The Belgic Confession

Introduction

The oldest of the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America is the Confession of Faith, popularly known as the Belgic Confession, following the seventeenth-century Latin designation "Confessio Belgica." "Belgica" referred to the whole of the Netherlands, both north and south, which today is divided into the Netherlands and Belgium. The confession's chief author was Guido de Brès, a preacher of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands, who died a martyr to the faith in the year 1567. During the sixteenth century the churches in this country were exposed to terrible persecution by the Roman Catholic government. To protest against this cruel oppression, and to prove to the persecutors that the adherents of the Reformed faith were not rebels, as was laid to their charge, but law-abiding citizens who professed the true Christian doctrine according to the Holy Scriptures, de Brès prepared this confession in the year 1561. In the following year a copy was sent to King Philip II, together with an address in which the petitioners declared that they were ready to obey the government in all lawful things, but that they would "offer their backs to stripes, their tongues to knives, their mouths to gags, and their whole bodies to the fire," rather than deny the truth expressed in this confession.

Although the immediate purpose of securing freedom from persecution was not attained, and de Brès himself fell as one of the many thousands who sealed their faith with their lives, his work has endured and will continue to endure. In its composition the author availed himself to some extent of a confession of the Reformed churches in France, written chiefly by John Calvin, published two years earlier. The work of de Brès, however, is not a mere revision of Calvin's work, but an independent composition. In 1566 the text of this confession was revised at a synod held at Antwerp. In the Netherlands it was at once gladly received by the churches, and it was adopted by national synods held during the last three decades of the sixteenth century. The text, not the contents, was revised again at the Synod of Dort in 1618-19 and adopted as one of the doctrinal standards to which all office-bearers in the Reformed churches were required to subscribe. The confession is recognized as one of the best official summaries of Reformed doctrine.

The text of Article 36 is presented in two forms in this edition because the Christian Reformed Church in 1938 and 1985 decided to revise it from the original text in order to set forth what it judged to be a more biblical statement on the relationship between church and state, and to eliminate language that denounced "Anabaptists, other anarchists . . ." and so on. The Reformed Church in America has not made any amendments to the Belgic Confession. However, when the Reformed Church in America adopted the Belgic Confession in 1792 as one of the three confessional Standards of Unity, it also adopted the Explanatory Articles that reconciled the statements in the three standards and the Church Order of Dort with the situation in which it existed in the newly independent United States of America. With regard to Article 36 dealing with the relation of church and state, it

stated that "whatever relates to the immediate authority and interposition of the Magistrate in the government of the Church, and which is introduced more or less into all the national establishments in Europe, is entirely omitted in the constitution now published." With regard to the harsh words about Anabaptists and others in Article 36, the RCA stated that "in publishing the Articles of Faith, the Church determined to abide by the words adopted in the Synod of Dordrecht, as most expressive of what she believes to be truth; in consequence of which, the terms alluded to could not be avoided. But she openly and candidly declares that she by no means thereby intended to refer to any denomination of Christians at present known, and would be grieved at giving offence, or unnecessarily hurting the feelings of any person."

Article 1: The Only God
We all believe in our hearts
and confess with our mouths
that there is a single
and simple
spiritual being,
whom we call God—

eternal,
incomprehensible,
invisible,
unchangeable,
infinite,
almighty;
completely wise,
just,
and good,
and the overflowing source
of all good.

Article 2: The Means by Which We Know God
We know God by two means:

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

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

Second, God makes himself known to us more clearly
by his holy and divine Word,
as much as we need in this life,
for God's glory
and for our salvation.

Article 3: The Written Word of God
We confess that this Word of God
was not sent nor delivered "by human will,"
but that "men and women moved by the Holy Spirit
spoke from God,"
as Peter says.[1]

Afterward our God—
with special care
for us and our salvation—
commanded his servants, the prophets and apostles,
to commit this revealed Word to writing.
God, with his own finger,
wrote the two tables of the law.

Therefore we call such writings
holy and divine Scriptures.

[1] 2 Pet. 1:21

Article 4: The Canonical Books
We include in the Holy Scripture the two volumes
of the Old and New Testaments.
They are canonical books
with which there can be no quarrel at all.

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

and then the other twelve minor prophets—
Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah,
Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk,
Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.
In the New Testament,
the four gospels—
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John;
the Acts of the Apostles;
the fourteen letters of Paul—
to the Romans;
the two letters to the Corinthians;
to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians;
the two letters to the Thessalonians;
the two letters to Timothy;
to Titus, Philemon, and to the Hebrews;
the seven letters of the other apostles—
one of James;
two of Peter;
three of John;
one of Jude;
and the Revelation of the apostle John.

* "Jeremiah" here includes the Book of Lamentations as well as the Book of Jeremiah.

Article 5: The Authority of Scripture
We receive all these books
and these only
as holy and canonical,
for the regulating, founding, and establishing
of our faith.

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

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

Article 6: The Difference Between Canonical and Apocryphal Books
We distinguish between these holy books
and the apocryphal ones,
    which are the third and fourth books of Esdras;
    the books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Jesus Sirach, Baruch;
    what was added to the Story of Esther;
    the Song of the Three Children in the Furnace;
    the Story of Susannah;
    the Story of Bel and the Dragon;
    the Prayer of Manasseh;
    and the two books of Maccabees.

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

Article 7: The Sufficiency of Scripture
We believe
that this Holy Scripture contains
the will of God completely
and that everything one must believe
to be saved
is sufficiently taught in it.

For since the entire manner of service
which God requires of us
is described in it at great length,
no one—
    even an apostle
    or an angel from heaven,
    as Paul says—[2]
ought to teach other than
what the Holy Scriptures have
already taught us.

For since it is forbidden
to add to the Word of God,
or take anything away from it,[3]
it is plainly demonstrated
that the teaching is perfect
and complete in all respects.

Therefore we must not consider human writings—
    no matter how holy their authors may have been—
equal to the divine writings;
nor may we put custom,
nor the majority,
nor age,
nor the passage of times or persons,
nor councils, decrees, or official decisions
above the truth of God,
    for truth is above everything else.

For all human beings are liars by nature
and more vain than vanity itself.

Therefore we reject with all our hearts
everything that does not agree
with this infallible rule,
    as we are taught to do by the apostles
    when they say,
        "Test the spirits
        to see whether they are from God,"[4]
    and also,
    "Do not receive into the house
    or welcome anyone
    who comes to you
    and does not bring this teaching."[5]

[2] Gal. 1:8
[3] Deut. 12:32; Rev. 22:18-19
[4] 1 John 4:1
[5] 2 John 10

Article 8: The Trinity
In keeping with this truth and Word of God
we believe in one God,
who is one single essence,
in whom there are three persons,
really, truly, and eternally distinct
according to their incommunicable properties—
namely,
Father,
Son,
and Holy Spirit.
The Father
is the cause,
origin,
and source of all things,
visible as well as invisible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Article 9: The Scriptural Witness on the Trinity
All these things we know
from the testimonies of Holy Scripture
as well as from the effects of the persons,
especially from those we feel within ourselves.

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

In the book of Genesis God says,
"Let us make humankind in our image,
according to our likeness."
So "God created humankind in his image"—
indeed, "male and female he created them."[6]
"See, the man has become like one of us."[7]

It appears from this
that there is a plurality of persons
within the Deity,
when God says,
"Let us make humankind in our image"—
and afterward God indicates the unity
in saying,
"God created."

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

For when our Lord was baptized in the Jordan,
the voice of the Father was heard saying,
"This is my Son, the Beloved;"[8]
the Son was seen in the water;
and the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove.

So, in the baptism of all believers
this form was prescribed by Christ:
Baptize all people "in the name
of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit."[9]

In the Gospel according to Luke
the angel Gabriel says to Mary,
the mother of our Lord:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;
therefore the child to be born will be holy;
he will be called Son of God."[10]

And in another place it says:
"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with all of you."[11]

["There are three that testify in heaven,
the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit,
and these three are one."][12]

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

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

The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier,
by living in our hearts.

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

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

[6] Gen. 1:26-27
[7] Gen. 3:22
[8] Matt. 3:17
[9] Matt. 28:19
[10] Luke 1:35
[11] 2 Cor. 13:14
[12] 1 John 5:7—following the better Greek texts, the NRSV and other modern translations place this verse in a footnote.

Article 10: The Deity of Christ
We believe that Jesus Christ,
according to his divine nature,
is the only Son of God—
eternally begotten,
not made or created,
for then he would be a creature.

He is one in essence with the Father;
coeternal;
the exact image of the person of the Father
and the "reflection of God's glory,"[13]
being like the Father in all things.

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

Moses says that God created the world;[14]
and John says that all things were created through the Word,[15]
which he calls God.
The apostle says that God created the world through the Son.[16]
He also says that God created all things through Jesus Christ.[17]

And so it must follow
that the one who is called God, the Word, the Son, and Jesus Christ
already existed before creating all things.
Therefore the prophet Micah says
that Christ's origin is "from ancient days."[18]
And the apostle says
that the Son has "neither beginning of days
nor end of life."[19]

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

[13] Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3
[14] Gen. 1:1
[15] John 1:3
[16] Heb. 1:2
[17] Col. 1:16
[18] Mic. 5:2
[19] Heb. 7:3

Article 11: The Deity of the Holy Spirit
We believe and confess also
that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally
from the Father and the Son—
neither made,
nor created,
nor begotten,
but only proceeding
from the two of them.

In regard to order,
the Spirit is the third person of the Trinity—
of one and the same essence,
and majesty,
and glory,
with the Father and the Son,
being true and eternal God,
as the Holy Scriptures teach us.

Article 12: The Creation of All Things
We believe that the Father,
when it seemed good to him,
created heaven and earth and all other creatures
from nothing,
by the Word—
    that is to say,
    by the Son.

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

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

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

    Some of them have fallen
        from the excellence in which God created them
        into eternal perdition;
    and the others have persisted and remained
        in their original state,
        by the grace of God.
    The devils and evil spirits are so corrupt
    that they are enemies of God
    and of everything good.
    They lie in wait for the church
    and every member of it
    like thieves,
        with all their power,
    to destroy and spoil everything
        by their deceptions.

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

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

Article 13: The Doctrine of God's Providence
We believe that this good God,
after creating all things,
did not abandon them to chance or fortune
but leads and governs them
according to his holy will,
in such a way that nothing happens in this world
without God's orderly arrangement.

Yet God is not the author of,
and cannot be charged with,
the sin that occurs.
For God's power and goodness
are so great and incomprehensible
that God arranges and does his works very well and justly
even when the devils and the wicked act unjustly.

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

This doctrine gives us unspeakable comfort
since it teaches us
that nothing can happen to us by chance
but only by the arrangement of our gracious
heavenly Father,
who watches over us with fatherly care,
sustaining all creatures under his lordship,
so that not one of the hairs on our heads
(for they are all numbered)
nor even a little bird
can fall to the ground
without the will of our Father.[20]

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

For that reason we reject
the damnable error of the Epicureans,
who say that God does not get involved in anything
and leaves everything to chance.

[20] Matt. 10:29-30

Article 14: The Creation and Fall of Humanity
We believe
that God created human beings from the dust of the earth
and made and formed them in his image and likeness—
good, just, and holy;
able by their will to conform
in all things
to the will of God.

But when they were in honor
they did not understand it[21]
and did not recognize their excellence.
But they subjected themselves willingly to sin
and consequently to death and the curse,
lending their ear to the word of the devil.

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

So they made themselves guilty
and subject to physical and spiritual death,
having become wicked,
perverse,
and corrupt in all their ways.

They lost all their excellent gifts
which they had received from God,
and retained none of them
except for small traces
which are enough to make them
inexcusable.

Moreover, all the light in us is turned to darkness,
as the Scripture teaches us:
"The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it."[22]
Here John calls the human race "darkness."

Therefore we reject everything taught to the contrary
concerning human free will,
since humans are nothing but the slaves of sin
and cannot do a thing
unless it is given them from heaven.[23]

For who can boast of being able
to do anything good by oneself,
since Christ says,
"No one can come to me
unless drawn by the Father who sent me"?[24]

Who can glory in their own will
when they understand that "the mind that is set on the flesh
is hostile to God"?[25]
Who can speak of their own knowledge
in view of the fact that "those who are unspiritual
do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit"?[26]

In short,
who can produce a single thought,
knowing that we are not able to think a thing
about ourselves,
by ourselves,
but that "our competence is from God"?[27]

And therefore,
what the apostle says
ought rightly to stand fixed and firm:
God works within us
both to will and to do
according to his good pleasure.[28]

For there is no understanding nor will
conforming to God's understanding and will
apart from Christ's involvement,
    as he teaches us when he says,
    "Apart from me you can do nothing."[29]

[21] Ps. 49:20
[22] John 1:5
[23] John 3:27
[24] John 6:44
[25] Rom. 8:7
[26] 1 Cor. 2:14
[27] 2 Cor. 3:5
[28] Phil. 2:13
[29] John 15:5

Article 15: The Doctrine of Original Sin
We believe
that by the disobedience of Adam
original sin has been spread
through the whole human race.[30]

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

Nevertheless,
it is not imputed to God's children
for their condemnation
but is forgiven
by his grace and mercy—
    not to put them to sleep
    but so that the awareness of this corruption
    might often make believers groan
    as they long to be set free
    from the body of this death.[31]

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

[30] Rom. 5:12-13
[31] Rom. 7:24

Article 16: The Doctrine of Election
We believe that—
all Adam's descendants having thus fallen
into perdition and ruin
by the sin of Adam—
God showed himself to be as he is:
merciful and just.

God is merciful
in withdrawing and saving from this perdition those who,
in the eternal and unchangeable divine counsel,
have been elected and chosen in Jesus Christ our Lord
by his pure goodness,
without any consideration of their works.

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

Article 17: The Recovery of Fallen Humanity
We believe that our good God,
by marvelous divine wisdom and goodness,
seeing that Adam and Eve had plunged themselves in this manner
into both physical and spiritual death
and made themselves completely miserable,
set out to find them,
though they,
trembling all over,
were fleeing from God.

And God comforted them,
promising to give them his Son,
born of a woman,[32]
to crush the head of the serpent,[33]
and to make them blessed.

[32] Gal. 4:4
[33] Gen. 3:15

Article 18: The Incarnation
So then we confess
that God fulfilled the promise
made to the early fathers and mothers
by the mouth of the holy prophets
when he sent the only and eternal Son of God
into the world
at the time appointed.

The Son took the "form of a slave"
and was made in "human form,"[34]
truly assuming a real human nature,
with all its weaknesses,
except for sin;
being conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
without male participation.

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

Therefore we confess
(against the heresy of the Anabaptists
who deny that Christ assumed
human flesh from his mother)
that Christ shared the very flesh and blood of children;[35]
being the fruit of the loins of David according to the flesh,[36]
descended from David according to the flesh;[37]
the fruit of the womb of the virgin Mary;[38]
born of a woman;[39]
the seed of David;[40]
the root of Jesse;[41]
descended from Judah,[42]
having descended from the Jews according to the flesh;
descended from Abraham—
having assumed descent from Abraham and Sarah,
and was made like his brothers and sisters,
yet without sin.[43]

In this way Christ is truly our Immanuel—
that is: "God with us."[44]

[34] Phil. 2:7
[35] Heb. 2:14
[36] Acts 2:30
[37] Rom. 1:3
[38] Luke 1:42
[39] Gal. 4:4
[40] 2 Tim. 2:8
[41] Rom. 15:12
[42] Heb. 7:14
[43] Heb. 2:17; 4:15
[44] Matt. 1:23

Article 19: The Two Natures of Christ

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

Thus his divine nature has always remained uncreated,
without beginning of days or end of life,[45]
filling heaven and earth.

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

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

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

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

[45] Heb. 7:3

Article 20: The Justice and Mercy of God in Christ
We believe that God—
    who is perfectly merciful
    and also very just—
sent the Son to assume the nature
in which the disobedience had been committed,
    in order to bear in it the punishment of sin
    by his most bitter passion and death.

So God made known his justice toward his Son,
    who was charged with our sin,
and he poured out his goodness and mercy on us,
    who are guilty and worthy of damnation,
giving to us his Son to die,
    by a most perfect love,
and raising him to life
    for our justification,
        in order that by him
        we might have immortality
        and eternal life.

Article 21: The Atonement
We believe
that Jesus Christ is a high priest forever
according to the order of Melchizedek—
    made such by an oath—
and that he presented himself
in our name
before his Father,
to appease his Father's wrath
with full satisfaction
    by offering himself
        on the tree of the cross
    and pouring out his precious blood
        for the cleansing of our sins,
        as the prophets had predicted.

For it is written
that "the punishment that made us whole"
was placed on the Son of God
and that "by his bruises we are healed."
He was "like a lamb that is led to the slaughter";
he was "numbered with the transgressors"[46]
and condemned as a criminal by Pontius Pilate,
    though Pilate had declared
    that he was innocent.

So he paid back
what he had not stolen,[47]
and he suffered—
    "the righteous for the unrighteous,"[48]
    in both his body and his soul—
in such a way that
when he sensed the horrible punishment
required by our sins
"his sweat became like great drops of blood
falling down on the ground."[49]
He cried, "My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me?"[50]

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

Therefore we rightly say with Paul that
we know nothing "except Jesus Christ, and him crucified";[51]
we "regard everything as loss
because of the surpassing value
of knowing Christ Jesus [our] Lord."[52]
We find all comforts in his wounds
and have no need to seek or invent any other means
to reconcile ourselves with God
than this one and only sacrifice,
once made,
which renders believers perfect
forever.

This is also why
the angel of God called him Jesus—
that is, "Savior"—
    because he would save his people
    from their sins.[53]

[46] Isa. 53:4-12
[47] Ps. 69:4
[48] 1 Pet. 3:18
[49] Luke 22:44
[50] Matt. 27:46
[51] 1 Cor. 2:2
[52] Phil. 3:8
[53] Matt. 1:21

Article 22: The Righteousness of Faith
We believe that
for us to acquire the true knowledge of this great mystery
the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith
that embraces Jesus Christ,
    with all his merits,
and makes him its own,
and no longer looks for anything
    apart from him.

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

Therefore,
to say that Christ is not enough
but that something else is needed as well
is a most enormous blasphemy against God—
    for it then would follow
    that Jesus Christ is only half a Savior.
And therefore we justly say with Paul
that we are justified "by faith alone"
or "by faith apart from works."[54]

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

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

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

[54] Rom. 3:28

Article 23: The Justification of Sinners
We believe
that our blessedness lies in the forgiveness of our sins
because of Jesus Christ,
and that in it our righteousness before God is contained,
as David and Paul teach us
when they declare those people blessed
to whom God grants righteousness
apart from works.[55]

And the same apostle says
that we are "justified by his grace as a gift,
through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."[56]
And therefore we cling to this foundation,
which is firm forever,
giving all glory to God,
humbling ourselves,
and recognizing ourselves as we are;
not claiming a thing for ourselves or our merits
and leaning and resting
on the sole obedience of Christ crucified,
which is ours when we believe in him.

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

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

Therefore everyone must say with David:
"[Lord,] do not enter into judgment with your servant,
    for no one living is righteous before you."[57]

[55] Ps. 32:1; Rom. 4:6
[56] Rom. 3:24
[57] Ps. 143:2

Article 24: The Sanctification of Sinners
We believe that this true faith,
    produced in us by the hearing of God's Word
    and by the work of the Holy Spirit,
regenerates us and makes us new creatures,[58]
    causing us to live a new life[59]
    and freeing us from the slavery of sin.

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

So then, it is impossible
for this holy faith to be unfruitful in a human being,
seeing that we do not speak of an empty faith
but of what Scripture calls
"faith working through love,"[60]
    which moves people to do by themselves
    the works that God has commanded
        in the Word.

These works,
    proceeding from the good root of faith,
are good and acceptable to God,
    since they are all sanctified by God's grace.

Yet they do not count toward our justification—
for by faith in Christ we are justified,
even before we do good works.
Otherwise they could not be good,
any more than the fruit of a tree could be good
if the tree is not good in the first place.

So then, we do good works,
but not for merit—
for what would we merit?
Rather, we are indebted to God for the good works we do,
and not God to us,
since God "is at work in [us], enabling [us] both
to will and to work for his good pleasure"[61] —
thus keeping in mind what is written:
"When you have done all that you were ordered to do,
say, 'We are worthless slaves;
we have done only what we ought to have done.'"[62]

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

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

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

[58] 2 Cor. 5:17
[59] Rom. 6:4
[60] Gal. 5:6
[61] Phil. 2:13
[62] Luke 17:10

Article 25: The Fulfillment of the Law
We believe
that the ceremonies and symbols of the law have ended
with the coming of Christ,
and that all foreshadowings have come to an end,
so that the use of them ought to be abolished
among Christians.
Yet the truth and substance of these things
remain for us in Jesus Christ,
in whom they have been fulfilled.

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

Article 26: The Intercession of Christ
We believe that we have no access to God
except through the one and only Mediator and Intercessor,
"Jesus Christ the righteous,"[63]
who
therefore was made human,
uniting together the divine and human natures,
so that we human beings might have access to the divine Majesty.
Otherwise we would have no access.

But this Mediator,
whom the Father has appointed between himself and us,
ought not terrify us by his greatness,
so that we have to look for another one,
according to our fancy.
For neither in heaven nor among the creatures on earth
is there anyone who loves us
more than Jesus Christ does.
Although he was "in the form of God,"
Christ nevertheless "emptied himself,"
taking "human form" and "the form of a slave" for us;[64]
and he made himself "like his brothers and sisters
in every respect."[65]

Suppose we had to find another intercessor.
Who would love us more than he who gave his life for us,
even though "we were enemies"?[66]
And suppose we had to find one who has prestige and power.
Who has as much of these as he who is seated
at the right hand of the Father,[67]
and who has "all authority
in heaven and on earth"?[68]
And who will be heard more readily
than God's own dearly beloved Son?

So, the practice of honoring the saints as intercessors
in fact dishonors them
because of its misplaced faith.
That was something the saints never did nor asked for,
but which in keeping with their duty,
as appears from their writings,
they consistently refused.

We should not plead here
that we are unworthy—
for it is not a question of offering our prayers
on the basis of our own dignity
but only on the basis of the excellence and dignity
of Jesus Christ,
whose righteousness is ours by faith.

Since the apostle for good reason
wants us to get rid of this foolish fear—
or rather, this unbelief—
he says to us that Jesus Christ
was made like "his brothers and sisters in every respect,
so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest"
to purify the sins of the people.[69]
For since he suffered,
being tempted,
he is also able to help those
who are tempted.[70]

And further,
to encourage us more
to approach him
he says,
"Since, then, we have a great high priest
who has passed through the heavens,
Jesus, the Son of God,
let us hold fast to our confession.
For we do not have a high priest

who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,
but we have one who in every respect has been tested
as we are,
yet without sin.
Let us therefore approach
the throne of grace
with boldness,
so that we may receive mercy
and find grace
to help in time of need."[71]

The same apostle says that
we "have confidence to enter the sanctuary
by the blood of Jesus."
"Let us approach with a true heart
in full assurance of faith…."[72]

Likewise,
Christ "holds his priesthood permanently….
Consequently, he is able for all time to save
those who approach God through him,
since he always lives
to make intercession for them."[73]

What more do we need?
For Christ himself declares:
"I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father
except through me."[74]
Why should we seek
another intercessor?

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

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

[63] 1 John 2:1
[64] Phil. 2:6-8
[65] Heb. 2:17
[66] Rom. 5:10
[67] Rom. 8:34; Heb. 1:3
[68] Matt. 28:18
[69] Heb. 2:17
[70] Heb. 2:18
[71] Heb. 4:14-16
[72] Heb. 10:19, 22
[73] Heb. 7:24-25
[74] John 14:6

Article 27: The Holy Catholic Church
We believe and confess
one single catholic or universal church—
    a holy congregation and gathering
    of true Christian believers,
        awaiting their entire salvation in Jesus Christ,
        being washed by his blood,
        and sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

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

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

For example,
during the very dangerous time of Ahab
the Lord preserved for himself seven thousand
who did not bend their knees to Baal.[75]

And so this holy church
is not confined,
bound,
or limited to a certain place or certain people.

But it is spread and dispersed
throughout the entire world,
    though still joined and united
        in heart and will,
        in one and the same Spirit,
        by the power of faith.

[75] 1 Kings 19:18

Article 28: The Obligations of Church Members
We believe that
    since this holy assembly and congregation
    is the gathering of those who are saved
    and there is no salvation apart from it,
people ought not to withdraw from it,
    content to be by themselves,
    regardless of their status or condition.

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

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

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

Article 29: The Marks of the True Church
We believe that we ought to discern
diligently and very carefully,
by the Word of God,
what is the true church—
for all sects in the world today
claim for themselves the name of "the church."

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

The true church can be recognized
if it has the following marks:
The church engages in the pure preaching
of the gospel;
it makes use of the pure administration of the sacraments
as Christ instituted them;
it practices church discipline
for correcting faults.

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

As for those who can belong to the church,
we can recognize them by the distinguishing marks of Christians:
namely by faith,
and by their fleeing from sin and pursuing righteousness,
once they have received the one and only Savior,
Jesus Christ.

They love the true God and their neighbors,
without turning to the right or left,
and they crucify the flesh and its works.

Though great weakness remains in them,
they fight against it
by the Spirit
all the days of their lives,

appealing constantly
to the blood, suffering, death, and obedience of the Lord Jesus,
in whom they have forgiveness of their sins,
through faith in him.

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

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

Article 30: The Government of the Church
We believe that this true church
ought to be governed according to the spiritual order
that our Lord has taught us in his Word.
There should be ministers or pastors
to preach the Word of God
and administer the sacraments.
There should also be elders and deacons,
along with the pastors,
to make up the council of the church.

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

By this means
everything will be done well
and in good order
in the church,
when such persons are elected
who are faithful
and are chosen according to the rule
that Paul gave to Timothy.[76]

[76] 1 Tim. 3

Article 31: The Officers of the Church
We believe that
ministers of the Word of God, elders, and deacons
ought to be chosen to their offices
by a legitimate election of the church,
with prayer in the name of the Lord,
and in good order,
as the Word of God teaches.

So all must be careful
not to push themselves forward improperly,
but must wait for God's call,
so that they may be assured of their calling
and be certain that they are
chosen by the Lord.

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

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

Article 32: The Order and Discipline of the Church
We also believe that
although it is useful and good
for those who govern the churches
to establish and set up
a certain order among themselves
for maintaining the body of the church,
they ought always to guard against deviating
from what Christ,
our only Master,
has ordained
for us.

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

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

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

Article 33: The Sacraments
We believe that our good God,
mindful of our crudeness and weakness,
has ordained sacraments for us
    to seal his promises in us,
    to pledge good will and grace toward us,
    and also to nourish and sustain our faith.

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

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

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

Article 34: The Sacrament of Baptism
We believe and confess that Jesus Christ,
in whom the law is fulfilled,
has by his shed blood
put an end to every other shedding of blood,
which anyone might do or wish to do
in order to atone or satisfy for sins.

Having abolished circumcision,
which was done with blood,
Christ established in its place
the sacrament of baptism.

By it we are received into God's church
and set apart from all other people and alien religions,
that we may wholly belong to him
whose mark and sign we bear.
Baptism also witnesses to us
that God, being our gracious Father,
will be our God forever.

Therefore Christ has commanded
that all those who belong to him
be baptized with pure water
"in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit."[77]

In this way God signifies to us
that just as water washes away the dirt of the body
when it is poured on us
and also is seen on the bodies of those who are baptized
when it is sprinkled on them,
so too the blood of Christ does the same thing internally,
in the soul,
by the Holy Spirit.

It washes and cleanses it from its sins
and transforms us from being the children of wrath
into the children of God.

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

So ministers,
as far as their work is concerned,
give us the sacrament and what is visible,
but our Lord gives what the sacrament signifies—
namely the invisible gifts and graces;
washing, purifying, and cleansing our souls
of all filth and unrighteousness;
renewing our hearts and filling them
with all comfort;
giving us true assurance
of his fatherly goodness;
clothing us with the "new self"
and stripping off the "old self
with its practices."[78]

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

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

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

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

Furthermore,
baptism does for our children
what circumcision did for the Jewish people.
That is why Paul calls baptism
the "circumcision of Christ."[79]

[77] Matt. 28:19
[78] Col. 3:9-10
[79] Col. 2:11

Article 35: The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
We believe and confess
that our Savior Jesus Christ
has ordained and instituted the sacrament of the Holy Supper
to nourish and sustain those
who are already regenerated and ingrafted
into his family,
which is his church.

Now those who are born again have two lives in them.
The one is physical and temporal—
they have it from the moment of their first birth,
and it is common to all.

The other is spiritual and heavenly,
    and is given them in their second birth—
    it comes through the Word of the gospel
    in the communion of the body of Christ;
    and this life is common to God's elect only.

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

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

Now it is certain
that Jesus Christ did not prescribe
his sacraments for us in vain,
since he works in us all he represents

by these holy signs,
    although the manner in which he does it
    goes beyond our understanding
    and is incomprehensible to us,
        just as the operation of God's Spirit
        is hidden and incomprehensible.

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

In that way Jesus Christ remains always seated
at the right hand of God the Father
in heaven—
but he never refrains on that account
to communicate himself to us
through faith.
This banquet is a spiritual table
at which Christ communicates himself to us
with all his benefits.
At that table he makes us enjoy himself
as much as the merits of his suffering and death,
as he nourishes, strengthens, and comforts
our poor, desolate souls
    by the eating of his flesh,
and relieves and renews them
    by the drinking of his blood.

Moreover,
though the sacraments and what they signify are joined together,
not all receive both of them.
The wicked certainly take the sacrament,
to their condemnation,
but do not receive the truth of the sacrament,
    just as Judas and Simon the Sorcerer both indeed
    received the sacrament,
    but not Christ,
    who was signified by it.
    He is communicated only to believers.

Finally,
with humility and reverence
we receive the holy sacrament
in the gathering of God's people,

as we engage together,
with thanksgiving,
in a holy remembrance
of the death of Christ our Savior,
and as we thus confess
our faith and Christian religion.
Therefore none should come to this table
without examining themselves carefully,
lest by eating this bread
and drinking this cup
they "eat and drink judgment against themselves."[80]

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

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

[80] 1 Cor. 11:29

Article 36: The Civil Government
We believe that
because of the depravity of the human race,
our good God has ordained kings, princes, and civil officers.
God wants the world to be governed by laws and policies
so that human lawlessness may be restrained
and that everything may be conducted in good order
among human beings.

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

*[RCA only**

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

*[CRC only***

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

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

They should do it in order that
the Word of God may have free course;
the kingdom of Jesus Christ may make progress;
and every anti-Christian power may be resisted.]

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

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

* The Reformed Church in America retains the original full text, choosing to recognize that the confession was written within a historical context which may not accurately describe the situation that pertains today.
**Synod 1958 of the Christian Reformed Church replaced the aforementioned paragraph with the following three paragraphs (in brackets).
***The RCA retains this final paragraph of the original Article 36, choosing to recognize that the confession was written within a historical context which may not accurately describe the situation that pertains today. Synod 1985 of the CRC directed that this paragraph be taken from the body of the text and placed in a footnote.

Article 37: The Last Judgment
Finally we believe,
according to God's Word,
that when the time appointed by the Lord is come
(which is unknown to all creatures)
and the number of the elect is complete,
our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven,
bodily and visibly,
as he ascended,
with great glory and majesty,
to declare himself the judge
of the living and the dead.
He will burn this old world,
in fire and flame,
in order to cleanse it.

Then all human creatures will appear in person
before the great judge—
men, women, and children,
who have lived from the beginning until the end
of the world.
They will be summoned there
"with the archangel's call
and with the sound of God's trumpet."[81]

For all those who died before that time
will be raised from the earth,
their spirits being joined and united
with their own bodies
in which they lived.

And as for those who are still alive,
they will not die like the others
but will be changed "in the twinkling of an eye"
from perishable to imperishable.[82]

Then the books (that is, the consciences) will be opened,
and the dead will be judged
    according to the things they did in the world,[83]
    whether good or evil.
Indeed, all people will give account
of all the idle words they have spoken,[84]
    which the world regards
    as only playing games.
And then the secrets and hypocrisies of all people
will be publicly uncovered
in the sight of all.

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

The evil ones will be convicted
    by the witness of their own consciences,
and shall be made immortal—
    but only to be tormented
    in "the eternal fire
        prepared for the devil and his angels."[85]

In contrast,
the faithful and elect will be crowned
    with glory and honor.

The Son of God will profess their names[86]
    before God his Father and the holy and elect angels;
all tears will be wiped from their eyes;[87]
and their cause—
    at present condemned as heretical and evil
    by many judges and civil officers—
will be acknowledged as the cause of the Son of God.

And as a gracious reward
the Lord will make them possess a glory
such as the human heart
could never imagine.

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

[81] 1 Thess. 4:16
[82] 1 Cor. 15:51-53
[83] Rev. 20:12
[84] Matt. 12:36
[85] Matt. 25:41
[86] Matt. 10:32
[87] Rev. 7:17