

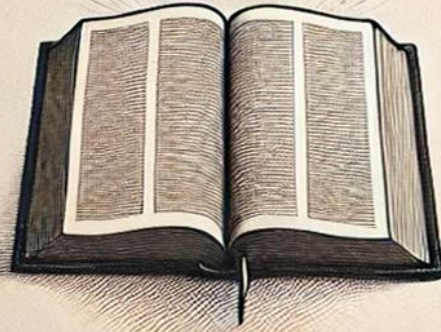
# OF THE WORD *of* GOD



BY  
**HENRY BULLINGER**

"YOUR WORD IS TRUTH." JOHN 17.17

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# Of the Word of God

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## OF THE WORD OF GOD:

The cause of it; and how, and by whom

ALL the decrees of Christian faith, with every way how to live rightly, well, and holily, and finally, all true and heavenly wisdom, have always been fetched out of the testimonies, or determinate judgments, of the word of God. Neither can they be drawn, taught, or, last of all, soundly confirmed from elsewhere, than from the word of God, whether by those who are wise men indeed, or by the faithful and those who are called by God to the ministry of the churches. Therefore, whoever is ignorant of what the word of God is, and the meaning of the word of God, seems like one who is blind, deaf, and

without wit, in the temple of the Lord, in the school of Christ, and lastly, in the reading of the very sacred scriptures. But though some are not at all zealous, and hardly drawn to hearing sermons in the church, that springs out of no other fountain than this: it is because they neither understand rightly, nor weigh diligently enough, the virtue and true force of the word of God. Therefore, so that nothing may cause the zealous desirers of the truth and of the word of God to stick on this point — but rather that the estimation of God's word which is due may be laid up in all men's hearts — I will (by God's help) lay out for you, dearly beloved, those things which a godly man ought to think and hold concerning the word of God.

And pray earnestly and continually to our bountiful God, that it may please Him to give to me his holy and effectual power to speak, and give to you the opening of your ears and minds, so that in all that I will say, the Lord's name may be praised, and your souls be profited abundantly.

First, I have to declare what the word of God is. *Verbum* in the scriptures, and according to the property of the Hebrew tongue, is diversely taken. For it signifies whatever thing a man wills; even as the word *ding* is largely used among the Germans. In St. Luke, the angel of God says to the blessed virgin: "With God no word [150] shall be impossible:" which is the same as if he had said, all things are possible for God, or to God nothing is impossible. *Verbum* also signifies a word uttered by the mouth of man. Sometimes it is used for a charge, sometimes for a whole sentence, or speech, or prophecy. There are many examples of this in the scriptures. But when *verbum* is joined with anything else, as in this place we call it *verbum Dei*, then is it not used in the same sense. For *verbum Dei*, "the word of God," signifies the virtue and power of God: it is also put for the Son of God, which is the second person in the most reverend Trinity. For

that saying of the holy evangelist is evident to all men, "The word was made flesh." Joh 1.14 But in this treatise of ours, the *word* of God properly signifies the *speech* of God, and the revealing of God's will — first of all uttered in a lively-expressed voice by the mouth of Christ, the prophets and apostles; and after that, it was again registered in writings which are rightly called "holy and divine scriptures." The word shows the mind of the one out of whom it comes. Therefore the word of God makes a declaration about God. But God naturally speaks truth about himself: he is just, good, pure, immortal, and eternal. Therefore it follows that the word of God also, which comes out of the mouth of God, is true, just, without deceit and guile, without error or evil affection, holy, pure, good, immortal, and everlasting. For in the gospel the Lord says, "Your word is truth." Joh 17.17 And the apostle Paul says, "The word of God is not tied." 2Tim 2.9 Again, the scripture everywhere cries: "The word of the Lord endures forever." [\[151\]](#)

And Solomon says: "Every word of God is purely cleansed. Add nothing to his words, lest perhaps he reprove you, and you be found a liar." Pro 30.5-6 David also says: "The sayings of the Lord are pure sayings, like silver cleansed in the fire, and seven times refined from the earth." Psa 12.6

This you will more fully perceive, dearly beloved, if I say speak more largely about the cause or beginning, and certainty, of the word of God. The word of God is truth; but God is the only well-spring of truth. Therefore, God is the beginning and cause of the word of God. And here indeed, since God does not have members like mortal men, he also lacks a bodily mouth. Yet, because the mouth is the instrument of the voice, a mouth is attributed to God. For he spoke to men in the voice of a man, that is, in a voice easily understood by men, and fashioned according to the speech usually spoken among

men. This is evidently seen in the things in which he dealt with the holy fathers, with whom we read that He talked many times and often, as with our parents Adam and Eve, Noah, and the rest of the fathers. In Mount Sinai, the Lord himself preached to the great congregation of Israel, repeating so plainly, that they might understand those Ten Commandments, in which is contained every point of godliness. For in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy we read, "These words," meaning the Ten Commandments, "the Lord spoke with a loud voice, from out of the midst of the fire, to the whole congregation." Deu 5.22

And in the fourth chapter: "A voice of words you heard, but you saw no similitude besides the voice." Deu 4.12 Truly, God oftentimes used the means of angels, by whose ministry he talked with mortal men. And it is very well known to all men, that the Son of God the Father, being incarnate, walked about on the earth; and being very God and man, he taught the people of Israel for the span of almost three years.<sup>[152]</sup> But in times past, and before the Son of God was born into the world, God, little by little, made himself acquainted with the hearts of the holy fathers, and after that with the minds of the holy prophets; and last of all, by their preaching and writings, He taught the whole world.

So also, Christ our Lord sent the Holy Ghost, who is from the Father and the Son, into the apostles, by whose mouths, words, and writings he was known throughout the world. And all these servants of God, were the elect vessels of God, having received with sincere hearts the revelation of God from God himself. First of all, in a living expressed voice, they delivered to the world the oracles and word of God which they had learned before; and afterward, when the world drew more to an end, some of them put them in writing for a memorial to posterity. And it is good to know how, and by whom, all this was

done. For by this narration the true cause, certainty, and dignity of the word of God plainly appears.

The writings of any man from the beginning of the world are not extant to be seen, until the time of Moses, and these have come to our knowledge — although it is likely that this same ancient and first world was not altogether without any writings. For the written prophecy of our holy father Enoch (who was seventh from our father Adam) is cited by St. Jude, the apostle, and brother of St. James. Jude 14-15 Furthermore, the writing or history of Job seems to have been set forth a great while before. But however it is, all the saints in the church of God give to Moses, the faithful servant of God, the first place among the holy writers.

From the beginning of the world, therefore, God by his Spirit and the ministry of angels, spoke to the holy fathers; and by word of mouth they taught their children, and children's children, and all their posterity, what they had learned from the mouth of God. When they had truly heard it, it was not with the intent to keep it close to themselves, but also to make their posterity partakers of it. For God oftentimes witnesses that "he will be the God of the fathers and of their seed forevermore." Gen 17.7 This is most plainly seen in the history of Adam, Noah, and Abraham, the first and great grandfathers.

In the eighteenth chapter of Genesis, truly, we read that the angel of God, and what is more indeed, that even the Lord himself, said to Abraham:

"And shall I hide from Abraham what I mind to do? since from Abraham shall come a great and mighty people, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? And this I know, that he will

command his children and his posterity after him, to keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice, judgment," Gen 18.17-19 and the rest.

Abraham therefore, a faithful and zealous worshipper of God, did not (even as those old fathers of the first world also did not) grow negligent at all in this, but diligently taught men the will and judgments of God. Thus he is called a prophet by Moses, yes, and by God himself. Gen 20.7 That devout and living tradition of the fathers, from hand to hand, was in use continually, even from the beginning of the world until the time of Moses.

Moreover, God of his goodness provided that no age should at any time be without most excellent lights, to be witnesses of the undoubted faith, and fathers of great authority. For the world before the deluge had in it nine most excellent, most holy, and wise men: Adam, Seth, Enosh, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, and Lamech. The chief of these, Adam and Methuselah, begin and make an end of all the sixteen hundred and fifty-six years [153] of the world before the deluge. For Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years; Gen 5.5 he therefore dies in the seven hundred and twenty-sixth year before the flood. And Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years; Gen 5.27 he dies in the very same year that the flood overflowed; and he lived together with Adam two hundred and forty-three years — so that he might be instructed by Adam abundantly enough concerning the beginning of things, concerning God, the falling and restoring again of mankind, and all other things belonging to religion, even as he was taught by God himself. These two fathers, with the rest named above, were able to instruct the whole age sufficiently enough in the true salvation and right ways of the Lord.



After the deluge, God gave excellent men to the world again, and very great lights. Their names are Noah, Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Here have we thirteen most excellent patriarchs, among whom the first two, Noah and Shem, are the chief; next to whom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were more notable than the rest. Noah lived nine hundred and fifty years in all. He was six hundred years old when the flood drowned the world. Gen 7.6 He therefore saw and heard all the holy fathers of the first world before the deluge, only three excepted: Adam, Seth, and Enosh. And he also lived many years together with the others, who had both seen and heard them; so that he could be ignorant in no point of those things which Adam had taught. Noah dies (which is a marvel to be told, and yet very true) in the forty-ninth year of Abraham's age.<sup>[154]</sup> Shem, the son of Noah, lived many years with his father; for he lived six hundred years in all. He was born to Noah about ninety-six years before the deluge. He saw and heard, therefore, not only his father Noah and his grandfather Lamech, but also his great grandsire Methuselah, with whom he lived ninety-six years before the deluge. From him he might be informed of all those things which Methuselah had heard and learned from Adam and the other patriarchs. Shem dies after the death of Abraham, in the fifty-second year of Jacob, which was thirty-seven years after the death of Abraham, in the year one hundred and twelve of Isaac's age. So that Jacob, the patriarch, might very well learn all the true divinity from Shem himself, even as he had heard it from Methuselah, who was the third witness and teacher from Adam.

Furthermore, Jacob the patriarch delivered to his children that which he received from God, to teach to his posterity. In Mesopotamia, there is born to Jacob his son Levi, and to him again is

born Kohath,[\[155\]](#) who both saw and heard Jacob. For Kohath lived no small number of years with his grandfather Jacob; for he is recounted in the roll of those who went with Jacob down into Egypt. Gen 46.11 But Jacob lived seventeen years with his children in Egypt.

Kohath is the grandfather of Moses, the father of Amram, from whom Moses perfectly drew that full and certain tradition by hand, as concerning the will, commandments, and judgments of God, even as Amram his father had learned them from his father Kohath, Kohath from Jacob, Jacob from Shem, Shem from Methuselah and from Adam the first father of us all — so that now, Moses is the seventh witness from Adam in the world. And from the beginning of the world to the birth of Moses are fully complete two thousand three hundred and sixty-eight years of the world. And whoever diligently reckons the years, that were not in vain set down by Moses in Genesis and Exodus, he will find this account to be true and right. [\[156\]](#)

Now, it also benefits us to know those chief principles of that living tradition, delivered by the holy fathers at the appointment of God, from hand to hand as it were, to all the posterity. The fathers taught their children that God, of his natural goodness, wishing well to mankind, would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth, and to be in nature like God himself: holy, happy, and absolutely blessed. And therefore God, in the beginning, created man in his own similitude and likeness, with the intent that he should be good, holy, immortal, blessed, and partaker of all the good gifts of God. But man did not continue in that dignity and happy state; by means of the devil, and his own proper fault, he fell into sin, misery, and death, changing his likeness to God into the similitude of the devil. Moreover, God here again began the work of salvation afresh, whereby mankind, being restored and set free from all evil, might

once again be made like God. And He meant to bring this mighty and divine work to pass by a certain middle mean: that is, by the Word incarnate. For just as he joined man to God by taking on flesh, so by dying in the flesh, he cleansed, sanctified, and delivered mankind with his sacrifice.

And by giving man His Holy Spirit, he made him again in nature like God: that is, immortal, and absolutely blessed. And last of all, He works in us a willing endeavour to aptly resemble the property and conditions of Him to whose likeness we are created, so that we may be holy, both body and soul. They added moreover, that the Word should be incarnate in his due time and appointed age — and also, that there remained a great day for judgment, in which, though all men were gathered together, yet only the righteous would receive that reward of heavenly immortality.

So then, this is the brief sum of the holy fathers' tradition, which it is best to untwist more largely, and to speak of it more diligently, by parts.

First, therefore, the fathers taught that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one God, in the most reverend Trinity, the maker and governor of heaven and earth and all things which are in it; by whom man was made, and who made all things for man, and put all things under mankind, to administer necessary things to him, as a loving Father and most bountiful Lord. Then they taught that man consisted of soul and body, and that he indeed was made good according to the image and likeness of God; but that by his own fault, and by the egging on of the devil, falling into sin, man brought death and damnation into the world, together with a web of miseries, out of which it cannot rid itself. So that now, all the children of Adam, even from Adam, are born the sons of wrath and wretchedness; but that

God, whose mercy abounds, according to his incomprehensible goodness, taking pity on the misery of mankind, even of his mere grace, granted pardon for the offence, and laid the weight of the punishment upon his only Son, with the intent that, when his heel was crushed by the serpent, he might himself break the serpent's head. Gen 3.15 That is to say, God makes a promise of a seed — that is, of a Son — who, taking on the flesh of a peerless woman (I mean, that virgin who is most worthy of commendations), would by his death vanquish death and Satan, the author of death; and he would bring the faithful sons of Adam out of bondage; and indeed, what is more, he would make them the sons of God by adoption, and heirs of life everlasting.

The holy fathers, therefore, taught to believe in God, and in his Son, the redeemer of the whole world — when in their very sacrifices they showed his death, an unspotted sacrifice, with which he intended to wipe away and cleanse the sins of the whole world.

And therefore, they had a most diligent eye to the stock and lineal descent of the Messiah. For it is brought down in a line as it were, from Adam to Noah, and from Noah by Shem, even to Abraham himself. And to him again it was said, "In your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen 22.18 In these words the promise once made to Adam, touching Christ the redeemer and changer of God's curse into blessing, is renewed and repeated again. The same line is brought down from Abraham by Isaac to Jacob. And Jacob, being full of the Spirit of God, pointed out his son Judah as the root of the blessed Seed, as seen in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis. Lastly, in the tribe of Judah the house of David was noted, out of which that seed and branch of life would come.

Moreover, the holy fathers taught that God, by a certain league, has joined himself to mankind, and that he has most strictly bound himself to the faithful, and the faithful likewise to himself again. Upon which, they taught us to be faithful to God, to honour God, to hate false gods, to call upon the only God, and to worship him devoutly. Furthermore, they taught that the worship of God consisted in spiritual things, such as faith, hope, charity, obedience, upright dealing, holiness, innocence, patience, truth, judgment, and godliness. And therefore they reprehended naughtiness and sin,<sup>[157]</sup> falsehood, lack of belief, desperation, disobedience, impatience, lying, hypocrisy, hatred, malicious taunts, violence, wrong, unrighteous dealing, uncleanness, riotousness, surfeiting,<sup>[158]</sup> whoredom, unrighteousness, and ungodliness. They taught that God was a rewarder of good, but a punisher and revenger of evil. They taught that the souls of men were immortal, and that their bodies would rise again in the day of judgment. Therefore, they exhorted us all to so live in this temporal life, that we do not lose the eternal life.

This is the sum of the word of God revealed to the fathers, and delivered by them to their posterity. This is the tradition of the holy fathers, which comprehends all religion. Finally, this is the true, ancient, undoubted, authentic, and catholic <sup>[159]</sup> faith of the fathers.

Besides this, the holy fathers taught their children, and children's children, the account of the years from the beginning of the world, and also the true historical course (profitable as well as necessary) of things from the creation of the world even to their own times — lest perhaps their children be ignorant of the beginning and succession of worldly things, and also of the judgments of God, and the examples of those who lived, godly as well as ungodly.

I could declare all this to you evidently, and in very good order, out of the first book of Moses, called Genesis, if it were not that thereby the sermon would be drawn out somewhat longer than useful. But I suppose that there are few present here, or rather none at all, who do not perceive that I have repeated what I have said, touching the tradition of the ancient fathers, word for word as it were, out of the book of Genesis; so that now I may very well go forward in the narration which I have begun.

So then, whatever was previously delivered by the fathers to the world by word of mouth, and from hand to hand as it were, that was put into writing first of all by the holy man Moses, together with those things which were done during the time of Moses' life, for the span of one hundred and twenty years. And that his estimation might be greater throughout the whole world, among all men, and in all ages — and that none should fail to know that the writings of Moses were the very word of God itself — Moses was furnished and consecrated by God, with signs and wonders to be marvelled at indeed, which the Almighty brought to pass by the hand (that is, by the ministry) of Moses. And truly, he wrought them not just in *any* corner of the world, or in an *unknown* place, but in Egypt, the most flourishing and renowned kingdom of that age.

Those miracles were greater and far more by many, than can be repeated here in a few words. Nor is it needful to repeat them, because you, dearly beloved, are not unskilful or ignorant of them at all. After that, God also procured authority for Moses by other means.

For many and oftentimes God had communication with Moses; and among the rest of his talk he said, "Behold, I will come to you in a

thick cloud, that the people may hear me talking with you, and may believe you forevermore." Exo 19.9

Nor was the Lord content with that, but he commanded Moses to call together all the people, six hundred thousand men, I say, with their wives and children. They are called out to mount Sinai, where God appears in a wonderful and terrible fashion; and He himself, preaching to the congregation, repeated to them the Ten Commandments. But the people, being terrified by the majesty of God, prayed and beseeched that God himself would no more afterward preach to the congregation with his own mouth, saying that it would be enough if he used Moses as an interpreter for them, and spoke to the church by him. Exo 20.19 The most high God liked the offer; and after that, he spoke to the people by Moses whatever He would have done. And because the people were stiff-necked, and not a little corrupted by keeping company with idolaters in Egypt, Moses now began to set down in writing those things which the holy fathers had taught by tradition, and also the things which the Lord had revealed to him. The reason why he wrote them down was that, lest perhaps by oblivion, by continuance of time, and by the obstinacy of a people so slow to believe, they might either perish, or else be corrupted. The Lord also set Moses an example to follow. For whatever God had spoken to the church in mount Sinai, he immediately wrote it with His own finger on two tablets of stone, as he had written it with his finger in the hearts of the fathers from the beginning of the world.[\[160\]](#)

Afterward also, in plain words, he commanded Moses to write whatever the Lord had revealed. Moses obeyed the Lord's commandment, and wrote them. The Holy Ghost, who was wholly in the mind of Moses, directed his hand as he wrote. There was no

ability lacking in Moses, that was necessary for a most absolute writer. He was abundantly instructed by his ancestors.

For he was born of the holiest progeny of those fathers whom God appointed to be witnesses of His will, commandments, and judgments — such as Amram, Kohath, Jacob, Shem, Methuselah and Adam. He was therefore able to write a true and certain history, from the beginning of the world even until his own time. To this he added those things which were done among the people of God in his own lifetime, of which he was a very true witness, as one who saw and heard them. Yes, and what is more, whatever he set forth in his books, he read to his people, and among so many thousands, there was not one found who questioned what he repeated. So that the whole consent and witness-bearing of the great congregation brought no small authority to the writings of Moses.

Moses therefore contained in the five books, called the five books of Moses, a history from the beginning of the great world, even to his own death, for the span of two thousand four hundred and eighty-eight years. He declared most largely in these, the revelation of the word of God made to men, and whatever the word of God contained and taught. In these, just as we have the manifold oracles of God himself, so we have most enlightening testimonies, statements, examples, and decrees of the most excellent, ancient, holy, wise, and greatest men of the world, touching all things which seem to pertain to true godliness, and the way to live well and holily. These books therefore found a ready-prepared entrance of belief among all the posterity, as books which are authentic, and which have authority sufficient of themselves, and which, without questioning, ought to be believed by the whole world.



Yes, and what is more, our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, refers the faithful to reading Moses — yes, and indeed, that is in the chief points of our salvation. The places are to be seen in John 5, and Luke 16. In the fifth chapter of Matthew he says, "Do not think that I have come to destroy the law and the prophets; for I have not come to destroy them, but to fulfil them. For, truly, I say to you, though heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle of the law shall not pass away till all is fulfilled. Whoever, therefore, undoes one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." Mat 5.17-19

Truly, some have been found who have spoken against Moses, the servant of God. But God has imputed that questioning as done against his divine majesty, and punished it most sharply. The proofs of this are to be seen in Exodus 16 and Numbers 12: first, the people murmuring against Moses; then Miriam, Moses' sister, speaking against her brother. But to the people it was said, "Your complaints are not against the ministers, but against the Lord." Exo 16.8 As for Mary, she was horribly stricken with a leprosy.[\[161\]](#) Theotectus was stricken blind, and Theopompus fell to be mad, because he had irreverently touched the word of God.[\[162\]](#) For, although the word of God is revealed, spoken, and written by men, yet it does not therefore cease to be that which indeed it is; nor does it therefore begin to be the word of men, because it is preached and heard by men — no more than the king's commandment, which is proclaimed by the crier, is said to be the commandment of the crier. Whoever contemns Moses, by whom God speaks to us — and at whose hand we have received those things which the patriarchs from the beginning of the world by tradition delivered to their posterity — despises God, and with God all the holy patriarchs. There is no difference between the word of God, which is taught by the living expressed voice of man, and that which is written by the pen of man.

But so far as the living voice and writing differ between themselves, the matter undoubtedly — the sense and meaning in the one and in the other — is all one. By this, dearly beloved, you have perceived the certain history of the beginning of the word of God.

Now let us go forward to the rest; that is, to add the history of the proceeding of the word of God, and by what means it shined ever and awhile very clear and brightly to the world. Later, after the departure of the holy man Moses out of this world into heaven, the Lord, of his bountifulness, gave most excellent prophets to his church, whom he had chosen with the intent that by them he might reveal his word to the whole world. And the prophets were to those of olden times, as prophets, priests, wise men, preachers, pastors, bishops, doctors [163] or divines are among us today: most skilful in heavenly things, and given by God to guide the people in the faith. And whoever reads the holy history, will confess that there flourished no small number of this sort; and those were not obscure, even till the captivity of Babylon. Among them are reckoned these singular and excellent men: Phineas, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. David and Solomon were both kings and prophets. In the time of the captivity at Babylon, Daniel and Ezekiel were notably known. After the captivity, among the rest, flourished Zechariah the son of Berechiah.

Here have I reckoned up a few among many. Although they flourished at various times, and the one a great while after the other, yet with one consent, they all acknowledge that God spoke to the world by Moses who (God so appointed it) left to the church in the world, a breviary [164] of true divinity, and a most absolute sum of the word of God contained in writing. All these priests, divines, and prophets, in all that they did, had an eye especially to the doctrine of Moses. They also referred all men, in cases of faith and religion, to

the book of Moses. They diligently beat the law of Moses into the minds of all men. It is indeed the law of God, and it is most properly called *Torah*,<sup>[165]</sup> the guide and rule of faith and life as it were. According to the times, persons, and places, they expounded this to all men.

For all the priests and prophets, before the incarnation of Christ, taught the men of their time godliness and true religion, by word of mouth. Nor did they teach any other thing than what the fathers had received from God, and which Moses had received from God and the fathers. And immediately after committing it to writing, they set it out to all of us who follow, even to the end of the world. So that now in the prophets, we have the doctrine of Moses and the tradition of the fathers, and in all and every point, they are more fully and plainly expounded and polished, being moreover very fitly applied to the places, times, and persons.

Furthermore, the doctrine and writings of the prophets have always been of great authority among all wise men throughout the whole world. For it is well perceived by many arguments, that they did not have their beginning from the prophets themselves, as their chief authors; but they were inspired from God out of heaven by the Holy Spirit of God. For it is God who, dwelling by his Spirit in the minds of the prophets, speaks to us by their mouths. And for that reason, they have a most large testimony at the hands of Christ and his elect apostles. What do you say to this, moreover: that by their ministry God has wrought miracles and wonders to be marvelled at, and those are not a few; that by mighty signs we might at least learn that it is God by whose inspiration the prophets teach and write whatever they left for us to remember?

Furthermore, so many commonweals [166] and congregations, gathered together and governed by the prophets according to the word of God, show most evident testimonies of God's truth in the prophets. Plato, Zeno, Aristotle, and other philosophers of the gentiles, are praised as excellent men. But which of them could gather a church to live according to their ordinances? And yet our prophets have had the most excellent and renowned commonweals or congregations — yes, and what is more, the most flourishing kingdoms in the whole world under their authority. All the wise men in the whole world (I mean those who lived in his time) revered [167] Solomon, a king and so great a prophet, and came to him from the very outmost ends of the world.

Daniel also had preeminence among the wise men at Babylon, being then the most renowned monarchy in the whole world. He was, moreover, held in great estimation by Darius the Mede, the son of Astyages [168] or Ahasuerus, and also with Cyrus that most excellent king. And here it suits me well to say something of that divine foreknowledge in our prophets, and most assured foreshowing of things which were to come after many years passed. And now, to say nothing of others, did not Isaiah most truly foretell those things which were afterward fulfilled by the Jews in our Lord Christ? He did not in vain seem to those of olden times to be a prophet rather than an evangelist, foretelling things to come.[169] He openly told the name of king Cyrus one hundred and sixty years, at least, before Cyrus was born. Daniel also was called by those in olden times by the name of one who knew much. For he foretold those things which are and have been done in all the kingdoms of the world almost, and among the people of God, from his own time until the time of Christ — and further, until the last day of judgment — so plainly that he may seem to have compiled a history of those things as if they were then already gone and past. All these things, I say, very evidently prove

that the doctrine and writings of the prophets are the very word of God, by which name and title they are set forth in various places of the scriptures. Truly, Peter the apostle says, "The prophecy did not come in olden times by the will of man. But holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2Pet 1.21.

And although God largely, clearly, plainly, and simply revealed his word to the world by the patriarchs, by Moses, by the priests and prophets; yet in the last of all times, He set it forth most clearly, simply, and abundantly to the whole world, by his Son. For the true and only begotten Son of God the Father, as the prophets had foretold, descending from heaven, fulfils all of whatever they foretold, and for the span of almost three years, teaches all points of godliness. For John says, "No man at any time has seen God; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him." Joh 1.18 The Lord himself, moreover, says to his disciples, "All things which I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." Joh 15.15 And again he says, "I am the light of the world: whoever follows me does not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Joh 8.12 Our Lord also taught that whoever would enter into heaven and be saved, heavenly regeneration was needful, Joh 3.5 because in the first birth, man is born to death; in the second to life; but regeneration is made perfect in us by the Spirit of God, who instructs our hearts in faith — I say, faith in Christ, who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Rom 4.25 He taught that by that faith, those who believe are justified; and that out of the same faith grow various fruits of charity and innocence, which he most earnestly exhorted them to bring forth.

He taught, furthermore, that he was the fulfilling, or fulness, of the law and the prophets; and he also approved and expounded the doctrine of Moses and the prophets. He joined diverse miracles and

benefits to doctrine, whereby he declared that he himself was that light of the world, and the mighty and bountiful Redeemer of the world. And with the intent that his doctrine and benefits might be known to the whole world, he chose for himself witnesses, whom he called apostles, because he purposed to send them to preach throughout the whole world. Those witnesses were simple men, innocents, just, tellers of truth, without deceit or subtleties, and holy and good in all points — whose names it is very profitable to often repeat in the congregation.

The names of the apostles are these: Peter and Andrew, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Judas his brother, whose surname was Thaddaeus, Simon and Judas Iscariot, into whose place (because he had betrayed the Lord) came St. Matthias.[\[170\]](#) These he had for the span of almost three years, as hearers of his heavenly doctrine, and beholders of his divine works. After his ascension into the heavens, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, he instructed them with all kinds of faculties. For just as they were surpassing skilful in the scriptures, so they were not unskilful, or lacking eloquence, in any tongue. And once being instructed in this manner, they depart out of the city of Jerusalem, and pass through the compass of the earth, preaching to all people and nations, what they had received to preach from the Saviour of the world and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when for certain years they had preached by word of mouth, then they also set down in writing what they had preached. For some, truly, wrote a history of the words and deeds of Christ, and some of the words and deeds of the apostles. Some others sent various epistles to diverse nations. In all these, to confirm the truth, they used the scripture of the law and the prophets, even as we read that the Lord oftentimes did. Moreover, to the twelve apostles are

joined two great lights of the world: John the Baptist, whom there was never anyone more holy born of women than him; Mat 11.11 and the chosen vessel Paul, Act 9.15 the great teacher of the Gentiles.

[171]

Nor is it to be marvelled at, that the forerunner and apostles of Christ always had very great dignity and authority in the church. For even as they were the ambassadors of the eternal King of all ages and of the whole world, so being endued with the Spirit of God, they did nothing according to the judgment of their own minds. And the Lord wrought great miracles by their ministry, to thereby garnish their ministry, and to commend their doctrine to us. And moreover, what may be thought of this: that by the word of God, they converted the whole world, gathering together and laying the foundations of notable churches throughout the compass of the world? Truly, by man's counsel and words, they would never have been able to bring this to pass.

To this is further added, that once they inclined to this doctrine, as a doctrine giving life, they did not refuse to die. Besides that, however many had their belief in the doctrine of the gospel, they were not afraid, through water, fire, and swords, to cut off this life, and to lay their hand on the life to come. The faithful saints could in no way have done these things, unless the doctrine which they believed had been of God.

Therefore, although the apostles were men, yet their doctrine, first taught by a living expressed voice, and after that set down in writing with pen and ink, is the doctrine of God and the very true word of God. For therefore the apostle left this saying in writing: "When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you did not

receive it as the word of men, but, as it is indeed, the word of God, which effectually works in you who believe." 1The 2.13

But now the matter itself, and the place, require that I also gather and plainly reckon up those books in which is contained the very word of God, first of all declared by the fathers, by Christ himself, and the apostles by word of mouth; and after that, was also written into books by the prophets and apostles. In the first place, truly, are set the five books of Moses. Then follow the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, two books of Samuel, two of Kings, two of Chronicles; Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, one apiece. After these come Job, David or the book of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles. With them are numbered the four greater prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; then the twelve lesser prophets, whose names are very well known; the old Testament ended with these books. The new Testament has in the beginning the evangelical history of Christ the Lord, written by four authors, that is, by two apostles, Matthew and John; and by two disciples, Mark, and also Luke, who compiled a wonderful, goodly, and profitable book of the Acts of the Apostles. Paul published fourteen epistles to various churches and persons. The other apostles wrote seven which are called both canonical and catholic.

And the books of the new Testament are ended with the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which he opened to the disciple whom he loved, John the evangelist and apostle — showing to him, and so to the whole church, the ordinance of God touching the church, even until the day of judgment. Therefore, in these few and mean (not unmeasurable), in these plain and simple (not dark and unkempt) books, is comprehended the full doctrine of godliness, which is the very word of the true, living, and eternal God [172]



Also the books of Moses and the prophets came through so many ages, perils, and captivities, sound and uncorrupted, even until the time of Christ and his apostles. For the Lord Jesus and the apostles used those books as true and authentic copies; which undoubtedly they neither would nor could have done, if it were so that either they had been corrupted, or had altogether perished. The books also, which the apostles of Christ have added, were kept in the church safe and uncorrupted throughout all persecutions, and have come sound and uncorrupted into our hands, upon whom the ends of the world have fallen. For by the vigilant care and unspeakable goodness of God our Father, it is brought to pass that no age at any time either has or shall lack so great a treasure.

Up to here I have declared this much to you, dearly beloved: what the word of God is, what the beginning of it in the church was, and what proceeding, dignity, and certainty it had. The word of God is the speech of God, that is to say, the revealing of His good will to mankind, which from the beginning, one by his own mouth, and another by the speech of angels, He opened to those first, ancient, and most holy fathers — those who again by tradition faithfully delivered it to their posterity.

Here are to be remembered those great lights of the world, Adam, Seth, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Amram, and his son Moses, who at God's commandment, comprehended in writing the history and traditions of the holy fathers, to which he joined the written law, and exposition of the law, together with a large and enlightening history of his own lifetime. After Moses, God gave to his church most excellent men, prophets and priests, who also by word of mouth and writings, delivered to their posterity that which they had learned from the Lord. After them came the only-begotten Son of God himself, down from heaven into the world, and

fulfilled all that was written of himself in the law and the prophets. He also taught a most absolute means of living well and holily. He made the apostles his witnesses. Afterwards, first of all with a living expressed voice, they preached all things which the Lord had taught them; and then, with the intent that they should not be corrupted, or taken clean out of man's remembrance, they committed it to writing. So that now we have from the fathers, the prophets, and apostles, the word of God as it was preached and written.

These things had their beginning of one and the same Spirit of God, and tend to one end: that is, to teach us how to live well and holily. He that does not believe these men, and namely, the only-begotten Son of God, whom then, I pray you, *will* he believe? We have here the most holy, innocent, upright-living, most praiseworthy, most just, most ancient, most wise, and most divine men in the whole world and compass of the earth, and briefly, such men as are by all means without comparison. The whole world cannot show us their like again, even if it were to be assembled in councils fully a thousand times. The holy emperor Constantine gathered a general council out of all the compass of the earth. Out of the whole world, three hundred and eighteen most excellent fathers [173] came there together. But those who are of the wisest sort would say that these are not so much as shadows, compared to those from whom we have received the word of God. Let us therefore in all things believe the word of God delivered to us by the scriptures.

Let us think that the Lord himself, who is the very living and eternal God, speaks to us by the scriptures. Let us forevermore praise the name and goodness of him, who has so faithfully, fully, and plainly granted to open to us miserable mortal men, all the means of how to live well and holily.

To him be praise, honour, and glory forevermore. Amen.

## **To whom, and to what end, it was revealed;**

also in what manner it is to be heard;

and that it fully teaches the whole doctrine of godliness.

DEARLY beloved, in the last sermon you learned what the word of God is; where it came from; by whom it was chiefly revealed; what proceedings it had; and of what dignity and certainty it is.

Now I have come again, and by God's favour and the help of your prayers, I will declare to you, beloved, to whom, and to what end, the word of God is revealed; in what manner it is to be heard; and what the force of it is, or the effect.

Our God is the God of all men and nations, who, according to the saying of the apostle, "would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." 2Tim 2.4 And therefore, for the benefit, life, and salvation of all men, he has revealed his word, so that indeed there might be a rule and certain way to lead men by the path of justice into life everlasting. God truly, in olden times, showed himself to the Israelites, his holy and peculiar people, more familiarly than to other nations. As the prophet says: "To Jacob he has declared his statutes, and his judgments to Israel. He has not dealt so with any nation, nor has he shown them his judgments." Psa 147.19-20 And yet he has not altogether been careless of the Gentiles.

For just as he sent Jonah to the Ninivites, so Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and the other prophets bestowed much labour in teaching and admonishing the Gentiles. And those most ancient fathers, Noah, Abraham, and the rest, not only instructed the Jewish people who descended from them, but also taught their other sons the judgments of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ truly, laying open the whole world before his disciples, said, "Teach all nations; preach the gospel to all creatures." Mar 16.15 And when St. Peter did not yet fully understand that the Gentiles also pertained to the fellowship of the church of Christ, and that the preaching of the glad tidings of salvation, purchased by Christ for the faithful, also belonged to the Gentiles, the Lord instructs him by a heavenly vision — by speaking to him out of heaven, and by the message which came from Cornelius, as you know, dearly beloved, by the history of the Acts of the Apostles.[\[174\]](#)

Let us therefore think, my brethren, that the word of God and the holy scriptures are revealed to all men, to all ages, kinds, degrees, and states, throughout the whole world. For the apostle Paul, also confirming it, says, "Whatever things are written, are written for our learning, that through patience, and the comfort of the scriptures, we may have hope." Rom 15.4

Therefore, let none of us say hereafter, "Why do I need to care what is written to the Jews in the old Testament, or what the apostles have written to the Romans, to the Corinthians, and to other nations? I am a Christian. The prophets both preached and wrote to the men of their time, and the apostles to those who lived in the same age with them." For if we think uprightly of the matter, we will see that the scriptures of the old and new Testaments should therefore be received by us, even *because* we are Christians. For Christ, our

Saviour and Master, referred us to the written books of Moses and the prophets. Saint Paul, the very elect instrument of Christ, applies to us the sacraments and examples of the old fathers, that is to say, circumcision in baptism, Col 2; and the paschal lamb in the supper or sacrament, 1Cor 5. In the tenth chapter of that same epistle, he applies assorted examples of the fathers to us.

And in the fourth chap. to the Romans, where he reasons about faith which justifies without the help of works and the law, he brings in the example of Abraham. And with that he adds, "Nevertheless, it is not written for Abraham alone, that faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, but also *for us*, to whom it shall be reckoned if we believe," etc. Rom 4.23-24

"By that means," say some, "we will again be wrapped in the law; we shall be forced to be circumcised, to sacrifice the flesh and blood of beasts, to admit again the priesthood of Aaron, together with the temple and the other ceremonies. There will again be allowed the bill of divorce, or putting away a man's wife, together with sufferance to marry many wives." To these I answer, that in the old Testament we must consider that there are some things which are forever to be observed, and some things which are ceremonial and allowed only till the time of amendment. Heb 9.10 That time of amendment is the time of Christ, who fulfilled the law, and took away the curse of the law. The same Christ changed circumcision into baptism. With his own sacrifice he made an end to all sacrifices; so that now, instead of all sacrifices, there is left to us that solitary sacrifice of Christ, in which we also learn to offer our very own bodies and prayers, together with good deeds, as spiritual sacrifices to God. Rom 12.1 Christ exchanged the priesthood of Aaron for his own, and for the priesthood of all Christians. We are the temple of God, in whom God dwells by his Spirit. Christ made all ceremonies void. Also, in the

nineteenth chap. of Matthew, he abrogated the bill of divorce, together with the marriage of many wives. But although these ceremonies and some external actions were abrogated and clean taken away by Christ, so that we should not be bound to them — yet notwithstanding, the scripture, which was published touching them, was *not* taken away, or else it was made void by Christ. For there must forever be in the church of Christ a certain (*i.e.*, sure) testimonial, whereby we may learn what manner of worshippings and figures of Christ those of olden times had. We must interpret for the church today, those worshippings and figures of Christ specially. [175]

And out of them we must, no less than out of the writings of the new Testament, preach Christ, forgiveness of sins, and repentance. So then, the writings of the old Testament are given by God to all Christians, in the same way that the apostle [176] wrote to *all* churches, those things which bore the name or title of some *particular* congregations.

And to this end, the word of God is revealed to men: that it may teach them what, and what manner, one God is towards men — that he would have them saved, and that is by faith in Christ; what Christ is, and by what means salvation comes; what becomes the true worshippers of God, what they ought to flee, and what to follow. [177] Nor is it sufficient to know the will of God, unless we do it, and are saved. And for that cause Moses said, "Hear, Israel, the statutes and judgments which I teach you, that you may do them and live." Deu 5.1 And the Lord in the gospel, confirming this, cries, "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it." Luk 11.28

And here is to be praised the exceeding great goodness of God, which would have nothing hidden from us which makes any whit to live

rightly, well, and holily. The wise and learned of this world for the most part envy or grudge that others should attain true wisdom. But our Lord gently, and of his own accord, offers to us the whole knowledge of heavenly things, and is desirous that we go forward in this. Yes, and what is more, he furthers our labour and brings it to an end. For "whoever has," says the Lord himself in the gospel, "to him shall be given, that he may have more abundance." Mat 13.12 "And every one that asks receives, and he that seeks finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened." Luk 11.10 Whereupon St. James the apostle says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally," that is, willingly, not with grudging, "neither throwing it in any man's face, and it shall be given him."  
[\[178\]](#)

Here, by the way, we see our duty: which is in reading and hearing the word of God, to pray earnestly and zealously that we may come to that end for which the word of God was given and revealed to us. But we will say something more as touching that matter, when we come to declare in what manner the word of God ought to be heard.

Now, because I have said that the word of God is revealed, with the intent that it may fully instruct us in the ways of God and our salvation, I will declare to you in a few words, dearly beloved, that in the word of God, delivered to us by the prophets and apostles, is abundantly contained the whole effect of godliness, and whatever things are available for leading our lives rightly, well, and holily. For, truly, it must be that that doctrine is full, and in all points perfect, to which nothing should either be added, or else be taken away. But such a doctrine is the doctrine taught in the word of God, as Moses witnesses, Deu 4 and 12; and Solomon, Pro 30.[\[179\]](#) What is he, therefore, who does not confess that all points of true piety are taught to us in the sacred scriptures? Furthermore, no man can deny

that it is a most absolute doctrine, by which a man is made so fully perfect, that in this world he may be taken for a just man, and in the world to come be called forever into the company of God. But he that believes the word of God uttered to the world by the prophets and apostles, and lives according to it, is indeed called a just man, and heir of life everlasting. That doctrine therefore is an absolute doctrine. For Paul also, declaring more largely and fully the same matter, says "All scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, instructed to all good works." 2Tim 3.16-17

You have, brethren, an evident testimony of the fulness of the word of God. You have a doctrine absolutely perfect in all points. You have a most perfect effect of the word of God; because by this doctrine the man of God, that is, the godly and devout worshipper of God, is perfect, being instructed, not to a certain few good works, but to all and every good work.

In what, therefore, can you find anything lacking? I do not think that anyone is such a sot, as to interpret these words of Paul to be spoken only touching the old Testament; seeing that it is more manifest than daylight, that Paul applied them to his scholar Timothy, who preached the gospel, and was a minister of the new Testament. If it is so, then, that the doctrine of the old Testament is of itself full, by how much more will it be the fuller, if the volume of the new Testament is added to it! I am not so ignorant, that I do not know that the Lord Jesus both did and spoke many things which were not written by the apostles. But it does not follow, therefore, that the doctrine of the word of God, taught by the apostles, is not absolutely perfect. For John, the apostle and evangelist, freely confesses that the Lord did many other things also, "which were not written in his book;" but



immediately he adds this, and says, "But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is Christ the Son of God, and that in believing, you might have life through his name." Joh 20.30-31 He affirms by this doctrine, which he contained in writing, that faith is fully taught; and that through faith everlasting life is granted by God. But the end of absolute doctrine is to be happy and perfectly blessed. Since, then, that comes to man by the written doctrine of the gospel, undoubtedly that doctrine of the gospel is most absolutely perfect.

I know that the Lord in the gospel said, "I have many things to tell you; but at this time you cannot bear them." But with this, I know too that he immediately added this saying: "But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you into all truth." [180] I know, furthermore, that the Spirit of truth came upon his disciples; and therefore I believe that, according to the true promise of Christ, they were led into all truth, so that it is most assuredly certain that nothing was lacking in them.

But there are some who, while they cannot deny this, turn themselves and say that "the apostles indeed knew all things, yet they did not teach them except by word of mouth, not setting down in writing all those things which pertain to true godliness" [181] — as though it were likely that Christ's most faithful apostles would, for spite, have kept back anything from their posterity — as though, indeed, he had lied who said, "These things are written, that in believing, you might have life everlasting." John therefore let nothing pass which belongs to our full instructing in the faith. Luke omitted nothing. Nor did the rest of the apostles and disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ allow anything to slip by them. Paul also wrote fourteen various epistles. Yet most of them contained one and the self-same matter. By this we may very well conjecture that the absolute doctrine of godliness is wholly comprehended in them. For he would

not have repeated one and the self-same thing so often, to so many various men, if there had yet been anything else necessary to be more fully taught for obtaining salvation. He would undoubtedly have taught those things, and not have repeated one and the same thing so many times.

Truly, in the third chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians he affirms that in the two first chapters of the same epistle, he declared his knowledge in the gospel of Christ. "God," he says, "by revelation showed the mystery to me, as I wrote before in a few words by which, when you read them, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." Eph 3.3-4 And he spoke this touching that one and only epistle; yes, and that too touching the two first chapters of that one epistle. When the largest and most enlightening letters or epistles of St. Paul himself, and also of the other apostles, are added together, I ask you who — unless he is altogether without sense — would once think that the apostles have left in writing to us, their posterity, a doctrine that is not absolutely perfect?

As for those who earnestly affirm that all points of godliness were taught by the apostles to the posterity by word of mouth, and not by writing, their purpose is to put their own up for sale, that is, *men's* ordinances, instead of the word of God.

But against this poison, my brethren, take this for a medicine to expel it. Confer the things, which these fellows put up for sale under the colour of the apostles' traditions, taught by word of mouth and not by writing, with the manifest writings of the apostles. And if in any place you perceive those traditions to disagree with the scriptures, then gather that it is the forged invention of men, and not the apostles' tradition. For they, who had one and the same Spirit of truth, did not leave to us one thing in writing, and teach us another

thing by word of mouth. Furthermore, we must diligently search whether those traditions set forward the glory of God rather than of men; or the safety of the faithful rather than the private advantage of the priests. And we must take heed of men's traditions, especially since the Lord says, "In vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men." Mat 15.9 So that now, the surest way is to cling to the word of the Lord left to us in the scriptures, which teaches abundantly all things that belong to true godliness.

It remains now for me to tell in what manner this perfect doctrine of godliness and salvation — I mean, the very word of God —ought to be heard by the faithful, with the intent that it may be heard with some fruit to profit them abundantly. I will contain [\[182\]](#) it in a few words. Let the word of God be heard with great reverence, which of right is due to God himself and godly things. Let it be heard very attentively; with continual prayers between, and earnest requests. Let it be heard soberly to our profit, that we may become better by it, that God may be glorified by us, and not that we go about curiously searching out the hidden counsels of God, or desire to be considered skilful and expert in many matters. Let true faith, the glory of God, and our salvation, be appointed as the measure and certain end of our hearing and reading. For in Exodus, Moses — the holy servant of God — is commanded to sanctify the people, and to make them ready to hear the sacred sermon which God himself minded to make the next day.

Moses therefore comes and demands of the whole people, that due obedience to be shown to God, as well as to his ministers. Then he commands them to wash their garments, and to abstain from their wives. After that, he appoints certain limits, beyond which it was not lawful for them to pass upon pain of death. Exo 19.10-15

By this we plainly learn that the Lord requires of those who would be his disciples, that they hear him, and specially show obedience and reverence to him in all things. For he, being God, speaks to us. And all of us owe honour and fear to God. A man, unless he becomes lowly, humble, and obedient to God, is altogether godless. Then, it is required at the hands of those who are fit hearers of the word of God, that they lay apart worldly affairs, which are signified by the garments; to tread underfoot all filthiness and uncleanness of soul and body; to refrain for a season even from those pleasures which are lawful for us. The Holy Ghost loves minds that are purely cleansed — which notwithstanding, are not cleansed except by the Spirit of God. It is needful to have a sincere belief in God, and a ready good-will and desire to live according to what is commanded in the word of God. Moreover, we must be wise to sobriety. [\[183\]](#)

Overly curious [\[184\]](#) questions must be set aside. Let only things that are profitable to salvation be learned. Last of all, let special heed be taken in hearing and learning. For Solomon says, "If you would seek wisdom as for gold, you shall obtain it." Pro 2.4-5 Again he says, "The one who searches out God's majesty will be overwhelmed by his wonderful glory." [\[185\]](#) And again he says, "Do not seek things too high for you, nor go about searching out things above your strength; but what God has commanded you, always think on that. And do not be over-curious to know His infinite works; for it is not expedient for you to see his hidden secrets with your eyes." [\[186\]](#)

Upon which the apostle Paul says, "Let no man think arrogantly of himself, but so think that he may be modest and sober, as God has given to everyone the measure of faith." Rom 12.3 And to this belongs what the same apostle says, "Knowledge puffs up, and charity edifies." 1Cor 8.1

But chiefly we must beware of those plagues which choke the seed of the word of God, and quench it without any fruit at all in the hearts of the hearers. Those plagues and diseases the Lord has recounted, or reckoned up, in the parable of the sower. Mat 13.1-23 For first of all, wanton and vain cogitations, which always lie wide open to the inspirations of Satan and the talk of naughty [187] men, are plagues to the word of God. Also voluptuous and dainty lovers of this world, who cannot abide to suffer any affliction for Christ and his gospel, hear God's word without any fruit at all, although they seem to give ear to it very joyfully. Furthermore, "the care of this world, and the deceit of riches," (Mat 13.22) are most pestilent diseases in the hearers of the word of God. For they not only hinder the seed, so that it cannot bring forth fruit in their hearts; but they also stir up and egg men on to question the word of God, and to afflict the earnest desirers of God's word. Here, therefore, we must take heed diligently, lest being infected with these diseases, we become vain and unthankful hearers of the word of God.

We must pray continually, that the bountiful and liberal Lord will grant to bestow on us his Spirit, that by it the seed of God's word may be quickened in our hearts, and that we, as holy and right hearers of his word, may bear fruit abundantly to the glory of God, and the everlasting salvation of our own souls. For what will it avail to hear the word of God without faith, and without the Holy Spirit of God to work or stir inwardly in our hearts? The apostle Paul says, "He that waters is nothing, nor he that plants; but it is God who gives increase." 1Cor 3.7

We therefore need God's watering, that the word of God may grow to a mature age, may receive increase, yes, and may also come to produce ripe fruit within our minds.

The same apostle Paul says, "The word of God is declared to us also, even as to our fathers. But it availed them nothing to hear the word, because it was not joined with faith in those who heard it. For they died in the desert." And immediately after he says, "Let us therefore do our best to enter into that rest, so that no man dies in the same example of unbelief." [\[188\]](#)

Therefore, if the word of God sounds in our ears; and with that, the Spirit of God shows his power in our hearts; and in faith we truly receive the word of God; *then* the word of God has a mighty force and a wonderful effect in us. For it drives away the misty darkness of errors, it opens our eyes, it converts and enlightens our minds, and instructs us most fully and absolutely in truth and godliness. For the prophet David in his Psalms bears witness, and says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of God is true, and gives wisdom to the simple; the commandment of the Lord is pure, and gives light to the eyes." Psa 19.7-8 Furthermore, the word of God feeds, strengthens, confirms, and comforts our souls; it regenerates, cleanses, makes joyful, and joins us to God; yes, and it obtains all things for us at God's hands, setting us in a most happy state — insomuch that no goods or treasure of the whole world compare with the word of God.

This much we attribute to the word of God, and not without the testimony of God's word. For the Lord by the prophet Amos threatens hunger and thirst — "not to eat bread and to drink water, but to hear the word of God." Amo 8.11 For in the old and new Testaments, it is said that "man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." [\[189\]](#) And the apostle Paul says that, "all things in the scriptures are written for our learning, that by patience and the comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." Rom 15.4 Also Peter says, "You are born anew, not of

corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which lives and lasts forever. And this is the word which was preached to you by the gospel." 1Pet 1.23, 25

The Lord also in the gospel bears witness to this, and says, "Now you are clean by the word which I have spoken to you." Joh 15.3 Again in the gospel he cries out saying, "If any man loves me, he will keep my saying, and my Father will love him, and we will come into him, and make our dwelling-place in him." Joh 14.23 Jeremiah says also, "Your word became my comfort." Jer 15.16 And the prophet David says, "The statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart." Psa 19.8 To this add that saying of the Lord's in the gospel, "If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, ask what you will, and it shall be done for you." Joh 15.7 In another place also, the prophet cries out saying, "If you are willing and will hearken, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you will not hear my word, the sword shall devour you." Isa 1.19-20 Moreover, Moses very often and largely reckons up the good things that will happen to those who obey the word of God: Leviticus 26, Deut. 28. Therefore, David boldly dares to prefer the word of God above all the pleasures and treasures of this world.

"The fear of the Lord is clean, and endures forever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and altogether righteous— they are more to be desired than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the dripping honeycombs. For your servant is plainly taught by them, and there is a great advantage in keeping them. Therefore, the law of Your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of silver and gold. Unless my delight had been in your law, I would have perished in my misery." [\[190\]](#)

To this now pertains that parable in the gospel, of the one who bought the precious pearl; and also of the one who sold all that he had, and bought the ground in which he knew that treasure was hidden. Mat 13.44-46 For that precious pearl, and that treasure, are the gospel, or the word of God. For the excellence of it, in the scriptures it is called a light, a fire, a sword, a maul [191] which breaks stones, a buckler,[192] and by many other names like these.

Dearly beloved, this hour you have heard our bountiful Lord and God, "who would have all men saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth;" how he has revealed his word to all men throughout the whole world, with the intent that all men in all places, of whatever kind, age, or degree they are, may know the truth, and be instructed in the true salvation; and may learn a perfect way how to live rightly, well, and holily, so that the man of God may be perfect, instructed to all good works. For in the word of truth, the Lord has delivered to his church all that is requisite to true godliness and salvation. Whatever things are necessary to be known touching God, the works, judgments, will, and commandments of God, touching Christ, our faith in Christ, and the duties of a holy life — all those things, I say, are fully taught in the word of God. Neither does the church need to crave any other, nor otherwise patch up with men's supplies, that which seems to be lacking in the word of the Lord. For the Lord not only taught our fathers the whole sum of godliness and salvation by the lively expressed voice of the apostles; but he also provided that, by means of those same apostles, it would be set down in writing. And it manifestly appears that it was done for posterity's sake — that is, for us and our successors — with the intent that none of us or ours should be seduced, nor that false traditions be popped into any of our mouths instead of the truth. We must all therefore beware; we must all watch, and stick fast to the word of God, which is left to us in the scriptures by the prophets and apostles.



Finally, let our care be wholly bent, with faith and profit, to hear whatever the Lord declares to us. Let us cast out and tread underfoot, whatever by our flesh, the world, or the devil, is objected as a hindrance to godliness. We know what the diseases and plagues of the seed of God's word are, sown in the hearts of the faithful. We know how great the power of God's word is in those who hear it devoutly.

i.70

Let us therefore beseech our Lord God to pour into our minds his holy Spirit, by whose virtue the seed of God's word may be quickened in our hearts, to bring forth much fruit to the salvation of our souls, and the glory of God our Father. To whom be glory forever.

## **1-3. THE THIRD SERMON: THE SENSE OF THE WORD OF GOD**

Of the sense and right exposition of the word of God,  
and by what manner of means it may be expounded.

DEARLY beloved brethren, I understand that by means of my doctrine of the word of God, there have risen sundry thoughts in the hearts of many men; yes, and very ungodly statements are sown abroad by some. For there are some who suppose that the scriptures, that is, the very word of God, is so dark, that it cannot be read with any profit at all. [\[193\]](#) And again, some others affirm that the word plainly delivered by God to mankind, stands in need of no exposition. And therefore they say that the scriptures should indeed be read by all men, but that each man may lawfully invent and choose such a

sense that he is persuaded would be most convenient for himself. [194] These fellows altogether condemn the order received by the churches, by which the minister of the church expounds the scriptures to the congregation. But dearly beloved, as you have begun to pray to the Lord, so you will go on I trust, by the hope that I have in God's goodness, that I am able to plainly declare to the godly, that the scripture is not dark at all, and that the Lord's will is altogether to have us understand it; and then, that the scriptures should always be expounded.

I will also teach you the manner of this, and some ready ways to interpret the scriptures. Handling these points will take away the impediments which drive men from reading the word of God, and will cause the reading and hearing of the word of God to be both wholesome and fruitful.

***1. It may be understood by the least among us.***

And first of all, we may thereby gather that God's will is to have his word understood by mankind, especially because in speaking to his servants, he used a most common kind of speech with which even veritable idiots [195] were acquainted. Nor do we read that the prophets and apostles, the servants of God and interpreters of his high and everlasting wisdom, used any strange kind of speech. So that in the whole pack of writers, none can be found to excel them in a plainer and easier phrase of writing. Their writings are full of common proverbs, similitudes, parables, comparisons, devised narrations, examples, and other like speech. There is nothing that more moves and plainly teaches the common sorts of wits among mortal men than these.

There arises, I confess, some darkness in the scriptures, because of the idiomatic nature, figurative ornaments, and unfamiliar use of the

tongues. But that difficulty may easily be helped by study, diligence, faith, and the means of skilful interpreters. I know that the apostle Peter says that in the epistles of Paul "many things are hard to understand." 2Pet 3.16 But he immediately adds, "which the unlearned, and those who are imperfect or unstable, pervert, as they do the other scriptures also, to their own destruction." By this we gather that the scripture is difficult or obscure to the unlearned, unskilful, unexercised, and malicious or corrupted wills, and not to the zealous and godly readers or hearers of it. Therefore, when St. Paul says, "If as yet our gospel is hidden, it is hidden from those who perish, in whom the prince of this world has blinded the understanding of unbelievers, so that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine for them." [\[196\]](#)

## ***2. What is less clear is interpreted by what is more clear***

He does not lay the blame for this difficulty on the word of God, but on the unprofitable hearers. Whoever we are, therefore, who desire to rightly understand the word of God, our care must be that Satan does not possess our minds, and close our eyes. For our Saviour also said in the gospel, "This is damnation, because the light came into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." Joh 3.19 Besides, the holy prophets of God and the apostles did not call the word of God, or the scriptures, darkness, obscureness, or mistiness, but a *certain* brightness and enlightenment. David says, "Your word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my paths." Psa 119.105 And what, I ask you, is more evident than this: that in making doubtful and obscure things manifest, no man refers to darkness and uncertainties? Things that are uncertain, doubtful, and obscure, are made manifest by those things that are more certain, sure, and evident. But, as often as any question or controversy happens in

matters of faith, do not all men agree that it ought to be ended and determined by the scriptures? It must therefore be, that the scriptures are evident, plain, and most assuredly certain.

### ***3. Let it be expounded by gifted teachers***

But though the scripture is manifest and the word of God is evident, yet, notwithstanding, it does not refuse a godly or holy exposition. Rather, a holy exposition sets out the word of God, and produces much fruit in the godly hearer. And because many deny that the scriptures ought to have any exposition, I will show by examples (which cannot be challenged) that they ought to be altogether expounded. For God himself, often having communication with Moses during the space of forty days, and during as many years, expounded the words of the law to the church by Moses, which he spoke to the whole congregation of Israel at Mount Sinai, writing them in two tablets. Moses left these to us in Deuteronomy and certain other books, as commentaries on God's commandments. After that immediately followed the prophets who, interpreting the law of Moses, applied it to the times, places, and men of their age; and they left their sermons to us who follow, as plain expositions of God's law. In the eighth chapter of Nehemiah, we read these words:

"Ezra the priest brought in the law, the book of Moses, and stood upon a turret made of wood, (that is, in the holy pulpit). And Ezra opened the book before the congregation of men and women, and whoever else had any understanding. And the Levites stood with him, so that he read out of the book, and the Levites instructed the people in the law, and the people stood in their place, and they read in the book of the law distinctly, expounding the sense, and causing them to understand the reading." Neh 8.2-8

This much is in the book of Nehemiah. By the way, mark here my brethren, that the lawful and holy ministers of the church of God not only read the word of God, but also expounded it.

This manner of reading and expounding the scriptures, or word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ neither abrogated nor contemned when, coming in the flesh as a true prophet and heavenly master, [\[197\]](#) he instructed the people of his church in the doctrine of the new Testament. For entering into the synagogue at Nazareth, he stood up to read, and the book of the prophet Isaiah was delivered to him. So he opened the book, and read a certain notable place out of the sixty-first chapter. Then, shutting the book, he gave it to the minister again, and expounded what he had read, declaring how that prophecy was now fulfilled in himself. Luk 4.16-21 Moreover, after he had risen from death, he joined himself in company with the two disciples who went to Emaus, and talked of sundry matters with them. But at length, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them whatever was written of himself throughout all the scriptures." Luk 24.15-27

The apostles, following this example of the Lord, also expounded the word of God themselves. For Peter, in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, expounds the sixteenth Psalm of Christ's resurrection from the dead. Act 2.25-31 And Philip also plainly expounds to the nobleman of Ethiopia the prophecy of Isaiah, whereby he brings him to the faith of Christ and fellowship of the church. Act 8.30-38 Whoever says that Paul does not everywhere interpret the holy scripture, has neither read nor seen the deeds or writings of Paul. Thus I have, I hope, both plainly and substantially shown that the word of God ought to be expounded.

#### ***4. Expound it according to the author's intent and circumstances***

And for those who cry out against the exposition of the scriptures, and would not have the ministers of the word and churches declare the scriptures in open and solemn audience, nor apply them to the places, times, states, and persons — their strategy is to seek something other than the honour due to God. They lead their lives far otherwise than is fitting [198] for godly men. Their talk is wicked, unseemly, and dishonest. Their deeds are mischievous and heinous offences. And they would do this without punishment; therefore they desire to have the exposition of the scriptures taken clean away. For if a man reads the words of the scripture only, not applying it to the states, places, times, and persons, it seems that he has not greatly touched their ungodly and wicked life. Therefore, when they cry that sermons and expositions of the scriptures ought to be taken away from among men, and that the scriptures ought to be read simply without any addition, they mind nothing else but to cast behind them the law of God, to tread underfoot all discipline and rebuking of sin, and so to offend freely without punishment. The righteous Lord will, in his appointed time, punish this sort of men that much more grievously, as they more boldly rebel against their God.

In the meantime, all the ministers of the church must beware not to follow their own affections in this, any whit at all, or else they will corrupt the scriptures by their wrong interpretations. And so, by that means, they will present to the church their own inventions, and not the word of God. It seems that the teachers of the ancient people in olden times committed a similar offence, because the Lord in Ezekiel accuses them, saying, "It seems a small thing to you to have eaten up the good pasture, but must you also tread the residue of your pasture under your feet, and drink the clearer water? Must you trouble the

rest with your feet? Thus my sheep must be willing to eat the thing that is trodden down with your feet, and drink what you have defiled with your feet." Eze 34.18-19 There is a sore offence in this, which the Lord punishes most sharply, according to his justice.

We therefore, the interpreters of God's holy word, and faithful ministers of the church of Christ, must have a diligent regard to keep the scriptures sound and perfect, and to teach the people of Christ the word of God sincerely — made plain, I mean, and not corrupted or darkened by foolish and wrong expositions of our own invention.

### ***5. Don't go beyond what is written***

And now, dearly beloved, the place and time require us to say something to you touching the interpretation of the holy scriptures, or the exposition of the word of God. In this I will not say anything particularly of the skilful knowledge of tongues, or the liberal sciences, which are things requisite in a good interpreter; but I will briefly touch the generalities alone. First of all, you must understand that some things in the scriptures, or word of God, are so plainly set forth, that they have no need of interpretation, nor will they allow for any exposition. If any man goes about with his own expositions to make these more manifest, he may seem to do as wittily as someone who, with fagot-light [199] and torches, would help the sun at its rising give more light to the world. As for those things which are so set down that they seem to require our help to expound them, they must not be interpreted after our own fantasies, but according to the mind and meaning of Him by whom the scriptures were revealed. For St. Peter says, "The prophecy did not come in olden times by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." [200] Therefore, the true and proper sense of God's word must be taken out of the scriptures themselves, and not be

forcibly thrust upon the scriptures, as we ourselves lust. And with this, you must mark a few certain rules, which I mean to touch briefly and show to you, in those few words which I have yet to speak.

## ***6. Expound it consistent with the received doctrines of the Faith***

First, since the apostle Paul would have the exposition of the scriptures agree *fitly*, and in every point *proportionally* with our faith, as seen in the twelfth chapter to the Romans; Rom 12.6 and because again in the second epistle to the Corinthians, he says, "Seeing then that we have the same spirit of faith (as it is written, 'I believed, and therefore I have spoken'), we also believe, and therefore we speak." 2Cor 4.13

Let it therefore be taken for a point of catholic religion, not to bring in or admit anything in our expositions which others have alleged against the received articles of our faith contained in the Apostles' Creed and other confessions of the ancient fathers. For the apostle says, "In defence of the truth we can say something, but against the truth we are able to say nothing." 2Cor 13.8 When we therefore read in the gospel of St. John, this saying of the Lord, "The Father is greater than I," Joh 14.28 we must think that it is against the articles of our faith to make or admit any inequality in the Godhead between the Father and the Son; and therefore, the Lord's meaning was otherwise than the very words seem to import at first blush.

Again, when we read this saying of the apostle, "It cannot be that those who were once illuminated, if they fall away, should be renewed again into repentance," Heb 6.4-6 let us not believe that repentance is to be denied to those who fall. For the catholic faith is this: that at every place, in every season, so long as we live on this



earth, a full pardon of all sins is promised to all men who turn to the Lord. In like manner, when we read that the Lord took bread and said of the bread, "This is my body," Mat 26.26 let us quickly remember that the articles of our faith attribute to our Lord the very body of a man, which ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father, from where it shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And let us think that the Lord, speaking of the sacrament, would have us expound the words of the sacrament sacramentally, and not transubstantially. Also in reading that saying of the apostle, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," 1Cor 15.50 let us not then take these words as they simply seem to signify, but sticking to the article of our faith, "I believe the resurrection of the body," [201] let us understand that "flesh and blood" mean the affections and infirmities, not the nature and substance, of our bodies.

### ***7. Expound it according to Law of Love***

Furthermore, we read in the gospel that the Lord sums up the law and the prophets, saying, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the chief and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. In these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets," Mat 22.37-40. Upon these words of the Lord, that holy man Aurelius Augustinus, in the thirty-sixth chapter of his first book *De Doctrina Christi*, says,

"Whoever seems to himself to understand the holy scriptures, or any part of it, so that with that understanding he does not work these two points of charity towards God and his neighbour, he does not yet understand the scriptures perfectly. But whoever takes out of them such an opinion that is profitable to *working* this charity, and yet he

does not say the self-same thing which it will be proved that the writer meant in that place — that man does not err to his own destruction, nor does he altogether deceive other men by lying." [\[202\]](#)

This much wrote Augustine. We must therefore, by all means possible, take heed that our interpretations do not tend to overthrow charity, but tend to its furtherance and commendation to all men. The Lord says, "Do not strive with the wicked." Mat 5.39 But if we affirm that he spoke this to the magistrates also, then charity towards our neighbours, the safety of those who are in jeopardy, and the defence of the oppressed, would be broken and clean taken away. [\[203\]](#) For thieves and unruly persons, robbers, and naughty fellows, would oppress the widows, the fatherless, and the poor, so that all iniquity would reign and have the upper hand. But in a matter so manifestly known, I suppose it is not needful to use many examples.

### ***8. Expound each passage according to its context***

Moreover, it is requisite in expounding the scriptures, and searching out the true sense of God's word, that we mark upon what occasion everything is spoken, what goes before, what follows after, at what season, in what order, and of what person anything is spoken. By the occasion, and the sentences going before and coming after, examples and parables are for the most part expounded. Also, unless a man always marks the manner of speaking throughout the whole scripture, and does that very diligently too, he cannot help in his expositions but to err very much out of the right way. St. Paul, observing the circumstance of the time, thereby concluded that Abraham was justified, neither by circumcision, nor yet by the law. The places are to be seen in the fourth chap. to the Romans and the third chap. to the Galatians. Again, when it is said to Peter, "Put away

your sword into your sheath; he that takes up the sword shall perish with the sword" Mat 26.52 — we must consider that Peter bore the personage of an apostle, and not of a magistrate. For we read that the sword is given to the magistrate for revenge. Rom 13.4 But it would be overly tedious and too troublesome to repeat more examples from every particular place.

### ***9. Compare like scriptures together***

Beside these, there is also another manner of interpreting the word of God: that is, by conferring together the places which are like or unlike, and by expounding the darker by the more evident, and the fewer by the more in number. Therefore, though the Lord says, "The Father is greater than I," we must consider that the same Lord, in another place, says, "My Father and I are one." [204] And though James the apostle says that Abraham and we are justified by works, Jas 2.21, 24 there are many places in St. Paul to be set against that one. And Peter the apostle allows this manner of interpreting where he says, "We have a right sure word of prophecy, to which if you attend, as to a light that shines in a dark place, you do well, until the day dawns, and the day-star arises in your hearts." 1Pet 1.19

That ancient writer Tertullian affirms that "they are heretics, and not men of the right faith, who draw some odd things out of the scriptures for their own purpose, not having any respect to the rest. But by that means, they pick out for themselves a certain few testimonies which they would have altogether believed, the whole scripture in the meantime questioning it, because indeed the fewer places must be understood according to the meaning of those that are more numerous." [205]

### ***10, Expound it humbly before God***

And finally, the most effectual rule of all, by which to expound the word of God, is a heart that loves God and his glory — not puffed up with pride, not desirous of vainglory, not corrupted with heresies and evil affections; but which continually prays to God for his holy Spirit, that as the scripture was revealed and inspired by it, so also it may be expounded by the same Spirit to the glory of God and the safeguard of the faithful. Let the mind of the interpreter be set on fire with zeal to advance virtue, and with hatred of wickedness, even to suppressing it. Let not the heart of such an expositor call to counsel that subtle sophister the devil, lest perhaps he also corrupts the sense of God's word now, as he previously did in paradise. Let him not abide to hear man's wisdom argue directly against the word of God. If the good and faithful expositor of God's word does this, then although in some points he does not (as the proverb says) hit the very head of the nail in the darker sense of the scripture, yet notwithstanding, that error should not be condemned as a heresy in the author, nor judged hurtful to the hearer. And whoever brings the darker and more proper meaning of the scripture to light, should not later condemn the imperfect exposition of that other — no more than the author of an imperfect exposition should reject the more proper sense of the better expositor; but by acknowledging it, he will receive it with thanksgiving.

I have said this much up to here touching the sense and exposition of God's word — which, as God revealed it to men, so also he would have them in any case understand it. Therefore, there is no cause for any man, by reason of a few difficulties, to despair of attaining the true understanding of the scriptures. The scripture allows for a godly and religious interpretation. The word of God is a rule for all men and ages to lead their lives by. Therefore, by interpretation, it should be applied to all ages and men of all sorts.

For even our God himself, by Moses, in many words expounded and applied to his people the law which he gave and published in Mount Sinai. Furthermore, it was a solemn use among the ancient prophets first to read, and then to apply by expositions, God's law to the people. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself expounded the scriptures. The apostles did the same also. The word of God therefore *ought* to be expounded. As for those who would *not* have it expounded, their intent is to sin freely, without control or punishment. But though the scripture allows for an exposition, it does not yet allow for any exposition whatsoever. For it utterly rejects that which savours of man's imagination. For just as the scripture was revealed by the Spirit of God, so it is requisite to expound it by the same Spirit. There are therefore certain rules to expound the word of God religiously, by the very word of God itself — that is, to so expound it, that the exposition does not disagree with the articles of our faith, [\[206\]](#) nor is it contrary to charity towards God and our neighbour. But rather, that it be thoroughly surveyed, and grounded upon that which went before and follows after, by diligent weighing of all the circumstances, and laying together the places. And chiefly, it is requisite that the heart of the interpreter be of a godly bent, willing to plant virtue and pluck up vice by the roots — and finally, that it is always ready evermore to pray to the Lord, that he will grant to illuminate our minds, that God's name may be glorified in all things. For His is the glory, honour, and dominion, forever and ever. Amen.

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[\[150\]](#) πᾶν ῥῆμα — Luke 1.37- *omne verbum*, Lat. and Vulg.

[\[151\]](#) Isa 40.8; 1Pet 1.25.

[152] The duration of our Lord's ministry is now usually admitted to have been three years and a half. See Greswell's *Harmon. Evang.*, and Dr Robinson's *Harmony of the Gospels*.

[153] Cf. Bullinger's Treatise, *The Old Faith*, translated in Coverdale's writings, etc. Parker Soc. ed. pp. 32, 36.

[154] There is some great miscalculation here; for Abraham, if born at all before Noah's death, could only have been in his infancy. Yet Calvin also says that "Abraham was nearly fifty years old, when his ancestor Noah died." — Comment, in Gen cap. ix. 28. But see note, p. i.42.

[155] Kohath – Vulgate Caath.

[156] It is scarcely necessary to observe that the system of chronology here used differs considerably from the received system according to Usher. Bullinger followed the vulgar Jewish chronology, upon which the arrangements of Scaliger, Petavius, and Usher were afterwards founded. See Hales' *Chronology*, Vol. I. The difference does not materially affect the argument. P. The line of the patriarchal tradition may be seen traced in Gray's *Key to the Old Testament*, pp. 80, 81. ed. 1797. Lond.

[157] *Naughtiness*: that which is evil, wicked, and morally reprehensible.

[158] *Surfeiting*: over-indulging one's appetite (for food, drink, sex, material goods, etc.).

[159] *authentica, orthodoxa, et catholica*, Lat. P.

[160] See Bullinger's treatise, *The Old Faith*, in Works of Bp. Coverdale, Parker Soc. Ed. pp. 27, 40.]

[161] Num 12.10. Miriam: Vulg. *Maria*.

[162] Theotectus tragaediarum scriptor, Lat. Theodectes, according to Suidas and Gellius x. 18, was a tragedian, and contemporary with Theopompus, who was an orator and historian, a pupil of Isocrates. Josephus, Lib. xn. cap. 2. Antiq. Jud., and Aristeas de LXX. Interp. relate the story referred to; namely, that each of these writers was preparing to put forth a part of the scriptures, as their own composition, when they were visited, the former with blindness, the latter with madness, which lasted thirty days. Ger. Vossius. Lib. i. c. 7. P.

[163] The word "doctors" is used throughout to refer to the gifted teachers of the church. – WHG

[164] *Breviary*: a compendium or extensive collection.

[165] Originally, *Thora*, תּוֹרָה [Exo 13.9], *a verbo; instituere, docere*. – Foster, Lex. Heb P. – quam Legem vulgo vertimus, Hebraeis ab indicando docendoque dicitur. Bucer. in Psalm, ii. ed. Steph. 1554. p. 16. See also Hooper's *Early Writings*, p. 88, Parker Soc. Ed.

[166] *Commonweal*: a community.

[167] *tantum non adorarunt*, Lat.; almost worshipped (adored).

[168] That Astyages, son of Cyaxares the first, is the Ahasuerus, and Cyaxares the second, Astyages son, the Darius the Mede, of scripture, see Prideaux's *Connect*. Vol. i. pp. 72, 104, 120, ed. McCaul, Lond. 1845.

[169] Originally, "an evangelist rather than a prophet..." Ita ut a quibusdam evangelista quam propheta potius diceretur (Esaias). Augustin. de Civ. Dei. Lib. xviii. cap. 29. Par. 1531. Tom. v. – Deinde

etiam hoc adjiciendum, quod non tarn propheta, quam evangelista, dicendus sit (Isaias). Hieron. Prsef. in lib. Isai. Ed. Par.1693-1706. Tom. i. col. 473. See also Bullinger's treatise, The Old Faith, ap. Works of Bp. Coverdale, Parker Soc. ed. p. 66.

[170] Mat 10.2-4; Act 1.26.

[171] 1Tim 2.7; 2Tim 1.11.

[172] The canon of Scripture received by the church of Rome, containing most of those books which we call apocryphal, was first set forth by the council of Trent; and afterwards confirmed by the bull of pope Pius IV. a.d. 1564. On this subject see Burnet on the 6th Article, with the notes in Page's Ed. 1839; and Bishop Cosin's "Scholastical History of the Canon of Scripture." P.

[173] See before, page i.12, where the number is inaccurately stated.

[174] Act 10.

[175] spiritually, ed. 1577; spiritualiter, Lat. P.

[176] apostles, 1577; *apostoli*, Lat.

[177] Originally: "what they ought to fly, and what to ensue."

[178] Jas 1.5. Originally: "neither casts any man in the teeth..." a Middle English aphorism. **NKJ**: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without **reproach**, and it will be given to him."

[179] Deu 4.2; 12.32; Pro 30.6.



[180] John 16.12, 13. For this and the other texts, by which the Romanists maintain patristical and ecclesiastical tradition, see the treatise "Of Unwritten Verities", in Remains of Abp. Cranmer, Parker Soc. ed. chap, ix.]

[181] Albert. Pigh. Controversiarum praecipuarum, etc. *Explicatio*. Par. 1549. fol. 95. b. Controv. 3. *de Ecclesia*.

[182] *comprehendam*, Lat. "comprehend" or encompass.

[183] Rom 12.3: to think soberly. "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think **soberly**, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."

[184] *Over-curious*: too elaborate; in this case, nit-picking the finer points unnecessarily.

[185] Pro 25.27, according to the Vulgate version, which "He that is a searcher of majesty (viz. of God), shall be overwhelmed by glory." Douay Version. Calvin uses the text in the same sense, Instit. Lib. in. cap. 21. § 2.]

[186] Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 3.21-23.

[187] *Naughty*: evil, wicked, and morally reprehensible.

[188] Heb 4.2; 3.17; 4.11.

[189] Deu 8.3; Mat 4.4.

[190] Psa 19.9-11, and 119.72, 92.

[191] *Maul*: a heavy long-handled hammer used to drive stakes or wedges; a sledge-hammer.

[192] Psa 119.105; Jer 23.29; Eph 6.17; Psa 91.4. – a shield; armor carried on the arm to intercept blows.

[193] Albert. Pigh. *Controv. Praecip. Explicatio*. Par. 1549. fol. 93. *Controv. 3. de Ecclesia*.

[194] Hooker's *Preface to Eccles. Pol.* Vol. i. p. 180. ed. Oxf. 1820.

[195] Idiot: an uneducated person, P.

[196] 2Cor 4.3, 4. "Lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ..." Cranmer's Bible, 1539.

[197] A teacher of the new Testament, or of the Christian church.

[198] Originally, "*comely*."

[199] That is, a match to light kindling.

[200] 2Pet 1.20, 21. The translator has here omitted, "No prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation." P.

[201] Of this body. See below, page i.168.

[202] Aug. *de Doct. Christ.* I. 36. Par. 1531. Tom. iii. fol. 5. P. In other words, if he rightly applies the principle of love, he hasn't misled anyone, even if he misses the original intent of the passage.

[203] That is, if we say that magistrates must not strive with the wicked, then evil will go unrestrained and unpunished.

[204] Joh 14.28, and 10.30.

[205] Tertull. *adv. Praxeam*, cap. 20. Opp. ed. Semler. Tom. ii. p. 183. Hal. Mag. 1828.

[206] Bullinger is not suggesting that creeds should control the interpretation of Scripture. Rather, the Scripture having been interpreted, and its truths summarized into creeds, it would be unwise to reinterpret Scripture in such a way that those truths are contradicted. That would be "novelty." The Reformation was not filled with novel doctrines. Instead, it restored to the Church its original doctrines, which had been twisted or abandoned over time.  
– WHG

