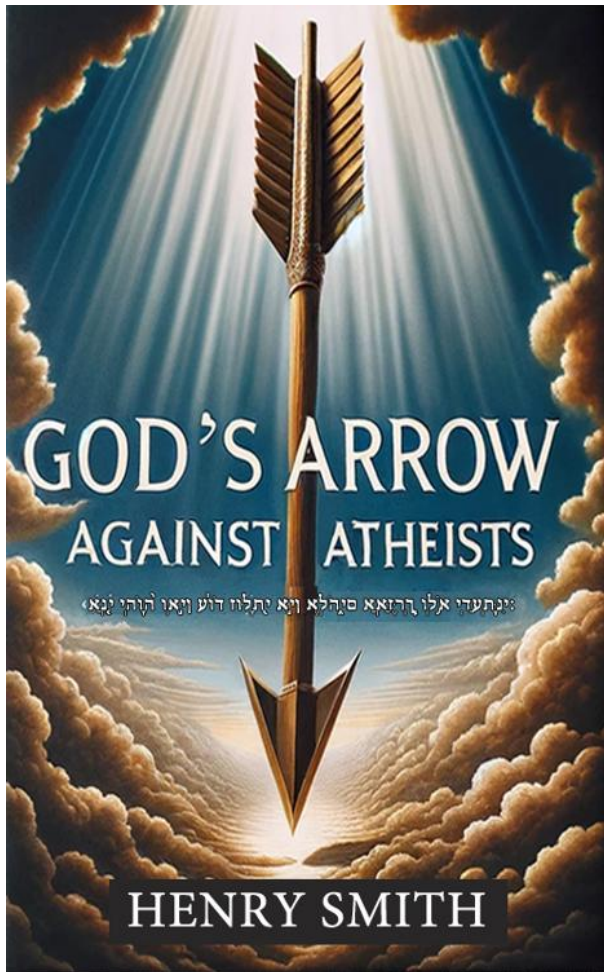


GOD'S ARROW AGAINST ATHEISTS

יִנְחֵעֲדוּ אֱלֹהֵי הַרְזָאָה סִינְהֵלָא וְיֵאָ יִתְלֹז דוּעַ וְיֵאָו הִוְהִי קִנְאָה

HENRY SMITH



God's Arrow Against Atheists

by Henry Smith

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To the Right Worshipful,

Virtuous, and Godly Lady Katherine Hayward,

Wife to Sir Rowland Hayward, the grave Father and Ancient Alderman of the famous City of London, John Danter, wishes Health, with an increase of Authority.

The Gardener (right virtuous and Godly Lady), Walking in the prime of Summer, in a fragrant and fragrant Garden, where grow all sorts of sweet Flowers, commonly gathers the pleasant Rose to gratify his Master: So I (right Worshipful), having come to my hand many excellent works to be published abroad in the world, have from among them all, chosen this Book Entitled, "God's Arrowe against Atheists," as the purest Rose for your Ladyship to delight in: hoping, with this favor, that you will be the sweet Patroness of this my poor goodwill, and to shield it under the wings of your clemency from the bitter storms of all Heretical Schismatics: In so doing my mind will be fully satisfied, that long has waited the time, to show my bounden duty to the Grave Fathers and Ancient Governors of this famous City of London, but especially to the right worshipful Sir Rowland Hayward, your reverent Husband, who thrice has been Lieutenant under her Majesty and held the chiefest office in this City, for the preservation of London's Charter: And you, sweet Ladies renowned

wife, whose virtuous mind has ever yet been willing to promote Scholars in the setting forth of God's truth, and to support the true endeavors of us Citizens, I therefore still expect your wonted and favorable liking, that you will spend some part of winter's weary nights and summer's pleasant evenings, in perusing over this worthy book, made by that famous learned man Master Henry Smith, before he departed this life, wherein is discussed, the vain Heresies of various religions now used in England, to the great harm of this flourishing Commonwealth: In doing so, I have my desire, wishing you the increase of all dignity in this world, and in the world to come, everlasting happiness. Amen.

Yours in all Humble and dutiful service to his poor power, John Danter Printer.

Chapter 1

God's Arrow Against Atheism and Irreligion.

A Theism and Irreligion were always abhorrent, even among the Heathens themselves; to the extent that Protagoras, for doubting whether there were any God or not, was banished by the Athenians from their Country. Diagoras was such a notorious Infidel that he believed there was no God; him and all such like Atheists were abhorred and detested even by the Heathens, resembling more like wild beasts than reasonable men. For Cicero, the Heathen Philosopher, condemned them all, and further stated that there was never any Nation so savage, or people so barbarous, but they always

confessed there was a God; led by the light of Nature and natural instinct. This is confirmed by the common practice of all Heathens, who would lift up their eyes and hands to heaven in any sudden distress that befell them. Moreover, through the experience of all ages, it has been proven that Atheists themselves, those who, in their health and prosperity, would strive against the existence of a God for the sake of more liberty in sinning, when they came to die or fell into great misery, showed themselves to be the most fearful of this God, as Seneca himself declared. To such an extent that Zeno, the Philosopher, used to say that it seemed to him a more substantial proof of this matter to hear an Atheist at his death, preaching about God (when he asked God and all the world for forgiveness), than to hear all the Philosophers in the world debating the point. For at the moment of death and misery, it is likely that such speak in earnest and sober spirit, who previously, in their wantonness, opposed God. It is remembered of Gaius Caligula, that wicked and incestuous Emperor, that he was a notable scoffer and disdainer of God, making no account of any other being God except himself. Yet this abominable and wicked Atheist, God did not leave unpunished (for, by His just judgment, Caligula was killed by some of his own officers). While he lived, this Emperor was accustomed (as the Historiographers report of him) at the terrifying thunder and lightning, not only to cover his head but also to hide himself under his bed for fear. Where do you suppose this fear came from? It came from his own conscience telling him (however, he might not affirm it in words) that there was a God in heaven, able to humble and overthrow his pride and that of all the Emperors in the world if He so desired. Whose thunderbolts were so terrible that, by his own example, he showed he was to be feared by all the world. Some even say that God is called Deus, from the Greek word Theos, which means fear because the fear of Him is ingrained in the very nature and conscience of all reasonable creatures, even in the conscience of

the greatest contemners and vilest Atheists in the world. Regardless of what they say or do, they will never be able to erase this impression: that there is a God, whose fear is engraved in the hearts of all men. So, where does shame come from in men after committing an offense? Or why should men (by natural distinction) differentiate between virtue and vice, good and evil if there were no God, who, because He loves the former and hates the latter, has written that distinction in every man's heart? Therefore, it can be concluded that every man's knowledge, conscience, and feelings serve as a thousand witnesses to convince him (whoever he may be) that there is a God to be feared, who abhors iniquity and wicked ways, and who should be sought as refuge and relief in times of trouble and deep distress (as the actions of even the Heathens themselves plainly demonstrate).

2 Moreover, as God is to be sensibly felt in every man's conscience, He is also to be seen visibly (if I may put it that way) in the creation of the world and all things contained therein. For, as all the eminent Philosophers have agreed (except for Aristotle, for a time, who held a fancy that the world had no beginning but was from all eternity; but eventually, in his old age, he confessed and held the opposite in his book "De Mundo," which he wrote to King Alexander, a book highly esteemed by Justin Martyr, who called it the epitome of all Aristotle's true Philosophy). Given that the world had a beginning, it must necessarily follow that it had an efficient cause or maker. So, I ask, who made it? If you claim that it made itself, it is absurd, for how could it make itself before it existed, when it had no being at all? If you say that something within the world made the world, meaning that some part of the world made the whole, that is even more absurd; for it is as absurd as saying that a finger (and this before it was a finger or part of the body) made the whole body. Therefore, it must be confessed, through the force of this argument (which is

clearly demonstrative), that something greater and more excellent than the entire world combined, something that existed before heaven and earth were created, was and must have been the maker and creator of this world. This can be nothing else but God, the Creator of all things, who existed before all His creatures and is referred to in the sacred writings as Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, for He alone was without a beginning Himself and shall be without an end. For He is eternal, being the Primus Motor, and the Almighty Creator of all things. So true is what Paul the Apostle testifies when he says that the invisible things of God (His eternal power and divine essence) are perfectly seen in the creation of the world, understood through His works. If, therefore, men would only raise their eyes to the heavens, and from there look down upon the earth, and behold the exceptional beauty and structure of this world, they cannot be so foolish or obtuse as to deny that there was and is a God who was the creator of them all. They would be moved, in some way, to glorify such an incomparable and excellent Creator. The Poets and others have even declared God to be Pater hominum, the Father of men, to emphasize that men have their origin and creation from Him. So, if we were to divert our gaze from the contemplation of the vast world and focus solely on Man (who, due to his beauty and excellence, is called in Greek "Microcosmos," the little world), we would still be compelled to acknowledge God as our Author, the Father and Creator. Thus, it is true that Paul the Apostle takes from the Poet Aratus when he says, "We are the offspring of God." And it is equally true that he further says in that place, "In Him we live, move, and have our being." Therefore, we owe all dutiful obedience and submission to Him, a duty that nature commands us to fulfill in consideration of our Creation. For a son honors his father by natural obligation, and all men are naturally inclined to be grateful to their founders, to whom they are especially bound, and whom they should not forget, except if they are extremely ungrateful and dissolute.

3 Not only the Creation of the world, and all things therein contained, proclaims that there is a God who is to be honoured for His infinitely extended authority and almighty power (for He made all things out of nothing; He spoke the word, and they were created), but His daily blessings and benefits sent down upon the earth also demonstrate the existence of a God who is provident and cares for humanity. Therefore, He is to be praised, thanked, and glorified forever. For it is true, as Saint Paul says, that God did not leave Himself without a witness when He bestowed benefits from heaven, giving us rain and favourable weather, and filling our hearts with food and gladness. Through these blessings and others, men may, and still may, daily be induced not only to believe in the existence of God from whom they receive all these, but also to acknowledge and attribute all praise and thanksgiving to Him as their primary and special benefactor. Just as the ox knows its owner and the donkey its master, feeder, and sustainer, it is only reasonable that human beings should know God, not only as their first creator but also as their daily provider, preserver, keeper, and upholder. As they contemplate these things and experience them, they cannot help but be reminded of God, the sender and author of them all, and be moved by a grateful heart towards Him. That is why He is called Deus, derived from the Latin word "dando," which means giving. In English, we call God, as if "good," because He is perfectly and solely good in and of Himself, the giver of all goodness and every good gift and blessing to others. From Him, as from the fountain, all benefits come, flow, and are derived to them.

4 I could also demonstrate how God is known to the world through His judgments upon wicked and unrighteous people, upon whom He sometimes visibly inflicts His severity and justice (if people would only consider them). For in this way, God has revealed Himself, as

the Apostle Paul teaches. These promises, I trust, are sufficient (if there were nothing more to be said), for by them we can easily see and prove that there is a God who created the world and everything within it. He preserves and upholds it with His mighty power, supports the earth and all its creatures with His providence and helping hand, even beyond the heavens and the earth, the work of His hands. As I mentioned before, every person's conscience teaches them that there is a God to be feared. No matter how many people may have spent their lives in wicked ways and a most damnable course, secretly wishing in their hearts that there were no God, because they view God only in terms of His vengeance, their own conscience will at times provoke them and force the issue (that there is a God). It will make them tremble, fear, and shake in dread, for the fear of Him is so deeply ingrained in the nature of all human beings that it is impossible to shake it off. Moreover, a sense of devotion to worship Him as the Creator and preserver of humanity and all other things is implanted and inseparably fixed in the hearts of all people. Though not all people of all nations know how to worship Him correctly, and in the way that He requires, this is evident from the examples of all nations and peoples in the world, all of whom have some form of religion, though they do not all find the true religion. They are all devoted to the worship of God, albeit worshipping Him or something else in His place. Thus, it is clear that the notion sometimes voiced by Atheists, that religion is merely a matter of policy or a political invention, is most vain and foolish. For it is evident that a religious inclination to worship God is naturally sealed in the hearts of all people, and this has always been the case. Even the conscience of the greatest scorners and despisers of God, which sometimes trembles before His judgment seat, abundantly testifies to the presence of a religious devotion and fear towards God. This is innate and fixed in the hearts and consciences of all people, no matter how rude, savage, or barbarous they may be. What law of

man, I ask, compelled Emperor Caligula, when he heard the terrifying thunder in the air and saw the flashing flames of lightning around him, to run under his bed and hide himself for fear of this terrible and great God? Or what prompts the most hardened Atheist in the world to do the same in a similar situation and during a tempest? Or what caused the heathens in any dangerous or sudden distress to lift up their eyes or hands to heaven and be greatly afraid? No one can claim that it is a human law, for no human law enforces such behavior. Instead, it is a natural instinct—the fear of God, whom they have offended and whose vengeance they dread. They also believe that help may come from Him, and this instinct is seated in the hearts of all people from their very birth, causing them to fear and seek refuge in God. Let it remain firm and beyond doubt, therefore, that the fear of the great God and a religious disposition to worship the same God are not imposed by human laws but are naturally sown in the hearts of all people, though not all discover or observe the right religion. Let us now seek and explore which is the true religion, acceptable to God and to be observed by men without wavering or doubt. All nations and peoples have some form of religion, as I mentioned earlier, but not all have the true and right religion.

Chapter 2.

Wherein, and in the next Chapter, it is shown that the Christian Religion is the only true Religion in the world and that God is

pleased with it.

In ancient times, the world was divided and distinguished into Jews and Gentiles, and this distinction still exists among us. Therefore, if I can prove the truth of our Christian Religion against both Jews and Gentiles, I will then establish it against the whole world. In this Chapter, I will first prove it against the Jews, and in the next against the Gentiles. Concerning the Jews, they will readily acknowledge our Religion as the true Religion if we can prove that Jesus Christ (whom we believe in) is the Messiah foretold by their prophets, who were the true and undisputed prophets of God. This can easily be proven, and therefore the Jews have no grounds to expect any other Messiah than the one who has already come, namely Jesus Christ, our Mediator, Savior, and Redeemer. Through Him, God the Father is well pleased, and for His sake (if we believe in Him), God will be reconciled to us and save us. Everything foretold about their Messiah is fully fulfilled and accomplished in our Jesus Christ and in no one else. Therefore, our Jesus was and is the true Messiah and no other. Let us consider the marks of the Messiah by which He may be recognized. Thus, we shall see that our Savior Jesus Christ is the only true Messiah, and there is no one else.

1 One mark to recognize the Messiah is that when He came, He should not be recognized or acknowledged as the Messiah but should be rejected and refused by the Jewish Nation. This rejection and refusal were ordained by God's predetermined counsel, with the purpose that He would be put to death among them. If they had accepted Him as the Messiah, they would not have treated Him so shamefully, nor would He have been put to death as foretold. This, then, being one mark of the Messiah, that He should be rejected as the Messiah by the Jewish Nation, especially by their rulers, strengthens our faith because it is fully accomplished in our Savior

Jesus Christ, whom they scorned, rejected, condemned, and put to death. Therefore, since the Jewish Nation rejected our Jesus as the Messiah, it strongly persuades us that He was and is the true Messiah. Thus, anyone who expects a Messiah who would be wholly accepted by the Jewish Nation is in vain, for no such Messiah was promised. On the contrary, it was foretold that He would be rejected by them, just as our Jesus was, in order to become an offering for sin according to God's preordination.

2 It was foretold that the Messiah would be born of a Virgin (Isaiah 7:14), that His place of birth would be Bethlehem (Micah 5:1), and that at His birth, all the infants around Bethlehem would be slain for His sake (Jeremiah 31:15). The kings of the earth would come and adore Him, offering gold and other gifts (Psalm 72:10). He would be presented in the temple of Jerusalem to enhance the glory of the second temple (Matthew 3:1). He would flee into Egypt and be recalled from there (Hosea 11:2). A star would appear at His birth to announce His coming into the world (Numbers 24). John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, would be the messenger to go before Him, preparing the way and crying in the desert (Malachi 3:1; Malachi 4:5; Isaiah 40:3). Furthermore, He would begin His own preaching with humility, gentleness, and meekness (Isaiah 42:2). He would be poor, lowly, and of no worldly reputation (Isaiah 53; Daniel 9; Zechariah 9; Jeremiah 14). He would perform miraculous wonders and heal all diseases (Isaiah 29:8, 6, 5, 91). He would die and be slain for the sins of His people (Daniel 9; Isaiah 53). He would be betrayed by one of His disciples who had eaten with Him (Psalm 40:14, 54; Psalm 18:8). He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver, and with that money, a field of potsherd would be bought (Zechariah 11:12; Jeremiah 30). He would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey before His passion (Zechariah 9:9). He would be beaten and spat upon by the Jews, and they would defile His face

with their spittle (Isaiah 50:6). They would whip His body before putting Him to death (Isaiah 53:2; Psalm 37:18). He would be put to death among thieves and malefactors (Isaiah 53:12). They would give Him vinegar to drink, divide His garments, and cast lots for His clothing (Psalm 68:22; Psalm 22:18). He would die by crucifixion, that is, His hands and feet would be nailed to a cross (Psalm 22:16; Zechariah 12). His side would be pierced, and people would look upon Him, whom they had pierced (Zechariah 12). He would rise from death on the third day (Psalm 16:10; Hosea 6:3). He would ascend into Heaven and sit at the right hand of His Father, reigning in glory and sovereignty (Psalm 110:1, 2). All these things, and whatever else pertains to the Messiah, are perfectly fulfilled in Jesus Christ and in no one else. Therefore, He alone, and no one else, is the true Messiah.

3 Hitherto, I have discussed the circumstances and events related to the Messiah, including His incarnation, birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, as well as His rejection by the Jews and the Jewish Nation. While these events are indeed remarkable and sufficient to establish one's belief in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom they are faithfully fulfilled, considering the timing of the Messiah's appearance will further strengthen our faith.

The prophet Daniel, who lived during the time of the first monarchy, foretold that there would be three more monarchies, with the last of these four monarchies being the greatest of all. He also prophesied that during the days of this fourth and final monarchy, which was the Roman Empire, the eternal King or Messiah would come and establish God's kingdom throughout the world. This prophecy came true when Jesus was born during the fourth monarchy, which was the Roman Empire, specifically during the reign of Emperor Augustus. Let us examine this matter more closely.

As everyone knows, the Temple of Jerusalem was constructed twice. First, it was built by King Solomon and stood for about 440 years. Then it was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. About 70 years later, it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, who led the Jews out of captivity. However, this second Temple, in terms of splendor and material riches, did not compare to the first Temple. This fact is evident in the weeping of the elders who remembered the first Temple when they saw the second, as recorded in the book of Ezra. The prophet Haggai also explicitly states the same. Nevertheless, God, through His prophet Haggai, proclaimed that after a while, the Desired of All Nations would come, and at that time, the second house or Temple would be filled with glory. The glory of this last house would surpass that of the first. This prophecy was fulfilled when our Savior Jesus Christ entered the second Temple. His personal presence there brought far greater dignity and glory than anything seen in Solomon's first Temple. Therefore, it is clear that the Desired of All Nations, the Messiah, was to come while the second Temple still stood. Daniel also indicated that the second Temple, after its rebuilding, would not be destroyed until the Messiah had come and been slain. The prophet Malachi similarly testified that the Messiah would come during the time of the second Temple, which indeed happened. Jesus Christ came into the world during the existence of the second Temple, and He Himself foretold its destruction before that generation passed. This prophecy was fulfilled when the Temple was destroyed about 46 years after our Savior's ascension into heaven, under the Roman Emperor Titus, the son of Vespasian. Therefore, it is futile for the Jews or anyone else to expect a Messiah to come after the destruction of the second Temple.

Let us also consider the prophecy made by Jacob regarding the specific time of the Messiah's appearance. Jacob addressed his children, saying, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you

what shall happen to you in the latter days," etc. He prophesied that the scepter, symbolizing royal authority, would not depart from Judah until Shiloh came, whom the Gentiles eagerly expected. Shiloh refers to the Messiah, as both Jews and Christians interpret it. This long-standing prophecy was fulfilled at the birth of Jesus Christ during the reign of Herod, the King of Judea. From the time when the scepter was given to King David, who was the first king from the Tribe of Judah, it never departed from that Tribe until the days of King Herod. Only in Herod's time did all governing authority cease and depart from the Tribe of Judah, being entrusted to a foreign ruler. Therefore, the Messiah was to be born during Herod's reign, neither before nor after. It is evident that governing authority did not completely depart from the house of Judah, once established in the person of King David, until King Herod's time. From David, the first king of that Tribe, to Zedekiah, who died in the Babylonian captivity, the Bible traces the lineage of all the kings from the house of Judah. Even during their Babylonian captivity, which lasted seventy years, the Jews were allowed to choose a governor from the Tribe of Judah, whom they referred to as "Reschgalvuta." After their return from Babylon, Zerubbabel governed as part of the same Tribe, followed by others, until the Maccabees, who served as both governors and priests. The Maccabees were descended from the Tribe of Judah through their mothers and from the Tribe of Levi through their fathers, according to Rabbi Kimbi's affirmation. From these men down to Hircanus, the King of Judea, who was the last king directly descended from the house of David and the Tribe of Judah, governing authority remained in the house of Judah.

After Hircanus, the aforementioned Herod, a complete stranger, whose father, as reported by Josephus (who was well-informed), was named Antipater and came from Idumaea, entered into the favor and friendship of the Romans. This was partly due to his father's

influence, as Josephus mentions, noting that his father was a wealthy, industrious, and politically active man. Herod's own ambition and diligence also played a role, as he possessed wit, beauty, and exceptional qualities. Through these commendable attributes, he eventually married the daughter of Hircanus, the King of Judea, and secured his position as the chief governor and ruler of the province and land of Galilee under his father-in-law. However, Hircanus later fell into the hands of the Parthians during a battle and was taken as a prisoner to Parthia.

Herod then embarked on a journey to Rome, where he managed to be declared the king of Judea without any legitimate title or claim. Notably, at that time, not only was his father-in-law Hircanus living in Parthia, but his younger brother Aristobulus and three of his sons, namely Antigonus, Alexander, and Aristobulus, along with various others from the royal bloodline of Judea, were also alive.

Having acquired the kingship of Judea in this manner, Herod first secured control over King Hircanus and subsequently put him to death. He also pursued a similar course with his younger brother Aristobulus and his three sons. Additionally, he ordered the execution of his wife Mariamnes, who was the daughter of King Hircanus, and her mother Alexandra. Shortly thereafter, he put to death two of his own sons, born to him by Mariamnes, as they belonged to the royal bloodline of Judah. Subsequently, he had his third son, named Antipater, executed. Furthermore, Herod ordered the killing of forty of the most prominent noblemen from the tribe of Judah. As recorded by Philo the Jew, who lived during the same period, he also had all members of the Sanhedrin, consisting of twenty-seven senators or elders who governed the people, put to death. He targeted the leaders of the Pharisees' sect, burned the genealogical records of all the kings and princes of the House of

Judah, and tasked Nicolaus Damascenus, a historian who served him, with fabricating a lineage that falsely claimed his descent from the ancient kings of Judah. Herod even sold the priesthood to outsiders. Ultimately, he dismantled, scattered, and devastated the House of Judah to the extent that no trace of government or principality remained within it.

Therefore, during the reign of King Herod and not before, the scepter, signifying governance, departed from Judah. Thus, it was during his rule and not prior or afterward that the Messiah was destined to appear, as foretold by Jacob's prophecy. As a result, Christ Jesus, the unquestionable Messiah, was indeed born during the time of King Herod in Judea. Consequently, it is futile for the Jews or anyone else to anticipate the arrival of another Messiah after the days of Herod. It was during his reign, and not before or after, that the scepter and all forms of leadership and governance were definitively removed from the House of Judah, aligning with Jacob's prophecy.

Additionally, the prophet Daniel goes even further by predicting the exact day and time when the Messiah would be slain for the sins of His people. In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, the king of the Medes, around the time of the evening sacrifice, Daniel prayed to his God for the people and their deliverance. He realized that the seventy years of their captivity, as foretold by Jeremiah, had come to an end. While Daniel was in prayer, approximately at the beginning of his supplications, God sent His angel Gabriel to convey that the command had been issued for the people's return from captivity and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Furthermore, Gabriel revealed that just as the people had been in Babylonian captivity for seventy years and were subsequently delivered from their earthly bondage, it would come to pass that within seventy weeks of years, the Messiah would

come. He would bring an end to wickedness, seal up sins, obliterate iniquity, usher in everlasting righteousness, and act as a deliverer, not only from the external Babylon but also from spiritual and hellish Egypt.

The words of the angel are as follows: "At the very beginning of your supplications, the commandment came forth, and I am come to show you, for you are greatly beloved. Therefore, understand the matter and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined over your people and over your holy city to finish wickedness, and to seal up sins, and to blot out iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the HOLY OF HOLIES, or the MOST HOLY. Know, therefore, and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to bring again the people and to build Jerusalem unto MESSIAH THE PRINCE, there shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks, etc. After these three score and two weeks, shall MESSIAH be slain, and not for himself, etc. He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week, he shall cause the Sacrifice and the Oblation to cease."

For a better understanding of these words, it must be noted that the term "Hebdomada," meaning a week or seven, is sometimes used to refer to a week of days, that is, seven days. In this context, it is called "Hebdomada dierum," a week of days. For example, in this prophecy of Daniel, he speaks of mourning for three weeks of days. However, at other times, it signifies a period of seven years, and then it is called "Hebdomada Annorum," a week of years. An example can be found in Leviticus, where it is said, "Thou shalt number unto thee seven weeks of years," signifying seven times seven years, which equals forty-nine years.

It is crucial to recognize that these seventy weeks are to be understood as weeks of years, not days. This is affirmed by the Jews themselves and supported by the books of Esdras, which show that the construction of the Temple and Jerusalem took many years before completion. Therefore, these seventy weeks of years amount to seven times seventy years, totaling four hundred and ninety years. Within this period, the Messiah would be slain. Starting from the commandment to bring the people back and rebuild Jerusalem, which was issued at the beginning of Daniel's supplications in the first year of Darius, there must be seven weeks and three score and two weeks, equivalent to forty-nine weeks or four hundred and eighty-three years. Calculating this time from Darius's commandment brings us to the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar when Christ Jesus was baptized and anointed by the Spirit of God descending upon Him in the form of a dove. At this moment, He began His ministry at around thirty years of age.

There is still one more week to complete the seventy-week period, during which the Messiah would be slain. This indeed happened as foretold when Christ Jesus, the true Messiah, was put to death about three and a half years after His baptism, specifically in the eighteenth year of Tiberius Caesar. Therefore, it is futile for the Jews or anyone else to expect another Messiah to come after the days of Tiberius Caesar, the Roman Emperor.

The Scriptures also reveal that the Messiah would be descended from the seed of David. God's words to David, "I have sworn to David my servant, I will prepare thy seed forever, and will build up thy seat to all generations," cannot be applied to King Solomon (as later Jews suggest). Solomon's kingdom was divided and weakened shortly after his death by Jeroboam and eventually extinguished. These promises cannot refer to any earthly king but must pertain to an

eternal king from David's lineage. The commitment made to David for Christ to come from his seed is reiterated by many prophets even after David's death. For instance, in Jeremiah, God declares that He will raise up a just seed to David who will be a wise king, execute justice, and bring salvation to Judah and Israel. He will be called "Our just God." These words were spoken over four hundred years after David's death, proving that the promises and prophecies were not made for King David, Solomon, or any other earthly king in David's line but for Christ. Christ not only descended from David in the flesh but also fulfilled many of David's types and figures. This is why in Ezekiel, who lived around the same time as Jeremiah, the Messiah is referred to by the name of David himself. God tells Ezekiel, "I will save my flock, neither shall they any longer be left to the spoil. I will set over them a shepherd, and he shall feed them, even David my servant. He shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd, and I will be their God, and my servant David shall be their Prince." Even the later Jews, as recorded in the Talmud, acknowledge that their Messiah is called David because he is to descend from David's seed.

Now, let us examine whether Jesus Christ, our Lord, did indeed come from the seed of David, as it was foretold the Messiah would. It is evident that He did, for no one has ever doubted or denied that Jesus directly descended from the tribe of Judah, and He was a direct descendant of the house of David through His mother. This was in accordance with the prophecy, and it is further confirmed by the two genealogies and pedigrees recorded by Saint Matthew and Saint Luke, which trace the blessed Virgin's lineage from David to Joseph. Joseph, who was of the same tribe and kin as Mary, married her, as it was customary among the Jews to marry within their own tribe. Therefore, when the Evangelists show the lineage of Joseph,

they also reveal the lineage of Mary, which was well known to all at the time, although they do not explicitly mention it.

Secondly, this lineage is confirmed by their journey to Bethlehem when Augustus Caesar issued a command that everyone should travel to the head city of their tribe and family for taxation purposes. By going to Bethlehem, it is demonstrated that both Joseph and Mary were of the lineage of David, as Bethlehem was exclusively the city of those from the house and lineage of David, for it was where King David was born.

Thirdly, the Jews, who sought to find any possible objections against Him, never raised an issue or alleged that He was not from the house of Judah or the house of David. If there were any grounds for such an argument, they would not have omitted it, as it could have easily disproven Jesus as the true Messiah. However, it is clear that they never doubted this fact. Moreover, it is even recorded in the Jewish Talmud itself that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, was of royal blood and descended from Zerubbabel of the house of David. This aligns with the statement made by the Apostle Paul, who testified that Jesus Christ was born from the seed of David according to the flesh, even though He was also the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification.

5 That the mother of Jesus was a virgin is abundantly testified by the Evangelists, and the Jewish scriptures also support the idea that the Messiah's mother would be a virgin. In Isaiah 7:14, it is presented as a remarkable occurrence when the prophet tells King Ahaz that a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, meaning "God with us." This would not be considered remarkable if the Hebrew word in that passage merely meant a young woman (as some later Rabbis claim) because it is common

and ordinary for young women to conceive and give birth. Therefore, the Septuagint rightly translates the word as "Parthenos," which specifically signifies a virgin. This interpretation was also understood by the older Jews, as noted by Rabbi Simeon. Rabbi Moses Hadasan, highly regarded among the Jews, commented on the same passage, emphasizing that it does not say, "Truth shall be engendered of the earth," but rather, "Truth shall bud forth," signifying that the Messiah (referred to as Truth) would not be begotten in the usual manner but by a virgin. Rabbi Hacadosch, using Kabbalistic art from various Scripture verses, not only confirms that the Messiah's mother would be a virgin but also asserts that her name would be Mary. Furthermore, the same Rabbi Hacadosch demonstrates from Scripture that the Messiah's name, at His coming, would be Jesus. Thus, it is futile to deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

6 Because Christ Jesus, through His miraculous works and extraordinary miracles, demonstrated that He could do things that no ordinary man could do, and because of His heavenly teachings, words, and deeds, which indicated that He was the Son of God sent from the bosom of His Father, we must investigate whether He is not only man but also God. The sacred Jewish scriptures provide the answer that He is indeed both God and man. This is signified by the Prophet Isaiah when he declares, "They shall call His name Emmanuel," which means "God with us." Isaiah further testifies that He shall be called "Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Another reference by Isaiah calls Him "the issue of the Lord" and "the fruit of the earth," indicating that He is both the Son of God and the Son of man. Jeremiah the Prophet also attests that He will be called "The Righteous God" or "God our Righteousness." God Himself states, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Even King David explicitly acknowledges Him as the Son of God, for although David

knew that He would come from his own lineage in the flesh, he also calls Him his Lord, saying, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The fact that David refers to Him as his Lord implies that Jesus is not only a man but also God, the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity. This truth is evident throughout the Jewish scriptures, and there is no need to elaborate further.

7. Nevertheless, it is important to address the Jews' misconception that the Messiah would be an earthly king who would reign in Judah and subdue all their enemies through terrestrial power and force. The time for such an earthly king has long passed, and there has been no such ruler in Judah. This fact should have led them to abandon their foolish belief. Daniel referred to the Messiah as the Eternal King, and Micah stated that He would reign forever, which cannot be attributed to an earthly kingdom.

Furthermore, God said to His son, the Messiah, "Ask of me, and I will give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the world for your possession." This clearly indicates that the Messiah would be a universal king, ruling not only over the Jews but also over the Gentiles and the entire world. It is also prophesied that He would endure like the Sun, and His reign would extend from sea to sea until the end of the world. All kings would adore Him, and all nations would serve Him. Every tribe on earth would be blessed in Him, and all nations would magnify Him. God told Abraham that through his seed, which is the Messiah, all nations of the earth would be blessed. Therefore, it is illogical to think that the Messiah would overthrow nations for the sake of the Jews when all nations were to receive their blessing from Him.

In the prophecy of Isaiah, God's commission to the Messiah is stated as follows: "It is too little that you be unto me a servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to convert the dregs of Israel; behold, I have appeared to you also to be a light unto the Gentiles, that you be my salvation unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Nearly everywhere in the scriptures, it is testified that the Gentiles would have just as much interest in the Messiah as the Jews and would benefit from Him in the same way. Therefore, while the Messiah is indeed referred to as a king, He is meant to be a spiritual and eternal king, as the prophets have declared. It is childish and absurd to imagine Him as an earthly king who would only reign in Judea and be a terrestrial conqueror.

Did not Zechariah, in terms of His worldly state, indicate that He would come humbly riding on a donkey? Did not Isaiah say that in this world, He would be despised, abject, and without reputation? Did not Daniel explicitly state that He would come to be sacrificed to take away sin and bring an end to other sacrifices? Did not Zechariah say that people would look upon Him after they had pierced or crucified Him? Did not the Prophet Isaiah describe Him as offering His soul as a sacrifice for sin and being led like a sheep to the slaughter, not opening His mouth? Where, then, is the pomp and worldly glory when He was destined to be poor, abject, and without worldly honor? Where is His earthly conquest when He Himself would be sacrificed? How could the Jews believe that the Messiah would be as they imagine when they were the very ones who would pursue Him to His death and look upon Him after they had pierced Him?

These points, although briefly and plainly stated, should be sufficient to convince the Jews that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head, the one

foretold to Adam and Eve, and the one in whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed. He perfectly fulfills all the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and no one else could fit these prophecies. Therefore, I conclude that the Christian religion, which we profess and which derives from Christ, the true Messiah, is the only true religion acceptable to God.

Chapter 3:

In Which the Christian Religion Is Demonstrated to Be the Only True Religion, Opposing the Gentiles and All Infidels of the World.

That there is a God has always been confessed by the heathens, and that there is only one God, as the Christian religion teaches, has been acknowledged by all learned heathen philosophers. Although they sometimes pretended and outwardly conformed to the errors of the common people by naming gods, they never actually spoke of more than one God. This can be seen in the writings of Plato, in an epistle he wrote to Dionysius, the king of Sicily. In this epistle, he provides a sign to distinguish when he speaks in jest and when he speaks in earnest. "Hinc disces tu scribam ego serio, nec ne cum serio ordior epistolam ab uno Deo," meaning, "Hereby (he says), you shall know whether I write in earnest or not, for when I write in earnest, I begin my letter with one God, and when I write not in earnest, I do begin my letter in the name of many gods." Even three of the most learned followers of the Platonic school, namely Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus, all testified and proved in various parts of their works,

despite being heathens themselves, that both they and their master Plato believed in only one God.

Aristotle, who succeeded Plato and founded the Peripatetic school, though he was deeply involved in the study of nature and sometimes seemed to forget the God who is the author of nature, later in his life, when writing the book of the world, made it clear that he acknowledged one God. In the same place, he also stated that the concept of multiple gods was invented to express the power of this one God through the multitude of His ministers. This shows that the simpler-minded heathens imagined God to be like earthly princes. They observed that every earthly prince had a large number of ministers, also known as servants and attendants, to demonstrate his power, magnificence, and high honor. Consequently, they believed that the great and mighty God could only be adequately understood if it were assumed that He had a multitude of lesser gods waiting on Him, similarly displaying His greatness and magnificence. Theophrastus and Aphrodisius, two leading Peripatetics, extensively confirmed their master's belief in one God.

Zeno, the chief and founder of the Stoics, used to say (as reported by Aristotle) that there was either one God or no God. The belief in one God is affirmed throughout the writings of Plutarch and Seneca, two outstanding authors who greatly admired the Stoic philosophy. Epictetus, a highly regarded figure in that school, whose words were considered oracles, also asserted the belief in one God, stating, "Dicondum ante omnia unum esse Deum, omnia negere, omnibus providere." This means, "Before all things (he said), we must affirm that there is one God, and that this God governs all and has providence over all."

Regarding the Academics, although their practice was to doubt and dispute everything, as Cicero appears to do in his discourse concerning the gods, he eventually concludes in agreement with the Stoics, who believed in one God. As for Socrates, the father and founder of the Academic Sect (and who was considered by the Oracle of Apollo to be the wisest man in all of Greece), the world knows that he was put to death for criticizing the multitude of gods among the Gentiles.

All these four schools of philosophers, who held a prominent place in their respective times, professed belief in one God when they expressed their true thoughts. However, if we go further back to the days before these philosophical sects emerged – to figures like Pythagoras, Archytas of Tarentum, and even further back to Hermes Trismegistus, who was the earliest philosopher among the Egyptians – we find that they were even more straightforward and unwavering in this belief. It is true that the pagans honored individuals who were renowned for their valor, unique insights, benevolent deeds, or exceptional talents above others by conferring upon them the title of gods. Nevertheless, they did not truly consider these individuals as gods; rather, they recognized them as mere mortal men. Hermes Trismegistus illustrated this when he stated, "Deos non natura ration, sed honoris causa nominamus," which can be translated as "We name them gods not based on their nature but for the sake of honor." In other words, they referred to them as gods not because they genuinely believed them to be gods, but because they intended to pay homage to their remarkable accomplishments and exceptional qualities. Cicero corroborated this view in his words: "The life of man (he said) and common custom have now adopted the practice of elevating to heaven, through fame and goodwill, those men who are considered excellent for their benevolent deeds." Consequently, figures such as Hercules, Castor, Pollux, Aesculapius, and Liber,

despite being human, were not regarded as gods. The disciple of Zeno, known as Persius, attested to the same understanding. The Greeks, as reported by Herodotus, initially believed that their gods (whom they later referred to as gods) were, in reality, nothing more than ordinary mortals. This was the prevailing belief. As famous men and women passed away – individuals who were distinguished and excelled above others – the living, fearing that their memory would fade into oblivion, took it upon themselves not merely to honor these individuals with the title of gods and goddesses, but also insisted on having their portraits or images created and displayed in various places for posterity to behold. Consequently, they eventually began to pay homage and show reverence to them. Yet, unsatisfied with this level of veneration, they went further by constructing altars and temples in their honor. In due course, they consecrated priests and established specific rites, ceremonies, and rituals to be conducted at these places:

The Devil, taking advantage of this situation and seizing the right opportunity (always intending to lead the world astray and keep them in error to the best of his ability), eventually infiltrated these altars that had been dedicated to these individuals. Under the names of these individuals, he established a means of being worshipped, replacing the true God. This is indeed true, as the sacred Psalm attests: "That the Gentiles sacrificed their Sons and their Daughters unto Devils." Furthermore, as Paul states, "that whatsoever the Gentiles offer, they offer unto Devils, and not to God." With the devils having entered into these altars, they gladly received the sacrifices offered to them, knowing that they had managed to ensnare humanity in such a predicament. To strengthen their deception, they presented themselves under the guise of these revered figures to those who sought answers from them. The responses given by these devilish spirits were recorded by their

priests and referred to as Oracles. Through such deceitful practices, these evil spirits enchanted and deluded the world. More will be discussed about these Oracles later on. But for now, I present this argument against them:

Those who, albeit ignorantly, worship devils, are clearly far from the true religion. This is evident.

However, the Gentiles worshipped devils.

The evidence that the Gentiles worshipped Devils (not God) is clear. Firstly, they worshipped gods who not only allowed but even required the sacrifice of human beings. They took pleasure in these countless murders and acts of manslaughter, which were exceedingly cruel and unnatural, believing that they could thereby appease these gods, despite such practices being highly displeasing to the true God. For instance, as Polydore Virgil has documented, the people of Rhodes sacrificed a man to Saturn. In the Island of Salamis, a man was sacrificed to Agraula. In the Temple of Pallas, a man was offered to Diomedes. This man was led around the altar three times by young men and then, by the priest, pierced with a spear and cast into the fire to be burnt. Among the people of Cyprus, human sacrifices were made to Jupiter, and this horrifying practice was passed down to posterity. Diana also received human sacrifices. Similarly, Hesus and Teutates had human sacrifices offered to them. Among the Egyptians, it was customary to sacrifice three men a day to Juno, provided they were pure. The Lacedemonians used to sacrifice a man to Mars. In times of war and pestilence, the Phoenicians sacrificed their dearest friends to Saturn. The people called Curetae offered children as sacrifices to Saturn. In Laodicia, a virgin was sacrificed to Pallas. Among the Arabians, a child was sacrificed every year and buried beneath the altar. Additionally, the

Thracians, Scythians, Carthaginians, and nearly all the Greeks, especially when preparing for war, sacrificed men. This practice was common among barbarous nations, the French, Germans, and even the Romans themselves, who, for example, offered a man as a sacrifice to Saturn in Italy at an altar. Moreover, this man was cast down from a bridge into the river Tyher. Dionysius Halicarnassus wrote that Jupiter and Apollo were highly displeased because only one-tenth of men were sacrificed to them. As a result, they sought revenge on Italy. Diodorus reported that, when the Carthaginians were defeated by Agathocles, the King of the Sicilians, they believed that their gods were angry with them. To appease their gods, they sacrificed two hundred sons of noble men at one time. This is truly monstrous cruelty! Who, then, could possibly be persuaded otherwise than that these gods of the Gentiles, whom they worshipped and sacrificed to, were nothing more than devils? This conclusion is inevitable when one considers that such cruel and unnatural acts of human slaughter, which undoubtedly offended God even more, were offered as appeasements to these gods.

Furthermore, these gods of the Gentiles not only approved of the sacrifice of human blood but also endorsed and permitted fornication, adultery, and all forms of impurity. In Alexandria, the image of Saturn was devoutly worshipped, and its priest, named Tynarus, brought selected matrons from the city to the image, claiming that they had been summoned by their god. In the darkness, he engaged in sexual acts with them in the name of their god. Among the Nasamones, it was customary for the bride, on the first night after her wedding, to lie with all the male guests in honor of the goddess Venus. Therefore, I conclude that those gods of the Gentiles who delighted in human slaughter and impurity must indeed be devils, as the righteous and kind God cannot tolerate any

of these practices, as anyone's own reason, senses, and understanding would confirm.

Another argument to demonstrate that the gods of the Gentiles were devils is their oracles. These oracles provided answers in matters that were purely contingent, and these answers were either false or so ambiguous and uncertain that they were deceptive. Therefore, it is evident that these oracles could not have come from God but from the devil. Even Porphyry, a prominent advocate of Paganism, acknowledges the falsehood and deceitfulness of these oracles in a dedicated book where he compiled famous oracles before his time along with their false and uncertain outcomes. He judges their predictive power, stating that the gods could predict some natural events because they observed the order of natural causes. However, in matters contingent upon human will, they only made conjectures, often lying and deceiving in both types of predictions, as natural events are variable, and human will is even more mutable.

Porphyry's assessment aligns with that of another Greek Heathen named Oenomaus, who, having been delighted by oracles but also deceived by them, wrote a book denouncing their falsehoods and lies. He explains that these oracles often obscured their answers with obscurities, equivocations, amphibologies, and doubtfulness, ensuring they left room to protect their reputation. For instance, when King Croesus of Lydia consulted the Oracle of Apollo about waging war against the Persians to gain their empire, the oracle's response was: "If Croesus without fear shall pass over Halys," referring to a river between him and Persia, "he shall bring to confusion a great rich kingdom." Croesus interpreted this as a positive sign and crossed the river, but he lost Lydia, his own kingdom, and was deceived by the ambiguous oracle.

Similarly, the Oracle of Apollo gave a cryptic response to Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, when he inquired about his prospects in a war against the Romans. The oracle said: "Aio te Aeacida Romanos vincere posse," which Pyrrhus understood as a positive affirmation. However, he was ultimately defeated by the Romans.

Many more such oracles deceived those who trusted them, and their answers were so ambiguous that worshippers often left without clear guidance. The question arises as to why these devilish spirits did not provide more certain answers to those who sought their counsel regarding future events.

The reason is evident: these spirits would have provided certain answers if they could, as it would enhance their credibility. However, the power to foretell future events with certainty rested solely with God. In challenging the gods of the Gentiles, God provokes them to declare what will happen in the future, saying, "Declare unto us what shall ensue hereafter, and thereby we shall know that ye are God's indeed." This demonstrates that the certain prediction of future events reveals a divine power, one that these devilish spirits lack. If these wicked spirits possessed the ability to certainly know and predict future events, they would undoubtedly have offered clear, undoubted oracles to gain lasting credibility worldwide. Instead, their falsehood, uncertainty, and deceitfulness have rightfully earned them perpetual disrepute, revealing them to be no more than deceitful spirits. Their worshippers were tragically deluded, as even the Heathen themselves have acknowledged.

Having thus briefly, yet I trust sufficiently, disproved the religion of the Gentiles as being a cruel, wicked, false, lying, and deceitful religion, devoid of any certainty upon which people might rely or assure themselves, it remains now for me to demonstrate the truth of

the Christian religion that we profess. In this first argument, I shall establish its powerful and unquestionable truth through the confession of the gods of the Gentiles themselves, which are indeed Devils and hellish spirits. These spirits have given testimony to the truth of Christianity, especially as the time of Christ's appearance in the world, who was to be the light of the Gentiles, drew near.

To manifest this, I will present two Oracles of Apollo, which should suffice for this purpose. The first was directed to one of his own priests who inquired about true Religion and God. Apollo's response in Greek was as follows: "O thou unhappy Priest, why dost thou ask me of God, who is the Father of all things, and of this most renowned king's dear and only Son, and of the spirit that containeth all, etc. Alas, that spirit will force me shortly to leave this habitation and place of Oracles." The other Oracle was given to Augustus Caesar, around the time when Christ was about to appear in the flesh. The Emperor, in his old age, decided to visit Delphi and inquire about his successor and the future of his empire. Despite offering a great sacrifice called Hecatombe, Apollo initially refused to answer. However, when Augustus persisted and increased his sacrifices, Apollo, seemingly compelled to speak, declared, "An Hebrew child that ruleth over the blessed gods, commandeth me to leave this habitation, and out of hand to get me to hell. But yet do thou depart in silence from our Altars." Thus, it is evident that this Hebrew child, our Christ Jesus, has the power to command the gods of the Gentiles, send them to hell, silence them, and remove them from their dwellings. Therefore, the religion of this powerful Jesus, of which he is the author, must undoubtedly be the true religion, affirmed even by the acknowledgment of the very Devils he commands.

Another argument for the divinity and truth of Christianity is its capacity to eliminate, in defiance of them, all the gods of the

Gentiles, silence their oracles, and drive them completely out of the world. This fulfills the prophecy of the Prophets that Christ, upon his arrival, would "Attenuabit omnes deos terrae," meaning "wear out all the gods of the earth." This truth is now clearly evident to the world through its outcomes.

Even during Cicero's time, the oracles and answers of these gods began to wane, as Cicero himself attests, having lived somewhat before the arrival of Christ. Gradually, they ceased entirely and became extinct. It is reported that in Egypt, when Christ was there with Joseph and Mary, all the idols of that superstitious nation fell down of their own accord. Subsequently, during the reign of Emperor Hadrian, all sacrifices to these gods ceased, including the Oracle of Apollo, and all other oracles became silent. Therefore, as Juvenal says, "Cessant oracula Delphis," meaning "The oracles cease at Delphi." Another poet affirms:

Excessere omnes a ditis arisque relictis, Dij quibus imperium hoc steterat, &c.

This means, "All the gods by whom this Empire stood have departed from their Temples, and left their Altars and place of their habitation." Plutarch affirms the same and is much troubled to search out the cause and reason for the ceasing of their Oracles. He, being a heathen, was greatly troubled by this and made various futile speculations, unable to penetrate the true cause. However, even Porphyry, a great patron of Paganism and an enemy of the Christian Religion, can explain the true cause. He reveals that since the arrival of Jesus, their gods are silent and can do them no good, having all departed from them. Porphyry's words are as follows: "Nunc vero mirantur (inquis) si tam multos annos ciuitas peste vexetur, cum & Aesculapius & alii dii longe absint ab ea: postea enim quam JESUS

colitur, nihil vtilitatis adiis consesequi possumus." This can be translated as, "Now (saith he) they marvel why this city is so many years vexed with pestilence when (indeed) Aesculapius and other gods have departed from it. For since the time that Jesus is worshipped, all our gods have been unprofitable to us." Considering this, it is clear that Jesus, the author of the Christian religion, has silenced and utterly destroyed the gods of the Gentiles, confirming the truth of His religion.

What more can I say? Even the Gentiles themselves, both the most ancient and the best, have testified about Jesus Christ and the truth of His religion. Christ, appointed before the creation of the world to work the redemption of both Jews and Gentiles, was not entirely unknown to these nations. Various forewarnings and indications of His coming were given, both among the Gentiles and the Jews, to prepare them for His arrival.

In ancient times, three notable men lived together: Abraham, who was the father or progenitor of the Hebrews (later called Jews), Job, and Zoroastres, who were not of the lineage of Heber (and were referred to as heathens or Gentiles). Job testified of Christ, referring to Him as the Redeemer, and he was confident that he would see Him with his own eyes, even if his body were consumed by worms, as he attests. Zoroastres, who lived during Abraham's time, might have met or spoken with Noah, as Abraham was born 60 years before Noah's death. In the writings attributed to Zoroastres, he spoke plainly about the Son of God, whom he called the "Second Mind." Hermes Trismegestus, influenced by Zoroastres, also acknowledged this second person in the Trinity, referring to Him as the first-begotten Son of God, His only Son, dear, eternal, immutable, and incorruptible, with an ineffable name. Among the Greeks, there were also Orpheus, Hesiod, and others who expressed similar ideas about

the Son of God. The Platonists likewise had extensive writings on this subject.

Additionally, the Gentiles had some prophets among them, such as Balaam, who prophesied about Christ and the star that would appear at His birth. This prophecy likely led the wise men from the East to see Christ in Judea. This same star is mentioned in various heathen writings, including Pliny, who referred to it as a comet. Pliny states, "Is comet a vnus tote orbe colitur," meaning "That only Comet is worshipped throughout all the world." Calcidius, a Platonist, mentions that Chaldean Astronomers deduced from their contemplation of this star that some God descended from heaven for the benefit of mankind.

The Gentiles also had certain women called Sibylla, who were Prophetesses. Endowed with a certain spirit of prophecy, they uttered remarkable predictions about Christ to come. One of them began her Greek meter in these very words: "Know thy God, who is the Son of God." Another of them composed a whole discourse in Greek verse called "Accrosticke," explicitly affirming that Christ Jesus, by name, would be the Savior and the Son of God. She expressly stated that He would be incarnate of a virgin, suffer death for our sins, be crucified, rise again, and ascend into glorious heavens. She prophesied that, at the appointed time, He would return on the day of the resurrection for the final judgment. These Sybils, ten in number, spoke so clearly of Christ Jesus, as did the Jewish Prophets. They even surpassed the Jewish Prophets in their clarity, providing a nearly full account of the Gospel. If the Gentiles will believe their own Prophets, they must also believe the Christian religion, of which Jesus Christ is the author and about whom they abundantly testified.

To prevent suspicion that Christians invented these prophecies and to emphasize that knowledge of Christ spread across the world before His arrival, it's important to note that Marcus Varro, a learned Roman who lived almost a hundred years before Christ, mentioned the Sybils extensively. He asserted that there were ten of them and documented their writings, countries, ages, and the writers who had mentioned them before his time. Both Varro and Fenestella, another heathen, confirmed that the Romans diligently collected the writings of the Sybils from all parts of the world, storing them with great reverence in the Capitol. Sybilla Erithraea, who composed the earlier acrostic verses, testified about herself, as recorded by Emperor Constantine, that she lived about five hundred years after Noah's flood. Apollidorus, her countryman, along with Erithraeus and Varro, reported that she lived even before the Trojan War, prophesying the destruction of Troy to the Greek warriors who went to that war, which occurred more than a thousand years before Christ's birth. Cicero, who died over 40 years before Christ's birth, translated the earlier acrostic verses into Latin, as attested by Constantine in his oration. Suetonius, another heathen, recorded that Augustus Caesar, prior to the birth of Christ, regarded the sayings of the Sybils highly, guarding them more securely under the Altar of Apollo on the Palatine Hill, where only those with special permission could access them. This establishes the credibility of the Sybils, who gave explicit testimony of our Savior Jesus Christ by name. Therefore, if the Gentiles believe these revered Prophets, who were their own, they must also believe in our Gospel and accept the Christian religion as the only true one.

Lastly, the Gentiles could have gained an understanding of the Messiah through the Hebrew scriptures, which had been translated into Greek several ages before Christ's birth. Ptolemy, the King of Egypt, who possessed a renowned library, diligently investigated the

origins of all nations and religions. He discovered that the Jewish people were the most ancient and possessed the most certain and undeniable history of the creation of the world. Consequently, he sent a request to Jerusalem for seventy men to assist in translating the sacred Bible from Hebrew into Greek. This translation indeed took place. Furthermore, the Gentiles could have learned about the Messiah either by visiting the Jewish land or through the presence of Jews in their lands. This was facilitated by the Jews' extended periods of bondage in Egypt and captivity in Babylon, among other events. In conclusion, since the Prophets of both Jews and Gentiles, representing the Prophets of the entire world, have provided clear and unmistakable testimony about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, it follows that His religion is the only true one, and all others should be rejected and detested.

That religion which is most ancient is the true religion because truth preceded error, and error is nothing but the corruption or deviation from truth. The religion for which Christ is the author is the most ancient because Christ, as the Son of God, is the most ancient of days. He is also testified to by the Hebrew records, which are the oldest writings in the world. Therefore, the Christian religion must be the only true religion. Tertullian rightly said, "Vetum quod primum, quod posterius adulterinum est," meaning that what is first is true, and what comes later is adulterated. The Hebrew records prophesied and foreshadowed Christ's coming, as demonstrated in the second chapter, and no one can deny it. He was promised to Adam as the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head. He was foretold to Abraham as coming from his seed, in whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Jacob foretold Him as Shilo, the expectation of the Gentiles. God told Moses about Him, foretelling that He would be the Prophet whose voice all would hear and obey. Given that He has come, fulfilling what was foretold in the

writings of Moses and the Hebrew records, which are the most ancient records in the world, I conclude that His religion, for which He is the author, is the only true religion.

The antiquity of Hebrew history before all others is acknowledged even by the heathens, so there is no need for further proof. Eupolonius and Eusebius have stated that letters, the beginnings of written words, were first discovered by Moses and given to the Jews. The Jews, in turn, taught them to the Phoenicians, who later passed them on to the Greeks. Therefore, it is clear that the first and most ancient records of the world must have been found among the Hebrews, as Ptolemy, King of Egypt, affirmed when he greatly valued the Hebrew scriptures. The Hebrew writings and histories must be considered true since they harmonize within themselves and no other records can disprove them. Even for those who are incredulous due to the ancient nature of Moses' history, it is essential to remember that the same skepticism could be applied to any other ancient history. However, because the history itself gives credit to Moses, and he is revered even by heathen historiographers and writers, such as Trebellius Pollio, who called him the only man familiar with God, and Cornelius Tacitus, who confirmed the events described in Moses' history, we must preserve the credit and respect due to Moses. Even Orpheus, one of the most ancient writers after Moses, and a heathen, mentioned the two stone Tablets on which God's law was written, expressing the wish that those seeking virtue would learn divine knowledge from them. Linus stated that God created all things, finishing His work on the seventh day. Homer and Hesiodus similarly testified to the holiness and brightness of the seventh day. Ovid affirmed that the earth was without form before being shaped by God, which corresponds to Moses' account in Genesis. All these examples confirm that the creation of the world, a great marvel, as described by Moses, was believed and testified to by

the chief and most learned philosophers among the heathens. Similarly, the flood that inundated the world, known as Noah's flood, was not only mentioned by Ovid but also by various ancient heathen writers, such as Berosus, Chaldaeus, Ieronimus Egiptius, Nicholas Damascenus, Abydenus, and others, as proven by Josephus and Eusebius.

Regarding the Tower of Babel and the origin of languages, which Moses records in Genesis 11, this event is confirmed by Abydenus, who lived around the same time. The Gentiles themselves argue that if there had not been such a miracle involving the confusion of tongues, all languages, being derived from one source (as all humans have one Father), would have continued to share the same language. The existence of diverse languages in the world serves as evidence of the confusion of tongues.

Concerning the extended lifespans of the first Patriarchs, not only the previously mentioned heathen historians Baerosus, Chaldaeus, Ieronimus Aegiptius, Nicholas Damascenus, Abydenus, but also Manethus, who documented Egyptian history, Molus Hestians, author of the accounts of the Phoenicians, Hesiodus, Hecatenus, Abd • rica, H • lamicus, Acusilans, and Epherus confirm that these early inhabitants of the world indeed lived for extended periods. They attribute this longevity to the necessity of increasing the population and achieving perfection in various sciences, especially Astronomy and Astrology. According to their writings, no individual could bring these sciences to adequate perfection if they lived for less than six hundred years, which they consider the time required for the great year to complete its cycle.

Regarding Abraham and his life, I have previously cited some heathen writers like Baerosus, Hecataeus, and Nicholas

Damascenus. Additionally, Polyhistor provides extensive information about Abraham's sojourn in Egypt, his conflict and victory on behalf of Lot, his reception by King Melchizedek, and other significant events, including his relationship with his wife and sister, Sarah, and the sacrifice of his son, Isaac. Thehem agrees with Melo in his writings against the Jews, along with Artabanus. They also reference the strange lake into which Sodom and Gomorrah were transformed after their destruction, known as the Dead Sea, where nothing can live. This information is corroborated by Galen, Pausanius, Solinus, Tacitus, and Strabo, all of whom testify to the unique wonders of the region.

Polyhistor provides a detailed account from Abraham to Moses, although he occasionally includes certain myths. This demonstrates that he did not derive his narrative solely from the Bible. He mentions Leodemus, who lived with Moses and wrote about the same events as Moses did. Theodorus, an ancient poet, along with Artabanus and Philon, who were Gentiles, support the accuracy of these accounts. Therefore, it is evident that the history recorded by Moses, as well as all the other sacred and canonical scriptures, is not a work of fiction or invention, as the devil might lead us to believe. Instead, it is a true, certain, and most unquestionable historical account in all aspects. These points are sufficiently and substantially substantiated by the writings of the heathens, which, although numerous, are too lengthy to enumerate here.

The great wonders and miracles performed by Moses are acknowledged not to be the result of his own power but of God's power. Many witnesses, including Artabanus in his book about the Jews and especially Eupolemus, testify to the wonderful and extraordinary deeds performed by Moses in Egypt. Even the greatest enemies of Moses, such as Appion in his fourth book against the

Jews and Porphyry in his fourth book against the Christians, confess the miracles. Porphyry provides additional proof by mentioning that he found these accounts confirmed by the story of a Gentile named Sacontathon, who lived during the same time as Moses. However, these great enemies of Moses claim that all these miracles were accomplished through Art Magic and not by the power of God.

But first, one must question how Moses, a simple shepherd, could have learned such advanced magic. Why couldn't the great Magicians of Egypt either replicate these miracles or protect themselves from the plagues that befell Egypt, especially since they had been studying Art Magic from their youth? Why did they cry out, "The finger of God is here," when they couldn't replicate what Moses did? Furthermore, why did Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, implore Moses and Aaron to pray to the Lord to remove the frogs, indicating that only God could do it, and that Moses and Aaron could only achieve it through prayer? Indeed, Moses and Aaron did accomplish it through prayer at the very time appointed by the king, so that he and the world would know that there was no one like the God of Israel.

Have you ever heard of works performed through Art Magic like those of Moses? When he divided the mighty Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to pass through on dry land? When the waters returned, drowning Pharaoh and his entire army, along with their splendor, in the sea? When he summoned so many quails into the camp to feed six hundred thousand men, not counting women and children? When he struck a rock, causing it to release an abundance of water for the entire Israelite company? When he made the ground open up and swallow alive three of the greatest leaders of the Israelites, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, along with their tents and possessions?

Moreover, whatever wondrous works or miracles Moses performed, he always attributed them to God, rejecting any personal glory and giving all the credit to God. In his writings, he did not excuse or conceal his own sins or the sins of his people, including those of his brother Aaron, his sister Miriam, his grandfather Levi, or any other family member. Even though he held a position of power and authority, he did not attempt to establish any of his own sons as his successors, even though he had many. Instead, he left the rule and government to a stranger named Joshua, following God's command.

All these things demonstrate, and many more that are too numerous to mention, that Moses, in his writings, words, and deeds, was not a man driven by ambition or worldly desires. Instead, he was a humble, meek, dutiful, obedient, and faithful servant of God in all matters.

The history of Moses, being the most ancient and undoubtedly true, since it testifies abundantly of Christ who was to come and what he would teach, leads to the conclusion that the religion he taught is the only true one, while all other religions lacking the same antiquity and truth should be abandoned.

6 No one can discredit Moses, the Psalms, or any of the Prophets among the Jews without also discrediting Christ. Christ himself said that everything written about him in Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled. He directed those who wanted to know if he was the true Messiah to the scriptures of the Jews, saying, "Search the Scriptures, for they are they that testify of me." Hence, Christ, Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets, as well as the entire canonical scriptures of the Jews, are intertwined like inseparable friends who cannot be separated. Each one serves as proof for the others, and a disproof of the truth of one discredits the others. Therefore, even

though unbelieving Jews may not stand with Christians due to their unbelief, Christians firmly hold onto the Jewish Scriptures to the death. If nothing else were to prove the divinity of Christ, his great and miraculous deeds, some of which no one had done before or could do except God, suffice to demonstrate that he is the Son of God and came from the bosom of his Father. His numerous and extraordinary miracles, renowned not only in Judea but throughout the Roman Empire and the world, are universally acknowledged and impossible to deny. Thus, I conclude that the Christian religion, emanating from such a divine power and one whose works and wonders surpass all others, is the most undoubtedly true religion.

7 Christ did no harm on earth but performed immeasurable good. He healed all manner of diseases, enabled the mute to speak, the lame to walk, the blind to see, and the deaf to hear. He calmed raging winds and seas, restored sight to the blind from birth, raised the dead to life, cast out demons, knew people's thoughts, and did works that no one could do except God or unless he himself were God. Moreover, his life was beyond reproach, with no one able to accuse him of any sin, so pure and blameless was he. His teachings were heavenly, innocent, and divine, like no other, spoken with unparalleled authority. He consistently proclaimed that he sought not his own glory, as deceivers often do, but rather the glory of his Father, and his actions matched his words. His entire life, death, resurrection, and ascension confirm this, for when the Jews tried to make him an earthly king, he refused and withdrew. He taught his disciples to do the same. He declared that his kingdom was not of this world but that he came to do the will of his Father. Furthermore, he was the greatest prophet ever, foretelling various events, such as his crucifixion by the Jews and his resurrection on the third day, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple before that generation passed, and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon his disciples

gathered in Jerusalem after his Ascension, among others. All these prophecies came to pass as he foretold. Not a single word he spoke was false, as there was never deceit on his lips. Therefore, I conclude that the religion of the one who lived the holiest life, caused no harm to others, radiated beauty to all, performed wondrous works, made true prophecies, preached heavenly doctrine, and sought only the glory of God while doing His will, must be and is the only true Religion.

8 Another argument I frame like this: A religion that undoubtedly comes from God is the true religion. The Christian Religion undoubtedly comes from God. Therefore, it undoubtedly comes from God, and consequently, it is the only true religion. To prove that it undoubtedly comes from God, consider this: It must either come from God, the Devil, or humans. However, it is too holy to originate from either humans or devils. It opposes the works and kingdom of one and prohibits the vengeful spirit of the other, commanding people to love their enemies, do good to those who hate and persecute them, condemning impure thoughts and covetousness, and forbidding all iniquity and wickedness, no matter how secret or concealed. Therefore, since it is so contrary to human inclinations, which are naturally sinful, and it commands holiness in the likeness of God, it is evident that it cannot be of human invention or the devil's invention. Therefore, it must undoubtedly come from God, and consequently, it is the only true religion.

9 Another argument goes like this: A religion that solely seeks the glory of God is and must be the only true religion. Such is the Christian Religion, for it does not allow anyone to boast in themselves but shows that all glory should be in the Lord. Therefore, the Christian Religion is the only true religion.

10 Lastly, the widespread success of the Gospel of Christ throughout the world, despite the opposition of the entire world (both Jews and Gentiles), demonstrates abundantly and effectively that the Christian Religion comes from God, and God is its author. If it had not had God to protect and support it, ensuring its spread throughout the world, it would have been completely suppressed and extinguished at its inception. After the ascension of Christ Jesus into heaven, what could his few Apostles reasonably have done to spread and establish it, against the power and might of the entire world, which was united with fury, fraud, violence, and vengeance, devising every means to suppress it? What eloquence did his few Apostles possess to persuade the world, or anyone in it, to accept and embrace the Christian Religion they were appointed to preach? As is well known, they were considered unlearned men, except that they were taught and guided by the Spirit of God, which, as promised by Christ their master, descended upon them at the appointed time when they were assembled in Jerusalem. Through this Spirit, they were enabled to speak all languages and emboldened to preach his Gospel and religion with such divine wisdom that no one could resist the spirit by which they spoke, despite the personal hindrances, troubles, vexations, and persecutions they faced.

This, even this, is a marvel of marvels and an indisputable demonstration of the divine virtue of the Christian religion. Despite having so few advocates, and such advocates as they were, and despite facing the opposition of all the rulers and powers of the world, it miraculously prevailed and spread universally across the face of the earth in a short time. Who can deny that it was protected and advanced by the power of God? The might of the whole world was against it, and if the Christian religion had depended solely on the protection of humans rather than God, it would have perished long ago, not surviving beyond its infancy. Therefore, let all minds

humble themselves, and let all tongues freely confess the divine virtue of the Christian religion, which could not be halted or suppressed. It was so powerful that even the combined might of the entire world and all the devils in hell could not prevent its course and spread, but it prevailed rapidly over the whole world. Consequently, the Christian religion (without a doubt) is the only true religion, descending from heaven, brought by Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, from the bosom of God his Father. With so many and such infallible arguments that prove its truth to every person's senses, none can doubt it unless they also doubt whether the eye sees, the ear hears, and the heart understands. The evidence is so clear and manifest that it is capable, if not of converting, at least of convincing all gainsayers and making those who already profess it hold it firmly. We know with certainty that the Christian Religion is the only true religion in the world, and salvation is found nowhere else. Examine all the religions in the world, and where will you find one as pure, divine, powerful, and miraculous? It possesses all the signs, tokens, arguments, and proofs that exist to demonstrate its radiant truth, showing that it undoubtedly comes from God.

CHAPTER 4:

Wherein is briefly shown the Religion of Muhammad to be a false and wicked Religion.

If I shall speak something of the Muhammadan Religion, I think the truth of the Christian Religion will appear so much the more. For when black and white are laid together, the white carries the greater

estimation and glory with it. Besides, Muhammad himself testifies of Christ as a great Prophet of God and a great worker of miracles. He acknowledges that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, that he lived without sin among men, that he was a Prophet, and more than a Prophet, and that he ascended into heaven. He even reproved the Jews for not believing that he was born of a Virgin. On the other hand, because he did not want Christ to have more credit than himself, he objected to Christ being called or reputed the Son of God. But in addition to the testimony of all the previous Prophets of the world, both Jews and Gentiles (as previously shown), who all teach that he is the Son of God, Soudas further refutes this false Prophet. He reports in his history that the Pharisees in Jerusalem called a Council to find out the Father of Jesus. They ordered certain women to investigate his mother, and the women affirmed that they found her to be a Virgin. Then it was recorded in the famous register book of the Temple: Jesus, the Son of God, and of Mary, the Virgin. This proves not only that the mother of Jesus was a Virgin (which Muhammad correctly held) but also that Jesus was the Son of God (which Muhammad did not allow). Indeed, Muhammad's Religion is a patched religion, mixed partly with Judaism, partly with Gentilism, partly with Papism, and partly with Christianity. It was cleverly devised to establish itself and attract followers, which will be discussed further later.

The beginning of Muhammad's rise and his Sect was as follows: Many hundred years after Christ, namely, in the year 597 AD, during the reign of Emperor Maurice, when Gregory the Great was Bishop of Rome, Muhammad was born. He belonged to the line of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, by Hagar the bondwoman. His father was Abdara, and his mother was Emma. They were very obscure and lowly parents from Mecca, a city in Arabia. His parents passed away, leaving him as a young orphan who was eventually taken captive.

When his kindred learned of this, a man named Abdemonaplas, an Israelite, who held him in high regard for his intelligence and wit, paid his ransom and made him his servant and factor in all his trade.

Not long after, his master died without an heir, and Muhammad married his mistress, a widow of fifty years named Eadigam. According to Paulus Diaconus, she was also his own kinswoman. Thus, Muhammad, whose master and wife were both of considerable standing, inherited their wealth and power upon their deaths, and through this means, he grew to great influence and reputation.

Diaconus further says that for ten years, Mahomet secretly engaged in persuading people through witchcraft, and for another ten years, he used force, swords, and bloodshed, along with rogues and vagabonds who joined him, to subdue countries. Finally, for nine years, he openly and blatantly deceived people as a false Prophet and ruled as a king over those he had already influenced throughout Arabia.

Sabellicus writes that Muhammad's father was a Heathen, and his mother was an Ismaelite. This led to a situation where his mother taught him some of the Hebrew religion, while his father introduced him to Gentile beliefs. As a result, Mahomet, like a dutiful child but not a wise one, obeyed both influences, which contributed to his mixed and patched religion. He suffered from epilepsy, which affected him severely, causing him to grovel on the ground and foam at the mouth. His wife, who had expected a husband of high honour and wealth, lamented her misfortune in marrying a poor and diseased man. However, Mahomet and his cunning associates had taught a dove to feed near his ear, where he placed grains of corn. He persuaded his wife to be content, claiming that he was more than she thought him to be: he was a Prophet, and the spirit of God descended

upon him. He asserted that the Angel Gabriel, in the form of a dove, came to his ear and revealed secrets from God, whose presence he could not withstand. Therefore, he prostrated himself and fell into a trance. His wife, convinced by this explanation, began spreading the word among her friends, saying, "Say nothing; my husband is a Prophet." Women, in their usual manner (where some of them cannot keep secrets), began to spread the news that Mahomet was a Prophet, and eventually, it reached the ears of men.

Once this news spread, people from all parts of Arabia flocked to him. Being well-versed in magic and thoroughly schooled in Satan's teachings, Mahomet saw an opportunity when the Romans and Persians were at war. He initially sided with the Romans but later betrayed them, weakening their position. He then noticed the Persians were also in decline, and with disdain for both sides, he raised himself up with his captains and lieutenants (called Amirai) to conquer nations and destroy Christians. His goal was to establish his false religion, which he had devised with his wicked confederates. He achieved remarkable success, and shortly after his death (during the reigns of Ebubezer and Haumar, who succeeded him in Arabia), the Arabians had conquered and subdued the regions of Gaza, the city of Bostra in Arabia, Damascus, Phoenicia, Egypt, Palestine, Jerusalem, all of Syria, Antioch, Edessa, Mesopotamia, Persia, and nearly all of Asia.

But I must not forget to mention Mahomet's demise. One evening, while staying up late in his palace and having consumed plenty of wine, into which one of his companions had poured poison, he began to feel his customary sickness coming on. He hurried outside, claiming he needed to meet with the Angel Gabriel privately, so as not to cause the deaths of those in his glorious presence. As he went out, he remembered that a soft place was best for his epileptic fit,

and he fell upon a dung heap, writhing in great pain, foaming at the mouth and gnashing his teeth. Pigs gathered around the dung heap, attacked him, wounded him severely, and would have devoured him had it not been for his wife and others from his household who heard the commotion and rescued the false Prophet. Antoninus reports that he suffered from various illnesses brought about by his intemperate diet, including pleurisy and a form of lethargy that often left him senseless. He languished for fourteen days, and in the end, he passed away. His abdomen had swollen so much that it appeared ready to burst, and his little finger bent backward. During his illness, he commanded those around him not to bury him immediately upon his death, claiming that he would ascend to heaven within three days. However, this proved that he was a false Prophet, as they kept him above ground for three and four days, even up to thirty days, hoping he would rise and ascend as promised, but nothing happened except for an unbearable stench. In great disdain, they threw him far from houses, as Antoninus writes. However, his companions, those who had consulted with him and concealed his deceit and treachery, eventually brought him back. They placed him in an iron coffin and, as Sabellicus and Nauclerus note, with great solemnity, they took him to the famous Temple of Mecca, his birthplace. They placed mighty loadstones on the roof of the temple, lifted the iron coffin, and the loadstones, drawn by the iron, held it up, suspending Mahomet on high.

Those who embrace Mahomet's religion are called Saracens, a name chosen by Mahomet himself to promote his doctrine and profession. He claimed this name to avoid the stigma of being descended from Ishmael, the son of Hagar the bondwoman. To circumvent this reproach, he falsely asserted that he was descended from Sarah, the free woman and wife of Abraham, and he and his followers came to be known as Saracens. Sabellicus also notes that the Greeks, out of

spite, often call the Saracens "Agarens" because they believe they are not descended from Sarah but from Hagar.

While Mahomet was alive, he associated with Christians, Jews, and infidels. To make his law more popular, he borrowed elements from various sects. Satan provided him with three instruments to carry out his mischievous intentions. The first was a Jewish astronomer and magician who revealed Jewish follies to him. The second was a man named John of Antioch, and the third was a monk named Sergius, both abominable heretics. Each of them played their part.

To appease the Christians, Mahomet consented to be baptized by Sergius. From these heretics, he learned various heresies, such as denying the Trinity like the Sabellians, establishing two beginnings like the Manichees, denying the equal power of the Father and the Son like Eunomius, calling the Holy Ghost a creature like Macedonius, and allowing multiple wives and licentiousness like the Nicolaites. Sergius the Monk also convinced Mahomet, in his Alcoran (the book of his law), to praise the humility of Christian monks and priests. He even introduced the Saracens to the monk's cowl, which they continue to use to this day, along with many genuflections and other practices resembling monks. Matthias à Michou added that they practiced shaving, which was undoubtedly a monk's doctrine.

The Saracens also commend the Blessed Virgin Mary, confess God as the governor of all things, acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Apostle of God, begotten by the Angel Gabriel to the virgin Mary without knowing a man, and consider Him greater and worthier than man. They accept the miracles performed by Christ, the Gospel (to the extent it aligns with the Alcoran), and Moses and the Old Testament, though they correct certain errors in it. Mahomet called himself a Prophet sent by God to rectify the imperfections of all laws. He

forbade his followers from using pictures and images in their temples, prohibited the consumption of swine's flesh, and mandated purifications, washings, and practices similar to the Jews. While Christians observe Sunday as their Sabbath and Jews observe Saturday, Mahomet designated Friday to distinguish his followers from both Hebrews and Christians. Antoninus wrote that this was done in honor of Venus, the Arabian goddess, to win over the country's people. Thus, Mahomet devised a religion by mixing elements from various others, aiming to attract followers from all religions to build his kingdom.

Mahomet seized the advantage of his time, exploiting the discord among princes and divisions among those who called themselves Christians. Emperor Heraclius and King Chosroes of Persia were bitter enemies, waging war against each other. The Scythian nation remained neutral at first but eventually rose against both sides, with Mahomet as their leader. The Church was troubled by various sects and heresies, including the Nestorians, Jacobites, Monothelites, and more. Additionally, there was contention among bishops over the title of universal bishop. God was greatly displeased with this wickedness and allowed nations to rise as a rod or scourge to chastise His people because when the hedge is broken, it is easy for the beasts of the field to enter and spoil. The vanity and falsehood of this religion can be proven as follows:

1. Firstly, the newness of this religion is a reason to doubt its authenticity, as it has only recently emerged, and no prophecy has ever endorsed such a prophet or his doctrine. He comes in his own name and should not be accepted as a result.
2. Secondly, he did not perform any miracles upon his arrival, providing no reason for anyone to believe in him. He spoke to

the Saracens and stated, "I am not sent unto you with miracles and signs." There was no demonstration of divine power in his actions.

3. Thirdly, Mahomet's claim that he would ascend to heaven within three days of his death was blatantly false, as previously demonstrated.
4. Fourthly, Mahomet's religion is carnal in nature, focusing on physical pleasures and indulgences. This suggests that man, rather than the divine spirit of God, is the author of this religion. Under his law, Saracens are allowed to have up to four wives, even if they are close relatives, and up to five if they marry them as virgins. They can also take as many captive women as they can afford to maintain. The paradise promised to his followers is a place filled with earthly delights, such as silk garments in various colors, gold and amber bracelets, banqueting houses by rivers, vessels made of gold and silver, and beautiful women to accompany them. The description includes gardens, orchards, fountains, rivers of milk, honey, and spiced wine, as well as all kinds of sweet scents and fragrances—essentially, everything that appeals to the fleshly desires of man. A carnal religion befits a carnal people, and this religion reflects the nature of its founder. Mahomet himself engaged in sinful acts, including bestiality, adultery with another man's wife, and boasting about his excessive sexual activity. He had forty wives and claimed that he had divine permission to engage in more sexual encounters than any other man. Even a follower of Muhammad's own sect, Avicenna, criticized this religion for focusing on bodily pleasures, whereas the wise sages of old placed a greater emphasis on the happiness of the soul. Mahomet's paradise and

doctrine are so focused on bodily pleasures that they bear little difference from Epicureanism, Atheism, or Muhammadanism.

5. Muhammad's law is oppressive, for he decreed the death penalty for anyone who dared to dispute it. If a person spoke against it, he ordered them to be put to death as traitors without a fair trial. This decree revealed that there was no sincerity in his law. Furthermore, he wrote in the Arabian language and taught his followers that his religion began, continued, and ended with the sword. This indicates that the sword and the power of the flesh were the sole means of enforcing and protecting his religion. Additionally, Muhammad enacted a law stating that those who killed their enemies or were killed by their enemies would enter paradise. His words reflected a purely earthly and vengeful spirit, with no evidence of a divine influence.
6. Muhammad's religion relied on force, fraud, and deception from its inception. He used his epileptic fits to convince his wife and others that they were manifestations of God's power and the presence of the Angel Gabriel. A heretical monk named Sergius was complicit and provided false testimony to support these claims. Muhammad claimed that the being he taught to feed at his ear was sometimes an angel and sometimes the Holy Ghost. He had three confederates who helped him devise and propagate lies. When he saw that people were receptive to his message, he falsely claimed that the Angel Gabriel had transported him to Jerusalem and then lifted him up to heaven, where he purportedly learned his law.

He convinced the Saracens that, before God created the world, it was written on the throne of God that there is no God but the God of Muhammad. Once he had composed his Alcoran and

bound it neatly, he secretly had a wild ass taken and the book tied around its neck. As he preached to the people, he suddenly acted as if a great secret had been revealed to him from above. He burst out and told the people, "Behold, God has sent you a law from heaven. Go to such a desert, there you shall find an Ass, and a book tied around its neck." The people rushed in great haste, and they found it just as he had said. They took the Ass, brought the book, and honored the Prophet.

Regarding divorced and separated wives, he claimed to have received a message from heaven. He employed soothsaying and divination, which, to this day, is referred to as Zarragia in Fessa, a city in Mauritania. He persuaded his followers that at the end of the world, he would transform into the form of a mighty ram, covered in thick and long fleeces of wool. He said that all those who followed his law would be like fleas sheltering themselves in his fleeces, and that he would leap into heaven, carrying them all there. These were some of his tricks to deceive a foolish, uneducated, and uncivilized population. I trust that everyone can see the foolishness, pride, and vanity of his religion.

7. Muhammad's religion is not a true religion but a mere concoction of his own, along with that of three other false conspirators. He cobbled together his Alcoran using elements of heathen, Indian, and Arabian doctrines, along with superstitions of Jews, Rechabites, and false Christians and heretics, including Nestorians, Sabellians, Manichees, Arians, Cerinthians, Macedonians, Eunomians, and Nicholaites. He added illusions and inventions of their own, and lastly, for added credibility, he borrowed some elements from the Old and New Testaments. But God will not be served in such a manner. He had already revealed His will to Israel, and He has not changed; He remains

the same God. He commanded, "You shall not do what seems right in your own eyes. Whatever I command you, take heed to do it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it." When Satan was summoned to reveal the truth about the Alcoran of Muhammad, he claimed that it contained twelve thousand lies and very little truth. Therefore, I conclude that there is no evidence to prove Muhammad as a true Prophet, but there is plenty to show him as a false Prophet, blasphemous, presumptuous, and that his religion is wicked, worldly, nonsensical, and false. It originates from a prideful spirit, human cunning, and corrupt invention, even from the devil, the cunning father of lies, who has been a murderer and a man-killer from the beginning. This should suffice on this matter.

Chapter 5:

Wherein is shown that the Church of Rome is not the true Church of God, nor observes the right Religion.

I am now entering into that great controversy between the Protestants and the Papists, regarding which of them should be the true Church and true worshippers of God in Christ. They both acknowledge God and Christ His Son, and they confess all the sacred and canonical books of the scriptures to come from God, by His divine spirit, as indeed they could come from no other source. However, as they both affirm these books, it is only reasonable that they should both stand before the judgment and arbitration of these books to determine the true Church. If they do so (as they must), this controversy will be resolved, and there will be no need for it to be questioned or doubted any longer. By the sacred and canonical

writings, it will become evident that the Church of Rome cannot possibly be the true Church. First, let us consider what the Church of Rome claims for itself and the grounds it relies on. If it is not founded on a solid basis, the entire structure is likely to crumble and fall into ruin.

1. They assert, albeit not with great strength, that the Church of God on earth, in its militant state, is always visible to the external eye. They claim that it can be identified and pointed to at all times, in such a way that anyone can know where to go, as if to the congregation of God's people. There, they can join themselves to the Church, praise and pray to God with them, and perform the deeds required by Him. However, this argument neither benefits them nor harms us. Just as in the early Christian Churches persecuted by tyrannical pagan Emperors, there was a Church of God, though not visible to them, which held their meetings and assemblies secretly due to the presence of their enemies. Similarly, during the reign of Queen Mary, as well as in all other periods of persecution by the Roman Bishops and their allies, our Church, no doubt, had its meetings and assemblies, even though both they and the location were concealed from their persecutors.

During the time of Emperor Diocletian, Christians were so greatly persecuted that, in the eyes of many, none remained. Their books were burned, their Churches demolished, and they were put to death. In the end, when this widespread destruction and cruelty had annihilated all that could be found, where was the visible Church then? It was undoubtedly compelled to conceal itself, and so it did. Its glory was obscured to the extent that, for a while, it shone nowhere. Therefore, the Church is not always visible and apparent to the external eye, nor is it always

radiant in the faces and view of people. Yet, it remains the same Church even when it is at times overshadowed by a cloud or appears to be completely obscured. It remains unchanged, just as fire persists even when it is sometimes hidden in embers. The true Church is and can be real, even if it is not visible or known to the world, even if it appears to be overwhelmed by tyrannical malice, and even if it conceals itself as though it were completely extinguished.

2. Let them tell me where the Church was visible when, assembled in Jerusalem, a great persecution arose against it, causing them all to disperse and scatter, as the text shows? Or let them tell me where or how the Church was visible when Christ was struck, and all the rest were scattered and concealed? The face of the visible Church was then not with Christ and His Apostles, but among the Jews, with the Scribes and Pharisees. Therefore, if visibility is such a mark of the true Church, then those who crucified Christ were the true Church, and not Jesus Christ and His Apostles. Who would dare to affirm that? Indeed, who would not deny it when the shepherd was struck, and the sheep scattered? Yet, a true Church could still exist, even if it was not visibly apparent to the world. What more can I say? Does not Saint John, in his Revelation, expressly testify that the Church of Christ, symbolized as a woman, fled into a desert or wilderness, where God had prepared a place for her, and where she could not be found by her persecutors for a certain time? Let them also show me how the Church was visible in the time of the Prophet Elijah when he lamented that he was left alone. "O Lord," he said, "they have forsaken your covenant, destroyed your altar, and slain your prophets with the sword, and I am left alone." Elijah did not consider himself the only remaining prophet (as Campion replied in the Tower). I mean he was not speaking

solely about himself in that regard. Instead, he believed that he was the only true worshipper left in Israel. This is evident from God's response to him, which stated that besides Elijah, there were still seven thousand true worshippers who had not bowed their knees to Baal. I ask the Papists, when Elijah knew of no other true worshippers of God but himself, how could the Church be visible? He did not know where to find another true worshipper. Moreover, it is written in 2 Kings 16 that during the reign of King Ahaz, a pattern of the idolatrous altar of Damascus was taken, and Uriah the high priest removed the Lord's altar. This shows that the priesthood was corrupted, the altar was removed, and consequently, the sacrifices ceased. What visibility could there be of the true Church in those days, during the reigns of Ahaz, Manasseh, and other idolatrous kings of Israel, when the Temple itself (the only place for offering sacrifices according to God's law) was polluted with heathen idolatry? What congregation could anyone have resorted to for performing a true and acceptable sacrifice to God during those times when the Temple in Jerusalem (the designated place of worship) would not admit true worshippers but only idolaters? It is evident, therefore, that a true Church can exist even when there is no known congregation to which one can resort, even if it remains hidden and unknown to one another and to the world. Consequently, visibility, which the Papists claim as a mark of the Church, is not a perpetual characteristic thereof. Indeed, if such visibility were a mark of the true Church, then the idolatrous people during the times of Elijah, Ahaz, Manasseh, and many other idolatrous kings of Israel would be considered the true Church, when, in fact, they were the false Church. Conversely, Elijah and all other true worshippers of God who had no place to offer sacrifices during those times would be considered the false Church, which is absurd. Chrysostom stated

that during the time of the abomination of desolation (as mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24), which refers to the era of wicked heresy and the army of Antichrist (as he interprets it), "No proof can be made of Christianity, and no refuge for Christians who desire to know the truth of faith, other than the divine Scriptures." Therefore, I conclude, as is evident, that the true Church can exist at times when visibility cannot discern or confirm it, and only the divine Scriptures can demonstrate and declare it. Consequently, it is demonstrably clear that the Papist assertion that the Church of God is always and forever visible, seen, and radiant to the outward eye and view of the world is not true. Therefore, the Papists wrong us greatly and reveal their own ignorance when they demand that we show our Church in all times and ages, even though it may be possible to do so. For our Church has always existed, even though it was not seen or known to them. It remained concealed and kept itself hidden from their fury and tyranny, just as the first primitive Churches did from their persecutors. Our Church was persecuted during those times when it could not be seen. Many were like steadfast martyrs who endured the tyranny of that Roman religion. Some were banished, others fled to other nations, some were martyred at home, and others hid themselves. However, the entire Church collectively was troubled and oppressed. Thus, when our Church was persecuted in those times, it is a compelling argument, I believe, to say that we had our Church then and always, even though it was a persecuted Church, even though it was a hunted and pursued Church, even though it was a scattered Church, and even though it was not visible or known to them. Moreover, even though it was enlightened by God for many ages, it remained hidden until the tyranny of Antichrist was over.

Secondly, another erroneous position by which they are gravely deceived is this: They believe that the Church cannot make mistakes. Therefore, they suppose that because the Church of Rome was once the true Church of God, it must still be so now and forever. They seem to disregard the possibility of an Apostasy in the Church, which Saint Paul affirmed would happen. They also act as if a particular Church (for the Church of Rome is just a particular Church) cannot make errors. Furthermore, they assert that general Councils (which represent the entire Church) cannot err, but the world should judge the truth of that claim. If it can be demonstrated that general Councils have erred or can err, then their argument falls apart. I sincerely hope they would consider this for their own benefit, as false Jesuits and Seminaries only deceive themselves and others, leading to their own confusion in this world and, unless they repent, in the world to come.

The fact that general Councils can err is made evident by Augustine, who explicitly teaches that only the Scriptures cannot err, while all other writers may err. Provincial Councils may err as well. Augustine states, "*Concilia quae fiunt ex universo orbe Christiano, priora posterioribus saepe emendari; cum aliquo experimento rerum aperitur quod clausum erat, & cognoscitur quod latebat,*" which means that general Councils composed of the entire Christian world are often corrected, the earlier ones by the later ones, when some trial of things opens what was closed and reveals what was hidden. Augustine says that a general Council can be corrected; therefore, it can err. Consequently, Augustine speaks plainly to Maximinian, the Bishop of the Arians, saying, "Neither ought I to allege the Council of Nice, nor thou the Council of Arimine, to take advantage thereby; for neither am I bound, nor held by the authority of this, nor thou of that; Set matter with matter, cause with cause, or reason with reason,

try the matter by the authority of Scriptures, not proper witnesses to any of us, but indifferent witnesses to us both."

During the time of Constantine, the first and last Council of Nice was held, in which it was decreed, according to our Creed, that Christ was both God and man. However, during the time of Constantius, the son of Constantine, who favored the Arians' error, the Council of Arimine decreed that Christ was not God but only man. This Council of Arimine erred, and quite substantially in a matter of faith. Therefore, it is evident that a general Council can make palpable errors, even in matters of faith.

Furthermore, general Councils have contradicted each other, even in matters of faith. For example, the Council of Constantinople condemned the use of Images in the Church, while the Council of Nice later allowed them. Since they contradict each other, one of them must be in error. Hence, a general Council can err.

The general Council itself admits that it can err. At the end of a general Council, in a prescribed prayer to be recited after every Council, the entire Council prays, "Ignorantiae ipsorum parcere, & errori indulgere," which means "Spare their ignorance and pardon their error." Therefore, a general Council can err.

The Pope of Rome, whom the Papists regard as the head of their Church, can err. Consequently, their entire Church can err. Augustine provides evidence of this by stating that Pope Innocentius of blessed memory taught that young children cannot be saved unless they receive the baptism of Christ and partake of the body and blood of Christ.

But this is criticized as an error; therefore, the Pope of Rome can err, and consequently, the whole Church under him, unless perhaps the

members have a privilege above the head. However, why should I dwell on this point? Their own Canon law (as evident in the decrees) explicitly states that if the Pope is found negligent of his own and his brethren's salvation, even if he leads innumerable people to the devil of hell, no mortal man may dare to reprove him. This is because he, being the judge of all, is to be judged by none unless he is found deviating from the faith. This suggests that they believed he could err in matters of faith, or else that exception would be in vain. Yet the Pope is no different from any other man, and all members of his Church are also human, and "humanum est errare," all men are prone to error. Let everyone be cautious about placing their trust in the Pope or any mortal man, for it is written in Jeremiah 17: "Maledictus homo qui in homine confidit," which means "Cursed is the man who puts his trust in man." Why? Because (as King David, the Psalmist, says in Psalm 116) all men are liars in their words and sinners in their deeds. But when the teachings of that man from Rome and his Church are in direct contradiction to the explicit word of God, who can deny that it is an obvious error-ridden Church?

For instance, when it established ignorance to be the mother of devotion, whereas Christ referred to it as the mother of error, saying, "Ye err not knowing the Scriptures" (Matthew 22:29). Who can help but think that they had no noble intentions, but rather intended to exalt the pride of the Pope, his Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, Monks, and other ecclesiastical figures? Christ encouraged the people to search the Scriptures (John 5:39), but Antichrist, as they label him, forbids them, claiming it is perilous and leads to schisms, sects, and heresies, as if they were wiser than Christ. Furthermore, the Apostle Paul commanded that the word of God should dwell richly among the people so that they might teach themselves (Colossians 3:16). However, the Pope of Rome and his Church do not permit a plentiful knowledge of the Word among them; instead, they desire ignorance.

One would justly suspect such a Church and Religion, even condemn it when, to perpetuate their Church in error, they prevent the people from searching the scriptures that might expose them. Thus, the naïve Papists (whom I pity) are led like blind men who do not know where they are headed. Their implicit faith (believing something without understanding it) is a lamentable deception. It is important that they themselves see and understand what they believe, ensuring that their faith and beliefs are correct, lest they are greatly deceived in the end, no matter how much they trust their teachers. The people of Berea were highly praised for searching the scriptures to verify the truth of what Paul taught them (Acts 17). For whoever it may be, even if it were an Angel from heaven, if they teach things contrary to the doctrine of the holy and canonical scriptures, we are to consider them accursed, as commanded by the Apostle of Christ Jesus, Saint Paul (Galatians 1:8-9).

Furthermore, the Church of Rome, when it taught and insisted that the Scriptures should be presented to the people or congregation in an unknown language, what did the people gain from it? Saint Paul believed that all things should be done for edification in the Church. For Saint Paul said, "Is qui supplet locum indocti quomodo dicturus est Amen ad tuam gratiarum actionem, quando quidem quid dicas nescit?" which means "How shall he that supplies the place of an unlearned man say Amen to your thanksgiving when he does not understand what you are saying?" (1 Corinthians 14). In that entire chapter, he strongly opposed service in an unknown language. Therefore, if the Church of Rome refuses to admit their error in this matter, they are beyond shame and possess the impudent and shameless demeanor of a harlot.

They have all devised and defend a place of Purgatory, wherein all that depart this life are put and there punished (with a punishing

fire) until they can be helped out with their Masses and other inventions and schemes. However, they will not do so, nor do they think they have any reason to, unless they receive good current coin (money) for the same.

And therefore, it may be justly called "Purgatory pickpocket." It is manifestly apparent from this that wealth and great riches of the Clergy were their only goal. It has no warrant in the Canonical books of the scriptures. Even the Canonical books of the scriptures show the opposite, as do the ancient Fathers.

In the Gospel, Christ, in Luke 16, mentions only two places, heaven and hell. He states that the rich man's soul (who was unmerciful to Lazarus) went to hell after his death, where he was tormented, while Lazarus' soul, after his death, was carried into Abraham's bosom, a place of joy and comfort. To the thief who was executed during Christ's suffering and believed in Him, Christ said, "Hodie • eris mecum in paradiso," which means "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). This indicates that the souls of the faithful do not enter Purgatory to be punished by fire, for all their sins are forgiven, and consequently, the punishment that accompanies them is also forgiven. Their souls pass from death to life and into paradise, a place of comfort, delight, and all sweetness, namely heaven, where Christ is. "Verily, verily I say unto you" (says Christ), "he that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into condemnation, but passeth from death to life" (John 5:25). So, where is this Purgatory, then? Saint Paul says, "I covet to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23), indicating that immediately after his death, he would be with Christ in glory. He said, "For we know that when this earthly tabernacle of ours is dissolved, we shall be a building not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1). Saint John, in his Revelation, says,

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth they rest from their labours, and their works follow them" (Revelation 14:13). If they have blessedness and rest from the time of their death, as he indicates, then they are not in any Purgatory fire to be scorched and troubled.

Saint Peter tells the Saints and children of God and assures them that "the end of their faith is the salvation of their souls" (1 Peter 1:9). If the salvation of their souls begins at the end of their faith, which lasts until the end of their life (and no longer, for then they have the fruition and possession of what they believe and hope for), then it is clear that there is no Purgatory. Ambrose says, "He that here in this life receiveth not remission of sins shall never come in the kingdom of heaven, for life eternal is remission of sins." Cyprian says, "When men are once departed hence, there is then no more place for repentance, no effect of satisfaction. Here life is either lost or kept. Here provision is made for eternal salvation by the worship of God and fruits." He further says, "Call upon God, even at your last gasp and departure from this temporal life. But call upon the one true God, pardon is given if you confess your sins, and saving forgiveness if you believe. From death, you will immediately pass to immortality."

Jerome states that the time of sowing their seed for Christians is in this present life. As soon as this life ends, they reap everlasting life. Augustine says, "The faith of Catholics believes the first place to be the kingdom of heaven, the second, hell. We are utterly ignorant of a third place, neither can we find any such in the holy scriptures." He writes in another place that those who believe in a purgatory fire are greatly deceived, and that it is a human conceit. So, how can the Papists be the true Catholics when they do not believe the faith of the Catholics, as Augustine affirms?

They also hold that since the fall of Adam, a man has a free will of himself and the power to come to God and do things that are acceptable and pleasing in His sight. However, God says that after that time, the imaginations of men's hearts are only evil every day (Genesis 6). If their hearts are only evil, then they do not have the inclination or willingness of themselves to do what is pleasing to Him. And Christ says that no man can come to Him unless His Father draws him (John 6:44, 65). If a man must be drawn before he can come, it means he has no inherent inclination to come on his own. This is why the Prophet says, "Convert thou me, and I shall be converted" (Jeremiah 7), indicating that he has no power in himself to be converted.

Saint Paul also shows that without God's grace, there is none who does good, not even one (Romans 3:10, etc.). All the philosophical virtues and good deeds that men do before they have faith (which is a gift of God) are considered sin and are not acceptable to God (John 6:29). The Apostle also testifies that without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6), and that whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23).

Christ Himself says that unless men are grafted into Him, they cannot bear fruit (John 15:1, 2, etc.). Paul often teaches that we must become new men and cast off the old man (Romans 1:2, etc.). He also instructs us to be renewed in the spirit of our minds (1 Corinthians 2:14) and states that the natural man does not perceive the things that are of God, for they are spiritually discerned. He further emphasizes that it is God who works both the will and the deed (Philippians 2:13). He plainly confesses that, of ourselves, we are not even capable of thinking a good thought, and that all our sufficiency comes from God (2 Corinthians 3:5).

These premises show that our understanding is blind and our will is perverse in any divine matter or acceptable service to God until God enlightens our understanding and draws and moves our will towards Him. God has ordered things in this way so that He may receive all the glory, which is only right. For what is man since his fall in Adam but an outcast and a runaway from God, naturally inclined to seek paths that lead away from God and His worship unless he is assisted from above? This is signified by Adam hiding himself from the presence of God after his fall.

Therefore, Augustine rightly and truly says, "Hominem libero arbitrio male vsum, & se & illud perdidisse" (That man, having misused his free will, has now both lost himself and it). He also says, "Liberum arbitrium captiuatum ne quid possit ad iustitiam" (Free will is taken captive so that it cannot do anything towards righteousness). And he adds, "Hominis non libera, sed a Deo liberata voluntas obsequitur" (It is not the free will but the freed will of man, set free by God, that obeys and yields obeisance). Augustine further states, "Liberum non fore quod Desideratia non liberauerit" (The will is not free but bound until God delivers and sets it at liberty).

Cyprian, whom Saint Augustine often cites, says, "De nullo gloriandum, &c." (Many must glory of nothing because nothing is ours. Therefore, every man, annihilating his own power, must learn wholly to depend upon God). And Chrysostom says, "Omnis homo non modo naturaliter peccator, sed totus peccatum est" (Every man is not only sinful by nature but is entirely sin). Therefore, Saint Paul shows that a man must be regenerated or born anew and renewed in the spirit of his mind before he can discern the good and acceptable will of God (Ephesians 4:23, 24). He also emphasizes that by nature, we are children of wrath (Ephesians 2).

Christ Himself testifies to Nicodemus, saying that what is born of the flesh is flesh and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. He declares that unless a man is born anew by the Spirit, he cannot even see the kingdom of God (John 3:3, etc.). Therefore, Saint Paul teaches that there must be a new creature, that anyone who wishes to be in Christ Jesus must undergo a renewal and metamorphosis of the mind (he uses the very word) before they can discern what is good and acceptable to God (Romans 12:2). I conclude, therefore, that the Papists are mistaken, for they do not recognize the misery and bondage of fallen humanity resulting from the great sin of disobedience by Adam. They defend free will in natural men, but it is clear that this will is not free; rather, it is so bound and enslaved to evil that God must first draw it out of its servitude and set it free, moving it towards Him before it will show any readiness to turn to Him. Therefore, I believe they are mistaken, and their Church not only can err but indeed errs in many points.

They hold that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it is lawful to withhold the Cup from the people, which goes against the institution of Christ. Christ Himself said, "Drink ye all of this" (Matthew 26:27), indicating that all should partake. Likewise, they may take the bread away from the people, which contradicts the clear teaching of Saint Paul (who, as he testifies, delivered the Institution of Christ). Saint Paul says, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup" (1 Corinthians 11:23, 28). This means that the people should drink as well as eat. The practice of the people receiving in both kinds was observed in the Church for many hundreds of years after Christ. Pope Gelasius even decreed that anyone who received only in one kind should be excommunicated. However, the modern Rome, with its Council of Constance, is not ashamed to go against all antiquity and all of theology.

Another gross error they hold is Transubstantiation in the Sacrament, which means they believe that after the words of Consecration, the Bread and Wine are changed into the actual substance of the Body and Blood of Christ. They base this belief on Christ's words, "Hoc est Corpus meum," which they interpret literally. But then why do they not interpret the other words of Christ concerning the Cup literally? The text says that He took the Cup and said, "This is my blood." They surely would not claim that the cup itself was the blood of Christ, as the words suggest. Instead, they understand a figure of speech in those words, specifically "contineus pro continente," meaning that by the cup, it is the wine in it that is meant. If they can accept a figure of speech in this case, then why not in the other? They could understand "figuratum pro signo," meaning that the words "This is my body" should be understood as "This bread is a sign of my body (which was broken for you)."

If we examine the old Sacraments of the Jews, namely Circumcision and the Paschal lamb, we will find a similar phrase of speech was used. Circumcision was called the Lord's covenant, but it was not the actual covenant, but a sign and seal of the covenant. The covenant was God's promise to Abraham, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed" (Genesis 17, Romans 4:11). Similarly, the Paschal Lamb was called the Passover, but it was a sign of their passing over or through the Red Sea, a mighty and wonderful deliverance. Therefore, since it is common in Sacraments to use such language, it is reasonable to think that when Christ Jesus instituted this Sacrament, which is to Christians what the Paschal Lamb was to the Jews, He called the bread His body in a figurative sense, just as the Paschal Lamb was called the Passover but was actually a sign and remembrance of their Passover.

And to confirm that this is the correct interpretation, we can refer to the words of Christ, where He says, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Tertullian also interprets it this way, for he says that Christ said, "Hoc est corpus meum," which means, "This is my body, that is, a figure of my body." Augustine similarly states that Christ's admirable patience allowed Judas to partake in the banquet, where He delivered to His Disciples a figure of His body and blood. Augustine also adds that the Lord did not hesitate to say, "This is my body," when He was only giving the sign of His body. This interpretation must be true because Saint Paul plainly and expressly states (1 Corinthians 11:26, 28) that the Communicant eats bread. Therefore, it remains bread even after the words of consecration. If it were truly transubstantiated into the body of Christ, there would be no bread left to eat, as the body of Christ would be the thing consumed. But no one actually eats the literal body of Christ; even Judas (known to be the child of perdition) would be saved according to their interpretation, for Christ says, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life" (John 6:54). However, the elect and godly do partake of Christ but not in a carnal sense; they do so spiritually and through true faith, apprehending and applying Christ with all His benefits to their souls, just as bread and wine are applied to their bodies.

Furthermore, if Christ had truly given His body to be eaten by His Disciples during the Institution of this Sacrament, what was it that hung on the cross the following day? Saint Peter also states in Acts 3:21 that as for the body of Christ, the heavens must contain Him until the end of the world. If His body is in heaven (as everyone knows it is), and He has a true body, how can He be in both heaven and on earth simultaneously in terms of His body? Even though His body is glorified, it still retains the nature and properties of a true body, which can only be in one place at a time. As Augustine says,

"The body of the Lord wherein He rose again can only be in one place." However, the Papists claim that there is a miracle in the Sacrament and that Christ is miraculously present. To this, I reply that if the bread were miraculously transformed into the actual body of Christ, it would visibly appear as such, for the nature of every miracle is to be visible to the senses. For instance, when Christ turned water into wine, it was visibly wine. If Moses' rod turned into a serpent, it was visibly a serpent. Therefore, if the bread were truly changed into Christ's body, it would be visibly His body, if we accept that a miracle is taking place.

But Augustine refutes this idea, stating, "The Sacraments may have honour as things religious, but they are not to be admired at as miracles." Theodoret is also explicit against Transubstantiation, saying that the mystical signs, after consecration, do not depart from their nature. They remain in their previous substance, form, and appearance and can be seen and felt as before.

Even Pope Gelasius himself plainly states that there is no transubstantiation in the Sacrament. He says, "The substance or nature of bread and wine does not cease, and verily there is the image and similitude of the body and blood of Christ celebrated in the action of the mysteries of the body of Christ." Therefore, I conclude that the current Church of Rome is not the same as it was in the past; it has become degenerate and departed from its former purity. Consequently, it is explicitly evident that this Church both can and does err.

The Church of Rome also maintains that their Pope has the authority to depose kings and princes. But by what right does he claim this authority? It is evident that when he does so or attempts to do so, he is a notable traitor, not only to God, whose authority he claims and

arrogates, but also to the princes to whom he should be subject. The raising and deposing of princes is a power reserved for God alone. He is the one who deposes the mighty from their thrones and exalts those of lowly estate (Luke 1). He is the one who puts down kings and grants kingdoms to whomever He wills. As He testifies of Himself: "By me, kings reign, and princes bear dominion" (Daniel 2:20; Daniel 4:14; Daniel 4:22). Therefore, since this high authority belongs exclusively to God, how can the Pope claim it without committing an act of treason against God? Will he assert this authority based on his possession of the keys and his Apostolic right? He cannot do so. He must remember that the keys given were the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:19). Therefore, by the authority of these keys, he cannot meddle with earthly kingdoms, either to grant access to them or to exclude anyone from them.

Furthermore, Saint Paul the Apostle explicitly states, concerning himself and the other apostles, that no matter how great their authority may be for overthrowing strongholds (that is, rebellious thoughts, proud conceits, and stubborn opinions seated in people's hearts against God, as he explains in the same passage), all their power and means to convert people rely solely on the "sword of the spirit," which is the word of God, and the power of the keys committed to them. He confesses openly that their authority, given to them by Christ, is solely spiritual (2 Corinthians 10:4). These words demonstrate that they have no civil authority through their ecclesiastical ministry.

Moreover, it is evident from the practices of the Apostles and their precepts, commanding all Christians to obey their rulers, kings, and princes, even if they were persecutors, that the Apostles never possessed such authority. Therefore, it is undoubtedly true that the Pope of Rome cannot claim such authority through any means.

Again, the Bishop of Rome cannot assert greater authority by the power of the keys or the authority to bind and loose than any other bishop elsewhere may have. The keys, representing the power to open and shut and to bind and loose, were given to all the Apostles, not just Peter. Consequently, for any minister of the Gospel to claim authority above another is absurd. They are all equally commissioned, and therefore have equal authority. Therefore, the Bishop of Rome, by virtue of the keys, has no more authority than any other bishop. Rather, their duty is to practice obedience to earthly rulers and teach that obedience to others, just as the Apostles of Christ did.

Indeed, Christ Himself stated that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). He refused to be made a king (John 6:15) and paid tribute to Caesar, commanding others to do the same and fulfill all their duties of subjection and obedience to Caesar (Matthew 22:21). If Christ was subject to Caesar, it is shameful for the Bishop of Rome to exalt himself above Caesar.

Perhaps the Bishop of Rome will claim his sovereign authority over princes through a donation from Constantine or some other Christian Emperor. Although he sometimes shamelessly utters such fables, let us assume, for argument's sake, that some Christian Emperor was foolish enough to grant him his empire (which is neither likely nor credible). Even so, I say that it was neither lawful nor tolerable for him to accept it if he wants to be a minister of the Gospel or a successor of the Apostles. Christ has explicitly forbidden His Apostles and, by extension, all ministers of His Gospel from exercising such dominion and civil jurisdiction. He said to them, "The kings of the nations reign over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you" (Matthew 20:25-26; Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:25-26).

These words are most prohibitive and demonstrate that these rulers should not reign like kings of nations or exercise authority like great men in those nations. Instead, they must serve in the Church and diligently fulfill the significant responsibilities placed upon them by their Master, Christ Jesus. Therefore, the Pope of Rome has no legitimate claim and is, in this regard, an usurper and intruder, committing a grave and reprehensible act of treason against both God and Princes.

Moreover, all the ancient Churches have affirmed and acknowledged the supreme authority of Princes over both priests and people. Tertullian, for example, declared, "We honour the Emperor as the next man to God and inferior to God only." He further stated that Princes are "second to God, the first next after God, and above and over all men." Similarly, Optatus asserted, "There is none above the Emperor but God, who made the Emperor." Chrysostom proclaimed that the Emperor has "no equal on earth." Even Gregory, Bishop of Rome, affirmed that power is given to Princes from heaven, not only over soldiers but also over priests.

Therefore, I conclude that the Church of Rome, as it exists today, is not the same as the Church it once was. It has fallen into corruption and pride, both against God and His anointed Prince. Consequently, it not only can err but indeed does err, and in the most detestable and abominable manner, to the highest degree.

Furthermore, the Bishop of Rome claims the authority from God to forgive sins and subsequently issues charters of pardon, bulls, and indulgences to those he intends to absolve. However, as the Scribes in the Gospel stated, "None can forgive sins but God" (Mark 2:7). The Scriptures repeatedly affirm that God alone forgives iniquity and transgressions, ascribing this authority solely to God and to no other

(Job 14:4; Isaiah 43:25). Therefore, if the Pope of Rome assumes the power to forgive sins in the manner he does, he must prove himself to be God; otherwise, his actions cannot be justified.

I need not cite specific passages; the entire book of God is replete with examples. I do not deny that Ministers of the Gospel have the power to bind and loose sinners (as Christ himself shows in Matthew 16). However, how and whom can they do this to? They can neither justify the unrighteous, whom God abhors, nor condemn the godly and faithful, whom God dearly loves. Therefore, since they cannot pardon those whom God condemns, nor condemn those whom God acquits (Romans 8:33-34), it is clear that their power to bind and loose sinners is limited and confined within the bounds of God's Word, which they may not transgress. If they do, they exceed their authority, and their actions will be of no effect.

They can, in accordance with God's Word, pronounce condemnation against unbelievers and obstinately wicked individuals unless they repent. They can also declare certain and assured salvation to the repentant, godly, and faithful individuals who continually seek to please God and walk in His ways, as the Word of God affirms. This is the extent of their authority to bind and loose sinners. When they pronounce pardons and forgiveness of sins, they must ensure that they do so not in their own names or according to their own wills and desires but in the name of God. They must be certain that what they utter is God's Word, will, and pleasure. However, the Bishop of Rome does not adhere to the rule of God's Word to measure and evaluate his pardons. He pardons whom he pleases, as if he were a god with absolute power, disregarding God's Word and will. Consequently, he not only pardons traitors and rebels against God and their lawful Princes without exception but also encourages them in their wicked schemes, leading them down a damnable path until it is too late for

them to repent. If they do not heed the warning, they will suffer eternal torment in hell.

The religion of Rome can be deduced from the fact that anyone can obtain a pardon for their sins for money. In such a system, why would wealthy individuals fear to commit sin when a Pope's pardon can absolve them of any wrongdoing? It is a religion of licentiousness, where, for money, one can receive a dispensation for any sin. These are such glaring flaws in the Roman Catholic religion that every virtuous and godly person rightly detests it and condemns it.

Furthermore, I will prove that it is impossible for the Church of Rome to be the true Church.

1. The Church of Rome holds that the divine and sacred Scriptures do not contain all things necessary for salvation. They insist that their unwritten traditions must be received with equal and equivalent authority. This was decreed by their Council of Trent. Pope Leo IV boldly asserts that one who does not receive the Popish canons as equally authoritative as the four Gospels does not believe correctly or hold the Catholic faith effectively. They even include decretal epistles with canonical scriptures. Pope Agatho claims that all the sanctions and decrees of their Roman See should be regarded as established by the divine voice. Who can tolerate such blasphemies? They make both the Scriptures imperfect and, to make matters worse, add to these Scriptures.

Wherein they commit two notable sins. First, they accuse the sacred and canonical Scriptures of not containing all matters necessary for salvation. This is directly contrary to the testimony of Saint John, who states that these things are written so that

you may believe, and in believing, have eternal life. It is also in direct contradiction to the testimony of Saint Paul, who declares that the Scriptures, given by divine inspiration, are profitable for reproof, teaching, correction, instruction, and perfecting the man of God (2 Timothy 3:15). Therefore, the Scriptures, or the written Word of God, are a true, sound, and complete doctrine that fully contains everything needed for our salvation. Saint Paul expressly tells Timothy that the Scriptures can make one wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:13). Thus, the Church of Rome is in direct contradiction and grievous error, and we have no need for their unwritten traditions.

Furthermore, how can we be certain that the traditions they claim to be Apostolical are indeed Apostolical when they are not written by the Apostles? Augustine, speaking on this matter, says, "If Jesus Christ has kept anything hidden, who among us will say that it is this or that? And if anyone says it is this, how will he prove it?" All the errors of the Church of Rome hide themselves behind the veil of traditions. Chrysostom flatly states that whatever is required for our salvation is contained in the Scriptures. He also affirms that all things are clear and plain in the Scriptures, and everything necessary is manifest there. Jerome, in the prologue of the Bible to Pauline, after listing the books of the New Testament and the Old, says, "I pray you, dear brother, among these live, meditate upon these, know nothing else, seek nothing else." He adds that these writings are holy and sound, and nothing else can be compared to them. He says, "Whatever they seek out or invent at their pleasure, without the authority and testimony of the Scriptures, as if they were the traditions of the Apostles, the word of God cuts off." Therefore, let us steadfastly adhere to the written word of God and disregard their traditions, which they cannot prove but impose

upon us without the testimony of Scriptures. Athanasius states that the holy Scriptures, inspired by God, are sufficient for all instruction in the truth. As for the other point of the Papists, where they equate and add their traditions, decretal epistles, and canons to the pure and divine word of God, it is an intolerable blasphemy that cannot be endured. God Himself says, "You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take away from it" (Deuteronomy 4). He also warns against adding or taking away from His commandments. In Revelation, Saint John declares that if anyone adds to the words of the book, God will add to him the plagues written in that book and take away his part from the book of life. In conclusion, the Church of Rome, which does not content itself with the sacred and Holy Scripture, is not the true Church of God. When it proceeds to add its own traditions, decretal epistles, and canons to the written word and regards them as having equal authority as the canonical and sacred Scriptures, it displays great pride and spiritual unfaithfulness. These actions are the marks of an adulteress, seeking to equal herself with her husband. Indeed, what more can be said? They claim that the authority of the Church is above the Scriptures, which demonstrates the notable pride and spiritual adultery of their Church.

2. The Church of Rome is idolatrous, and therefore it is not the true Church. They prostrate themselves before idols and images as the heathens did, thus committing idolatry in their manner of worship. I speak concerning the manner of their worship because even though the heathens did not worship the true God, they believed that they were worshipping the true God through the image or idol, just as the Papists claim. The Papists assert that they are not foolish enough to think that an image or idol made of wood or stone can be God. Similarly, the heathens did

not believe that their idols or images were God, as they knew these objects were made of wood, stone, or similar materials. However, both groups worshiped God in the image, which makes the case the same concerning the manner of worship.

Furthermore, if the Papists do not worship the idol or image, why do they bow down to it? God commands, "You shall not make for yourself any graven image," making it clear that creating images to represent God (who is an eternal and invisible spirit) is idolatry. He also says, "You shall not bow down to them, nor worship them," so bowing down to them, even if they are considered representations of God, is still idolatry. God must be worshipped in the manner He has prescribed, not otherwise. The fact that worshipping God through an image is outright idolatry is demonstrated by the example of the Israelites when they made the golden calf as a representation of God. The text shows that this was idolatry for which many of them were plagued and punished, even though their intention was to worship the true God through the calf. Therefore, the idolatry of the Church of Rome is as gross and wicked as that of the Israelites. The Papists' customary distinction between "Dulia" and "Latria," where they claim to give service to images but worship God, does not help their case. How can the temple of God be reconciled with images, as Paul asks? What authority do they have to serve images alongside God when Christ Himself says, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve"?

Paul the Apostle also explicitly urges people to turn from idols or images to serve the living God (using the word "Dulia"), indicating that there is an opposition between images and the service of God. One cannot serve both. God Himself disapproves

of idols and images, declaring through His Prophet that they are not "laymen's books," as the Papists call them, but are instead teachers of lies. Saint John also commands all Christians to keep themselves from idols. Additionally, it is idolatry to pray to anyone other than God. When people pray, Christ instructs them to call upon the Father in heaven, not the Virgin Mary or any other departed saint. Saint Paul affirms that faith and prayer are closely related. We can call upon no one whom we do not also believe in, and we are to believe in none but God. Therefore, we may pray to none but God. Consequently, when the Church of Rome prays to departed saints, it commits gross idolatry. The Scriptures clearly show that only God should be prayed to. Furthermore, in their idolatrous Mass or sacrament of the altar, the Papists claim that, after a certain incantation by the priest, there is no longer any bread or wine but only the actual body and blood of Christ. They command that the piece of bread which is shown (still appearing as bread despite their magical claims) be adored and worshipped. To adore or worship any creature, such as bread, is idolatry. The Papistical Church does this, therefore it is idolatrous. I have previously demonstrated that it remains bread after consecration, and that Christ cannot possibly be present there in bodily substance since He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father. Even if they do not believe divine testimonies on this matter, the authority of Cicero, a heathen, might persuade them. Cicero once said, "Whom do you think so mad as to believe that which he eats to be God?" Since the Church of Rome worships bread as if it were God, it is evident that they are gross idolaters. Consequently, their Church cannot be the true Church of God on earth.

3. The Papists do not verbally deny Christ, but upon closer examination, we shall find that in their actions, they do deny Him. For example, the right faith believes Christ Jesus to be both God and man, a belief that the Church of Rome affirms in words. However, when we press them on the matter of the Sacrament, they reveal that they do not believe Christ has a true body. When confronted with the fact that Christ's body cannot be both in heaven and on earth at the same time, as it goes against the nature of a true body, they resort to the notion of ubiquity, asserting that because the divinity of Christ is everywhere, His humanity must also be everywhere. This is an illogical consequence, as the divinity and humanity of Christ are of distinct natures. If His body and flesh were indeed everywhere, as they claim, how can we reconcile this with the statement of the Angel who said, "He is risen; He is not here"? These words clearly indicate that His body and flesh are not everywhere. Furthermore, if Christ's humanity were everywhere, how can we affirm His ascension into heaven? The term "ascension" implies that His bodily presence moved from one place to another, indicating that it was not in the place from which it departed.

In conclusion, it is an attribute of the Divine nature to be everywhere, and thus, when the Papists argue for the ubiquity of Christ's flesh, they are essentially implying that His flesh has been transformed into God, which is a grave heresy. Therefore, it is evident that the Papists, like the Eutichians, deny that Christ has a true body when they maintain that His body can be in multiple places simultaneously, and even everywhere. By denying Christ's possession of a true body, they deviate from the true faith, and as a result, they cannot be considered the true

Church. This summarizes their error concerning the person of Christ.

4. Now, regarding the office of Christ (for His person and His office are two chief matters that we should all consider), the Papists will concede, in words, that it consists of three aspects: that He is both a Prophet, a Priest, and a King. This, I say, they acknowledge in words, but in practice and reality, they do not. In respect to Christ being our Prophet, who should and did reveal His Father's will to the world, we ought to be content with His voice and search no further than what He has revealed in His Scriptures. However, the Papists are not content with this. They hold that their unwritten traditions and Popish Canons must also be received, under the same threat of damnation, as mentioned previously regarding the Priesthood of Christ.

As for the Priesthood of Christ, it consists of two elements: the offering of Himself once as a fully perfect and sufficient Sacrifice and His intercession with His Father, which remains and will do so until the end of the world. Both of these, the Papists nullify, as I will demonstrate. First, concerning the Sacrifice and Oblation of Christ, there is no doubt that, having been performed once on the Cross, it was a most complete, perfect, and satisfactory Sacrifice to deliver from both culpa (guilt) and poena (punishment). Otherwise, how could Christ be called Jesus, meaning a Savior, if He did not deliver us from punishment as well as from sin? However, the Papists assert that Christ, through His passion, has obtained remission for sins committed before Baptism. Still, sins committed after Baptism, they argue, have had their guilt forgiven but the punishment remains, which is to be paid in purgatory, as they claim, and to be redeemed through our own acts of satisfaction. Thus, they

transform the punishment due to sin (which is indeed eternal in hell) into a temporary state in purgatory, to be alleviated through acts of satisfaction. But what can a person give in ransom for their soul? As mentioned before, even Augustine reported that the Catholic faith does not believe in purgatory as they have invented it. For, as Saint John states, it is the blood of Christ that purges us from all sin, and His most precious blood is the only Purgatory we acknowledge. It delivers His people from the punishment due to sins, as well as from sins themselves, for our punishment was placed upon Him, and by His stripes, we are healed, as the Prophet Isaiah speaks.

Moreover, the Papists claim that they offer up Christ in their Mass, which they assert is propitiatory for both the living and the dead. Concerning the dead, it cannot be propitiatory or beneficial, for as a tree falls, so it lies, and as a person is found at death, so they either go to heaven or hell. There is no third place called purgatory, as they claim. If anyone is in heaven, their Masses can do them no good, for they already enjoy all that is good. And if anyone is in hell, we know that "Ex inferno nulla redemptio," from hell there is no redemption. Therefore, for the dead, it cannot be propitiatory or serve any purpose. As for the living, it cannot be propitiatory. Indeed, it is blasphemous and diminishes the significance of Christ's one-time sacrifice. Since He is a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, He is to die only once, which He did on the Cross. His sacrifice is perfect, as the author of Hebrews states, and it requires no further assistance, such as the Mass or any other ceremony, to make it perfect. To suppose any imperfection in the sacrifice and oblation of Jesus Christ is wicked, gross, blasphemous, and damnable. God proclaimed with a voice from heaven twice, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

5. Now, concerning the other aspect of His Priesthood, namely, His intercession with His Father, by which He makes requests to God on our behalf, although the Papists attribute this chiefly to Christ, what else do they do but completely rob Him of it when they associate others with Him? Such as the Virgin Mary, whom they call the Queen of heaven, the gate of Paradise, their life and sweetness, the Treasurer of Grace, the refuge of sinners, and the Mediatrix of men. I ask, what do they leave to Christ now? Furthermore, when they say the following to her:

"O happy mother, satisfying for our sins, by your motherly authority, command the Redeemer."

What greater blasphemy against Christ could they utter? It is evident that Saint Paul states there is but one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). But the Papists are not content with Him; they want many Mediators. Saint Paul also says that through Christ, we have boldness and access to God (Ephesians 3:12). So, what foolish fear drives the Papists to appoint other Mediators for themselves? Since, therefore, the Church of Rome does not regard the once-offered Oblation of Jesus Christ and His Intercession as perfect but accuses them of imperfection (as is apparent from their doctrines), it cannot possibly be the true Church.

Christ Himself commands us to ask in no other name but His and promises that whatever is asked in His name, it shall be done (John 14:13-14). Chrysostom, speaking of the woman of Canaan, who, though she was a sinner, approached Christ, says:

"Behold the wisdom of this woman. She does not pray to James,

she does not beseech John, she does not go to Peter, she does not seek any of the company of the Apostles, but despite all this, she takes repentance as her companion and goes to the very fountain itself."

He also says that to have access to God, there is no need for a Courtly attendant or intercessor, but one should simply say, "Have mercy upon me, O God," for He hears you from wherever you are and answers you from wherever you call upon Him. Ambrose likewise responds to the carnal reasoning of the Papists, saying:

"They are accustomed to use a pitiful excuse, saying that through these (saints) they may have access to God, just as through Earls, access is made to Kings. Therefore, access is made to the King through Officers and Earls, because the King himself is a man. But to come to God, from whom nothing is hidden, there is no need for a spokesman, but a devout mind; for wherever such a one speaks to Him, He will answer him."

Therefore, the Church of Rome, which does not acknowledge the sufficiency and perfection of Christ's one Oblation or His continual intercession, cannot possibly be the true Church.

6. The Papists, in words, will not deny that Christ is a King who possesses all power in heaven and on earth. However, in reality, they seem to exile and banish Him from His kingdom, or at least leave Him with only a small portion, or rather none at all. This is because, as Saint James speaks, Christ is the only lawgiver for His Church, and therefore, His laws alone should govern the Church. However, the Papists cannot tolerate this and add their Popish canons, constitutions, and customs to govern the

Church. They insist that these should take precedence, even at the expense of the word of God.

Secondly, Christ is the only one who should reign in the consciences of men. Yet, the Pope claims the power to bind men's consciences with his laws, statutes, and decrees.

Thirdly, the Pope traitorously claims to be the head of the entire universal Church, a title that, by prerogative, belongs only to Jesus Christ. But before I proceed further, I ask the Pope and the Papists: when and by what right does their proud Pope take on the title of the head of the Church or universal Bishop over the entire Christian world? By virtue of this title, he assumes the authority to rule as he pleases and do as he pleases. First, to claim this title as the successor to Peter is impossible because Peter, the Apostle, never held any such title, preeminence, or authority over the other Apostles.

It is true that Christ said to Peter, after he confessed Jesus to be the Christ, the son of the living God, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church." However, these words do not confer superiority to Peter over the others; they merely indicate that the Church is built not on Peter, but on the rock. On what rock? Namely, on Jesus Christ, whom Peter confesses as the son of the living God. For it is that confession of Peter regarding Jesus being the Christ, the son of the living God, that serves as the rock upon which the Church is built. As Saint Paul explains and affirms, "Other foundations can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." In another place, he expressly states, "That rock was Christ." Christ Himself also affirms that whoever hears His words and acts on them is like a man who builds his house upon a rock, indicating that He and His words and

doctrine are the rock against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. This is in agreement with what Saint Paul says, that the Church is built on the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, with Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone.

So, where do we find that Peter was made the Prince of the Apostles to rule over all the others, as the Pope does now? The Papists answer that, in the following words, when Christ gave Peter the keys to bind and loose, He made Peter the Prince and universal Bishop of the whole Church. However, I assert that Christ did not give more authority to Peter than to the rest in this regard. The keys were not given to him or the others at that moment, but there was a promise that they would be given. The words are in the future tense, "I will give unto you." This promise was later fulfilled when the keys, signifying the power to bind and loose sinners, were given not only to Peter but to Peter and all the other Apostles together, as clearly declared and confirmed by Saint John in his Gospel. Since Peter was the one who spoke for himself and the others, both Cyprian and Augustine explain and affirm that the keys were given to Peter and the rest equally.

Therefore, Peter did not receive any more authority or superiority than the other Apostles. It is true that he was called "Primus" because he was among the first to be called to the Apostleship, or because he was the first among all the Apostles to confess Jesus as the Messiah and Son of the living God. He may also have been considered the foremost in always being ready to speak and answer. However, all of this does not prove that he had authority over the others or a larger commission than the rest. I concede that he was called "Primus" for these reasons, but it does not establish that he had authority over the

rest. The words of their commission clearly show that they all had equal authority. Their commission was given to them all indifferently, without making distinctions. It was as follows: "Go ye and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). Review all that remains written, and you will find that Peter was one of the twelve, equal with the others, their companion but not their Lord. Where was Peter's superiority when Paul rebuked him to his face, as recorded in Galatians chapter 2, verse 11, when he pleaded no privilege but responded to the accusation for his own vindication and the satisfaction of others?

Where was Peter's authority over the rest when the rest sent him and John into Samaria, as recorded in Acts chapter 11, verses 3 and 4, and also in Acts chapter 8, verse 14? His compliance with their sending clearly indicates that he had no superiority over them.

Where was his preeminence or authority when, during a council held in Jerusalem where the Apostles were present, Peter was not the one ruling the proceedings, but James, as seen in Luke 22:25, 26, etc.?

Furthermore, I assert that when there was contention among the Apostles about who should be the chief among them, Christ plainly told them that kings of nations might exercise authority over their people, and great men under those kings might also have authority over others, but it should not be so among them. Instead, the greatest among them should be as the least and as a servant. This teaching is found in Luke 22:25, 26, etc.

If the greatest among them should be as the least, what authority does he have over the least? In that case, the least has the same authority as the greatest, meaning they all have equal authority. I am puzzled, therefore, by what the Pope and Papists mean when they, contrary to the Commission of Christ, contrary to the practice of Peter himself, and contrary to Christ's decree of their equality, assert that Peter was the Prince of the Apostles and had authority over them all. In reality, as evident from all the Scriptures and the course of Peter's life, he neither claimed nor possessed any authority over the rest that exceeded what the rest had over him. Consequently, the Pope of Rome can never claim a position as the successor to Peter that was never held by Peter himself, his supposed predecessor.

The Papists, realizing that the scriptures do not support their claims but rather oppose them, have invented some counterfeit and fabricated authors like Amacletus and Amissetus, among others, to make it seem as if there is some antiquity or semblance of antiquity to their arguments. However, the falsehood of all these claims can be exposed by examining other writings if one pays close attention. During Cyprian's time, it was considered objectionable for anyone to claim the title of "Bishop of Bishops," as evidenced by his outcry at the Council of Carthage. The African Council also decreed that no one should be called "Priest of Priests" or "Archpriest," among other such titles. The Council of Nicaea decreed that the Bishop of Rome, as well as the Bishops of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople, should confine themselves to their respective provinces and not exceed their boundaries. Other councils made similar affirmations, as they are well-known and need not be repeated here. All of these demonstrate that, during those times, the

Bishop of Rome had no greater jurisdiction than within his own province and could not meddle in the provinces of other bishops. Jerome of his time also asserted that the Bishop of Engubium or any other bishop, even the smallest, was equal to the Bishop of Rome. The title of "Universal Bishop" was greatly desired by John, the Bishop of Constantinople, and there was much contention over it. However, it was not granted to the Bishop of Rome until the time of Boniface III, who obtained it from the wicked Emperor Phocas. Afterward, the Bishops of Rome never ceased to increase their dignity and pride in their Roman See. Interestingly, at the time when John, the Bishop of Constantinople, sought the title of "Universal Bishop" for his See, Gregory, then the Bishop of Rome, strongly opposed it and declared that anyone who assumed that title could be nothing less than Antichrist. Therefore, it is evident that until the time of Gregory, the Bishop of Rome, the concept of a universal bishop was unheard of in the Church. Boniface III was the first Bishop of Rome to acquire this title, more than 600 years after Christ. Furthermore, how can the current Pope evade being identified as Antichrist, given that, according to the explicit judgment of his predecessor Gregory, he is condemned for being Antichrist by bearing this title without shame? This is nothing less than usurping Christ Jesus' prerogative title. The Pope may argue that, though he claims to be the head of the Church, he does not consider himself to be anything other than a ministerial head and Christ's representative on earth. However, why would he be so presumptuous as to assert this title without clear authorization from Christ, which he cannot demonstrate? Who would dare to assume the role of a deputy to an earthly ruler without first obtaining a patent from that ruler? Moreover, the Church of Christ on earth, being like a chaste bride to her Husband and head, Christ Jesus, should neither acknowledge

nor have any other head except her Husband, to whom she has pledged her faithfulness. Lastly, there can be no successor when the predecessor is always present, and Christ is perpetually present with His Church, as He Himself declared, "Behold I am with you to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). Therefore, He can have neither a successor nor a vicar to represent His person or guide His Church, for His Spirit (since His bodily ascension) serves as the guide and governor of the Church in His place (John 14, 15, and 16). No mortal man is appointed to this role. In conclusion, considering all these reasons, it is clear that the Church of Rome cannot possibly be the true Church.

7. The Church of Rome does not attribute justification solely to faith in Christ Jesus. Instead, they claim that men's works are meritorious and that justification should be partly ascribed to them. This is a fundamental error. Saint Paul clearly states that all are justified freely by God's grace (Romans 3:24). If they are justified "freely," then it means they are justified without any merit of their own. Saint Paul reinforces this point by saying, "We hold that a man is justified by faith without the works of the Law" (Romans 3:28). In numerous passages, the Apostle explicitly excludes works from being causes of our justification. Works are, indeed, the effects of justification. Therefore, it is a true statement that only faith justifies, as justification is imputed to our faith, not our works, in the sight of God. As Saint Paul says, "Abraham believed God, and that was imputed to him for righteousness" (Romans 4:8). He goes on to argue that if Abraham were justified by works, he would have something to boast about, but not before God. This underscores that he was not justified in the sight of God by works. While Saint James does say in his second chapter that Abraham was justified by his works when he offered his son Isaac at God's command, this

justification is before men, not before God. Works declare to others the faith by which a person is justified before God. Hence, when Saint James says, "Show me thy faith by thy works," he means that works demonstrate faith before men. It is God who regards a person's faith for justification, and men look at the works as evidence of faith's genuineness. Saint James rightly points out that faith without works is dead and ineffective. However, faith and works must coexist, and where true faith exists, good works naturally follow as its fruits. In this way, Saint Paul and Saint James can be reconciled. Thomas Aquinas, a Papist scholastic, affirmed that Christ Jesus justifies effectively, faith justifies apprehensively by embracing Christ, and good works justify declaratively, declaring to the world one's justification before God. Faith without works is dead and unprofitable, but justification before God is attributed to faith, not works. Saint Paul explicitly states, "God imputes righteousness without works" (Romans 4:6), "by grace, not of works" (Romans 11:6), and "not of works" (Romans 9:11). In Ephesians 2:8-9, he tells the Ephesians that they are saved by grace through faith and not by works, emphasizing that salvation is not based on works. Saint Paul also speaks on behalf of all the children of God, stating that they are saved not by works but by God's predestination and grace (2 Timothy 1:9). He affirms that God saves us not because of our works but out of His mercy (Titus 3:5). Many similar passages support our belief that faith alone justifies before God. Saint Hilary said, "Sola fides iustificat," which means "Faith only justifies." Ambrose declared that a man is not justified before God except by faith, which is equivalent to saying that faith alone justifies before God. Saint Basil explained that perfect and sound rejoicing in God occurs when a man does not boast of his own righteousness but knows that he lacks true righteousness and is justified by

faith alone. Gregory Nazianzen asserted that believing only is righteousness. Therefore, it is evident from both Scripture and the writings of the Fathers that we hold the truth in this matter, and the Church of Rome is in a significant error. It is true that every man will be rewarded according to his works, as the faith of men is evaluated by their works, but there is no Scripture to support the notion that anyone is saved *propter merita*, that is, for their works or merits. On the contrary, many Scriptures refute this idea. Even when we have done all that we can, we must acknowledge ourselves as unprofitable servants, as Christ commanded (Luke 17:10). Therefore, the Papists, who teach meritorious works and even works of supererogation for salvation, both for themselves and others, do not hold the correct faith and, consequently, are not part of the true Church.

8. If I were to detail all the corruptions of the Roman Catholic Church, it would be an endless task, and I am not able to enumerate them all. Therefore, I will conclude this discussion with the following argument: The Pope of Rome, as the head of that Church, is the famous Antichrist foretold by the Apostle Paul and presignified in the Book of Revelation by Saint John. Therefore, it is impossible for the Church of Rome to be the true Church, for the Church of Antichrist, no matter how much it boasts, cannot be the true Church, just as many a harlot desires to be considered an honest woman.

One of the marks of Antichrist, as shown by Paul, is that he should exalt himself above everyone who is called God, though not above God Himself (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Those whom the Scriptures call God are known to be the judges and magistrates of the earth, as they are in the place of God and His representatives, thus deserving the honourable title of being

called God (Psalm 81:6). It is well-known that the Pope of Rome exalts himself above such earthly gods, namely, all princes and magistrates. He and his Jesuits openly manifest this through their wicked practices, seminaries, and patrons, as well as their writings.

Another mark of Antichrist, as set forth by Paul, is that he should sit in the Temple of God as God, presenting himself as God (2 Thessalonians 2:4). And what does the Pope do but sit in the Temple of God as if he were God? By claiming the Apostolic See, he asserts himself as the head of the Church, ruling it as he pleases. He elevates and deposes princes from their thrones, claiming infallibility and the power to forgive sins, which are matters that belong exclusively to God. These actions demonstrate his self-exaltation to the authority of God Himself, and numerous documents like the Sixth book of the Decretals, the Clementines, and the Extravagants provide ample evidence of this. These Popes went beyond what Angelicus wrote in his Poetry, where he said, "Papa stupor mundi, the Pope is the wonder of the world. Nec Deus es, nec homo, sed neuter, & inter utrumque," meaning "Thou art not God, nor art thou man, but neuter mixed of both." These Popes boldly took on the very name of God, accepting it from others, as seen in the blasphemous verse dedicated to Pope Sixtus the fourth when he entered Rome in his papal dignity. The verse on the gate he entered read:

Oraclo vocis mundi moderaris habenis, Et merito in terris, crederis esse Deus.

By the oracle of your own voice, you govern the world, And rightly on Earth, you are believed to be a God.

Shall I say more? The Pope, more than any other man in the world, assumes such Luciferian pride (though he deceives the world with

words, calling himself "servus servorum Dei," a servant of the servants of God), that he elevates himself above God Himself and His worship. He presumes to be above the Scriptures, dispensing with them at his pleasure and permitting things contrary to them. God Himself, whose will is unchangeable and revealed in the Scriptures, will not do this, for He and His Word do not contradict. This manifests that the Pope exalts himself above God since there is less danger and punishment for anyone who breaks any of God's laws than for one who breaks even the slightest decree of the Pope. Furthermore, he claims authority in three places: Heaven, Earth, and Purgatory, which is why he wears a triple crown. By this account and claim, he has more extensive authority than God Himself, for such a third place as Purgatory is not recognized by God. These actions reveal his self-exaltation above God and all that is worshipped.

Antichrist is described as one who comes with lying signs, false miracles, and wonders, as mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 (by which, if possible, he would deceive even the elect). This description is fitting for the Pope and the Papal Church, known for their cunning deceptions, frauds, and knaveries, as attested by their "Aurea Legenda" and the book of Trophes.

Saint Paul, in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, indicates that Antichrist should be "O'anomos," meaning a lawless person or one not subject to any law. This description is clearly applicable to the Pope, for no laws, whether divine or human, can bind him. He claims to be above all laws, able to change and alter them at will and for whomever he chooses, as testified by the gloss upon the decretals, which states that he is not subject to any law. This aligns precisely with Saint Paul's reference to "O'anomos," a lawless person.

Saint John, in the Book of Revelation, portrays Antichrist and his seat as the great whore, with whom the kings of the Earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the Earth have been intoxicated with the wine of her fornication. This woman represents the great City that holds dominion over the kings of the Earth during the time of this Revelation, as explicitly affirmed by Saint John (Revelation 17:18). It is well-known that at that time, there was no other City reigning over the kings of the Earth except Rome. Therefore, Rome alone is and must be the seat of Antichrist, as no other city can fit this description given by Saint John. Rome was the sole city in the world that ruled over the kings of the Earth, with the Emperor as its head at that time, but now the Pope has taken that role. The condition of the first beast, the Roman Empire (civil), has changed into an Ecclesiastical Roman Empire.

Saint John, in his Revelation 13:11, saw a beast rising out of the Earth that had two horns like a Lamb but spoke like the Dragon. All that is spoken of this beast fittingly and exclusively applies to that man in Rome, the Pope. Though in appearance, he resembles a Lamb, for what could be milder or more humble than calling himself the servant of the servants of God, in reality, he plays the role of the Dragon or Devil. He has learned this cunning from Satan, who, despite being a malevolent spirit, transforms himself into an Angel of light to deceive souls, as the Apostle reveals in 2 Corinthians 11:14.

Here is wisdom, says Saint John in the Revelation: let anyone with understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666. Now, because the number of this wicked beast contains six hundred and sixty-six, Irenaeus believed that this Antichristian beast should be a man of Italy, as the number of the beast can be made up by the Greek word "Lateines," which corresponds to the just number of 666, being the number of the

beast's name. If someone thinks that although the Revelation was written in Greek, it might have been revealed to Saint John in Hebrew because the Hebrew tongue is considered the Holy tongue, and John himself was an Hebrew or Jew by nationality, and various Hebrew words are found in the Revelation, then he should seek out a Hebrew word that contains that precise number. In this regard, there is no need to search far or study much because the Hebrew word "רוֹמִי" (Romanus, meaning a man of Rome in English) contains the exact number of 666 in those Hebrew letters. Thus, whether through Greek or Hebrew letters, the number of the name aligns perfectly with that man in Rome, the Pope.

All the marks that correspond to Antichrist, whatever they may be, are fully and exclusively fulfilled in the Pope. Therefore, there is no doubt that he is the notable Antichrist of whom Paul and Saint John in his Revelation testify. Consequently, the Church of Rome, not being the true Church of Christ but, on the contrary, the visible Church of Antichrist, should rightfully be forsaken, and forever abandoned by all Christians who value their salvation in Jesus Christ, to whom they have entrusted themselves and to whom they must remain steadfast forevermore. May God grant us all the strength to do so. Amen.

CHAPTER 6.

Against Schism and Schismatic Synagogues

Many there are who, with godly and zealous intentions, seek reformation and the Church government that Christ Himself established in His Church. I neither dare nor intend to remove them. Others, however, seek reformation in a wrong manner, using venomous and slanderous tongues to revile and rail against those who oppose it. These actions do not bring credit to themselves or to the cause they wish to promote. Some go even further and, to make the cause of reformation appear odious, claim that it abolishes Her Majesty's supreme government and authority in ecclesiastical matters. I would urge all individuals to speak the truth and seek the advancement of God's truth in a respectful, peaceful, and charitable manner. Let the cause not be misrepresented. For my part, I desire nothing more than what every Christian should desire, namely, that the truth of God should hold preeminence, whatever it may be.

And I would to God that all malice and contention, from all sides, would become more charitably disposed in both their words and writings towards one another. This way, this controversy would come to an end sooner and be resolved more quickly. There are others who, because they cannot see their desired discipline and Church government established after such a long time, leave our Church and create a schism and separation from us. They establish their own discipline by their own authority and condemn our Church as not being a Church, in order to make their detestable schism more acceptable. These are the Brownists and Barrowists, who do not wait for the approval of the chief Magistrate to establish their own discipline, nor do they recognize any Church in England other than their own. But regarding them, you must understand that a Church may exist, and indeed a true Church may exist, even if it lacks Elders, Deacons, or Discipline. In Acts 2:41,42,43,47, we read about an assembly of people in Jerusalem who received the word of God, believed, and were explicitly called a Church. Who can deny them

being the true Church of God, since the Holy Ghost testifies to it? Yet, at that time, no Deacons were chosen, and no consistories of Elders were established. They were not established until later. Therefore, a true Church of God can exist, even if it does not yet have these elements. This desired Discipline is not an essential part of the Church. It is akin to the wall of a city, or a hedge or ditch around a vineyard. A city is still a city without a wall, and a vineyard is still a vineyard without a hedge or ditch, although it may be less fortified. Therefore, as long as we have the preaching of God's holy word and the correct administration of the Sacraments (which are the essential marks of the true Church), no one should abandon our Church due to any other deficiency, corruption, or imperfection. Even if they concede that Ministers in the Church of England have not been properly ordained and brought into the Church, does that mean they are not Ministers? By the same argument, they could claim that a person who is born into the world in an unorthodox manner (such as through a Caesarean section) is not a human being, since they enter the world in a disorderly fashion, just as Ministers may enter the Church with irregular ordination. I am certain that corrupt ordination does not invalidate a Minister. Likewise, any other corruption in our Church does not negate its existence as a Church. If a man is diseased and filled with corruption, no one will deny that he is still a man, despite these flaws. Even if he uses a prosthetic limb in place of a lost one, he remains a man because his essential parts are intact. Similarly, although we lack that Discipline, we possess the essential elements of the Church: the correct preaching of the word of God and the administration of the Sacraments. Therefore, we are undoubtedly a true Church of God. If we have a true Church, albeit an imperfect one, let the Brownists and Barrowists consider what they have abandoned. For if the Church of Christ is the body of Christ, as Saint Paul affirms, then by their schism and separation, they have separated themselves from the body of Christ. Let them

remember whose members they are until they are reconciled. Let them no longer charge our Church with idolatry, unless they can better prove it, which neither they nor the whole world can do. To claim, as they do, that a set form of prayer used in the Church and offered to God, when the prayer is crafted according to the rule of God's word, is idolatry, is detestable. By the same reasoning, they could condemn all prayers made to God by the Preacher or Pastor of the Congregation, which they do not. Furthermore, all reformed Churches in Christendom have a set form of public prayers for public gatherings and Congregations.

They say that we observe Saints' days and dedicate Churches to them, but they should show that we do these things in honor of the Saints, else they have no reason to charge our Church with idolatry, as they wickedly do. For the Statute itself expresses that our Church calls them Holy-days, not for the sake of the Saints but for the holy exercises conducted on them in public assemblies.

Furthermore, it is true that we observe fasting days, but in doing so, we do not follow Romish fasts or place worship of God, remission of our sins, or the merits of eternal life in them as the Papists do. The political laws of this land that prohibit eating flesh on certain days do so in consideration of the commonwealth, aiming to improve navigation and conserve the young cattle population. They also impose penalties for those who consider these days as meritorious Romish fasts.

Therefore, I wish for them to cease their slander against this Church, end their damnable schism, and reconcile with our Church, from which they have foolishly departed. However imperfect our Church may be (may God cure its imperfections in due time), they can never prove otherwise than that the Church of England is the true Church

of God, and it is utterly unlawful to make a separation from it. May God forgive us all and bring us back into reconciliation with Him. Amen.

FINIS.

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