

God's Great Benefits Bestowed Upon England

Preface

TO OUR BRETHREN IN ENGLAND, AND ELSEWHERE, WHICH LOVE JESUS CHRIST UNFEIGNEDLY, MERCY AND PEACE.

T'IS MORE EVIDENT and known to all men, than well considered and thankfully received of many, with what great mercies, and especial graces God endued our country of England in these latter days; when from idolatry He called us to the knowledge of His gospel, and of no people made us His people, a holy people, (Hosea 2:23, Rom. 9:25-26, 1 Pet. 2:9-10) the people of God; sending us a King most godly, learned, zealous, wise, and such one as never sat in that royal chair before. God's word universally spread over all the land, repentance preached, Christ's kingdom offered, sin rebuked; so that none could excuse himself, either that he had not heard, or else was not taught God's holy gospel.

Yet it came to pass, and this day that is verified on us, which the Lord reproved Israel for, saying, I have stretched forth my hands all the day long unto a people that believeth not, but rebelleth against me, and walk after their own imaginations. (Isa. 65:2, Rom. 10:21) For whose ways were not corrupt? Even from the highest to the lowest, from top to toe there was no part sound. (Isa. 1:6, Jer. 2:4-13)

Such contempt of God's word, as well on their behalf to whom charge of preaching was committed, as on the other side, negligence to hear, and learn to frame their lives according thereunto; that if the Lord had not hastened His plague and prevented, it would certainly have come to pass, which those wicked men of Anathoth said to the prophet Jeremiah: Speak no more to us in this name of the Lord. (Jer. 11:21) The which unkindness and contempt, would God we could as earnestly repent as we now feel the lack of these accustomed mercies. For now the day of our visitation is come, (Luke 19:44) and the Lord has brought the plagues upon us, (Lev. 26:21, Deut. 27-30) whereof before we were admonished, and most justly menaced. For the false prophets are sent forth with lies in their mouths (1 Kings 22:22, 2 Chron. 18:21, Ex. 14:11-12) to deceive England; and the scarcity of God's word is so great, that although they seek it from one sea coast to another, yet they cannot find it, (Amos 8:12) but as men famished devour the pestiferous dung of Papistry, to the poisoning of their own souls. Let us therefore, brethren, turn wholly to the Lord by repentance, fasting and prayer, (Joel 2:12-13, Ps. 69:10-11, Jonah 3:5-10; Jonah 4) earnestly beseeching Him to receive us once again to favour, who wills not the death of a sinner (but his amendment), offering Himself to all them that in their necessity seek unto Him, and like a most merciful Father proves all remedies for our bettering; (2 Chron. 36, Isa. 5, Prov. 3:11-12, Heb. 12:5-11, Rev. 3:19) not cruelly punishing to destroy us, but gently chastising to save us.

Beware then you harden not your hearts against this merciful Lord, (Heb. 3:8-9; 4:7, Ps. 95:8-11) and tempt Him as the stubborn Jews did, whom He therefore delivered up into their enemies' hands, to perish with the sword, hunger, and pestilence. For God will not be mocked, (Gal. 6:7) but like a consuming fire will destroy as well the wicked contemners of His word as the crafty dissemblers, (Heb. 12:29, Deut. 4:24) which go about to measure God by their fantasies; not considering that they heap damnation against themselves in the day of his anger (Rom. 2:5, Jam. 5:3) which now already is kindled, and begins to flame, to the condemnation of their souls and bodies - who knowing Jesus Christ to have once fully satisfied for our sins, (Heb. 9:11-12, Rom. 5:8-9, 1 Pet. 3:18) cease not daily, either in heart, mouth, or outward consent to blaspheme His precious death, and (as much as in them lies) crucify him anew. (Heb. 6:6; 10:26-29, 1 Cor. 6:9-10) Do you not remember that idolaters have no portion in the kingdom of God, (Gal. 5:19-21, Rev. 21:8; 22:15, Isa. 66:24, Mark 9:43-48) but are thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where their worm shall never die? Cannot the examples of God's fearful judgments move you, (2 Pet. 2:10-12, Jude Job 4:17-21) who spared not His very angels when they trespassed, but hitherto reserves them in hell chains, to be tormented in the day of the Lord? And will He then favour idolaters, dissemblers, blasphemers, mockers, contemners? and not rather in this life verify that which the Holy Ghost pronounces against the children of God's wrath, who because they do not receive the truth for their salvation, are led by lies to their endless condemnation? (2 Thess. 2:10-12, John 3:19) At the least, let God's forewarning somewhat move you to pity your own state, who for your instruction suffers your own brethren amongst you to die so terribly, some in despair, others to kill themselves, and many uttering most horrible blasphemies, even to their last breath. The which things are so fearful for us to hear, that we tremble in thinking thereupon. If you will therefore be counted in the number of God's people, and be so in deed; look not backward from

the plow, return not to your vomit, bow not your knee to Baal, pollute not the temple of the Holy Ghost, in presenting yourselves to that most wicked and blasphemous Mass, with such like idols; (Luke 9:62, 2 Pet. 2:22, Prov. 26:11, Rom. 11:4, 1 Kings 19:18, 1 Cor. 6:19) but either stand in the truth, and so rather obey God than men; (Luke 12:4-5, Acts 5:29) else follow God's calling, who has so mercifully provided for you, moving the hearts of all godly rulers and magistrates to pity your state, and do you good, so that at Emden, Wesel, Frankfurt, and in this city [Geneva], He has appointed godly churches, wherein you may learn to fear him, repent [of] your sins, amend your lives, and recover again his favour and mercy. And because there is no way more ready or sure to come to Him, than by framing ourselves altogether to his blessed will, revealed unto us in His word; (1 Sam. 15:22, Matt. 17:5 [?], John 9:31 we, to whom though God has given more liberty, yet no less lamenting your bondage than rejoicing in our own deliverance from that Babylonian slavery and Antichristian yoke, have earnestly endeavoured, amongst other things which might bring us to the worthy consideration of God's word, (John 5:39, Luke 1:68-79, 2 Pet. 1:16-21) to frame our lives, and reform our state of religion in such sort, that neither doubt of the certainty thereof should make us fear, nor yet man's judgement discourage us, and cause us [to] shrink from this enterprise most acceptable to God, comfortable to his church, and necessarily appertaining to every Christian man's duty.

We, therefore, not as the greatest clerks of all, but as the least able of many, do present unto you which desire the increase of God's glory, and the pure simplicity of His word, a form and order of a reformed church, limited within the compass of God's word, (Gal. 1:8-9, 1:11-12; 3:15-17, 2 Tim. 3:15-17, Rom. 10:17) which our Saviour has left unto us as only [alone] sufficient to govern all our actions by; so that whatsoever is added to this word by man's device, seem it never so good, holy, or beautiful, yet before our God, who is jealous and cannot admit any companion or counsellor, it is evil, wicked, and abominable. (Luke 16:13) For He that is the wisdom of the Father, the brightness of his glory, the true light, the word of life, yea truth and life itself, (1 Cor. 1:24, John 1:4, 9; 14:6, Heb. 1:3) can He give unto his church (for the which He paid the ransom of His blood) that which should not be a sufficient assurance for the same? Can the word of truth deceive us? the way of life misguide us? the word of salvation damn us? God keep us from such blasphemies, and so direct our hearts with his Holy Spirit, that we may not only content ourselves with His wisdom, but so rejoice in the same, that we may abhor all things which are contrary. The which considerations, dear brethren, when we weighed with reverent fear and humility; and also knowing, that negligence in reforming that religion which was begun in England, was not the least cause of God's rods laid upon us; having now obtained by the merciful providence of our heavenly Father a free church for all our nation in this most worthy city of Geneva, we presented to the judgment of the famous man John Calvin, and others learned in these parts, the Order which we minded to use in our church: who approving it, as sufficient for a Christian congregation, we put the same into execution, nothing doubting but all godly men shall be much edified thereby.

And as for the Papists, or malicious men and ungodly, we have not laboured to satisfy them, because we knew no sovereign medicine for their cankered sore, except it may please God, by our prayers, to be merciful to them, and call them home, if they be not already forsaken. But yet, forasmuch as there are some, which through continuance in their evil, rather delighting in custom than knowledge, cannot suffer that men should once open their mouths against certain old and received ceremonies, we thought good in this place somewhat to touch that scrupulosity. For as ceremonies grounded upon God's word, and approved in the New Testament, are commendable (as the circumstance thereof does support), so those that man has invented (though he had never so good occasion thereunto), if they are once abused, import a necessity, hinder God's word, or be drawn into a superstition, without respect ought to be abolished. For if Hezekiah was commended by the Holy Ghost for breaking in pieces the brazen serpent, (2 Kings 18:2-4) which Moses had erected by God's commandment, and now had continued above 800 years (which thing of itself was not evil, but rather put men in remembrance of God's benefit); yet because it began to minister occasion to the people to commit idolatry, was not to be borne withal: how much more ought we to take heed, that through our occasion men commit not idolatry with their own imaginations and fantasies? It was not without great cause, commanded by Almighty God, that the places, and other appurtenances, which had served to idolatry should be utterly consumed, (Deut. 12:2-3, 30; 13:6-18, 2 Kings 18:4) lest babes and children, through occasion remembering the same, should fall into like inconvenience.

And think you that we ought to be wiser? and not rather take heed, that those things which the Papists and other idolaters have invented, or else observe as invented by man, may not enter into Christ's church - as well to the end that the weak may not be confirmed in their error, (1 Cor. 8:9

ff.; 10:32, Rom. 14:13) as that we may altogether separate ourselves from that idolatrous Babylon and temple of Belial, (2 Cor. 6:15-17, Isa. 52:11) wherewith Christ has no concord nor agreement? There was no one ceremony more ancient, nor yet of better authority, than the washing of the disciples' feet, which was observed a long time in the church, and instituted by Christ himself. (John 13:4-17) Yet when some were persuaded that it was a portion of the Lord's Supper, and others thought it served instead of baptism, the godly churches in St. Augustine's time (Epist. 119, ad Jan.) thought it better to leave that which was ordained for a good use, than by retaining the same, confirm an error or superstition. The Corinthians, for the relief of the poor, and to increase brotherly amity together, did institute a feast, (1 Cor. 11:23) immediately after the Lord's Supper. (Chrysostom, 1 Cor. 11, Te tul lib., ad uxorem) But how sharply St. Paul did reprehend the same, condemning in comparison, that men should add anything to the Lord's institution, it appears by that he says, I have received of the Lord that which I gave you. We read also, that Hezekiah and his nephew Josiah restored the use of the Passover, (2 Chron. 30:1 ff., 2 Kings 23:21-23) which had been a very long time discontinued; but in the ministration thereof, they observed no other ceremony than God had left to Moses from the beginning. (Ex. 12:14, Lev. 23:5, Deut. 16:1-8)

Circumcision, likewise a sacrament, was evermore after one sort ministered, even as the Lord commanded it. (Gen. 17:9-14, Josh. 5:2-8) But such is the nature of the flesh, it will be wise, and have a stroke in God's doings; yea, and how willfully it causes man to maintain his own fantasies, it is manifest to them which have perused the ancient records of the church. For beginning at Jerusalem, and so coming to the rest of the churches, as Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome, he shall see plainly, that their greatest disturbances and overthrow, chanced through ceremonies. What conflict was at all times betwixt the Latin and Greek churches for the same, no Christian can consider without tears. And was there anything more objected against St. Paul, both of the Galatians and also of others, (Gal. 1-2, Acts 21:21) than that he would not observe the ceremonies as the chief apostles did? And yet he kept them while any hope was to gain the weak brethren, and therefore circumcised Timothy; (Acts 16:3) but when he perceived that men would retain them as necessary things in the church, he called that which before he made indifferent, wicked and impious, saying that whosoever was circumcised, Christ could nothing profit them (Gal. 5:2, Acts 15:1-2) - fearing also, lest he had taken pains amongst them in vain, which joined Christ with beggarly ceremonies. (Gal. 4:9-11)

Therefore, dear brethren, being hereby persuaded, and with many more reasons confirmed (which opportunity permits not here to write), we have contented ourselves with that wisdom which we have learned in God's book, where we are taught to preach the word of God purely, (Acts 2:42, Matt. 26:26-30; 28:19-20) minister the sacraments sincerely, and use prayers and other orders thereby approved, to the increase of God's glory, and edification of His holy people. As touching preaching, forasmuch as it is allowed of all godly men, we may at this time leave the probation [proof] thereof. And also for the ministration of the two sacraments, our book gives sufficient proof.

But because prayers are after two manner of sorts - that is, either in words only, or else with song joined thereunto - and this latter part, as well for lack of the true use thereof, as due consideration of the same, is called by many into doubt, whether it may be used in a reformed church; it is expedient that we note briefly a few things pertaining thereunto.

St. Paul giving a rule how men should sing, first says, I will sing in voice, and I will sing with understanding. (1 Cor. 14:15) And in another place, showing what songs should be sung, exhorts the Ephesians to edify one another with psalms, songs of praise, and such as are spiritual, singing in their hearts to the Lord with thanksgiving. (Eph. 5:19, Jam. 5:13) As if the Holy Ghost would say, that the song did inflame the heart to call upon God, and praise him with a more fervent and lively zeal. And as music or singing is natural unto us, and therefore every man delights therein; so our merciful God sets before our eyes, how we may rejoice and sing to the glory of his name, recreation of our spirits, and profit of ourselves. But as there is no gift of God so precious or excellent, that Satan has not after a sort drawn to himself and corrupted, so has he most impudently abused this notable gift of singing, chiefly by the Papists his ministers, in disfiguring it, partly by strange language, that cannot edify, and partly by a curious wanton sort, hiring men to tickle the ears and flatter the fantasies, not esteeming it as a gift approved by the word of God, profitable for the church, and confirmed by all antiquity.

As, besides other places, is most manifest by the words of Pliny, (Epist., lib. 10) called the younger, who, when he was deputy in Asia unto the Emperor Trajan, and had received charge to inquire out the Christians to put them to death, wrote among other things, touching the Christians, "That their manners were to sing verses or psalms early in the morning to Christ their God."

If any, peradventure, would doubt, when, or by whom these churches or assemblies were instituted, it is likewise evident, that St. John the apostle, (Eccl. Hist. book 3, ch. 22) who, although in Domitian's time he was banished in the Isle Patmos; yet when Nerva his successor, and next before Trajan reigned, returned to Ephesus, and so planted the churches, as the histories report. Seeing therefore God's word does approve it, antiquity bears witness thereof, and best reformed churches have received the same, no man can reprove it, except he will contemn God's word, despise antiquity, and utterly condemn the godly reformed churches.

And there are no songs more meet than the Psalms of the prophet David, which the Holy Ghost has framed to the same use, and commended to the church, as containing the effect of the whole scripture, that hereby our hearts might be more lively touched, as appears by Moses, Hezekiah, Judith, Deborah, Mary, Zacharias, and others, (Ex. 15:1-19, Isa. 38:10-20, Judith 16:1-22, Judges 5, Lk. 1:46-55; 1:68-79) who by songs and metre, rather than in their common speech and prose, gave thanks to God for such comfort as he sent them. Here it were too long to treat of the metre; but forasmuch as the learned doubt not thereof, and it is plainly proven that the Psalms are not only metrical, and contain just cesures [metrical pauses; divisions], but also have grace and majesty in the verse more than any other places of the scriptures, we need not to enter into any probation [proof].

For they that are skillful in the Hebrew tongue, (Read Moses' Chabib, in his books called *^wql aprm m[wn ykrd Psalms in Metre in the Hebrew Tongue*) by comparing the Psalms with the rest of the scriptures, easily may perceive the metre. And to whom is it not known, how the Holy Ghost by all means sought to help our memory, when he fashioned many Psalms according to letters of the alphabet; so that every verse begins with the letters thereof in order. Sometimes "A" begins the half verse, and "B" the other half; and in another place, three verses, yea and eight verses with one letter, even the Psalm throughout; as if all men should be inflamed with the love thereof, both for variety of matter, and also briefness, easiness, and delectation.

Now, to make you privy also why we altered the rhyme in certain places of him [Thomas Sternhold], whom for the gifts that God had given him, we esteemed and revered, this may suffice: that in this enterprise, we did only set God before our eyes, and therefore weighed the words and sense of the prophets, rather considering the meaning thereof than what any man had written. And chiefly being in this place [Geneva], whereas most perfect and godly judgment did assure us, and exhortations to the same encourage us, we thought it better to frame the rhyme to the Hebrew sense, than to bind that sense to the English metre; and so either altered for the better, in such places as he had not attained unto, or else where he had escaped part of the verse, or sometimes the whole, we added the same, not as men desirous to find faults, but only as such which covet to hide them, as the learned can judge.

It remains last of all that you understand the reasons which moved us to choose out and follow this catechism of Geneva rather than any other; (1. A reference to Calvin's Catechism, which was ordinarily published with the Book of Order. In the 1556 edition of the Genevan Book, the psalter and Calvin's Catechism were inserted after the Order of Ecclesiastical Discipline, prior to the household prayers.) for considering that the true use of a catechism is to instruct a Christian fully in all points of belief and Christian religion; and wherein this is most easily, orderly, and perfectly taught, that to be the best; we could find none in so great a number which either for facility is equal, or else for the perfection to be compared. Moreover, the dangers which hang over Christ's church in these days moved us very much; for as men may see present signs of certain barbarousness, and puddles of errors which are likely to chance in the church of God, so there is no better preservation against the same, than if all godly churches would agree in one kind of doctrine and confession of faith, which in all points were agreeable to God's holy word, that our posterity might be confirmed (Ps. 89:1) by the universal example of Christ's church against all heresies, persecutions, and other dangers; perceiving that it is not only the doctrine of one man, but the consent of the whole Christian church, and that wherein all youth have been brought up and trained in. The which thing, seeing none has so far performed, nor yet is in such towardness [readiness] to the same as this catechism is, being for the worthiness thereof already translated

into Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and English, we could do no less but willingly and gladly embrace the same.

Wherefore we being now under the same cross of affliction that you our dear brethren are, and yet altogether the children of God our merciful Father through Jesus Christ, desire you, in His name, with judgment to read our doings, trying them only by the touchstone of His word, that either if they be found faulty, they may be rejected, or else if they be profitable, God may be glorified, His church edified, and the malicious confounded. Farewell, dear brethren, and let us all pray to our loving God, that He would be merciful unto us, restore His holy word, comfort and strengthen His children, and finally confound Satan, Antichrist, and all His enemies. At Geneva, the 10th of February, Anno 1556.

I believe and confess (Rom. 10:9-10) my Lord God eternal, infinite, immeasurable, incomprehensible, and invisible, (Gen. 17:1, Ps. 63:1 ff., Ps. 139:1-16) one in substance, (Gen. 1:1, Eph. 4:4-6) and three in person, (Gen. 1:26, 1 John 5:7, Matt. 3:16-17, Matt. 28:19) Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who, by His almighty power and wisdom, (Heb. 1:2, Prov. 8:22-30) has not only of nothing created heaven, earth, and all things therein contained, (Gen. 1:1, Jer. 32:16, Ps. 33:6-7) and man after his own image, (Gen. 1:26, Eph. 4:24, Col. 3:10) that He might in him be glorified; (1 Cor. 6:20, John 17:1, Prov. 16:4) but also by His fatherly providence, (Matt. 6:26-32, Luke 12:24-30, 1 Pet. 5:7, Phil. 4:6) governs, maintains, and preserves the same, according to the purpose of His will. (Eph. 1:11)

I believe also and confess Jesus Christ the only Saviour and Messiah, (Matt. 1:21, Acts 4:12, 1 Tim. 1:15) who being equal with God, (John 1:1, Phil. 2:6-7, 1 Tim. 3:16, 1 John 5:20, Rom. 9:5) made Himself of no reputation, but took on Him the shape of a servant, and became man in all things like unto us (except sin), (Heb. 2:16-17, Phil. 2:7-8, 1 Pet. 2:22, 1 John 3:5) to assure us of mercy and forgiveness. (Rom. 8:32 ff., 1 John 2:1) For when through our father Adam's transgression we were become children of perdition, (Gen. 3:1-7, Rom. 5:16-18, Eph. 2:3, Gal. 3:10, 13) there was no means to bring us from that yoke of sin and damnation,

The Confession of Our Faith, Which Are Assembled in the English Congregation at Geneva

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH; AND IN JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD; but only Jesus Christ our Lord: (Acts 4:12, 1 Pet. 2:6, Isa. 28:16, Rom. 9:33) who giving us that by grace, which was His by nature, (John 1:14, Heb. 1:5, Rom. 1:4, Ps. 2:7) made us (through faith) the children of God: (Gal. 3:26, Rom. 8:14, John 1:12, Eph. 1:5) who when the fullness of time was come, (Gal. 4:4, Acts 2:22) was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary (according to the flesh), (Isa. 7:14, Luke 1:31, 35, Rom. 1:3) and preached on earth the gospel of salvation, (Acts 10:36, Rom. 1:5) till at length, by tyranny of the priests, He was guiltless condemned under Pontius Pilate, (John 7:32; 11:47-48, 53; 12:10-11, 42, Matt. 12:14, Matt. 27, Luke 23) then president of Jewry, and most slanderously hanged on the cross betwixt two thieves as a notorious trespasser, where taking upon Him the punishment of our sins, (Gal. 3:13, Isa. 53:6-10) He delivered us from the curse of the Law.

And forasmuch as He, being only God, could not feel death; neither, being only man, could overcome death, He joined both together, and suffered His humanity to be punished with most cruel death: feeling in Himself the anger and severe judgment of God, even as if He had been in the extreme torments of hell, (Acts 2:27, 1 Pet. 2:24, Isa. 53:4-5, 7, 10) and therefore cried with a loud voice, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Ps. 22:1, Matt. 27:46)

Thus of His free mercy, (Isa. 53:1 ff., Heb. 9:12, 14, 25-26, 28; 10:12, 14, 10:5-18, Gal. 1:4, Rom. 4:25; 5:8-10, 1 John 1:7) without compulsion, He offered up Himself as the only sacrifice to purge the sins of all the world, so that all other sacrifices for sin are blasphemous and derogate from the sufficiency hereof. The which death, albeit it did sufficiently reconcile us to God; (Col. 1:20) yet the scriptures commonly do attribute our regeneration to his resurrection; (Rom. 10:9, 1 Pet. 1:3) for as by rising again from the grave the third day, (Matt. 28:5-8, Acts 10:40, 1 Cor. 15:4) He conquered death, (Hosea 13:14, 1 Cor. 15:26, 55-57) even so the victory of our faith stands in His resurrection, and therefore without the one, we cannot feel the benefit of the other: For as by death, sin was taken away, (Rom. 4:25) so our righteousness was restored by His

resurrection. And because He would accomplish all things, (Eph. 4:10, John 14:2-3, Eph. 2:4-7) and take possession for us in His kingdom, He ascended into heaven, (Mark 16:19, Luke 24:51, Acts 1:9, 11, 1 Cor. 15[?]) to enlarge that same kingdom by the abundant power of his Spirit, (Luke 24:49, John 14:16-17, 26, Acts 2:1 ff.) by whom we are most assured of his continual intercession toward God the Father for us. (Rom. 8:34, Heb. 7:25; 9:24, 1 John 2:1) And altogether He is in heaven, (Acts 1:9-11; 3:21) as touching his corporeal presence, where the Father has now set Him on His right hand, (Col. 3:1, Rom. 8:34, Heb. 1:3; 10:12; 12:2) committing unto Him the administration of all things, (Eph. 1:20-22, Phil. 2:9, Col. 2:10) as well in heaven above as in the earth beneath; yet is He present with us His members, (Matt. 28:20) even to end of the world, in preserving and governing us with his effectual power and grace, who (when all things are fulfilled which God has spoken by the mouth of all His prophets since the world began)(Eph. 4:15-16) will come in the same visible form in the which He ascended, (Eph. 4:1-6, Phil. 3:16, Col. 2:2) with an unspeakable majesty, power, and company, to separate the lambs from the goats, the elect from the reprobate, (Matt. 25:46, Phil. 3:20) so that none, whether He be alive then or dead before, shall escape His judgment. (Matt. 24:30-31, Acts 10:42, 1 Cor. 15:22-23, 1 Thess. 4:16-17, 2 Thess. 1:7-10, 2 Tim. 4:1, 8) Moreover, I believe and confess the Holy Ghost, God equal with Father and the Son, (Matt. 3:16-17, 1 John 5:7, 1 Pet. 1:2, 22, 1 Cor. 6:11,19 ,John 16:7-13, Acts 17[?]) who regenerates and sanctifies us, rules and guides us into all truth, persuading most assuredly in our consciences that we are the children of God, (Rom. 8:13-17, Gal. 4:6-7) brethren to Jesus Christ, and fellow heirs with Him of life everlasting. Yet notwithstanding it is not sufficient to believe that God is omnipotent and merciful; that Christ has made satisfaction; or, that the Holy Ghost has this power and effect, except we do apply the same benefits to ourselves (Hab. 2:4, Rom. 1:17; 10:9 ff., 1 John 3:23) which are God's elect. (Matt. 16:18, John 10:3-5, Eph. 5:25-27, Rom. 8:28 ff., Song 2) I believe therefore and confess one holy church, e which (as members of Jesus Christ, (Eph. 1:10, 22-23, Col. 1:18, 1 Cor. 12:12-13) the only head thereof) (Acts 3:21) consents in faith, hope, and charity, (Acts 1:11) using the gifts of God, whether they are temporal or spiritual, (Acts 2:41 ff.; 4:32ff; Rom. 12:4 ff., 1 Cor. 12:1 ff., Eph. 4:7, 11-12) to the profit and furtherance of the same. Which church is not seen to man's eye, but only known to God: (Rom. 2:28-29[?]) who of the lost sons of Adam, has ordained some, as vessels of wrath, to damnation, and has chosen others, as vessels of his mercy, to be saved; (Rom. 9:23, Eph. 1:4-6, 11-12) the which also, in due time, He calls to integrity of life and godly conversation, to make them a glorious church to Himself. (Rom. 8:30, Eph. 5:26-27) But that church which is visible, and seen to the eye, (Matt. 16:17, 1 Cor. 15:9) has three tokens, or marks, whereby it may be discerned.

First, the word of God contained in the Old and New Testaments, (Matt. 28:19-20, Rom. 10:14, 17, 2 Cor. 3-4, Eph. 2:20, John 10:3-6, 2 Tim. 3:15-16, 2 Pet. 1:20-21) which as it is above the authority of the same church, (Eph. 2:19-21, Matt. 17:5[?], John 10:3-8) and only [alone] sufficient to instruct us in all things concerning salvation, (John 20:31, 2 Tim. 3:15-17) so is it left for all degrees of men to read and understand. (Josh. 1:7-9, John 5:39) For without this word, neither church, council nor decree can establish any point touching salvation. (Eph. 5:17, Matt. 15:1-20)

The second [mark] is the holy sacraments: (Matt. 26:26-30; 28:19, Rom. 4:11, Eph. 5:26[?]) to wit, of baptism and Lord's Supper; which sacraments Christ has left unto us as holy signs and seals of God's promises. For as by baptism once received, is signified that we (as well infants as others of age and discretion) being strangers from God by original sin, (Rom. 5:6-10, Eph. 2:1-7, Titus 3:5, Gal. 3[?], Rom. 7:18 ff.) are received into His family and congregation, with full assurance, that although this root of sin lies hidden in us, yet to the elect it shall not be imputed; (Rom. 4:5-8[?], Ps. 32:1-2) so the Supper declares, that God, as a most provident Father, (1 Cor. 11:23-29) does not only feed our bodies, but also spiritually nourishes our souls with the graces and benefits of Jesus Christ (which the scripture calls eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood). (John 6:48-58) Neither must we, in the administration of these sacraments, follow man's fantasy, but as Christ Himself has ordained, so must they be ministered; and by such as by ordinary vocation are thereunto called. (Heb. 5:4, John 3:27) Therefore, whosoever reserves and worships these sacraments, or contrariwise contemns them in time and place, procures to himself damnation.

The third mark of this church is ecclesiastical discipline, (Matt. 18:15-22, Luke 17:3-4, Lev. 19:17, Ecclesiasticus, 19:13-17) which stands in admonition and correction of faults. The final end whereof is excommunication, by the consent of the church determined, (1 Cor. 5:1ff.) if the

offender is obstinate. And besides this ecclesiastical censure, I acknowledge to belong to this church a political magistrate, (Rom. 13:1-7, Wisdom 6:4, Titus 3:1, 1 Pet. 2:13-14) who ministers to every man to every man justice, defending the good and punishing the evil; to whom we must render honour and obedience in all things, which are not contrary to the word of God. (Acts 5:29) And as Moses, Hezekiah, Josiah, and godly rulers purged the church of God from superstition and idolatry, (Ex. 32:26-28, 2 Kings 18:4; 23:1 ff., 2 Chron. 29; 35:1 ff.) so the defence of Christ's church appertains to the Christian magistrates, against all idolaters and heretics, as Papists, Anabaptists, with suchlike limbs of Antichrist, to root out all doctrine of devils and men, (2 Tim. 4:2-4, Col. 2:8, 16-23, Matt. 15:1-9, Isa. 29:13, Heb. 9:12, 14, 25-26, 28; 10:10, 12, 14, Acts 10:15, 1 John 2:22, Rom. 7:6, Gal. 5:1, Col. 2:8, Rom. 14:1 ff., 1 Tim. 4:1-8, Matt. 19:10-12, 1 Cor. 7:2, 9, 1 Cor. 8[?], 1 Cor. 10:25, 2 Cor. 6:16, Luke 17:23, Rom. 3:19-20, 1 Cor. 3:11, Gal. 4:9-10) as the Mass, Purgatory, Limbus Patrum, (2. According to Roman Catholic doctrine, the souls of some persons pass from this life into a place of limbo - neither heaven nor hell, but some other abode to await their final disposition. Papists hold that Limbus Patrum is the place bordering hell and purgatory where the Old Testament patriarchs waited until their redemption was completed by Christ, specifically by his descent into hell. The Romish notion of Christ's descent into hell is openly repudiated in this confession; see the exposition of the phrase, "He descended into hell," as found on page 38 above. See Richard A. Muller, Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), "limbus," p. 178.) prayer to saints, and for the dead; freewill, distinction of meats, apparel, and days; vows of single life, presence at idol service, man's merits, with suchlike, which draw us from the society of Christ's church - wherein stands only [alone] remission of sins, purchased by Christ's blood to all them that believe, (Isa. 33:24, Matt. 18:18, John 20:23, 2 Cor. 5:9-13, Rom. 1:16; 10:11-12, Eph. 2:11 ff.) whether they are Jews or Gentiles - and lead us to vain confidence in creatures, and trust in our own imaginations. The punishment whereof, although God oftentimes differs in this life, (2 Pet. 2, Jude 4-16, Rom. 9[?]) yet after the general resurrection, (Acts 24:15, 1 Cor. 15:12ff., Phil. 3:19-21, 1 Thess. 4:13 ff.) when our souls and bodies shall rise again to immortality, they shall be damned to unquenchable fire; (2 Thess. 1:7-9, Isa. 30:27, John 5:29) and then we which have forsaken all man's wisdom to cleave unto Christ, shall hear that joyful voice, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit ye the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world, (Matt. 25:21, 23, 34, 36) and so shall go triumphing with him in body and soul, (1 Thess. 4:16-17; 5:9-10, John 5:29, Isa. 26:19) to remain in glory everlasting, where we shall see God face to face, (1 Cor. 13:12, 1 John 3:2, Jer. 31:34, Heb. 8:11) and shall no more need one to instruct another; for we shall all know him, from the highest to the lowest: To whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all praise, honour, and glory, now and ever. So be it.

Of Ministers and Their Election

What Things are Chiefly Required in the Pastors and Ministers

First, let the church diligently consider that the minister which is to be chosen (Acts 1:21-23, 13:2-3; 14:23) be not found culpable of any such faults which St. Paul reprehends in a man of that vocation, (1 Tim. 3:2-7, 2 Tim. 2:5-6; 4:5, Ezek. 33:7, Jer. 3:15, John 21:17, Isa. 62:6, 1 Cor. 9:16, 19-23) but contrariwise endowed with such virtues, that he may be able to undertake his charge, and diligently execute the same.

Secondly, that he distribute faithfully the word of God, and minister the sacraments sincerely, (2 Tim. 2:2, 14-16, 23-25, 2 Cor. 4:1-2, 17, Matt. 26:26; 28:19-20, 1 Cor. 1:17-18, 21-24) ever careful not only to teach his flock publicly, but also privately to admonish them; (Acts 20:28, 31, 2 Tim. 4:2) remembering always, that if any thing perish through his default, the Lord will require it at his hands. (Ezek. 3:18-21, Ezek. 2, 1 Cor. 9:16)

Of Their Office and Duty

Because the charge of the word of God is of greater importance than that any man is able to dispense therewith; (1 Cor. 9:16, Acts 6:2, 4, Luke 12:14) and St. Paul exhorts to esteem them as ministers of Christ, and disposers of God's mysteries; (1 Cor. 4:1, 2 Cor. 4:1-2, 5, 7, 10) not lords or rulers, as St. Peter says, over the flock; (1 Pet. 5:2-8, 2 Cor. 1:24, Matt. 20:25-26) therefore the pastor's or minister's chief office stands in preaching the word of God, and ministering the sacraments. (Matt. 26:26ff.; 28:19-20, Mal. 2:6-7, 1 Pet. 4:10-11, Acts 3:2-3, 5; 16:10, 17, 1 Cor. 1:17ff.) So that in consultations, judgments, elections, and other political affairs, his counsel, (Acts 20:28, 2 Cor. 4:2, 5) rather than authority, takes place. And if so be the congregation, upon just cause, agrees to excommunicate, then it belongs to the minister,

according to their general determination, to pronounce the sentence, (1 Cor. 5:1 ff.) to the end that all things may be done orderly, and without confusion. (1 Cor. 14:33, 40)

The Manner of Electing the Pastors and Ministers

The ministers and elders at such time as there wants a minister, assemble the whole congregation, (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5, Acts 1:15-26) exhorting them to advise and consider who may best serve in that room and office. And if there be choice, the church appoints two or three, upon some certain day, to be examined by the ministers and elders. First, as touching their doctrine, (1 Tim. 3:2, 6, Titus 1:9) whether he that should be minister have good and sound knowledge in the holy scriptures, and fit and apt gifts to communicate the same to the edification of the people. For the trial whereof, they propose [to] him a theme or text to be treated privately, whereby his ability may the more manifestly appear unto them. Secondly, they inquire of his life and conversation, if he has in times past lived without slander [scandal], and governed himself in such sort, as the word of God has not heard evil, or been slandered through his occasion. (Rom. 2:19-24, Jam. 1:26-27, 1 Sam. 2:17, 24, 1 Tim. 5:17) Which being severally done, they signify unto the congregation, whose gifts they find most excellent and profitable for that ministry: appointing by a general consent, eight days at the least, that every man may diligently inquire of his life and manners. At the which time also, the minister exhorts them to humble themselves to God by fasting and prayer, (Acts 13:3; 14:23, Luke 2:37) that both their election may be agreeable to his will, and also profitable to the church. And if in the mean season anything be brought against him whereby he may be found unworthy by lawful probations, then is he dismissed and some other presented. If nothing be alleged upon some certain day, one of the ministers, at the morning sermon, presents him again to the church, framing his sermon, or some part thereof, to the setting forth of his duty.

Then at afternoon, the sermon ended, the minister exhorts them to the election, with the invocation of God's name, (1 Cor. 10:31, Col. 3:17, Matt. 9:37-38) directing his prayer as God shall move his heart. In like manner, after the election, the minister gives thanks to God, (1 Thess. 5:18, Col. 4:2, Eph. 5:20, Phil 1:3) with request of such things as shall be necessary for his office. After that he is appointed minister, the people sing a psalm and depart.

Of the Elders, and as Touching Their Office and Election

The elders must be men of good life and godly conversation, (Num. 11:16 ff. Acts 14:23; 16:4; 20:17ff. Rom. 12:8 Eph. 4:11-16 1 Cor. 12:28 Jam. 5:14 1 Pet. 5:1-3) without blame and all suspicion; careful for the flock, wise, and, above all things, fearing God: whose office stands in governing with the rest of the ministers, in consulting, admonishing, correcting, and ordering all things appertaining to the state of the congregation. And they differ from the ministers, in that they preach not the word, nor minister the sacraments. In assembling the people, neither they without the ministers, nor the ministers without them, may attempt anything. And if any of the just number want, the minister, by the consent of the rest, warns the people thereof, and finally admonishes them to observe the same order which was used in choosing the ministers.

Of the Deacons, and Their Office and Election

The deacons must be men of good estimation and report, (Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-13) discreet, of good conscience; charitable, wise, and finally adorned with such virtues as St. Paul requires in them. Their office is to gather the alms diligently, and faithfully to distribute them, (Rom. 12:7-8) with the consent of the ministers and elders; also to provide for the sick and impotent persons; having ever a diligent care, that the charity of godly men be not wasted upon loiterers and idle vagabonds. (2 Thess. 3:10-12) Their election is, as has been before rehearsed in the ministers and elders.

Of Teachers or Doctors

We are not ignorant that the scriptures make mention of a fourth kind of ministers left to the church of Christ, which also are very profitable, where time and place do permit. But for lack of opportunity, in this our dispersion and exile, we cannot well have the use thereof; and would to God it were not neglected where better occasion serves. These ministers are called teachers or

doctors, (Eph. 4:11, 1 Cor. 12:28) whose office is to instruct and teach the faithful in sound doctrine, providing with all diligence that the purity of the gospel be not corrupted, either through ignorance, or evil opinions. Notwithstanding, considering the present state of things, we comprehend under this title such means as God has in his church, that it should not be left desolate, nor yet His doctrine decay for default of ministers thereof. Therefore to term it by a word more usual in these our days, we may call it the order of schools, wherein the highest degree, and most annexed to the ministry and government of the church, is the exposition of God's word, which is contained in the Old and New Testaments. But because men cannot so well profit in that knowledge, except they be first instructed in tongues and human sciences (for now God works not commonly by miracles), it is necessary that seed be sown for the time to come, to the intent that the church be not left barren and wasted to our posterity; and that schools also be erected, and colleges maintained, with just and sufficient stipends, wherein youth may be trained in the knowledge and fear of God, that in their ripe age they may prove worthy members of our Lord Jesus Christ, whether it be to rule in civil policy, or to serve in the spiritual ministry, or else to live in godly reverence and subjection.

The Weekly Assembly of the Ministers, Elders, and Deacons

To the intent that the ministry of God's word may be had in reverence, and not brought to contempt through the evil conversation of such as are called thereunto, (Rom. 2:19-24, Ezek. 36:22-23, Isa. 52:5) and also that faults and vices may not by long sufferance grow at length to extreme inconveniences; (2 Tim. 2) it is ordained that every Thursday the ministers and elders, in their assembly or consistory, diligently examine all such faults and suspicions as may be espied, (1 Cor. 5) not only amongst others, but chiefly amongst themselves, lest they seem to be culpable of that which our Saviour Christ reproved in the Pharisees, (Matt. 7:3, Luke 6:41, Rom. 2:17-24) who could espy a mote in another man's eye, and could not see a beam in their own. And because the eye ought to be more clear than the rest of the body, (Matt. 6:22-23, Luke 11:34) the minister may not be spotted with any vice, but to the great slander of God's word, whose message he bears: therefore it is to be understood that there are certain faults, which if they be deprehended in a minister, he ought to be deposed: as heresy, Papistry, schism, blasphemy, perjury, fornication, theft, drunkenness, usury, fighting, unlawful games, with suchlike. Others are more tolerable, if so be that after brotherly admonition he amends his fault: as strange and unprofitable fashion in preaching the scriptures; curiosity in seeking vain questions; negligence, as well in his sermons, and in studying the scriptures, as in all other things concerning his vocation; scurrility, flattering, lying, backbiting, wanton words, deceit, covetousness, taunting, dissolution in apparel, gesture, and his other doings; which vices, as they are odious in all men, so in him that ought to be as an example to others of perfection, (Matt. 5:13, Mark 9:50?) in no wise are to be suffered; especially, if [it] so be that, according to God's rule, being brotherly advertised, (Matt. 18:15-17, Luke 17:3, Jam. 5:16, 19-20) he acknowledge not his fault and amend.

Interpretation of the Scriptures

Once every week, the congregation assembles to hear some place of the scriptures orderly expounded. (1 Cor. 14:1 ff., 1 Thess. 5:20, Eph. 4:29, 1 Cor. 12:28-31) At which time, it is lawful for every man to speak or enquire, as God shall move his heart, and the text minister occasion; so it be without pertinacity or disdain, as one that rather seeks to profit than to contend. And if [it] so be any contention arise, then such as are appointed moderators, either satisfy the party, or else if he seems to evil, exhort him to keep silence, referring the judgement thereof to the ministers and elders, to be determined in their assembly or consistory before mentioned. qeQ
When the congregation is assembled at the hour appointed, the minister uses one of these two confessions, or like in effect, exhorting the people diligently to examine themselves, following in their hearts the tenor of his words.

A Confession of Our Sins, Framed to Our Time, out of the 9th Chapter of Daniel

O Lord God, which art mighty and dreadful, thou that keepest covenant, and shewest mercy to them that love Thee and do Thy commandments: (Neh. 1:5, Job 9, 38-40, Ps. 24, 76, 77:10 ff., 139) We have sinned; we have offended; (Ex. 20:6, Luke 7:47) we have wickedly and stubbornly gone back from Thy laws and precepts. (Gen. 3:6-19, Rom. 5:12ff., 1 John 1:8-10, Ps. 32:5; 106:6 ff.) We would never obey Thy servants the prophets that spake in Thy name, (Lev. 26, Deut. 28, Jer. 26:4-6, 29:19, Neh. 1:6-11) to our kings and princes, to our forefathers, and to all

the people of our land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee; (Ps. 11:7, Jam. 1:13, Job 4:17-19; 9:1 ff.; 25:4-6) unto us pertaineth nothing but open shame, as it is come to pass this day unto our miserable country of England; yea unto all our nations, whether they be far or near, through all lands, wherein they are scattered for the offences that they and we have committed against Thee, (Ps. 89:10 [?], Jer. 26-27) so that the curses and punishments which are written in Thy law (Lev. 26:14 ff., Deut. 27-30) are now poured upon us; and Thou hast performed those words wherewith Thou didst menace us and our rulers that governed us, in bringing the same plagues upon us which before were threatened. And yet notwithstanding, both they and we proceed in our iniquity, and cease not to heap sin upon sin. For they which once were well instructed in the doctrine of Thy gospel, are now gone back from the obedience of thy truth, and are turned again to that most abominable idolatry, (2 Pet. 2:20-22, Prov. 26:11, Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31) from the which they were once called by the lively preaching of Thy word. And we, alas! to this day, do not earnestly repent us of our former wickedness, neither do we rightly consider the heaviness of thy displeasure. (Ps. 19:12-13, Deut. 31:16ff.; 29:20, Ezek. 5:5-11) Such is thy just judgment, O Lord, that thou punisheth sin by sin, and man by his own inventions, (Rom. 1:18 ff.) so that there can be no end of iniquity, except Thou prevent us (Isa. 65:1) with Thy undeserved grace. (Eph. 2:5)

Therefore convert us, O Lord, and we shall be converted; (Ps. 85:4, Jer. 31:18) for we do not offer up our prayers trusting in our own righteousness, (Titus 3:5, 2 Tim. 1:9) but in Thy manifold mercies. And although Thou hast once of Thy especial grace delivered us from the miserable thralldom of error and blindness, and called us many times to the sweet liberty of Thy gospel, (Gal. 4 & 5:1 ff.) which we notwithstanding have most shamefully abused, in obeying rather our own lusts and affections, (Gal. 5:13-21) than the admonitions of Thy prophets; (Zech. 7:8-14) yet we beseech Thee once again, for Thy name's sake, (Ps. 23:3; 25:11) to pour some comfortable drop of Thy accustomed mercies upon us; incline Thine ears, and open Thine eyes, (Ps. 71:1 ff.) to behold the grievous plagues of our country, the continual sorrows of our afflicted brethren, and our woeful banishment. And let our afflictions and just punishments be an admonition and warning to other nations among whom we are scattered, that with all reverence they may obey thy holy gospel; lest for like contempt, in the end, like or worse plagues fall upon them. (Matt. 11:20-24; 12:41, Luke 10:13-16)

Wherefore, O Lord, hear us! O Lord, forgive us! O Lord, consider and tarry not over long! but for Thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, be merciful unto us, and deliver us. (John 16:23-24) So shall it be known to all the world, that Thou only art the selfsame God, that ever showeth mercy to all such as call upon Thy holy name. (Ps. 103; 108:4, 136)

Another Confession for All States and Times

O eternal God and most merciful Father, we confess and acknowledge here, before Thy divine majesty, that we are miserable sinners, (Rom. 3:9 ff., Ps. 14:1-3) conceived and born in sin and iniquity, (Ps. 51:5) so that in us there is no goodness. (Rom. 7:15-25) For the flesh evermore rebels against the spirit, (Gal. 5:17) whereby we continually transgress Thy holy precepts and commandments, and so purchase to ourselves, through Thy just judgment, death and damnation. (Rom. 2:1 ff., Jer. 3:23-25, Isa. 40:7 [?])

Notwithstanding, O heavenly Father, forasmuch as we are displeased with ourselves for the sins that we have committed against Thee, and do unfeignedly repent us of the same, we most humbly beseech Thee, for Jesus Christ's sake, to show thy mercy upon us, to forgive us all our sins, and to increase thy Holy Spirit in us: that we, acknowledging from the bottom of our hearts our own unrighteousness, may from henceforth not only mortify our sinful lusts and affections, (Col. 3:5 ff., Rom. 6:1-7, Eph. 4:20-24; 5:3-5, 1 Pet. 2:11) but also bring forth such fruits as may be agreeable to Thy most blessed will; not for the worthiness thereof, but for the merits of Thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, (Rom. 5:1 ff., Heb. 9:14, Eph. 2:16ff.) our only Saviour, whom Thou hast already given [as] an oblation and offering for our sins, and for whose sake we are certainly persuaded that Thou wilt deny us nothing that we shall ask in His name, according to Thy will. (John 14:13-14; 16:23, Matt. 7:7-12, Jam. 1:5-7)

For Thy Spirit does assure our consciences that Thou art our merciful Father, (1 John 3:24, Rom. 8:9-17, 37-39) and so lovest us Thy children through Him, that nothing is able to remove Thy heavenly grace and favour from us. To Thee, therefore, O Father, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. So be it. QeQ

This done, the people sing a Psalm all together, in a plain tune; which ended, the minister prays for the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, as the same shall move his heart, and so proceeds to the sermon; using after the sermon this prayer following, or such-like.

A Prayer for the Whole Estate of Christ's Church

Almighty God and most merciful Father, we humbly submit ourselves, (1 Pet. 5:6) and fall down before Thy Majesty, (Num. 16:22, Deut. 9:18, Josh. 7:6) beseeching Thee from the bottom of our hearts, that this seed of Thy word, (Matt. 13:3-8) now sown amongst us, may take such deep root, that neither the burning heat of persecution cause it to wither, neither the thorny cares of this life do choke it, but that as seed sown in good ground, it may bring forth thirty, sixty, and an hundred fold, as thy heavenly wisdom hath appointed. And because we have need continually to crave many things at thy hands, we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, to grant us thy Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13, Rom. 8:12-17, Jam. 5:16, 1 John 5:14, Rom. 12:11-12, Wisdom 9:17-18) to direct our petitions, that they may proceed from such a fervent mind as may be agreeable to Thy most blessed will. (2 Cor. 3:5, John 15:5, Phil. 2:13) And seeing that our infirmity is able to do nothing without thy help, and that thou art not ignorant with how many and great temptations (Ps. 40:12-13, 17, 1 Pet. 1:6) we poor wretches are on every side enclosed and compassed, let Thy strength, O Lord, sustain our weakness, that we being defended with the force of Thy grace, may be safely preserved against all assaults of Satan, who goeth about continually like a roaring lion, seeking to devour us. (1 Pet. 5:8)

Increase our faith, (Luke 17:5) O merciful Father, that we do not swerve at any time from Thy heavenly word, but augment in us hope and love, with a careful keeping of all Thy commandments, that no hardness of heart, (Ps. 95:7-8, Heb. 3:7ff.; 4:7) no hypocrisy, no concupiscence of the eyes, (1 John 2:15-17) nor enticements of the world, do draw us away from thy obedience. And seeing we live now in these most perilous times, (1 Tim. 4:1 ff., 2 Pet. 3:3 ff., 2 Tim. 3:1ff., Jude) let Thy Fatherly providence defend us against the violence of all our enemies, which do everywhere pursue us; but chiefly against the wicked rage and furious uproars of that Romish idol, enemy to Thy Christ. (2 Thess. 2:1 ff., 1 John 2:18, Rev. 13, 17)

Furthermore, forasmuch as by Thy holy apostle we are taught to make our prayers and supplications for all men, (1 Tim. 2:1 ff.) we pray not only for ourselves here present, but beseech thee also, to reduce all such as be yet ignorant, from the miserable captivity of blindness and error, to the pure understanding and knowledge of Thy heavenly truth, that we all, with one consent and unity of minds, (Rom. 15:6, 1 Cor. 1:10, Eph. 4:3) may worship thee our only God and Saviour; and that all pastors, shepherds, and ministers, to whom Thou hast committed the dispensation of Thy holy word, (John 21:15-17, Matt. 28:19-20, 1 Cor. 9:16 ff., Mark 16:15) and charge of thy chosen people, (1 Pet. 5:1-3) may both in their life and doctrine be found faithful, setting only before their eyes Thy glory; and that by them, all poor sheep which wander and go astray, may be gathered and brought home to thy fold.

Moreover, because the hearts of rulers are in thy hands (Prov. 21:1) we beseech Thee to direct and govern the hearts of all kings, princes, and magistrates to whom Thou hast committed the sword; (Rom. 13:4, John 19:11) especially, O Lord, according to our bounden duty, we beseech Thee to maintain and increase the honourable estate of this city, into whose defence we are received, the magistrates, the council, and all the whole body of this commonwealth: Let Thy Fatherly favour so preserve them, and Thy Holy Spirit so govern their hearts, that they may in such sort execute their office, that thy religion may be purely maintained, manners reformed, and sin punished according to the precise rule of Thy holy word. (1 Tim. 1:3 ff., Jam. 1:18 ff.)

And for that we are all members of the mystical body of Christ Jesus, (1 Cor. 12:12-13, Rom. 12:4-5) we make our requests unto thee, O heavenly Father, for all such as are afflicted with any kind of cross or tribulation, (Jam. 5:13-15) as war, plague, famine, sickness, poverty, imprisonment, persecution, banishment, or any other kind of Thy rods, whether it be calamity of body, or vexation of mind, (2 Cor. 1:6 ff., Heb. 13:3) that it would please Thee to give them patience and constancy, till Thou send them full deliverance of all their troubles. And as we are bound to love and honour our parents, kinfolks, friends, and country, (Ex. 20:12) so we most humbly beseech Thee to show Thy pity upon our miserable country of England, which once, through Thy mercy, was called to liberty, and now for their and our sins, is brought unto most vile slavery and Babylonian bondage.

Root out from thence, O Lord, all ravening wolves, (Matt. 7:15, Acts 20:29) which to fill their bellies destroy thy flock. (Ezek. 34:1 ff., Rom. 16:17-18, Phil. 3:2, 18-19) And show thy great mercies upon those our brethren which are persecuted, cast in prison, and daily condemned to death for the testimony of Thy truth. (Heb. 13:3, Rom. 8:36, Ps. 44:22) And though they be utterly destitute of all men's aid, (John 16:33) yet let Thy sweet comfort never depart from them, but so inflame their hearts with Thy Holy Spirit, that they may boldly and cheerfully abide such trial (1 Pet. 1:7) as thy godly wisdom shall appoint. (Acts 2:23, Matt. 10:35 ff., Luke 21:12ff.) So that at length, as well by their death as by their life, (Rom. 14:7-8) the kingdom of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ may increase and shine through all the world. In whose name we make our humble petitions unto thee, as he hath taught us.

Our Father which art in heaven, etc.

Almighty and ever living God, vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, to grant us perfect continuance in Thy lively faith, augmenting the same in us daily, (Luke 17:5) till we grow to the full measure of our perfection in Christ, (Eph. 4:12-16) whereof we make our confession, saying, "I believe in God," etc. qeQ

Then the people sing a Psalm, which ended, the minister pronounces one of these blessings, and so the congregation departs.

The Lord bless you and save you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be merciful unto you; the Lord turn His countenance towards you, and grant you His peace. (Num. 6:24-26)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. So be it. (2 Cor. 13:14) qeQ

It shall not be necessary for the minister daily to repeat all these things before mentioned, but beginning with some manner of confession, to proceed to the sermon; which ended, he either uses the prayer for all estates before mentioned, or else prays, as the Spirit of God shall move his heart, framing the same according to the time and matter which he hath entreated of. And if there shall be at any time any present plague, famine, pestilence, war, or suchlike, (Lev. 26:14ff., Deut. 28:15ff., 1 Kings 8:33-40, 2 Sam. 21[?]) which are evident tokens of God's wrath; as it is our part to acknowledge our sins to be the occasion thereof, so are we appointed by the scriptures to give ourselves to mourning, fasting, and prayer, as the means to turn away God's heavy displeasure. Therefore, it shall be convenient that the minister, at such time, not only admonish the people thereof, but also use some form of prayer, according as the present necessity requires, to the which he may appoint, by a common consent, some several day after the sermon, weekly to be observed.

The Order of Baptism

First note, that forasmuch as it is not permitted by God's word, that women should preach or minister the sacraments; and it is evident that the sacraments are not ordained of God to be used in private corners as charms or sorceries, but left to the congregation, and necessarily annexed to God's word as seals of the same; therefore the infant which is to be baptized shall be brought to the church, on the day appointed to common prayer and preaching, accompanied with the father and godfather. So that after the sermon, the child being presented to the minister, he demands this question: Do you present this child to be baptized, earnestly desiring that he may be engrafted in the mystical body of Jesus Christ?

`The answer: Yes, we require the same.

The minister proceeds: Then let us consider, dearly beloved, how Almighty God has not only made us his children by adoption, Rom. 8:14-17, Gal. 4:4-7, Eph. 1:5; 2:18-19) and received us into the fellowship of his church; but also has promised that he will be our God, and the God of our children, unto the thousandth generation. (Gen. 17:7, Ex. 20:6, Deut. 7:9, Isa. 59:21) Which thing, as He confirmed to His people of the Old Testament by the sacrament of circumcision, (Gen. 17:7ff., Rom. 4:11) so has He also renewed the same to us in his New Testament by the sacrament of baptism; (Col. 2:11-12, Gal. 3:27, Acts 2:38-39) doing us thereby to wit, that our

infants appertain to Him by covenant, and therefore ought not to be defrauded of those holy signs and badges whereby His children are known from infidels and pagans. (Acts 10:47-48)

Neither is it requisite, that all those that receive this sacrament have the use of understanding and faith; but chiefly that they be contained under the name of God's people: (Acts 2:38-39, 1 Cor. 7:4) so that remission of sins in the blood of Christ Jesus does appertain to them by God's promise. Which thing is most evident by St. Paul, (1 Cor. 7:14) who pronounces the children begotten and born, either of the parents being faithful, to be clean and holy. Also our Saviour Christ admits children to His presence, embracing and blessing them. (Mark 10:13-16, Matt. 19:13-15, Luke 18:15-16, Ps. 22:9-10) Which testimonies of the Holy Ghost assure us, that infants are of the number of God's people; and that remission of sins does also appertain to them in Christ. Therefore, without injury, they cannot be debarred from the common sign of God's children. Neither yet is this outward action of such necessity, that the lack thereof should be prejudicial to their salvation, (Rom. 4:10, Gal. 3:1 ff., Gen. 15:6; 17:12) if that prevented by death, they may not conveniently be presented to the church. But we (having respect to that obedience which Christians owe to the voice and ordinance of Christ Jesus, who commanded to preach and baptize all without exception), (Mark 16:15-16, Matt. 28:19) do judge them only unworthy of any fellowship with Him, who contemptuously refuse such ordinary means as His wisdom has appointed to the instruction of our dull senses.

Furthermore, it is evident that baptism was ordained to be ministered in the element of water, (Matt. 3:11, 1 Pet. 3:21, 1 John 5:6, 8, 1 Cor. 10:1-4) to teach us, that like as water outwardly does wash away the filth of the body, so inwardly does the virtue of Christ's blood purge our souls from that corruption and deadly poison wherewith by nature we were infected: (Eph. 2:1 ff.) whose venomous dregs, (Rom. 7:5 ff.) although they continue in this our flesh, yet by the merits of his death are not imputed unto us, (Rom. 4:1 ff., Gal. 3:1 ff., Ps. 32:1-2) because the justice of Jesus Christ is made ours by baptism. (Rom. 6:3-6, Gal. 3:27) Not that we think any such virtue or power to be included in the visible water or outward action (for many have been baptized, and yet never inwardly purged), but that our Saviour Christ, who commanded baptism to be ministered, will, by the power of his Holy Spirit, effectually work in the hearts of His elect (Acts 2:41-42; 13:48) (in time convenient) all that is meant and signified by the same. And this the scripture calls our regeneration, (Eph. 2:1 ff., 1 Cor. 12:9-11, Rom. 6:3-6, Col. 2:12-13[?]) which stands chiefly in these two points: in mortification (that is to say, a resisting of the rebellious lusts of the flesh), and newness of life, whereby we continually strive to walk in that pureness and perfection wherewith we are clad in baptism. And although we in the journey of this life are encumbered with many enemies, (1 Pet. 5:8, Luke 22:31, Job 7[?]) which in the way assail us, yet we fight not without fruit. For this continual battle which we fight against sin, death, and hell, (Rom. 5:3-5, 1 Pet. 1:5-7, Jam. 1:2-4, Eph. 6:10-18) is a most infallible argument that God the Father, mindful of His promise made unto us in Christ Jesus, does not only give us motions and courage to resist them, but also assurance to overcome and obtain victory. (1 Cor. 15:57-58, Hos. 13:14, Heb. 2:14-15, Job 19:25 ff. [?]) Wherefore, dearly beloved, it is not only of necessity that we be once baptized, but also it much profits oft to be present at the ministration thereof; that we being put in mind of the league and covenant made betwixt God and us, (Deut 6:1 ff., Josh. 1:8) that He will be our God, and we His people, He our Father, and we His children, (Jer. 31:33, Heb. 8:8-12) may have occasion as well to try our lives past as our present conversation, and to prove ourselves, whether we stand fast in the faith of God's elect, or contrariwise have strayed from Him through incredulity and ungodly living; (Eph. 4:22 ff[?], Col. 3:8 ff., Heb. 13:9 [?]) whereof if our consciences do accuse us, yet byhearing the loving promises of our heavenly Father (who calls all men to mercy by repentance), (Ezek. 18:21-22, Acts 11:18, 2 Pet. 3:9, Deut. 4:29-31; 6:1ff.) we may from henceforth walk more warily in our vocation.

Moreover, you that are fathers and mothers may take hereby most singular comfort, to see your children thus received into the bosom of Christ's congregation, whereby you are daily admonished that you nourish and bring up the children of God's favour and mercy, over whom His fatherly providence watches continually. (Matt. 18:12-14) Which thing, as it ought greatly to rejoice you (knowing that nothing can chance unto them without His good pleasure), (Matt. 6:25-34, Luke 12:6-7) so ought it to make you diligent and careful to nurture and instruct them in the true knowledge and fear of God. (Deut. 4:9; 6:7; 11:19, Eph. 6:4) Wherein if you are negligent, you do not only injury to your own children, (1 Sam. 2:22-25, 2 Kings 2:23-24) hiding from them the good will and pleasure of Almighty God their Father, but also heap damnation upon yourselves, in suffering His children bought with the blood of His dear Son, so traitorously (for lack of knowledge) to turn back from Him.

Therefore it is your duty, with all diligence, to provide that your children, in time convenient, be instructed in all doctrine necessary for a true Christian, (Gen. 18:19, Deut. 32:46) chiefly that they be taught to rest upon the justice of Christ Jesus alone, and to abhor and flee all superstition, Papistry, and idolatry. Finally, to the intent that we may be assured, that you the father and the surety consent to the performance hereof, declare here before God and the face of His congregation, the sum of that faith wherein you believe, and will instruct this child.

Then the father, or in his absence the godfather, shall rehearse the articles of his faith; which done, the minister exhorting the people to prayer says in this manner, or suchlike, kneeling: (3. In the edition of 1562, the word kneeling is omitted.)

Almighty and everlasting God, which of Thy infinite mercy and goodness hast promised unto us that Thou wilt not only be our God, but also the God and Father of our children: we beseech Thee, that as Thou hast vouchsafed to call us to be partakers of this Thy great mercy in the fellowship of faith, (Gal. 3:26-29, 1 Pet. 1:5, Phil. 3:9, Rom. 3:22; 4:11-17) so it may please thee to sanctify with Thy Spirit, (2 Cor. 5:17 ff. [?], Rom. 8:14-17, Eph. 2:18-22; 3[?]) and to receive into the number of Thy children this infant, whom we shall baptize according to thy word, (Matt. 28:19, Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:38-41) to the end that he coming to perfect age, may confess Thee only the true God, (Rom. 10:9-10, John 17:3) and whom Thou hast sent Jesus Christ, and so serve Him, and be profitable unto His church in the whole course of his life; (Rom. 12:1, 1 Cor. 12 [?], 2 Thess. 5:11 [?]) that after this life is ended, he may be brought as a lively member of His body unto the full fruition of Thy joys in the heavens, (1 Cor. 2:9, Rom. 6:22, Titus 3:7) where Thy Son our Christ reigneth, world without end. In whose name we pray as He hath taught us:

Our Father, etc.

When they have prayed in this sort, the minister requires the child's name, which known, he says:

N., I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matt. 28:19, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38-41)

And as he speaks these words, he takes water in his hand and lays it upon the child's forehead: which done, he gives thanks as follows:

Forasmuch, most holy and merciful Father, as Thou dost not only beautify and bless us with common benefits, like unto the rest of mankind, but also heapest upon us most abundantly rare and wonderful gifts, (Eph. 2:1 ff., 1 Pet. 2:9-10, Hos. 2:23, 2 Pet. 3:13-14) of duty we lift up our eyes and minds unto Thee, and give Thee most humble thanks for Thy infinite goodness, which hast not only numbered us amongst Thy saints, (1 Pet. 2:9-10, Eph. 2:19-22) but also of Thy free mercy dost call our children unto Thee, marking them with this sacrament as a singular token and badge of thy love. Wherefore most loving Father, though we are not able to deserve this so great a benefit, (yea, if Thou wouldst handle us according to our merits, (Rom. 2:1ff., Jer. 3:24-25, Isa. 40:6-7, Luke 17:10) we should suffer the punishment of eternal death and damnation), yet for Christ's sake we beseech Thee, that Thou wilt confirm this Thy favour more and more towards us, and take this infant into Thy tuition and defence, whom we offer and present unto Thee with common supplications, and never suffer him to fall to such unkindness, whereby he should lose the force of this baptism, (2 Cor. 6:16-18 [?]) but that he may perceive Thee continually to be his merciful Father, through the Holy Spirit working in his heart, by whose divine power he may so prevail against Satan, that in the end, obtaining the victory, he may be exalted into the liberty of Thy kingdom.

The Manner of the Lord's Supper

The day when the Lord's Supper is ministered, which commonly is used once a month, or so oft as the congregation shall think expedient, the minister uses to say as follows:

Let us mark, dear brethren, and consider how Jesus Christ did ordain unto us His Holy Supper, according as St. Paul makes rehearsal in the 11th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians: I have, says he, received of the Lord that which I

have delivered unto you, (to wit) that the Lord Jesus, the same night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, saying, Take ye, eat ye, this is My body which is broken for you; do ye this in remembrance of Me. Likewise after supper, He took the cup, saying, This cup is the new Testament or covenant in My blood, do ye this so oft as ye shall drink thereof, in remembrance of Me. For so oft as ye shall eat this bread and drink of this cup, ye shall declare the Lord's death until His coming. Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, he shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Then see that every man prove and try himself, and so let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup; for whosoever eateth or drinketh unworthily, he eateth and drinketh his own damnation, for not having due regard and consideration of the Lord's body. This done, the minister proceeds to the exhortation.

Dearly beloved in the Lord, forasmuch as we are now assembled to celebrate the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ, let us consider these words of St. Paul, how he exhorts all persons diligently to try and examine themselves before they presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For as the benefit is great, if with a truly penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament (for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood, (John 6:56-57) then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us, we are one with Christ and Christ with us), so is the danger great if we receive the same unworthily, for then we are guilty of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour, we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's body; we kindle God's wrath against us, and provoke Him to plague us with diverse diseases and sundry kinds of death.

Therefore if any of you be a blasphemer of God, (Gal. 5:19-21) hinderer or slanderer of his word, an adulterer, or be in malice or envy, or in any other grievous crime: bewail your sins, and come not to this holy table, lest after the taking of this holy sacrament, the Devil enter into you as he entered into Judas, (John 13:27) and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to destruction both of body and soul. Judge therefore yourselves, brethren, that you be not judged of the Lord; repent yourselves truly for your sins past, (Matt. 3:10-12, Titus 2:11-14) and have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour, seeking only your salvation in the merits of his death and passion, (Acts 4:12, Gal. 2:16-21) from henceforth refusing and forgetting all malice and debate, (1 Pet. 2:1, 1 Cor. 14:20, Eph. 4:1-3, 25-32) with full purpose to live in brotherly amity and godly conversation all the days of your life. And albeit we feel in ourselves much frailty and wretchedness, as that we have not our faith so perfect and constant as we ought, being many times ready to distrust God's goodness through our corrupt nature, (Rom. 7:15-25) and also that we are not so thoroughly given to serve God, neither have so fervent a zeal to set forth His glory as our duty requires, feeling still such rebellion in ourselves, that we have need daily to fight against the lusts of our flesh; (Gal. 5:17) yet, nevertheless, seeing that our Lord has dealt thus mercifully with us, that He has printed His gospel in our hearts, (Heb. 8:10-12, Jer. 31:33-34, Isa. 59:21) so that we are preserved from falling into desperation and misbelief; and seeing also He has endued us with a will and desire to renounce and withstand our own affections, (Rom. 7:15, 19-20, Phil. 1:6) with a longing for his righteousness and the keeping of his commandments, we may be now right well assured, that those defaults and manifold imperfections in us shall be no hindrance at all against us, to cause Him not to accept and impute us as worthy to come to His spiritual table. For the end of our coming thither is not to make protestation that we are upright and just in our lives, (Luke 18:9-14) but contrariwise, we come to seek our life and perfection in Jesus Christ, acknowledging in the meantime, that we of ourselves are the children of wrath and damnation. (Eph. 2:3, Luke 5:31-32[?])

Let us consider, then, that this sacrament is a singular medicine for all poor sick creatures, a comfortable help to weak souls, and that our Lord requires no other worthiness on our part, but that we unfeignedly acknowledge our naughtiness and imperfection. Then to the end that we may be worthy partakers of His merits and most comfortable benefits (which is the true eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood), (John 6:55-58) let us not suffer our minds to wander about the consideration of these earthly and corruptible things (which we see present to our eyes, and feel with our hands) to seek Christ bodily present in them, as if He were enclosed in the bread or wine, or as if these elements were turned and changed into the substance of His flesh and blood. For the only way to dispose our souls to receive nourishment, relief, and quickening of His substance, is to lift up our minds by faith above all things worldly and sensible, and thereby to enter into heaven, that we may find and receive Christ, where He dwells undoubtedly very God and very man, (1 Tim. 6:14-16) in the incomprehensible glory of His Father, to whom be all praise, honour, and glory, now and ever. Amen.

The exhortation ended, the minister comes down from the pulpit, and sits at the table, every man and woman in likewise taking their place as occasion best serves: then he takes bread, and gives thanks, (Matt. 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:19-20, 1 Cor. 11:23-29) either in these words following, or like in effect:

O Father of mercy, and God of all consolation, seeing all creatures do knowledge and confess Thee as Governor and Lord, (Rev. 5:13) it becometh us, the workmanship of thine own hands, at all times to reverence and magnify thy Godly Majesty: first, for that Thou hast created us to Thine own image and similitude; (Gen. 1:27) but chiefly that Thou hast delivered us from that everlasting death and damnation, (Eph. 2:8-12, Gal. 1:4, Gen. 3:15) into the which Satan drew mankind by the means of sin, from the bondage whereof, neither man nor angel was able to make us free; (Acts 4:12, Heb. 1:4-5, Rev. 5:1-4) but thou, O Lord, rich in mercy and infinite in goodness, hast provided our redemption to stand in Thy only and well-beloved Son, whom of very love Thou didst give to be made man, (John 3:16) like unto us is all things (Heb. 2:17) (sin excepted), (Heb. 4:15, 7:26-28) that in His body He might receive the punishments of our transgression, (1 Pet. 2:24, Isa. 43:25[?], Isa. 53) by His death to make satisfaction to Thy justice, (Matt. 3:17; 17:5, Rom. 5:8-10) and by His resurrection to destroy him that was author of death; (Heb. 2:14) and so to reduce and bring again life to the world, (John 6:50-51) from which the whole offspring of Adam most justly was exiled. (Gen. 3:22-24, Rom. 5:12)

O Lord, we acknowledge that no creature is able to comprehend the length and breadth, the depth and height, of that Thy most excellent love, (Eph 3:18-19) which moved Thee to show mercy where none was deserved; (Eph. 2:8-12) to promise and give life where death had gotten victory; (John 6:33; 17:2-3, Eph. 2:1-7) to receive us into Thy grace when we could do nothing but rebel against Thy justice. (Gen. 6:5, Rom. 3:9-18, Isa. 64:6, Ps. 5:9; 14:1-3, Rom. 7:14)

O Lord, the blind dullness of our corrupt nature will not suffer us sufficiently to weigh these Thy most ample benefits; (Matt. 16:13-17, 1 Cor. 2:14, Luke 11:33 ff. [?], Matt. 10 [?]) yet, nevertheless, at the commandment of Jesus Christ our Lord, (Matt. 26:26-28, Luke 22:17-20) we present ourselves to this His table, (which He hath left to be used in remembrance of His death until His coming again), (1 Cor. 11:23-26) to declare and witness before the world that by Him alone we have received liberty and life; (John 8:32, 36, Gal. 5:13) that by Him alone Thou dost acknowledge us Thy children and heirs; (Rom. 8:14-17, 1 Pet. 1:3-5, Eph. 1:5) that by Him alone we have entrance to the throne of Thy grace; (Eph. 2:18, Heb. 4:15-16) that by Him alone we are possessed in our spiritual kingdom, (Matt. 25, John 14:1ff., Luke 12:32) to eat and drink at his table; (Luke 22:14-20, Rev. 2:7, 17) with whom we have our conversation presently in heaven; and by whom our bodies shall be raised up again from the dust, and shall be placed with Him in that endless joy, (Phil. 3:20, Eph. 2:6[?]) which Thou, O Father of mercy, hast prepared for Thine elect, before the foundation of the world was laid. (Eph. 1:4, Rev. 13:7-8) And these most inestimable benefits, we acknowledge and confess to have received of Thy free mercy and grace, by Thy only beloved Son Jesus Christ: (Rom. 3:20 [?], Eph. 2:8-12, Titus 3:4-7) for the which therefore, we Thy congregation, moved by Thy Holy Spirit, (Rom. 8:15[?]) render thee all thanks, praise, and glory, for ever and ever.

This done, the minister breaks the bread, and delivers it to the people, (Matt. 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26) who distribute and divide the same amongst themselves, (Luke 22:19-20, 1 Cor. 10:16) according to our Saviour Christ's commandment, and in likewise gives the cup. (1 Cor. 11:23-26, John 13, 14) During the which time, some place of the scriptures is read, which does lively set forth the death of Christ, to the intent that our eyes and senses may not only be occupied in these outward signs of bread and wine, which are called the visible word; but that our hearts and minds also may be fully fixed in the contemplations of the Lord's death, which is by this holy sacrament represented. And after the action is done, he gives thanks, saying:

Most merciful Father, we render to Thee all praise, thanks, and glory, for that Thou hast vouchsafed to grant unto us miserable sinners so excellent a gift and treasure, as to receive us into the fellowship and company of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord; (1 Cor. 10:16-17) whom Thou delivered to death for us, (Rom. 4:25) and hast given Him unto us as a necessary food and nourishment unto everlasting life. (John 6:55-58)

And now we beseech Thee also, O heavenly Father, to grant us this request; that Thou never suffer us to become so unkind as to forget so worthy benefits; but rather imprint and fasten them sure in our hearts, that we may grow and

increase daily more and more in true faith, (Luke 17:5) which continually is exercised in all manner of good works, (Gal. 5:6) and so much the rather, O Lord, confirm us in these perilous days and rages of Satan, (1 Tim. 4:1-3, Eph. 6:12[?], 2 Pet. 3:3) that we may constantly stand and continue in the confession of the same to the advancement of thy glory, (Matt. 5:13-16, 1 Pet. 2:9, 12) which art God over all things blessed for ever. So be it.

The action thus ended, the people sing the 103rd Psalm, "My soul, give laud," etc, or some other of thanksgiving: which ended, one of the blessings before mentioned is recited, and so they rise from the table, and depart.

To the Reader:

If perchance any would marvel why we follow rather this order than any other in the administration of this sacrament, let him diligently consider, that, first of all, we utterly renounce the error of the Papists; secondly, we restore unto the sacraments their own substance, and to Christ His proper place. And as for the words of the Lord's Supper, we rehearse them not because they should change the substance of the bread or wine, or that the repetition thereof, with the intent of the sacrificer, should make the sacrament (as the Papists falsely believe), but they are read and pronounced, to teach us how to behave ourselves in this action, and that Christ might witness unto our faith, as it were with His own mouth, that He has ordained these signs for our spiritual use and comfort. We do first, therefore, examine ourselves, according to St. Paul's rule, and prepare our minds that we may be worthy partakers of so high mysteries. Then taking bread, we give thanks, break, and distribute it, (Matt. 26:26-30, 1 Cor. 11:23-26, Luke 22:19-20) as Christ our Saviour has taught us.

Finally, the ministrations ended, we give thanks again, according to His example. So that without His word and warrant, there is nothing in this holy action attempted.

The Form of Marriage

After the banns or contract has been published three several days in the congregation (to the intent that if any persons have interest or title to either of the parties, they may have sufficient time to make their challenge), the parties assemble at the beginning of the sermon, and the minister, at time convenient, says as follows:

Of Marriage The Exhortation

Dearly beloved brethren, we are here gathered together in the sight of God, and in the face of his congregation to knit and join these parties together in the honourable estate of matrimony, (Heb. 13:4, Prov. 18:22) which was instituted and authorized by God himself in paradise, (Gen. 2:18-24) man being then in the state of innocence. For what time God made heaven earth, and all that is in them, and had created and fashioned man also after His own similitude and likeness, unto whom He gave rule and lordship over all the beasts of the earth, fishes of the sea, and fowls of the air; He said, It is not good that man live alone; let Us make him an helper like unto himself.

And God brought a fast sleep upon him and took one of his ribs and shaped Eve thereof; giving us thereby to understand, that man and wife are one body, one flesh, and one blood. Signifying also unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his church; (Eph. 5:32) for the which cause man leaves his father and mother and takes him to his wife, (Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:5, Mark 10:7-8, 1 Cor. 6:16) to keep company with her; the which also he ought to love, even as our Saviour loves His church: that is to say, His elect and faithful congregation, for the which He gave His life. (Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:5, Mark 10:7-8, 1 Cor. 6:16) And semblably [similarly] also, it is the wife's duty to study to please and obey her husband, (Eph. 5:22-24, Col. 3:18, 1 Pet. 3:1-6, 1 Cor. 11:3 ff., 1 Tim. 2:9 ff.) serving him in all things that are godly and honest; for she is in subjection, and under the governance of her husband, so long as they continue both alive. (Rom. 7:2, 1 Cor. 7:39, Matt. 19:9)(Rom. 7:2, 1 Cor. 7:39, Matt. 19:9)

And this holy marriage, being a thing most honourable, is of such virtue and force, that thereby the husband has no more right or power over his own body, but the wife; and likewise the wife has no power over her own body, but the husband; (1 Cor. 7:2ff.) forasmuch as God has so knit them together in this mutual society to the procreation of children, that they should bring them up in the

fear of the Lord, and to the increase of Christ's kingdom. (Eph. 6:4, 2 Tim. 3:14-15 [?])
 Wherefore, they that are thus coupled together by God, can not be severed or put apart, unless it be for a season, with the assent of both parties, (1 Cor. 7:5) to the end to give themselves the more fervently to fasting and prayer; giving diligent heed, in the meantime, that their long being apart be not a snare to bring them into the danger of Satan through incontinence. And therefore to avoid fornication, every man ought to have his own wife, and every woman her own husband: so that so many as cannot live chaste, are bound by the commandment of God to marry, (Matt. 19:10-12, 1 Cor. 7:9) that thereby the holy temple of God, which is our bodies, may be kept pure and undefiled. (1 Cor. 3:16-17, 1 Cor. 6:18-20, 2 Cor. 6:14-18, Lev. 19:2[?], 1 Pet. 1:15-16[?])
 For since our bodies are now become the very members of Jesus Christ, how horrible and detestable a thing is it to make them the members of an harlot! Everyone ought therefore to keep his vessel in all purity and holiness; (1 Thess. 4:3-5, Rom. 12:1-2, Eph. 5:24-33[?]) for whosoever pollutes and defiles the temple of God, him will God destroy. (1 Cor. 3:16-17)
 Here the minister speaks to the parties that shall be married, in this wise: I require and charge you, as you will answer at the day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, (1 Cor. 4:5, Matt. 7:1ff.[?], Rom. 2:16) that if either of you do know any impediment why you may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, that you confess it; for be you well assured, that so many as are coupled otherwise than God's word does allow, are not joined together by God; neither is their matrimony lawful.
 If no impediment is known, then the minister says: I take you to witness that are here present, beseeching you all to have good remembrance hereof; and moreover, if there be any of you which knows that either of these parties is contracted to any other, or knows any other lawful impediment, let them now make declaration thereof. If no cause is alleged, the minister proceeds, saying:
 Forasmuch as no man speaks against this thing, you, N., shall protest here before God and His holy congregation, that you have taken, and are now contented to have N., here present, for your lawful wife and spouse; promising to keep her, to love and treat her in all things according to the duty of a faithful husband, (Col. 3:19, 1 Pet. 3:7, Matt. 19:5, 1 Cor. 7:3-5, 10-11[?], Mal. 2:15-16) forsaking all others during her life; and briefly, to live in a holy conversation with her, keeping faith and truth in all points, according as the word of God and His holy gospel do command.
 The answer: Even so I take her before God, and in presence of this His congregation.
 The minister to the spouse also says: You, N., shall protest here before the face of God, in the presence of this holy congregation, that you have taken, and are now contented to have, N., here present, for your lawful husband; promising to him subjection and obedience, (1 Cor. 11:3, Eph. 5:22-24, 5:33, Col. 3:18, 1 Tim. 2:19-15, 1 Pet. 3:1-6, Esther 1:20 [?], Matt. 19:3-6) forsaking all others during his life; and finally, to live in a holy conversation with him, keeping faith and truth in all points, as God's word does prescribe.
 The answer: Even so I take him before God, and in the presence of this His congregation.
 The minister then says: Give diligent care to the [words of the] gospel, that you may understand how our Lord would have this holy contract kept and observed; and how sure and fast a knot it is, which may in no wise be loosed, according as we are taught in the 19th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel: "The Pharisees came unto Christ to tempt him and to grope His mind, saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every light cause? He answered, saying, Have ye not read, that He which created man at the beginning, made them male and female? saying, For this thing shall man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh; so that they are no more two, but are one flesh. Let no man therefore put asunder that which God hath coupled together." If you believe assuredly these words which our Lord and Saviour did speak (according as you have heard them now rehearsed out of the holy gospel), then may you be certain, that God has even so knit you together in this holy state of wedlock. Wherefore apply yourselves to live a chaste and holy life together, in godly love, in Christian peace, and good example; ever holding fast the band of charity without any breach, keeping faith and truth the one to the other, even as God's word does appoint.
 Then the minister commends them to God, in this or suchlike sort:
 The Lord sanctify and bless you; the Lord pour the riches of his grace upon you, that you may please Him, and live together in holy love to your lives' end. So be it.
 Then is sung the 128th Psalm, "Blessed are they that fear the Lord," etc, or some other, pertaining to the same purpose.

The Visitation of the Sick

Because the visitation of the sick is a thing very necessary, and yet notwithstanding, it is hard to prescribe all rules pertaining thereunto, we refer it to the discretion of the godly and prudent minister: who, according as he sees the patient

affected, either may lift him up with the sweet promises of God's mercy through Christ, if he perceives him much afraid of God's threatenings; or contrariwise, if he is not touched with the feeling of his sins, may beat him down with God's justice; evermore like a skillful physician, framing his medicine according as the disease requires. And if he perceives him to want any necessaries, he not only relieves him according to ability, but also provides by others that he may be furnished sufficiently. Moreover, the party that is visited may, at all times, for his comfort, send for the minister; who does not only make prayers for him there presently, but also, if it so requires, commends him in the public prayers to the congregation.

Of Burial

The corpse is reverently brought to the grave, accompanied with the congregation, without any further ceremonies; which being buried, the minister goes to the church, if it is not far off, and makes some comfortable exhortation to the people, touching death and resurrection.

The Order of Ecclesiastical Discipline

As no city, town, house, or family can maintain their estate and prosper without policy and governance, so the church of God, which requires more purely to be governed than any city or family, cannot without spiritual policy and ecclesiastical discipline continue, increase, and flourish. And as the word of God is the life and soul of this church, (Eph. 5:26) so this godly order and discipline is as it were sinews in the body, which knit and join the members together with decent order and comeliness. It is a bridle to stay the wicked from their mischiefs. It is a spur to prick forward such as are slow and negligent; yea and for all men it is the Father's rod ever in a readiness to chastise gently the faults committed, and to cause them afterward to live in more godly fear and reverence. Finally, it is an order left by God unto His church, whereby men learn to frame their wills, and doings, according to the law of God, by instructing and admonishing one another, yea, and by correcting and punishing all obstinate rebels, and contemners of the same. There are three causes chiefly which move the church of God to the executing of discipline. First, that men of evil conversation be not numbered amongst of God's children to their Father's reproach, (Eph. 5:7-11; 5:27[?]) as if the church of God were a sanctuary for naughty and vile persons. The second respect is, that the good be not infected with companying the evil; which thing St. Paul foresaw when he commanded the Corinthians to banish from amongst them the incestuous adulterer, saying, A little leaven maketh sour the whole lump of dough. (1 Cor. 5:6-7, Gal. 5:9) The third cause is, that a man thus corrected, or excommunicated, might be ashamed of his fault, (2 Thess. 3:6, 14[?], 1 Cor. 5:5) and so through repentance come to amendment; the which thing the apostle calls, delivering to Satan, that his soul may be saved in the day of the Lord; meaning that he might be punished with excommunication, to the intent his soul should not perish for ever.

First, therefore, it is to be noted, that this censure, correction, or discipline, is either private or public: private, as if a man commits either in manners or doctrine against you, (Matt. 18:15-17, Luke 17:3, Jam. 5:16-20, Lev. 19:17, 2 Thess. 3:12-15) to admonish him brotherly betwixt him and you. If perchance he stubbornly resists your charitable advertisements, or else by continuance in his fault declares that he amends not; then, after he has been the second time warned in presence of two or three witnesses, and continues obstinately in his error, he ought, as our Saviour Christ commands, to be disclosed and uttered to the church, so that according to public discipline, he either may received through repentance, or else be punished as his fault requires. And here, as touching private discipline, three things are to be noted: first, that our admonitions proceed of a godly zeal and conscience, rather seeking to win our brother than to slander him; next, that we be assured that his fault is reprovably by God's word; and finally, that we use such modesty and wisdom, that if we somewhat doubt of the matter whereof we admonish him, yet with godly exhortations he may be brought to the knowledge of his fault; or if the fault pertains to many, or is known of diverse, that our admonition be done in presence of them. Briefly, if it concerns the whole church, in such sort that the concealing thereof might procure some danger to the same, that then it be uttered to the ministers and seniors [elders], to whom the policy of the church does pertain. Also in public discipline, it is to be observed that the ministry pretermitt nothing at any time unchastised with one kind of punishment or other. If they perceive anything in the congregation, either evil in example, slanderous [scandalous] in manners, or not beseeming their profession; as if there be any covetous person, any adulterer, or fornicator, forsworn, thief, briber, false witness-bearer, blasphemer, drunkard, slanderer, usurer; any person disobedient, seditious, or dissolute; any heresy or sect, as papistical, anabaptistical, and such like: briefly,

whatsoever it is that might spot the Christian congregation, (Eph. 5:27) yea, rather whatsoever is not to edification, ought not to escape either admonition punishment.

And because it happens sometimes in the church of Christ, that when other remedies assayed profit nothing, they must proceed to the apostolical rod and correction as unto excommunication (which is the greatest and last punishment belonging to the spiritual ministry); it is ordained that nothing be attempted in that behalf without the determination of the whole church: wherein also they must beware and take good heed, that they seem not more ready to expel from the congregation than to receive again those in whom they perceive fruits worthy of repentance to appear; neither yet to forbid him the hearing of sermons, which is excluded from the sacraments, and other duties of the church, that he may have liberty and occasion to repent. Finally, that all punishments, correction, censures, and admonitions, stretch no further than God's word, with mercy, may lawfully bear.

They worship Me in vain, teaching doctrine which is men's traditions. Matt. 15:9 Come forth of Babylon My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, nor receive of her plagues, for her sins are gone up to heaven, and God hath remembered her wickedness. Rev. 18:4-5 ucu

A Form of Prayers to be Used in Private Houses, Every Morning and Evening

Morning Prayer

Almighty God and most merciful Father, we do not present ourselves here before Thy Majesty trusting in our own merits or worthiness, but in

Thy manifold mercies, (Dan. 9:18) which hast promised to hear our prayers, and grant our requests which we shall make to Thee in the name of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord: (John 16:23-24) who hath also commanded us to assemble ourselves together in His name, (Matt. 18:20) with full assurance that he will not only be amongst us, but also be our Mediator and Advocate towards thy Majesty, (1 Tim. 2:5) that we may obtain all things which shall seem expedient to Thy blessed will for our necessities. (1 John 3:22) Therefore we beseech Thee, most merciful Father, to turn Thy loving countenance towards us, and impute not unto us our manifold sins and offences, (Ps. 32:1-2) whereby we justly deserve thy wrath and sharp punishment, but rather receive us to Thy mercy for Jesus Christ's sake, accepting his death and passion as a just recompence for all our offences, (1 John 2:1-2) in whom only Thou art pleased, and through whom Thou canst not be offended with us. And seeing that of Thy great mercies we have quietly passed this night, grant, O heavenly Father, that we may spend and bestow this day wholly in Thy service, so that all our thoughts, words, and deeds may redound to the glory of Thy name, (Col. 3:17) and good example to all men, who seeing our good works may glorify Thee our heavenly Father.

And forasmuch as of Thy mere benevolence and love Thou hast not only created us to Thine own similitude and likeness, (Gen. 1:27) but also hast chosen us to be heirs with Thy dear Son Jesus Christ of that immortal kingdom which Thou prepared for us before the beginning of world: we beseech Thee to increase our faith and knowledge, (Luke 17:5) and to lighten our hearts with Thy Holy Spirit, that we may in the meantime live in godly conversation and integrity of life; knowing that idolaters, adulterers, covetous men, contentious persons, drunkards, gluttons, and such like, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19-21) And because Thou hast commanded us to pray one for another, we do not only make request, O Lord, for ourselves and them that Thou hast already called to the true understanding of Thy heavenly will, but for all people and nations of the world, (Acts 10:35) who as they know by Thy wonderful works that Thou art God over all, so they may be instructed by Thy Holy Spirit to believe in Thee their only Saviour and Redeemer. But forasmuch as they cannot believe except they hear, (Rom. 10:14-15) nor cannot hear but by preaching, and none can preach except they be sent; therefore, O Lord, raise up faithful distributors of Thy mysteries, who setting apart all worldly respects, may both in their life and doctrine only seek Thy glory. Contrarily confound Satan, Antichrist, (Rom. 16:20) with all hirelings and Papists, whom Thou hast already cast off into a reprobate sense, that they may not by sects, schisms, heresies, and errors, disquiet thy little flock.

And because, O Lord, we have fallen into the latter days and dangerous times, wherein ignorance hath got the upper hand, (2 Tim. 3:1 ff.) and Satan with his ministers seek by all means to quench the light of Thy gospel, we beseech Thee to maintain Thy cause against those ravening wolves, (Matt. 7:15) and strengthen all Thy servants, whom they keep in prison and bondage. Let not Thy longsuffering be an occasion either to increase their tyranny or to discourage Thy children; neither yet let our sins and wickedness be a hindrance to Thy mercies, but with speed, O Lord, consider these great miseries; and chiefly the afflictions of our country, which once flourished through Thy mercies, and now for contempt of Thy word is plagued according to Thy judgment. (Amos 8, Matt. 11:20 ff.[?])

Alas, Lord, mayest thou not be entreated? Shall we thus be left in despair? Shall all the world laugh at our shame for ever? (Ps. 77:7-9 [?]) Truth it is, Lord, that we were more than sufficiently warned of this thy vengeance to come, both by thy word and examples of others. For Thy people Israel many times by their sins provoked Thine anger, (Ex. 32:1 ff.) and Thou punished them by Thy just judgment; yet though their sins were never so grievous, if they once returned from their iniquity, Thou received them to mercy. (Isa. 37:1 ff.)

We therefore, most wretched sinners, bewail our manifold sins, and earnestly repent us for our former wickedness and ungodly behaviour towards thee; and whereas we cannot of ourselves purchase thy pardon, (Rom. 7:14ff. [?], 2 Cor. 3:5, Luke 18:13-14[?]) yet we humbly beseech Thee, for Jesus Christ's sake, to show Thy mercies upon us, and restore us again to Thy favour. Grant us, dear Father, these our requests, and all other things necessary for us, and Thy whole church, according to Thy promise in Jesus Christ our Lord: in whose name we beseech Thee as He hath taught us saying:

Our Father, etc.

A Prayer to be Said Before Meals

All things depend upon Thy providence, O Lord, to receive at Thy hands due sustenance in time convenient. Thou givest to them, and they gather it; thou openest Thy hand, and they are satisfied with all good things. (Ps. 104:27-28)

O heavenly Father, which art the fountain and full treasure of all goodness, we beseech Thee to show Thy mercies upon us Thy children, and sanctify these gifts which we receive of Thy merciful liberality, (1 Tim. 4:4-5) granting us grace to use them soberly and purely according to thy blessed will; (Titus 2:12) so that hereby we may acknowledge Thee to be the Author and Giver of all good things; and above all, that we may remember continually to seek the spiritual food of thy word, (John 6:27) wherewith our souls may be nourished everlastingly through our Saviour Christ; who is the true bread of life which came down from heaven, (John 6:50-51) of whom whosoever eateth shall live for ever, and reign with Him in glory, world without end. So be it.

A Thanksgiving After Meals

Let all nations magnify the Lord; let all people rejoice in praising and extolling His great mercies. For His fatherly kindness is plentifully shewed forth upon us, and the truth of His promise endureth forever. (Ps. 117) We render thanks unto Thee, O Lord God, for the manifold benefits which we continually receive at Thy bountiful hand, (Col. 3:17) not only for that it hath pleased Thee to feed us in this present life, giving unto us all things necessary for the same, but especially because Thou hast of Thy free mercies fashioned us anew into an assured hope of a far better life, (Rom. 8:18 ff. [?], Titus 3:4-7) the which Thou hast declared unto us by Thy holy gospel. (2 Tim. 1:10) Therefore we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, that Thou wilt not suffer our affections to be so entangled or rooted in these earthly and corruptible things, (1 John 2:15) but that we may always have our minds directed to Thee on high, (1 Tim. 2[?]) continually watching for the coming of our Lord and Saviour Christ, (1 Cor. 1:7) what time he shall appear for our full redemption: (Rom. 8:23) To whom, with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever. So be it.

Evening Prayer

O Lord God, Father everlasting and full of pity, we acknowledge and confess that we are not worthy to lift up our eyes to heaven, (Luke 15:18-19; 18:13) much less to present ourselves before Thy Majesty with confidence that Thou wilt hear our prayers and grant our requests, if we consider our own deservings; for our consciences do accuse us, and our sins witness against us, and we know that Thou art an upright judge, who dost not justify the sinners and wicked men, but punishes the faults of all such as transgress thy commandments. (Ex. 23:7[?]) Yet most merciful Father, since it hath pleased Thee to command us to call on Thee in all our troubles and adversities, (Ps. 50:15) promising even then to help us, when we feel ourselves, as it were, swallowed up of death and desperation, (Ps. 18:4-6) we utterly renounce all worldly confidence, and flee to Thy sovereign bounty as our only stay and refuge; beseeching Thee not to call to remembrance our manifold sins and wickedness, (Ps. 79:8) whereby we continually provoke Thy wrath and indignation against us; neither our negligence and unkindness, which have neither worthily esteemed, nor in our lives sufficiently expressed the sweet comfort of thy gospel revealed unto us; but rather to accept the obedience and death of Thy Son Jesus Christ, who by offering up His body in sacrifice once for all, (Heb. 9 -10) hath made a sufficient recompence for all our sins.

Have mercy therefore upon us, O Lord, and forgive us our offences. (Ps. 19:12[?])
 Teach us by Thy Holy Spirit that we may rightly weigh them, and earnestly repent for the same.
 And so much the rather, O Lord, because that the reprobate, and such as Thou hast forsaken, (Ps. 58:3-5) cannot praise Thee, nor call upon Thy name; but the repenting heart, the sorrowful mind, the conscience oppressed, (Ps. 51:17 [?]) hungering and thirsting for Thy grace, shall ever set forth thy praise and glory. (Ps. 107:9) And albeit we are but worms and dust, (Ps. 22:6) yet Thou art our Creator, and we are the work of Thy hands; yea, Thou art our Father and we are Thy children; (2 Cor. 6:18) Thou art our Shepherd and we Thy flock; Thou art our Redeemer and we the people whom Thou hast bought; Thou art our God and we Thine inheritance: Correct us not therefore in Thine anger, (Jer. 10:24, Ps. 6:1) O Lord; neither according to our deserts punish us. But mercifully chastise us with a fatherly affection, that all the world may know that at whatsoever time a sinner doth repent him of his sin from the bottom of his heart, (Ezek. 18:21-22, 27-28) Thou wilt put away his wickedness out of Thy remembrance, as Thou hast promised by Thy holy prophet. (4. At this point, readers are directed "to that part of the Morning Prayer that is for the increase of the gospel, which may be said here as time serves." See the first new paragraph on page 96, beginning with the words, "And because thou hast com-manded us to pray. . . .")
 Finally, forasmuch as it hath pleased Thee to make the night for man to rest in, as Thou hast ordained him the day to travel, grant, O dear Father, that we may so take our bodily rest, that our souls may continually watch for the time that our Lord Jesus Christ shall appear for our deliverance out of this mortal life; (Luke 12:35 ff.) and in the mean season, that we, not overcome by any temptations, fantasies, dreams, or illusions, (Matt. 6:13) may fully set our minds upon Thee, love Thee, fear Thee, and rest in Thee. Furthermore, that our sleep be not excessive or overmuch, after the insatiable desires of our flesh, (Luke 21:34-36[?]) but only sufficient to content our weak nature, that we may be better disposed to live in all godly conversation, to the glory of Thy holy name and profit of our brethren. So be it.

A Prayer Made at the First Assembly of the Congregation, when the Confession of Our Faith, and Whole Orders of the Church, Were There Read and Approved

O Lord God Almighty, and Father most merciful, there is none like Thee in heaven nor in earth, (1 Kings 8:23) who workest all things for the glory of thy name and the comfort of thine elect. Thou didst once make man ruler over all thy creatures, and placed him in the garden of all pleasures; (Gen. 1:28; 2:8-17) but how soon, alas, did he in his felicity forget Thy goodness? (Gen. 3) Thy people Israel, also, in their wealth did evermore run astray, (Ex. 32) abusing thy manifold mercies; like as all flesh continually rageth when it hath gotten liberty and external prosperity. But such is thy wisdom adjoined to Thy mercies, dear Father, that Thou seekest all means possible to bring Thy children to the sure sense and lively feeling of Thy fatherly favour. (Ezek. 18:23, 32[?])
 And therefore when prosperity will not serve, then sendest Thou adversity, graciously correcting all Thy children whom Thou receivest into Thy household. (Heb. 12:6, Prov. 3:11-12[?]) Wherefore we, wretched and miserable sinners, render unto Thee most humble and hearty thanks, that it hath pleased Thee to call us home to Thy fold by Thy fatherly correction at this present [time], whereas in our prosperity and liberty we did neglect Thy graces offered unto us. For the which negligence, and many other grievous sins whereof we now accuse ourselves before Thee, Thou mightest most justly have given us up to reprobate minds and induration of our hearts, (Rom. 1:28) as Thou hast done others. But such is thy goodness, O Lord, that Thou seemest to forget all our offences, (Isa. 43:25 [?]) and hast called us of Thy good pleasure from all idolatries into this city [Geneva] most Christianly reformed, to profess Thy name, and to suffer some cross amongst Thy people for Thy truth and gospel's sake; (Matt. 5:11) and so to be Thy witnesses with Thy prophets and apostles, (Luke 24:44-48, Acts 1:8) yea, with Thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Head, to whom Thou dost begin here to fashion us like, that in His glory we may also be like Him when He shall appear. (1 John 3:2) O Lord God, what are we upon whom thou shouldst show this great mercy? (Ps. 8:4) O most loving Lord, forgive us our unthankfulness, and all our sins for Jesus Christ's sake. O heavenly Father, increase Thy Holy Spirit in us; to teach our hearts to cry Abba, dear Father! (Gal. 4:6) to assure us of our eternal election in Christ; to reveal Thy will more and more towards us; to confirm us so in Thy truth, that we may live and die therein; and that by the power of the same Spirit, we may boldly give an account of our faith to all men with humility and meekness, that whereas they backbite and slander us as evil doers, they may be ashamed and once stop their mouths, seeing our good conversation in Christ Jesus, (1 Pet. 3:15-16) for whose sake we beseech Thee, O Lord God, to guide, govern, and prosper this our enterprise in assembling our brethren to praise Thy holy name; and not only to be here present with us Thy children according to Thy promise, (Matt. 18:20) but also mercifully to assist Thy like persecuted people, our brethren, gathered in all other places, that they and we, consenting together in one

spirit and truth, (Rom. 15:5-6) may (all worldly respects set apart) seek only Thy honour and glory in all our and their assemblies. So be it.