of man, but that *men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*, as the apostle Peter says (2 Pet 1:21). Thereafter, in His special care for us and our salvation, God commanded His servants, the prophets and apostles, to commit His revealed Word to writing¹ and He Himself wrote with His own finger the two tables of the law.² Therefore we call such writings holy and divine Scriptures.³

¹ Ex 34:27; Ps 102:18; Rev 1:11, 19.

² Ex 31:18.

³ 2 Tim 3:16.

ARTICLE 4

THE CANONICAL BOOKS

We believe that the Holy Scriptures consist of two parts, namely, the Old and the New Testament, which are canonical, against which nothing can be alleged. These books are listed in the church of God as follows.

The books of the Old Testament: the five books of Moses, namely, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The books of the New Testament: the four gospels, namely, Matthew, Mark,

Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles; the thirteen letters of the apostle Paul, namely, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon; the letter to the Hebrews; the seven other letters, namely, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude; and the Revelation to the apostle John.

ARTICLE 5

THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

We receive¹ all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith.² We believe without any doubt all things contained in them, not so much because the church receives and approves them as such, but especially because the Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God,³ and also because they contain the evidence of this in themselves; even the blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are being fulfilled.⁴

1 1 Thess 2:13.

2 2 Tim 3:16, 17.

3 1 Cor 12:3; 1 Jn 4:6, 1 Jn 5:7.

4 Deut 18:21, 22; 1 Kings 22:28; Jer 28:9; Ezek 33:33.

ARTICLE 6

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CANONICAL AND APOCRYPHAL BOOKS

We distinguish these holy books from the apocryphal, namely, 3 and 4 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, additions to Esther, the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men in the Furnace, Susannah, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasseh, and 1 and 2 Maccabees. The church may read and take instruction from these so far as they agree with the canonical books. They are, however, far from having such power and authority that we may confirm from their testimony any point of faith or of the Christian religion; much less may they be used to detract from the authority of the holy books.

ARTICLE 7

THE SUFFICIENCY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

We believe that this Holy Scripture fully contains the will of God and that all that man must believe in order to be saved is sufficiently taught therein.¹ The whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in it at length. It is therefore unlawful for any one, even for an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in Holy Scripture:² yes, *even if it be an angel from heaven*, as the apostle Paul says (Gal 1:8). Since it is forbidden to add to or take away anything from the Word of God (Deut 12:32),³ it is evident that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects.⁴

We may not consider any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, of equal value with the divine Scriptures; nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all;⁵ for all men are of themselves liars, and

only a breath (Ps 62:9). We therefore reject with all our heart whatever does not agree with this infallible rule,⁶ as the apostles have taught us: *Test the spirits to see whether they are from God* (1 Jn 4:1). Likewise: *If any one comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him* (2 Jn 1:10).

1 2 Tim 3:16, 17; 1 Pet 1:10-12.

2 1 Cor 15:2; 1 Tim 1:3.

3 Deut 4:2; Prov 30:6; Acts 26:22; 1 Cor 4:6; Rev 22:18, 19.

4 Ps 19:7; Jn 15:15; Acts 18:28; Acts 20:27; Rom 15:4.

5 Mk 7:7-9; Acts 4:19; Col 2:8; 1 Jn 2:19.

6 Deut 4:5, 6; Is 8:20; 1 Cor 3:11; Eph 4:4-6; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Tim 3:14, 15.

ARTICLE 8

GOD IS ONE IN ESSENCE, YET DISTINGUISHED IN THREE PERSONS

According to this truth and this Word of God, we believe in one only God,¹ who is one single essence, in which are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct according to their incommunicable properties; namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.² The Father is the cause, origin, and beginning of all things visible and invisible.³ The Son is the Word, the wisdom, and the image of the Father.⁴ The Holy Spirit is the eternal power and might who proceeds from the Father and the Son.⁵ Nevertheless, God is not by this distinction divided into three, since the Holy Scriptures teach us that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each has His personal existence, distinguished by Their properties; but in such a way that these three persons are but one only God.

It is therefore evident that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, and likewise the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. Nevertheless, these persons thus distinguished are not divided, nor intermixed; for the Father has not assumed our flesh and blood, neither has the Holy Spirit, but the Son only. The Father has never been without His Son,⁶ or without His Holy Spirit. For these three, in one and the same essence, are equal in eternity. There is neither first nor last; for They are all three one, in truth, in power, in goodness, and in mercy.

1 1 Cor 8:4-6.

2 Mt 3:16, 17; Mt 28:19.

3 Eph 3:14, 15.

4 Prov 8:22-31; Jn 1:14; Jn 5:17-26; 1 Cor 1:24; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:3; Rev 19:13.

5 Jn 15:26.

6 Mic 5:2; Jn 1:1, 2.

ARTICLE 9

SCRIPTURE PROOF OF THIS DOCTRINE

All this we know both from the testimonies of Holy Scripture¹ and from the respective works of the three Persons, and especially those we perceive in ourselves. The testimonies of Scripture which lead us to believe this Holy Trinity are written in many places of the Old Testament. It is not necessary to mention them all; it is sufficient to select some with discretion.

In the book of Genesis God says: *Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness So God created man in His own image...; male and female He*

created them (Gen 1:26, 27). Also: *The man has now become like one of Us* (Gen 3:22). From God's saying, *Let Us make man in Our image*, it appears that there are more divine persons than one; and when He says, *God* created, He indicates that there is one God. It is true, He does not say how many persons there are, but what seems to be somewhat obscure in the Old Testament is very plain in the New Testament. For when our Lord was baptized in the river Jordan, the voice of the Father was heard, who said, *This is My Son, whom I love* (Mt 3:17); the Son was seen in the water, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form as a dove.² For the baptism of all believers Christ commanded ^(a) : *Baptize all nations into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit* (Mt 28:19). In the gospel according to Luke the angel Gabriel thus addressed Mary, the mother of our Lord: *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God* (Luke 1:35). Likewise: *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all* (2 Cor 13:14). In all these places we are fully taught that there are three persons in one only divine essence.

Although this doctrine far surpasses all human understanding, nevertheless in this life we believe it on the ground of the Word of God, and we expect to enjoy its perfect knowledge and fruit hereafter in heaven.

Moreover, we must observe the distinct offices and works of these three Persons towards us. The Father is called our Creator by His power; the Son is our Saviour and Redeemer by His blood; the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier by His dwelling in our hearts. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity has always been maintained and preserved in the true church since the time of the apostles to this very day, over against Jews, Muslims, and against false Christians and heretics such as Marcion, Mani, Praxeas, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, Arius, and such like, who have been justly condemned by the orthodox fathers. In this doctrine, therefore, we willingly receive the three creeds, of the Apostles, of Nicea, and of Athanasius; likewise that which in accordance with them is agreed upon by the early fathers.

1 Jn 14:16; Jn 15:26; Acts 2:32, 33; Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6; Tit 3:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2; 1 Jn 4:13, 14; 1 Jn 5:1-12; Jude 20, 21; Rev 1:4, 5.

2 Mt 3:16. ^(a) Originally "prescribed this formula" was used; "commanded" reflects Matthew 28:19 much closer.

ARTICLE 10

JESUS CHRIST TRUE AND ETERNAL GOD

We believe that Jesus Christ according to His divine nature is the only-begotten Son of God,¹ begotten from eternity, not made, nor created – for then He would be a creature – but of the same essence with the Father, equally-eternal, *the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being* (Heb 1:3), and is equal to Him in all things.² He is the Son of God, not only from the time that He assumed our nature but from all eternity,³ as the following testimonies, when compared with each other, teach us: Moses says that God created the world;⁴ the apostle John says that all things were made by the Word which he calls God.⁵ The letter to the Hebrews says that God made the world through His Son,⁶ likewise the apostle Paul says that God created all things through Jesus Christ.⁷

Therefore it must necessarily follow that He who is called God, the Word, the Son, and Jesus Christ, did exist at that time when all things were created by Him. Therefore He could say, *I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am* (Jn 8:58), and He prayed, *Father, glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began* (Jn 17:5). And so He is true, eternal God, the Almighty, whom we invoke, worship, and serve.

1 Mt 17:5; Jn 1:14, 18; Jn 3:16; Jn 14:1-14; Jn 20:17, 31; Rom 1:4; Gal 4:4; Heb 1:2; 1 Jn 5:5, 9-12.

2 Jn 5:18, 23; Jn 10:30; Jn 14:9; Jn 20:28; Rom 9:5; Phil 2:6; Col 1:15; Tit 2:13; Heb 1:3; Rev 5:13.

3 Jn 8:58; Jn 17:5; Heb 13:8.

4 Gen 1:1.

5 Jn 1:1-3.

6 Heb 1:2.

7 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16.

ARTICLE 11

THE HOLY SPIRIT TRUE AND ETERNAL GOD

We believe and confess also that the Holy Spirit from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son. He is neither made, created, nor begotten, but He can only be said to proceed from both.¹ In order He is the third Person of the Holy Trinity, of one and the same essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, true and eternal God, as the Holy Scriptures teach us.²

1 Jn 14:15-26; Jn 15:26; Rom 8:9.

2 Gen 1:2; Mt 28:19; Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Cor 2:10; 1 Cor 3:16; 1 Cor 6:11; 1 Jn 5:7.

ARTICLE 12

THE CREATION OF ALL THINGS, ESPECIALLY THE ANGELS

We believe that the Father through the Word, that is, through His Son, has created out of nothing heaven and earth and all creatures, when it seemed good to Him,¹ and that He has given to every creature its being, shape, and form, and to each its specific task and function to serve its Creator. We believe that He also continues to sustain and govern them according to His eternal providence and by His infinite power in order to serve man, to the end that man may serve his God.

He also created the angels good, to be His messengers and to serve His elect.² Some of these have fallen from the exalted position in which God created them into everlasting perdition,³ but the others have by the grace of God remained steadfast and continued in their first state. The devils and evil spirits are so depraved that they are enemies of God and of all that is good.⁴ With all their might, they lie in wait like murderers to ruin the church and all its members and to destroy everything by their wicked devices.⁵ They are therefore by their own wickedness sentenced to eternal damnation and daily expect their horrible torments.⁶

Therefore we detest and reject the error of the Sadducees, who deny that there are any spirits and angels;⁷ and also the error of the Manichees, who say that the devils were not created, but have their origin of themselves, and that without having become corrupted, they are wicked by their own nature.

1 Gen 1:1; Gen 2:3; Is 40:26; Jer 32:17; Col 1:15, 16; 1 Tim 4:3; Heb 11:3; Rev 4:11.

2 Ps 103:20, 21; Mt 4:11; Heb 1:14.

3 Jn 8:44; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6.

4 Gen 3:1-5; 1 Pet 5:8.

5 Eph 6:12; Rev 12:4, 13-17; Rev 20:7-9.

6 Mt 8:29; Mt 25:41; Rev 20:10.

7 Acts 23:8.

ARTICLE 13

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

We believe that this good God, after He had created all things, did not abandon them or give them up to fortune or chance,¹ but that according to His holy will He so rules and governs them that in this world nothing happens without His direction.² Yet God is not the Author of the sins which are committed nor can He be charged with them.³ For His power and goodness are so great and beyond understanding that He ordains and executes His work in the most excellent and just manner, even when devils and wicked men act unjustly.⁴ And as to His actions surpassing human understanding, we will not curiously inquire farther than our capacity allows us. But with the greatest humility and reverence we adore the just judgments of God, which are hidden from us,⁵ and we content ourselves that we are pupils of Christ, who have only to learn those things which He teaches us in His Word, without transgressing these limits.⁶

This doctrine gives us inexpressible consolation, for we learn thereby that nothing can happen to us by chance, but only by the direction of our gracious heavenly Father. He watches over us with fatherly care, keeping all creatures so under His power that not one hair of our head – for they are all numbered – nor one sparrow can fall to the ground without the will of our Father (Mt 10:29, 30). In this we trust, because we know that He holds in check the devil and all our enemies so that they cannot hurt us without His permission and will.⁷

We therefore reject the damnable error of the Epicureans, who say that God does not concern Himself with anything but leaves all things to chance.

1 Jn 5:17; Heb 1:3.

2 Ps 115:3; Prov 16:1, 9, 33; Prov 21:1; Eph 1:11, 12; Jas 4:13-15.

3 Jas 1:13; 1 Jn 2:16.

4 Job 1:21; Is 10:5; Is 45:7; Amos 3:6; Acts 2:23; Acts 4:27, 28.

5 1 Kings 22:19-23; Rom 1:28; 2 Thess 2:11.

6 Deut 29:29; 1 Cor 4:6.

7 Gen 45:8; Gen 50:20; 2 Sam 16:10; Rom 8:28, 38, 39.

ARTICLE 14

THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN AND HIS

INCAPABILITY OF DOING WHAT IS TRULY GOOD

We believe that God created man of dust from the ground¹ and He made and formed him after His own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy.² His will could conform to the will of God in every respect. But, when man was in this high position, he did not appreciate it nor did he value his excellency. He gave ear to the words of the devil and wilfully subjected himself to sin and consequently to death and the curse.³ For he transgressed the commandment of life which he had received; by his sin he broke away from God, who was his true life; he corrupted his whole nature. By all this he made himself liable to physical and spiritual death.⁴

Since man became wicked and perverse, corrupt in all his ways, he has lost all his excellent gifts which he had once received from God.⁵ He has nothing left but some small traces, which are sufficient to make man inexcusable.⁶ For whatever light was in us has changed into darkness,⁷ as Scripture teaches us, *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it* (Jn 1:5); where the apostle John calls mankind darkness.

Therefore we reject all teaching contrary to this concerning the free will of man, since man *is a slave to sin* (Jn 8:34) and *a man can receive only what is given him from heaven* (Jn 3:27). For who dares to boast that he of himself can do any good, when Christ says: *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him* (Jn 6:44)? Who will glory in his own will, when he understands *that the sinful mind is hostile to God* (Rom 8:7)? Who can speak of his knowledge, since *the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God* (1 Cor 2:14)? In short, who dares to claim anything, when he realizes that we are not *competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God* (2 Cor 3:5)? Therefore what the apostle says must justly remain sure and firm: *It is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose* (Phil 2:13). For there is no understanding nor will conformable to the understanding and will of God unless Christ has brought it about; as He teaches us: *Apart from Me you can do nothing* (Jn 15:5).

1 Gen 2:7; Gen 3:19; Eccles 12:7.

2 Gen 1:26, 27; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10.

3 Gen 3:16-19; Rom 5:12.

4 Gen 2:17; Eph 2:1; Eph 4:18.

5 Ps 94:11; Rom 3:10; Rom 8:6.

6 Rom 1:20, 21.

7 Eph 5:8.

ARTICLE 15 ORIGINAL SIN

We believe that by the disobedience of Adam original sin has spread throughout the whole human race.¹ It is a corruption of the entire nature of man² and a hereditary evil which infects even infants in their mother's womb.³ As a root it produces in man all sorts of sin. It is, therefore, so vile and abominable in the sight of God that it is sufficient to condemn the human race.⁴ It is not abolished nor eradicated even by baptism, for sin continually streams forth like water welling up from this woeful source.⁵ Yet, in spite of all this, original sin is not imputed to the children of God to their condemnation but by His grace and mercy is forgiven them.⁶ This does not mean that the believers may sleep peacefully in their sin, but that the awareness of this corruption may make them often groan as they eagerly wait to be delivered from this body of death.

In this regard we reject the error of the Pelagians, who say that this sin is only a matter of imitation.

1 Rom 5:12-14, 19.

2 Rom 3:10.

3 Job 14:4; Ps 51:5; Jn 3:6.

4 Eph 2:3.

5 Rom 7:18, 19.

6 Eph 2:4, 5.

ARTICLE 16

DIVINE ELECTION

We believe that, when the entire offspring of Adam plunged into perdition and ruin by the transgression of the first man,¹ God manifested Himself to be as He is: merciful and just. *Merciful*, in rescuing and saving from this perdition those whom in His eternal and unchangeable counsel² He has elected³ in Jesus Christ our Lord⁴ by His pure goodness, without any consideration of their works.⁵ *Just*, in leaving the others in the fall and perdition into which they have plunged themselves.⁶

1 Rom 3:12.

2 Jn 6:37, 44; Jn 10:29; Jn 17:2, 9, 12; Jn 18:9.

3 1 Sam 12:22; Ps 65:4; Acts 13:48; Rom 9:16; Rom 11:5; Tit 1:1.

4 Jn 15:16, 19; Rom 8:29; Eph 1:4, 5.

5 Mal 1:2, 3; Rom 9:11-13; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 3:4, 5.

6 Rom 9:19-22; 1 Pet 2:8.

ARTICLE 17

THE RESCUE OF FALLEN MAN

We believe that, when He saw that man had thus plunged himself into physical and spiritual death and made himself completely miserable, our gracious God in His marvellous wisdom and goodness set out to seek man when he trembling fled from Him.¹ He comforted him with the promise that He would give him His Son, born of woman (Gal 4:4), to crush the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15) and to make man blessed.

1 Gen 3:9.

2 Gen 22:18; Is 7:14; Jn 1:14; Jn 5:46; Jn 7:42; Acts 13:32, 33; Rom 1:2, 3; Gal 3:16;

2 Tim 2:8; Heb 7:14.

ARTICLE 18

THE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD

We confess, therefore, that God has fulfilled the promise He made to the fathers by the mouth of His holy prophets¹ when, at the time appointed by Him,² He sent into the world His own only-begotten and eternal Son, who took the form of a servant and was born in the likeness of men (Phil 2:7). He truly assumed a real human nature with all its infirmities,³ without sin,⁴ for He was conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit and not by the act of a man.⁵ He not only assumed human nature as to the body, but also a true human soul, in order that He might be a real man. For since the soul was lost as well as the body, it was necessary that He should assume both to save both.

Contrary to the heresy of the Anabaptists, who deny that Christ assumed human flesh of His mother, we therefore confess that Christ partook of the flesh and blood of the children (Heb 2:14). He is a descendant of David (Acts 2:30); born of David according to His human nature (Rom 1:3); of the womb of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:42); born of woman (Gal 4:4); a branch of David (Jer 33:15); a shoot from the stump of Jesse (Is 11:1); descended from Judah (Heb 7:14); descended from the Jews according to the flesh (Rom 9:5); of the seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16), since the Son was concerned with the descendants of Abraham. Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect,

yet without sin (Heb 2:16, 17; Heb 4:15).

In this way He is in truth our Immanuel, that is, God with us (Mt 1:23).

1 Gen 26:4; 2 Sam 7:12-16; Ps 132:11; Lk 1:55; Acts 13:23.

2 Gal 4:4.

3 1 Tim 2:5; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 2:14.

4 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22.

5 Mt 1:18; Lk 1:35.

ARTICLE 19

THE TWO NATURES IN THE ONE PERSON OF CHRIST

We believe that by this conception the person of the Son of God is inseparably united and joined with the human nature,¹ so that there are not two sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures united in one single person. Each nature retains its own distinct properties: His divine nature has always remained uncreated, without beginning of days or end of life (Heb 7:3), filling heaven and earth.² His human nature has not lost its properties; it has beginning of days and remains created. It is finite and retains all the properties of a true body.³ Even though, by His resurrection, He has given immortality to His human nature, He has not changed its reality,⁴ since our salvation and resurrection also depend on the reality of His body.⁵

However, these two natures are so closely united in one person that they were not even separated by His death. Therefore, what He, when dying, committed into the hands of His Father was a real human spirit that departed from His body.⁶ Meanwhile His divinity always remained united with His human nature, even when He was lying in the grave.⁷ And the divine nature always remained in Him just as it was in Him when He was a little child, even though it did not manifest itself as such for a little while.

For this reason we profess Him to be true God and true man: true God in order to conquer death by His power; and true man that He might die for us according to the infirmity of His flesh.

1 Jn 1:14; Jn 10:30; Rom 9:5; Phil 2:6, 7.

2 Mt 28:20.

3 1 Tim 2:5.

4 Mt 26:11; Lk 24:39; Jn 20:25; Acts 1:3, 11; Acts 3:21; Heb 2:9.

5 1 Cor 15:21; Phil 3:21.

6 Mt 27:50.

7 Rom 1:4.

ARTICLE 20

THE JUSTICE AND MERCY OF GOD IN CHRIST

We believe that God, who is perfectly merciful and just, sent His Son to assume that nature in which disobedience had been committed,¹ to make satisfaction in that same nature; and to bear the punishment of sin by His most bitter passion and death.² God therefore manifested His justice against His Son when He laid our iniquity on Him,³ and poured out His goodness and mercy on us, who were guilty and worthy of damnation. Out of a most perfect love He gave His Son to die for us and He raised Him for our justification⁴ that through Him we might obtain immortality and life eternal.

1 Rom 8:3.

2 Heb 2:14.

3 Rom 3:25, 26; Rom 8:32.

4 Rom 4:25.

ARTICLE 21

THE SATISFACTION OF CHRIST OUR HIGH PRIEST

We believe that Jesus Christ was confirmed by an oath to be a High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.¹ He presented Himself in our place before His Father, appeasing God's wrath by His full satisfaction,² offering Himself on the tree of the cross, where He poured out His precious blood to purge away our sins,³ as the prophets had foretold.⁴ For it is written, *The punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.*⁵ *He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. He was numbered with the transgressors* (Is 53:5,7,12),⁶ and condemned as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, though he had first declared Him innocent.⁷ He was *forced to restore what [He] did not steal* (Ps 69:4). He died as the righteous for the unrighteous (1 Pet 3:18).⁸ He suffered in body and soul,⁹ feeling the horrible punishment caused by our sins, and *His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground* (Luke 22:44). Finally, He exclaimed, *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me* (Mt 27:46)? All this He endured for the forgiveness of our sins.

Therefore we justly say, with Paul, that we know nothing *except Jesus Christ and Him crucified* (1 Cor 2:2). *We consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Chris Jesus [our] Lord* (Phil 3:8). We find comfort in His wounds and have no need to seek or invent any other means of reconciliation with God than this only sacrifice, once offered, by which the believers are perfected for all times (Heb 10:14).¹⁰ This is also the reason why the angel of God called Him *Jesus*, that is, Saviour, *because He [would] save His people from their sins* (Mt 1:21).¹¹

1 Ps 110:4; Heb 7:15-17.

2 Rom 4:25; Rom 5:8, 9; Rom 8:32; Gal 3:13; Col 2:14; Heb 2:9, 17; Heb 9:11-15.

3 Acts 2:23; Phil 2:8; 1 Tim 1:15; Heb 9:22; 1 Pet 1:18, 19; 1 Jn 1:7; Rev 7:14.

4 Lk 24:25-27; Rom 3:21; 1 Cor 15:3.

5 1 Pet 2:24.

6 Mk 15:28.

7 Jn 18:38.

8 Rom 5:6.

9 Ps 22:15.

10 Heb 7:26-28; Heb 9:24-28.

11 Lk 1:31; Acts 4:12.

ARTICLE 22

OUR JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST

We believe that, in order that we may obtain the true knowledge of this great mystery, the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith.¹ This faith embraces Jesus Christ with all His merits, makes Him our own, and does not seek anything besides Him.² For it must necessarily follow, either that all we need for our salvation is not in Jesus Christ or, if it is all in Him, that one who has Jesus Christ through faith, has complete salvation.³ It is, therefore, a terrible blasphemy to assert that Christ is not sufficient, but that something else is needed besides Him; for the conclusion would then be that Christ is only half a Saviour.

Therefore we rightly say with Paul that we are *justified by faith apart from observing the law* (Rom 3:28).⁴ Meanwhile, strictly speaking, we do not

mean that faith as such justifies us,⁵ for faith is only the instrument by which we embrace Christ our righteousness; He imputes to us all His merits and as many holy works as He has done for us and in our place.⁶ Therefore Jesus Christ is our righteousness, and faith is the instrument that keeps us with Him in the communion of all His benefits. When those benefits have become ours, they are more than sufficient to acquit us of our sins.

1 Jn 16:14; 1 Cor 2:12; Eph 1:17, 18.

2 Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12; Gal 2:21.

3 Ps 32:1; Mt 1:21; Lk 1:77; Acts 13:38, 39; Rom 8:1.

4 Rom 3:19-4:8; Rom 10:4-11; Gal 2:16; Phil 3:9; Tit 3:5.

5 1 Cor 4:7.

6 Jer 23:6; Mt 20:28; Rom 8:33; 1 Cor 1:30, 31; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Jn 4:10.

ARTICLE 23

OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD

We believe that our blessedness lies in the forgiveness of our sins for Jesus Christ's sake and that therein our righteousness before God¹ consists, as David and Paul teach us. They speak of *the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works* (Rom 4:6; Ps 32:1). The apostle also says that we are *justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus* (Rom 3:24).²

Therefore we always hold to this firm foundation. We give all the glory to God,³ humble ourselves before Him, and acknowledge ourselves to be what we are. We do not claim anything for ourselves or our merits,⁴ but rely and rest on the only obedience of Jesus Christ crucified;⁵ His obedience is ours when we believe in Him.⁶

This is sufficient to cover all our iniquities and to give us confidence in drawing near to God, freeing our conscience of fear, terror, and dread, so that we do not follow the example of our first father, Adam, who trembling tried to hide and covered himself with fig leaves.⁷ For indeed, if we had to appear before God, relying – be it ever so little – on ourselves or some other creature, (woe be to us!) we would be consumed.⁸ Therefore everyone must say with David, O LORD, *do not bring Your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before You* (Ps 143:2).

1 1 Jn 2:1.

2 2 Cor 5:18, 19; Eph 2:8; 1 Tim 2:6.

3 Ps 115:1; Rev 7:10-12.

4 1 Cor 4:4; Jas 2:10.

5 Acts 4:12; Heb 10:20.

6 Rom 4:23-25.

7 Gen 3:7; Zeph 3:11; Heb 4:16; 1 Jn 4:17-19.

8 Lk 16:15; Phil 3:4-9.

ARTICLE 24

OUR SANCTIFICATION AND GOOD WORKS

We believe that this true faith, worked in man by the hearing of God's Word and by the operation of the Holy Spirit,¹ regenerates him and makes him a new man.² It makes him live a new life and frees him from the slavery of sin.³ Therefore it is not true that this justifying faith makes man indifferent to living a good and holy life.⁴ On the contrary, without it no one would ever do anything

out of love for God,⁵ but only out of self-love or fear of being condemned. It is therefore impossible for this holy faith to be inactive in man, for we do not speak of an empty faith but of what Scripture calls *faith expressing itself through love* (Gal 5:6). This faith induces man to apply himself to those works which God has commanded in His Word. These works, proceeding from the good root of faith, are good and acceptable in the sight of God, since they are all sanctified by His grace. Nevertheless, they do not count toward our justification. For through faith in Christ we are justified, even before we do any good works.⁶ Otherwise they could not be good any more than the fruit of a tree can be good unless the tree itself is good.⁷

Therefore we do good works, but not for merit. For what could we merit? We are indebted to God, rather than He to us, for the good works we do,⁸ since it is He *who works in [us], to will and to act according to His good purpose* (Phil 2:13). Let us keep in mind what is written: *So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty* (Luke 17:10)." Meanwhile we do not deny that God rewards good works,⁹ but it is by His grace that He crowns His gifts.

Furthermore, although we do good works, we do not base our salvation on them. We cannot do a single work that is not defiled by our flesh and does not deserve punishment.¹⁰ Even if we could show one good work, the remembrance of one sin is enough to make God reject it.¹¹ We would then always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences would be constantly tormented, if they did not rely on the merit of the death and passion of our Saviour.¹²

1 Acts 16:14; Rom 10:17; 1 Cor 12:3.

2 Ezek 36:26, 27; Jn 1:12, 13; Jn 3:5; Eph 2:4-6; Tit 3:5; 1 Pet 1:23.

3 Jn 5:24; Jn 8:36; Rom 6:4-6; 1 Jn 3:9.

4 Gal 5:22; Tit 2:12.

5 Jn 15:5; Rom 14:23; 1 Tim 1:5; Heb 11:4, 6.

6 Rom 4:5.

7 Mt 7:17.

8 1 Cor 1:30, 31; 1 Cor 4:7; Eph 2:10.

9 Rom 2:6, 7; 1 Cor 3:14; 2 Jn 8; Rev 2:23.

10 Rom 7:21.

11 Jas 2:10.

12 Hab 2:4; Mt 11:28; Rom 10:11.

ARTICLE 25

CHRIST, THE FULFILMENT OF THE LAW

We believe that the ceremonies and symbols of the law have ceased with the coming of Christ, and that all shadows have been fulfilled,¹ so that the use of them ought to be abolished among Christians. Yet their truth and substance remain for us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have been fulfilled.²

In the meantime we still use the testimonies taken from the law and the prophets, both to confirm us in the doctrine of the gospel and to order our life in all honour, according to God's will and to His glory.³

1 Mt 27:51; Rom 10:4; Heb 9:9, 10.

2 Mt 5:17; Gal 3:24; Col 2:17.

3 Rom 13:8-10; Rom 15:4; 2 Pet 1:19; 2 Pet 3:2.

ARTICLE 26 CHRIST'S INTERCESSION

We believe that we have no access to God except through the only Mediator¹ and Advocate Jesus Christ the righteous.² For this purpose He became man, uniting together the divine and human nature, that we might not be barred from but have access to the divine majesty.³ This Mediator, however, whom the Father has ordained between Himself and us, should not frighten us by His greatness, so that we look for another according to our fancy. There is no creature in heaven or on earth who loves us more than Jesus Christ.⁴ Though He was in the form of God, He emptied Himself, taking the form of man and of a servant for us (Phil 2:6, 7), and was *made like His brothers in every way* (Heb 2:17). If, therefore, we had to look for another intercessor, could we find one who loves us more than He who laid down His life for us, even while we were His enemies (Rom 5:8, 10)? If we had to look for one who has authority and power, who has more than He who is seated at the right hand of the Father⁵ and who has all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18)? Moreover, who will be heard more readily than God's own well-beloved Son?⁶

Therefore it was pure lack of trust which introduced the custom of dishonouring the saints rather than honouring them, doing what they themselves never did nor required. On the contrary, they constantly rejected such honour according to their duty,⁷ as appears from their writings. Here one ought not to bring in our unworthiness, for it is not a question of offering our prayers on the basis of our own worthiness, but only on the basis of the excellence and worthiness of Jesus Christ,⁸ whose righteousness is ours by faith.⁹

Therefore, to take away from us this foolish fear or rather distrust, the author of Hebrews, with good reason, says to us that Jesus Christ was *made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted* (Heb 2:17, 18). Further, to encourage us more to go to Him, he says: *Therefore, since then we have a great High Priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest, who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need* (Heb 4:14, 15).¹⁰ The same letter says: *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus . . . let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith*, etc. (Heb 10:19, 22). Also, *because Christ lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them* (Heb 7:24, 25).¹¹ What more is needed? Christ Himself says: *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me* (Jn 14:6). Why should we look for another advocate? It has pleased God to give us His Son as our Advocate. Let us then not leave Him for another, or

even look for another, without ever finding one. For when God gave Him to us, He knew very well that we were sinners.

In conclusion, according to the command of Christ, we call upon the heavenly Father through Christ our only Mediator,¹² as we are taught in the Lord's prayer.¹³ We rest assured that we shall obtain all we ask of the Father in His Name (Jn 16:23).¹⁴

1 1 Tim 2:5.

2 1 Jn 2:1.

3 Eph 3:12.

4 Mt 11:28; Jn 15:13; Eph 3:19; 1 Jn 4:10.

5 Heb 1:3; Heb 8:1.

6 Mt 3:17; Jn 11:42; Eph 1:6.

7 Acts 10:26; Acts 14:15.

8 Jer 17:5, 7; Acts 4:12.

9 1 Cor 1:30.

10 Jn 10:9; Eph 2:18; Heb 9:24.

11 Rom 8:34.

12 Heb 13:15.

13 Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4.

14 Jn 14:13.

ARTICLE 27

THE CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH

We believe and profess one catholic or universal church,¹ which is a holy congregation and assembly² of the true Christian believers, who expect their entire salvation in Jesus Christ,³ are washed by His blood, and are sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit.⁴

This church has existed from the beginning of the world and will be to the end, for Christ is an eternal King who cannot be without subjects.⁵ This holy church is preserved by God against the fury of the whole world,⁶ although for a while it may look very small and as extinct in the eyes of man.⁷ Thus during the perilous reign of Ahab, the Lord kept for Himself seven thousand persons who had not bowed their knees to Baal.⁸

Moreover, this holy church is not confined or limited to one particular place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed throughout the entire world.⁹ Yet, it is joined and united with heart and will, in one and the same Spirit, by the power of faith.¹⁰

1 Gen 22:18; Is 49:6; Eph 2:17-19.

2 Ps 111:1; Jn 10:14, 16; Eph 4:3-6; Heb 12:22, 23.

3 Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21.

4 Eph 1:13; Eph 4:30.

5 2 Sam 7:16; Ps 89:36; Ps 110:4; Mt 28:18, 20; Lk 1:32.

6 Ps 46:5; Mt 16:18.

7 Is 1:9; 1 Pet 3:20; Rev 11:7.

8 1 Kings 19:18; Rom 11:4.

9 Mt 23:8; Jn 4:21-23; Rom 10:12, 13.

10 Ps 119:63; Acts 4:32; Eph 4:4.

ARTICLE 28

EVERYONE'S DUTY TO JOIN THE CHURCH

We believe, since this holy assembly and congregation is the assembly of the redeemed and there is no salvation outside of it,¹ that no one ought to

withdraw from it, content to be by himself, no matter what his status or standing may be. But all and everyone are obliged to join it and unite with it,² maintaining the unity of the church. They must submit themselves to its instruction and discipline,³ bend their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ,⁴ and serve the edification of the brothers and sisters,⁵ according to the talents which God has given them as members of the same body.⁶

To observe this more effectively, it is the duty of all believers, according to the Word of God, to separate from those who do not belong to the church⁷ and to join this assembly⁸ wherever God has established it. They should do so even though the rulers and edicts of princes were against it, and death or physical punishment might follow.⁹

All therefore who draw away from the church or fail to join it act contrary to the ordinance of God.

1 Mt 16:18, 19; Acts 2:47; Gal 4:26; Eph 5:25-27; Heb 2:11, 12; Heb 12:23.

2 2 Chron 30:8; Jn 17:21; Col 3:15.

3 Heb 13:17.

4 Mt 11:28-30.

5 Eph 4:12.

6 1 Cor 12:7, 27; Eph 4:16.

7 Num 16:23-26; Is 52:11, 12; Acts 2:40; Rom 16:17; Rev 18:4.

8 Ps 122:1; Is 2:3; Heb 10:25.

9 Acts 4:19, 20.

ARTICLE 29

THE MARKS OF THE TRUE AND THE FALSE CHURCH

We believe that we ought to discern diligently and very carefully from the Word of God what is the true church, for all sects which are in the world today claim for themselves the name of church.¹ We are not speaking here of the hypocrites, who are mixed in the church along with the good and yet are not part of the church, although they are outwardly in it.² We are speaking of the body and the communion of the true church which must be distinguished from all sects that call themselves the church.

The true church is to be recognized by the following marks:

It practises the pure preaching of the gospel.³ It maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them.⁴ It exercises church discipline for correcting and punishing sins.⁵ In short, it governs itself according to the pure Word of God,⁶ rejecting all things contrary to it⁷ and regarding Jesus Christ as the only Head.⁸ Hereby the true church can certainly be known and no one has the right to separate from it.

Those who are of the church may be recognized by the marks of Christians. They believe in Jesus Christ the only Saviour,⁹ flee from sin and pursue righteousness,¹⁰ love the true God and their neighbour¹¹ without turning to the right or left, and crucify their flesh and its works.¹² Although great weakness remains in them, they fight against it by the Spirit all the days of their life.¹³ They appeal constantly to the blood, suffering, death, and obedience of Jesus Christ, in whom they have forgiveness of their sins through faith in Him.¹⁴

The false church assigns more authority to itself and its ordinances than to the Word of God. It does not want to submit itself to the yoke of Christ.¹⁵ It

does not administer the sacraments as Christ commanded in His Word, but adds to them and subtracts from them as it pleases. It bases itself more on men than on Jesus Christ. It persecutes those who live holy lives according to the Word of God and who rebuke the false church for its sins, greed, and idolatries.¹⁶

These two churches are easily recognized and distinguished from each other.

1 Rev 2:9.

2 Rom 9:6.

3 Gal 1:8; 1 Tim 3:15.

4 Acts 19:3-5; 1 Cor 11:20-29.

5 Mt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:4, 5, 13; 2 Thess 3:6, 14; Tit 3:10.

6 Jn 8:47; Jn 17:20; Acts 17:11; Eph 2:20; Col 1:23; 1 Tim 6:3.

7 1 Thess 5:21; 1 Tim 6:20; Rev 2:6.

8 Jn 10:14; Eph 5:23; Col 1:18.

9 Jn 1:12; 1 Jn 4:2.

10 Rom 6:2; Phil 3:12.

11 Jn 4:19-21.

12 Gal 5:24.

13 Rom 7:15; Gal 5:17.

14 Rom 7:24, 25; 1 Jn 1:7-9.

15 Acts 4:17, 18; 2 Tim 4:3, 4; 2 Jn 9.

16 Jn 16:2.

ARTICLE 30

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

We believe that this true church must be governed according to the spiritual order which our Lord has taught us in His Word.¹ There should be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and to

administer the sacraments;² there should also be elders³ and deacons⁴ who, together with the pastors, form the council of the church.⁵ By these means they preserve the true religion; they see to it that the true doctrine takes its course, that evil men are disciplined in a spiritual way and are restrained, and also that the poor and all the afflicted are helped and comforted according to their need.⁶ By these means everything will be done well and in good order when faithful men are chosen⁷ in agreement with the rule that the apostle Paul gave to Timothy.⁸

1 Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11, 12; 1 Tim 3:15; Heb 13:20, 21.

2 Lk 1:2; Lk 10:16; Jn 20:23; Rom 10:14; 1 Cor 4:1; 2 Cor 5:19, 20; 2 Tim 4:2.

3 Acts 14:23; Tit 1:5.

4 1 Tim 3:8-10.

5 Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 4:14.

6 Acts 6:1-4; Tit 1:7-9.

7 1 Cor 4:2.

8 1 Tim 3.

ARTICLE 31

THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

We believe that ministers of God's Word, elders, and deacons ought to be chosen to their offices by lawful election of the church, with prayer and in good order, as stipulated by the Word of God.¹ Therefore everyone shall take care not to intrude by improper means. He shall wait for the time that he is

called by God so that he may have sure testimony and thus be certain that his call comes from the Lord.² Ministers of the Word, in whatever place they are, have equal power and authority, for they are all servants of Jesus Christ,³ the only universal Bishop and the only Head of the church.⁴ In order that this holy ordinance of God may not be violated or rejected, we declare that everyone must hold the ministers of the Word and the elders of the church in special esteem because of their work,⁵ and as much as possible be at peace with them without grumbling or arguing.

1 Acts 1:23, 24; Acts 6:2, 3.

2 Acts 13:2; 1 Cor 12:28; 1 Tim 4:14; 1 Tim 5:22; Heb 5:4.

3 2 Cor 5:20; 1 Pet 5:1-4.

4 Mt 23:8, 10; Eph 1:22, Eph 5:23.

5 1 Thess 5:12, 13; 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:17.

ARTICLE 32

THE ORDER AND DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH

We believe that, although it is useful and good for those who govern the church to establish a certain order to maintain the body of the church, they must at all times watch that they do not deviate from what Christ, our only Master, has commanded.¹ Therefore we reject all human inventions and laws introduced into the worship of God which bind and compel the consciences in any way.² We accept only what is proper to preserve and promote harmony and unity and to keep all in obedience to God.³ To that end, discipline and excommunication ought to be exercised in agreement with the Word of God.⁴

1 1 Tim 3:15.

2 Is 29:13; Mt 15:9; Gal 5:1.

3 1 Cor 14:33.

4 Mt 16:19; Mt 18:15-18; Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 5; 1 Tim 1:20.

ARTICLE 33

THE SACRAMENTS

We believe that our gracious God, mindful of our insensitivity and weakness, has ordained sacraments to seal His promises to us and to be pledges of His good will and grace towards us. He did so to nourish and sustain our faith.¹ He has added these to the Word of the gospel² to represent better to our external senses both what He declares to us in His Word and what He does inwardly in our hearts. Thus He confirms to us the salvation which He imparts to us. Sacraments are visible signs and seals of something internal and invisible, by means of which God works in us through the power of the Holy Spirit.³ Therefore the signs are not void and meaningless so that they deceive us. For Jesus Christ is their truth; apart from Him they would be nothing. Moreover, we are satisfied with the number of sacraments which Christ our Master has instituted for us, namely, two: the sacrament of baptism⁴ and the holy supper of Jesus Christ.⁵

1 Gen 17:9-14; Ex 12; Rom 4:11.

2 Mt 28:19; Eph 5:26.

3 Rom 2:28, 29; Col 2:11, 12.

4 Mt 28:19.

5 Mt 26:26-28; 1 Cor 11:23-26.

ARTICLE 34

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law (Rom 10:4), has by His shed blood put an end to every other shedding of blood that one could or would make as an expiation or satisfaction for sins. He has abolished circumcision, which involved blood, and has instituted in its place the sacrament of baptism.¹ By baptism we are received into the church of God and set apart from all other peoples and false religions, to be entirely committed to Him² whose mark and emblem we bear. This serves as a testimony to us that He will be our God and gracious Father for ever.

For that reason He has commanded all those who are His to be baptized with plain water into *the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* (Mt 28:19). By this He signifies to us that as water washes away the dirt of the body when poured on us, and as water is seen on the body of the baptized when sprinkled on him, so the blood of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, does the same thing internally to the soul.³ It washes and cleanses our soul from sin⁴ and regenerates us from children of wrath into children of God.⁵ This is not brought about by the water as such⁶ but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God,⁷ which is our Red Sea,⁸ through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, that is, the devil, and enter into the spiritual land of Canaan.

Thus the ministers on their part give us the sacrament and what is visible, but our Lord gives us what is signified by the sacrament, namely, the invisible gifts and grace. He washes, purges, and cleanses our souls of all filth and unrighteousness,⁹ renews our hearts and fills them with all comfort, gives us true assurance of His fatherly goodness, clothes us with the new nature, and takes away the old nature with all its works.¹⁰

We believe, therefore, that anyone who aspires to eternal life ought to be baptized only once.¹¹ Baptism should never be repeated, for we cannot be born twice. Moreover, baptism benefits us not only when the water is on us and when we receive it, but throughout our whole life. For that reason we reject the error of the Anabaptists, who are not content with a single baptism received only once, and who also condemn the baptism of the little children of believers. We believe that these children ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as infants were circumcised in Israel on the basis of the same promises which are now made to our children.¹² Indeed, Christ shed His blood to wash the children of believers just as much as He shed it for adults.¹³ Therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of what Christ has done for them, as the Lord commanded in the law that a lamb was to be offered shortly after children were born.¹⁴ This was a sacrament of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Because baptism has the same significance for our children as circumcision had for the people of Israel, Paul calls baptism *the circumcision done by Christ* (Col 2:11).

1 Col 2:11.

2 Ex 12:48; 1 Pet 2:9.

3 Mt 3:11; 1 Cor 12:13.

4 Acts 22:16; Heb 9:14; 1 Jn 1:7; Rev 1:5b.

5 Tit 3:5.

6 1 Pet 3:21.

7 Rom 6:3; 1 Pet 1:2; 1 Pet 2:24.

8 1 Cor 10:1-4.

9 1 Cor 6:11; Eph 5:26.

10 Rom 6:4; Gal 3:27.

11 Mt 28:19; Eph 4:5.

12 Gen 17:10-12; Mt 19:14; Acts 2:39.

13 1 Cor 7:14.

14 Lev 12:6.

ARTICLE 35

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe and confess that our Saviour Jesus Christ has instituted the sacrament of the holy supper¹ to nourish and sustain those whom He has already regenerated and incorporated into His family, which is His church.

Those who are born anew have a twofold life.² One is physical and temporal, which they received in their first birth and is common to all men. The other is spiritual and heavenly, which is given them in their second birth and is effected by the word of the gospel³ in the communion of the body of Christ. This life is not common to all but only to the elect of God.

For the support of the physical and earthly life God has ordained earthly and material bread. This bread is common to all just as life is common to all. For the support of the spiritual and heavenly life, which believers have, He has sent them a living bread which came down from heaven (Jn 6:51), namely, Jesus Christ,⁴ who nourishes and sustains the spiritual life of the believers⁵ when He is eaten by them, that is, spiritually appropriated and received by faith.⁶

To represent to us the spiritual and heavenly bread, Christ has instituted earthly and visible bread as a sacrament of His body and wine as a sacrament of His blood.⁷ He testifies to us that as certainly as we take and hold the sacrament in our hands and eat and drink it with our mouths, by which our physical life is then sustained, so certainly do we receive by faith,⁸ as the hand and mouth of our soul, the true body and true blood of Christ, our only Saviour, in our souls for our spiritual life.

It is beyond any doubt that Jesus Christ did not commend His sacraments to us in vain. Therefore He works in us all that He represents to us by these holy signs. We do not understand the manner in which this is done, just as we do not comprehend the hidden activity of the Spirit of God.⁹ Yet we do not go wrong when we say that what we eat and drink is the true, natural body and the true blood of Christ. However, the manner in which we eat it is not by mouth but in the spirit by faith. In that way Jesus Christ always remains seated at the right hand of God His Father in heaven;¹⁰ yet He does not cease to communicate Himself to us by faith. This banquet is a spiritual table at which Christ makes us partakers of Himself with all His benefits and gives us the grace to enjoy both Himself and the merit of His suffering and death.¹¹ He nourishes, strengthens, and comforts our poor, desolate souls by the eating of His flesh, and refreshes and renews them by the drinking of His blood.

Although the sacrament is joined together with that which is signified, the latter is not always received by all.¹² The wicked certainly takes the sacrament to his condemnation, but he does not receive the truth of the sacrament.

Thus Judas and Simon the sorcerer both received the sacrament, but they did not receive Christ, who is signified by it.¹³ He is communicated exclusively to the believers.¹⁴

Finally, we receive this holy sacrament in the congregation of the people of God¹⁵ with humility and reverence as we together commemorate the death of Christ our Saviour with thanksgiving and we confess our faith and Christian religion.¹⁶ Therefore no one should come to this table without careful self-examination, lest by eating this bread and drinking from this cup, he eat and drink judgment upon himself (1 Cor 10:28, 29). In short, we are moved by the use of this holy sacrament to a fervent love of God and our neighbours. Therefore we reject as desecrations all additions and condemnable inventions which men have mixed with the sacraments. We declare that we should be content with the ordinance taught by Christ and His apostles and should speak about it as they have spoken.

1 Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:19, 20; 1 Cor 11:23-26.

2 Jn 3:5, 6.

3 Jn 5:25.

4 Jn 6:48-51.

5 Jn 6:63; Jn 10:10b.

6 Jn 6:40, 47.

7 Jn 6:55; 1 Cor 10:16.

8 Eph 3:17.

9 Jn 3:8.

10 Mk 16:19; Acts 3:21.

11 Rom 8:32; 1 Cor 10:3, 4.

12 1 Cor 2:14.

13 Lk 22:21, 22; Acts 8:13, 21.

14 Jn 3:36.

15 Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7.

16 Acts 2:46; 1 Cor 11:26.

ARTICLE 36

THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that, because of the depravity of mankind, our gracious God has ordained kings, princes, and civil officers.¹ He wants the world to be governed by laws and statutes,² in order that the lawlessness of men be restrained and that everything be conducted among them in good order.³ For that purpose He has placed the sword in the hand of the government to punish wrongdoers and to protect those who do what is good (Rom 13:4). Their task of restraining and sustaining is not limited to the public order but includes the protection of the church and its ministry in order that *the kingdom of Christ may come, the Word of the gospel may be preached everywhere,⁴ and God may be honoured and served by everyone, as He requires in His Word.

Moreover, everyone – no matter of what quality, condition, or rank – ought to be subject to the civil officers, pay taxes, hold them in honour and respect, and obey them in all things⁵ which do not disagree with the Word of God.⁶ We ought to pray for them, that God may direct them in all their ways and *that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness* (1 Tim 2:1, 2).

For that reason we condemn the Anabaptists and other rebellious people, and in general all those who reject the authorities and civil officers, subvert justice,⁷ introduce a communion of goods, and overturn the decency that God has established among men.

*The following words were deleted here by the General Synod 1905 of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland): all idolatry and false worship may be removed and prevented, the kingdom of antichrist may be destroyed.

1 Prov 8:15; Dan 2:21; Jn 19:11; Rom 13:1.

2 Ex 18:20.

3 Deut 1:16; Deut 16:19; Judg 21:25; Ps 82; Jer 21:12; Jer 22:3; 1 Pet 2:13, 14.

4 Ps 2; Rom 13:4a; 1 Tim 2:1-4.

5 Mt 17:27; Mt 22:21; Rom 13:7; Tit 3:1; 1 Pet 2:17.

6 Acts 4:19; Acts 5:29.

7 2 Pet 2:10; Jude 8.

ARTICLE 37

THE LAST JUDGMENT

Finally, we believe, according to the Word of God, that when the time, ordained by the Lord but unknown to all creatures, has come¹ and the number of the elect is complete,² our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, bodily and visibly,³ as He ascended (Acts 1:11), with great glory and majesty.⁴ He will declare Himself judge of the living and the dead⁵ and set this old world afire in order to purge it.⁶ Then all people, men, women, and children, who ever lived, from the beginning of the world to the end, will appear in person before this great Judge.⁷ They will be summoned *with the voice of the archangel and with trumpet call of God* (1 Thess 4:16).

Those who will have died before that time will arise out of the earth,⁸ as their spirits are once again united with their own bodies in which they lived. Those who will then be still alive will not die as the others but will be changed in the twinkling of an eye from perishable to imperishable.⁹ Then the books will be opened and the dead will be judged (Rev 20:12) according to what they have done in this world, whether good or evil (2 Cor 5:10).¹⁰ Indeed, all people *will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken* (Mt 12:36), which the world regards as mere jest and amusement. The secrets and hypocrisy of men will then be publicly uncovered in the sight of all. Thus for good reason the thought of this judgment is horrible and dreadful to the wicked and evildoers¹¹ but it is a great joy and comfort to the righteous and elect. For then their full redemption will be completed and they will receive the fruits of their labour and of the trouble they have suffered.¹² Their innocence will be known to all and they will see the terrible vengeance God will bring upon the wicked who persecuted, oppressed, and tormented them in this world.¹³

The wicked will be convicted by the testimony of their own consciences and will become immortal, but only to be tormented in *the eternal fire*¹⁴ *prepared for the devil and his angels* (Mt 25:41).¹⁵ On the other hand, the faithful and elect will be crowned with glory and honour. The Son of God will acknowl-

edge their names before God His Father (Mt 10:32) and His elect angels.¹⁶ God *will wipe away every tear from their eyes* (Rev 21:4),¹⁷ and their cause – at present condemned as heretical and evil by many judges and civil authorities – will be recognized as the cause of the Son of God. As a gracious reward, the Lord will grant them glory such as the heart of man could never conceive.¹⁸ Therefore we look forward to that great day with a great longing to enjoy to the full the promises of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus* (Rev 22:20).

1 Mt 24:36; Mt 25:13; 1 Thess 5:1,2.

2 Heb 11:39, 40; Rev 6:11.

3 Rev 1:7.

4 Mt 24:30; Mt 25:31.

5 Mt 25:31-46; 2 Tim 4:1; 1 Pet 4:5.

6 2 Pet 3:10-13.

7 Deut 7:9-11; Rev 20:12, 13.

8 Dan 12:2; Jn 5:28, 29.

9 1 Cor 15:51, 52; Phil 3:20, 21.

10 Heb 9:27; Rev 22:12.

11 Mt 11:22; Mt 23:33; Rom 2:5, 6; Heb 10:27; 2 Pet 2:9; Jude 15; Rev 14:7a.

12 Lk 14:14; 2 Thess 1:3-10; 1 Jn 4:17.

13 Rev 15:4; Rev 18:20.

14 Mt 13:41, 42; Mk 9:48; Lk 16:22-28; Rev 21:8.

15 Rev 20:10.

16 Rev 3:5.

17 Is 25:8; Rev 7:17.

18 Dan 12:3; Mt 5:12; Mt 13:43; 1 Cor 2:9; Rev 21:9-22:5.

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

The Heidelberg Catechism, the second of our doctrinal standards, was written in Heidelberg at the request of Elector Frederick III, ruler of the most influential German province, the Palatinate, from 1559 to 1576. This pious Christian prince commissioned Zacharius Ursinus, twenty-eight years of age and professor of theology at the Heidelberg University, and Caspar Olevianus, twenty-six years old and Frederick's court preacher, to prepare a catechism for instructing the youth and for guiding pastors and teachers. Frederick obtained the advice and cooperation of the entire theological faculty in the preparation of the Catechism. The Heidelberg Catechism was adopted by a Synod in Heidelberg and published in German with a preface by Frederick III, dated January 19, 1563. A second and third German edition, each with some small additions, as well as a Latin translation were published in Heidelberg in the same year. The Catechism was soon divided into fifty-two sections, so that a section of the Catechism could be explained to the churches each Sunday of the year.

In the Netherlands this Heidelberg Catechism became generally and favourably known almost as soon as it came from the press, mainly through the efforts of Petrus Dathenus, who translated it into the Dutch language and added this translation to his Dutch rendering of the Genevan Psalter, which was published in 1566. In the same year Peter Gabriel set the example of explaining this catechism to his congregation at Amsterdam in his Sunday afternoon sermons. The National Synods of the sixteenth century adopted it as one of the Three Forms of Unity, requiring office-bearers to subscribe to it and ministers to explain it to the churches. These requirements were strongly emphasized by the great Synod of Dort in 1618-19.

The Heidelberg Catechism has been translated into many languages and is the most influential and the most generally accepted of the several catechisms of Reformation times.

LORD'S DAY 1

1. Q. What is your only comfort
in life and death?
- A. That I am not my own,¹
but belong with body and soul,
both in life and in death,²
to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.³
He has fully paid for all my sins
with His precious blood,⁴
and has set me free
from all the power of the devil.⁵
He also preserves me in such a way⁶
that without the will of my heavenly Father
not a hair can fall from my head;⁷
indeed, all things must work together
for my salvation.⁸

Therefore, by His Holy Spirit
 He also assures me
 of eternal life⁹
 and makes me heartily willing and ready
 from now on to live for Him.¹⁰

¹ 1 Cor 6:19, 20.

² Rom 14:7-9.

³ 1 Cor 3:23; Tit 2:14.

⁴ 1 Pet 1:18, 19; 1 Jn 1:7; 2:2.

⁵ Jn 8:34-36; Heb 2:14, 15; 1 Jn 3:8.

⁶ Jn 6:39, 40; 10:27-30; 2 Thess 3:3; 1 Pet 1:5.

⁷ Mt 10:29-31; Lk 21:16-18.

⁸ Rom 8:28.

⁹ Rom 8:15, 16; 2 Cor 1:21, 22; 5:5; Eph 1:13, 14.

¹⁰ Rom 8:14.

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

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

¹ Rom 3:9, 10; 1 Jn 1:10.

² Jn 17:3; Acts 4:12; 10:43.

³ Mt 5:16; Rom 6:13; Eph 5:8-10; 1 Pet 2:9, 10.

The First Part

OUR SIN AND MISERY

LORD'S DAY 2

3. Q. From where do you know
 your sins and misery?

- A. From the law of God.¹

¹ Rom 3: 20; 7:7-25.

4. Q. What does God's law require of us?

- A. Christ teaches us this in a summary in Matthew 22:
*Love the Lord your God
 with all your heart
 and with all your soul
 and with all your mind.¹
 This is the first and greatest commandment.*

And the second is like it:

Love your neighbour as yourself.

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.²

¹ Deut 6:5.

² Lev 19:18.

5. Q. Can you keep all this perfectly?

A. No,¹ I am inclined by nature to hate God and my neighbour.²

¹ Rom 3:10, 23; 1 Jn 1:8, 10.

² Gen 6:5; 8:21; Jer 17:9; Rom 7:23; 8:7; Eph 2:3; Tit 3:3.

LORD'S DAY 3

6. Q. Did God, then, create man so wicked and perverse?

A. No, on the contrary, God created man good¹ and in His image,² that is, in true righteousness and holiness,³ so that he might rightly know God his Creator,⁴ heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal blessedness to praise and glorify Him.⁵

¹ Gen 1:31.

² Gen 1:26, 27.

³ Eph 4:24.

⁴ Col 3:10.

⁵ Ps 8.

7. Q. From where, then, did man's depraved nature come?

A. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise,¹ for there our nature became so corrupt² that we are all conceived and born in sin.³

¹ Gen 3.

² Rom 5:12, 18, 19.

³ Ps 51:5.

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

A. Yes,¹ unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.²

¹ Gen 6:5; 8:21; Job 14:4; Is 53:6.

² Jn 3:3-5.

LORD'S DAY 4

9. Q. But does not God do man an injustice
by requiring in His law
what man cannot do?

A. No,
for God so created man
that he was able to do it.¹
But man, at the instigation of the devil,²
in deliberate disobedience³
robbed himself and all his descendants
of these gifts.⁴

¹ Gen 1:31.

² Gen 3:13; Jn 8:44; 1 Tim 2:13, 14.

³ Gen 3:6.

⁴ Rom 5:12, 18, 19.

10. Q. Will God allow such disobedience and apostasy
to go unpunished?

A. Certainly not.
He is terribly displeased
with our original sin
as well as our actual sins.
Therefore He will punish them
by a just judgment
both now and eternally,¹
as He has declared:²
*Cursed is everyone
who does not continue to do everything
written in the Book of the Law (Galatians 3:10).*

¹ Gen 2:17; Ex 34:7; Ps 5:4-6; 7:11; Nahum 1:2; Rom 1:18; 5:12; Eph 5:6;
Heb 9:27.

² Deut 27:26.

11. Q. But is God not also merciful?

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

¹ Ex 20:6; 34:6, 7; Ps 103:8, 9.

² Ex 20:5; 34:7; Deut 7:9-11; Ps 5:4-6; Heb 10:30, 31.

³ Mt 25:45, 46.

The Second Part
OUR DELIVERANCE
LORD'S DAY 5

12. Q. Since, according to God's righteous judgment we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, how can we escape this punishment and be again received into favour?
- A. God demands that His justice be satisfied.¹ Therefore we must make full payment, either by ourselves or through another.²
- ¹ Ex 20:5; 23:7; Rom 2:1-11.
² Is 53:11; Rom 8:3, 4.
13. Q. Can we by ourselves make this payment?
- A. Certainly not.
 On the contrary, we daily increase our debt.¹
- ¹ Ps 130:3; Mt 6:12; Rom 2:4, 5.
14. Q. Can any mere creature pay for us?
- A. No.
 In the first place,
 God will not punish another creature for the sin which man has committed.¹
 Furthermore,
 no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin and deliver others from it.²
- ¹ Ezek 18:4, 20; Heb 2:14-18.
² Ps 130:3; Nahum 1:6.
15. Q. What kind of mediator and deliverer must we seek?
- A. One who is a true¹ and righteous² man, and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is at the same time true God.³
- ¹ 1 Cor 15:21; Heb 2:17.
² Is 53:9; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 7:26.
³ Is 7:14; 9:6; Jer 23:6; Jn 1:1; Rom 8:3, 4.

LORD'S DAY 6

16. Q. Why must He be a true and righteous man?
- A. He must be a true man
 because the justice of God requires
 that the same human nature which has sinned

should pay for sin.¹

He must be a righteous man
because one who himself is a sinner
cannot pay for others.²

¹ Rom 5:12, 15; 1 Cor 15:21; Heb 2:14-16.

² Heb 7:26, 27; 1 Pet 3:18.

17. Q. Why must He at the same time be true God?

A. He must be true God
so that by the power of His divine nature¹
He might bear in His human nature
the burden of God's wrath,²
and might obtain for us
and restore to us
righteousness and life.³

¹ Is 9:6.

² Deut 4:24; Nahum 1:6; Ps 130:3.

³ Is 53:5, 11; Jn 3:16; 2 Cor 5:21.

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

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ,¹
*who has become for us wisdom from God—that is,
our righteousness, holiness
and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30).*

¹ Mt 1:21-23; Lk 2:11; 1 Tim 2:5; 3:16.

19. Q. From where do you know this?

A. From the holy gospel,
which God Himself first revealed in Paradise.¹
Later, He had it proclaimed
by the patriarchs² and prophets,³
and foreshadowed
by the sacrifices and other ceremonies
of the law.⁴
Finally, He had it fulfilled
through His only Son.⁵

¹ Gen 3:15.

² Gen 12:3; 22:18; 49:10.

³ Is 53; Jer 23:5, 6; Mic 7:18-20; Acts 10:43; Heb 1:1.

⁴ Lev 1-7; Jn 5:46; Heb 10:1-10.

⁵ Rom 10:4; Gal 4:4, 5; Col 2:17.

LORD'S DAY 7

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

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

¹ Mt 7:14; Jn 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; Rom 11:16-21.

21. Q. What is true faith?

A. True faith is a sure knowledge
whereby I accept as true
all that God has revealed to us in His Word.¹
At the same time it is a firm confidence²
that not only to others, but also to me,³
God has granted forgiveness of sins,
everlasting righteousness, and salvation,⁴
out of mere grace,
only for the sake of Christ's merits.⁵
This faith the Holy Spirit works in my heart
by the gospel.⁶

¹ Jn 17:3, 17; Heb 11:1-3; Jas 2:19.

² Rom 4:18-21; 5:1; 10:10; Heb 4:16.

³ Gal 2:20.

⁴ Rom 1:17; Heb 10:10.

⁵ Rom 3:20-26; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-10.

⁶ Acts 16:14; Rom 1:16; 10:17; 1 Cor 1:21.

22. Q. What, then, must a Christian believe?

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

¹ Mt 28:19; Jn 20:30, 31.

23. Q. What are these articles?

- A.
- I. 1. *I believe in God the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.*
 - II. 2. *I believe in Jesus Christ,
His only-begotten Son, our Lord;*
3. *He was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary;*
4. *suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;*

- He descended into hell.*
5. *On the third day He arose from the dead;*
 6. *He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand
of God the Father almighty;*
 7. *from there He will come to judge
the living and the dead.*
- III.
8. *I believe in the Holy Spirit;*
 9. *I believe a holy catholic Christian church,
the communion of saints;*
 10. *the forgiveness of sins;*
 11. *the resurrection of the body;*
 12. *and the life everlasting.*

LORD'S DAY 8

24. Q. How are these articles divided?
- A. Into three parts:
the first is about God the Father and our creation;
the second about God the Son and our redemption;
the third about God the Holy Spirit
and our sanctification.
25. Q. Since there is only one God,¹
why do you speak of three persons,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- A. Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word²
that these three distinct persons
are the one, true, eternal God.

¹ Deut 6:4; Is 44:6; 45:5; 1 Cor 8:4, 6.

² Gen 1:2, 3; Is 61:1; 63:8-10; Mt 3:16, 17; 28:18, 19; Lk 4:18; Jn 14:26; 15:26;
2 Cor 13:14; Gal 4:6; Tit 3:5, 6.

God the Father and Our Creation

LORD'S DAY 9

26. Q. What do you believe when you say:
*I believe in God the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?*
- A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who out of nothing created heaven and earth
and all that is in them,¹
and who still upholds and governs them
by His eternal counsel and providence,²
is, for the sake of Christ His Son,
my God and my Father.³

In Him I trust so completely
 as to have no doubt
 that He will provide me
 with all things necessary for body and soul,⁴
 and will also turn to my good
 whatever adversity He sends me
 in this life of sorrow.⁵
 He is able to do so as almighty God,⁶
 and willing also as a faithful Father.⁷

1 Gen 1 and 2; Ex 20:11; Job 38 and 39; Ps 33:6; Is 44:24; Acts 4:24; 14:15.
 2 Ps 104:27-30; Mt 6:30; 10:29; Eph 1:11.
 3 Jn 1:12, 13; Rom 8:15, 16; Gal 4:4-7; Eph 1:5.
 4 Ps 55:22; Mt 6:25, 26; Lk 12:22-31.
 5 Rom 8:28.
 6 Gen 18:14; Rom 8:31-39.
 7 Mt 6:32, 33; 7:9-11.

LORD’S DAY 10

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

A. God’s providence is
 His almighty and ever present power,¹
 whereby, as with His hand, He still upholds
 heaven and earth and all creatures,²
 and so governs them that
 leaf and blade,
 rain and drought,
 fruitful and barren years,
 food and drink,
 health and sickness,
 riches and poverty,³
 indeed, all things,
 come to us not by chance⁴
 but by His fatherly hand.⁵

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

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

A. We can be patient in adversity,¹
 thankful in prosperity,²
 and with a view to the future
 we can have a firm confidence
 in our faithful God and Father

that no creature shall separate us
 from His love;³
 for all creatures are so completely in His hand
 that without His will
 they cannot so much as move.⁴

¹ Job 1:21, 22; Ps 39:10; Jas 1:3.

² Deut 8:10; 1 Thess 5:18.

³ Ps 55:22; Rom 5:3-5; 8:38, 39.

⁴ Job 1:12; 2:6; Prov 21:1; Acts 17:24-28.

God the Son and our Redemption

LORD'S DAY 11

29. Q. Why is the Son of God called *Jesus*,
 that is, Saviour?
- A. Because He saves us from all our sins,¹
 and because salvation is not to be sought or found
 in anyone else.²

¹ Mt 1:21; Heb 7:25.

² Is 43:11; Jn 15:4, 5; Acts 4:11, 12; 1 Tim 2:5.

30. Q. Do those who seek
 their salvation or well-being
 in saints, in themselves, or anywhere else,
 also believe in the only Saviour Jesus?
- A. No.
 Though they boast of Him in words,
 they in fact deny the only Saviour Jesus.¹
 For one of two things must be true:
 either Jesus is not a complete Saviour,
 or those who by true faith accept this Saviour
 must find in Him all that is necessary
 for their salvation.²

¹ 1 Cor 1:12, 13; Gal 5:4.

² Col 1:19, 20; 2:10; 1 Jn 1:7.

LORD'S DAY 12

31. Q. Why is He called *Christ*,
 that is, Anointed?
- A. Because He has been ordained by God the Father,
 and anointed with the Holy Spirit,¹ to be
 our chief Prophet and Teacher,²
 who has fully revealed to us
 the secret counsel and will of God
 concerning our redemption;³

our only High Priest,⁴
 who by the one sacrifice of His body
 has redeemed us,⁵
 and who continually intercedes for us
 before the Father,⁶
 and our eternal King,⁷
 who governs us by His Word and Spirit,
 and who defends and preserves us
 in the redemption obtained for us.⁸

¹ Ps 45:7 (Heb 1:9); Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18); Lk 3:21, 22.

² Deut 18:15 (Acts 3:22).

³ Jn 1:18; 15:15.

⁴ Ps 110:4 (Heb 7:17).

⁵ Heb 9:12; 10:11-14.

⁶ Rom 8:34; Heb 9:24; 1 Jn 2:1.

⁷ Zech 9:9 (Mt 21:5); Lk 1:33.

⁸ Mt 28:18-20; Jn 10:28; Rev 12:10, 11.

32. Q. Why are you called a Christian?

- A. Because I am a member of Christ by faith¹
 and thus share in His anointing,²
 so that I may
 as prophet confess His Name,³
 as priest present myself
 a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him,⁴
 and as king fight with a free and good conscience
 against sin and the devil in this life,⁵
 and hereafter reign with Him eternally
 over all creatures.⁶

¹ 1 Cor 12:12-27.

² Joel 2:28 (Acts 2:17); 1 Jn 2:27.

³ Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9, 10; Heb 13:15.

⁴ Rom 12:1; 1 Pet 2:5, 9.

⁵ Gal 5:16, 17; Eph 6:11; 1 Tim 1:18, 19.

⁶ Mt 25:34; 2 Tim 2:12.

LORD'S DAY 13

33. Q. Why is He called God's *only-begotten Son*,
 since we also are children of God?

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

¹ 1 Jn 1:1-3, 14, 18; 3:16; Rom 8:32; Heb 1; 1 Jn 4:9.

² 1 Jn 1:12; Rom 8:14-17; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:5, 6.

34. Q. Why do you call Him *our Lord*?

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

¹ 1 Cor 6:20; 1 Tim 2:5, 6.

² 1 Pet 1:18, 19.

³ Col 1:13, 14; Heb 2:14, 15.

LORD'S DAY 14

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

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

¹ Jn 1:1; 10:30-36; Rom 1:3; 9:5; Col 1:15-17; 1 Jn 5:20.

² Mt 1:18-23; Jn 1:14; Gal 4:4; Heb 2:14.

³ Lk 1:35.

⁴ 2 Sam 7:12-16; Ps 132:11; Mt 1:1; Lk 1:32; Rom 1:3.

⁵ Phil 2:7; Heb 2:17.

⁶ Heb 4:15; 7:26, 27.

36. Q. What benefit do you receive
from the holy conception and birth of Christ?

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

¹ 1 Tim 2:5, 6; Heb 9:13-15.

² Rom 8:3, 4; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 4:4, 5; 1 Pet 1:18, 19.

LORD'S DAY 15

37. Q. What do you confess when you say
that He *suffered*?

A. During all the time He lived on earth,
but especially at the end,

Christ bore in body and soul
the wrath of God against the sin
of the whole human race.¹

Thus, by His suffering,
as the only atoning sacrifice,²
He has redeemed our body and soul
from everlasting damnation,³
and obtained for us
the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life.⁴

¹ Is 53; 1 Tim 2:6; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18.

² Rom 3:25; 1 Cor 5:7; Eph 5:2; Heb 10:14; 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10.

³ Rom 8:1-4; Gal 3:13; Col 1:13; Heb 9:12; 1 Pet 1:18, 19.

⁴ Jn 3:16; Rom 3:24-26; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 9:15.

38. Q. Why did He suffer *under Pontius Pilate* as judge?

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

¹ Lk 23:13-24; Jn 19:4, 12-16.

² Is 53:4, 5; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13.

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

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

¹ Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13.

LORD'S DAY 16

40. Q. Why was it necessary for Christ
to humble Himself even unto death?

A. Because of the justice and truth of God¹
satisfaction for our sins
could be made in no other way
than by the death of the Son of God.²

¹ Gen 2:17.

² Rom 8:3; Phil 2:8; Heb 2:9, 14, 15.

41. Q. Why was He *buried*?
- A. His burial testified
that He had really died.¹
¹ Is 53:9; Jn 19:38-42; Acts 13:29; 1 Cor 15:3,4.
42. Q. Since Christ has died for us,
why do we still have to die?
- A. Our death is not a payment for our sins,
but it puts an end to sin
and is an entrance into eternal life.¹
¹ Jn 5:24; Phil 1:21-23; 1 Thess 5:9, 10.
43. Q. What further benefit do we receive
from Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross?
- A. Through Christ's death
our old nature is crucified,
put to death,
and buried with Him,¹
so that the evil desires of the flesh
may no longer reign in us,²
but that we may offer ourselves to Him
as a sacrifice of thankfulness.³
¹ Rom 6:5-11; Col 2:11, 12.
² Rom 6:12-14.
³ Rom 12:1; Eph 5:1, 2.
44. Q. Why is there added:
He descended into hell?
- A. In my greatest sorrows and temptations
I may be assured and comforted
that my Lord Jesus Christ,
by His unspeakable anguish, pain, terror, and agony,
which He endured throughout all His sufferings¹
but especially on the cross,
has delivered me
from the anguish and torment of hell.²
¹ Ps 18:5, 6; 116:3; Mt 26:36-46; 27:45, 46; Heb 5:7-10.
² Is 53.

LORD'S DAY 17

45. Q. How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?
- A. First,
by His resurrection
He has overcome death,
so that He could make us share

in the righteousness
 which He had obtained for us
 by His death.¹
 Second,
 by His power
 we too are raised up
 to a new life.²
 Third,
 Christ's resurrection
 is to us a sure pledge
 of our glorious resurrection.³

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

LORD'S DAY 18

46. Q. What do you confess when you say,
He ascended into heaven?
- A. That Christ,
 before the eyes of His disciples,
 was taken up from the earth into heaven,¹
 and that He is there for our benefit²
 until He comes again
 to judge the living and the dead.³

¹ Mk 16:19; Lk 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9-11.
² Rom 8:34; Heb 4:14; 7:23-25; 9:24.
³ Mt 24:30; Acts 1:11.

47. Q. Is Christ, then, not with us
 until the end of the world,
 as He has promised us?¹
- A. Christ is true man and true God.
 With respect to His human nature
 He is no longer on earth,²
 but with respect to
 His divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit
 He is never absent from us.³

¹ Mt 28:20.
² Mt 26:11; Jn 16:28; 17:11; Acts 3:19-21; Heb 8:4.
³ Mt 28:18-20; Jn 14:16-19; 16:13.

48. Q. But are the two natures in Christ
 not separated from each other
 if His human nature is not present
 wherever His divinity is?
- A. Not at all,

for His divinity has no limits
and is present everywhere.¹
So it must follow that His divinity
is indeed beyond the human nature
which He has taken on
and nevertheless is within this human nature
and remains personally united with it.²

¹ Jer 23:23, 24; Acts 7:48, 49.

² Jn 1:14; 3:13; Col 2:9.

49. Q. How does Christ's ascension into heaven benefit us?

A. First,

He is our Advocate in heaven
before His Father.¹

Second,

we have our flesh in heaven
as a sure pledge that He, our Head,
will also take us, His members,
up to Himself.²

Third,

He sends us His Spirit as a counter-pledge,³
by whose power we seek
the things that are above,
where Christ is,
seated at the right hand of God,
and not the things that are on earth.⁴

¹ Rom 8:34; 1 Jn 2:1.

² Jn 14:2; 17:24; Eph 2:4-6.

³ Jn 14:16; Acts 2:33; 2 Cor 1:21, 22; 5:5.

⁴ Col 3:1-4.

LORD'S DAY 19

50. Q. Why is it added,
And sits at the right hand of God?

A. Christ ascended into heaven
to manifest Himself there
as Head of His church,¹
through whom the Father governs all things.²

¹ Eph 1:20-23; Col 1:18.

² Mt 28:18; Jn 5:22, 23.

51. Q. How does the glory of Christ, our Head,
benefit us?

A. First,

by His Holy Spirit
He pours out heavenly gifts

upon us, His members.¹
Second,
by His power
He defends and preserves us
against all enemies.²

¹ Acts 2:33; Eph 4:7-12.
² Ps 2:9; 110:1, 2; Jn 10:27-30; Rev 19:11-16.

52. Q. What comfort is it to you
that Christ *will come to judge*
the living and the dead?

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

¹ Lk 21:28; Rom 8:22-25; Phil 3:20,21; Tit 2:13, 14.
² Mt 25:31-46; 1 Thess 4:16, 17; 2 Thess 1:6-10.

God the Holy Spirit and our Sanctification
LORD’S DAY 20

53. Q. What do you believe
concerning *the Holy Spirit*?

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

¹ Gen 1:1, 2; Mt 28:19; Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Cor 3:16.
² 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 1:21, 22; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13.
³ Gal 3:14; 1 Pet 1:2.
⁴ Jn 15:26; Acts 9:31.
⁵ Jn 14:16, 17; 1 Pet 4:14.

LORD'S DAY 21

54. Q. What do you believe concerning the *holy catholic Christian church*?

A. I believe that the Son of God,¹
 out of the whole human race,²
 from the beginning of the world to its end,³
 gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself,⁴
 by His Spirit and Word,⁵
 in the unity of the true faith,⁶
 a church chosen to everlasting life.⁷
 And I believe that I am⁸
 and forever shall remain
 a living member of it.⁹

¹ Jn 10:11; Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11-13; Col 1:18.

² Gen 26:4; Rev 5:9.

³ Is 59:21; 1 Cor 11:26.

⁴ Ps 129:1-5; Mt 16:18; Jn 10:28-30.

⁵ Rom 1:16; 10:14-17; Eph 5:26.

⁶ Acts 2:42-47; Eph 4:1-6.

⁷ Rom 8:29; Eph 1:3-14.

⁸ 1 Jn 3:14, 19-21.

⁹ Ps 23:6; Jn 10:27, 28; 1 Cor 1:4-9; 1 Pet 1:3-5.

55. Q. What do you understand by *the communion of saints*?

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

¹ Rom 8:32; 1 Cor 6:17; 12:4-7, 12, 13; 1 Jn 1:3.

² Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:20-27; 13:1-7; Phil 2:4-8.

56. Q. What do you believe concerning *the forgiveness of sins*?

A. I believe that God,
 because of Christ's satisfaction,
 will no more remember
 my sins,¹
 nor my sinful nature,
 against which I have to struggle

all my life,²
 but will graciously grant me
 the righteousness of Christ,
 that I may never come into condemnation.³

¹ Ps 103:3, 4, 10, 12; Mic 7:18, 19; 2 Cor 5:18-21; 1 Jn 1:7; 2:2.

² Rom 7:21-25.

³ Jn 3:17, 18; 5:24; Rom 8:1, 2.

LORD'S DAY 22

57. Q. What comfort does
the resurrection of the body
 offer you?

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

¹ Lk 16:22; 23:43; Phil 1:21-23.

² Job 19:25, 26; 1 Cor 15:20, 42-46, 54; Phil 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2.

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

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

¹ Jn 17:3; Rom 14:17; 2 Cor 5:2, 3.

² Jn 17:24; 1 Cor 2:9.

Our Justification LORD'S DAY 23

59. Q. But what does it help you
 now that you believe all this?

A. In Christ I am righteous before God
 and heir to life everlasting.¹

¹ Hab 2:4; Jn 3:36; Rom 1:17; 5:1, 2.

60. Q. How are you righteous before God?
- A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ.¹
 Although my conscience accuses me
 that I have grievously sinned
 against all God's commandments,
 have never kept any of them,²
 and am still inclined to all evil,³
 yet God, without any merit of my own,⁴
 out of mere grace,⁵
 imputes to me
 the perfect satisfaction,
 righteousness, and holiness of Christ.⁶
 He grants these to me
 as if I had never had nor committed
 any sin,
 and as if I myself had accomplished
 all the obedience
 which Christ has rendered for me,⁷
 if only I accept this gift
 with a believing heart.⁸

¹ Rom 3:21-28; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8, 9; Phil 3:8-11.

² Rom 3:9, 10.

³ Rom 7:23.

⁴ Deut 9:6; Ezek 36:22; Tit 3:4, 5.

⁵ Rom 3:24; Eph 2:8.

⁶ Rom 4:3-5; 2 Cor 5:17-19; 1 Jn 2:1, 2.

⁷ Rom 4:24, 25; 2 Cor 5:21.

⁸ Jn 3:18; Acts 16:30, 31; Rom 3:22.

61. Q. Why do you say
 that you are righteous
 only by faith?
- A. Not that I am acceptable to God
 on account of the worthiness
 of my faith,
 for only the satisfaction, righteousness,
 and holiness of Christ
 is my righteousness before God.¹
 I can receive this righteousness
 and make it my own
 by faith only.²

¹ 1 Cor 1:30, 31; 2:2.

² Rom 10:10; 1 Jn 5:10-12.

LORD'S DAY 24

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

- A. Because the righteousness
which can stand before God's judgment
must be absolutely perfect
and in complete agreement
with the law of God,¹
whereas even our best works in this life
are all imperfect and defiled with sin.²
- ¹ Deut 27:26; Gal 3:10.
² Is 64:6.
63. Q. But do our good works earn nothing,
even though God promises to reward them
in this life and the next?¹
- A. This reward is not earned;
it is a gift of grace.²
- ¹ Mt 5:12; Heb 11:6.
² Lk 17:10; 2 Tim 4:7, 8.
64. Q. Does this teaching not make people
careless and wicked?
- A. No.
It is impossible
that those grafted into Christ
by true faith
should not bring forth
fruits of thankfulness.¹
- ¹ Mt 7:18; Lk 6:43-45; Jn 15:5.

Word and Sacraments

LORD'S DAY 25

65. Q. Since then faith alone
makes us share in Christ and all His benefits,
where does this faith come from?
- A. From the Holy Spirit,¹
who works it in our hearts
by the preaching of the gospel,²
and strengthens it
by the use of the sacraments.³
- ¹ Jn 3:5; 1 Cor 2:10-14; Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29.
² Rom 10:17; 1 Pet 1:23-25.
³ Mt 28:19, 20; 1 Cor 10:16.

66. Q. What are the sacraments?
- A. The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals. They were instituted by God so that by their use He might the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel.¹
And this is the promise:
that God graciously grants us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life because of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross.²
- ¹ Gen 17:11; Deut 30:6; Rom 4:11.
² Mt 26:27, 28; Acts 2:38; Heb 10:10.
67. Q. Are both the Word and the sacraments then intended to focus our faith on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?
- A. Yes, indeed.
The Holy Spirit teaches us in the gospel and assures us by the sacraments that our entire salvation rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us on the cross.¹
- ¹ Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 11:26; Gal 3:27.
68. Q. How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the new covenant?
- A. Two: holy baptism and the holy supper.¹
- ¹ Mt 28:19, 20; 1 Cor 11:23-26.

Holy Baptism

LORD'S DAY 26

69. Q. How does holy baptism signify and seal to you that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross benefits you?
- A. In this way:
Christ instituted this outward washing¹ and with it gave the promise that, as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body, so certainly His blood and Spirit wash away the impurity of my soul,

that is, all my sins.²

¹ Mt 28:19.

² Mt 3:11; Mk 16:16; Jn 1:33; Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3, 4; 1 Pet 3:21.

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

A. To be washed with Christ's blood means
to receive forgiveness of sins from God,
through grace,
because of Christ's blood,
poured out for us
in His sacrifice on the cross.¹

To be washed with His Spirit means
to be renewed by the Holy Spirit
and sanctified to be members of Christ,
so that more and more
we become dead to sin
and lead a holy and blameless life.²

¹ Ezek 36:25; Zech 13:1; Eph 1:7; Heb 12:24; 1 Pet 1:2; Rev 1:5; 7:14.

² Jn 3:5-8; Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 6:11; Col 2:11, 12.

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

A. In the institution of baptism, where He says:
*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
Whoever believes and is baptized
will be saved,
but whoever does not believe
will be condemned (Mark 16:16).*

This promise is repeated where Scripture calls baptism
the washing of regeneration
and the washing away of sins (Titus 3:5; Acts 22:16).

LORD'S DAY 27

72. Q. Does this outward washing with water
itself wash away sins?

A. No, only the blood of Jesus Christ
and the Holy Spirit
cleans us from all sins.¹

¹ Mt 3:11; 1 Pet 3:21; 1 Jn 1:7.

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

A. God speaks in this way for a good reason.
He wants to teach us

that the blood and Spirit of Christ
remove our sins
just as water takes away
dirt from the body.¹

But, even more important,

He wants to assure us
by this divine pledge and sign
that we are
as truly cleansed from our sins spiritually
as we are bodily washed with water.²

¹ 1 Cor 6:11; Rev 1:5; 7:14.

² Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3, 4; Gal 3:27.

74. Q. Should infants, too, be baptized?

A. Yes.

Infants as well as adults
belong to God's covenant and congregation.¹

Through Christ's blood
the redemption from sin
and the Holy Spirit, who works faith,
are promised to them
no less than to adults.²

Therefore, by baptism, as sign of the covenant,
they must be grafted into the Christian church
and distinguished from the children of unbelievers.³

This was done in the old covenant by circumcision,⁴
in place of which baptism was instituted
in the new covenant.⁵

¹ Gen 17:7; Mt 19:14.

² Ps 22:10; Is 44:1-3; Acts 2:38, 39; 16:31.

³ Acts 10:47; 1 Cor 7:14.

⁴ Gen 17:9-14.

⁵ Col 2: 11-13.

The Lord's Supper

LORD'S DAY 28

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

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

¹ Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:19, 20; 1 Cor 11:23-25.

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

- A. First,
 to accept with a believing heart
 all the suffering and the death of Christ,
 and so receive
 forgiveness of sins and life eternal.¹
 Second,
 to be united more and more to His sacred body
 through the Holy Spirit,
 who lives both in Christ and in us.²
 Therefore, although Christ is in heaven³
 and we are on earth,
 yet we are flesh of His flesh
 and bone of His bones,⁴
 and we forever live and are governed
 by one Spirit,
 as the members of our body are
 by one soul.⁵

¹ Jn 6:35, 40, 50-54.

² Jn 6:55, 56; 1 Cor 12:13.

- ³ Acts 1:9-11; 3:21; 1 Cor 11:26; Col 3:1.
⁴ 1 Cor 6:15, 17; Eph 5:29, 30; 1 Jn 4:13.
⁵ Jn 6:56-58; 15:1-6; Eph 4:15, 16; 1 Jn 3:24.

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

- A. In the institution of the Lord's supper:
*The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed,
 took bread, and when He had given thanks,
 He broke it and said,
 "This is My body, which is for you;
 Do this in remembrance of Me."
 In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying,
 "This cup is the new covenant in My blood;
 Do this, whenever you drink it,
 in remembrance of Me."
 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup,
 you proclaim the Lord's death
 until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).*

This promise is repeated by Paul where he says:
*Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks
 a participation in the blood of Christ?
 And is not the bread that we break
 a participation in the body of Christ?
 Because there is one loaf,
 we, who are many, are one body,
 for we all partake of the one loaf
 (1 Corinthians 10:16, 17).*

LORD'S DAY 29

78. Q. Are then the bread and wine
 changed into the real body and blood of Christ?

- A. No.
 Just as the water of baptism
 is not changed into the blood of Christ
 and is not the washing away of sins itself
 but is simply God's sign and pledge,¹
 so also the bread in the Lord's supper
 does not become the body of Christ itself,²
 although it is called Christ's body³
 in keeping with the nature and usage of sacraments.⁴

¹ Eph 5:26; Tit 3:5.

² Mt 26:26-29.

³ 1 Cor 10:16, 17; 11:26-28.

⁴ Gen 17:10, 11; Ex 12:11, 13; 1 Cor 10:3, 4; 1 Pet 3:21.

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

A. Christ speaks in this way for a good reason: He wants to teach us by His supper that as bread and wine sustain us in this temporal life, so His crucified body and shed blood are true food and drink for our souls to eternal life.¹

But, even more important, He wants to assure us by this visible sign and pledge, first,

that through the working of the Holy Spirit we share in His true body and blood as surely as we receive with our mouth these holy signs in remembrance of Him,² and, second,

that all His suffering and obedience are as certainly ours as if we personally had suffered and paid for our sins.³

¹ Jn 6:51, 55.

² 1 Cor 10:16, 17; 11:26.

³ Rom 6:5-11.

LORD’S DAY 30

80. Q. What difference is there between the Lord’s supper and the papal mass?

A. The Lord’s supper testifies to us, first, that we have complete forgiveness of all our sins through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself accomplished on the cross once for all;¹

and, second, that through the Holy Spirit we are grafted into Christ,² who with His true body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father,³

and this is where He wants to be worshipped.⁴

But the mass teaches,

first,

that the living and the dead
do not have forgiveness of sins
through the suffering of Christ
unless He is still offered for them daily
by the priests;

and, second,

that Christ is bodily present
in the form of bread and wine,
and there is to be worshipped.

Therefore the mass is basically

nothing but a denial

of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ,
and an accursed idolatry.

¹ Mt 26:28; Jn 19:30; Heb 7:27; 9:12, 25, 26; 10:10-18.

² 1 Cor 6:17; 10:16, 17.

³ Jn 20:17; Acts 7:55, 56; Heb 1:3; 8:1.

⁴ Jn 4:21-24; Phil 3:20; Col 3:1; 1 Thess 1:10.

81. Q. Who are to come
to the table of the Lord?

A. Those who are truly displeased with themselves
because of their sins
and yet trust that these are forgiven them
and that their remaining weakness is covered
by the suffering and death of Christ,
and who also desire more and more
to strengthen their faith
and amend their life.

But hypocrites and those who do not repent
eat and drink judgment upon themselves.¹

¹ 1 Cor 10:19-22; 11:26-32.

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

A. No, for then the covenant of God
would be profaned
and His wrath kindled
against the whole congregation.¹

Therefore,

according to the command of Christ and His apostles,
the Christian church is duty-bound
to exclude such persons
by the keys of the kingdom of heaven,

until they amend their lives.

¹ Ps 50:16; Is 1:11-17; 1 Cor 11:17-34.

LORD'S DAY 31

83. Q. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

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

¹ Mt 16:19; Jn 20:21-23.

84. Q. How is the kingdom of heaven
opened and closed
by the preaching of the gospel?

A. According to the command of Christ,
the kingdom of heaven is opened
when it is proclaimed and publicly testified
to each and every believer
that God has really forgiven
all their sins
for the sake of Christ's merits,
as often as they by true faith
accept the promise of the gospel.

The kingdom of heaven is closed
when it is proclaimed and testified
to all unbelievers and hypocrites
that the wrath of God
and eternal condemnation
rest on them
as long as they do not repent.

According to this testimony of the gospel,
God will judge
both in this life
and in the life to come.¹

¹ Mt 16:19; Jn 3:31-36; 20:21-23.

85. Q. How is the kingdom of heaven
closed and opened
by church discipline?

A. According to the command of Christ,
people who call themselves Christians
but show themselves to be un-christian
in doctrine or life
are first repeatedly admonished

in a brotherly manner.
 If they do not give up
 their errors or wickedness,
 they are reported to the church,
 that is, to the elders.
 If they do not heed
 also their admonitions,
 they are forbidden the use of the sacraments,
 and they are excluded by the elders
 from the Christian congregation,
 and by God Himself
 from the kingdom of Christ.¹
 They are again received
 as members of Christ
 and of the church
 when they promise and show
 real amendment.²

¹ Mt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:3-5; 11-13; 2 Thess 3:14, 15.

² Lk 15:20-24; 2 Cor 2:6-11.

The Third Part OUR THANKFULNESS LORD'S DAY 32

86. Q. Since we have been delivered
 from our misery
 by grace alone through Christ,
 without any merit of our own,
 why must we yet do good works?
- A. Because Christ,
 having redeemed us by His blood,
 also renews us by His Holy Spirit
 to be His image,
 so that with our whole life
 we may show ourselves thankful to God
 for His benefits,¹
 and He may be praised by us.²
 Further, that we ourselves
 may be assured of our faith
 by its fruits,³
 and that by our godly walk of life
 we may win our neighbours for Christ.⁴

¹ Rom 6:13; 12:1, 2; 1 Pet 2:5-10.

² Mt 5:16; 1 Cor 6:19, 20.

³ Mt 7:17, 18; Gal 5:22-24; 2 Pet 1:10, 11.

⁴ Mt 5:14-16; Rom 14:17-19; 1 Pet 2:12; 3:1, 2.

87. Q. Can those be saved
who do not turn to God
from their ungrateful and impenitent
walk of life?
- A. By no means.
Scripture says that no unchaste person,
idolater, adulterer,
thief, greedy person,
drunkard, slanderer,
robber, or the like
shall inherit the kingdom of God.¹
- ¹ 1 Cor 6:9, 10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5, 6; 1 Jn 3:14.

LORD'S DAY 33

88. Q. What is
the true repentance or conversion of man?
- A. It is the dying of the old nature
and the coming to life of the new.¹
- ¹ Rom 6:1-11; 1 Cor 5:7; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:5-10.
89. Q. What is the dying of the old nature?
- A. It is to grieve with heartfelt sorrow
that we have offended God by our sin,
and more and more to hate it
and flee from it.¹
- ¹ Ps 51:3, 4, 17; Joel 2:12, 13; Rom 8:12, 13; 2 Cor 7:10.
90. Q. What is the coming to life
of the new nature?
- A. It is a heartfelt joy
in God through Christ,¹
and a love and delight
to live according to the will of God
in all good works.²
- ¹ Ps 51:8, 12; Is 57:15; Rom 5:1; 14:17.
² Rom 6:10, 11; Gal 2:20.
91. Q. But what are good works?
- A. Only those which are done
out of true faith,¹
in accordance with the law of God,²
and to His glory,³
and not those based
on our own opinion
or on precepts of men.⁴
- ¹ Jn 15:5; Rom 14:23; Heb 11:6.

² Lev 18:4; 1 Sam 15:22; Eph 2:10.

³ 1 Cor 10:31.

⁴ Deut 12:32; Is 29:13; Ezek 20:18, 19; Mt 15:7-9.

The Ten Words

LORD'S DAY 34

92. Q. What is the law of the LORD?
 A. *God spoke all these words:
 I am the LORD your God,
 who brought you out of Egypt,
 out of the land of slavery.*
1. *You shall have no other gods before Me.*
 2. *You shall not make for yourself an idol
 in the form of anything in heaven above
 or on the earth beneath
 or in the waters below.
 You shall not bow down to them or worship them;
 for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God,
 punishing the children for the sin of the fathers
 to the third and fourth generation
 of those who hate Me,
 but showing love to a thousand generations of those
 who love Me and keep My commandments.*
 3. *You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God,
 for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless
 who misuses His name.*
 4. *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD
 your God. On it you shall not do any work,
 neither you, nor your son or daughter,
 nor your manservant or maidservant,
 nor your animals,
 nor the alien within your gates.
 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth,
 the sea, and all that is in them,
 but He rested on the seventh day.
 Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day
 and made it holy.*
 5. *Honor your father and your mother,
 so that you may live long
 in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*
 6. *You shall not murder.*
 7. *You shall not commit adultery.*
 8. *You shall not steal.*
 9. *You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.*

10. *You shall not covet your neighbor's house.
You shall not covet your neighbor's wife,
or his manservant or maidservant,
his ox or donkey,
or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*¹

¹ Ex 20:1-17; Deut 5:6-21.

93. Q. How are these commandments divided?

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

¹ Mt 22:37-40.

94. Q. What does the LORD require in the first commandment?

A. That for the sake of my very salvation I avoid and flee all idolatry,¹ witchcraft, superstition,² and prayer to saints or to other creatures.³

Further, that I rightly come to know the only true God,⁴ trust in Him alone,⁵ submit to Him with all humility⁶ and patience,⁷ expect all good from Him only,⁸ and love,⁹ fear,¹⁰ and honour Him¹¹ with all my heart.

In short, that I forsake all creatures rather than do the least thing against His will.¹²

¹ 1 Cor 6:9, 10; 10:5-14; 1 Jn 5:21.

² Lev 19:31; Deut 18:9-12.

³ Mt 4:10; Rev 19:10; 22:8, 9.

⁴ Jn 17:3.

⁵ Jer 17:5, 7.

⁶ 1 Pet 5:5, 6.

⁷ Rom 5:3, 4; 1 Cor 10:10; Phil 2:14; Col 1:11; Heb 10:36.

⁸ Ps 104:27, 28; Is 45:7; Jas 1:17.

⁹ Deut 6:5; (Mt 22:37).

¹⁰ Deut 6:2; Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; 9:10; Mt 10:28; 1 Pet 1:17.

¹¹ Deut 6:13; (Mt 4:10); Deut 10:20.

¹² Mt 5:29, 30; 10:37-39; Acts 5:29.

95. Q. What is idolatry?

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

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

LORD'S DAY 35

96. Q. What does God require
in the second commandment?

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

¹ Deut 4:15-19; Is 40:18-25; Acts 17:29; Rom 1:23.

² Lev 10:1-7; Deut 12:30; 1 Sam 15:22, 23; Mt 15:9; Jn 4:23, 24.

97. Q. May we then not make
any image at all?

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

¹ Ex 34:13, 14, 17; Num 33:52; 2 Kings 18:4, 5; Is 40:25.

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

A. No, for we should not be wiser than God.
He wants His people to be taught
not by means of dumb images¹
but by the living preaching of His Word.²

¹ Jer 10:8; Hab 2:18-20.

² Rom 10:14, 15, 17; 2 Tim 3:16, 17; 2 Pet 1:19.

LORD'S DAY 36

99. Q. What is required
in the third commandment?

A. We are not to blaspheme or to abuse the Name of God

by cursing,¹ perjury,² or unnecessary oaths,³
 nor to share in such horrible sins
 by being silent bystanders.⁴
 Rather, we must use the holy Name of God
 only with fear and reverence,⁵
 so that we may rightly confess Him,⁶
 call upon Him,⁷
 and praise Him in all our words and works.⁸

¹ Lev 24:10-17.

² Lev 19:12.

³ Mt 5:37; Jas 5:12.

⁴ Lev 5:1; Prov 29:24.

⁵ Ps 99:1-5; Is 45:23; Jer 4:2.

⁶ Mt 10:32, 33; Rom 10:9, 10.

⁷ Ps 50:14, 15; 1 Tim 2:8.

⁸ Rom 2:24; Col 3:17; 1 Tim 6:1.

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

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

¹ Lev 5:1.

² Lev 24:16.

LORD'S DAY 37

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

A. Yes, when the government demands it
 of its subjects,
 or when necessity requires it,
 in order to maintain and promote
 fidelity and truth,
 to God's glory and for our neighbour's good.
 Such oath-taking is based on God's Word¹
 and was therefore rightly used
 by saints in the Old and the New Testament.²

¹ Deut 6:13; 10:20; Jer 4:1, 2; Heb 6:16.

² Gen 21:24; 31:53; Josh 9:15; 1 Sam 24:22; 1 Kings 1:29, 30; Rom 1:9;
 2 Cor 1:23.

102.Q. May we also swear by saints
or other creatures?

A. No.

A lawful oath is a calling upon God,
who alone knows the heart,
to bear witness to the truth,
and to punish me if I swear falsely.¹

No creature is worthy of such honour.²

¹ Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 1:23.

² Mt 5:34-37; 23:16-22; Jas 5:12.

LORD'S DAY 38

103.Q. What does God require
in the fourth commandment?

A. First,

that the ministry of the gospel and the schools
be maintained¹

and that, especially on the day of rest,

I diligently attend the church of God²

to hear God's Word,³

to use the sacraments,⁴

to call publicly upon the LORD,⁵

and to give Christian offerings for the poor.⁶

Second,

that all the days of my life

I rest from my evil works,

let the LORD work in me through His Holy Spirit,

and so begin in this life

the eternal Sabbath.⁷

¹ Deut 6:4-9; 20-25; 1 Cor 9:13, 14; 2 Tim 2:2; 3:13-17; Tit 1:5.

² Deut 12:5-12; Ps 40:9, 10; 68:26; Acts 2:42-47; Heb 10:23-25.

³ Rom 10:14-17; 1 Cor 14:26-33; 1 Tim 4:13.

⁴ 1 Cor 11:23, 24.

⁵ Col 3:16; 1 Tim 2:1.

⁶ Ps 50:14; 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8 and 9.

⁷ Is 66:23; Heb 4:9-11.

LORD'S DAY 39

104.Q. What does God require
in the fifth commandment?

A. That I show all honour, love, and faithfulness

to my father and mother

and to all those in authority over me,

submit myself with due obedience

to their good instruction and discipline,¹

and also have patience with their weaknesses
and shortcomings,²
since it is God's will
to govern us by their hand.³

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

² Prov 20:20; 23:22; 1 Pet 2:18.

³ Mt 22:21; Rom 13:1-8; Eph 6:1-9; Col 3:18-21.

LORD'S DAY 40

105.Q. What does God require
in the sixth commandment?

- A. I am not to dishonour, hate, injure,
or kill my neighbour
by thoughts, words, or gestures,
and much less by deeds,
whether personally or through another;¹
rather, I am to put away
all desire of revenge.²

Moreover, I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself.³

Therefore, also, the government bears the sword
to prevent murder.⁴

¹ Gen 9:6; Lev 19:17, 18; Mt 5:21, 22; 26:52.

² Prov 25:21, 22; Mt 18:35; Rom 12:19; Eph 4:26.

³ Mt 4:7; 26:52; Rom 13:11-14.

⁴ Gen 9:6; Ex 21:14; Rom 13:4.

106.Q. But does this commandment
speak only of killing?

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

¹ Prov 14:30; Rom 1:29; 12:19; Gal 5:19-21; Jas 1:20; 1 Jn 2:9-11.

² 1 Jn 3:15.

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

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

- ¹ Mt 7:12; 22:39; Rom 12:10.
² Mt 5:5; Lk 6:36; Rom 12:10, 18; Gal 6:1, 2; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; 1 Pet 3:8.
³ Ex 23:4, 5; Mt 5:44, 45; Rom 12:20.

LORD'S DAY 41

108.Q. What does the seventh commandment teach us?

- A. That all unchastity is cursed by God.¹
 We must therefore detest it from the heart²
 and live chaste and disciplined lives,
 both within and outside of holy marriage.³

¹ Lev 18:30; Eph 5:3-5.

² Jude 22, 23.

³ 1 Cor 7:1-9; 1 Thess 4:3-8; Heb 13:4.

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

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

¹ Mt 5:27-29; 1 Cor 6:18-20; Eph 5:3, 4.

² 1 Cor 15:33; Eph 5:18.

LORD'S DAY 42

110.Q. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

- A. God forbids not only outright theft and robbery¹
 but also such wicked schemes and devices as
 false weights and measures,
 deceptive merchandising,
 counterfeit money,
 and usury;²
 we must not defraud our neighbour in any way,
 whether by force or by show of right.³
 In addition God forbids all greed⁴
 and all abuse or squandering of His gifts.⁵

¹ Ex 22:1; 1 Cor 5:9, 10; 6:9, 10.

² Deut 25:13-16; Ps 15:5; Prov 11:1; 12:22; Ezek 45:9-12; Lk 6:35.

³ Mic 6:9-11; Lk 3:14; Jas 5:1-6.

⁴ Lk 12:15; Eph 5:5.

⁵ Prov 21:20; 23:20, 21; Lk 16:10-13.

- 111.Q. What does God require of you in this commandment?
- A. I must promote my neighbour's good wherever I can and may, deal with him as I would like others to deal with me, and work faithfully so that I may be able to give to those in need.¹
- ¹ Is 58:5-10; Mt 7:12; Gal 6:9, 10; Eph 4:28.

LORD'S DAY 43

- 112.Q. What is required in the ninth commandment?
- A. I must not give false testimony against anyone, twist no one's words, not gossip or slander, nor condemn or join in condemning anyone rashly and unheard.¹
- Rather, I must avoid all lying and deceit as the devil's own works, under penalty of God's heavy wrath.²
- In court and everywhere else, I must love the truth,³ speak and confess it honestly, and do what I can to defend and promote my neighbour's honour and reputation.⁴
- ¹ Ps 15; Prov 19:5, 9; 21:28; Mt 7:1; Lk 6:37; Rom 1:28-32.
² Lev 19:11, 12; Prov 12:22; 13:5; Jn 8:44; Rev 21:8.
³ 1 Cor 13:6; Eph 4:25.
⁴ 1 Pet 3:8, 9; 4:8.

LORD'S DAY 44

- 113.Q. What does the tenth commandment require of us?
- A. That not even the slightest thought or desire contrary to any of God's commandments should ever arise in our heart.
- Rather, with all our heart we should always hate all sin and delight in all righteousness.¹
- ¹ Ps 19:7-14; 139:23, 24; Rom 7:7, 8.

114.Q. But can those converted to God
keep these commandments perfectly?

A. No.

In this life even the holiest
have only a small beginning
of this obedience.¹

Nevertheless, with earnest purpose
they do begin to live
not only according to some
but to all the commandments of God.²

¹ Eccles 7:20; Rom 7:14, 15; 1 Cor 13:9; 1 Jn 1:8.

² Ps 1:1, 2; Rom 7:22-25; Phil 3:12-16.

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

A. First,

so that throughout our life
we may more and more become aware of
our sinful nature,
and therefore seek more eagerly
the forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ.¹

Second,

so that, while praying to God
for the grace of the Holy Spirit,
we may never stop striving
to be renewed more and more
after God's image,
until after this life we reach
the goal of perfection.²

¹ Ps 32:5; Rom 3:19-26; 7:7, 24, 25; 1 Jn 1:9.

² 1 Cor 9:24; Phil 3:12-14; 1 Jn 3:1-3.

Prayer

LORD'S DAY 45

116.Q. Why is prayer necessary for Christians?

A. Because prayer is the most important part
of the thankfulness
which God requires of us.¹

Moreover, God will give
His grace and the Holy Spirit
only to those who constantly
and with heartfelt longing

ask Him for these gifts
and thank Him for them.²

¹ Ps 50:14, 15; 116:12-19; 1 Thess 5:16-18.

² Mt 7:7, 8; Lk 11:9-13.

117.Q. What belongs to a prayer
which pleases God
and is heard by Him?

A. First,

we must from the heart
call upon the one true God only,
who has revealed Himself in His Word,
for all that He has commanded us to pray.¹

Second,

we must thoroughly know
our need and misery,
so that we may humble ourselves
before God.²

Third,

we must rest on this firm foundation
that, although we do not deserve it,
God will certainly hear our prayer
for the sake of Christ our Lord,
as He has promised us in His Word.³

¹ Ps 145:18-20; Jn 4:22-24; Rom 8:26, 27; Jas 1:5; 1 Jn 5:14, 15; Rev 19:10.

² 2 Chron 7:14; 20:12; Ps 2:11; 34:18; 62:8; Is 66:2; Rev 4.

³ Dan 9:17-19; Mt 7:8; Jn 14:13, 14; 16:23; Rom 10:13; Jas 1:6.

118.Q. What has God commanded us
to ask of Him?

A. All the things we need
for body and soul,¹
as included in the prayer
which Christ our Lord Himself taught us.

¹ Mt 6:33; Jas 1:17.

119.Q. What is the Lord's prayer?

A. *Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,
for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen.*¹

¹ Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4.

LORD'S DAY 46

- 120.Q. Why has Christ commanded us to address God as *Our Father*?
- A. To awaken in us
 at the very beginning of our prayer
 that childlike reverence and trust
 toward God
 which should be basic to our prayer:
 God has become our Father
 through Christ
 and will much less deny us
 what we ask of Him in faith
 than our fathers would
 refuse us earthly things.¹
- ¹ Mt 7:9-11; Lk 11:11-13.

- 121.Q. Why is there added,
in heaven?
- A. These words teach us
 not to think of God's heavenly majesty
 in an earthly manner,¹
 and to expect from His almighty power
 all things we need
 for body and soul.²
- ¹ Jer 23:23, 24; Acts 17:24, 25.
² Mt 6:25-34; Rom 8:31, 32.

LORD'S DAY 47

- 122.Q. What is the first petition?
- A. *Hallowed be Your name.*
 That is:
 Grant us first of all
 that we may rightly know You,¹
 and sanctify, glorify, and praise You
 in all Your works,
 in which shine forth
 Your almighty power,
 wisdom, goodness, righteousness,
 mercy, and truth.²
- Grant us also
 that we may so direct our whole life –
 our thoughts, words, and actions –
 that Your name is not blasphemed because of us
 but always honoured and praised.³

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

LORD'S DAY 48

123.Q. What is the second petition?

A. *Your kingdom come.*

That is:

So rule us by Your Word and Spirit
 that more and more we submit to You.¹

Preserve and increase Your church.²

Destroy the works of the devil,
 every power that raises itself against You,
 and every conspiracy against Your holy Word.³

Do all this

until the fulness of Your kingdom comes,
 wherein You shall be all in all.⁴

- ¹ Ps 119:5, 105; 143:10; Mt 6:33.
² Ps 51:18; 122:6-9; Mt 16:18; Acts 2:42-47.
³ Rom 16:20; 1 Jn 3:8.
⁴ Rom 8:22, 23; 1 Cor 15:28; Rev 22: 17, 20.

LORD'S DAY 49

124.Q. What is the third petition?

A. *Your will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.*

That is:

Grant that we and all men
 may deny our own will,
 and without any murmuring
 obey Your will,
 for it alone is good.¹

Grant also that everyone
 may carry out the duties
 of his office and calling²
 as willingly and faithfully
 as the angels in heaven.³

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

LORD'S DAY 50

125. Q. What is the fourth petition?

A. *Give us today our daily bread.*

That is:

Provide us with all our bodily needs¹
 so that we may acknowledge
 that You are the only fountain of all good,²
 and that our care and labour,
 and also Your gifts,
 cannot do us any good
 without Your blessing.³

Grant, therefore, that we may
 withdraw our trust
 from all creatures
 and place it only in You.⁴

¹ Ps 104:27-30; 145:15, 16; Mt 6:25-34.

² Acts 14:17; 17:25; Jas 1:17.

³ Deut 8:3; Ps 37:16; 127:1, 2; 1 Cor 15:58.

⁴ Ps 55:22; 62; 146; Jer 17:5-8; Heb 13:5, 6.

LORD'S DAY 51

126.Q. What is the fifth petition?

- A. *Forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

That is:

For the sake of Christ's blood,
 do not impute to us,
 wretched sinners;
 any of our transgressions,
 nor the evil which still clings to us,¹
 as we also find this evidence of Your grace in us
 that we are fully determined
 wholeheartedly to forgive our neighbour.²

¹ Ps 51:1-7; 143:2; Rom 8:1; 1 Jn 2:1, 2.

² Mt 6:14, 15; 18:21-35.

LORD'S DAY 52

127.Q. What is the sixth petition?

- A. *And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from the evil one.*

That is:

In ourselves we are so weak
 that we cannot stand even for a moment.¹
 Moreover, our sworn enemies –
 the devil,² the world,³ and our own flesh⁴ –
 do not cease to attack us.

Will You, therefore,
 uphold and strengthen us

by the power of Your Holy Spirit,
so that in this spiritual war⁵
we may not go down to defeat,
but always firmly resist our enemies,
until we finally obtain
the complete victory.⁶

¹ Ps 103:14-16; Jn 15:1-5.

² 2 Cor 11:14; Eph 6:10-13; 1 Pet 5:8.

³ Jn 15:18-21.

⁴ Rom 7:23; Gal 5:17.

⁵ Mt 10:19, 20; 26:41; Mk 13:33; Rom 5:3-5.

⁶ 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Thess 3:13; 5:23.

128.Q. How do you conclude your prayer?

A. *For Yours is the kingdom
and the power
and the glory for ever.*

That is:

All this we ask of You
because, as our King,
having power over all things,
You art both willing and able
to give us all that is good,¹
and because not we
but Your holy name
should so receive all glory
for ever.²

¹ Rom 10:11-13; 2 Pet 2:9.

² Ps 115:1; Jer 33:8, 9; Jn 14:13.

129.Q. What does the word *Amen* mean?

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

¹ Is 65:24; 2 Cor 1:20; 2 Tim 2:13.

THE CANONS OF DORT

The third of our doctrinal standards is the Canons of Dort, also called the Five Articles against the Remonstrants. These are statements of doctrine adopted by the Reformed Synod of Dort in 1618-1619. This Synod had an international dimension, since it was not only composed of the delegates of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands but also attended by twenty-seven representatives of foreign churches.

The Synod of Dort was held in view of the serious disturbance in the Reformed churches caused by the rise and spread of Arminianism. Arminius, a theological professor at the University of Leyden, and his followers departed from the Reformed faith in their teaching concerning five important points. They taught conditional election on the ground of foreseen faith, universal atonement, partial depravity, resistible grace, and the possibility of a lapse from grace. These views were rejected by the Synod, and the opposite views were embodied in what are now called the Canons of Dort or the Five Articles against the Remonstrants. In these Canons the Synod set forth the Reformed doctrine on these points, namely, unconditional election, particular atonement, total depravity, invincible grace, and the perseverance of the saints.

Each of the Canons consists of a positive and a negative part, the former being an exposition of the Reformed doctrine on the subject, and the latter a repudiation of the corresponding Arminian error. Although in form there are only four chapters, occasioned by the combination of the third and fourth sections into one, we properly speak of five Canons, and the third chapter is always designated as Chapter III/IV. All office-bearers of our churches are required to subscribe to these Canons as well as to the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism.

NOTE: Text references and headings will be added in the margin in the final printed version of the Canons of Dort This in order to make the layout the same as the current *Book of Praise*. For the purpose of this report the references are listed under each Article.

FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE

DIVINE ELECTION AND REPROBATION

ARTICLE 1

ALL MANKIND CONDEMNABLE BEFORE GOD

Since all men have sinned in Adam, lie under the curse, and deserve eternal death, God would have done no one an injustice if it had been His will to leave the whole human race in sin and under the curse, and to condemn it on account of its sin, according to these words of the apostle: so that ... *the whole world [may be] held accountable to God. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; and, the wages of sin is death.*

Rom 5:12; Rom 3:19, 23; Rom 6:23.

ARTICLE 2**THE SENDING OF THE SON OF GOD**

But in this the love of God was made manifest, that He sent His only-begotten Son into the world, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

1 Jn 4:9; Jn 3:16

ARTICLE 3**THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL**

So that men may be brought to faith, God mercifully sends heralds of this most joyful message to whom He will and when He wills. By their ministry men are called to repentance and to faith in Christ crucified. For *how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?* Is 52:7; 1 Cor 1:23-24; Rom 10:14-15.

ARTICLE 4**A TWOFOLD OUTCOME**

The wrath of God remains upon those who do not believe this gospel. But those who receive it and embrace Jesus the Saviour with a true and living faith are delivered by Him from the wrath of God and from destruction, and are given eternal life.

Jn 3:36; Mk 16:16; Rom 10:9.

ARTICLE 5**THE CAUSE OF UNBELIEF, THE SOURCE OF FAITH**

The cause or guilt for this unbelief, as well as for all other sins, is by no means in God, but rather in man. Faith in Jesus Christ and salvation through Him, however, is the free gift of God, as it is written: *By grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Similarly: It has been granted to you on behalf of Christ ...to believe on Him.*

Heb 4:6; Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29.

ARTICLE 6**GOD'S ETERNAL DECREE**

That God in time confers the gift of faith on some, and not on others, proceeds from His eternal decree. For He knows all His works from eternity, and He *works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.* According to this decree He graciously softens the hearts of the elect, no matter how hard they may be, and inclines them to believe; those not elected, however, He leaves in their own wickedness and hardness by a just judgment. And here especially is disclosed to us the profound, merciful, and at the same time just distinction between men equally worthy of condemnation, or that decree of election and reprobation which has been revealed in God's Word. Although perverse, impure, and unstable men twist this decree to their own destruction, it provides unspeakable comfort for holy and God-fearing souls.

Acts 13:48; 1 Pet 2:8; Eph 1:11.

ARTICLE 7**ELECTION DEFINED**

Election is the unchangeable purpose of God whereby, before the foundation of the world, out of the whole human race, which had fallen by its own fault out of its original integrity into sin and perdition, He has, according to the sovereign good pleasure of His will, out of mere grace, chosen in Christ to salvation a definite number of specific persons, neither better nor more worthy than others, but involved together with them in a common misery. He has also from eternity appointed Christ to be the Mediator and Head of all the elect and the foundation of salvation and thus He decreed to give to Christ those who were to be saved, and effectually to call and draw them into His communion through His Word and Spirit. He decreed to give them true faith in Him, to justify them, to sanctify them, and, after having powerfully kept them in the fellowship of His Son, finally to glorify them, for the demonstration of His mercy and the praise of the riches of His glorious grace. As it is written: God chose us in Christ, before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us *to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will— to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. And elsewhere, those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified.* Eph 1:4, 11; Jn 17:2, 12, 24; Jn 6:37, 44; Eph 1:4-6; Rom 8:30.

ARTICLE 8**ONE DECREE OF ELECTION**

There are not various decrees of this election, but there is one and the same decree concerning all those that are to be saved under both the Old and the New Testament. For Scripture declares that the good pleasure, purpose, and counsel of the will of God is one. According to this purpose He has chosen us from eternity both to grace and to glory, both to salvation and to the way of salvation, which He prepared for us that we should walk in it. Deut 7:7; 9:6; Eph 1:4-5; Eph 2:10.

ARTICLE 9**ELECTION NOT BASED ON FORESEEN FAITH**

This election is not based on foreseen faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality of disposition, as a cause or condition in man required for being chosen, but men are chosen to faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, and so on. Election, therefore, is the fountain of every saving good, from which flow faith, holiness, and other saving gifts, and finally eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects. This the apostle teaches when he says, *He chose us* (not because we were, but are) *to be holy and blameless in His sight.* Rom 8:30; Eph 1:4.

ARTICLE 10**ELECTION BASED ON GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE**

The cause of this gracious election is solely the good pleasure of God. This good pleasure does not consist in this, that out of all possible conditions God chose certain qualities or actions of men as a condition for salvation, but in

this, that out of the common mass of sinners He adopted certain persons to be His own possession. For it is written, *Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad, and so on, she (namely, Rebecca), was told, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." And, all who were appointed for eternal life believed.*

Rom 9:11-13;(Gen 25:23);(Mal 1:2-3);Acts 13:48.

ARTICLE 11

ELECTION UNCHANGEABLE

As God Himself is most wise, unchangeable, all-knowing and almighty, so His election can neither be undone and redone, nor changed, revoked, or annulled; neither can the elect be cast away, nor their number be diminished.

Jn 6:37; 10:28.

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, but by observing in themselves, 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, and a hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Deut 29:29;1 Cor 2:10-11;2 Cor 13:5; 7:10;Mt 5:6.

ARTICLE 13

THE VALUE OF THIS ASSURANCE

The awareness and assurance of this election provide the children of God with greater reason for daily humbling themselves before God, for adoring the depth of His mercies, for cleansing themselves, and for fervently loving Him in turn who first so greatly loved them. It is therefore not at all true that this doctrine of election and the reflection on it makes them lax in observing the commands of God or falsely secure. In the just judgment of God, this usually happens to those who rashly presume to have the grace of election, or idly and boldly chatter about it, but refuse to walk in the ways of the elect.

1 Jn 3:3; 4:19.

ARTICLE 14

HOW ELECTION IS TO BE TAUGHT

This doctrine of divine election, according to the most wise counsel of God, was preached by the prophets, by Christ Himself, and by the apostles, under the Old as well as the New Testament, and was then committed to writing in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, also today this doctrine should be taught in the church of God, for which it was particularly intended, in its proper time and place, provided it be done with a spirit of discretion, in a reverent and holy manner, without inquisitively prying into the ways of the most High, to the glory of God's most holy Name, and for the living comfort of His people.

Acts 20:27; Job 36:23-26; Rom 11:33; 12:3; 1 Cor 4:6.

ARTICLE 15**REPROBATION DESCRIBED**

Holy Scripture illustrates and recommends to us this eternal and undeserved grace of our election, especially when it further declares that not all men are elect but that some have not been elected, or have been passed by in the eternal election of God. Out of His most free, most just, blameless, and unchangeable good pleasure, God has decreed to leave them in the common misery into which they have by their own fault plunged themselves, and not to give them saving faith and the grace of conversion. These, having been left in their own ways and under His just judgment, God has decreed finally to condemn and punish eternally, not only on account of their unbelief but also on account of all their other sins, in order to display His justice. This is the decree of reprobation, which by no means makes God the author of sin (the very thought is blasphemous!), but rather declares Him to be its awesome, blameless, and just judge and avenger.

Rom 9:22; 1 Pet 2:8; Acts 14:16.

ARTICLE 16**RESPONSES TO THE DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION**

Some do not yet clearly discern in themselves a living faith in Christ, an assured confidence of heart, peace of conscience, a zeal for childlike obedience, and a glorying in God through Christ; nevertheless, they use the means through which God has promised to work these things in us. They ought not to be alarmed when reprobation is mentioned, nor to count themselves among the reprobate. Rather, they must diligently continue in the use of these means, fervently desire a time of more abundant grace, and expect it with reverence and humility. Others seriously desire to be converted to God, to please Him only, and to be delivered from the body of death. Yet they cannot reach that point on the way of godliness and faith which they would like. They should be even less terrified by the doctrine of reprobation, since a merciful God has promised not to snuff out the smouldering wick nor to break the bruised reed.

Still others disregard God and the Saviour Jesus Christ and have completely given themselves over to the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth. For them this doctrine of reprobation is rightly fearsome as long as they do not seriously turn to God.

Jas 2:26; 2 Cor 1:12; Rom 5:11; Phil 3:3; Rom 7:24; Is 42:3; Mt 12:20; Mt 13:22; Heb 12:29.

ARTICLE 17**CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS WHO DIE IN INFANCY**

We must judge concerning the will of God from His Word, which declares that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they are included with their parents. Therefore, God-fearing parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in their infancy.

Gen 17:7; Is 59:21; Acts 2:39; 1 Cor 7:14.

ARTICLE 18**NOT PROTEST BUT ADORATION**

To those who complain about this grace of undeserved election and the severity of righteous reprobation, we reply with this word of the apostle: *But who are you, O man, to talk back to God?* And with this word of our Saviour: *Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money?*

We, however, with reverent adoration of these mysteries, exclaim with the apostle: *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?" "Who has ever 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.* Job 34:34-37; Rom 9:20; Mt 20:15; Rom 11:33-36.

REJECTION OF ERRORS

Having explained the true doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, Synod rejects the following errors:

1

Error: The will of God to save those who would believe and persevere in faith and obedience is the whole and entire decree of election to salvation. Nothing else concerning this decree has been revealed in God's Word.

Refutation: This error is deceptive and clearly contradicts Scripture, which declares not only that God will save those who believe but also that He has chosen specific persons from eternity. Within time He grants to these elect, above others, both faith in Christ and perseverance. *I have revealed You to those whom You gave Me out of the world, Jn 17:6. And all who were appointed for eternal life believed, Acts 13:48. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight, Eph 1:4.*

2

Error: There are various kinds of divine election to eternal life. One is general and indefinite, another is particular and definite. The latter in turn is either incomplete, revocable, non-decisive, and conditional, or it is complete, irrevocable, decisive, and absolute. In the same fashion there is an election to faith and another to salvation. Therefore election can be to justifying faith, without being decisive to salvation.

Refutation: All this is an invention of the human mind without any basis in the Scriptures. The doctrine of election is thus corrupted and the golden chain of our salvation broken: *And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified, Rom 8:30.*

3

Error: The good pleasure and purpose of God of which Scripture speaks in the doctrine of election is not that He chose certain specific persons and not others, but that out of all possible conditions (such as the works of the law)

He chose or selected the act of faith, which in itself is without merit, as well as the imperfect obedience of faith, to be a condition of salvation. In His grace He wished to count such faith as complete obedience and worthy of the reward of eternal life.

Refutation: This offensive error deprives God's good pleasure and Christ's merits of all efficacy, and draws people away from the truth of gracious justification and from the simplicity of Scripture. It contradicts the word of the apostle: *God has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 2 Tim 1:9.*

4

Error: Election to faith depends on the condition that man should use the light of nature properly, and that he be pious, humble, meek, and fit for eternal life.

Refutation: If this were true, election would depend on man. This smacks of the teaching of Pelagius and is in open conflict with the teaching of the apostle in Ephesians 2:3-9, *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to 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.*

5

Error: Incomplete and non-decisive election of specific persons to salvation took place on the ground of foreseen faith, conversion, holiness, and godliness, which either began or continued for some time. Complete and decisive election, however, occurred because of foreseen perseverance in faith, conversion, holiness, and godliness till the end. This is the gracious and evangelical worthiness because of which the person who is chosen is more worthy than the one who is not chosen. Therefore faith, obedience of faith, holiness, godliness, and perseverance are not fruits of unchangeable election to glory. Instead, they are necessary conditions and causes required and foreseen as accomplished in those who are to be fully elected.

Refutation: This error militates against all of Scripture, which constantly impresses the following upon us: Election is *not by works but by Him who calls, Rom 9:11; And all who were appointed for eternal life believed, Acts 13:48; He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight, Eph 1:4; You did not choose me, but I chose you, Jn 15:16; And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace, Rom 11:6; This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins, 1 Jn 4:10.*

6

Error: Not every election to salvation is unchangeable. Some of the elect can and do indeed perish everlastingly, notwithstanding any decree of God.

Refutation: This gross error makes God changeable, destroys the comfort which the believers obtain from the firmness of their election, and contradicts Holy Scripture: The elect can not be led astray, Mt 24:24; *And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that He has given Me, but raise them up at the last day*, Jn 6:39; *those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified*, Rom 8:30.

7

Error: In this life there is no fruit, consciousness, or certainty of the unchangeable election to glory, except such as is based upon a changeable and uncertain condition.

Refutation: To speak about an uncertain certainty is not only absurd but also contrary to the experience of the believers. As a result of the awareness of their election, they glory with the apostle in this favour of God, Eph 1. With the disciples of Christ they rejoice that their names are written in heaven, Lk 10:20. They put the consciousness of their election over against the flaming darts of the devil, when they exclaim: *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?* Rom 8:33

8

Error: God did not simply by an act of His righteous will decide to leave any person in the common state of sin and condemnation since his fall in Adam, nor did He decide to pass by any one in granting such grace as is necessary for faith and conversion.

Refutation: Scripture, however, states, *God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden*, Rom 9:18. It also declares, *The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them*, Mt 13:11. *Likewise, I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was Your good pleasure*, Mt 11:25, 26.

9

Error: God sends the gospel to one people rather than to another not merely and solely because of the good pleasure of His will, but because one people is better and worthier than another to which the gospel is not preached.

Refutation: Moses denies this when he addresses the people of Israel as follows: *To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. Yet the LORD set His affection on your forefathers and loved them, and He chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, as it is today*, Deut 10:14, 15. And Christ says, *Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes*, Mt 11:21.

SECOND HEAD OF DOCTRINE

CHRIST'S DEATH AND MAN'S REDEMPTION THROUGH IT

ARTICLE 1

THE PUNISHMENT WHICH GOD'S JUSTICE REQUIRES

God is not only supremely merciful but also supremely just. And as He Himself has revealed in His Word, His justice requires that our sins, committed against His infinite majesty, should be punished not only in this age but also in the age to come, both in body and soul. We cannot escape these punishments unless satisfaction is made to the justice of God.

Ex 34:6-7; Rom 5:16; Gal 3:10.

ARTICLE 2

THE SATISFACTION MADE BY CHRIST

We ourselves, however, cannot make this satisfaction and cannot free ourselves from God's wrath. God, therefore, in His infinite mercy has given His only-begotten Son as our Surety. For us or in our place He was made sin and a curse on the cross so that He might make satisfaction on our behalf.

Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13.

ARTICLE 3

THE INFINITE VALUE OF CHRIST'S DEATH

This death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins, of infinite value and worth, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world.

Heb 9:26, 28; 10:14; 1 Jn 2:2.

ARTICLE 4

WHY HIS DEATH HAS INFINITE VALUE

This death is of such great value and worth because the person who submitted to it is not only a true and perfectly holy man, but also the only-begotten Son of God, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for these qualifications were necessary for our Saviour. Further, this death is of such great value and worth because it was accompanied by a sense of the wrath and curse of God which we by our sins had deserved.

Heb 4:5; 7:26; 1 Jn 4:9; Mt 27:46.

ARTICLE 5

THE UNIVERSAL PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

The promise of the gospel is that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life. This promise ought to be announced and proclaimed universally and without discrimination to all peoples and to all men, to whom God in His good pleasure sends the gospel, together with the command to repent and believe.

Jn 3:16; 1 Cor 1:23; Mt 28:19; Acts 2:38; 16:31.

ARTICLE 6**WHY SOME DO NOT BELIEVE**

That, however, many who have been called by the gospel neither repent nor believe in Christ but perish in unbelief does not happen because of any defect or insufficiency in the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross, but through their own fault.

Mt 22:14; Ps 95:11; Heb 4:6.

ARTICLE 7**WHY OTHERS DO BELIEVE**

But to those who truly believe and by the death of Christ are freed from their sins and saved from perdition, this benefit comes only through God's grace, given to them from eternity in Christ. God owes this grace to no one.

2 Cor 5:18; Eph 2:8-9.

ARTICLE 8**THE EFFICACY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST**

For this was the most free counsel of God the Father, that the life-giving and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect. It was His most gracious will and intent to give to them alone justifying faith and thereby to bring them unfailingly to salvation. This means: God willed that Christ through the blood of the cross (by which He confirmed the new covenant) should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and tongue all those, and those only, who from eternity were chosen to salvation and were given to Him by the Father. God further willed that Christ should give to them faith, which, together with other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, He acquired for them by His death; that He should cleanse them by His blood from all sins, both original and actual, both those committed after faith and before faith; and that He should guard them faithfully to the end and at last present them to Himself in splendour without any spot or wrinkle.

Jn 17:9; Eph 5:25-27; Lk 22:20; Heb 8:6; Rev 5:9; Phil 2:9; 1 Jn 1:7; Jn 10:28; Eph 5:27.

ARTICLE 9**THE FULFILMENT OF GOD'S COUNSEL**

This counsel, proceeding from eternal love for the elect, has from the beginning of the world to the present time been powerfully fulfilled, and will also continue to be fulfilled, though the gates of hell vainly try to frustrate it. In due time the elect will be gathered together into one, and there will always be a church of believers, founded on the blood of Christ. This church shall steadfastly love and faithfully serve Him as her Saviour (who as bridegroom for His bride laid down His life for her on the cross) and celebrate His praises here and through all eternity.

Mt 16:18; Jn 11:52; 1 Kgs 19:18; Eph 5:25.

REJECTION OF ERRORS

Having explained the true doctrine of the death of Christ and the redemption of man by this death, Synod rejects the following errors:

1

Error: God the Father has ordained His Son to the death of the cross without a specific and definite decree to save any. What Christ obtained by His death might have been necessary, profitable, and valuable, and might remain in all its parts complete, perfect, and intact, even though the redemption He acquired had actually never been applied to any person.

Refutation: This doctrine is offensive to the wisdom of the Father and the merits of Jesus Christ and is contrary to Scripture. For our Saviour says: *I lay down My life for the sheep, and I know them*, Jn 10:15, 27. And the prophet Isaiah says concerning the Saviour: *Though the LORD makes His life a guilt offering, He will see His offspring and prolong His days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in His hand*, Is 53:10. Finally, this error contradicts the article of faith concerning the catholic Christian church.

2

Error: It was not the purpose of Christ's death that He should confirm the new covenant of grace by His blood, but only that He should acquire for the Father the mere right to establish once more with man such a covenant as He might please, whether of grace or of works.

Refutation: This militates against Scripture, which teaches that Christ has become the Surety and Mediator of a better, that is, a new covenant, and that a will takes effect only at death, Heb 7:22, 9:15, 17.

3

Error: By His satisfaction Christ did not really merit for anyone either salvation itself or faith by which this satisfaction of Christ to salvation is effectually made one's own. He acquired for the Father only the authority or the perfect will to deal again with man, and to prescribe new conditions as He might desire. It depends, however, on the free will of man to fulfil these conditions. Therefore it was possible that either no one or all men would fulfil them.

Refutation: Those who teach this error think contemptuously of the death of Christ, do not at all acknowledge its most important fruit or benefit, and bring back out of hell the Pelagian error.

4

Error: The new covenant of grace which God the Father, through the mediation of the death of Christ, made with man, does not consist herein that we are justified before God and saved by faith, inasmuch as it accepts the merit of Christ. It consists in the fact that God has revoked the demand of perfect obedience of the law and regards faith as such and the obedience of faith, though imperfect, as the perfect obedience of the law. He graciously deems it worthy of the reward of eternal life.

Refutation: This doctrine contradicts Scripture: *They are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood, Rom 3:24, 25.* Those who teach this error proclaim, as did the ungodly Socinus, a new and strange justification of man before God, against the consensus of the whole church.

5

Error: All men have been accepted into the state of reconciliation and into the grace of the covenant, so that no one is liable to condemnation on account of original sin, and no one shall be condemned because of it, but all are free from the guilt of original sin.

Refutation: This opinion is in conflict with Scripture, which teaches that we are *by nature objects of wrath, Eph 2:3.*

6

Error: As far as God is concerned, He wished to bestow equally upon all people the benefits acquired by the death of Christ; however, some obtain the pardon of sin and eternal life and others do not. This distinction depends on their own free will, which applies itself to the grace that is offered indifferently, and not on the special gift of mercy which so powerfully works in them that they rather than others apply this grace to themselves.

Refutation: Those who teach this, misuse the difference between the acquisition and the application of salvation and confuse the minds of imprudent and inexperienced people. While they pretend to present this distinction in a sound sense, they seek to instil into the minds of people the pernicious poison of Pelagianism.

7

Error: Christ could not die, did not need to die, and did not die for those whom God loved in the highest degree and elected to eternal life, since these do not need the death of Christ.

Refutation: This doctrine contradicts the apostle, who declares: *The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me, Gal 2:20.* 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 Jesus who died, Rom 8:33, 34,* namely, for them. And the Saviour assures us: *I lay down My life for the sheep, Jn 10:15.* And: *My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends, Jn 15:12, 13.*

THIRD AND FOURTH HEADS OF DOCTRINE

THE CORRUPTION OF MAN,
HIS CONVERSION TO GOD,
AND THE MANNER IN WHICH IT OCCURS

ARTICLE 1

THE EFFECT OF THE FALL

In the beginning man was created in the image of God. He was adorned in his mind with true and wholesome knowledge of his Creator and of all spiritual things; his will and heart were upright, all his affections pure, and therefore man was completely holy.

But rebelling against God through the instigation of the devil and through his own free will, he deprived himself of these excellent gifts, and instead brought upon himself blindness, horrible darkness, futility, and perverseness of judgment in his mind; wickedness, rebelliousness, and stubbornness in his will and heart; and impurity in all his affections.

Gen 1:26-27; Gen 3:1-7; Eph 4:17-19.

ARTICLE 2

THE SPREAD OF CORRUPTION

Since after the fall man became corrupt, he as a corrupt father brought forth corrupt children. Thus the corruption has spread from Adam to all his descendants, with the exception of Christ alone, not by imitation, as the Pelagians of old maintained, but by the propagation of a perverted nature, according to the righteous judgment of God.

Job 14:4; Ps 51:7; Rom 5:12; Heb 4:15.

ARTICLE 3

MAN'S TOTAL INABILITY

Therefore all men are conceived in sin and are born as children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in sins, and slaves of sin. And without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they neither will nor can return to God, reform their depraved nature, or prepare themselves for its reformation.

Eph 2:1, 3; Jn 8:34; Rom 6:16-17; Jn 3:3-6; Tit 3:5.

ARTICLE 4

THE INADEQUACY OF THE LIGHT OF NATURE

To be sure, there is left in man after the fall, some light of nature, whereby he retains some notions about God, about natural things, and about the difference between what is honourable and shameful, and shows some regard for virtue and outward order. But so far is he from arriving at the saving knowledge of God and true conversion through this light of nature that he does not even use it properly in natural and civil matters. Rather, whatever this light may be, man wholly pollutes it in various ways and suppresses it by his wickedness. In doing so, he renders himself without excuse before God.

Rom 1:19-20; 2:14-15; Rom 1:18, 20.

ARTICLE 5**THE INADEQUACY OF THE LAW**

What holds for the light of nature also applies to the Ten Commandments, given by God through Moses particularly to the Jews. For though it reveals the greatness of sin, and more and more convicts man of his guilt, yet it neither points out a remedy nor gives him power to rise out of this misery. Rather, weakened by the flesh, it leaves the transgressor under the curse. Man cannot, therefore, through the law obtain saving grace.

Rom 3:19-20; 7:10, 13; Rom 8:3; 2 Cor 3:6-7.

ARTICLE 6**THE NEED FOR THE GOSPEL**

What, therefore, neither the light of nature nor the law can do, God performs by the power of the Holy Spirit through the word or ministry of reconciliation, which is the gospel of the Messiah, by which it has pleased God to save men who believe, both under the old and under the new dispensation.

2 Cor 5:18-19; 1 Cor 1:21.

ARTICLE 7**WHY THE GOSPEL IS SENT TO SOME AND NOT TO OTHERS**

Under the old dispensation God revealed this mystery of His will to few. Under the new dispensation, however, He took the distinction between the peoples away and revealed it to a larger number. The cause of this very distribution of the gospel is not to be ascribed to the worthiness of one people above another, nor to the better use of the light of nature, but to the sovereign good pleasure and undeserved love of God. Therefore we to whom so great a grace is granted, beyond and contrary to all we deserve, ought to acknowledge it with a humble and grateful heart. But as regards to others whom this grace is not given, we ought with the apostle to adore the severity and righteousness of the judgments of God but by no means inquisitively to pry into them.

Eph 1:9; 2:14; Col 3:11; Rom 2:11; Mt 11:26; Rom 11:22-23; Rev 16:7; Deut 29:29.

ARTICLE 8**THE EARNEST CALL BY THE GOSPEL**

But as many as are called by the gospel are earnestly called, for God earnestly and most sincerely reveals in His Word what is pleasing to Him, namely, that those who are called should come to Him. He also earnestly promises rest for their souls and eternal life to all who come to Him and believe.

Is 55:1; Mt 22:4; Rev 22:17; Jn 6:37; Mt 11:29-29.

ARTICLE 9**WHY SOME WHO ARE CALLED DO NOT COME**

It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of the Christ offered by the gospel, nor of God, who calls through the gospel and who even confers various gifts upon them, that many who are called through the ministry of the gospel do

not come and are not converted. The fault lies in themselves. Some of them do not care and do not accept the word of life. Others do indeed receive it, but they do not accept it into their hearts, and therefore, after the joy of a temporary faith has vanished, they turn away. Still others choke the seed of the word by the thorns of the cares and the pleasures of this world, and bring forth no fruit. This our Saviour teaches in the Parable of the Sower, Mt 13. Mt 11:20-24; 22:1-8; 23:37.

ARTICLE 10

WHY OTHERS WHO ARE CALLED DO COME

Others who are called by the ministry of the gospel do come and are converted. This is not to be ascribed to man. He does not distinguish himself by his free will above others who are furnished with equal or sufficient grace for faith or conversion (as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains). It is to be ascribed to God. He has chosen His own in Christ from eternity and calls them effectually within time. He gives them faith and repentance; He delivers them from the power of darkness and transfers them to the kingdom of His Son. All this He does that they may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light, and may boast not of themselves but of the Lord, according to the testimony of the apostles in various places.

Rom 9:16; Col 1:13; Gal 1:4; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17; Eph 2:8-9.

ARTICLE 11

HOW GOD BRINGS ABOUT CONVERSION

God carries out His good pleasure in the elect and works in them true conversion in the following manner. He takes care that the gospel is preached to them, and powerfully enlightens their minds by the Holy Spirit, so that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God. By the efficacious working of the same regenerating Spirit He also penetrates into the innermost recesses of man. He opens the closed and softens the hard heart, circumcises that which was uncircumcised, and instils new qualities into the will. He makes the will, which was dead, alive; which was bad, good; which was unwilling, willing; and which was stubborn, obedient. He moves and strengthens it so that, like a good tree, it may be able to produce the fruit of good works.

Heb 6:4-5; 1 Cor 2:10-14; Heb 4:12; Acts 16:14; Deut 30:6; Ez 11:19; 36:26; Mt 7:18.

ARTICLE 12

REGENERATION IS THE WORK OF GOD ALONE

This conversion is the regeneration, the new creation, the raising from the dead, the making alive, so highly spoken of in the Scriptures, which God works in us without us. But this regeneration is by no means brought about only by outward teaching, by moral persuasion, or by such a mode of operation that, after God has done His part, it remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not regenerated, converted or not converted. It is, however, clearly a supernatural, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, marvellous,

mysterious, and inexpressible work. According to Scripture, inspired by the Author of this work, regeneration is not inferior in power to creation or the raising of the dead. Hence all those in whose hearts God works in this amazing way are certainly, unfailingly, and effectually regenerated and do actually believe. And then the will so renewed is not only acted upon and moved by God but, acted upon by God, the will itself also acts. Therefore man himself is rightly said to believe and repent through the grace he has received.

Jn 3:3; 2 Cor 4:6; 5:17; Eph 5:14; Jn 5:25; Rom 4:17; Phil 2:13.

ARTICLE 13

REGENERATION IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE

In this life believers cannot fully understand the way in which God does this work. Meanwhile, however, it is enough for them to know and experience that by this grace of God they believe with the heart and love their Saviour. Jn 3:18; Rom 10:9.

ARTICLE 14

HOW FAITH IS A GIFT OF GOD

Faith is therefore a gift of God, not because it is merely offered by God to the free will of man, but because it is actually conferred on man, instilled and infused into him. Nor is it a gift in the sense that God confers only the power to believe and then awaits from man's free will the consent to believe or the act of believing. It is, however, a gift in the sense that He who works both to will and to work, and indeed all things in all, brings about in man both the will to believe and the act of believing.

Eph 2:8; Phil 2:13.

ARTICLE 15

THE PROPER ATTITUDE WITH RESPECT TO GOD'S UNDESERVED GRACE

This grace God owes to no one. For what could He owe to man? Who has given Him first that he might be repaid? What could God owe to one who has nothing of his own but sin and falsehood? He, therefore, who receives this grace owes and renders eternal thanks to God alone. He who does not receive this grace, however, either does not care at all for these spiritual things and is pleased with what he has, or in false security vainly boasts that he has what he does not have. Further, about those who outwardly profess their faith and amend their lives we are to judge and speak in the most favourable way, according to the example of the apostles, for the inner recesses of the heart are unknown to us. As for those who have not yet been called, we should pray for them to God, who calls into existence the things that do not exist. But we must by no means act haughtily, as if we had distinguished ourselves from them.

Rom 11:35; Amos 6:1; Jer 7:4; Rom 14:10; Rom 4:17; 1 Cor 4:7.

ARTICLE 16

MAN'S WILL NOT TAKEN AWAY BUT MADE ALIVE

Man through his fall did not cease to be man, endowed with intellect and will; and sin, which has pervaded the whole human race, did not deprive man of his

human nature, but brought upon him depravity and spiritual death. So also this divine grace of regeneration does not act upon men as if they were blocks and stones and does not take away the will and its properties, or violently coerce it, but makes the will spiritually alive, heals it, corrects it, pleasantly and at the same time powerfully bends it. As a result, where formerly the rebellion and resistance of the flesh fully dominated, now a prompt and sincere obedience of the Spirit begins to prevail, in which the true, spiritual renewal and freedom of our will consists. And if the wonderful Maker of all good did not deal with us in this way, man would have no hope of rising from his fall through this free will, by which he, when he was still standing, plunged himself into ruin. Rom 8:2; Eph 2:1; Ps 51:12; Phil 2:13.

ARTICLE 17

THE USE OF MEANS

The almighty working of God whereby He brings forth and sustains this our natural life does not exclude but requires the use of means, by which He according to His infinite wisdom and goodness has willed to exercise His power. So also the aforementioned supernatural working of God whereby He regenerates us, in no way excludes or cancels the use of the gospel, which the most wise God has ordained to be the seed of regeneration and the food of the soul. For this reason the apostles and the teachers who succeeded them, reverently instructed the people concerning this grace of God, to His glory and to the abasement of all pride. In the meantime, however, they did not neglect to keep them, by the holy admonitions of the gospel, under the administration of the Word, the sacraments, and discipline. So today those who give or receive instruction in the church should not dare to tempt God by separating what He in His good pleasure has willed to be closely joined together. For grace is conferred through admonitions, and the more readily we do our duty, the more this favour of God, who works in us, usually manifests itself in its lustre, and so His work best proceeds. To God alone, both for the means and for their saving fruit and efficacy, all glory is due throughout eternity. Amen. Is 55:10-11; 1 Cor 1:21; Jas 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23, 25; 2:2.

REJECTION OF ERRORS

Having explained the true doctrine of the corruption of man and his conversion to God, Synod rejects the following errors:

1

Error: Properly speaking, it cannot be said that original sin as such is sufficient to condemn the whole human race or to deserve temporal and eternal punishment.

Refutation: This contradicts the words of the apostle when he declares: *sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned*, Rom 5:12. And in verse 16: *The judgment following one sin and brought condemnation*. Also Rom 6:23: *For the wages of sin is death*.

2

Error: The spiritual gifts or the good qualities and virtues, such as goodness, holiness, righteousness, cannot have belonged to the will of man when he was first created, and therefore cannot have been separated from his will when he fell.

Refutation: This error is contrary to the description of the image of God which the apostle gives in Eph 4:24, when he connects it with righteousness and holiness, which undoubtedly belong to the will.

3

Error: In spiritual death the spiritual gifts are not separate from the will of man, since the will as such has never been corrupted but only hampered by the darkness of the mind and the unruliness of the passions. If these hindrances have been removed, the will can exert its full innate power. The will is of itself able to will and to choose, or else not to will and not to choose, all manner of good which may be presented to it.

Refutation: This is an innovation and an error, and tends to extol the powers of the free will, contrary to what the prophet Jeremiah states in chapter 17:9, *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure*. And the apostle Paul writes: *All of us also lived among them (the sons of disobedience) at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful natures and following its desires and thoughts* Eph 2:3.

4

Error: The unregenerate man is not really or totally dead in sins, or deprived of all powers unto spiritual good. He can yet hunger and thirst after righteousness and life, and offer the sacrifice of a contrite and broken spirit which is pleasing to God.

Refutation: These things are in conflict with the clear testimonies of Scripture: *you were dead in your transgressions and sins*, Eph 2:1, (cf. 2:5). And *every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time*, Gen 6:5 and 8:21. Moreover, only the regenerate and those who are called blessed hunger and thirst after deliverance from misery and after life, and offer to God the sacrifice of a broken spirit, Ps 51:19 and Mt 5:6.

5

Error: The corrupt and natural man can so well use the common grace (which for the Arminians is the light of nature), or the gifts still left him after the fall, that he can gradually gain by their good use a greater, that is, the evangelical or saving grace, and salvation itself. In this way God on His part shows Himself ready to reveal Christ to all men, since He administers to all sufficiently and efficaciously the means necessary for the knowledge of Christ, for faith and repentance.

Refutation: Not only the experience of all ages but also Scripture testifies that this is untrue. *He has revealed his word to Jacob, His laws and decrees to Israel. He has done this for no other nation; they do not know His laws*, Ps 147:19, 20. *In the past, He let all nations go their own way*, Acts 14:16. And Paul and his companions were *kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word*

in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to, Acts 16:6, 7.

6

Error: In the true conversion of man no new qualities, powers, or gifts can be infused by God into the will. Therefore faith, through which we are first converted and because of which we are called believers, is not a quality or gift infused by God but only an act of man. It cannot be called a gift except with respect to the power to attain to this faith.

Refutation: This teaching contradicts the Holy Scriptures, which declare that God infuses new qualities of faith, of obedience, and of the consciousness of His love into our hearts: *I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts, Jer 31:33. And: I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground, Is 44:3. And: God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us, Rom 5:5.* This also conflicts with the constant practice of the church, which prays by the mouth of the prophet: *Restore me, and I will return, because You are the LORD my God, Jer 31:18.*

7

Error: The grace whereby we are converted to God is only a gentle advising. This manner of working which consists in advising is the most noble manner in the conversion of man and is most in harmony with man's nature. There is no reason why this advising grace alone should not be sufficient to make the natural man spiritual. Indeed, God does not bring about the consent of the will except through this moral persuasion. The power of the divine working surpasses the working of Satan, in that God promises eternal while Satan promises only temporal goods.

Refutation: This is entirely Pelagian and contrary to the whole Scripture, which teaches beyond this moral persuasion yet another, far more powerful and divine manner of the working of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of man: *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh, Ezek 36:26.*

8

Error: In regenerating man God does not use the powers of His omnipotence so as to forcefully and unflinchingly bend man's will to faith and conversion. Even if all the works of grace have been accomplished which God employs to convert man and even if God intends his regeneration and wills to regenerate him, man may yet so resist God and the Holy Spirit, and indeed often does so resist, that he entirely prevents his regeneration. It therefore remains in man's power to be regenerated or not.

Refutation: This is nothing less than the denial of all the efficacy of God's grace in our conversion, and the subjecting of the working of Almighty God to the will of man. It is contrary to the apostles, who teach *His incomparably great power for us who believe, Eph 1:19; who pray our God that by His power He may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith, 2 Thess 1:11, and who declare that His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness, 2 Pet 1:3.*

9

Error: Grace and free will are partial causes which together work the beginning of conversion. In the order of these causes grace does not precede the working of the will. God does not effectually help the will of man to come to conversion until the will of man moves itself and determines to do this.

Refutation: The early church long ago condemned this doctrine of the Pelagians according to the words of the apostle: *It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy*, Rom 9:16. Also: *For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive?* 1 Cor 4:7. And: *it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose*, Phil 2:13.

FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

ARTICLE 1

THE REGENERATE NOT FREE FROM INDWELLING SIN

Those whom God according to His purpose calls into the fellowship of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and regenerates by His Holy Spirit, He certainly sets free from the dominion and slavery of sin, but not entirely in this life from the flesh and the body of sin.

Jn 8:34; Rom 6:17; 7:21-24.

ARTICLE 2

DAILY SINS OF WEAKNESS

Therefore daily sins of weakness spring up and defects cling to even the best works of the saints. These are for them a constant reason to humble themselves before God, to flee to the crucified Christ, to put the flesh to death more and more through the Spirit of prayer and by holy exercises of godliness, and to long and strive for the goal of perfection until at last, delivered from this body of death, they reign with the Lamb of God in heaven.

1 Jn 1:8; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 4:7; Phil 3:12, 14; Rev 5:6, 10.

ARTICLE 3

GOD PRESERVES HIS OWN

Because of these remnants of indwelling sin and also because of the temptations of the world and of Satan, those who have been converted could not remain standing in that grace if left to their own strength. But God is faithful, who mercifully confirms them in the grace once conferred upon them and powerfully preserves them in that grace to the end.

Rom 7:20; 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Pet 1:5.

ARTICLE 4

SAINTS MAY FALL INTO SERIOUS SINS

Although the power of God whereby He confirms and preserves true believers in grace is so great that it cannot be conquered by the flesh, yet the converted are not always so led and moved by God that they cannot in certain particular actions turn aside through their own fault from the guidance of grace and be seduced by and yield to the lusts of the flesh. They must therefore constantly watch and pray that they may not be led into temptation. When they do not watch and pray, they not only can be drawn away by the flesh, the world, and Satan into serious and atrocious sins, but with the righteous permission of God are sometimes actually drawn away. The lamentable fall of David, Peter, and other saints, described in Holy Scripture, demonstrates this.

Eph 1:19; Mt 26:41; 1 Thess 5:6, 17; 2 Sam 11; Mt 26.

ARTICLE 5

THE EFFECTS OF SUCH SERIOUS SINS

By such gross sins, however, they greatly offend God, incur the guilt of

death, grieve the Holy Spirit, suspend the exercise of faith, severely wound their consciences, and sometimes for a while lose the sense of God's favour – until they return to the right way through sincere repentance and God's fatherly face again shines upon them.

2 Sam 12; Eph 4:30; Ps 32:3-5; Num 6:25.

ARTICLE 6

GOD WILL NOT PERMIT HIS ELECT TO BE LOST

For God, who is rich in mercy, according to the unchangeable purpose of His election, does not completely withdraw His Holy Spirit from His own even in their deplorable fall. Neither does He permit them to sink so deep that they fall away from the grace of adoption and the state of justification, or commit the sin unto death or the sin against the Holy Spirit and, totally deserted by Him, plunge themselves into eternal ruin.

Eph 1:11; 2:4; Ps 51:13; Gal 4:5; 1 Jn 5:16-18; Mt 12:31-32.

ARTICLE 7

GOD WILL AGAIN RENEW HIS ELECT TO REPENTANCE

For in the first place, in their fall, He preserves in them His imperishable seed of regeneration, so that it does not perish and is not cast out. Further, through His Word and Spirit He certainly and effectually renews them to repentance. As a result they grieve from the heart with a godly sorrow for the sins they have committed; they seek and obtain through faith with a contrite heart forgiveness in the blood of the Mediator; they again experience the favour of a reconciled God and adore His mercies and faithfulness. And from now on they more diligently work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

1 Pet 1:23; 1 Jn 3:9; 2 Cor 7:10; Ps 32:5; 51:19; Phil 2:12.

ARTICLE 8

THE GRACE OF THE TRIUNE GOD PRESERVES

So it is not through their own merits or strength but through the undeserved mercy of God that they neither totally fall away from faith and grace nor remain in their downfall and are finally lost. With respect to themselves this could not only easily happen but would undoubtedly happen. But with respect to God this cannot possibly happen, since His counsel cannot be changed, His promise cannot fail, the calling according to His purpose cannot be revoked, the merit, intercession, and preservation of Christ cannot be nullified, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit can neither be frustrated nor destroyed.

Ps 33:11; Heb 6:17; Rom 8:30; 9:11; Lk 22:34; Eph 1:13.

ARTICLE 9

THE ASSURANCE OF THIS PRESERVATION

Believers themselves can be certain of this preservation of the elect to salvation and the perseverance of true believers in the faith. And they are indeed certain according to the measure of their faith, by which they firmly believe that they are and always shall remain true and living members of the church, and that they have forgiveness of sins and life eternal.

Rom 8:31-39; 2 Tim 4:8, 18.

ARTICLE 10**THE SOURCE OF THIS ASSURANCE**

This assurance is not produced by a certain private revelation besides or outside the Word, but by faith in the promises of God, which He has most abundantly revealed in His Word for our comfort; by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our spirit that we are children and heirs of God; and, finally, by the serious and holy pursuit of a clear conscience and of good works. And if the elect of God did not have in this world the solid comfort of obtaining the victory and this unfailing pledge of eternal glory, they would be of all men the most miserable.

Rom 8:16-17; 1 Jn 3:1-2; Acts 24:16; Rom 8:37; 1 Cor 15:19.

ARTICLE 11**THIS ASSURANCE NOT ALWAYS FELT**

Scripture meanwhile testifies that believers in this life have to struggle with various doubts of the flesh and, placed under severe temptation, do not always feel this full assurance of faith and certainty of perseverance. But God, the Father of all comfort, will not let them be tempted beyond their strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, and by the Holy Spirit will again revive in them the certainty of perseverance.

2 Cor 1:3; 1 Cor 10:13.

ARTICLE 12**THIS ASSURANCE IS AN INCENTIVE TO GODLINESS**

This certainty of perseverance, however, so far from making true believers proud and complacent, is rather the true root of humility, childlike reverence, genuine godliness, endurance in every struggle, fervent prayers, constancy in suffering and in the confession of the truth, and lasting joy in God. Further, the consideration of this benefit is for them an incentive to the serious and constant practice of gratitude and good works, as is evident from the testimonies of Scripture and the examples of the saints.

Rom 12:1; Ps 56:12-13; 116:12; Tit 2:11-14; 1 Jn 3:3.

ARTICLE 13**THIS ASSURANCE DOES NOT LEAD TO CARELESSNESS**

Neither does this renewed confidence produce carelessness or neglect of godliness in those who have been restored after their fall; rather, it produces in them a much greater concern to observe carefully the ways of the Lord, which He prepared beforehand. They observe these ways in order that by walking in them they may retain the certainty of their perseverance. Then shall the face of their gracious God not turn away from them again because of their abuse of His fatherly goodness, with the result that they would fall into still greater anguish of spirit. Indeed, to those who fear God the contemplation of His face is sweeter than life, but its withdrawal is more bitter than death.

2 Cor 7:10; Eph 2:10; Ps 63:4; Is 64:7; Jer 33:5.

ARTICLE 14**THE USE OF MEANS IN PERSEVERANCE**

Just as it has pleased God to begin this work of grace in us by the preach-

ing of the gospel, so He maintains, continues, and perfects it by the hearing and reading of His Word, by meditation on it, by its exhortations, threats, and promises, and by the use of the sacraments.
Deut 6:20-25; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Acts 2:42.

ARTICLE 15

THIS DOCTRINE IS HATED BY SATAN BUT LOVED BY THE CHURCH

This doctrine of the perseverance of true believers and saints, and of their assurance of it, God has most abundantly revealed in His Word for the glory of His Name and for the consolation of the godly, and He impresses it on the hearts of believers. It is something which the flesh does not understand, Satan hates, the world ridicules, the ignorant and the hypocrites abuse, and the heretics attack. The Bride of Christ, on the other hand, has always loved this doctrine most tenderly and defended it steadfastly as a treasure of inestimable value; and God, against whom no counsel can avail and no strength can prevail, shall see to it that she will continue to do so. To this God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be honour and glory forever. Amen.

Rev 14:12; Eph 5:32; Ps 33:10-11; 1 Pet 5:10-11.

REJECTION OF ERRORS

Having explained the true doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, Synod rejects the following errors:

1

Error: The perseverance of the true believers is not a fruit of election or a gift of God obtained by the death of Christ, but a condition of the new covenant, which man before his so-called decisive election and justification must fulfil through his free will.

Refutation: Holy Scripture testifies that perseverance follows from election and is given to the elect by virtue of the death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ: The elect obtained it. The others were hardened [Rom 11:7]. Also: *He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Rom 8:32-35.*

2

Error: God does indeed provide the believer with sufficient strength to persevere, and is ready to preserve this in him if he will do his duty. But even with all those things in place which are necessary to persevere in faith and which God will use to preserve faith, it still always depends on the decision of man's will whether he will persevere or not.

Refutation: This idea contains outright Pelagianism. While it wants to make men free, it makes them robbers of God's honour. It conflicts with the consistent teaching of the gospel, which takes from man all cause for boasting, and as-

cribes all the praise for this benefit to the grace of God alone. It is also contrary to the testimony of the apostle: It is God who *will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor 1:8.

3

Error: True regenerate believers not only can fall completely and definitely from justifying faith and also from grace and salvation, but indeed they often do fall from them and are lost forever.

Refutation: This opinion nullifies the grace of justification and regeneration and the continuous preservation by Christ, contrary to the clear words of the apostle Paul: *God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!* Rom 5:8, 9. And contrary to the apostle John: *No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God*, 1 Jn 3:9, and also to the words of Jesus Christ: *I give them eternal life, 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*, Jn 10:28, 29.

4

Error: True regenerate believers can commit the sin that leads to death or the sin against the Holy Spirit.

Refutation: The same apostle John, after speaking 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 continue to sin (namely, with that kind of sin); the One who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him*.

5

Error: Without a special revelation we can have no certainty of future perseverance in this life.

Refutation: By this doctrine the sure comfort of true believers in this life is taken away, and the doubting of the followers of the pope is again introduced into the church. The Holy Scriptures, however, always deduce this assurance, not from a special and extraordinary revelation, but from the marks peculiar to the children of God and from the very constant promises of God. So especially the apostle Paul declares that nothing in all creation *will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Rom 8:39. And John writes: *Those who obey His commands live in Him, and He in them. And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us*, 1 Jn 3:24.

6

Error: By its very nature the doctrine of the certainty of perseverance and salvation causes false security and is harmful to godliness, good morals, prayers, and other holy exercises. On the contrary, it is praiseworthy to doubt.

Refutation: This error ignores the effective power of God's grace and the working of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. It contradicts the apostle John, who teaches the opposite with these clear words: Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, 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 Jn 3:2, 3. Furthermore, it is refuted by the example of the saints in both the Old and the New Testament who, although they were certain of their perseverance and salvation, nevertheless continued in prayer and other exercises of godliness.

7

Error: The faith of those who believe for a time does not differ from justifying and saving faith except with respect to its duration.

Refutation: In Mt 13:20-23 and Luke 8:13-15 Christ Himself clearly indicates, besides this duration, a threefold difference between those who believe only for a time and true believers. He declares that the former receive the seed on rocky ground, but the latter in good soil, or in a good heart; that the former are without root, but the latter have a firm root; and that the former are without fruit, but the latter bring forth fruit in varying measure, constantly and steadfastly.

8

Error: It is not absurd that one, having lost his first regeneration, is again and even often born anew.

Refutation: This doctrine denies that the seed of God, by which we are born again, is imperishable, contrary to the testimony of the apostle Peter: *You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable*, 1 Pet 1:23.

9

Error: Christ did not pray anywhere that believers should unfailingly continue in faith.

Refutation: This contradicts Christ Himself, who says: *I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail*, Luke 22:32. It also contradicts the apostle John, who declares that Christ did not pray only for the apostles, but also for all who would believe through their word: *Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your name, and, My prayer is not that You take them out of the world but that You protect them from the evil one*, Jn 17:11, 15, (cf. 17:20).

CONCLUSION

This is the clear, simple, and straightforward explanation of the orthodox doctrine with respect to the five articles in dispute in the Netherlands, as well as the rejection of the errors by which the churches have for some time been disturbed. The Synod judges this explanation and rejection to be taken from the Word of God and to be in agreement with the confessions of the Reformed churches. Hence it clearly appears that some have acted very im-

properly and against all truth, fairness, and love in wishing to persuade the public of the following:

- The doctrine of the Reformed churches concerning predestination and related subjects, by its very character and tendency, turns the hearts of men away from all godliness and religion.
- It is an opiate for the flesh administered by the devil, and a stronghold of Satan, where he lies in wait for all, wounds multitudes, and mortally pierces many with the darts both of despair and false security.
- It makes God the author of sin, an unjust tyrant and hypocrite; and is nothing more than a renewed Stoicism, Manicheism, Libertinism, and Mohammedanism.
- It leads to sinful carelessness, since it makes people believe that nothing can prevent the salvation of the elect, no matter how they live, and that, therefore, they may safely commit the most atrocious crimes. On the other hand, it would not in the least contribute to the salvation of the reprobate, even if they had performed all the works of the saints.
- The same doctrine teaches that God has predestined and created the greatest part of the world for eternal damnation by a mere arbitrary act of His will, without taking into account any sin.
- 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.
- Many innocent children of believers are torn from their mothers' breasts and tyrannically thrown 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 help to them.

And there are many more teachings of this kind which the Reformed churches not only do not confess but even detest wholeheartedly.

Therefore, this Synod of Dort adjures, in the Name of the Lord, all who piously call upon our Saviour Jesus Christ not to judge the faith of the Reformed churches from the slander gathered from here and there. Neither are they to judge from personal statements of some ancient or modern teachers, often quoted in bad faith, or taken out of context and explained contrary to their meaning. But one ought to judge the faith of the Reformed churches from the public confessions of these churches themselves and from the present explanation of the orthodox doctrine, confirmed by the unanimous consent of the members of the entire Synod, one and all.

Moreover, the Synod warns the slanderers themselves to consider how severe a judgment of God awaits those who bear false witness against so many churches and their confessions, disturb the consciences of the weak, and try to make many suspicious of the community of true believers.

Finally, this Synod exhorts all fellow ministers in the gospel of Christ to conduct themselves in a God-fearing and reverent manner when they deal with this doctrine in schools and churches. In teaching it, both in speaking and writing, they ought to seek the glory of God's Name, the holiness of life, and the consolation of afflicted souls. Their thinking and speaking about this doctrine should be in agreement with Scripture according to the analogy of faith. And they must refrain from all those expressions which exceed the pre-

scribed limits of the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures and which may provide shameless sophists with a good opportunity to scoff at the doctrine of the Reformed churches, or even to slander it.

May Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is seated at the Father's right hand and gives gifts to men, sanctify us in the truth, lead to the truth those who err, silence the slanderers of the sound doctrine, and equip the faithful ministers of His Word with the Spirit of wisdom and discretion, that everything they say may tend to the glory of God and the building up of those who hear them. Amen.

10.2 *Liturgical Forms:*

The following forms are included:

1. Form for the Baptism of Infants
2. Form for the Baptism of Adults
3. Form for the Public Profession of Faith
4. Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper
5. Abbreviated Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper (for the Second Service)
6. Form for the Excommunication of Non-Communicant Members
7. Form for the Excommunication of Communicant Members
8. Form for Readmission Into the Church of Christ
9. Form for the Ordination (or Installation) of Ministers of the Word
10. Form for the Ordination (or Installation) of Missionaries
11. Form for the Ordination of Elders And Deacons
12. Form for the Solemnization of Marriage

NOTE: Text references and headings will be added in the margin in the final printed version of the Forms. This in order to make the layout the same as the current *Book of Praise*.

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ: The doctrine of holy baptism is summarized as follows:

First, we and our children are conceived and born in sin and are therefore by nature children of wrath, so that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we are born again. This is what the immersion in or sprinkling with water teaches us. It signifies the impurity of our souls, so that we may detest ourselves, humble ourselves before God, and seek our cleansing and salvation outside of ourselves.

Second, baptism signifies and seals to us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ. We are, therefore, baptized into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

When we are baptized into the Name of the Father, God the Father testifies and seals to us that He establishes an eternal covenant of grace with us. He adopts us for His children and heirs, and promises to provide us with all good and avert all evil or turn it to our benefit.

When we are baptized into the Name of the Son, God the Son promises us that He washes us in His blood from all our sins and unites us with Him in His death and resurrection. Thus we are freed from our sins and accounted righteous before God.

When we are baptized into the Name of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit assures us by this sacrament that He will dwell in us and make us living members of Christ, imparting to us what we have in Christ, namely, the cleansing from our sins and the daily renewal of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without blemish among the assembly of God's elect in life eternal.

Third, since every covenant contains two parts, a promise and an obligation,

we are, through baptism, called and obliged by the Lord to a new obedience. We are to cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to trust Him, and to love Him with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and with all our strength. We must not love the world but put off our old nature and lead a God-fearing life. And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sins, we must not despair of God's mercy nor continue in sin, for baptism is a seal and trustworthy testimony that we have an eternal covenant with God.

Although our children do not understand all this, we may not therefore exclude them from baptism. Just as they share without their knowledge in the condemnation of Adam, so are they, without their knowledge, received into grace in Christ. For the LORD spoke to Abraham, the father of all believers, and thus also speaks to us and our children, saying, *I will establish My covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.*

Peter also testifies to this when he says, *The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.* Therefore, in the old dispensation God commanded that infants be circumcised. This circumcision was a seal of the covenant and of the righteousness of faith. Christ also *took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them.* In the new dispensation baptism has replaced circumcision. Therefore, infants must be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God and of His covenant; and as they grow up, their parents have the duty to instruct them in these things.

In order that we may now administer this holy sacrament of God to His glory, for our comfort, and to the upbuilding of the congregation, let us call upon His holy Name.

Almighty, eternal God, in Your righteous judgment You punished the unbelieving and unrepentant world with the flood, but in Your great mercy saved and protected the believer Noah and his family. You drowned the obstinate Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, but led Your people Israel through the midst of the sea on dry ground – by which baptism was signified.

We therefore pray that You, in Your infinite mercy, will graciously look upon this Your child and incorporate him (her) by Your Holy Spirit into Your Son Jesus Christ, so that he (she) may be buried with Him by baptism into death and raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

We pray that he (she), following Him day by day, may joyfully bear his (her) cross and cleave to Him in true faith, firm hope, and ardent love. Grant that he (she), comforted in You, may leave this life, which is no more than a constant death, and at the last day may appear without terror before the judgment seat of Christ Your Son.

All this we ask through Him, our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who with You and the Holy Spirit, one only God, lives and reigns forever. Amen.

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

You have heard that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord our God to seal to us and our children His covenant; we must therefore use this sacrament for

that purpose and not out of custom or superstition. That it may be clear, then, that you desire baptism for the right purpose, you are to answer sincerely the following questions:

First, do you confess that our children, though conceived and born in sin, and therefore subject to all sorts of misery, even to condemnation, are sanctified in Christ and thus as members of His church ought to be baptized?

Second, do you confess that the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian church, is the true and complete doctrine of salvation?

Third, do you promise as father and mother to instruct your child in this doctrine, as soon as he (she) is able to understand, and to have him (her) instructed therein to the utmost of your power?

What is your answer?

I do (to be answered by each parent).

_____, I baptize you into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Almighty, merciful God and Father, we thank and praise You that You have forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of Your beloved Son Jesus Christ. You received us through Your Holy Spirit as members of Your only-begotten Son, and so adopted us to be Your children. You sealed and confirmed this to us by holy baptism.

We pray You through Your beloved Son that You will always govern this child by Your Holy Spirit, that he (she) may be nurtured in the Christian faith and in godliness, and may grow and increase in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant that he (she) thus may acknowledge Your fatherly goodness and mercy, which You have shown to him (her) and to us all. May he (she) live in all righteousness under our only Teacher, King, and High Priest, Jesus Christ, and valiantly fight against and overcome sin, the devil, and his whole dominion. May he (she) forever praise and magnify You and Your Son Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit, the one only true God. Amen.

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS

Those who were not baptized in their infancy, and at a later age declare that they desire Christian baptism, must first be thoroughly instructed in the essentials of the Christian doctrine. After having confessed this doctrine before the overseers, they shall be admitted to the public profession of their faith and to baptism. For the administration of their baptism the following form shall be used.

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ:

The doctrine of holy baptism is summarized as follows:

First, we and our children are conceived and born in sin and are therefore by nature children of wrath, so that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we are born again. This is what the immersion in or sprinkling with water teaches us. It signifies the impurity of our souls, so that we may detest ourselves, humble ourselves before God, and seek our cleansing and salvation outside of ourselves.

Second, baptism signifies and seals to us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ. We are therefore baptized into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

When we are baptized into the Name of the Father, God the Father testifies and seals to us that He establishes an eternal covenant of grace with us. He adopts us for His children and heirs, and promises to provide us with all good and avert all evil or turn it to our benefit.

When we are baptized into the Name of the Son, God the Son promises us that He washes us in His blood from all our sins and unites us with Him in His death and resurrection. Thus we are freed from our sins and accounted righteous before God.

When we are baptized into the Name of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit assures us by this sacrament that He will dwell in us and make us living members of Christ, imparting to us what we have in Christ, namely, the cleansing from our sins and the daily renewal of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without blemish among the assembly of God's elect in life eternal.

Third, since every covenant contains two parts, a promise and an obligation, we are, through baptism, called and obliged by the Lord to a new obedience. We are to cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to trust in Him, and to love Him with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and with all our strength. We must not love the world but put off our old nature and lead a God-fearing life. And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sins, we must not despair of God's mercy nor continue in sin, for baptism is a seal and trustworthy testimony that we have an eternal covenant with God.

Although the children of believers are not able to understand these things, they must be baptized by virtue of the covenant. Adults, however, may not be baptized unless they, conscious of their sins, repent and profess their faith in Christ. For this reason John the Baptist, following the command of God, preached a *baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*, and only those who confessed their sins were baptized. Our Lord Jesus Christ also commanded His apostles to *go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them*

in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, adding the promise, whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.

According to this rule the apostles baptized only those adults who had repented and professed their faith. Therefore also today no other adults should be baptized than those who have learned to understand, by the preaching and instruction of the Gospel, the glorious contents of holy baptism, and are thus able to give account of their faith by personal profession.

In order that we may now administer this holy sacrament of God to His glory, for our comfort, and to the upbuilding of the congregation, let us call upon His holy Name.

Almighty, eternal God, in Your righteous judgment You punished the unbelieving and unrepentant world with the flood, but in Your great mercy saved and protected the believer Noah and his family. You drowned the obstinate Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, but led Your people Israel through the midst of the sea on dry ground – by which baptism was signified.

We therefore pray that You, in Your infinite mercy, will graciously look upon this brother (sister) and incorporate him (her) by Your Holy Spirit into Your Son Jesus Christ, so that he (she) may be buried with Him by baptism into death and raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

We pray that he (she), following Him day by day, may joyfully bear his (her) cross and cleave to Him in true faith, firm hope, and ardent love. Grant that he (she), comforted in You, may leave this life, which is no more than a constant death, and at the last day may appear without terror before the judgment seat of Christ Your Son.

All this we ask through Him, our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who with You and the Holy Spirit, one only God, lives and reigns forever. Amen.

Beloved brother (sister) _____, you desire to receive holy baptism as a seal of your incorporation into the church of God. You have been instructed by us in the Christian religion and have made profession of it before the overseers. It must become clear to all that you not only accept the Christian doctrine, but also intend, by the grace of God, to live according to it. Therefore, we ask you to answer sincerely the following questions before God and His church:

First, do you believe in the one and only true God, distinct in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who has created of nothing heaven and earth, with all that is in them, and still upholds and governs them, so that nothing happens without His divine will?

Second, do you believe that you were conceived and born in sin and are therefore by nature a child of wrath, totally unable to do any good and inclined to all evil? Do you confess that you have often transgressed the commandments of the Lord in thought, word, and deed, and do you sincerely repent of these your sins?

Third, do you believe that Jesus Christ, who is both true and eternal God and true man, who assumed His human nature from the virgin Mary, is given by God as your Saviour? Believing in Him, do you confess that you receive the remission of sins in His blood and that by the power of the Holy Spirit you have

become a member of Jesus Christ and His church?

Fourth, do you wholeheartedly agree with the doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian church? Do you promise to continue steadfastly in this doctrine to the end of your life, and do you reject all heresies and errors conflicting with this doctrine? Do you promise to persevere in the fellowship of this Christian church and be diligent in the hearing of the Word of God and in the use of the holy sacraments?

Fifth, do you firmly resolve, as is proper for a member of Christ and His church, always to lead a Christian life and not to love the world and its evil desires? Do you promise to submit willingly to the Christian admonition and discipline of the church, if it should happen, and may God graciously prevent it, that you become delinquent either in doctrine or in conduct?

_____, what is your answer?
I do.

Our merciful God grant you His grace and blessing to fulfil this your holy intention through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

_____, I baptize you into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Almighty, merciful God and Father, we thank and praise You that You have forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of Your beloved Son Jesus Christ. You received us through Your Holy Spirit as members of Your only-begotten Son, and so adopted us to be Your children. You sealed and confirmed this to us by holy baptism.

We pray You through Your beloved Son that You will always govern this brother (sister) by Your Holy Spirit, that he (she) may live a truly Christian and godly life and grow in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant that he (she) may acknowledge Your fatherly goodness and mercy, which You have shown to him (her) and to us all. May he (she) live in all righteousness under our only Teacher, King, and High Priest, Jesus Christ, and valiantly fight against and overcome sin, the devil, and his whole dominion. May he (she) forever praise and magnify You and Your Son Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit, the one only true God. Amen.

FORM FOR THE PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ:

We thank the Lord our God for the grace given us by adopting us to be His children and receiving us into His covenant. We acknowledge His love and power, by which He instills in His children the desire publicly to profess their faith in Him in the presence of His holy church, so that they may receive admission to the holy supper.

Since you have now come here to make this profession before God and His holy church, and hereby to receive admission to the holy supper, we ask you to answer sincerely to the following questions:

First, do you wholeheartedly believe the doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian church? Do you promise by the grace of God steadfastly to continue in this doctrine in life and death, rejecting all heresies and errors conflicting with God's Word?

Second, do you acknowledge God's covenant promises, which have been signified and sealed to you in your baptism? Do you truly detest and humble yourself before God because of your sins and seek your life outside of yourself in Jesus Christ?

Third, do you declare that you love the Lord God and that it is your heartfelt desire to serve Him according to His Word, to forsake the world, and to crucify your old nature?

Fourth, do you firmly resolve to commit your whole life to the Lord's service as a living member of His church? Do you promise to submit willingly to the admonition and discipline of the church, if it should happen, and may God graciously prevent it, that you become delinquent either in doctrine or in conduct?

_____, what is your answer?

I do.

The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To Him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

FORM FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ:

The holy supper has been instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to the words of this institution as described by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29: *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

In order that we may now celebrate this holy supper of the Lord to our comfort, we must first rightly examine ourselves. Further, we must use it as Christ intended it, namely, to His remembrance.

True self-examination consists of the following three parts:

First, let everyone consider his sins and accursedness, so that he, detesting himself, may humble himself before God. For the wrath of God against sin is so great that He could not leave it unpunished, but has punished it in His beloved Son Jesus Christ by the bitter and shameful death on the cross.

Second, let everyone search his heart whether he also believes the sure promise of God that all his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is freely given him as his own, as if he himself had fulfilled all righteousness.

Third, let everyone examine his conscience whether it is his sincere desire to show true thankfulness to God with his entire life and, laying aside all enmity, hatred, and envy, to live with his neighbour in true love and unity.

God will certainly receive in grace all who are thus minded and count them worthy to partake of the supper of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But those who do not feel this testimony in their hearts, eat and drink judgment upon themselves. Therefore, according to the command of Christ and of the apostle Paul, we admonish all those who know themselves to be guilty of the following offensive sins to abstain from the table of the Lord, and we declare to them that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ: all who refuse to trust in the LORD alone or who serve Him in their own manner; all who abuse the Name of the LORD by cursing or in any other way; all who do not diligently attend the worship services and who despise the proclamation of God's Word or the sanctity of the sacraments; all who are disobedient to their parents or to others in authority over them; all who violate human life or cherish hatred against their neighbour and refuse to be reconciled to him; all who, either within or outside of holy wedlock, do not keep their bodies pure; all who by stealing, greed, or extravagance, lead a worldly life; all liars, backbiters, and slanderers; briefly, all who either in word or conduct show them-

selves to be unbelieving by leading an offensive life. While they persist in their sins, they shall not take of this food, which Christ has ordained only for His believers; otherwise their judgment and condemnation will be the heavier.

But all this, beloved brothers and sisters, is not meant to discourage broken and contrite hearts, as if only those who are without sin may come to the table of the Lord. For we do not come to this supper to declare that we are perfect and righteous in ourselves. On the contrary, we seek our life outside of ourselves in Jesus Christ and, in doing so, we acknowledge that we are dead in ourselves. We also are aware of our many sins and shortcomings. We do not have perfect faith and we do not serve God with such zeal as He requires. Daily we have to contend with the weakness of our faith and with the evil desires of our flesh. Yet, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are heartily sorry for these shortcomings and desire to fight against our unbelief and to live according to all the commandments of God. Therefore we may be fully assured that no sin or weakness which still remains in us against our will can prevent us from being received by God in grace and from being made worthy partakers of this heavenly food and drink.

Let us now consider for what purpose the Lord has instituted His supper; namely, that we should use it in remembrance of Him. We are to remember Him in the following manner:

First of all, let us fully trust that the Lord Jesus Christ was sent by the Father into this world, according to the promises made from the beginning to the fathers in the Old Testament, and that He assumed our flesh and blood.

From the beginning of His incarnation to the end of His life on earth, He bore for us the wrath of God, under which we should have perished eternally. By His perfect obedience He has for us fulfilled all the righteousness of God's law. He did so especially when the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of Him His sweat like drops of blood falling on the ground in the garden of Gethsemane. There He was bound that He might free us from our sins. He suffered countless insults that we might never be put to shame. He was innocently condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God. He even let His blessed body be nailed to the cross that He might cancel the bond which stood against us because of our sins. By all this He has taken our curse upon Himself that He might fill us with His blessing. On the cross He humbled Himself, in body and soul, to the very deepest shame and anguish of hell. Then He called out with a loud voice, *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* that we might be accepted by God and nevermore be forsaken by Him. Finally, by His death and the shedding of His blood, He confirmed the new and eternal testament, the covenant of grace, when He said, *It is finished.*

In order that we might firmly believe that we belong to this covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ during His last Passover instituted the holy supper. He gave the bread and the cup to His disciples in remembrance of Him, and He declared, saying: As often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are reminded and assured of My hearty love and faithfulness towards you. It

is a sure pledge that I have given My body and shed My blood for you; otherwise you would have suffered eternal death. I nourish and refresh your hungry and thirsty souls with My crucified body and shed blood to everlasting life as certainly as this bread is broken before your eyes and this cup is given to you and you eat and drink in remembrance of Me.

From this institution of the holy supper of our Lord Jesus Christ we learn that He directs our faith and trust to His perfect sacrifice, once offered on the cross. It is the only ground for our salvation. Thereby He has become to our hungry and thirsty souls the true food and drink of life eternal. For by His death He has removed the cause of our eternal hunger and misery, which is sin, and obtained for us the life-giving Spirit. By this Spirit, who dwells in Christ as the Head and in us as His members, we have true communion with Him and share in all His riches, life eternal, righteousness, and glory.

By the same Spirit we are also united in true brotherly love as members of one body. For the apostle Paul says, *Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.* As one bread is baked out of many grains and one wine is pressed out of many grapes, so we all, incorporated in Christ by faith, are together one body. For the sake of Christ, who so exceedingly loved us first, we shall now love one another, and shall show this to one another not just in words but also in deeds.

Finally, Christ has commanded us to celebrate the holy supper until He comes. We receive at His table a foretaste of the abundant joy which He has promised and look forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb, when He will drink the wine new with us in the kingdom of His Father. Let us rejoice and give Him the glory, for the marriage feast of the Lamb is coming!

May the almighty, heavenly God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ help us in this through His Holy Spirit. Amen.

To receive all this, let us now humble ourselves before God in prayer and call upon Him in true faith.

Merciful God and Father, we thank You that in this supper we cherish the blessed memory of the bitter death of Your dear Son Jesus Christ. Work in our hearts through the Holy Spirit so that we may entrust ourselves more and more to Your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that our contrite hearts may be nourished with His true body and blood, yes, with Him who is the only heavenly bread, that we may not live in our sins, but Christ in us and we in Him.

Let us so truly be partakers of the new and everlasting testament, the covenant of grace, that we do not doubt that You will forever be our gracious Father, nevermore imputing to us our sins but providing us with all things for body and soul as Your dear children and heirs.

Grant us Your grace that we may take up our cross joyfully, deny ourselves, and confess our Saviour. Let us in all tribulation await our Lord Jesus Christ, who will come from heaven to change our mortal body to be like His glorious body and take us to Himself forever.

Hear us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (Or: . . . through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray,

*Our Father in heaven
 hallowed be Your name,
 Your kingdom come,
 Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,
 for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen)*

Let us now profess our catholic, undoubted Christian faith. (The Apostles' Creed may be recited by the minister, said in unison, or sung by the congregation.)

Brothers and sisters, in order that we may now be nourished with Christ, the true heavenly bread, we must not cling with our hearts to the outward symbols of bread and wine, but lift our hearts on high in heaven, where Christ, our advocate, is, at the right hand of His heavenly Father. Let us not doubt that we shall be nourished and refreshed in our souls with His body and blood, through the working of the Holy Spirit, as truly as we receive the holy bread and drink in remembrance of Him.

(When he breaks the bread, the minister shall say:)

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was broken for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(And when he gives the cup:)

The cup of blessing, for which we give thanks, is the communion of the blood of Christ. Take, drink from it, all of you, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was poured out for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(During the communion some suitable portion of Scripture may be read and a Psalm or hymn be sung.)

(After the communion, the minister shall say:)

Beloved in the Lord, since the Lord has now nourished our souls at His table, let us together praise His holy Name. Let everyone say in his heart:

*Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name.
 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.*

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will He harbor His anger forever; He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.

He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all - how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?

But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!

Therefore my heart and my mouth shall proclaim the praise of the Lord, from now on and for evermore. Amen.

Merciful God and Father, we thank You that in Your boundless mercy You have given us Your only-begotten Son as our Mediator. We praise You that He is the sacrifice for our sins and our food and drink to life eternal.

We thank You that You give us a true faith, through which we may share in such great benefits.

Through Your Son You have instituted the holy supper for the strengthening of our faith. We earnestly ask You, faithful God and Father, that by Your Holy Spirit this celebration may lead to our daily increase in true faith and fellowship with Christ, Your beloved Son.

In His Name we pray. Amen.

ABBREVIATED FORM FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (For the Second Service)

Brothers and sisters:

The apostle Paul describes the institution of the holy supper in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29: *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

If we are to celebrate the holy supper for the strengthening of our faith, we must first examine ourselves.

Let everyone consider his sins and accursedness that he may humble himself before God.

Let everyone examine his heart whether he believes the sure promise of God that all his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is freely given him as his own.

Finally, let everyone determine whether he intends gratefully to serve the Lord with his entire life and to live in true love and harmony with his neighbour.

All who by the grace of God repent of their sins, desire to fight against their unbelief and live according to God's commandments, will certainly be received by God at the table of His Son Jesus Christ. They may be fully assured that no sin or weakness which still remains in them against their will shall keep God from accepting them in grace and granting them this heavenly food and drink.

But to all who do not truly grieve over their sins and do not repent from them, we declare that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ. We admonish them to abstain from the holy supper; otherwise their judgment will be the heavier.

Christ has commanded us to use this supper in remembrance of Him. At this table we remember that our Lord was sent by the Father into the world, assumed our flesh and blood, and from the beginning to the end of His life bore for us the wrath of God. He was bound that we might be set free. He was innocently condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God. He let His blessed body be nailed to the cross and so took our curse upon Himself to fill us with His blessing. He was forsaken by God that we might nevermore be forsaken by Him. By His death and the shedding of His blood He confirmed the new and everlasting covenant of grace when He said, *It is finished.*

Therefore, as often as we eat this bread and drink of this cup, we are reminded and assured of Christ's hearty love towards us. He died on the cross and shed His blood for us that He might feed our hungry and thirsty souls unto eternal life with His crucified body and shed blood, as truly as we receive this bread and drink in remembrance of Him.

By His suffering and death Christ has obtained for us the Spirit of life. By this Spirit we are united with Him and receive all His gifts. The same Spirit unites us in brotherly love as members of one body. Therefore we all, incorporated into Christ by true faith, are one body and shall show this to one another not just in words but also in deeds.

Finally, Christ has commanded us to celebrate the holy supper until He comes. We receive at His table a foretaste of the abundant joy which He has promised and look forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb, when He will drink the wine new with us in the kingdom of His Father.

Let us rejoice and give Him the glory, for the marriage feast of the Lamb is coming!

Let us pray.

Gracious God and Father, we thank You that You have given us Your only Son as a sacrifice for our sins and as our food and drink unto eternal life.

We pray, work in our hearts by Your Holy Spirit through this supper so that, entrusting ourselves more and more to Your Son Jesus Christ, we may not live in our sins, but He in us and we in Him. Strengthen our faith that You will forever be our gracious Father, who gives us all things necessary for body and soul. Grant us Your grace that we may joyfully take up our cross, deny ourselves, and confess our Saviour.

Teach us to expect our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, who will change our mortal body to be like His glorious body and take us to Himself in eternity. Amen.

In order to be nourished with Christ, the true heavenly bread, let us not cling to the outward symbols of bread and wine, but lift up our hearts to Jesus Christ, our advocate at the Father's right hand.

Let us firmly believe that we will be nourished with His body and blood as certainly as we receive this bread and drink in remembrance of Him.

(When he breaks the bread, the minister shall say:)

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was broken for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(And when he gives the cup:)

The cup of blessing, for which we give thanks, is the communion of the blood of Christ. Take, drink from it, all of you, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was poured out for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(During the communion some suitable portion of Scripture may be read and a Psalm or hymn be sung.)

(After the communion, the minister shall say:)

Beloved in the Lord, now that the Lord has nourished us at His table, let us together praise His Name with thanksgiving.

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will He harbor His anger forever; He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.

Therefore my heart and my mouth shall proclaim the praise of the Lord, from now on and for evermore. Amen.

Merciful God and Father, we thank You for the opportunity to partake of the supper of Your Son Jesus Christ, by eating of the bread and drinking of the cup, and so proclaiming the death of our Lord as the only ground of our salvation.

We praise You that You give us the privilege to rejoice in the communion of Your Son, as well as in the fellowship with one another.

We also earnestly ask You that we, being strengthened in faith by the celebration of this sacrament, may bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

Cause us to show in our whole life our heartfelt love towards You and towards each other.

Grant that with ardent expectation we may await the return of our Saviour, who promised that He would drink with us of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of His Father.

To You, Father, be all glory, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

FORM FOR THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF NON-COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

Beloved in the Lord:

The consistory has the sad duty of informing the congregation that a brother (sister), by baptism ingrafted into the Christian church, is guilty of sin against the . . . commandment and that he (she), in spite of many earnest admonitions, did not show evidence of true repentance. Therefore the consistory, to its great sorrow, is obliged to deal further with this brother (sister), and, if he (she) persists in his (her) sin, to proceed to his (her) excommunication. The consistory is making this known to you for the first time and seriously exhorts you to pray for him (her) continually, that it might please the Lord to bring him (her) to repentance.

Beloved in the Lord:

The consistory, having taken the advice of classis, has the sad duty of informing the congregation that _____, by baptism ingrafted into the Christian church, in spite of continual earnest admonitions, obstinately persists in sinning against the . . . commandment. Unless he (she) within . . . shows repentance and amendment of life, the consistory will be obliged to exclude this brother (sister) from the communion of the church because of his (her) wilful disobedience to the covenant of God. The congregation is exhorted to admonish this member with affection and to pray the Lord for his (her) conversion.

Beloved in the Lord:

The consistory previously had the sad duty of informing the congregation that _____, by baptism ingrafted into the Christian church, in spite of continual earnest admonitions, obstinately persisted in sinning against the . . . commandment, and that the consistory would be obliged to exclude this brother (sister) from the communion of the church, unless he (she) showed repentance and amendment of life.

The consistory must now inform the congregation that _____, in spite of many earnest admonitions, obstinately denies the communion with Christ and His church, which was signified and sealed to him (her) in holy baptism.

Therefore, we as the elders of the church of God in this place, assembled in the Name and authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, declare before you all that for these reasons we hereby excommunicate _____ from the church of the Lord and that, as long as he (she) persists obstinately and impenitently in his (her) sins, he (she) is excluded from the fellowship of Christ and all the spiritual blessings and benefits which God promises to and bestows upon His church; and that he (she) is therefore to be accounted by you as a Gentile and an outcast, according to the command of Christ, who says that whatever His ministers shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.

Further we exhort you, beloved Christians, not to associate with him (her), that he (she) may be ashamed. Do not look on him (her) as an enemy but warn him (her) as a brother (sister).

In the meantime, take care lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, departing from the living God. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord,*

for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" - which is the first commandment with a promise - "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful men, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

But since it is God who works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure, let us call upon His holy Name with confession of our sins.

Righteous God and merciful Father, before Your holy majesty we accuse ourselves because of our sins. We acknowledge that we have deserved the sorrow and grief caused by the excommunication of our brother (sister). Yes, we all are worthy to be excluded from Your presence because of our many transgressions.

But, O Lord, be gracious to us for Christ's sake. We repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness. Work in us by Your Spirit, so that we may endeavour to serve You more and more. Grant that we may shun pollution by the world and by those who have strayed from You.

Grant that the excluded member may become ashamed of his (her) sins and return to You, for You have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Therefore we, Your people, will always welcome those who return to You. Kindle in our hearts love and zeal that, by our admonitions as well as by our example, this excommunicated brother (sister) and others who live in unbelief may be brought back to You.

Bless our endeavours, that we may have reason to rejoice again over him (her) for whom we now must mourn, so that in this way Your holy Name be praised, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Or: . . . through our Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray,

*Our Father in heaven
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.*

*Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,
for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen)*

FORM FOR THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF COMMICANT MEMBERS

Beloved in the Lord:

The consistory informs you with sorrow, that a brother (sister) of the congregation has become guilty of sin against the commandment. In spite of several earnest admonitions, there is no evidence of repentance. Therefore the consistory had to suspend him (her) from the communion of the table of the Lord. However, this did not lead to repentance. Continuing admonitions also proved fruitless. To its great sorrow the consistory is now obliged to exercise further discipline, and will have to proceed to the excommunication of this brother (sister) if he (she) persists in his (her) sin. We make this known to you for the first time, and seriously exhort you to pray the Lord that He may bring this member of the body to repentance.

Beloved in the Lord:

With sorrow the consistory has informed you previously that a brother (sister) has become guilty of sin against the commandment. You then heard that he (she) was suspended from the holy supper because he (she) refused to repent. In spite of continued discipline no true repentance has become apparent. On the contrary, all admonitions remained fruitless. The only result was a further hardening of heart. We have asked the advice of classis and now inform you with sorrow that we will proceed with the excommunication. We seriously exhort you to admonish this sinner continually in love. His (Her) name and address are _____. Pray the Lord that He may bring this brother (sister) to repentance, that this sin may be banned from the congregation and the sinner be saved.

Beloved in the Lord:

The consistory had the sad duty to inform you already twice that brother (sister) _____ has become guilty of sinning against the commandment. You also heard that he (she) refused to repent and further hardened his (her) heart, so that he (she) had to be suspended from the holy supper. Yet, no true repentance was shown. On the contrary, all admonitions remained fruitless. Therefore, to our great sorrow, we now inform you for the third time that we have to deal further with this brother (sister). If he (she) does not come to repentance, he (she) will be excluded from the communion of the church of Christ on For the last time we call upon you to admonish him (her) most urgently and in love. Pray the Lord that it may please Him to lead this brother (sister) to repentance, so that he (she) may not harden himself (herself) to the utmost.

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ:

The consistory has informed you that brother (sister) _____ has persisted in a life of sin. The purpose of these announcements was that by your prayers and admonitions he (she) might turn to the living God and thus be delivered from the power of Satan, who has taken him (her) captive. But, to our deep sorrow, no one has informed us of the least evidence of true repentance, although he (she) was warned by many. His (Her) guilt, which

was already serious, has only become all the heavier because of his (her) persistence in sin. We have shown much patience with him (her), but now we know ourselves bound to proceed to the ultimate remedy given us by the Lord in His Word, namely, exclusion from the communion of His church. This excommunication is intended to make this brother (sister) ashamed of his (her) sins, and also to ensure that this corrupt member does not affect the whole body which is Christ's church. Moreover, in this way the blaspheming of God's Name is prevented. Christ Jesus has assigned the exercise of discipline to His office-bearers with the words, *I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

Therefore we, as the elders of the church of God in this place, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ excommunicate _____ from the church of the Lord, because he (she) obstinately persists in his (her) sin.

He (she) is now excluded from the fellowship of Christ and from His kingdom. he (she) may no longer use the sacraments. he (she) has no part any more in the spiritual blessings and benefits which Christ bestows upon His church. As long as he (she) persists in sin, let him (her) be to you as a Gentile and an outcast.

We exhort you, beloved Christians, not to look on him (her) as an enemy. On the contrary, try to warn him (her) as a brother (sister). But do not associate with him (her), that he (she) may be ashamed and come to repentance.

This excommunication, beloved, is a warning for us all. Let us fear the Lord and be cautious, for he who thinks he stands must take heed lest he fall. Continue in the true fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and also with all upright believers, so that we may obtain eternal salvation.

You have seen in what manner our excommunicated brother (sister) has lost the way: how he (she) began to fall and gradually came to ruin. Learn from this how subtle Satan is in bringing man to destruction, and how he causes him to despise God's Word and His sacraments.

Therefore, resist evil from the very beginning. *Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.*

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Pray so that you will not fall into temptation.

Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.

Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Let everyone repent of his sins lest our God humble us again and we have to grieve for another member of the body. Live with one accord in godliness; be our crown and joy in the Lord.

Only the Lord, *who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose*, is able to keep us in the way of His commandments.

Let us, therefore, call upon His holy Name with confession of our sins.

Righteous God and merciful Father, before Your holy majesty we accuse ourselves because of our sins. We acknowledge that we have deserved the

sorrow and grief caused by the excommunication of our brother (sister). Yes, we all are worthy to be excluded from Your presence because of our many transgressions.

But, O Lord, be gracious to us for Christ's sake. We repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness. Work in us by Your Spirit, so that we may endeavour to serve You more and more. Grant that we may shun pollution by the world and by those who have strayed from You.

Grant that the excluded member may become ashamed of his (her) sins and return to You, for You have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Therefore we, Your people, will always welcome those who return to You. Kindle in our hearts love and zeal that, by our admonitions as well as by our example, this excommunicated brother (sister) and others who live in unbelief may be brought back to You.

Bless our endeavours, that we may have reason to rejoice again over him (her) for whom we now must mourn, so that in this way Your holy Name be praised, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Or: . . . through our Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray,

*Our Father in heaven
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,
for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen)*

FORM FOR READMISSION INTO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Beloved in the Lord:

In the year . . . brother (sister) _____, was excommunicated from the church of Christ. The consistory may now inform you with gratitude that this remedy has borne fruit. The Lord has blessed our admonitions and prayers, so that _____ has repented and has requested to be received again into the communion of the church.

It is the gracious will of God that we receive penitent sinners with joy.

Since all things have to be done in good order, we inform you that at the next celebration of the holy supper we shall loose this man (woman) from the bond of excommunication and readmit him (her) to the fellowship of the saints.

If any of you should have valid reason against such readmission, he should give notice to the consistory within . . . week(s). Meanwhile let us thank the Lord, who has shown favour to this lost sheep, and let us beseech Him to perfect His work of conversion to eternal salvation.

(If no lawful objection has been brought forward, the readmission shall take place with the following form.)

Beloved Christians:

We have recently informed you of the conversion of _____, to the end that, with your approbation, he (she) might be received again into the church of God. No one has brought forward any objection against this readmission, and therefore we will now receive him (her) again into the communion of saints.

The Lord Christ instructed His church to excommunicate impenitent sinners and said, *Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven*. But He immediately added, *And whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven*.

He taught us that excommunication does not take away all hope of salvation. For God has sworn by Himself, saying, *As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live*. Therefore the church keeps hoping and praying for the repentance and return of the lost sinner, always eager to receive the penitent. The apostle Paul commanded the congregation at Corinth to forgive and comfort the brother who had been reprovved and had come to repentance. He exhorted them to reaffirm their love for him lest he should be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

Christ also teaches us that the sentence of absolution, passed upon a repentant sinner according to the Word of God, is counted binding by the Lord. *Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven*. For this reason no one who truly repents needs to doubt in the least that he is certainly received by God in grace, as Christ has declared, saying: *If you forgive anyone his, they are forgiven*.

Before we proceed to the act of loosing the bond of excommunication and readmit you, _____, to the church of Christ, we request you to answer the following questions.

_____, do you declare with all your heart, here before God and His church, that you are sincerely sorry for the sin and stubbornness on account of which you were justly excluded from the church? Do you also truly believe that God has forgiven all your sins for the sake of Christ's blood and now receives you in grace?

Do you, therefore, desire to be readmitted to the church of Christ and do you promise, by the grace of the Lord, to live from now on in all godliness according to the Word of God?

I do.

Assembled in the Name and authority of Christ Jesus, we as the elders of the church of God in this place, absolve you, _____, from the bond of excommunication. We receive you again into the church of the Lord with joy and gratitude, and declare that you share in the fellowship of Christ, of the holy sacraments, and of all spiritual gifts and blessings of our Saviour which God promises to and bestows upon His church. May the eternal God preserve you in this grace to the end, through His only Son Jesus Christ. *The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it. Amen.*

Beloved brother (sister), be assured in your heart that the Lord Himself has received you in grace. Be diligent to guard yourself against the subtleties of Satan, the wickedness of the world, and the fallacies of the flesh, lest you again become entangled in sin. The love of Christ has brought you back; love Him, for He has forgiven you much. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit again, who has promised in your baptism to dwell in you and to sanctify you to be a member of Christ.

Beloved Christians, receive this brother (sister) in love. Rejoice and be thankful, for this brother (sister) was dead and is alive; he (she) was lost and is found. Rejoice with the angels, for Christ said, *I tell you that in the same way there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine persons who do not need to repent.* Look on him (her) no longer as a stranger but as a fellow citizen with the saints and a member of the household of God.

Since there is no good in ourselves, let us, with praise and thanksgiving, implore the Lord Almighty for His grace.

Gracious God and Father, we thank and praise You through Jesus Christ that You have granted this brother (sister) godly grief and repentance unto life and have caused us to rejoice in this.

We pray, show him (her) Your grace, that he (she) may become more and more assured of the complete remission of all sins, and may derive from that assurance unspeakable joy and delight to serve You.

Since for a time he (she) has grieved many by his (her) sins, grant that he (she) now may edify many by his (her) conversion. Grant that he (she) may walk steadfastly in Your ways till the end.

Teach us, Father, by this example that with You there is forgiveness, that You

may be praised. Grant that we now with our brother (sister) may together serve You with childlike fear and obedience all the days of our life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit is the one only true God. Amen.

(Or: . . . through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose Name we conclude our prayer:

*Our Father in heaven
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,
for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen)*

FORM FOR THE ORDINATION (OR INSTALLATION) OF MINISTERS OF THE WORD

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ:

The consistory has now twice published the name of our brother _____, to learn if anyone had objections against his ordination to the ministry of the Word (or: installation as minister in this church). Since no one has brought forward anything lawful against his doctrine and life, we will now in the Name of the Lord proceed to his ordination (or: installation).

Let us first hear what Holy Scripture teaches about the office of ministers of the Word.

The exalted Christ gathers His church through His Word and Spirit, and in His grace uses the ministry of man. The apostle Paul indicates this when he says, *It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.* As the Chief Shepherd, who unceasingly cares for His flock, He appoints shepherds to take heed to the flock in His Name. They are to take care of the sheep of Christ by means of the proclamation of the Word, by the administration of the sacraments, and by prayers and pastoral supervision. In this way the flock is tended and led in the right paths.

In the early Christian church this task was fulfilled by the apostles. They, in turn, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, appointed elders in every church. According to 1 Timothy 5:17 there were elders who ruled the congregation. Some of them were also called to labour in preaching and teaching. The latter are now called ministers of the Word. They have received the ministry of reconciliation, of which Paul speaks, saying, *All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

The task of the minister of the Word can be described as follows:

First, he must declare the whole counsel of God to his congregation, proclaiming the Word according to the command of the apostle Paul: *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction.* After the example of the apostle he is to perform this duty in public and from house to house. He shall expose all errors and heresies as unfruitful works of darkness, and exhort the membership to walk as children of the light. He shall teach the Word of God to the youth of the church and to others whom God calls, for the Holy Scriptures are able to instruct them for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It is also his duty to visit the members of the congregation and to comfort the sick and sorrowing. Thus comforting and admonishing, he shall call the whole

congregation to the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Second, he is called to administer the sacraments, because Christ has joined this administration to the preaching of the gospel. It is therefore the duty of the minister of the Word to administer holy baptism according to the command of Christ, *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* He also is to administer the holy supper as instituted by Christ when He said, *Do this in remembrance of Me.*

Third, it is his duty as pastor and teacher of the congregation to call upon the Name of the Lord in public worship, *with requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving.*

Fourth, it is the duty of the minister of the Word, with the elders as stewards of the house of God, to see to it that in the congregation all things are done in peace and good order. Together they shall supervise the doctrine and life of the membership, as the apostle Peter said: *Be shepherds of God's flock, not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.* In so doing they are to shut and open the kingdom of God by Christian discipline, according to the charge given them by Christ. From all this we see what glorious work the ministers of the Word may perform. When the Chief Shepherd is manifested they as faithful servants will obtain the unfading crown of glory.

Beloved brother _____, you are now about to enter upon your office. We ask you to answer the following questions before God and His holy church.

First, do you feel in your heart that God Himself, through His congregation, has called you to this holy ministry?

Second, do you believe the Old and the New Testament to be the only Word of God and the complete doctrine of salvation? Do you reject all doctrines conflicting with it?

Third, do you promise faithfully to discharge the duties of your office and to adorn the doctrine of God with a godly life? Do you also promise to submit to the discipline of the church in case you should become delinquent in doctrine or life?

What is your answer?

I do.

God, our heavenly Father, who has called you to this holy office, enlighten you with His Spirit and so govern you in your ministry that you may fulfill it obediently and that it may bear fruit to the honour of His Name and the expansion of the kingdom of His Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Beloved brother in Christ, God our Father has obtained the church for Himself with the blood of His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has made you pastor and teacher of this congregation. Love Christ, feed His lambs and tend His sheep, *not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be.* Keep watch over yourself *set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Preach the pure doc-*

trine, so that by your preaching and teaching the congregation may be kept in obedience to the Word of God. *Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Do not neglect your gift*, with which the Lord has endowed you for this ministry. Devote yourself to your duties with all your strength and with perseverance, *because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

Beloved brothers and sisters, the Lord has granted you this servant. Receive him with all joy. *How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!* Take heed to receive the Word of God, which you shall hear from him, and accept his words, spoken according to the Holy Scriptures, *not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God.*

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

If you thus receive this servant from the Lord, the peace of God will come upon you, and you will inherit eternal life through Christ.

Since we of ourselves are not capable of all this, we will call upon the Almighty God.

Merciful Father, it pleases You to gather to Yourself out of the whole human race a church chosen to life eternal. We thank You that You gather this church by the ministry of men and that You give this minister of the Word to this congregation. We pray, by your Spirit equip him for the ministry to which You have called him. Enlighten his mind that he may understand the Scriptures, and open his mouth that he may proclaim the mysteries of the gospel with boldness. Grant him wisdom and faithfulness to guide the flock in the right path and to keep them in Christian peace, that by his ministry and under his good leadership Your church may be preserved and increased.

Encourage and comfort him by Your Spirit, so that he may remain steadfast in troubles and temptations during his ministry, and, finally, with all Your faithful servants, may enter into the joy of his Lord.

Grant that those entrusted to his pastoral care may acknowledge this servant as sent by You. Give that they may receive the instruction and admonition of Christ which this shepherd shall bring to them and that they may joyfully submit to his direction. Grant that through his ministry all may believe in Christ and thus inherit eternal life.

Hear us, O Father, through Jesus Christ Your Son, who with You and the Holy Spirit, one only God, lives and reigns forever. Amen.

*The laying on of hands shall not take place in the case of those who are already in the ministry.

FORM FOR THE ORDINATION (OR INSTALLATION) OF MISSIONARIES

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ:

The consistory has now twice published the name of our brother _____, to learn if anyone had objections against his ordination installation as a missionary. Since no one has brought forward anything lawful against his doctrine and life, we will now in the Name of the Lord proceed to his ordination installation.

Let us first hear what Holy Scripture teaches about the office of those ministers of the Word who are set apart for the preaching of the gospel to those who are outside.

God, our heavenly Father, in His good pleasure, gathers a church from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. He calls them out of the corrupt race of man unto life eternal.

For this purpose God sent His only Son into the world, who came as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep, that they may have life and have it abundantly. He calls His sheep not only from Israel but also from all the nations, and leads them to His fold, that there may be one flock, one Shepherd.

In order to gather His church, Christ has sent the Spirit as He promised, saying, *When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, He will testify about Me.* The apostles were also witnesses, sent by Christ as He had been sent by the Father; they testified that the Father had sent His Son as the Saviour of the world.

It is the calling of the church, through this testimony of the apostles, to move people to believe in Christ crucified. From the time of the apostles, the Holy Spirit has commanded the church to set men apart for the work to which He has called them.

In order that this command may be fulfilled, the Lord Christ has now given to this congregation a minister of the Word.

According to the mandate of the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles, a missionary shall first of all preach the Word of God to those who are without Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise. Thus he brings hope to those who have no hope and are without God in the world, that they, being far off, may come near through the blood of Christ.

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. He has entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to men whom He made ambassadors of Christ. Therefore the missionary shall beseech men in the Name of Christ to *be reconciled to God.*

He must hold firm to the reliable Word of God, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to refute those who contradict it.

Second, he ought to baptize believers and their children into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that the Lord has commanded His church.

And since the Lord Jesus has commanded His church to proclaim His death until He comes, he shall also prepare the table of the Lord in the midst

of the believers. It shall be his duty to admonish the believers when they sin in doctrine and life and to deny them the use of the sacraments if they do not heed his admonitions, for the apostle Paul warned, *You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.*

Third, as soon as it becomes feasible he shall, in good order, ordain overseers and deacons, according to the charge and example of the apostle Paul; so that they, as faithful men who are able to teach others also, may guide the flock of the Lord, which He obtained with the blood of His Son. He shall, however, not be hasty in the laying on of hands, according to the warning of Paul to Timothy.

In order that the apostles would be able to fulfil this charge, the Lord Christ, to whom has been given all authority in heaven and on earth, comforted and encouraged them, and in them His whole church, with the promise, *And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.* This promise shall stand until the holy city, the new Jerusalem, has come down out of heaven from God. Then the promise will be fulfilled that the nations shall walk by its light and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. Therefore the Lord Christ calls those blessed who wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

And now, beloved brother _____, you are about to enter upon your office, as it has been described. Therefore you are to answer the following questions before God and His holy church.

First, do you feel in your heart that God Himself through His congregation has called you to this holy ministry?

Second, do you receive the Old and the New Testament as the only Word of God and the complete doctrine of salvation and do you reject all doctrines conflicting with it?

Third, do you promise faithfully to discharge the duties of your office and to adorn the doctrine of God with a godly life? Do you also promise to do your work under the direction of and in close cooperation with the consistory of this church? Do you promise to submit to the discipline of the church, in case you should become delinquent in doctrine or life?

What is your answer?

I do.

God, our heavenly Father, who has called you to this holy office, enlighten you with His Spirit and so govern you in your ministry that you may fulfil it obediently and that it may bear fruit to the honour of His Name and the expansion of the kingdom of His Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Beloved brother, go then in the power of the Holy Spirit to the work to which God, through His church, has called you as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not be ashamed, then, of testifying to our Lord and take your share of suffering for the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us

with a holy calling. *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

Beloved brothers and sisters, the Lord has granted you this servant. Receive him with all joy. Beseech the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that He may guard him (together with his family) in all his (their) ways. Pray for him, that the Word of the Lord may speed on and triumph, as it did among you.

Since we of ourselves are not capable of all this, we will call upon the Almighty God.

Merciful Father, You are pleased to gather to Yourself out of the whole human race a church chosen to life eternal. We thank You that You gather this church by the ministry of man and that You have graciously provided this congregation with a faithful servant who is to labour in the ministry of Your Word to those who are outside.

We pray You, by Your Spirit equip him for the ministry to which You have called him. Enlighten his mind that he may understand the Scriptures, and open his mouth that he may boldly proclaim Your gospel, so that through his preaching many may come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant him wisdom and perseverance in all difficulties and oppression which may confront him in his ministry. Guard him in all his ways. Grant him Your grace that he may remain steadfast to the end and with all Your faithful servants may enter into the joy of his Lord.

Grant this congregation (and the cooperating churches) Your grace, that they may see what You are doing in this ministry and continually remember Your servant in their prayers, in order that they may rejoice in the propagation of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Hear us, O merciful Father, through Your dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

FORM FOR THE ORDINATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ:

The consistory has now twice published the names of the brothers who were elected and appointed to the office of elder and deacon in this church, to learn if anyone had objections to their ordination. Since no one has brought forward anything lawful against their doctrine and life, we shall now in the Name of the Lord proceed to their ordination.

Let us first hear what Holy Scripture teaches about the offices of elders and deacons.

Already in the old dispensation the people of God enjoyed the leadership and guidance of elders. The Lord told Moses to gather the elders of Israel together in Egypt and to inform them of His promises to deliver them from bondage. While these elders were with Moses in the desert, the Lord told him to select from their midst seventy men to bear the burden of the people with him. Together with Moses these elders had authority to command the people. At the end of his ministry, Moses gave to all the elders of Israel the law to rule God's people. Once in the promised land, these elders fulfilled their calling in every city.

In His unceasing care for His flock the Good Shepherd called apostles to be the foundation of His catholic church. The apostles, in turn, appointed elders in every church with the cooperation of the congregation. Apostles and elders gathered together to take decisions to which the churches had to submit. Paul charged the overseers to take heed to the flock in which the Holy Spirit had made them guardians. Peter admonished the elders to tend the flock of God that was their charge.

In his epistle to the Philippians, the apostle Paul addressed the saints together with the overseers and deacons. In order that these offices might remain, he also gave his fellow workers detailed instructions for selecting brothers to these offices of overseers and deacons.

He directed Titus to appoint elders in every town. The New Testament calls these office-bearers not only presbyters or elders but also bishops or overseers as well as shepherds and guardians.

The office of elder is, therefore, one of authority given by Christ. Elders are to fulfil their duties by reminding God's people of His ordinances and by exercising discipline over the disobedient, by caring for the flock and defending the sheep against the dangers that threaten them.

As for their mandate, the task of the elders is, together with the ministers of the Word, to have supervision over Christ's church, that every member may conduct himself properly in doctrine and life, according to the gospel. For this purpose they shall faithfully visit the members of the congregation in their homes to comfort, instruct, and admonish them with the Word of God, reproving those who behave improperly. They shall exercise Christian discipline, according to the command of Christ, against those who show themselves unbelieving and ungodly and refuse to repent. They shall watch that the sacraments are not profaned.

Second, being stewards of the house of God, they are to take care that in the congregation all things are done decently and in good order. For this purpose they form, together with the minister of the Word, the consistory of the church. Together they tend the flock of God which is in their charge. They must prevent anyone from serving in the church without having been lawfully called.

Third, it is their duty to assist the ministers of the Word with good counsel and advice. They are also charged with the supervision over the doctrine and conduct of these fellow servants. They shall permit no strange teaching, so that in every respect the congregation is edified by the pure doctrine of the gospel. Therefore they must watch diligently that no wolves enter the sheepfold of the Good Shepherd.

To do their work well as shepherds of God's flock, the overseers should train themselves in godliness and diligently search the Scriptures, which are profitable in every respect, that the man of God may be equipped for every good work.

Concerning the ministry of mercy, assigned to the deacons, the Lord impressed upon His people Israel the obligation to show mercy to the needy. God repeatedly commanded that the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow might eat within their towns and be filled. In the old dispensation the needy and suffering were protected and provided for by God's fatherly love: His ordinances taught the covenant people to imitate that love as beloved children.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who has shown us the Father, came into the world to serve. In His mercy He fed the hungry, healed the sick, and showed compassion to the afflicted. Thus He gave an example, that His church should do likewise. The ministry of mercy, as assigned to the deacons, proceeds, therefore, from this love of our Saviour.

After the example of her Lord, the first Christian congregation took care that no one in her midst suffered want. To each was distributed according to need.

Also today the Lord calls on us to show hospitality, generosity, and mercy, so that the weak and needy may share abundantly in the joy of God's people. No one in the congregation of Christ may live uncomforted under the pressure of sickness, loneliness, and poverty.

For the sake of this service of love, Christ has given deacons to His church. When the apostles realized that they would have to give up preaching the Word of God if they had to devote their full attention to the daily support of the needy, they assigned this duty to seven brothers chosen by the congregation. It is therefore the responsibility of the deacons to see to the good progress of this service of charity in the church. They shall acquaint themselves with existing needs and difficulties, and exhort the members of Christ's body to show mercy. They shall gather and manage the offerings and distribute them in Christ's Name, according to need. They are called to encourage and comfort with the Word of God those who receive the gifts of Christ's love. They shall promote with word and deed the unity and fellowship in the Holy Spirit which the congregation enjoys at the table of the Lord.

In this way God's children will increase in love to one another and to all men.

Beloved brothers, you are about to enter upon your respective offices. We request you to answer the following questions before God and His holy church.

First, do you feel in your hearts that God Himself, through His congregation, has called you to these offices?

Second, do you believe the Old and New Testament to be the only Word of God and the complete doctrine of salvation? Do you reject all doctrines conflicting with it?

Third, do you promise to discharge faithfully the duties of your office and to adorn it with a godly life – you elders in the government of the church and you deacons in the ministry of mercy? Do you also promise to submit to the discipline of the church in case you should become delinquent in doctrine or life?

What is your answer?

I do (to be answered by each personally).

The almighty God and Father grant you His grace, that you may faithfully and fruitfully discharge your offices. Amen.

You, elders, as good shepherds of Christ's flock and faithful watchmen over the house of God, be diligent in governing the church, in comforting the distressed, and in admonishing the wayward. Take heed that the congregation abide by the pure doctrine and lead a godly life. *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

You, deacons, be faithful and diligent in the gathering of gifts and distribute them cheerfully to those who need assistance, especially to the widows and orphans. Do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith. Support those who are burdened with cares or who are lonely. Give in your ministry of mercy a good example to the congregation of the service to which all are called by Christ Jesus.

Be all with one accord faithful in your offices. Hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. If you serve well, you will gain a good standing for yourselves, always have great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus, and finally enter into the joy of your Master.

On the other hand, beloved brothers and sisters, receive these men as servants of God.

Respect the overseers who labour among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

Take care that the deacons have sufficient means to fulfil their ministry. Be good stewards of all that the Lord has entrusted to you. Remember Christ, your example in serving the church of God.

Since we are unable of ourselves to do all this, let us call upon the Lord our God.

Lord God and heavenly Father, it pleases You for the edification of Your church to ordain overseers and deacons besides the ministers of the Word. We thank You that You give us men who are endowed with Your Holy Spirit. Grant them more and more the gifts they need – wisdom, courage, discretion, and mercy – so that each of them may fulfil his office as it is pleasing to You.

Give Your grace to both elders and deacons that they may persevere in faithful service, without being hindered by trouble and sorrow or by persecution of the world.

Grant that this congregation, over whom You have set them, may submit willingly to the good exhortation of the overseers and esteem them in love because of their work.

Give us ardent love for each other. Grant that we may cheerfully provide the deacons with sufficient means, so that the needy may be liberally supplied.

We pray You that by the faithful service of everyone the kingdom of Your Son may come and Your Name be glorified, for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.

FORM FOR THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE

The consistory announces that _____ and _____ have indicated their intention to enter into the married state, according to the ordinance of God. They desire to begin this holy state in the Name of the Lord and to complete it to His glory. If no lawful objection is brought forward, the ceremony will take place, the Lord willing, on

_____ and _____, since the consistory has duly made known to the congregation your desire to enter into the married state, and no lawful objection has been presented, we may now proceed to the solemnization of your marriage in the Name of the Lord.

Let us first listen to a summary of what the Word of God teaches us about marriage. We find there that marriage is an institution of God which pleases Him, and must therefore be held in honour among all. After God our Father made heaven and earth, He created man in His own image. And the LORD God said, *The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man. The man said,*

*"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."*

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. We therefore believe that the LORD also today gives husband and wife to one another. Since they are united by His hand, nothing shall separate them in this life.

Also, our Lord Jesus Christ honoured marriage when He revealed His glory at the marriage feast at Cana. He teaches us that marriage is an institution of God and should not be broken, when He says, *Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.*

Since God has made marriage such a strong bond, He hates divorce, as also our Lord Jesus Christ shows in these words: *I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.*

As the Lord forbids immorality *each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband*, so that our bodies may be preserved as temples of the Holy Spirit and we may glorify God in our bodies.

The apostle Paul teaches us that the unity of husband and wife in marriage is a profound mystery, reflecting the relationship between Christ and His church. As Christ is the Head of the church, so the husband is the head of his wife. Christ loved His church to the end, and gave Himself up for her, that she might be holy and without blemish; likewise the husband shall love his wife as his own body, take care of her, and cherish her. As the church is subject to Christ, so the wife shall be subject in everything to her husband, respect him, and entrust herself to his loving care, following the example of godly women who trusted in God and were subject to their husbands.

Husband and wife shall assist each other in all good things, heartily forgiving one another their sins and shortcomings. United in love, they will more and more reflect in their marriage the unity of Christ and His church.

Although it is true, as the apostle says, that those who marry will face trouble in this state and because of sin will experience many difficulties and afflictions, yet they may also believe the promise of God that they, as heirs of the grace of life, will always receive His aid and protection, even when they least expect it.

The Word of God also teaches us about the purpose of marriage.

First, husband and wife shall live together in sincere love and holiness, helping each other faithfully in all things that belong to this life and to the life to come.

Second, by marriage the human race is to be continued and increased, and, under the blessing of God, husband and wife will be fruitful and multiply. If it pleases God to give them children, they shall nurture these children in the true knowledge and fear of the Lord.

(The minister shall ask them to rise.)

Bridegroom and bride, hear from the Word of God what the Lord requires of you in marriage.

Bridegroom, know that God has set you to be the head of your wife. You shall love her as your own body, as Christ loved His church and gave Himself up for her. Guide, protect, and comfort your wife. Live with her wisely and honour her, because she is an heir to eternal life together with you; then your prayers will not be hindered. Work faithfully in your daily calling, that you may support your family and also help those in need.

Bride, you shall love your husband and be subject to him, as the church is subject to Christ. Accept his guidance and assist him in all good things. Take proper care of your family and household, and live modestly, in faith, love, and holiness.

Assist each other always and be faithful to each other. Diligently fulfil the calling which the Lord has given you in the church and in this world. Believe God's sure promise, *Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in His ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours.*

_____ and _____, you have now heard what the Lord requires of you and what He has promised you. May our gracious God give you the strength and the faithfulness to live together as husband and

wife in this manner and may your help be in the Name of the LORD who made heaven and earth.

(Minister: Will you now join right hands?)

(To the bridegroom:)

_____, do you declare here before the Lord and these witnesses that you take as your lawful wife _____, here present? Do you promise to love and guide her faithfully, to maintain her, and to live with her in holiness, according to the holy gospel? Do you also promise never to forsake her, but to be true to her always, in good days and bad, in riches and poverty, in health and sickness, for as long as you both shall live?

What is your answer?

I do.

(To the bride:)

_____, do you declare here before the Lord and these witnesses that you take as your lawful husband _____, here present? Do you promise to love and obey him, to assist him, and to live with him in holiness, according to the holy gospel? Do you also promise never to forsake him, but to be true to him always, in good days and bad, in riches and poverty, in health and sickness, for as long as you both shall live?

What is your answer?

I do.

(Minister:) I now pronounce you husband and wife. The Father of all mercies, who by His grace called you to this holy state of marriage, bind you together in true love and faithfulness, and grant you His blessing. Amen.

Bridegroom and bride, since we cannot expect anything from ourselves, you shall kneel before the Lord and we shall pray with you and for you that He may enable you to fulfil your vows and grant you His blessing.

Almighty and heavenly Father, You have said from the beginning that man should not be alone. We thank and praise You that You have given this brother and sister to each other in marriage, that they may be one.

We pray You, grant them Your Holy Spirit that they may live together according to Your will in true faith. Help them to resist the power of sin, and to live in holiness before You. Lift up Your countenance upon them, and guide them in prosperity and adversity by Your fatherly hand. Grant them Your blessing according to the covenant promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If it should please You to give them children, confirm Your covenant to them and to their seed; and grant that they may nurture these children in the fear of the Lord, to the glory of Your Name, and to the edification of the church.

Let them live in communion with Your Son Jesus Christ, in the harmony of

true love, and to the benefit of their neighbour. Cause them to look forward with all the church to the great day of the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Hear us, merciful Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, who with You and the Holy Spirit, the only true God, lives and reigns for ever, Amen.

(Or add:

Our Father in heaven

hallowed be Your name,

Your kingdom come,

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,

for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen)

Brother and sister _____, our Lord God bless you richly and grant you a long and holy life together in all godliness, love, and unity. Amen.

10.3 *The Prayers*

Changes: Prayers updated with respect to pronouns and verb endings.

The following prayers are included:

1. A General Confession of Sins and Prayer Before the Sermon and on Days of Fasting and Prayer
2. A Prayer for all the Needs of Christendom
3. A Public Confession of Sins and Prayer before the Sermon
4. A Prayer after the Sermon
5. A Prayer before the Explanation of the Catechism
6. A Prayer after the Explanation of the Catechism
7. A Prayer before Meals
8. Thanksgiving after Meals
9. A Prayer for the Sick and the Spiritually Distressed
10. A Prayer for the Sick and the Spiritually Distressed
11. A Morning Prayer
12. An Evening Prayer
13. An Opening Prayer for Ecclesiastical Assemblies
14. A Closing Prayer for Ecclesiastical Assemblies
15. An Opening Prayer for The Meetings of the Deacons

PRAYERS

1. A GENERAL CONFESSION OF SINS AND PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON AND ON DAYS OF FASTING AND PRAYER

O eternal and merciful God and Father, we humble ourselves before Your great majesty, for we have frequently and grievously sinned against You. We acknowledge that if You were to enter into judgment with us, we would deserve nothing but temporal and eternal death. We are deeply conscious of the fact that we are conceived and born in sin, and that all manner of evil desires against You and our neighbour fill our hearts. We continually transgress Your commandments, failing to do what You have commanded us, and doing that which You have expressly forbidden. We all, like sheep, have gone astray and each of us has turned to his own way. We acknowledge our waywardness, and are heartily sorry for all our sins. We confess that our transgressions are innumerable, and that we have nothing with which to repay our debt. Therefore we are not worthy to be called Your children, nor to lift up our eyes to You in heaven.

Nevertheless, O Lord God and gracious Father, we know that You do not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn to You and live. We know that Your mercy toward those who turn to You is infinite; and so we take courage to call upon You from the depths of our hearts, trusting in our Mediator Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Have compassion on us and forgive us all our sins for Christ's sake. Wash us in the pure fountain of His blood, so that we may become clean and white as snow. Cover our nakedness with His righteousness, for the glory of Your Name. Free our understanding from all blindness, and our hearts from all stubbornness and rebellion.

Open now the mouth of Your servant, and fill it with Your wisdom and knowledge, that he may boldly proclaim Your Word in all its purity. Prepare our hearts to receive it, to understand it, and to preserve it. Inscribe Your law, as You have promised, on our hearts, and give us the desire and the strength to walk in the ways of Your precepts, to the praise and glory of Your Name, and to the edification of the church.

All this, gracious Father, we implore in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.
(Or: . . . who taught us to pray, *Our Father* . . .)

2. A PRAYER FOR ALL THE NEEDS OF CHRISTENDOM

Almighty and merciful God, we confess that we are unworthy to come before You in prayer. Our consciences accuse us and our sins testify against us. We also know that You are a righteous judge who punishes the sins of those who transgress Your commandments.

But You, LORD, have commanded us to call upon You in all our needs and have in mercy promised to listen to our petitions. We realize that this is not because of our merits, for we have none, but because of the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom You have appointed as our Mediator and Advocate. Therefore we forsake all other help and refuse to take our refuge in anything but Your mercy alone.

Heavenly Father, You have showered upon us so many blessings that we are not able to comprehend them, much less to count them. We especially thank You that You have led us to the light of Your truth and to the knowledge of Your holy gospel. Time and again, however, we have ungratefully forgotten Your benefits, deserted You, by following the desires of our own hearts. We have not honoured You as we should have. We have grievously sinned against You. If You were to bring us into judgment, we could expect nothing but condemnation and eternal death. But, LORD, look upon the face of Your Anointed. Hide Your eyes from our sins and remove Your wrath through His intercession. Work in us mightily by Your Spirit, that He may daily put to death our sinful nature and work the daily renewal of our life.

As it pleases You that we should pray for all mankind, we implore You, bless the spreading of Your holy gospel, that it may be proclaimed and received universally so that the whole world may know You. Enlighten the ignorant, strengthen the weak. May everyone by word and deed magnify Your holy Name. To this end send faithful servants into Your harvest and equip them to discharge the duties of their office diligently. Destroy, we pray, all false teachers, fierce wolves and hirelings who seek their own honour and profit rather than the honour of Your holy Name and the salvation of men.

Graciously preserve and govern Your Christian churches throughout the world in the unity of the true faith and in godliness of life, that Your kingdom may come day by day. Destroy the kingdom of Satan until the perfection of Your kingdom arrive when You shall be all in all.

We pray for the mission among Jews, Muslims, and heathen, who live without hope and without You in the world. Grant Your blessing upon the spreading of the gospel among those who still call themselves Christians but have deviated from Your truth in doctrine and life.

Remember all Christian instruction and all who are engaged in it. Bless all societies which, in accordance with Your holy Word, seek to hallow Your Name, to further Your kingdom, and to fulfil Your will. Be with all Christian institutions of mercy and grant those who work there the full measure of Your love.

We also pray for the civil government, for our Queen and her house, and for all national, provincial, and local authorities, whom You have set over us. Grant that they may perform their task in such a manner that the rule of the King of kings is acknowledged by them and by their subjects. May they as Your servants more and more oppose the kingdom of Satan, which is a kingdom of lawlessness. Grant that under the rule and protection of the governing authorities we may lead a quiet and peaceful life, godly and respectful in every way.

We pray for all Your children who suffer persecution for the sake of Your Name and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Comfort them with Your Holy Spirit and deliver them from the hands of their enemies. Do not permit the memory of Your Name to be removed from the earth. Do not let the enemies of Your truth have occasion to dishonour and blaspheme Your Name. But if it is Your will that persecuted Christians by their death bear witness to the truth and glorify Your Name, comfort them in their sufferings. May they accept their trials as from Your fatherly hand and remain faithful in life and death to the honour of Your Name, to the edification of the church, and to their salvation.

We remember before You all those whom You are chastening with poverty, imprisonment, physical illness, or spiritual distress. May it please You to heal the sick and to restore soundness of mind to the mentally ill. Surround those who are handicapped in body or mind with Your care and bless all that is done to help them. Lift up those who are cast down. Be a Comforter to the widowers, a Protector to the widows, a Father to the orphans. Show Your love to the lonely, Your strength to the weak, Your grace to the dying, Your sustaining power to the bereaved. Grant that all trials may yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Glorify Yourself in the faith, love, and endurance of all those whom You have called to Your eternal glory in Christ.

O LORD, take us and our dear ones into Your care and keeping. Watch over our families. Strengthen the expectant mothers and grant them a good delivery. Bless the bond between husbands and wives, and between parents and children. Be with those married couples whom You, in Your wisdom, do not give children. Bless them and cause them to be a blessing in the midst of Your household.

Help us in our daily work, and protect us when we travel. Bless our work for the promotion of Your kingdom and for the benefit of our country, or for the advancement of honourable personal interests. Bless the products of the soil and grant favourable weather and fruitful increase.

Enable us in our respective callings to live according to Your will. May we use the talents we have received from Your hand in such a way that they may not hinder but rather promote our life in Your kingdom. In all temptations strengthen us so that we fight the good fight of the faith, obtain the victory, and hereafter with Christ inherit eternal life.

We pray all this in the Name of our faithful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Or: . . . who taught us to pray, *Our Father* . . .)

3. A PUBLIC CONFESSION OF SINS AND PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON

Heavenly Father, eternal and merciful God, we acknowledge and confess before Your divine majesty that we are poor wretched sinners. We were conceived and born in sin and corruption, and are inclined to all manner of evil and incapable by nature of doing any good. We also transgress Your holy commandments continually. We grieve You by our sins and bring judgment on ourselves because of them. But, LORD, we are truly sorry for our sins, by which we have provoked You to anger. Our conscience accuses us and we acknowledge that we are to blame for our sinfulness and transgressions. Yet we plead for Your mercy on the ground of the suffering of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ. Have compassion on us, gracious God and Father, and forgive us our sins for the sake of His death. Grant us also the grace of Your Holy Spirit, that He may teach us to confess our sins sincerely and to know our wretchedness. May He so lead us that we die to sin, rise up to a new life, and bring forth fruits of holiness and righteousness acceptable to You through Jesus Christ.

Make us understand Your holy Word in accordance with Your divine will, so that we may learn to put our trust in You alone and not in any creature. May our old nature with all its evil desires be put to death day by day and may we present ourselves a living sacrifice to You, to the honour of Your Name and the benefit of our neighbour.

We also implore You, gracious God, to bring back to Yourself in true repentance all who depart from Your truth, that we all with one accord may serve You through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(Or: . . . who taught us to pray, *Our Father* . . .)

4. A PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON

We thank You, merciful God and Father, that You have brought us to know You and Your Son by Your Spirit and Word and have caused Your Word to be proclaimed to us. Grant that we, having received Christ Jesus the Lord, may live in Him, *rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith, as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness*. But since we, through ignorance, unthankfulness, and discontent, do not obey You as we should, we implore You, O Lord, remember Your great mercy and have compassion on us. Teach us truly to know our sins, sincerely to repent, and to amend our life. Strengthen the ministers to preach Your holy Word faithfully and steadfastly. Likewise, Lord, give strength to all civil authorities, that they may use the sword entrusted to them in justice and equity.

Keep us, we implore You, from all hypocrisy and unfaithfulness, and frustrate all evil and subtle designs against Your Word and Your church. O Lord, do not withdraw from us Your Word and Spirit, but grant us a strong faith, patience, and steadfastness in all suffering and adversity. Help and sustain Your church, and deliver Your people from opposition, ridicule, and tyranny. We pray in particular for _____. Strengthen those who are weak and

burdened with sorrow. Grant us Your peace through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who gave us this sure promise: *I tell You the truth, My Father will give you whatever you ask in My Name.* Amen.

(Or: and who taught us to pray, *Our Father . . .*)

5. A PRAYER BEFORE THE EXPLANATION OF THE CATECHISM

Heavenly Father, Your Word is perfect, reviving the soul; Your testimony is sure, making wise the simple. Your gospel is the power unto salvation to everyone who believes. We, however, are by nature blind and incapable of doing any good. Therefore we implore You, illumine our darkened minds by Your Holy Spirit. Give us a humble heart, free from all conceit and worldly wisdom, which is enmity against You, so that, hearing Your Word, we may rightly understand it and let ourselves be governed by it. Confirm us in our catholic and undoubted Christian faith. Graciously bring back those who are leaving Your truth, that we all in unity may serve You in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. We ask these things only for the sake of Christ. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, *Our Father . . .*)

6. A PRAYER AFTER THE EXPLANATION OF THE CATECHISM

Gracious God and merciful Father, we thank You that You have established Your covenant with the believers and their children. You have not only sealed this by holy baptism, but also show it daily by preparing praise to Yourself out of the mouths of children and infants, whereby the wise and prudent of this world are put to shame. You reveal it also by teaching us Your ways and will in Christ Jesus our Lord. You gave pastors and teachers to equip the saints for serving You so that the body of Christ may be built up. We implore You to continue to work in the hearts of all the children of the covenant, both old and young, in order that we all may grow in the knowledge of Your grace in Christ until we reach complete maturity in Him. May we, by Your power, not be tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of teaching. Bless our families and endow the parents by Your Spirit with wisdom from above, that they may bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. We pray for all teaching which is based on Your holy Word, as we have summarized it in the confessions of the church. Be with all who labour in it and provide them with knowledge and wisdom which is rooted in the fear of Your Name. Put to shame those who are high and mighty in their own eyes and in the estimation of the world. May by the godliness of Your people, the kingdom of Satan be destroyed and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in all Your churches be strengthened, to the glory of Your holy Name and unto our salvation.

All this we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ Your Son. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, *Our Father . . .*)

7. A PRAYER BEFORE MEALS

Almighty God, faithful Father, You have made the world and uphold it by Your powerful Word. You provided Israel in the desert with food from on high. Will You also bless us, Your humble servants, and renew our strength by these gifts, which, through our Lord Jesus Christ, we have received from Your bountiful, fatherly hand. Give that we may use them in moderation. Help us to put them to use in a life devoted to You and Your service, for we do acknowledge that You are our Father and the Source of all good things. Grant also that at all times we may long for the lasting food of Your Word. May we so be nourished to everlasting life, which You have prepared for us by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Saviour. In His Name we pray. Amen.

8. THANKSGIVING AFTER MEALS

Lord God, our heavenly Father, we thank You for the food and drink which we have enjoyed in this meal, and for all Your gracious gifts, which we continually receive out of Your hand. We thank You especially for Your divine Word which we were allowed to read together. Through it You have caused us to be born anew to a living hope, which You have revealed in the holy gospel. Merciful God and Father, we pray, let our hearts not be weighed down by the cares of this life nor become too deeply attached to earthly and perishable things. Grant us Your grace, that in our daily tasks we may seek the things which are above, expecting our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is coming on the clouds for our deliverance.

We give our thanks and submit our prayer in His Name. Amen.

9. A PRAYER FOR THE SICK AND THE SPIRITUALLY DISTRESSED

Merciful God and Father, You give eternal hope and salvation to the living and eternal life to the dying. You alone have life and death in Your hands, and Christ alone has the keys of death and of the grave. All things are in Your power so that neither health nor sickness, good nor evil, life nor death can happen to us without Your will. We also know that by Your power and direction all things must serve our salvation. Gracious Father, we implore You to grant us the grace of Your Holy Spirit, that He may teach us truly to know our misery and to bear patiently with Your chastisements. If You O Lord kept a record of our sins these chastisements should have been ten thousand times more severe. We believe that they are not evidence of Your wrath but of Your fatherly love towards us, that we might not be condemned with the world.

LORD strengthen our faith by Your Holy Spirit, so that we become more and more united with Christ our Head, since it is Your good pleasure to unite us to Him in both suffering and glory. Enable us to bear what is brought upon us by Your fatherly wisdom. We submit ourselves entirely to Your will, whether You leave us on earth or whether You take us home unto Yourself. We trust that

with body and soul, both in life and in death, we belong to Christ, whose resurrection is the guarantee of our blessed resurrection.

Grant that we may experience the comfort of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. May His innocent blood wash away the dirt of our sins and may His righteousness cover our unrighteousness in Your sight. Arm us with faith and hope, so that we may overcome the assaults of Satan and not be put to shame by any fear of death. When our eyes grow dim, let Your eyes be open toward us. When You take away from us the ability to speak will You then hear the sighing of our hearts. When our hands have lost their strength, continue to support and carry us on Your everlasting arms.

Father, we commit our spirit into Your hands. Deal with us according to Your promise. Never forsake us, but always be with us, even in the hour of death.

Hear and answer us for the sake of Christ, our dear Saviour. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, *Our Father . . .*)

10. A PRAYER FOR THE SICK AND THE SPIRITUALLY DISTRESSED

Righteous God and merciful Father, You are the Almighty, without whose will nothing occurs in heaven or on earth. Life and death are also in Your hand. We are not worthy to call upon You and, if You were to keep a record of our sins we could not hope that You would hear us and answer us. We pray that You will look upon us according to Your mercy in Christ Jesus, who carried our sorrows and was pierced for our transgressions. We acknowledge that of ourselves we are incapable of doing any good and are inclined to all evil. Therefore we are justly chastised and disciplined by You and yet we do not nearly receive what we deserve.

Lord, You have made us Your people and You are our God. Your mercy, which You have never withheld from those who turn to You, is our only refuge. We pray, therefore, do not hold our sins against us but impute to us the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, so that in Him we may stand before You. Graciously grant us recovery, take this suffering and sickness away from us, and bless the means of healing You have provided. If it pleases You to prolong our trial, give us patience and strength to bear it all according to Your will. You are wise and good. May, whatever You decide, serve the renewal of our life.

Lord rather chastise us here than that we should perish with the world hereafter. Grant that we may forsake the world and crucify our old nature, and that we may more and more be renewed after the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us never be separated from Your love, but draw us closer to You from day to day. Grant that we with joy may fulfill our calling, which is to die with Christ, to rise with Him triumphantly, and to live with Him eternally. We believe that You will hear us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, *Our Father . . .*)

11. A MORNING PRAYER

Merciful Father, we thank You that in Your great faithfulness You kept watch over us during this past night. Strengthen and guide us by Your Holy Spirit, that we may use this new day and all the days of our life in holiness and righteousness. Grant that we in all our undertakings may always have Your glory foremost in our minds. May we always work in such a manner that we expect all results and fruits of our work from Your generous hand alone.

We ask that You will graciously forgive all our sins according to Your promise, for the sake of the passion and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Your grace we are heartily sorry for all our transgressions. Illuminate our hearts, that we may lay aside all works of darkness and as children of light may walk in the light and live a new life in all godliness.

Bless the proclamation of Your divine Word here and in the mission fields. Strengthen all faithful labourers in Your vineyard.

We pray for those whom You have set over us, that as servants of You, the King of kings and Lord of lords, they may rule according to the calling You give them. Give endurance to all who are persecuted because of their faith and deliver them from their enemies. Destroy all the works of the devil. Comfort the distressed. Show Your mercy and help to all who call upon Your holy Name in sickness and other trials of life. Deal with us and with all Your people according to Your grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, who assured us that You will do whatever we ask in His Name. Amen.

12. AN EVENING PRAYER

Merciful God, in whom is no darkness at all, we come before You at the end of this day. We thank You that You have given us strength for our daily work, and have guided us safely through this day. Bless what was good in our labour and conduct.

Since you ordained that man should labour during the day and rest at night, we pray You to give us peaceful and undisturbed rest so that we may be able to take up our daily task again. Command Your angels to guard us and cause Your face to shine upon us. We cast all our anxieties on You, for You take care of us.

Control our sleep and rule our hearts, in order that we may not be defiled in any way but may glorify You even in our nightly rest. Defend and protect us against all assaults of the devil and take us into Your divine protection.

We confess that we did not spend this day without grievously sinning against You. In Your mercy please cover our sins as You cover the earth in the darkness of the night.

Grant comfort and rest to all who are ill, bowed down with grief, or afflicted with spiritual distress. Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not abandon the works of Your hands.

All this we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

13. AN OPENING PRAYER FOR ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES

Heavenly Father, merciful God, it has pleased You according to Your infinite wisdom and lovingkindness to gather a church unto Yourself out of the peoples of the earth. Through Your Word and Spirit, You govern her through the service of men. You have graciously called us to be office-bearers and have charged us to keep watch over ourselves and all the flock which Christ has bought with His precious blood.

In Your name we are now together to deal with matters concerning the edification and welfare of Your churches and to do so in an ecclesiastical manner. We realize that we are unworthy and unable of ourselves to think, speak, or accomplish any good. We implore You, that Your Holy Spirit may govern us in our deliberations and decisions and may lead us into Your truth.

Keep all misunderstanding away from us and guard us against the sinful inclinations of our hearts. May Your Word be our only rule and standard, so that our work may glorify Your Name, serve the well-being of Your churches, and bring peace to our consciences.

We ask this in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep. Amen.

14. A CLOSING PRAYER FOR ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank You that in the gathering and preservation of Your church in our country You are pleased to use our services. You have graciously ordered all things so that Your gospel can be preached without hindrance and we may engage in public worship and have our ecclesiastical assemblies. At the close of this meeting we humbly ask forgiveness for the shortcomings and sins which did not remain hidden from Your eyes. We bring thanks for the good we received from Your fatherly hand. Will You, O faithful God and Father, bless all decisions taken in agreement with Your holy Word. Preserve Your church by the purity of doctrine, by the proper administration and use of the sacraments, and by the faithful exercise of church discipline.

Destroy all wicked counsels conceived against Your Word and church, and strengthen the ministers to preach Your gospel boldly and steadfastly.

Give perseverance to the overseers and the deacons, that they may be a blessing to Your people through the faithful administration of their offices.

Bless our Queen and her house, that she may reign by Your wisdom. So govern the civil authorities that they may rule in justice and with wise restraint. May their rule be directed to Your supremacy as the King of both rulers and subjects. Let in this way the shameful and wicked dominion of Satan be increasingly broken down. Grant that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life, godly and respectful in every way.

Hear us, O God and Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

15. AN OPENING PRAYER FOR THE MEETINGS OF THE DEACONS

Merciful God and Father, You have not only declared that we will always have the poor with us, but have also commanded us to support them in their need. You have ordained the service of deacons for Your church, in order that the needy members may receive the necessary support. You have called us to the office of deacon in this congregation, and we are now assembled in Your Name to deal with the matters pertaining to our office. We humbly implore You to dwell among us with the Spirit of discretion. Grant us His help, that we may be able to establish who are the ones that are truly in need. Lead us to them and help us to distribute the offerings that have been collected in a spirit of joy, fidelity, and liberality.

Kindle fervent love for the needy in the hearts of Your people, that they may generously contribute to them as Your stewards. Grant us sufficient means to bring relief to the needy. May we discharge the duties of our office as Christ's ministers of mercy.

Give us Your grace to relieve needs by means of material gifts and to instill the comfort of Your holy Word into the hearts of the afflicted, that they may put their trust in You alone. Bless, we pray, our work of mercy that we all may praise and thank You, while we await the blessed appearance of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who became poor for our sakes that He might enrich us with eternal treasures.

In His Name we pray. Amen.

11.0 **Expanded Hymn Section (Reference: Par. 1.1.10)**

11.1 **Fulfilling the Mandate**

11.1.1 *Introduction*

The committee has selected 28 hymns that were with a view to increasing the hymn section of the *Book of Praise* in accordance with the mandate received from Synod Chatham.

11.1.2 *Selection Process*

The committee reviewed in excess of 500 hymns from various sources, many of which were suggested by the churches.

Prior to choosing the hymns, the committee identified deficiencies /weaknesses in the existing hymn section and the selections were made to strengthen the overall collection.

Furthermore, the choices were to some degree influenced by the ongoing work with the Psalter-Hymnal Committee of the URCNA in that the majority of the hymns chosen are mutually acceptable to both Committees. This with a view to keep this particular mandate in line with the mandate re: the future common songbook with the URCNA.

What is of greatest importance is that all hymns were measured using the *Guidelines and Principles* agreed upon by the Committee together with the Psalter-Hymnal Committee of the URCNA and adopted by Synod Chatham.

11.1.3 *Hymn on Nicene Creed*

The Church at Kerwood suggested (letter of 14 June, 2000) to add the Nicene Creed as a hymn to our hymn section. There were three suggestions each of which were evaluated by the committee and two musical experts. Based on their advice the Committee decided not to include the Nicene Creed in the current hymn section for reasons as follows:

a) The melodies are not very suitable.

The challenge of writing a melody for the Nicene Creed is that it was not originally written as a hymn. The text of the Creed is neither poetic nor rhythmic and thus a melody is almost bound to be somewhat makeshift.

b) The melodies under review are not very singable. None of the versions evaluated are particularly

suitable for congregational singing. Given the length of this Creed, it would result in a hymn twice the length of our current Hymn 1A.

In addition, the committee evaluated the “Luther Hymn” a paraphrase of this Creed. However the text was so far removed from the Creed that it could not be considered for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

11.1.4 *Singing of Votum and Amen*

The Church at Kerwood suggested the inclusion of music for singing the Votum and Amen. The committee is of the opinion that these are matters left to the freedom of the churches and sees therefore no need to include such songs in the *Book of Praise*.

11.1.5 *Results*

In summary, seven of the ten categories, as listed on page 312/313 of the *Book of Praise*, received at least one extra hymn. The categories “.....He spoke by holy men of old”, “The Word became incarnate”, and “Thou hast redeemed us with Thy blood” are the categories not increased.

“We Praise Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” was increased from 4 to 8 hymns

“Christ has risen! Hallelujah!” was increased from 4 to 8 hymns

“The Lord ascended upon high” was increased from 6 to 8 hymns

“He has come the Holy Spirit” was increased from 3 to 4 hymns

“Watch o’er Thy Church O Lord” was increased from 10 –19 hymns *

“Come, Lord Jesus! Maranatha! was increased from 8 to 15 hymns **

“All Glory be to Thee most high” was increased from 8 to 12 hymns.

* The seemingly large increase for this section is a result of the many topics that are covered by this title. Of the nine proposed hymns in this section:

- two hymns are about the Holy Supper
- three hymns are about Baptism
- two hymns are about Marriage
- two hymns are about the church

** The relatively large increase in this section resulted from the addition of four hymns about the resurrection, a topic sparingly covered in our current Hymns Section.

11.1.6 *Testing by the Churches*

In order to complete the mandate, with Synod concurrence, the committee wishes to produce a Supplement to the *Book of Praise* to allow the churches to thoroughly test the proposed hymns.

The Committee therefore recommends that Synod:

- 1) provisionally adopt the Hymns presented in par. 11.3 below for testing by the churches and,
- 2) instruct the committee to produce a Supplement to the *Book of Praise* in order that these hymns may be tested by the churches.

11.2 Proposed Additional Hymn Selections – Table of Contents:

	Title of Hymn	Proposed Category from Book of Praise, Page 312 /313
1	We Come, O Christ, to You.	We praise Thee Father, Son and Holy Spirit
2	Christ the Lord is Risen Today	Christ Has Risen! Hallelujah!
3	God Gave to Us This Day of Days	
4	Christ Jesus Lay in Death Strong Bands	
5	Christ is Risen	
6	Jesus Shall Reign.	
7	Since our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus	
8	The Spirit Came, As Promised	He has come, the Holy Spirit
9	For the Bread Which You Have Broken (LS)	Watch O'er Thy Church, O Lord.
10	Until He Comes (LS)	
11	We Praise You Lord (Baptism)	
12	Our Children Lord in Faith and Prayer (Baptism)	
13	O God Great Father (Baptism)	
14	O Gracious Lord (Marriage)	
15	Lord Today Bless This New Marriage (Marriage)	
16	Jesus, with Your Church Abide.	
17	Great is Thy Faithfulness	
18	Christ Shall Have Dominion	Come Lord Jesus! Maranatha!
19	Day of Judgment! Day of Wonders	
20	The World of Old	
21	The Hope of the Resurrection (Resurrection)	
22	The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done. (Resurrection)	
23	O Christ, Our Hope (Resurrection)	
24	Alleluia! Alleluia! (Resurrection)	
25	Now Blessed be the Lord Our God	All Glory be to Thee Most High
26	O, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing.	
27	May the grace of Christ Our Saviour	
28	Glory be to the Father	

11.3 Proposed Hymns

The pages that follow present the proposed 28 hymns for supplementing our current Hymn section of the *Book of Praise*.

DISCLAIMER:

The Committee has at this stage not completed the copyright research on all of these additional hymns. This section of the report is intended only as an internal working document for the benefit of the churches in order to come to a responsible decision.

Therefore songs number 1, 7, 8, 15 and 17 may not be duplicated for any use.

We Come O Christ to You

Text: Margaret Clarkson, 1946, rev 1984
 ©1957, 1985 InterVarsity Press.
 Assigned 1987 to Hope Publishing Co

Tune: Eastview
 James V. Lee, 1892-1959
 © 1959 United Reformed Church

1. We come, O Christ, to you, true Son of God and man, by
 2. You are the way to God, your blood our ran - som paid; in
 3. You are the li - ving truth; all wis - dom dwells in you, the
 4. You on - ly are true life — to know you is to live the
 5. We wor - ship you, Lord Christ, our Sa - viour and our King; to

whom all things con - sist. In whom all life be - gan. In
 you we face our Judge and Ma - ker un - a - fraid. Be -
 source of ev - ery skill, the one e - ter - nal True! O
 more a - bun - dant life that earth can ne - ver give. O
 you our youth and strength a - dor - ing - ly we bring: so

you a - lone we live and move and have our be - ing in your love.
 fore the throne ab - solved we stand; your love has met your law's de - mand.
 great I AM! in you we rest, sure an - swer to our ev - ery quest.
 ris - en Lord! we live in you: in us each day your life re - new!
 fill our hearts that all may view your life in us and turn to you!

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

Words: Charles Wesley 1739 alt.

Tune: Easter Hymn with Alleluias

Music from Lyra Davidica, 1708

1. "Christ the Lord is risen to-day"
 2. Lives a - gain our glo - rious King,
 3. Christ's re - deem - ing work is done;
 4. Hail the Lord of earth and heaven!

Al - le - lu - ja!

All cre - a - tion join to say
 Where, O death is now your sting?
 Fought the fight, the bat - tle won;
 Praise to you by all be given;

Al - le - lu - ja!

Raise your joys and tri - umphs high;
 Once He died, our souls to save;
 Death in vain for - bids Him rise;
 Ri - sen Christ tri - um - phant now,

Al - le - lu - ja!

Sing, you heavens, and earth re - ply.
 Where your vic - to - ry, O grave?
 Christ has o - pened Par - a - dise.
 Ev - ery knee to You shall bow.

Al - le - lu - ja!

God Gave to Us this Day of Days

Anonymous 6th Century

Aurora lucit rutilat

1. God gave to us this day of days. On which we
 2. His bo - dy un - to death he gave And then was
 3. The gloom - y dark - ness, sin, and death Are con - quered,
 4. Now we can sing with hap - pi - ness For gone's the

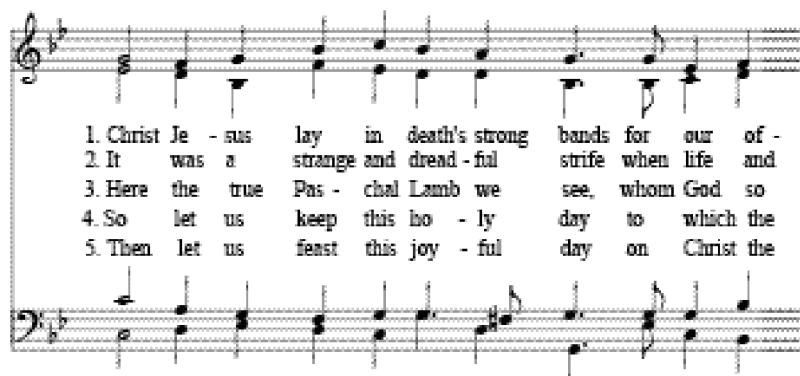
sing our songs of praise, For Je - sus lives! Let us re -
 bu - ried in the grave, But rose a - gain vic - to - rious -
 as the Scrip - ture says, By Je - sus Christ, the ris - en
 fear - ful wret - ched - ness, Thanks to the Lord, the sa - cri -

joice And give Him thanks as with one voice Al - le - lu - jah!
 ly And freed us from all sla - ve - ry Al - le - lu - jah!
 Lord; Who brought back light, and life re - stored Al - le - lu - jah!
 ficed And re - sur - rec - ted Je - sus Christ. Al - le - lu - jah!

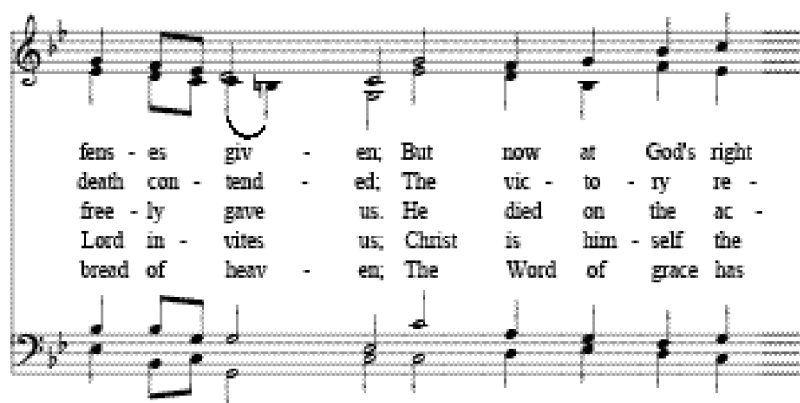
Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands

Words: Martin Luther, 1524
 Transl. Richard Massie, 1854, alt.

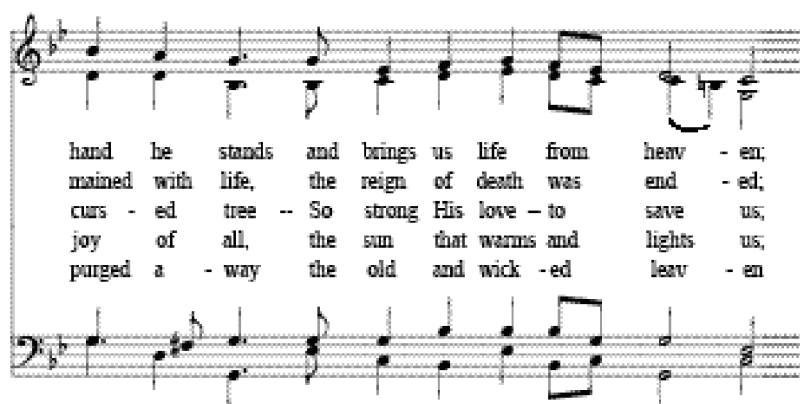
Tune: J. Walther's
 Geistliche Gesangbuchlein, 1524



1. Christ Je - sus lay in death's strong bands for our of -
 2. It was a strange and dread - ful strife when life and
 3. Here the true Pas - chal Lamb we see, whom God so
 4. So let us keep this ho - ly day to which the
 5. Then let us feast this joy - ful day on Christ the



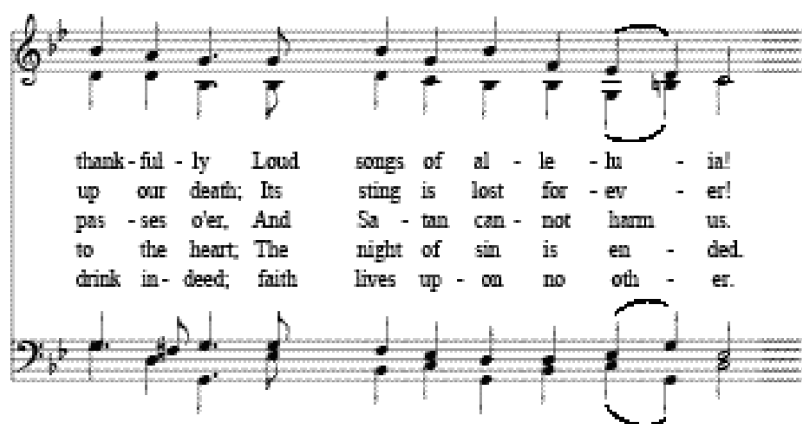
fens - es giv - en; But now at God's right
 death con - tend - ed; The vic - to - ry re -
 free - ly gave us. He died on the ac -
 Lord in - vites us; Christ is him - self the
 bread of heav - en; The Word of grace has



hand he stands and brings us life from heav - en;
 mained with life, the reign of death was end - ed;
 curs - ed tree -- So strong His love - to save us,
 joy of all, the sun that warms and lights us,
 purged a - way the old and wick - ed leav - en



There - fore let us joy - ful be, and sing to God right
 Ho - ly Scrip - ture plain - ly says His death has swal - lowed
 See, His blood now marks our door, faith points to it, death
 By His grace he does im - part e - ter - nal sun - shine
 Christ a - lone our souls will feed, He is our food and



thank - ful - ly Loud songs of al - le - lu - ia!
 up our death; Its sting is lost for - ev - er!
 pas - ses o'er, And Sa - tan can - not harm us.
 to the heart; The night of sin is en - ded.
 drink in - deed; faith lives up - on no oth - er.



Al - le - lu - ia!
 Al - le - lu - ia!
 Al - le - lu - ia!
 Al - le - lu - ia!
 Al - le - lu - ia!

Christ is Risen

Words and Music:

S. Vanderploeg

1. Christ is ris - en, Burst His pris - on. Let us
 2. Prais - es sing we, Thanks we bring Thee, Christ, who
 3. Let our liv - ing Be thanks - giv - ing For what
 4. Christ, all glo - rious And vic - to - rious, Is in
 5. At the dawn - ing Of the morn - ing He'll re -

hymns of tri - umph sing, For our sad - ness Turned to
 took our sins a - way. We in - he - rit On Thy
 God in Christ has done. Bow be - fore Him And a -
 heav - en there to reign. He's been giv - en Earth and
 turn from heav'n on high. Christ des - cen - ding, We as -

glad - ness. Death to - day has lost its sting.
 me - rit, Right - eous - ness and life to - day.
 dore Him, Je - sus Christ God's on - ly Son. Al - le -
 heav - en, All cre - a - tion's His do - main.
 cen - ding, Meet each oth - er in the sky.

lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia! So - li De - o Glo - ri - a!
 - a!

Jesus Shall Reign

Text: Isaac Watts, 1719, alt.

Tune: Duke Street
John Hatton, 1793

1. Je - sus shall reign wher - e'r the sun does its suc -
 2. Bles - sings a - bound wher - e'r He reigns: the pris - oners
 3. Let ev - ery crea - ture rise and bring the high - est

ses - sive jour - neys run, His king - dom stretch from
 leap to loose their chains, the wea - ry find e -
 ho - nours to our King, an - gels de - scend with

shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.
 ter - nal rest, and all who suf - fer want are blest.
 songs a - gain, and earth re - pest the loud a - men.

Since Our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus

Text: Based on Hebrews 1:3-4; 4:14-16; 12:2

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Tune: Tochter Zion,

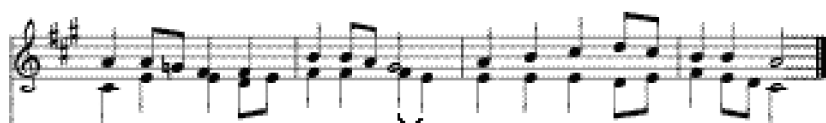
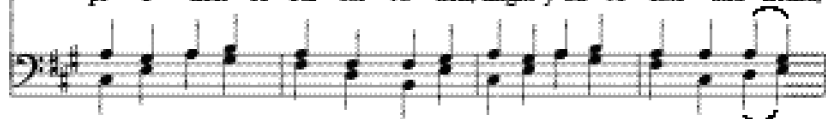
Cologne, 1741



1. Since our great high priest, Christ Je - sus, bears the name a - boveall names,
2. Since we have a priest who suf - fered, know - ing weak - ness, tears and pain;
3. Sac - ri - fice and suf - fering o - ver, now he sits at God's right hand,
4. Love's ex - am - ple, hope's at - trac - tion, faith's be - gin - ning and its end,



reign - ing Son of God, sur - pass - ing oth - er ti - tles, powers, and claims
 who, like us was tried and tempt - ed; un - like us, with - out a stain
 crowned with praise, no more an out - cast, his pre - em - i - nence long planned;
 pi - o - neer of our sal - va - tion, might - y ad - vo - cate and friend;



since to heaven our Lord has passed, let us hold our wit - ness fast!
 since he shared our low - ly place, let us bold - ly seek his grace!
 such a great high priest we have, strong to help, su - preme to save!
 Je - sus, now in glo - ry raised, our as - cen - ded Lord, be praised!



The Spirit Came, As Promised

Text: James E. Seddon, 1973
 © 1973 Hope Publishing Co.
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Tune: Befiehl du deine wege
 Johannes G. Bastiaans, 1868

1. The Spir - it came as prom - ised, in God's ap - poin - ted hour; and
 2. The Spir - it makes our bod - ies the tem - ple of the Lord. He
 3. He bids us live to - geth - er in u - ni - ty and peace; em -
 4. The word, the Spir - it's weap - on, will bring all sin to light; and

now to each be - liev - er he comes in love and power. And
 binds us all to - geth - er in faith and true ac - cord. The
 play his gifts in bless - ing, and let base pas - sions cease. We
 pray, by his di - rect - ing, will give new joy and might. Be

by his Ho - ly Spir - it, God seals us as his own, and
 Spir - it in his great - ness brings power from God a - bove, and
 should not grieve the Spir - it by o - pen sin or shame nor
 filled then with his Spir - it, live ou God's will and word; re -

through the Son and Spir - it makes ac - cess to his throne.
 with the Son and Fa - ther dwells in our hearts in love.
 let our words and ac - tions de - ny his ho - ly name.
 joyce with hymns and sing - ing make mu - sic to the Lord.

For the Bread Which You Have Broken

Words: Louis F. Benson, 1925 alt.

Tune: *Omni die*

1. For the bread which You have brok - en, For the
 2. By this pro - mise that You love us, By Your
 3. In Your ser - vice, Lord de - fend us; In our

cup You gave, O Lord For the words which You have
 gift of peace re - stored, By Your call to heav'n a
 hearts keep watch, O Lord, In the world to which You

spok - en, Now we give You thanks, O Lord.
 bove us, Hal - low all our lives, O Lord.
 send us Let Your King - dom come, O Lord.

Until He Comes

Words: George Rawson (alt.)
(Presbyterian Book of Praise, 1905, No. 422 alt)

Melody: Almsgiving
John B. Dykes 1865

1. By Christ re - deemed, in Christ re - stored,
2. His bo - dy, of - ferred in our stead,
3. His life - blood shed for us we see

1. Him who was cursed, we now a - dore,
2. Is shown in this me - mo - rial bread,
3. Poured out for us, un - doubt - ed - ly,

1. And mark the death of our dear Lord, Un - til He comes.
2. And thus our con - trite souls are fed, Un - til He comes.
3. As wine we drink in me - mo - ry, Un - til He comes.

4. Thus, by His suffering Christ achieved
That we the Spirit have received,
And unity, as brothers, gained
Until He comes.
5. When soon the final trumpet's heard
And all the ancient graves are stirred
Then, with the great commanding Word,
The Lord shall come.

6. Then, once again, we'll celebrate.
Let not our hearts be desolate,
But strong in faith, in patience wait,
Until He comes.

We Praise You, Lord

Text: Judith O'Neill, b. 1930 (alt)

Tune : St. Magnus

1. We praise You, Lord, for Je - sus Christ, Who
 2. We praise You, Lord, that this dear child Is
 3. We praise You, Lord, for Je - sus Christ: He

died and rose a - gain; He lives, He broke the
 graf - ted to the vine, And as a mem - ber
 loves this child we bring; He frees, for - gives, and

pow'r of sin And o - ver death now reigns.
 of Your house, Now bears the cross as sign.
 heals us all; He lives and reigns as King.

Our Children, Lord, in Faith and Prayer

Text: Thomas Haweis, 1808, alt.

Tune: Naomi

Arranged by Lowell Mason, 1836

1. Our chil - dren, Lord, in faith and prayer, We
 2. Such help - less babes Christ did em - brace, While
 3. As they grow up their hearts se - cure From

now pre - sent to Thee; Let them Thy cov - enant
 dwel - ling here be - low; To us and ours, O
 world - ly snares, we pray; O let them to the

mer - cies share and Thy sal - va - tion see.
 God of grace, the same com - pas - sion show.
 end en - dure in ev - ery righ - teous way.

O God, Great Father Lord and King

Text: E. Embree Hoss, 1905 (alt)

Tune : Melcombe
Sammel Webbe, 1782

1. O God, great Fa - ther, Lord and King, Our
 2. Your cov - enant bles - sing did of old Their
 3. Look down up - on us while we pray And

chil - dren un - to You we bring. We come in faith and
 par - ents and their seed en - fold. That an - cient prom - ise
 vis - it us in grace to - day. Those lit - tle ones You

hope and love; We dare Your stead - fast love to prove.
 stands se - cure And shall while heaven and earth en - dure
 did re - ceive; Your pre - cious pro - mise we be - lieve.

4. They now the outward sign receive;
 Your promised Holy Spirit give.
 O keep and help them by Your power
 In every hard and trying hour.
5. Direct their feet in holy ways
 And shine on them in darkest days.
 Uphold them till their life is past
 And bring them all to heaven at last

O Gracious Lord

Original text: Dorothy F. Gurney, 1883
Text Altered CJN/ GvP

Tune : O Perfect Love
Joseph Barnby 1889

1. O gra - cious Lord, in glo - rious heav'n - ly dwell - ing,
2. Christ Je - sus grant them each the full as - sur - ance
3. Grant them the joy, which bright - ens earth - ly sor - row;

We hum - bly come in prayer be - fore Your throne;
Of stead - fast faith and pa - tient hope in You,
Grant them the peace, which calms all earth - ly strife;

That their's may be the love that knows no end - ing
That they may love each oth - er with en - dur - ance;
Grant them the vi - sion of the new to - mor - row

As they, by sa - cred vows, are joined in one.
Grant child - like trust in You each day a - new.
That will re - veal e - ter - nal love and life.

Lord, Today Bless This New Marriage

Text: Marie J. Post, 1974
©1987 CRC Publications

Tune : Cross of Jesus
John Stainer, 1887

1. Lord, to - day bless this new mar - riage, Guide this u - nion
2. Fill their lives with love and ser - vice Where their dai - ly
3. May the home they are pre - par - ing Be a place of

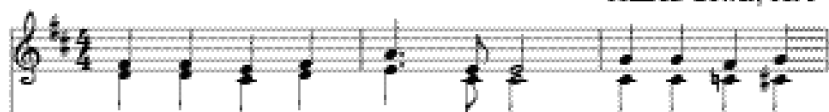
in Your way. With the bles - sing of Your Spir - it
walk may be. Grant them hum - ble hearts when pros - pered,
faith and prayer, Fruit - ful for this life and fruit - ful

May they walk from day to day.
Pa - tience in ad - ver - si - ty.
For Your King - dom, which they share.

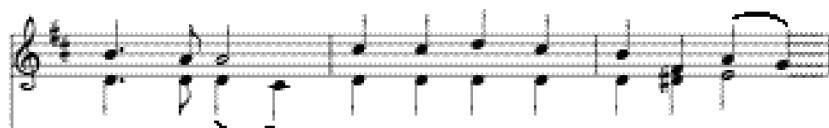
Jesus With Your Church Abide

Text: Thomas Benson Pollock, 1871, alt.

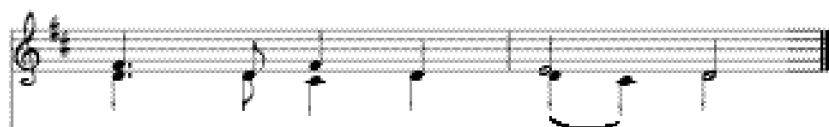
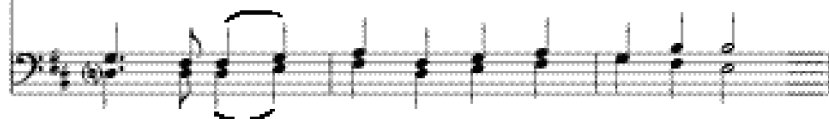
Tune: Gower's Litany
John H. Gower, 1891



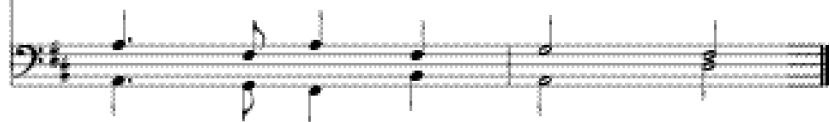
1. Je - sus with your church a - bid; be our Sa - viour,
2. Keep her life and doc - trine pure; grant her pa - tience
3. May our lamp of truth be bright; may we bear a -
4. Par - don us for work un - done, par - don us for



Lord, and Guide, while on earth our faith is tried:
to en - dure, trust - ing in your pro - mise sure:
loft its light through the realms of sin - ful night:
fields un - won, bless the work we have be - gun:



Lord, our Sav - iour, hear us.



Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Text: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

Text and Music (c) 1923, 1951,

Hope Publishing Co.

Tune : Faithfulness

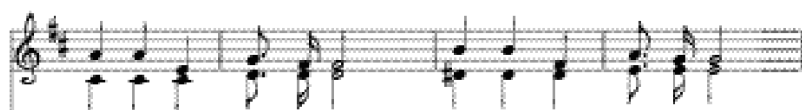
William M. Runyan, 1923

1. Great is Thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther
 2. Sum - mer and win - ter and spring - time and har - vest,
 3. Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth,

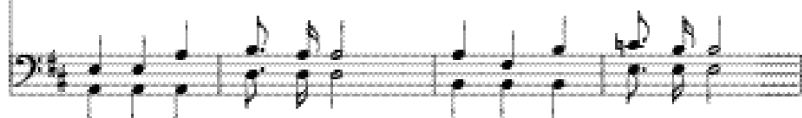
There is no shad - dow of turn - ing with Thee;
 Sun, moon, and stars in their cours - es a - bove
 Thy own dear pres - ence to cheer and to guide,

Thou chang - est not, Thy com - pas - sions, they fail not,
 Join with all na - ture in man - i - fold wit - ness
 Strength for to - day and bright hope for to - mor - row

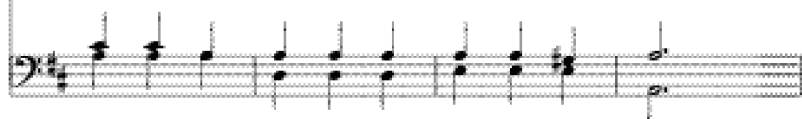
As Thou hast been Thou for - e - ver wilt be.
 To Thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy and love.
 Bles - sings all mine, with ten - thou - sand be - side!



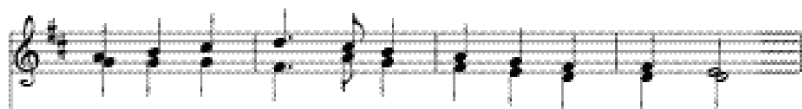
Great is Thy faith-ful-ness Great is Thy faith-ful-ness!



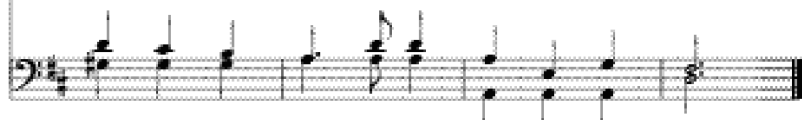
Mor-ning by mor-ning new mer-cies I see;



All I have need-ed Thy hand has pro-vid-ed



Great is Thy faith-ful-ness, Lord, un-to me!



Christ Shall Have Dominion

Text: From Psalter 1912

Psalm 72:8-19.

Tune: Albert Pierson, 1933

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line.

1. Christ shall have do - min - ion o - ver land and sea;
 2. When the need - y seek Him, He will mer - cy show,
 Earth's re - mot - est re - gions shall His King - dom be.
 All the weak and help - less shall His pit - y know.
 They that wilds in - hab - it shall their wor - ship bring;
 He will sure - ly save them from op - pres - sion's might,
 Kings shall bring their tri - bute na - tions serve our King.
 For their lives are pre - cious in His ho - ly sight.

3. Ever and forever shall His Name endure;
 All the weak and helpless shall His pity know.
 And in Him forever nations shall be blessed,
 And all peoples hail Him King of kings confessed.
4. Unto God Almighty joyful Zion sings;
 He alone is glorious, doing wondrous things.
 Evermore O people, bless His glorious Name,
 His eternal glory through the earth proclaim.

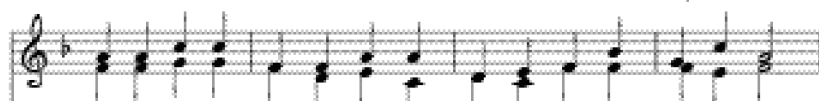
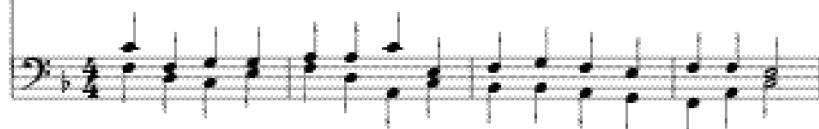
Day of Judgment Day of Wonders

Words: John Newton 1774 alt.

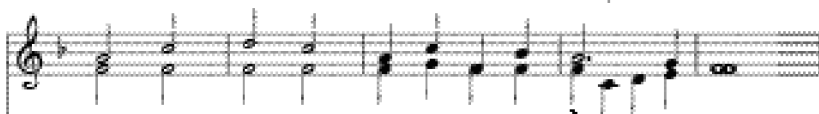
Tune : Coronae
William H. Monk, 1871



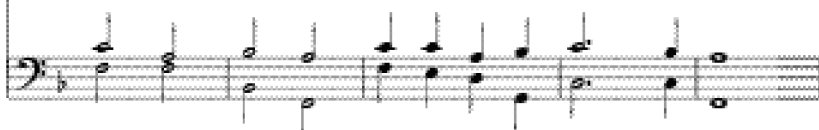
1. Day of Judg -ment Day of won - ders! Hark! the trum - pet's fear - ful sound
2. See the Judge, our na - ture wear - ing, Clothed in ma - jes - ty di - vine;



Loud - er than a thou - sand thun - ders, Shakes the vast cre - a - - tion round.
You who long for His ap - pear - ing Then shall say, this God is mine!



How the sum - mons Will the sin - ner's heart con - found!
Gra - cious Sav - iour, Own me in that day as Thine.



- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>3. At His call the dead awaken
Rise to life from earth and sea;
All the powers of nature, shaken
By His looks, prepare to flee.
Careless sinner,
What will then become of thee?</p> | <p>4. But to those who have confessed,
Loved and served the Lord below,
He will say, Come near, you blessed
See the kingdom I bestow;
You forever
Shall my love and glory know.</p> |
|--|---|

The World of Old

Words and Music:

Revelations 21: 1-5

S. Vanderploeg

1. The world of old, As John fore - told, Will once ap - pear in
 2. Out of the sky, From heav'n on high, Will come the new Je -
 3. He'll wipe a - way Their tears that day, And death will be des -

new ar - ray. The rest - less sea Will no more be. The
 ru - sa - lem. God's dwel - ling then Will be with men, And
 troyed at last. No grief, nor pain There'll be a - gain. The

earth and sky will pass a - way.
 He Him - self will live with them. See, God is ma - king
 things that were be - fore have passed.

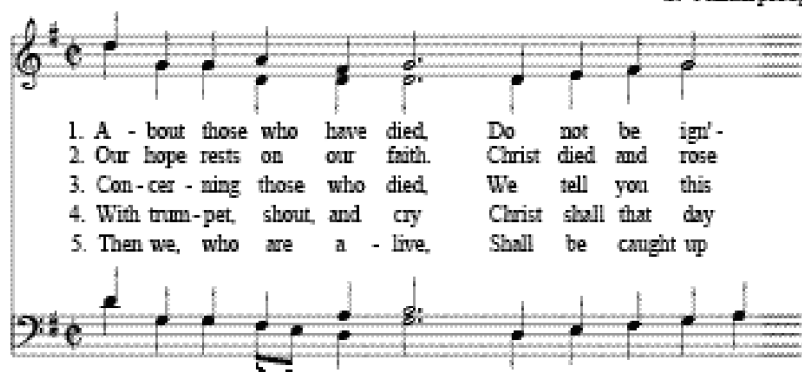
all things new. His word is true, His word is true.

The Hope of Resurrection

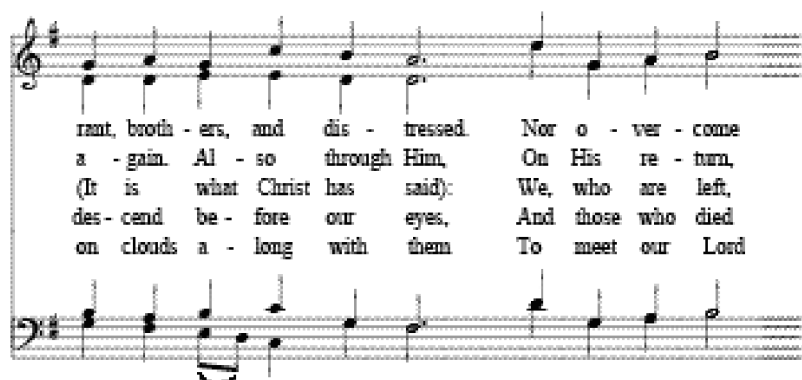
1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

Words and Music:

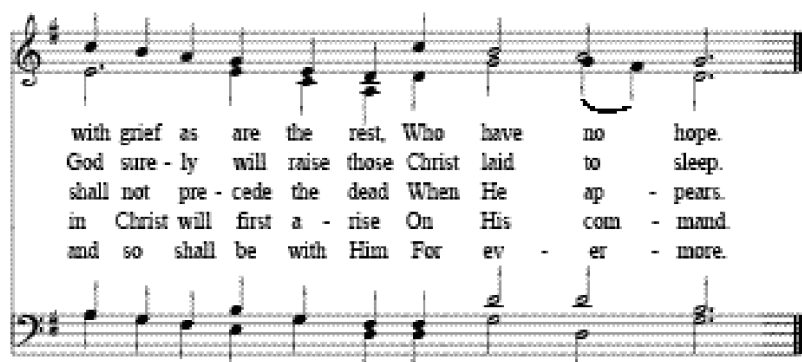
S. Vanderploeg



1. A - bout those who have died, Do not be ign'-
 2. Our hope rests on our faith. Christ died and rose
 3. Con - cer - ning those who died, We tell you this
 4. With trum - pet, shout, and cry Christ shall that day
 5. Then we, who are a - live, Shall be caught up



rant, broth - ers, and dis - tressed. Nor o - ver - come
 a - gain. Al - so through Him, On His re - turn,
 (It is what Christ has said): We, who are left,
 des - cend be - fore our eyes, And those who died
 on clouds a - long with them To meet our Lord



with grief as are the rest, Who have no hope.
 God sure - ly will raise those Christ laid to sleep.
 shall not pre - cede the dead When He ap - pears.
 in Christ will first a - rise On His com - mand.
 and so shall be with Him For ev - er - more.

The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done

Text: Latin, Cologne, 1695

Tr. Francis Pott, 1861.

Tune: Palestrina (Victory), 1591

arr: William H. Monk, 1861

Before first stanza only

Al - le lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

1. The strife is o'er, the bat - tle done;
2. The powers of death have done their worst,
3. The three sad days are quick - ly sped;
4. Lord, by the stripes which wound - ed Thee,

The vic - to - ry of life is won; The song of
But Christ their le - gions has dis - persed; Let shouts of
He ri - ses glo - rious from the dead; All glo - ry
From death's dread sting Thy ser - vants free' That we may

tri - umph has be - gun Al - le - lu - ia!
ho - ly joy out - burst. Al - le - lu - ia!
to our ri - sen Head. Al - le - lu - ia!
live and sing to Thee. Al - le - lu - ia!

O Christ, Our Hope, Our Heart's Desire

Text: Latin Hymn, 7th Cent.
Tr. J. Chandler, 1837

Tune: Manosh
Henry W. Greatorex's Collection, 1851

1. O Christ, our hope, our heart's de - sire, Re -
 2. How vast the mer - cy and the love Which
 3. But now the bands of death are burst, The
 4. O Christ be Thou our last - ing joy, Our

demp - tion's on - ly spring! Cre - a - tor of the
 laid our sins on Thee, And led Thee to a
 ran - som has been paid; And Thou art on Thy
 ev - er great re - ward! Our on - ly glo - ry

world art Thou, It's Sa - viour and it's King.
 cru - el death, To set Thy peo - ple free.
 Fa - ther's throne, In glo - rious robes ar - rayed.
 may it be To glo - ry in the Lord.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Text: Christopher Woodworth, 1862

Tune: Welsh Hymn Melody
Ton-Y-Botel

1. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Hearts to heaven and
 2. Christ is ri - sen, Christ the first - fruits Of the ho - ly
 3. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Glo - ry to the

voi - ces raise; Sing to God a hymn of glad - ness,
 har - vest - field, Which will all its full a - bum - dance
 Three in One: To the Fa - ther, and the Sa - viour,

Sing to God a hymn of praise; He who on the
 At His sec - ond com - ing yield. Then the gold - en
 Who the vic - to - ry has won. Glo - ry to the

cross an Off'-ring For the world's sal - va - tion bled,
 ears of har - vest Will their heads be - fore him wave,
 Ho - ly Spi - rit Fount of love and sanc - ti - ty;

Je - sus Christ, the King of Glo - ry,
 Rip - ened by His glo - rious sun - shine
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Now is ri - sen from the dead.
 From the fur - rows of the grave.
 To the Tri - une Maj - es - ty.

Now Blessed Be the Lord Our God

Text: Psalm 72:18,19;
Scottish Psalter, alt.

Tune : Coronation
Oliver Holden, 1793

1. Now bles - sed be the Lord our God, the God of Is - ra -
2. And bles - sed be His glo - rious Name through all e - ter - ni -

el, For He a - lone does won - drous works: His glo - rious
ty, The whole earth let His glo - ry fill: A - men! So

deeds ex - cel; For He a - lone does
shall it be; The whole earth let His

won - drous works; His glo - rious deeds ex - cel
glo - ry fill: A - men! So shall it be.

O, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Text: Charles Wesley, 1739, alt.

Tune: Azmon - Carl G. Gläser, 1828
arr. Lowell Mason, 1839

1. O, for a thou - sand tongues to sing my
2. My gra - cious Mas - ter and my God, as -
3. The name of Je - sus calms our fears and
4. He breaks the power of reign - ing sin, he
5. He speaks, and, lis - tening to His voice, new

great Re - deem - er's praise, The glo - ries of my
sist me to pro - claim, To spread through all the
> bids our sor - rows cease; 'tis mu - sic to the
sets the pri - oner free; His blood can make the
life the dead re - ceive; The mourn - ful bro - ken

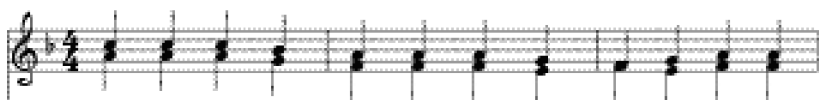
God and King, the tri - umphs of his grace!
earth a - broad, the ho - nours of your name.
> sin - ner's ears, 'tis life and health and peace.
foul - est clean; His blood a - vails for me.
hearts re - joice; the hum - ble poor be - lieve.

6. Hear Him, you deaf; you voiceless ones,
Your loosened tongues empty;
You blind, behold your Saviour come;
And leap, you lame, for joy!
7. To God all glory, praise, and love
Be now and ever given
By saints below and saints above,
The Church in earth and heaven.

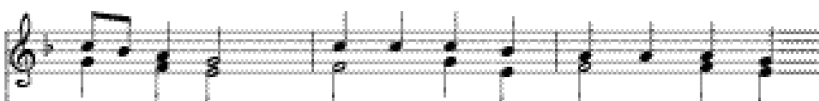
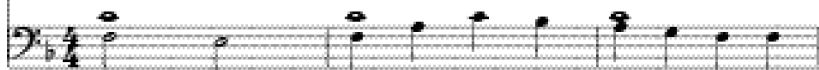
May the Grace of Christ Our Saviour

Text: John Newton, 1779

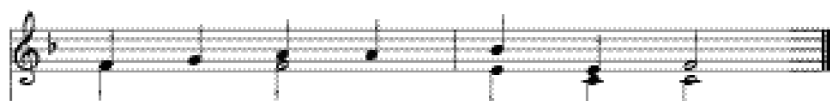
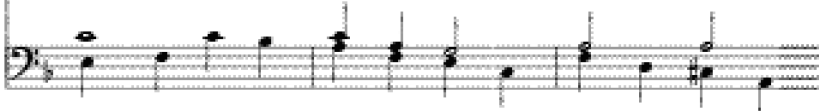
Tune: Evening Prayer
John Stainer, 1898



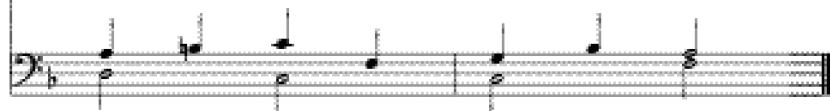
1. May the grace of Christ the Sa - viour and the Fa - ther's
2. Thus may we a - bide in u - nion with each oth - er



bound - less love with the Ho - ly Spi - rit's fa - vour
and the Lord, and pos - sess, in sweet com - mu - nion,



rest up - on us from a - bove
joys which earth can - not af - ford.



Glory Be to the Father

Text: Anonymous, 2nd Cent.

Tune: Gloria Patri
Charles Meineke, 1782-1850

Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther and to the

The first system of musical notation for the first line of the hymn. It consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in the key of G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are placed below the treble staff.

Son and to the Ho - ly Ghost, As it

The second system of musical notation, continuing the melody and bass line from the first system. The lyrics are placed below the treble staff.

was in the be - gin-ning, is now and ev - er

The third system of musical notation, continuing the melody and bass line. The lyrics are placed below the treble staff.

shall be, world with - out end. A - men, A - men.

The fourth and final system of musical notation for this page, concluding the hymn with a double bar line. The lyrics are placed below the treble staff.

12.0 **Overleaf Notation (Reference: Par.1.1.11)**

After due consideration, the Committee proposes to keep the overleaf notation on hold until the progress of developing the common songbook becomes clearer. There is a growing sense that the URCNA Committee will much prefer the music in the Common Book to be four-part harmony. Moreover, many changes to the prose section are pending. With this in mind it is economically responsible to implement all the changes at once, be it a reworked *Book of Praise* or the Common Songbook.

13.0 **Other Matters Dealing With Changes in the Book of Praise**

On a regular basis, the Committee receives comments/questions from members of the churches. Based on interaction with these comments/questions, the Committee makes the following proposals.

NOTE: *The changes proposed in this section are not yet included in the Prose section with the NIV Bible references. (Reference: Par. 1.1.9) and, if adopted by Synod, are to be added.*

13.1 **Lord's Day 27 (Answer 74)**

"... adults. Therefore, by baptism they must be grafted into the Christian church."..... Here the image of "grafting" is used, which probably has been taken from John 15. This gives the impression that a foreign element is included. The original German text is slightly different: " they, by baptism, as the sign of the covenant, also must be incorporated in the Christian church and from the children of unbelievers distinguished". Here the difference is made between "belonging" to the covenant, and being "incorporated" in the covenant. The word "belonging" indicates the status, while the words "being incorporated" refers to the action that makes the status official. Children of believers are from the beginning in God's covenant. However, through baptism they are officially included in the covenant and registered as such.

The proposed amendment reads as follows:

"... adults. Therefore, by baptism, as sign of the covenant, they must be incorporated into the Christian church"

The Form for the Excommunication of Non-Communicant Members is affected as follows: 2nd line of the first announcement and the 3rd line of the second announcement (page 607): " by baptism ingrafted into" with above change should then be changed to "by baptism incorporated into ..."

The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the change "grafted" to "incorporated" reflect the original text.

13.2 **Phrasing in Lords Day 37, Answer 102**

The current phrasing "calling upon God" is linguistically problematic. This phrasing was compared with the original German while also

proper language flow in English was considered. A literal translation does not work in this instance. In addition, the Committee is of the opinion that the last line also requires changing. As it stands, “creature” receives the emphasis while the intention is to emphasize “honour”.

The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the reworded Answer 102:

“No, for a legitimate oath is an appeal to God,
 who alone knows the heart,
 to testify to the truth,
 and to punish me if I swear falsely.
 This honour does not belong to any creature.

13.3 **Lord’s Supper Form**

13.3.1 *Section on “Remembrance of Christ”*

- 13.3.1.1 In the paragraph, “From the beginning eternally. By His perfect obedience He has fulfilled for us all the righteousness of God’s law. He did so especially when the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of Him the bloody sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane”, In the phrase “fulfilled for us all”, “all” refers to the righteousness of God’s law and should not be read as “us all”.

The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the following as a better formulation:

“He has for us fulfilled all the righteousness of God’s law.”

- 13.3.1.2 The phrase “*He did so especially when the weight.....*” gives the wrong impression that ‘fulfilling the righteousness of God’s law’ is limited to Christ’s suffering.

The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the following formulation:

“We remember in particular that the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of Him His sweat like drops of blood falling to the ground in the Garden of Gethsemane.”

- 13.3.1.3 In the statement “He was innocently condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God.” The adverbial form “innocently” is not correct.

The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the following solution as this best captures the original meaning:

“Though innocent, He was condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God.”

- 13.3.1.4 Structure of the paragraphs: While studying this section it was also discovered that where it reads (top of p597): “First of all, let us” it is not anywhere followed by “Secondly” to complete the thought. In the original German version it essentially reads as follows: “We are to remember in the following manner first of all”; in this way it can exist without a “secondly”. This can best be corrected by altering the paragraph structure slightly as follows”:
 (Par.1) Let us now consider
- (Par.2) First of all, let us fully trust
- (Par.3) We remember in particular that the weight

The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the above paragraph restructuring.

13.3.2 *Entire “Remembrance of Christ” paragraph.*

The entire “Remembrance of Christ” paragraph reads as follows:

Let us now consider for what purpose the Lord has instituted His supper; namely, that we should use it in remembrance of Him. We are to remember Him in the following manner:

First of all, let us fully trust that the Lord Jesus Christ was sent by the Father into this world, according to the promises made from the beginning to the fathers in the Old Testament, and that He assumed our flesh and blood. From the beginning of His incarnation to the end of His life on earth, He bore for us the wrath of God, under which we should have perished eternally. By His perfect obedience He has for us fulfilled all the righteousness of God’s law.

We remember in particular that the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of Him His sweat like drops of blood falling to the ground in the Garden of Gethsemane. There He was bound that He might free us from our sins. He suffered countless insults that we might never be put to shame. Though innocent, He was condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God. He even let His blessed body be nailed to the cross that He might cancel the bond which stood against us because of our sins. By all this He has taken our curse upon Himself that He might fill us with His blessing. On the cross He humbled Himself, in body and soul, to the very deepest shame and anguish of hell. Then He called out with a loud voice, *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* that we might be accepted by God and nevermore be forsaken by Him. Finally, by His death and the shedding of His blood, He confirmed the new and eternal testament, the covenant of grace, when He said, *It is finished.*

13.3.3 Section on “Assurance”

13.3.3.1 This section has a problematic expression in that the words “and He declared, saying” indicate that what follows is a literal quote of the Lord Jesus when in fact it is not.

Currently the passage reads [bold added]:
 In order that we might firmly believe that we belong to this covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ during His last Passover instituted the holy supper. He gave the bread and the cup to His disciples in remembrance of Him, **and He declared, saying:** *As often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are reminded and assured of My hearty love and faithfulness toward you...*

If the statements from the gospel of Matthew are inserted this difficulty is avoided.

The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the reworked formulation of the section on “Assurance”:

In order that we might firmly believe that we belong to this covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the holy supper during His last Passover. *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is My body”. Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins”.* That means: As often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are reminded and assured of My hearty love and faithfulness toward you....”

The marginal reference added will be Mt 26:26-28.

13.4 **Introduction to the Form for Public Profession of Faith**

The Form for the Baptism of Adults has an introductory explanation. The form itself contains a section “Public Profession of Faith” for use by those who are baptized as adults.

The Form for Public Profession of Faith has no such introduction. In order to make it clear that this form is intended only for those that were baptized as infants, the Committee recommends that Synod adopt the following introduction to the Form for the Public Profession of Faith:

(Prior to admission to the Lord's Supper, those who were baptized as infants must be thoroughly instructed in the Christian doctrine. After having confessed this doctrine before the elders, they may publicly profess their faith, for which the following form shall be used.)

13.5 **Corrections in Book of Praise:**

From time to time the Committee is made aware of certain misprints in the *Book of Praise*. This section lists those that the Committee has taken note of. Most of these do not require Synod approval as they are clearly misprints and have therefore been passed on to Premier Printing to be included in the next printing (July 2006)). The Committee decided to include them in the report so the churches can take note of these particularly since a great number dealt with misprints in our confessions.

13.5.1 *Corrections to be approved by Synod*

The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the following proposed change in the *Book of Praise*:

Page 459, Belgic Confession Art. 25: "to order our life in all honour" should be "to order our life in all honesty". The original edition read: "tout honneur", but as result of the Dordrecht revision, it became:"toute honestete", which is clearly intended.

13.5.2 *Corrections already provided to the printer*

The following corrections have already been provided to Premier Printing to be included in the next printing (July 2006).

Page v of the Preface, the last sentence, "Except for the Nicene Creed," is no longer true, since the language of the Nicene Creed has also been updated in the 1998 edition.

Page viii, Under Hypoionian: Ps 99 needs to be added.

Page 453, Belgic Confession Art. 18: "of the seed of Abraham", for consistency this should be followed by the text: (Gal 3:16)

Page 460, Belgic Confession Art. 26: not as quoted. Heb 4: 14,15 should be Heb 4:14-16

Page 470, Belgic Confession Art. 35: the text reference should be to 1 Cor 11 rather than 1 Cor 10.

Page 594 The text in the margin at top of the page should be 1 Pet 5:10,11

Page 535, Canons of Dort, I, Art. 9: should read "or any other good quality or disposition". It currently is of.

Page 631, Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons, about the middle of the page, there is a sentence, which reads: To each was contributed according to need. The verb should read, “distributed” Note that the bottom of the same page correctly states, “They shall gather and manage the offerings and *distribute* them in Christ’s Name, according to need.”

Page 655, third paragraph, 4th line, Introduction to the Church Order, the word Oder should be spelled Order.

14.0 **Working Together With the URCNA Songbook Committee**

The Committee, along with the URCNA Songbook Committee, submitted a joint report to the *Committee for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity* for inclusion in their report to Synod Smithers and to the *Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity* for inclusion in their report to Synod Schererville.

For reference this joint report is included as Appendix A.

15.0 **Review/ Revision of the Psalms**

15.1 **Background**

In 2004, the Committee requested a mandate from Synod Chatham (Acts p.174ff.) as follows: “From time to time, the Committee discusses the feasibility of reviewing and possibly revising the metrical rhymings of the psalms to reflect the language of the bible translations presently in use by our churches. In recognition of the scope of the work involved, and when considering the advantage of not introducing partially revised editions, the Committee seeks direction in the form of a clear mandate from General Synod Chatham 2004 in this matter”

Synod decided not to proceed with the request for a change in mandate at this time (Acts Art. 115. 5.3.2).

15.2 **Renewed Request and Considerations**

The Committee hereby urgently repeats its request for a mandate to initiate an update of the metrical Psalms of the *Book of Praise* as there are new grounds to do so.

We present the following considerations:

15.2.1 In our work with the URCNA towards a Common Songbook, we have become aware of a perceived reluctance to accept the collection of the 150 Psalms as presented in the *Anglo-Genevan Psalter* as part of such a Songbook. As Committee, we treasure the historical and the catholic significance of the Genevan Psalter for use in the Reformed churches also in North America today. Therefore we consider it of utmost importance that we present the best possible metrical version of the Psalms for inclusion in a Common Songbook. Carefully considered improvements to our existing *Book of Praise* will allow us to do so.

- 15.2.2 The timing of our request is significant, for once the Common Songbook has been created and adopted for use, it will be particularly difficult to implement changes for the foreseeable future.
- 15.2.3 The timeframe itself within the context of the development of a Common Songbook has an impact on our work, and lends urgency to our request. The sooner we can begin to offer the best possible version of the Psalter, the better.
- 15.2.4 Aside from the work with the URCNA, it remains the primary task of the Committee to make available to the churches the best possible version of the Psalms for singing. We need to consider that the introduction of a new Bible translation has brought about a significant change in the language used in public and private worship. To enhance the sense of unity in the manner Scripture speaks to us, and we respond in song, it is important that also the Psalms we sing reflect the language of Scripture.
- 15.2.5 We consider it especially important to promote a love for Psalm-singing among the young people of the church. An up-to-date version that reflects the language used in Bible translations would help dispel the notion that the Genevan Psalms are mere relics of the past. A current text would serve both the present and future generations.
- 15.2.6 We acknowledge that a proposed revision may result in some inconvenience for those who have committed many Psalm stanzas to memory. However, we also must be forward-looking, and consider a generation of young children who will benefit from versions they can understand. In turn, it will help them preserve their and our Genevan heritage.
- 15.2.7 Presently, some Psalms or stanzas contain flaws and inaccuracies that should be corrected. In some instances, the text can be changed to do better justice to what we read in Scripture. As an example of a flaw we include some lines from Ps. 24:5, where at present the accent falls on the wrong syllable:
Current version:
 Who has clean hands, whose heart is pure
Possible revision:
 Whose hands are clean, whose heart is pure
 As an example of an inaccuracy we include a stanza from Ps. 92, in which the last two lines of stanza 6 are too compressed to do justice to what we read in Scripture:
Current version:
 Their fruit in old age bearing, they're vigorous and green.
 Yes, now my Rock, I've seen, His righteousness, His caring.
Possible revision (new stanza 7):
 Still fruit in old age bearing, they fresh and green remain.
 Their witness makes it plain: the LORD is just and caring.
 His righteousness and favour they shall proclaim in song:
 "In Him there is no wrong. He is my rock forever."

- 15.2.8 Some Psalms or stanzas have archaic wording and have a style that cries out for improvement. In some instances, such archaic language creates distance and obscurity. Language that is abstract, turgid, flat or prosaic should be replaced with diction that is more vivid and direct and, in that sense, more poetic. The result will be a more faithful rendering of the Scriptural text. As an example we include some lines from the second stanza of Ps. 17:

Current version:

LORD, Thou hast probed and tried my heart,
And Thou by night dost test and weigh me.
Thou findest when Thou dost assay me
That I in evil take no part.

Possible revision:

If in the night You probe my mind
And test my inner thoughts and feelings,
All that my heart may be concealing,
You will in me no evil find.

- 15.2.9 Since the *Anglo-Genevan Psalter* as a collection of Psalms forms a single entity, it makes sense to for consistency in its overall revision. In order to attain such uniformity, it is important to review all 150 Psalm, and make changes where required.
- 15.2.10 A preliminary review of the required changes suggests that the task of revising the Psalm section may not be as daunting or sweeping as once thought. The Genevan Psalms in the *Book of Praise* may be divided into three categories. Approximately a third of them require no revisions to speak of. In another sixty or so, mostly minor changes will suffice. The ones that remain should be considered for a major revision or, in some cases, replacement.
- 15.2.11 The author of many of our Psalm versions, Dr. W. Helder, has indicated that he is presently willing and able to work together with the Committee to accomplish this task. The churches are already aware of his recent work as much of it has been published in *Clarion* over the past number of years. We have included three examples of his work in *Appendix B*.
- 15.2.12 When considering the process involved in a revision project, the Committee proposes to seek as much input and constructive feedback from the churches at all stages of the project. Given the "work-in-progress" nature of the work, ways ought to be explored that enable churches to interact with the material as soon as it is released for testing by the Committee. It may left in the freedom of the churches to make use of the revised Psalms in different ways. For example, either by having the congregation sing them before or during the worship services.

15.2.13 When considering the possibilities today's technology has to offer, the committee proposes to publish revised/updated Psalm versions as they become available on a website. Such a website would be the responsibility of and be maintained by the Committee and would be linked to the website of the churches at . It is hoped that this process will allow for long-term testing and constructive criticism.

15.3 **Conclusion**

The Committee recommends that Synod mandate the Committee to:

1. Initiate a thorough review of all 150 Psalms in the 1984 text of *Anglo-Genevan* Psalter in the *Book of Praise*.
2. Prepare an updated Psalm Section for the *Book of Praise* or the common Songbook.
3. Engage Dr. W. Helder to work with the Committee to update the Psalm section.
4. Provide for a fair remuneration for the work involved.
5. Solicit input from the churches at all stages of the process.
6. Publish revised/updated Psalm versions as they become available on a website linked to
7. Report to General Synod on the progress of the work.

16.0 **Further Recommendations**

16.1 *Committee Membership*

16.1.1 That the *Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise* be continued. Due to Dr. J. Smith's departure to Australia he, regretfully, had to resign from the Committee. The current size of the Committee is five members, however; the Committee has been able to make use of technical advisors from time to time.

16.1.2 The Committee recommends that the size of the Committee be kept to five members and that it make use of technical advisors as necessary in order to carry out its regular mandate.

16.1.3 Dr. C. van Halen-Faber is due to retire from the Committee in 2007 having served an additional term of three years. (*Acts Chatham 2004*, Art.115. 3.2.4).

The Committee recommends that Dr. C.vanHalen-Faber be appointed for an additional six years to extend her current term to the full nine years

16.2 *Committee Mandate*

16.2.1 To function according to the arrangements for publishing and distribution accepted by General Synod Cloverdale 1983 (*Acts Cloverdale 1983*, pp.297-299), under the original terms of the contract with Premier Printing Ltd., to be reviewed in 2011.

- 16.2.2 To maintain its corporate status in order to be able to protect the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters concerning the *Book of Praise*.
- 16.2.3 To foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* among others and to promote the availability of a book of harmonization facilitating the use of the *Book of Praise* in the English speaking world.
- 16.2.4 To serve as the address which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed. To evaluate and to scrutinize the contents of this correspondence, and to report to the next General Synod as to the validity of the suggestions made.

17.0 Summary

17.1 Summary of recommendations

This summary is provided to serve Synod with a checklist of all matters requiring a decision pertaining to matters of the *Book of Praise*

1. Ref. Par. 7.0: *Inclusion of the Apostles' Creed in the Baptismal Forms*
The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the insertion of the Apostles' Creed in the Baptismal Forms as outlined in par. 7.1 and 7.2.
2. Ref. Par. 8.3 *Proposed Subscription Forms*
The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the Subscription Forms as presented in par. 8.3.1 and 8.3.2, and instruct the Committee to have them printed in the next edition of the *Book of Praise*.
3. Ref. Par. 10.0: *Prose section with the NIV Bible references*
The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the updated Liturgical Forms and Prayers as presented in par. 10.1 through 10.3.
4. Ref. Par. 11.0 *Expanded Hymn Section*
 - 1). provisionally adopt the Hymns presented in par. 11.3 for testing by the churches and
 - 2). instruct the committee to produce a Supplement to the *Book of Praise* so these hymns may be tested by the churches.
5. Ref. Par. 13.1 *Lord's Day 27 (Answer 74)*
The Committee recommends to Synod adopt the change "grafted" to "incorporated" to reflect the original text.
6. Ref. Par. 13.2 *Phrasing in Lords Day 37, Answer 102*
The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the reworded Answer 102:

7. Ref. Par. 13.3.1.1 (*Lord's Supper Form*)
The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the following as a better formulation:
"He has for us fulfilled all the righteousness of God's law."
8. Ref. Par. 13.3.1.2 (*Lord's Supper Form*)
The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the following formulation:
"We remember in particular that the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of Him His sweat like drops of blood falling to the ground in the Garden of Gethsemane."
9. Ref. Par. 13.3.1.3 (*Lord's Supper Form*)
The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the following solution as this best captures the original meaning:
"Though innocent, He was condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God."
10. Ref. Par. 13.3.1.4 (*Lord's Supper Form*)
The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the above paragraph restructuring.
Note items 7-10 are combined in par. 13.3.2.
11. Ref. Par. 13.3.3.1 (*Lord's Supper Form*)
The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the reworked formulation of the section on "Assurance:
12. Ref. Par. 13.4 *Introduction to the Form for Public Profession of Faith*
The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the introduction to the Form for the Public Profession of Faith:
13. Ref. Par. 13.5: *Corrections in Book of Praise*
The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the proposed change in the *Book of Praise* per Par. 13.5.1 re: Belgic Confession Art. 25, Page 459,
14. Ref. Par. 15.0: *Review/ Revision of the Psalms*:
The Committee recommends that Synod mandate the Committee to:
 1. Initiate a thorough review of all 150 Psalms in the 1984 text of *Anglo-Genevan* Psalter in the *Book of Praise*.
 2. Prepare an updated Psalm Section for the *Book of Praise* or the common Songbook.
 3. Engage Dr. W. Helder to work with the Committee to update the Psalm section.
 4. Provide for a fair remuneration for the work involved.
 5. Solicit input from the churches at all stages of the process.

6. Publish revised/updated Psalm versions as they become available on a website linked to
 7. Report to General Synod on the progress of the work.
15. Ref. Par. 16.0: *Further Recommendations*
The Committee recommends that Synod approve the recommendations re Membership in Par. 16.1 *Committee Membership*
The Committee recommends that Synod approve the Committee mandates in par. 16.2 *Committee Mandate*

Respectfully submitted,
D.G.J Agema (2010)
N.H. Gootjes (2010)
C.J. Nobels (2010) Secretary
C. van Halen-Faber (2007)
G.Ph. van Popta (2010), Chairman

APPENDIX A

Report to the Committee for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity (CPEU) and
the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (CERCU)
by the Joint Committee for a Common Song Book
(Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) of
the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) and the
Psalter-Hymnal Committee of the United Reformed Churches
of North America (URCNA))

1. **CanRC Mandate**

(Reference: Acts General Synod Chatham: Article 77 para. 5.2)

- 1.1. To continue working closely with the committee re: song book appointed by the URCNA synod (ref 5.2.1);
- 1.2. To continue to produce a song book that contains the complete Anglo-Genevan Psalter and other suitable metrical versions of the Psalms, including hymns that also meet the standard of faithfulness to the Scriptures and Reformed confessions (ref 5.2.2);
- 1.3. To keep the CPEU updated on the progress (ref 5.2.3);
- 1.4. To provide the CPEU with a report in sufficient time for it to produce the comprehensive report for Synod in a timely fashion (ref 5.2.4).

2. **URCNA Mandate** (Reference: Minutes Synod Escondido).

- 2.1. "That the present 'Psalter Hymnal Committee' work together with the Canadian Reformed '*Book of Praise* Committee' to consider for inclusion in this song book the 150 Psalms in metrical settings (one note for each syllable) from an English translation of the Genevan Psalter, as well as other non-Genevan settings for the Psalms, and also hymns that meet the standard of faithfulness to the Scriptures and to the Reformed Confessions. The two song books primarily in use need not be included in their totality." (Minutes, Article XLV, B, 2, c).
- 2.2. "To report annually to the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity, which, in turn will make full annual reports to the churches concerning this work." (Minutes, Article XLV, B, 4).

3. **Joint Committee**

3.1. Meetings

The Joint Committee meets two times per year. Since the last Synod the Joint Committee met four times with one more meeting scheduled for late October 2006. Detailed minutes are taken for internal use. For each of the meetings extensive Press Releases were issued. The individual committees meet regularly, CanRC usually face to face and URCNA usually on-line.

The Joint Committee met:

March 2004 in Jenison MI

April 2005 in Ancaster ON

November 2005 in Jenison MI

April 2006 in Ancaster ON

The topics discussed and accomplishments made to date are recorded in the paragraphs following.

3.2. Benefit of Joint Meetings

The original meeting schedule was to meet once per year. This has now been doubled to twice per year. With each successive meeting mutual trust and understanding is strengthened. This was particularly obvious when selecting hymns according to the adopted Principles and Guidelines. As a result, the Joint Committee could work in harmony and with frankness toward each other. Although complete agreement was not always achieved, the discussions were always brotherly.

Efforts are being made to publicize awareness of the work done, particularly on the Principles and Guidelines, with a series of articles in *Christian Renewal* and *Clarion*.

4. **Principles and Guidelines**

The Principles and Guidelines presented to Synod Chatham (CanRC) and Synod Calgary (URCNA) were (unintentionally) slightly different. An addition to Guideline 7 was picked up in the report to Synod Calgary, but not in the report to Synod Chatham. Synod Calgary felt it necessary to additionally amend Guideline 9. The Joint Committee adopted these changes which are as follows:

- 4.1. Guideline 7 now reads (*italics constitutes the change*) "In content and form, the songs of the Church must be free from artificiality, sentimentality, *and individualism.*"
- 4.2. Guideline 9 originally read as follows: "The music of the Church should be expressive of the Reformed tradition. Where possible, use is to be made of music developed in the tradition of this rich heritage (e.g., the Genevan psalm tunes and the Scottish Psalter)." Synod Calgary changed the wording to: "*The music of the Church should be expressive of the Reformed tradition. Use is to be made of the music developed in the tradition of this rich heritage.*"

5. **Joint Committee Future Plans**

The Joint Committee intends, D.V., to:

- 5.1. Continue to meet at least two times per year.
- 5.2. Continue to foster public awareness of the activities relating to the Common Song Book by way of articles and press releases of joint meetings.
- 5.3. Continue to search for suitable Psalms (See also Section 7).
- 5.4. Continue to evaluate hymns (See also Section 7).
- 5.5. Resolve copyright issues relating to using material not in the public domain

- 5.6. Deal with issues involving rhyming and change of text of songs made necessary due to questionable doctrine, antiquated language, questionable expressions and the like.

6. **Creeds, confessions and liturgical forms and prayers**

6.1. Liturgical forms and confessions committee (URCNA)

Synod Calgary created a new committee with the mandate of dealing with the non-musical portion of the Song Book. The original committee's remaining mandate is to deal only with the musical section.

When the change was made by Synod Calgary, there appeared to be no clear mandate instructing the new committee to work together with the SCBP; hence the Joint Committee expressed concern that combined work on the creeds, confessions, etc. could not begin. Contact was taken up with the new committee with the aid of CPEU and CERCU.

The result was a communication from Dr. K. Riddlebarger, chairman of the new committee who, in March 2006, wrote in part: "..... *that our current operating assumptions —1). That our committee is distinct from the committee working on the musical portion of the Psalter, 2). That we are working on prayers, liturgical forms, and confessional documents for a new URCNA hymnal, and 3). That we are to report our work to the churches through the CERCU committee – do need to include consultation with the CanRC. Before we begin our work on the forms (we should start in May) we'll figure out what is meant by "in conjunction with" and then go from there.*"

6.2. Joint Committee's intent to make a recommendation

In a united federation a common set of creeds, confessions, liturgical forms and prayers will be required at some time. Since under the current condition no meaningful work could be started on this non-musical part of the Common Song Book, the Joint Committee will make the appropriate recommendations to correct this situation at the conclusion of this report.

7. **Song Book Activity**

7.1. Hymns

7.1.1. Gross List of Potential Hymns

The joint committee has reviewed the hymns as found in the Centennial Edition of the Psalter-Hymnal, some of the hymns of the *Book of Praise*, the proposed hymns for the *Book of Praise* Augmentation and hymns of the New Trinity Hymnal (the review of latter is still in progress). The adopted Principles and Guidelines were applied to each hymn reviewed. On the basis of the review the hymn was placed on the gross list or rejected. This gross list will be used to make final selections for the Common Song Book proposal to arrive at a well-balanced hymnary.

7.1.2. Structure of the hymnary

Initial work has been done on the structure. There is complete agreement that the basic structure will follow the division of the Apostolic Creed. The tentative structure is as follows:

1. The Apostles Creed
2. The Holy Trinity
3. God the Father and our Creation
Including: Thanksgiving for Harvest and Labour
4. God the Son and our Redemption
5. God the Holy Spirit and our Sanctification
6. The Church
Including: Holy Baptism
The Lord's Supper
Ordination
7. The Forgiveness of Sins
8. The Resurrection of the Body and the Return of Christ
9. Eternal Life on the New Earth

7.2. Psalms

7.2.1. *Agreement*

The Joint Committee has found agreement in many areas.

- 7.2.1.1. The Joint Committee has agreed that at least one of each Psalm rendition must be a complete Psalm. Additional selections of the same Psalm may be partial.
- 7.2.1.2. Whether complete or partial, the renditions ought to be accurate translations or paraphrases of the Hebrew text of the Psalms;
- 7.2.1.3. The Joint Committee has agreed that all 150 Psalms are to be represented in the Psalter section.
- 7.2.1.4. The tunes should support the words;
- 7.2.1.5. The Psalter should be expressive of the Reformed tradition.
- 7.2.1.6. The Psalms will have the principal place in the singing of the congregation, and therefore, in the churches' Song Book.
- 7.2.1.7. In principle there is agreement to publish in 4-part harmony.

7.2.2. *Understanding each other's positions where there is no complete agreement*

In order to better understand our mutual positions, with respect to whether or not to include the complete Anglo-Genevan Psalter in the Common Song Book, the individual committees prepared position papers. These also generated an open and frank discussion to try to come to a mutual understanding.

- 7.2.2.1. The CanRC paper outlined the history and background of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter. As a collection, it is a significant and unique contribution to North American Psalmody, containing all 150 Psalms and that the choice was made to compile a non-eclectic Psalter. Of great importance is that the words

are true to the actual biblical text and that each and every Psalm is 100% complete. The CanRC continue to be deeply grateful for the existence of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter.

7.2.2.2. The URCNA paper explains that there are arguments against incorporating an all Genevan Psalter. Generally there is a negative reaction against the Genevan Psalter among the URCNA churches. This is for a large part due to the fact that although in URCNA congregations there are some second-generation Dutch immigrants who might be somewhat familiar with the Genevan tunes, there is increasingly greater cultural diversity. There is the danger of presenting a narrow cultural profile that is completely foreign to URCNA communities.

The paper contains many questions touching on the reality as it is in the URCNA, some of which include the following: Can we argue for Genevan tunes on the basis of Scripture or confessions?

Are there no other tunes that could support the text equally well?

These questions are intended to convey the reluctance of many URCNA church members to accept a common Song Book that contains all the Genevan Psalms. The result could well be that, instead of fostering increased Psalm singing, it may actually lead to less Psalm singing or even non-use of the Song Book. This would certainly be counter productive to the cause of unity even if federative unity will be achieved

7.2.3. *Discussion of papers*

In the discussion based on these papers it became clear that it was not that far-fetched that this issue could become an obstacle to real unity.

We make the following observations:

The CanRC will need to revisit the General Synod decision that all 150 Genevan Psalms are to be included. It should be considered whether we may allow the inclusion of all 150 Anglo-Genevan Psalms to become the main divisive issue preventing full unity. Although we recognize the tremendous commitment and effort that led to the development and production of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter, can it be defended that all 150 Genevan tunes are to be included?

In addition, in order to serve the unity sought, the URCNA will need to study seriously the Genevan Psalms in order to become thoroughly informed about them. Such efforts will help to discover the beauty of the melodies that have withstood the test of time, and will

develop a greater understanding of why the CanRC churches sing and love the Genevan Psalms. Disassembling the Anglo-Genevan Psalter will be difficult for the CanRC to accept without the assurance that this is done for a good reason: For the sake of unity, and the expectation that the new book will be the official Song Book, to the exclusion of other books and collections.

If everyone keeps the unity of the federation-to-be fully in view, considerations for a compromise that is God pleasing must be made possible.

7.2.4. *How do we go from here to a Common Song Book*

The joint committee recommend that the Common Song Book ought not to be a condition for federative unity for the following reasons:

7.2.4.1. Currently the Song Book appears to be a condition for federative unity (see art. 73. 4.7 Neerlandia). However, the committee understands that there is a huge emotional element present. This was also obvious in our working together as committees. (A flavour of this "tension" can be seen in paragraph 7.2.2.2 above).

7.2.4.2. To truly serve unity, it may be better to first learn to fully trust and appreciate each other as fellow members of Christ before adopting the Common Song Book.

7.2.4.3. To produce the complete Song Book is a tremendously labour intensive task that will take many years.

It would therefore be best that the Common Song Book be not a part of the merger vote. After merger the committee can continue its work. Then a synod of the new federation can adopt the Common Song Book when it is completed.

8. **Contact with CPEU/CERCU**

8.1. The contact with these committees was accomplished by interim reports, and Press Releases of the Joint Meetings. Advice was also sought with respect to the "Liturgical forms and confessions committee (URCNA)"

8.2. This report will be the final report under the current synodical mandates.

9. Recommendations

	Recommendations to Synod Smithers	Recommendations to Synod Schererville
9.1	<u>Synod decide</u> to continue the SCBP mandate as given by Synod Chatham Article 77 para. 5 except modified as listed under 9.4	<u>Synod decide</u> to continue the committee’s mandate given by previous Synods.
9.2	<u>Synod appoint</u> a (new) sub committee to the SCBP to work together with URCNA “Liturgical forms and confessions committee (URCNA)” to come to a unified text for creeds, confessions and liturgical forms and prayers	<u>Synod clarify</u> the mandate for the “Liturgical forms and confessions committee (URCNA)” in order for it to work together with the sub committee to the SCBP for Creeds, confessions and liturgical forms and prayers to come to a unified text for creeds, confessions and liturgical forms and prayers
9.3	<u>Synod maintain</u> the goal for production and use of a Common Song Book but establish that the Common Song Book is not a condition for federative unity (see concerns para. 7.2.4)	<u>Synod maintain</u> the goal for production and use of a Common Song Book but establish that the Common Song Book is not a condition for federative unity (see concerns para. 7.2.4)
9.4	<u>Synod reconsider</u> the decision recorded in Art. 77 para. 5.2.2 of Synod Chatham: “To continue to produce a song book that contains the complete Anglo-Genevan Psalter” and <u>allow</u> the SCBP to delete some Genevan Psalms provided suitable complete replacements can be found. (Refer to para. 1.2 above)	<u>Synod provide</u> direction to the committee if the inclusion of all 150 Anglo-Genevan Psalms would be detrimental for the churches to accept the Common Song Book.
9.5	<u>Synod approve</u> the changes to Guidelines 7 and 9 (Refer to para. 4.1 and 4. above)	<u>No action required</u> as Synod Calgary already approved the Principles and Guidelines in their present form.
9.6	<u>Synod state</u> its commitment that the Common Song Book shall be the exclusively used Song Book in the worship services of the united federation.	<u>Synod state</u> its commitment that the Common Song Book shall be the exclusively used Song Book in the worship services of the united federation.

Respectfully submitted,
(in alphabetical order)

- D.G.J. Agema (CanRC)
- D. Jasperse (URCNA)
- R. Lankheet (URCNA)
- D. Royall (URCNA)
- A. VanderPol (URCNA)
- G.Ph. van Popta (CanRC)

- N.H. Gootjes (CanRC)
- E. Knott (URCNA)
- C.J. Nobels (CanRC)
- D. Vander Meulen (URCNA)
- C. VanHalen-Faber (CanRC)
- D. Wynia (URCNA)

APPENDIX B

Ref. Par. 15.0:

Following are three examples of Dr. Helder's work; they are included with his permission.

PSALM 101 (1543 / Geneva, 1551)

1. LORD, I will worship You with great rejoicing,
My praise of righteousness and mercy voicing.
Of steadfast love and justice I will sing
To You, my king.
2. The path of blameless living I will ponder.
When will You come to me, lest I should wander?
I'll walk within my house from sin apart,
With upright heart.
3. Things base and worthless I will not have near me.
The faithless and their deeds I hate sincerely.
I shun all evil. No disloyalty
Shall cling to me.
4. If one should secretly his neighbour slander,
I will not fail to silence the offender.
Proud hearts and haughty eyes I cannot bear
And will not spare.
5. Those who are faithful, without guile or malice,
I will appoint to serve me in my palace.
No liar and no scandalmonger shall
In my house dwell.
6. The wicked I will punish without pity,
Of evildoers rid God's holy city,
And each new day those who still jeer and scoff
I will cut off.

PSALM 112 (Geneva, 1562)

1. Come, praise the LORD! Let all revere Him.
How blessed is the man who fears Him,
Who in the LORD'S commands takes pleasure.
His offspring, blest in equal measure,
Will be the mighty in the nation,
A truly upright generation.
2. Abundant riches fill his dwelling;
Firm stands his justice, never failing.
As after night comes morning brightness,
Light dawns for him who loves uprightness;
All gloom and darkness it displaces
For the compassionate and gracious.
3. All's well with him whose generous lending
Gives joy to those on him depending;
Who, his trustworthiness revealing,
Lets justice govern all his dealings.
The righteous one shall never waver;
His praises will be sung forever.
4. With steadfast heart in God confiding,
He has no fear of evil tidings;
He in the end with exultation
Will greet his foe's humiliation.
His gifts he on the poor will shower;
Great are his honour and his power.
5. The just will thrive in his endeavours;
His righteousness endures forever.
The wicked sees it with vexation;
His teeth he gnashes in frustration.
The schemes and hopes that he may cherish
Are sure to fail and doomed to perish.

PSALM 122 (Geneva, 1551)

1. My heart exulted. I was glad
When I heard eager voices call,
“Come, let us go now, one and all,
To Zion, to the house of God.”
Our journey has been richly blest,
For, O Jerusalem, at last
Our feet within your gates are standing!
Jerusalem! We stood in awe
When we your strength and beauty saw
While to your citadels ascending.
2. Jerusalem, designed so well,
Is built as close-knit unity;
There flock together joyfully
The tribes and clans of Israel.
They to Jerusalem ascend,
According to the LORD’S command,
To thank Him with their adoration.
For there are set the royal thrones
Of David’s house, and there his sons
With righteous judgments rule the nation.
3. Pray that Jerusalem be blest:
“May peace prevail within your walls,
And safety in your citadels.
May those who love you there find rest.”
Now for the sake of friends and kin,
Jerusalem, I say again:
“May lasting peace be yours to cherish.”
And mindful that the God of grace
Has in your midst His dwelling place,
I pray that you may thrive and flourish.

