

# TRACTS

CONTAINING

TREATISES ON THE SACRAMENTS,

CATECHISM OF THE CHURCH OF GENEVA,

FORMS OF PRAYER, AND CONFESSIONS OF FAITH.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN AND FRENCH

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VOLUME SECOND.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY.

M-DCCC.XLIX.

# CONFESSION OF FAITH

IN NAME OF

THE REFORMED CHURCHES OF FRANCE:

DRAWN UP DURING THE WAR,

FOR PRESENTATION TO

THE EMPEROR, PRINCES, AND STATES OF GERMANY, AT THE DIET OF FRANKFORT;

BUT WHICH COULD NOT REACH THEM, THE PASSES BEING CLOSED.

NOW PUBLISHED

FOR THE ADVANTAGES WHICH MAY ACCRUE FROM IT, AND EVEN BECAUSE  
NECESSITY REQUIRES IT.

ANNO M.D.LXII.

## TO THE READER.

BECAUSE during the troubles of war which have happened in France, to the great regret of the Princes and Lords who were even constrained to take up arms, many false charges were disseminated against them to render the truth odious in their persons, they were constrained at the time to publish certain declarations in defence of their integrity. Now that it has pleased God to regard France in pity and give her peace, and that the conduct of those who had been defamed has been approved by his Majesty and his Council, so that there is no need to make any apology for them, the evil, which lasted only too long, may well be allowed to remain as it were buried, and wo to those who would in any way disturb the public tranquillity. However, as several ignorant persons, from being ill informed on the doctrine against which they have fought, have always persisted in holding it in horror and detestation, it has seemed more than useful to bring forward this Confession of Faith, which was sent on the occasion above mentioned to be presented to the Emperor and States of the Empire met at the diet of Frankfort, but could not reach them, as all the passes were closed. True, indeed, it may seem as if the time were past; but when everything is well considered, it is still in the present day as seasonable as ever, as by the grace of God the result will show. Be this as it may, it were a pity that any thing so valuable should remain as it were effaced, seeing that it may be serviceable in many ways.

# CONFESSION OF FAITH,

IN NAME OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES OF FRANCE.\*

## 1. JUST DEFENCE OF THE CHURCHES OF FRANCE.

SIRE, we doubt not that since those troubles which have been stirred up in the kingdom of France to our great regret, some have endeavoured by all means to render our cause odious to your Majesty, and that you also, illustrious Princes, have heard many sinister reports to animate you against us. But we have always hoped, and hope more than ever, that having obtained audience to make our apology, it will be received so soon as you shall have ascertained the facts of the case.

## 2. DIFFERENT DECLARATIONS OF THE CHURCHES.

Now the truth is, that we have already, on former occasions, published many declarations, by which all Christendom must be sufficiently advertised of our innocence and integrity, and that so far are we from having wished to excite any sedition against the King, our sole Sovereign Prince and Lord under God, that on the contrary we expose our lives and our goods in this war to maintain the superiority which is due to him, and the authority of his edicts, as in fact his Majesty has no more loyal, obedient, and peaceful subjects than we are and wish to be to the end. Wherefore without stopping at those things which have been amply enough explained heretofore, it will be sufficient to show at present what the religion is, for the exercise of which, as authorized by the edicts of the King our Sovereign Lord, we have been constrained to defend ourselves by arms. For we understand that the malevolent, who have nothing else to gainsay in us, falsely and tortuously throw blame before your Majesty, and before you, illustrious Princes, on the religion which we follow, and make you believe several things in order to disgust you with it, so that if we were not allowed our defence our cause would be altogether oppressed by such calumnies.

## 3. THEIR CONFESSION OF FAITH.

True it is that the Confession of Faith of the Churches of France, to which we adhere, might so far remedy the evil, for since it has been twice solemnly presented to the King our Sovereign Lord, it may be clearly seen from it what is the summary of our faith. And but for this we would not have waited so long to clear ourselves from the false detractions which have been uttered

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\* Translated from the French.

against us. Not that the mouth of evil speakers ever can be closed, but inasmuch as it is our duty to use all pains and diligence in order that our integrity may be known, and our persons not lie under scandal, so by much stronger reason should the pure simplicity of our faith be known, in order that the malignant may not with open mouth blaspheme the truth of the gospel. Wherefore we have thought it advisable, to address this brief summary to your Majesty, and to your Excellencies, most illustrious Princes, in order that the faith which we hold may be attested by our own subscriptions. And as we desire to be in good reputation with you, Sire, for the reverence which we bear your Majesty, and also you, most illustrious Princes, we humbly supplicate and pray that this Confession may have access to be heard and graciously listened to.

#### 4. OF GOD AND THE THREE PERSONS.

In the first place, we protest that on all the articles which have been decided by ancient Councils, touching the infinite spiritual essence of God, and the distinction of the three persons, and the union of the two natures in our Lord Jesus Christ, we receive and agree in all that was therein resolved, as being drawn from the Holy Scriptures, on which alone our faith should be founded, as there is no other witness proper and competent to decide what the majesty of God is but God himself.

#### 5. OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES AND THE TWO NATURES IN CHRIST.

But as we hold the Old and New Testaments as the only rule of our faith, so we receive all that is conformable to them : such as believing that there are three distinct persons in the one essence of God, and that our Lord Jesus Christ, being very God and very man, has so united the two natures in himself that they are not confounded. Wherefore we detest all the heresies which were of old condemned, such as those of the Arians, Sabellians, Eunomians, and the like, as well as the Nestorians and Eutychians. God forbid that we should be infected with those reveries which troubled the Catholic Church at the time when it was in its purity.

#### 6. SUMMARY OF THE DIFFERENCES.

Wherefore all our differences relate to the following points: on what our confidence of salvation should rest, how we ought to invoke God, and what is the method of well and duly serving him. And there are points depending on these, viz., what is the true polity of the Church, the office of prelates and pastors, the nature, virtue, and use of the Sacraments.

## 7. OF ADAM'S FALL.

To know well wherein consists the true salvation of men, it is necessary to know what is their state and condition. Now we hold what Scripture teaches, that the whole human race was so corrupted by the fall of Adam, that by nature we are all condemned and lost, not only by another's guilt, but because we are sinners from the womb, and God can justly condemn us, although there be no outward act by which we have deserved condemnation.

## 8. OF ORIGINAL SIN.

Moreover, we hold that original sin is a corruption spread over our senses and affections, so that right understanding and reason is perverted in us, and we are like poor blind persons in darkness, and the will is subject to all wicked desires, full of rebellion, and given up to evil; in short, that we are poor captives held under the tyranny of sin ; not that in doing evil we are not pushed by our own will in such a way that we cannot throw our sins upon another, but because sprung of the cursed race of Adam, we have not one particle of strength to do well, and all our faculties are vicious.

## 9. OF THE SOURCE OF OUR SALVATION.

Hence we conclude, that the source and origin of our salvation is the pure mercy of God ; *for* he cannot find in us any worthiness to induce him to love us. We also being bad trees cannot bear any good fruit, and therefore cannot prevent God, so as to acquire or merit grace from him ; but he looks upon us in pity, to show mercy to us, and has no other cause for displaying his mercy in us but our misery. We likewise hold that the goodness which he displays towards us proceeds from his having elected us before the creation of the world, not seeking the cause of so doing out of himself and his good pleasure. And here is our first fundamental principle, viz., that we are pleasing to God, inasmuch as he has been pleased to adopt us as his children before we were born, and has by this means delivered us by special privilege from the general curse under which all men have fallen.

## 10. OF FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

But because the counsel of God is incomprehensible, we confess that in order to obtain salvation it is necessary to have recourse to the means which God has ordained ; for we are not of the number of fanatics who, under colour of the eternal predestination of God, have no regard to arrive by the right path at the life which is promised to us; but rather we hold, that in order to be adopted children of God, and to have a proper certainty of it, we must

believe in Jesus Christ, inasmuch as it is in him alone that we must seek the whole grounds of our salvation.

#### 11. OF OUR RECONCILIATION WITH GOD.

And first we believe that his death was the one perpetual sacrifice to reconcile us to God, and that in it we have full satisfaction for all our offences ; by his blood we are washed from all our pollutions, and we therefore place all our confidence in the forgiveness of sins which he has purchased for us, and that not only for once, but for the whole period of our life : for which reason also he is called our righteousness. (1 Cor. i. 30.) And so far are we from presuming on our merit, that we confess in all humility that if God look to what is in us he will find only ground to condemn us. Thus to be assured of his grace we have no other resource than his pure mercy, inasmuch as he receives us in the name of his well-beloved Son.

#### 12. OF GOOD WORKS.

But as our sins are not pardoned to give us license to do wickedly, but rather as it is said in the psalm, (Ps. cxxx. 4,) God is propitious to us, in order that we may be induced to fear and reverence him, we also hold that the grace which has appeared to us in Jesus Christ ought to have reference to the end which St. Paul mentions, (Tit. ii. 12,) that renouncing all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should walk in holiness of life, aspiring to the hope of the kingdom of heaven. Wherefore the blood of Jesus Christ is not our laver, in order to make us wallow in pollution, but rather to draw us to true purity. In one word, being the children of God we must be regenerated by his Spirit. And this is the reason why it is said, (1 John iii. 8,) that our Lord Jesus Christ came to destroy the kingdom of the devil, which is the kingdom of iniquity, inasmuch, as he has been given us as Mediator, not only in order to obtain pardon of our sins, but also to sanctify us, which is equivalent to saying that it was, as it were, to dedicate us to the service of God, by withdrawing us from the pollutions of this world. Hence we cannot be Christians without being new creatures, (Eph. ii. 2,) formed unto good works, which God has prepared, in order that we should walk in them, seeing that of ourselves we would not be so disposed. But the will and execution are given us by God, and all our sufficiency is of him, (Phil. ii. 13 ;) and for this purpose our Lord Jesus Christ has received all fulness of grace, that we may draw from him, (2 Cor. iii. 5.) Thus we presume not on our free-will or virtue and ability, but rather confess that our good works are pure gifts of God.

### 13. HOW WE PARTAKE OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS BENEFITS.—OF FAITH.

Now we understand that we are made partakers of all his blessings by means of faith ; for this it is which brings us into communication with Christ, in order that he may dwell in us, that we may be ingrafted into him as our root, that we may be members of his body, that we may live in him, and he in us, and possess him, with all his benefits. And that it may not be thought strange that we attribute such virtue to faith, we do not take it for a fleeting opinion, but for a certainty which we have of the promises of God, in which all these blessings are contained, and by which we embrace our Lord Jesus Christ as the surety of all our salvation, and apply to our own use what he has received of God his Father to impart unto us. This faith we likewise know that we cannot have if it be not given us from above, and as Scripture declares, (Eph. ii. 9 ; i. 18,) till the Holy Spirit enlightens us to comprehend what is beyond all human sense, and seals in our hearts what we ought to believe.

### 14. OF THE IMPERFECTION AND PERFECTION OF BELIEVERS.

Now, although being called to do good works, we produce the fruits of our calling, as it is said, (Luke i. 75,) that we have been redeemed in order to serve God in holiness and righteousness, we are however always encompassed with many infirmities while we live in this world. What is more, all our thoughts and affections are so stained with impurity that no work can proceed from us which is worthy of the acceptance of God. Thus so far are we, in striving to do well, from being able to merit anything, that we always continue debtors. For God will always have just cause to blame us in whatever we do, and reward is promised to none but those who fulfil the law; which we are very far from doing. (Deut. xviii. 5 ; Ezek. xx. 11; Rom. x. 5; Gal. iii. 12.) See then how we hold that all our merits are suppressed. It is not only that we fail in the perfect fulfilment of the law, but that also in every act there is some evil vicious taint. We are well aware that the instruction commonly given is to repair the faults we commit by satisfactions ; but as the Scripture teaches us that our Lord Jesus Christ has satisfied for us, we cannot repose in any thing else than the sacrifice of his death, by which the wrath of God is appeased, wrath which no creatures could sustain. (Gal. iii. 13 ; iv. 5 ; Tit. ii. 14 ; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) And the reason why we hold that we are justified by faith alone is because it is necessary for us to borrow elsewhere, namely, from our Lord Jesus Christ, that righteousness which is wanting to us, not in part but wholly.

## 15. OF INVOCATION.

It is this which gives us boldness to call upon God, for without this we should have no access, Scripture teaching that we never shall be heard while in doubt and disquietude. (Heb. xi. 6; James i. 6, 7.) Therefore we hold that our • sovereign good and repose consists in being assured of the forgiveness of sins, by the faith which we have in Jesus Christ, seeing that this is the key which opens the gate that leads us to God. (Rom. iv. 6 ; James i. 32.) Now it is said that whosoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Still, according as Scripture teaches us, we address our prayers to God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has become our Advocate, because without him we should not be worthy of obtaining access. (Eph. iii. 12; Heb. iv. 16.) That we do not pray to holy men and women in common fashion, should not be imputed to us as a fault: for since in all our actions we are required to have our conscience decided, we cannot observe too great sobriety in prayer. We accordingly follow the rule which has been given us, viz., that without having known him, and that his word has been preached to us in testimony of his will, we cannot call upon him. Now in regard to prayer, the whole of Scripture refers us to him only. What is more, he regards our prayers as the chief and supreme sacrifice by which we do homage to his Majesty, as he declares in the fiftieth Psalm, and hence to address our prayers to creatures, and go gadding about to this quarter and to that, is a thing which we may not do, if we would not be guilty of sacrilege. To seek other patrons or advocates than our Lord Jesus Christ, we hold not to be in our choice or liberty. True it is that wo ought to pray one for another, while we are conversant here below, but as to having recourse to the dead, since Scripture does not tell us to do so, we will not attempt it, for fear of being guilty of presumption. Even the enormous abuses which have been and still are in vogue, warn us to confine ourselves within such simplicity, as a limit which God has set to check all curiosity and boldness. For many prayers have been forged full of horrible blasphemies, such as those which request the Virgin Mary to command her Son, and exert her authority over him—and which style her the haven of salvation, the life and hope of those who trust in her.

## 16. OF PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

We refuse to pray for the dead, not only for this reason, but also because the practice implies a great deal more, viz., presupposes that there is a purgatory in which souls are punished for the faults which they have committed. Now, on this view, the redemption made by Jesus Christ cannot be complete, and we must detract from the death which he suffered, as if it had only

procured a partial acquittal—a thing which cannot be said without blasphemy. Thus believing that the poor people have been imposed upon in this respect, we are unwilling to devise any thing against the principles of our Christian faith. We deem it sufficient to hold by the pure doctrine of Holy Scripture, which makes no mention of all this. Be this as it may, we hold that it is a superstition devised by the fancy of men, and besides, as we are not permitted to pray to God at hap-hazard, we would not be so presumptuous as to usurp the office of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has fully acquitted us of all our offences.

#### 17. OF THE SERVICE OF GOD.

The second principal point in which we differ from the custom and opinion received in the world, is the manner of serving God. Now on our part, in accordance with his declaration, that obedience is better than sacrifice, (1 Sam. xv. 22,) and with his uniform injunction to listen to what he commands, if we would render a well regulated and acceptable sacrifice, we hold that it is not for us to invent what to us seems good, or to follow what may have been devised in the brain of other men, but to confine ourselves simply to the purity of Scripture. Wherefore we believe that anything which is not derived from it, but has only been commanded by the authority of men, ought not to be regarded as the service of God. And in this we have two articles as a kind of axioms. The one is, that men cannot bind the conscience under pain of mortal sin: for not in vain does God insist on being regarded as the only lawgiver, saying, (James iv. 12,) that it is for him to condemn and acquit, nor in vain does he so often reiterate, that we are not to add to his ordinances. This indeed cannot be done without taxing him with not having known all that was useful, (Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32,) or with having forgotten this thing or that through inadvertence. The second axiom is, that when we presume to serve God at our own hand, he repudiates it as corruption. And this is the reason why he exclaims by his prophet Isaiah, (Is. xxix. 13,) that all true religion has been perverted by keeping the commandments of men. And our Lord Jesus Christ confirms the same by saying, (Matt. xv. 9,) that in vain would we know God by human tradition. It is with good reason, therefore, that his spiritual supremacy over our souls remains inviolable, and that at the very least his will as a bridle should regulate our devotions.

#### 18. OF HUMAN TRADITION.

We have in this matter such notable warnings from common experience, that we are the more confirmed in not passing the limits of Scripture. For since men began to make laws to regulate the service of God, and subject the conscience, there has been neither end nor measure, while, on the other hand,

God has punished such temerity, blinding men with delusions which may make one shudder. When we look nearer to see what human traditions are, we find that they are an abyss, and that their number is endless. And yet there are abuses so absurd and enormous, that it is wonderful how men could have been so stupid, were it not that God has executed the vengeance which he announced by his prophet Isaiah, (Is. xxix. 14,) blinding and infatuating the wise who would honour him by observing the commandments of men.

#### 19. OF IDOLATROUS INTENTIONS.

Since men have turned aside from pure and holy obedience to God, they have discovered that good intention was sufficient to approve everything. This was to open a door to all superstitions. It has been the origin of the worship of images, the purchase of masses, the filling of churches with pomp and parade, the running about on pilgrimages, the making of vows by each at his own hand. But the abyss here is so profound that it is enough for us to have touched on some examples. So far is it from being permitted to honour God by human inventions, that there would be no firmness nor certainty, neither bottom nor shore in religion : every thing would go to wreck, and Christianity differ in nothing from the idolatries of the heathen.

#### 20. OF THE TYRANNICAL ORDINANCES OF THE POPE.

There is another evil which we have alleged in the tyranny by which poor souls are oppressed. When men are commanded to confess their sins once a year to a priest, it is just to throw the whole world into despair. For if a man cannot keep count of the faults of a single day, who can be able to collect them at the end of a year ? And yet the decree declares that pardon cannot otherwise be obtained. This is to close the gate of paradise against all mankind. Moreover, though the observance of human laws were not impossible, there is always sacrilege in encroaching on the jurisdiction of God, as when it is said that sins will not be pardoned unless they are confessed in the ear of a priest. This is to append a condition to the promise of God, so as to render it false or vain. The same may be said of the prohibition to eat flesh on certain days under pain of mortal sin. We confess, indeed, that fasting and abstinence is a laudable virtue, but such a prohibition trenches on the authority of God. The prohibition of marriage to priests, as well as monks and nuns, contains in itself two vices. First, it belonged not to mortal men to prohibit what God has permitted, and secondly, to constrain those who have not the gift of continence to refrain from the remedy, is as it were to plunge them into an abyss. And, in fact, we see the fruits which have been produced by it, and have no need to say what we are even shamed to think.

## 21. OF THE AUTHORITY AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.

We intend not, however, to annihilate the authority of the Church, or of prelates and pastors, to whom the superintendence of its government has been given. We admit that bishops and pastors ought to be listened to with reverence, in so far as they discharge the office of preaching the word of God, and moreover, that all churches, and each one in particular, have powers to make laws and statutes for the common guidance, (1 Cor. xiv. 40,) as it is necessary that every thing be done decently and in order. Such statutes ought to be obeyed, provided they do not restrict consciences nor establish superstition, and we hold those to be fanatical and contumacious who will not conform to them. But we dissemble not that it is necessary to distinguish true and legitimate pastors from those who have only a frivolous title. For in fact it is but too notorious that those who call themselves prelates and would be acknowledged as such, do not even make a semblance of discharging their duty. But the worst is, that, under colour of their state and dignity, they lead poor souls to perdition, turning them aside from the truth of God to their lies. And hence, though they were to be tolerated in other respects, yet when they would feed us on false doctrines and errors, we must put in practice St. Peter's answer, “ *We must obey God rather than man.*” (Acts v. 29.)

## 22. OF THE PRIMACY OF THE POPE.

Moreover, we hold that the primacy which the Pope attributes to himself is an enormous usurpation. For were we to admit the expediency of having some head in the Church, (this, however, is completely repugnant to the word of God, Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; v. 23 ; Col. i. 18,) still it is extravagantly absurd that he who is to be head over bishops should not be a bishop himself. And when we examine all that they say of their hierarchy, we find that it bears no resemblance to what our Lord Jesus and his apostles taught us, or rather that it is a corruption fitted to overturn the government of the Church. We touch not on all the dissoluteness and scandals which are only too notorious, but we say that all Christians, in order not to be rebels against God, ought to reject what they know to be contrary to the purity of his service. For when there is a question as to the spiritual jurisdiction which God reserves to himself, all human supremacy must give way. The laws of earthly princes, however grievous and harsh they should be, nay, even should they be felt to be unjust, are nevertheless valid, and it is not lawful to despise them: for the goods and bodies of this world are not so precious as that the authority which God has given to all kings, princes, and rulers, should not take precedence of them. But it is a very different case to subject our souls to tyrannical or

strange and bastard laws, which are to turn us aside from subjection to God. Meanwhile we confess, that it is not for private persons to correct such abuses, in order to remove them entirely; it is enough that all Christians abstain from them, keeping themselves pure and entire for the service of God.

### 23. OF THE DUTY OF PASTORS AND FLOCK IN THE CHURCH.

As to all pastors who acquit themselves faithfully of their charge, we hold that they ought to be received as representing the person of him who has ordained them ; and that all Christians ought to array themselves under the common order of the faithful to hear the doctrine of salvation, to make confession of their faith, to keep themselves in union with the Church, to submit peacefully to censure and correction, and assist in preventing any schism or disturbance from taking place. Hence we hold as schismatics all who stir up trouble and confusion, tending to rend the Church, which cannot retain its proper state without being governed by its pastors, since it has so pleased God, and he has commanded all, from the greatest to the least, to conform in subjection to it ; so that all who separate and voluntarily cut themselves off from the company of the faithful also banish themselves from the kingdom of heaven. At the same time; those who would be listened to in the name of Christ must take heed to deliver the doctrine which has been committed to them.

### 24. OF THE SACRAMENTS.

It remains to declare what is our faith touching the Sacraments. We hold them to be at once an attestation to the grace of God to ratify it in us, and external signs, by which we declare our Christianity before men. True it is that the word of God should suffice to assure us of our salvation ; but seeing that God has been pleased, because of our ignorance and frailty, to add such helps, it is very reasonable that we accept of them, and apply them to our profit. Thus the sacraments are, as it were, seals to seal the grace of God in our hearts, and render it more authentic, for which reason they may be termed visible doctrine. Now we believe that all which is there figured and demonstrated is accomplished in us. For they are not vain or elusory figures, since God, who is infallible truth, gives them to us for confirmation of our faith. Moreover, we believe that whatever unworthiness there may be in the minister, the sacrament fails not to be good and available. For the truth of God does not change or vary according to the wickedness of men, as it is not their office to give virtue or effect to what God has appointed.

Hence we believe, that though the sacraments should be administered by wicked and unworthy persons, they always retain their nature, so as to bring and communicate truly to the receivers the thing signified by them. We hold,

however, that they are useful only when God gives effect to them, and displays the power of his Spirit, using them as instruments. Hence the Spirit of God must act to make us feel their efficacy for our salvation. We also confess that the use of them is necessary, and that all those who make no account of them declare themselves despisers of the grace of God, and are blinded by devilish pride, not knowing their infirmity which God has been pleased to sustain by such means and remedy. Moreover, since God has placed the sacraments as a sacred deposit in his Church, we believe that individuals are not to use them apart, but that the use of them ought to be common to the assembly of the faithful, and that they ought to be administered by the pastors to whom the charge and dispensation of them has been committed.

#### 25. TO WHOM IT APPERTAINS TO INSTITUTE SACRAMENTS.— THE NUMBER OF THEM.

From this we infer that it belongs to God only to ordain sacraments, seeing that he alone can bear witness to his will, seal the promises, represent his spiritual gifts, and make earthly elements to be, as it were, earnest of our salvation. Hence the ceremonies which have been introduced by men cannot, and ought not to be, held as sacraments. To attribute to them this title and quality is only to deceive. Wherefore we confess that the number of seven sacraments, which they are commonly held to be, is not received by us, seeing they are not sanctioned by the word of God. Still, though we do not avow marriage to be a sacrament, it is not because we despise it. Neither do we mean to lessen the dignity of the temporary sacraments which were used in the days of miracles, although we say that they are not now in use, *e.g.*, the anointing of the sick. At all events, it is very reasonable that the ordinances which have proceeded from God should be distinguished from those which have been introduced by men.

#### 26. OF BAPTISM.

As there are two sacraments for the common use of the whole Church, viz., Baptism and the Holy Supper, we will make a brief confession of our faith in regard to both. We hold, then, that baptism being a spiritual washing and sign of our regeneration, serves as an evidence that God introduces us into his Church to make us, as it were, his children and heirs ; and thus ought we to apply it during the whole period of our life, in order to confirm us in the promises which have been given us, as well of the forgiveness of our sins as of the guidance and assistance of the Holy Spirit. And because the two graces which are there signified to us are given us in Jesus Christ, and cannot be found elsewhere, we believe, that in order to enjoy the fruit of our baptism it is necessary to refer it to its proper end, that is, to hold that we are washed

by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, and in virtue of his death and resurrection, die in ourselves and rise again to newness of life ; and because Jesus Christ is the substance, the Scripture says that we are properly baptized in his name. (Acts ii. 38 ; x. 48 ; xix. 5.) Moreover, we believe, that since baptism is a treasure which God has placed in his Church, all the members ought to partake of it. Now we doubt not that little children born of Christians are of this number, since God has adopted them, as he declares. Indeed we should defraud them of their right were we to exclude them from the sign which only ratifies the thing contained in the promise: considering, moreover, that children ought no more in the present day to be deprived of the sacrament of their salvation than the children of the Jews were in ancient times, seeing that now the manifestation must be larger and clearer than it was under the law. Wherefore we reprobate all fanatics who will not allow little children to be baptized.

#### 27. OF THE SUPPER—OF THE MASS.

To make clear our belief in the Supper, we are constrained to show how it differs from the Mass. For we cannot conceal that there is nothing common or conformable between them, or even approaching to resemblance. We are not ignorant that this acknowledgment is odious to many persons, in respect that the Mass is in high reverence and esteem, and, in fact, we were no less devoted to it than others until we were shown its abuses : but we hope, that when our reasons have been patiently heard and understood, nothing strange will be found in what we hold respecting it.

It is true, the term Sacrifice was long ago applied to the Supper, but the ancient doctors were very far from using it in the sense which has been given to it since, viz., as being a meritorious oblation to obtain pardon and grace as well to the dead as the living. Now, though there are in the present day a kind of middle-men, who, to colour the general error which has prevailed in the world, make a pretence of receiving the doctrine of the ancient fathers, use and practice, however, demonstrate that the things are quite contrary, and at least as distant as heaven is from earth. It is notorious, that in the ancient Church there were no private masses, no foundations, and that the Sacrament was used for communicating, whereas in the present day masses are purchased as satisfactions, to obtain acquittal with God, and each individual has them apart at will. Such merchandise cannot cloak itself under the ancient practice of the Church. Another profanation is, that whereas the Holy Supper ought only to bear the name of Jesus Christ, they forge masses at will, of Christopher, or Barbara, or any other saint of the calendar, as it is called—fashions which agree no more with the nature of the Sacrament than fire agrees with water.

## 28. OF THE AUTHOR OF THE SUPPER.

Moreover, though we honour antiquity, and do not willingly reject what was approved by holy fathers, yet it seems to us very reasonable, that the institutions of our Lord Jesus Christ should be preferred to all that men have devised. All human authority must cease when it is a question of obeying him to whom all power has been given. Our Lord Jesus Christ, none but he, is the author of the Supper. Therefore what he has ordained is the inviolable rule which ought to be observed without contradiction. Now he distributed the bread and wine, saying, Take, eat, drink : this is my body and my blood. (Matt. xxvi. 26; Matt. xiv. 22 ; 1 Cor. ii. 24.) Hence to offer instead of receiving is to contravene the ordinance of the Son of God. Whatever excuses men may pretend, in introducing a kind of sacrifice, they have metamorphosed the sacrament, and converted it into an entirely different form. This is the reason why we cannot consent to the use of any mode of sacrificing in the Supper : for it is not lawful for us to deviate from what our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded, seeing the heavenly Father has published his decree, “ Hear ye him.” (Matt. xvii. 5.) And in fact, St. Paul, when wishing to reform some abuse which had already sprung up in the Church of Corinth, leads back the faithful to the observance of what they had received from our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. xi. 23.) Hence we see that there is no firm footing anywhere else.

## 29. OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

We hold, then, that since Scripture teaches that our Lord Jesus Christ, by one only sacrifice, purchased perpetual redemption for us, and that it was only once for all he offered his body as the price and satisfaction of our sins, it is unlawful to reiterate such a sacrifice ; and since the Father, by ordaining him sole and perpetual Priest after the order of Melchisedec, has confirmed this by solemn oath, we hold also that for others to offer is blasphemously to derogate from his dignity. We believe, moreover, that it is an abuse and intolerable corruption to have masses in which none communicate, seeing that the Supper is nothing else than a sacrament in which all Christians partake together of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

## 30. OTHER CORRUPTIONS OF THE MASS.

We also reprobate another abuse which is common throughout the world. It is that the people communicate only in the half of the Supper, while one solitary priest receives the whole sacrament. It is distinctly said—Drink all of this cup. (Matth. xxvi. 27.) What God has joined men may not put asunder.

Even the usage of the primitive Church was conformable to the institution of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this separation, which takes away the cup from the people, was recently introduced. Nor can we consent to another abuse, viz., that of celebrating the ordinance in an unknown tongue. For our Lord wished to be understood by his disciples when he said—Take, eat, this is my body, &c.; and these words are addressed to the Church. It is therefore a mockery of the sacrament when the priest mutters over the bread and over the cup, and no one understands what he is about.

### 31. WHY THE HOLY SUPPER WAS INSTITUTED.

In regard to the Supper of our Lord we have to say, in the first place, for what end it was instituted : for from this it will be seen what its use is, and what benefit accrues to us from it. The end, then, to which it ought to be referred is to continue in us the grace which we received in baptism. For as by baptism God regenerates us to be his children, and by such spiritual birth introduces us into his Church, to make us, as it were, of his household ; so in the Supper he declares to us that he wishes not to leave us unprovided, but rather to maintain us in the heavenly life till such time as we shall have attained to the perfection of it. Now, inasmuch as there is no other food for our souls than Jesus Christ, it is in him alone that we must seek life. But because of our weakness and ignorance, the Supper is to us a visible and external sign to testify to us, that in partaking of the body and blood of Jesus Christ we live spiritually in him. For as he does not present himself to us empty, so we receive him with all his benefits and gifts in such manner, that while possessing him we have in him all that appertains to our salvation.

In saying that the Supper is a sign, we mean not that it is a simple figure or remembrance, but confess that the thing signified by it is verily accomplished in us in fact. For seeing that God is infallible truth, it is certain that he means not to amuse us with some vain appearance, but that the substance of what the sacraments signify is conjoined with them.

### 32. OF THE REAL RECEIVING OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD.

Wherefore we hold that this doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, viz., that his body is truly meat, and his blood truly drink, (John vi.) is not only represented and ratified in the Supper, but also accomplished in fact. For there under the symbols of bread and wine our Lord presents us with his body and blood, and we are spiritually fed upon them, provided we do not preclude entrance to his grace by our unbelief. For as a vessel, though it be empty, cannot receive any liquor while it is closed and corked, so also must faith give an opening to make us capable of receiving the blessings which God

offers us, as it is said in the Psalm, (Ps. lxxxi. 11.) Open thy mouth and I will fill it. Not that our unbelief can destroy the truth of God, or that our depravity can hinder the sacraments from retaining their virtue; for let us be what we may, God is ever like himself, and the virtue of the sacraments depends not on our faith, as if by our ingratitude we could derogate from their nature or quality.

### 33. THE UNWORTHY COMMUNICATE ONLY IN THE SIGNS.

Wherefore the supper is a certain attestation, which is addressed to the bad as well as the good, in order to offer Christ to all indiscriminately; but this is not to say that all receive him when he is offered to them. And in fact it were grossly absurd to hold that Jesus Christ is received by those who are entire strangers to him, and that the wicked eat his body and drink his blood while destitute of his Spirit. For in this way he would be dead, being despoiled of his virtue and yielding nothing.

### 34. REASON OF THIS.

Though it is said that the wicked are guilty of the body and blood of Christ when they partake unworthily of the Supper, this does not prove that they receive any more than the sign. For it is not said by St. Paul that they are condemned for having received the body and the blood, but for not having discerned between them and profane things. Their offence then is that they rejected Christ when he was presented to them. For such contempt carries with it detestable sacrilege. We confess indeed that speaking sacramentally, as it is called, the wicked receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and the ancient fathers sometimes used this language, but they explained themselves by adding that it was not really and in fact, but in so far as the sacrament implies it. Indeed we can have no part in Jesus Christ except by faith, and he has no connection with us if we are not his members.

### 35. OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

It remains to see the way and manner in which our Lord Jesus communicates himself to us in the Supper. In regard to this, several questions and disputes have been raised in our time. Now, in the first place, we reject not only the common reverie in regard to what is called transubstantiation, but also what was decided at the Council of Tours, viz., that we chew with our teeth and swallow the body of Christ. For to say that the bread is changed and becomes no more than a form without substance, is repugnant to the nature of the sacrament, in which it is shown that as we are supported on bread and wine, so our souls are nourished with the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. Now it is necessary that there be a correspondence between the

spiritual reality and the external symbol. If then there was only the figure of bread, there would also be a figure only in regard to the body and blood of Christ. We conclude, then, without doubt, that the bread and the wine remain as the sign and the pledge to testify to us that the flesh of Jesus Christ is our heavenly bread and his blood our true drink. In the second place, to imagine that we swallow the body of Jesus Christ, and that it passes into us as material bread, is a thing which cannot be received by Christians, and is altogether at variance with the reverence with which we ought to regard the sacred union which we have with the Son of God.

### 36. OF CONSUBSTANTIATION.

Still we confess that we are truly united with our Lord Jesus, so that he invigorates us by the proper substance of his body. Our meaning is not that he descends here below or has an infinite body to fill heaven and earth, but that this grace of uniting us with him and living on his substance is everywhere diffused by the virtue of his Spirit. We are aware indeed that some say that in so high and deep a mystery it is not lawful to inquire into the mode ; but after they have thus spoken, they determine that the body of Jesus Christ is under the bread, just as wine may be contained in a pot. Thus under colour of sobriety they take license to say what they please. On our part we confess that the mode of communicating with Jesus Christ is miraculous and transcends our conceptions, and we are not ashamed to exclaim with St. Paul, (Eph. v. 32,) that it is a great mystery, which ought to fill us with amazement, but this hinders us not from rejecting all absurdities contrary to Holy Scripture, and to the articles of our faith.

### 37. OF UBIQUITY.

Now we hold for certain and infallible, that though the human nature of our Lord Jesus is conjoined with his divinity, so as to establish in him a true unity of person, still his human nature retains its quality and condition, and every thing which is proper to it. In like manner then as our Lord Jesus took a body capable of suffering, this body had its magnitude and measure and was not infinite. We confess indeed that when it was glorified it changed its condition, so as to be no longer subject to any infirmity. It however retained its substance ; otherwise the promise given us by the mouth of St. Paul (Phil. iii. 21) would fail, that the corruptible and fading bodies which we now have will be rendered conformable to the body of Jesus Christ. At all events, we cannot be blamed for seeking Jesus Christ on high as we are admonished to do, even in terms of the preamble which has at all times been used in celebrating this ordinance—Raise your hearts on high.

### 38. OF THE POWER OF GOD.

Those who accuse us of wishing to derogate from the power of God, do us great wrong. For the question is not what God can do? but, what his word bears? beyond which we ought not to speculate in order to guess at this thing or that. And in fact, we enter not into the dispute whether or not God can make the body of Jesus Christ to be everywhere, but with all modesty we remain within the doctrine of Scripture (Phil. i. 5) as our proper limit. It bears that our Lord Jesus assumed a body like ours in every respect, that he sojourned here below in the world, and ascended to heaven in order to descend and appear from thence on the last day, as it is distinctly stated that the heavens must receive him until he appears. (Acts i. 11.) And what the angel said to the disciples ought to be well considered—Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in like manner as you have seen him ascend. Still we magnify the power of God more than those do who would defame us by such reproaches ; for we confess that however great the distance of space between Jesus Christ and us, he fails not to give us life in himself, to dwell in us, to provide for us and make us partakers of the substance of his body and his blood, by the incomprehensible virtue of his Spirit. From this it appears that the blame which some cast upon us is only calumny. They charge us with measuring the power of God by our own capacity, after the fashion of philosophers, whereas our philosophy is to receive in simplicity what the Scripture shows us.

### 39 OF THE TRUTH OF GOD.

Those also who represent that we give no credit to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ—This is my body, this is my blood—ought to be ashamed of injuring us so falsely. God forbid it should ever come into our thought to reply against him who is immutable truth. So far are we from being so abandoned as to wish to vent such blasphemy, that we implicitly receive what our Lord Jesus Christ pronounced; only we require that the natural sense of the words be well understood.

Now we do not seek the exposition of them in our own brains, but derive it from the constant usage of Scripture, and the common style of the Holy Spirit. Did we bring forward any novelty, it might be odious or suspicious ; but when we wish to abide by the property common to all sacraments, it seems to us well entitled to be received. To be brief, we protest that we neither think nor speak otherwise than St. Augustine has expressed word for word, (Ep. 23, ad Bonif.,) viz., that if the sacraments had not some resemblance to the things which they signify, they would not be sacraments at all,

and that hence they take the names of the things themselves ; and thus, properly speaking, the sacrament of the body of Jesus Christ is the body of Jesus Christ, and the sacrament of his blood is his blood. Still we always conjoin the reality with the figure in such manner that this sacrament is not illusory.

Now, SIRE, your Majesty, and your Excellences, most illustrious Princes, have a declaration of our faith, in which there is nothing either coloured or disguised, and by which we desire that our cause be judged and decided. Meanwhile, we most humbly supplicate your Majesty and your Excellences, most illustrious Princes, that as we have with all reverence proceeded to declare what we believe, so it would please you attentively to consider the contents of this statement with such benignity that reason and equity alone may rule, laying aside all human opinions, so as not to prejudge the truth.