



THE BASIC DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

**A Set of Follow-Up Bible Study
Outlines**

IFECHUKWU U. IBEME

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By

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[Table_of_Contents](#)

Foreword by: Rt. Rev. E.K. Mani, JP.
(The Anglican Bishop of
Maiduguri Diocese)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Foreword](#)

[Preface/Acknowledgement](#)

[Introduction](#)

PART ONE: THE NEW CREATION

Study 1: [The Newbirth and its Assurance](#)

Study 2: [The New Life](#)

PART TWO: GOD AND HIS WORD

Study 3: [The God we Worship](#)

Study 4: [The Bible as the Word of God](#)

PART THREE: HOLDING FAST

Study 5: [Prayer and Devotion time](#)

Study 6: [Overcoming Afflictions](#)

PART FOUR: REACHING OUT

Study 7: [Fellowship and Stewardship](#)

Study 8: [Witnessing and Soulwinning](#)

SUPPLEMENT

Supplement 1: [Christian Water Baptism](#)

Supplement 2: [Articles of Religion](#)

[Fellow-up Check Sheet](#)

[Table_of_Contents](#)

FOREWORD

Dr. Ifechukwu U. Ibeme is not only a medical doctor, but also an attested preacher and an orderly teacher of the Word. As a committed Christian and convinced “evangelical Anglican” he believes that the Church must effectively teach all aspects of her life – faith, doctrine and tradition – on the basis of the supreme authority of the Scriptures. I have heard this author say that he desires earnestly to see in every Church-congregation, men and women whose hearts are after God and whose lives are true to the Word. This has moved him to labour through his ministry in this our Anglican Diocese of Maiduguri and beyond.

In these days of Church doctrinal fuzziness, the Church needs sound teaching on her doctrine. And truly, a great deal of scripturally sound teaching is highly needed in our churches today, more than ever before. This is why we happily welcome this book. It is a most timely and well-written booklet, which explains the fundamentals of the Christian Faith direct from the Bible. In addition, the author has devoted some pages to an illuminating treatise on Christian water Baptism, as well as publicised the confession of the historic Anglican Church commonly called the 39 Articles of Faith.

Dr. I. U. Ibeme is our Diocesan Evangelism Secretary as well as our Diocesan Chairman for the EFAC; he is also running an ordination course at St. Francis of Assisi Theological College. Wusasa, Zaria.

Having carefully read through the whole work myself, I confidently recommend it to all Christians, both Clergymen and Laymen: for private and public reading and Bible Study alike. I particularly recommend that all the Churches in the Anglican Diocese of Maiduguri utilize this book in their Bible studies. It is apologetic enough as far as the Anglican Doctrine is concerned.

May this booklet be received with open mind in every quarter by all and sundry, so that God would enlighten every heart through its contents to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord and saviour Amen.

Rt. Rev E.K. Mani JP
Anglican Bishop of Maiduguri Diocese,
June 1991.

[Table_of_Contents](#)

[Table_of_Contents](#)

PREFACE/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks be to God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christi for the opportunity and Grace given me to prepare these studies (which the Maiduguri Diocesan EFAC has taken up as the copyright owner and publisher). My earnest prayer is that God would bless this effort and use it to turn the hearts of men and women after Him and so enlarge and enlighten His Church in the knowledge of the Truth.

THE BASIC DOCTRINE OF CHRIST is only but a mini attempt to set forth didactically to this generation the fundamentals of the one, holy, universal, and apostolic Faith in Christ. It is an introductory revisit of the BIBLE BASED historic faith of the Reformation, preached down the centuries by many Evangelical Saints including Anglican Evangelicals. Biblically Sound Christian doctrine is lacking today in our older and newer Churches alike. Much of current understanding and preaching by many Christians today is Scripturally lopsided and much is totally repugnant to the Word of God. Much is man –centred rather than God-centred, much is wantonness than obedience, and much is self-esteem than humility. We often see the Word of God regrettably mishandled: Sometimes due to ignorance and sometimes due to insincerity; sometimes due to unbelief and sometimes due to unbridled enthusiasm; sometimes due to malice and sometimes due to stubbornness; sometimes due to reactionary disorderly emotionalism and sometimes due to reactionary cold formalism. No one cares about what God wants anymore. No one cares!

Many a time, we are suffocated with impetuous presentation of private conceptions, superstitious beliefs, and personal experiences “supported”

with incoherent out-of-context manipulation of the Word of God! May the Lord have mercy.

It is high time we revived the ancient doctrine of Christ and the traditions of the apostles in its purest form. It is time we reformed the Churches. It is time we built ONLY on the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets, with Christ as the Chief Corner Stone. The Church of today is so oblivious of the past that she has totally neglected the fellowship of the Saints of old, both in doctrine and in traditions. But Christianity that differs much from that of the first four centuries AD is not likely to be Christianity at all. And faith based on any authority other than that which agrees wholly with the Scriptures is not likely to be the Christian Faith at all. THE CHURCH MUST REFORM HER FAITH AND JUDGE HER TRADITIONS ON THE BASIS OF THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

These didactic follow-up studies are intended to impart the sound biblical doctrine of Christ, primarily to the new convert in the world of today. We also believe that through these outlines God would mercifully grant that erroneous beliefs and teachings be corrected, true faith strengthened, backsliders exhorted unto faith, many souls drawn to the feet of Christ our Lord, and Saints furnished unto every good work.

In order to put things right and make matters clear concerning the teachings and practices of the historic Anglican Church (and other historic reformed Churches), the supplements on Christian Water Baptism and the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith have been included in this booklet.

May God by His grace, confirm His Word of Truth in His elect Saints, even in these last days; that they no longer be blown about by every wind of doctrine, but rather be established in the true Faith till the appearing of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (Amen).

I wish to acknowledge the tremendous help and constructive criticisms from the leaders and Bible Study teachers of EFAC in particular, as well as those of Sunday School Bible Study of our Church.

[Table_of_Contents](#)

[Table_of_Contents](#)

INTRODUCTION

When one is converted to Christ, he/she is like a new born baby who needs to be weaned and trained until he/she becomes capable of fending for himself/herself, as well as for others who need help and support. This set of follow-up Bible study outlines is designed to help the new convert gain the necessary BIBLE BASED footing within the shortest possible time on which to build for further Christian growth unto maturity.

They are also meant for the old Christian who needs or desires a resume of the Basic Doctrine of Christ. For the Bible study teacher, the outlines serve as a ready tool.

These studies should be preferably taught didactically, in the order they are arranged in this booklet, reading out the Bible references as much as possible. Each study may be broken up for two or more sessions depending on time allotted to each or be lumped into four as indicated,

especially for revision or retreat session with older Christians – such would mean longer time per session.

May the Lord be with you and enlighten you as you study on. Amen.

[Table_of_Contents](#)

PART ONE

THE NEW CREATION

STUDY 1

THE NEW BIRTH AND ITS ASSURANCE

A. THE NEW BIRTH

When you REPENT of your sinfulness, and BELIEVE in Jesus Christ as the Son of God - **resting on** Him as the only Saviour, who rose from the dead (Rom. 10:9), and **receiving** Him as Lord of your whole life - then you are: **justified** through Christ's blood (Rom 3:22-28) and **born anew** into the Kingdom of God by the working of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-7). This gives you the power to become a son and heir to the Kingdom of Heaven (John 1:12,13; Rom. 8:15-17), having been baptised into Christ's Body with the same Holy Spirit (1Cor. 12:13). This Newbirth is also called REGENERATION (which is Salvation).

To believe in Jesus Christ as the Saviour and Lord (2Pet. 1:11) and the ONLY WAY to eternal life (John 10:9; 14:6) is to agree with all that he is and all that He said and did. To believe is to trust completely, adhere and rely absolutely. Through such FAITH in Jesus, you are saved by HIS GRACE (Heb. 11:6; Eph. 2:8) if you truly believe. HOWEVER, DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE? ARE YOU BORN AGAIN OF THE SPIRIT? IF NOT, WHY NOT BELIEVE AND BE SAVED (Acts. 16:31)

Now since you are saved (or born again), you are a child of God, indwelled by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13; Rom. 8:9) and therefore baptised with the Spirit into Christ (1Cor. 12:13).

All your desire and whole life is now for Christ alone (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:12,13). Yours is now a life of CONFIDENT TRUST in and COMMITTED OBEDIENCE to our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ.

B. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Assurance is that certainty that enables you to say: "Yes, I am born again, I am saved". To have this assurance, the new birth must have taken place in your life (as explained above). Assurance requires FAITH in (i.e. confident trust in and committed obedience to) God and His Word. Assurance of Salvation is to be certain; that your sins are forgiven (1John 1:8,9); that you have been justified (i.e. counted righteous) freely by God's grace (Rom 5:1-2), through Christ's death and blood (Rom. 5:8,9); and that you possess eternal life now (1John 5:11-13).

Your assurance and certainty that if you die NOW or if Christ comes NOW, you shall go to heaven and reign with Him is based on:-

(i) The Word of God:

- God has said that you have eternal life so far as you believe in Christ. So no one (including the Devil) can change this fact. Praise God! (John 10:27-29; 1John 5:13.)

- It is no longer what you feel but what you KNOW that God who cannot lie has promised.
- (ii) The witness of the Holy Spirit:
- The Holy Spirit gives you a deep convincing impression in your inner man that you are a child of God. (Rom. 8:16).
 - It is to make you a Son that God has given you His Holy Spirit (Rom 8:15; Gal. 4:6; 1John 4:13).
- (iii) The Change of your Life.
- Your affections, attitudes and values have taken a totally new turn towards godliness (2Cor. 5:17; Tit. 2:11,12).
 - You now greatly desire the Word of God (1Peter 2:2).
 - You love the fellowship of Christians (1John 3:14; Heb 10:25).
 - You desire to share your faith with others (Ps. 40:10).

C. PRESSING ON:

- Now that you are sure about your salvation, live as one who is saved. Be pure and righteous like Jesus (1John 3:2-9)
- Also be careful so that you do not fall (1Cor. 10:12), because it is possible to fall away and even lose your salvation (Rom 11; 12-23; Matt, 5: 13, 8; 12, John 15: 3-6, 1Cor. 3:17), if you do not allow it to take root (Matt. 13: 20-22).
- To stand and grow, you must continue in the study of GOD'S Word, in prayer, in participation in fellowships, Church services

and Holy Communion, and in witnessing for Christ. (Act. 2; 40-42).

- Always remember that as a CHRISTIAN, you are saved (i.e. born again and indwelled by HOLY SPIRIT) so then you are the temple of the Holy Spirit and bought at a precious price to become God's property. Any sin committed as a CHRISTIAN is GRIEVOUS because it is a misuse of GOD'S OWN PROPERTY. (1Cor. 6:19, 20). So, keep yourself pure (1Tim 5: 22b).

***NOTE: BE STEADFAST; PRESS ON TOWARDS THE MARK
(PHIL. 3:14).***

[Table of Contents](#)

[Table_of_Contents](#)

STUDY 2

THE NEW LIFE

INTRODUCTION

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17).

For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works”. (Eph. 2:10).

The NEW life is a totally revolutionised life; it is completely different from the old life as the Word of God says:

“For the Grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Tit 2:11-13).

The NEW BIRTH produces NEW LIFE. The new life is the Spirit-controlled life, the sanctified life, the Victorious Christian life. It is a life of HOLINESS, HUMILITY, BOLDNESS, POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT and HOPE OF HEAVEN. So that the old Natural man gives way totally for the New Spiritual man, and you could say as Paul:

“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20; see also Rom 6:6; 11-14).

A. SANCTIFICATION:

This includes all that HAS BEEN DONE (at Regeneration) and all that IS BEING DONE thereafter to bring you into PERFECTION IN HOLINESS in Christ Jesus.

(i) You have been Sanctified: -

- By God the Father (1Thes 5:23; Jude 1).
- By God the Son (Heb. 2:11)
- By God the Holy Spirit (1Peter 1:2; Rom 15:16).
- By the Blood of Christ (Heb. 13.12).
- By your faith in Christ (Acts 26:18).

(ii) You are being Sanctified: -

- By all in (1) above continuing to work.
- Through the WORD which is THE TRUTH (2Cor.3:18; John 17:17).

- Through chastening or discipline (Heb.12: 10,11).
- Through complete surrender (Rom. 6:11,19).
- Through personal cleansing and mortification of all fleshly tendencies (2Cor. 7:1; Col. 3: 5-14).
- By looking unto Jesus and setting our affections on things above (Heb. 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-4)

(iii) Maintain your Sanctification: -

Having seen all that work together to sanctify you then, seek and maintain this Holiness (1Thes. 4:3,4) by:

- Cultivating the habit of a Spirit-led life (Gal. 5:16, 23).
- Repenting of, confessing and abhorring any acts you ever realise to be sinful (1John 1: 8,9; Rev. 2:4,5)
- Resisting the Devil (i.e. Not yielding to temptations) James 4:7; 1Peter 5:8, 9.
- Continuing in the Scriptures, in prayer, in fellowship and in witnessing (Acts 2:42).

(iv) Understand your Sanctification and Holiness:-

Remember always that God has BY HIS GRACE numbered you NOW as a member of the communion of the Saints (Phil 1:1; Col. 1:12) or the Holy Brotherhood (Heb. 3:1 which is the true Holy, Universal (Catholic) and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. This does not mean that you are by your works already perfect (Phil. 3:12-17); nor is it because you are without sin or can no longer sin (1 John 1:8-10); but because Christ's righteousness has been imputed to your account. This was made possible by God's grace (Rom. 4:4-8)

through your faith in Christ (Rom 3:22). You now have power over sin and over your sinful nature (Rom. 6:12-14) through the indwelling Holy Spirit (1John 3:7-9). God is so holy and mighty that only Christ's righteousness (not ours) could satisfy His awesome demands.

B. SEPARATION AND CONSECRATION:

Sanctification comprises:-

- (i) SEPARATION and CLEANSING from sin and the world (2Cor. 6:17; Rom 12:2). That is being IN the world but not OF the world (John 17:14-18; 1John 2:15; 16).
- (ii) CONSECRATION (by you) unto ACCEPTANCE and USE (by God) for the Lord. This means dedicating your whole self and life to God in absolute trust and surrender so that He could freely use you to any extent in accomplishing His will and pleasure (Rom. 12:1; Gal. 2:20).

C. SHINING THE LIGHT OF THE NEW LIFE (Matt. 5:14-16)

Our Lord Jesus Christ has given us the principles of the New Sanctified Life in the SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Matt. 5, 6 and 7). Make out time to study these three chapters.

Here are some principles of Separation (Dan 1:8):-

- (i) I must separate from any anti-Christian activity (e.g. Secret Societies, false doctrine or HERESY, Church division or SCHISM, Idolatry etc).

- (ii) I must separate from anything that could destroy my testimony (e.g. Drinking, Smoking, Seductive Paintings and Fashion, Clubs, Paganish and immoral dancing, Wild shows, Unwise use of the tongue, Quarrelling, and other appearances of evil) 1 Thes. 5:22.
- (iii) I must separate from any thing that will lead me to sin (Mark 9:43-48); and from ALL SINS (1Cor. 6:9; 10; Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 1:29-31; Rev. 21:8, 2Tim. 3:1-5).
- (iv) Not all things are expedient and necessary for me (1Cor. 10:23). Therefore in exercising my liberty, I must first Ask: -
 - What would Jesus do? (Gal. 2:20).
 - Will this glorify God? (1Cor. 10:31).
 - Will this edify the brethren and myself? (1Cor. 10:33); Rom. 14:19).
 - Am I being careful? (Phil. 2:12)
 - Am I showing good virtue? (Phil. 4:8,9
 - Am I acting selflessly in love? (Rom. 15:1-3; Gal 5:13).
- (ii) I must obey all scriptural commandments and instructions (e.g Men should uncover their heads while Women should cover their heads when praying – 1Cor. 11:4-6; or Love your enemies – Luke 6:27; etc.)
- (iii) I shall not seek my desire nor the desire of others but only the desire of God according to His Word in all things (John 4:34; 5:30).

- (iv) I must be convinced about what I do. (“If in doubt, don’t” – Rom 14:5,23; Heb. 11:6), because I will give account of myself to God (Rom. 14:12; 2Cor. 5:10; Jas. 1:8).
- (v) I must not be too rash in judging those who disagree with me nor will I cause my brother to stumble (Rom. 14:3, 13, 21; John 7:24).

***NOTE: GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY AND YOUR SPIRIT
(2COR. 5:20)***

[Table_of_Contents](#)

PART TWO

GOD AND HIS WORD

STUDY 3

THE GOD WE WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

We firmly believe IN ONE GOD (not three Gods) who has revealed Himself to us in THREE PERSONS or THREE PERSONAL MANIFESTATIONS – The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. The Trinity could be likened to water which exists in three forms:- Liquid water, Solid ice and Gaseous steam.

Some people find it difficult to accept the mystery of Trinity, however, the Bible and the Apostolic Universal Church has always taught and believed it, and we must believe it if we are to be saved. (John 10:2-33,36,38-40; 14:23,26; 15:26; 16; Mark 1:10,11; Luke 3:22; Gen. 1:1-3, 26; John 1:1-4, 14; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; 1Peter 1:2; 2Cor. 13:14; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38-40). The word “TRINITY” is not in the Bible but it is a theological term meaning “Three-in-One”. Hence, the phrase Triune God means Three-In-One God. You as a man who is in the image of God may be said to be three-in-one, for you are spirit, soul and body (1Thes 5:23); yet you are not three different you’s but ONE you. Again, a man may be a Pastor, a Doctor and Father, Yet that cannot make him three; he still remains one man.

A. THE DEITY OF THE THREE PERSONS.

ATTRIBUTE	FATHER	THE SON	THE HOLY SPIRIT
Called God	John 8:54	John 1:1,14	Acts. 5:3,4
Eternal	Psalm 90:2	Rev. 1:18,17	Heb. 9:14
Omnipotent	1 Pet. 1:5	Matt. 28:18	Rom. 15:19
Omniscient	Psalm 147:5	Rev. 2:23	1 Cor. 2:11
Omnipresent	Jere. 23:24	Matt. 18:20	Psalm 139:7

B. THE TRINITY ACTING IN UNITY

(i) In Creation: -

- The Father spoke (Gen 1:3).
- The Son was the Word (John 1:1)
- The Holy Spirit moved on the Water (Gen 1:2)

(ii) In Redemption:-

- The Father sent the Son for us (John 3:16) and chose us (Eph. 1:3, 4).
- The Son offered Himself, finished the work for us (John 19:30) and redeemed us (Eph. 1:7,8).
- The Holy Spirit was the means of Christ's offering (Heb. 9:14) and our seal of guarantee (Eph. 1:13,14).

(iii) In Regeneration:-

- The Father accepts us as His sons (1John 3:1)
- The Son Cleanses us with His Blood (Eph. 1:7).
- The Holy Spirit begets us as sons of God (John 3:5) by baptising us into Christ's Body (1Cor. 12:13) as He comes to dwell in us (Rom. 8:9, 15).

(i) In Prayer:-

- The Father receives our request (John 16:23)
- The Son is the Name in which we pray (John 16:23).
- The Holy Spirit directs us in petitions (Rom. 8:26).

The mystery of the truth about The Trinity is great! As Christians we believe in, and worship “one God in Three Persons”, and “Three Persons in one God” - The Father Almighty, the Son Jesus Christ who is both God and Man (God, of the same substance with the Father, begotten before all worlds; and Man, of the substance of His mother, born in the world), and the Holy Spirit who is of the same substance with the Father and the Son, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

C THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU

God is everywhere yet the Son sits on the right hand of the Father and is with the Father on the throne in Heaven, the Holy Spirit has come down to build up and perfect the Church of which you are a part (Acts 2:23). Without the Holy Spirit, neither you nor the Church can do anything. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, Counsellor, Helper, Standby, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengthenener (John 16:7).

The Holy Spirit is “He” not “It”. He is the Third Person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit has intellect (1Cor. 2:11), will (1Cor. 12:11) and affection (Eph. 4:30; Rom. 15:30), so He is a Person (John 14:26; 15:26).

The Holy Spirit is somebody not something and He:-

1. Indwells (1 Cor. 3:16).
2. Interceded (Rom. 8:26).
3. Speaks (Acts 28:25).
4. Leads (Rm. 8:14).
5. Guides (John 16:13:13).
6. Moves (Gen. 1:2).

The Holy Spirit is important in your life as a believer

- (i) He gives you supernatural GIFTS and POWER for SERVICE. Acts 1:8; 1Cor. 12:7-12, 28-30; Rom 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11 (Over 20 Spiritual gifts are named in the New Testament).
- (ii) He guides and directs you in all things and into all truth. John 16:13; Matt. 10:19, 20; Rom. 8:14; Acts 10:19,20.
- (iii) He comforts, counsels, helps and controls you. John 14:26; Acts 16:6; Rom. 8:26.
- (iv) He produces His FRUIT of Christian Virtues in you. Gal. 5:22-2; 1 Cor. 13:2 Peter 1:5-8.

(a) Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

We cannot do without the Holy Spirit. When you repented and believed in Christ, you were sealed with, Baptised with, born again of, and indwelled by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 1Cor. 12:13; 2Cor. 1:22; Prov. 1:23; Rom 8:9; Acts 2:38; 1John 4:13-15; Gal. 3:14). Since you have been thus REGENERATED with the Holy Spirit, allow Him to do all His work FULLY in your life everywhere and always (Rm. 8:14; Gal 5:25).

All true believers have been baptised with (i.e. born of) the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 12:13), yet we all are urged to BE FILLED CONTINUALLY with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and to earnestly desire His gifts (1Cor 12:31); to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25) and to pursue after His fruit (2Peter 1:5-9). From time to time, as often as the need arises and conditions are met, Christians are by God's grace FILLED AGAIN AND AGAIN, MORE AND MORE with the Holy Spirit who dwells in them. You are filled when you yield or surrender yourself to the gracious CONTROL of the Holy Spirit: -

- ii. By earnestly asking in penitent faith (Acts 4:2-31; Luke 11:13). Or
- iii. By readily acting in obedient faith (Acts 4:8; Mark 13:11).

Being filled is a matter of the one and same indwelling Holy Spirit getting more of us not our getting more of Him. Being filled with the Holy Spirit has sometimes been erroneously called "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" But following the Scriptures, the Spirit baptism happens at, and is the same as the New birth, it is true for all true believers today. (Acts 2:38; 1Cor. 12:13). The Baptism is once but filling is often and progressive (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9; Eph. 5:18; Rom. 15:13,14).

b) Evidences of Being Filled

Whenever you are filled with the Holy Spirit you know because there will follow an instantaneous upsurge and overflow of grace from the indwelling fountain of the Holy Spirit, (John 4:14; 7:38; Eph. 5:18-20, Col. 1:9-11) leading to:-

- (i) Experience of Power (Acts 4:8, 31; Col. 1:11) and/or
- (ii) Manifestation of some Gifts (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 13:9-11; Col. 1:9).

So it is against the Scriptures to teach today that after being born again of the Spirit, one should thereafter be baptised with the Spirit. It is even more erroneous to teach that the initial evidence of that baptism is the speaking in tongues. Neither being baptised with the Spirit (Which is the Newbirth) nor being filled with the Spirit (which occurs many times after Newbirth), is always accompanied with tongues. Though Tongues is meant to be found AMONGST believers (Mk. 16:17) yet it is never given to ALL believers (1Cor. 12:30) but only to SOME (1Cor. 12:10) just as any other gift. The gift of Tongues enables our spirits to sing or speak out mysterious prayers of thanksgiving and adoration to God (1 Cor. 14:2, 14-7; Acts 11:15; 10:46). Tongues are not meant for speaking messages or prophecies to believers (1Cor. 14:2, 22). This is the much we can get out of the Scriptures, anything more than this could only be a modern, man-made doctrine which is not of Christ.

D. KNOWING GOD

We should not merely believe but also KNOW God. To know God experientially is to have Eternal Life (John 17:3). God is unapproachably HOLY (1Tim. 6:16) but He graciously reaches out to us in LOVE. God is ALMIGHTY and invariably FAITHFUL. In His holiness, God is JUST; and by His Love, He is our JUSTIFIER through Christ (Rom. 3:26). Our God is a Wonder!

When you believe in the Son of God and surrender to the Father's will, God shall work out His divine eternal PURPOSE in your life and MANIFEST Himself to you through the Holy Spirit which He has given to all who love Him. (John 14:23; Acts 5:32).

To worship God in SPIRIT AND TRUTH (John 4:24) is to really KNOW Him personally in our daily lives through the fellowship of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:17-19). To know God is to have communion with Him personally and always.

***NOTE: GRIEVE NOT AND QUENCH NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT
(EPH. 4:30; 1THES. 5:19).***

[Table_of_Contents](#)

STUDY 4

THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD

INTRODUCTION:

We do not worship the Bible but we study it, believe it and obey it as the Word of God.

All Scripture (every word and punctuations), were inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16). No Scripture contains any private interpretation for Holy men of God spoke only as the Holy Spirit moved them (2Peter 1:20-21; 1Cor. 2:12, 16; 2Peter 3:2, 15-16). The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible but He wrote through Holy men whom He guided in thought, phrase and words. The Holy Spirit also took cognisance of the personality, vocation, experience and language of these Holy men.

The Bible is the written Word of God. It reveals to us the ways of God (i.e. His words and works) in carrying out His Redemptive purpose for man. The Bible was written by the INSPIRATION of God and every jot and tittle therein shall not pass away but must be fulfilled. (Matt. 5:18; 24:35). The Bible is the Word of God INSCRIPTURATE (i.e. written form) while Jesus Christ is the Word of God INCARNATE (i.e. human form). The creation is standing on God's Word (2Peter 3:5-7). Our faith depends on the Word (Rom. 10:17; 1Peter 1:23).

As the Word of God, the Bible is authentic (Psa. 119:160a), infallible (Isa. 55:11), effectually active (John 6:63; Heb. 4:12) and sanctifying (John 15:3; 17:17).

The Bible was written in 3 different languages, on 3 different continents, over a period of more than 1,500 years through over 40 inspired Holy men (Kings, Priests, Doctors, Lawyers, Statesmen, Businessmen, Fishermen). There are 66 books in the Bible – 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

Despite all these diversities, there is no contradiction in the Bible. Many lives have been transformed by this Word of God over the ages. Praise God for making this Book of Books available to us.

A THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

As you leaf through the Bible now, you will see

- (i) The Old Testament (39 Books).
 - (a) LAW: 5 Books of Moses (Genesis to Deuteronomy)
 - (b) HISTORY: 12 Books on how Israel's repeated sin led to their exile and return (Joshua to Esther).
 - (c) WISDOM AND SONGS: 5 Books, including the Old Testament Hymn book called Psalms (Job to Song of Songs).
 - (d) PROPHECY: 17 Books of Prophecy about Israel, other nations and the MESSIAH. The last 12 books are short,

so are called the Minor Prophets (Isaiah to Daniel, Hosea, Malachi).

- (ii) The New Testament (27 Book)
 - (a) GOSPELS: 4 Books of the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ on earth (Mathew to John).
 - (b) HISTORY: 1 Book on the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the early Church (Acts).
 - (c) EPISTLES: 21 Letters written to the Churches by the Apostles and the brothers of Jesus. Paul wrote 13 and probably Hebrews (Romans to Hebrews; James to Jude).
 - (d) PROPHECY: 1 Book on the end-times and the second coming of Christ (Revelation).

NOTE:

The Apocrypha is not part of God's Word. The Jews, Jesus, the Apostles and the early Church did not regard Apocrypha as God's Word or as 'Inspired'.

B. BIBLE STUDY AND MEDITATION (Joshua 1:8)

You must study the Bible because it is the spiritual manual and equipment for Victorious Holy Living (2Tim 3:16,17; Eph 6:17; Ps. 119:11, 130; Heb. 4:12; John 6:63) as well as the spiritual food (1Peter 2:2).

- (i) Principles of Bible Study (Pslm 119:18)
 - (a) Study with open mind (Heb. 3:15).
 - (b) Study with surrendered will and prepared heart (Ezra 7:10).

- (c) Study with faith to believe (Heb. 4:2;) Psm. 119:128).
- (d) Mark and take down notes
- (e) Make careful use of commentaries various versions, concordance and other Bible helps (e.g. Daily Guide)
- (f) Memorise some key verses (Col. 3:16; Psm 119:16).
- (ii) Mediate along these lines (Psm 1:1-2)
 - (a) What does the passage say about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit?
 - (b) How does it apply to me as a Christian?
 - (c) Is there error and sin to avoid or example to follow?
 - (d) Is there a promise to claim or command to obey?

Endeavour to get your own good copy of the Bible, prayerfully study, and meditate on at least one chapter a day. Start with Mark's Gospel, then John's, then Acts. You should finish them before the end of this follow-up series. Then study other books and chapters, also topical themes and Bible characters too.

NOTE: DESIRE THE PURE MILK OF THE WORD (1PETER 2:2).

[Table_of_Contents](#)

PART THREE

HOLDING FAST

STUDY 5

PRAYER AND DEVOTION TIME

INTRODUCTION:

Prayer is communicating with God. Communication means speaking and listening for the response. Whenever, you pour out the whole burden in your heart before God the Father (Luke 22:44) in adoration and worship, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication, you are praying. In this you must be led by the Holy Spirit, you must have confidence and faith (with all humility) that you will receive all blessings due to you according to the promises of God (Mark 11:23-24; Matt. 17:20). God is more ready to hear our prayers than we are to call upon Him (Isa 65:24), if we love and obey Him.

The Holy Spirit leads us to pray in accordance with God's will (Rom. 8:26,27; 1John 5:14-15).

It is only through the mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that you now have access to the Father (Eph. 2:18; 1Tim 2:5), therefore you have to pray in the name of Jesus Christ (John 14:13; 14; 15:16). There is no other name (Acts 4:12) and at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow (Phil. 2:9-11).

When you come to God in prayers, you must first completely forgive everybody and anybody that has wronged you (Matt. 6:15). If you do not do this, God may not forgive you your sins and if you have any sins, God may not hear your prayers (Ps. 66:18,18; Isa 59:1,2; 1John 3:22).

A. WHEN, WHERE AND HOW MIGHT WE PRAY (LUKE 11:1)

- You may pray anywhere (Tim 2:8) and anytime (1Thes. 5:17). But pray in due order as prescribed in the Scriptures (Matt 6:9-14), so as not to displease God (Lev. 10:1-3).
- You may pray in the closet. That is alone and quietly in a secret place or room; or secretly in your heart (Matt. 6:6).
- You may also pray together with other Christians in small groups (Mk. 18:20; Acts 16:25) or in larger groups (Acts 1:14; 2:42).
- You may pray audibly (Luke 22:41,42; Acts 7:59, 60) or silently (1Sam 1.13-15), depending on circumstances (1Cor. 14:23,27,28).

Always let the Holy Spirit lead and direct you on when, where, and how to pray and be wise and obedient (Eph. 5:15; 1Cor. 14:14-20). Let all things be done decently and in order unto edifying and without confusion. Burning of candles and incenses have no scriptural basis. Cabbalistic methods and uses of “secrets” of the Psalms are unscriptural too.

B. THE BALANCED PRAYER (MATT. 6:9-13).

Prayer is not just making requests. A balanced prayer should comprise: (A.C.T.S.)

1. **Adoration:** Always start your prayers by yielding your whole being to God in praise of His name and in worship, for He is the Lord God Almighty, Holy and full of majesty (1 Chron. 29:11-13). Admire God in words and in songs too, as Paul and Silas did (Acts 16:25). Use Hymnbooks or Choruses.
2. **Confession:** If it is true that you have been born again or been saved, you are now one of the Saints in Christ (Col. 1:12; Phil. 4:21,22). But you are not yet perfect (Eph. 4:12,13). Nor should you claim perfection (Phil 3:12-17). Humbly see yourself as unprofitable (Luke 17:10). Depending only on God's grace and Christ's righteousness through faith (Rom. 10:1-4; 3:24). Nevertheless (Rom 10:1-4; 3:24). Nevertheless, sin should no longer have dominion over you (Rom. 6:12-14) nor should you sin at all, (1 John 3:9) because you are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

However, if you sin, the Holy Spirit, in you, will quickly point it out for you to humbly confess and ask God for forgiveness with true repentance (1John 1:8-10; 2:1). God is faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you. You

should not go back to such sins. God is able to forget any forgiven sin. (Heb. 8:12).

3. **Thanksgiving:** Always remember to thank God for all His blessings; for His grace, love and for answered prayers. Thank him for the problems around you. Thank Him in Faith, knowing that He is willing and able to answer you and solve all your problems (Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6).

4. **Supplication**

- (a) *Intercession* – Pray for other people’s problems. Intercede for the Church and her leaders and ministers. Pray for the nation and her rulers. Pray for sinners (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

- (b) *Petition* – Pray for yourself and for all problems that come your way. Pray for all your needs and desires (Phil 4:6). Re-dedicate yourself to God (2 Cor. 4:16).

Pray with faith – that is in accordance with the promises of God and in the will of God, believing God without any doubt in your mind that God will take care of ALL your problems. (Phil. 4:19; 1John 5:15). Pray as circumstances demand and as the Spirit leads. Your prayer must not always contain all the above components, nor must it be in the above order.

C. FASTING (Isa 58:6-9; Matt. 6:16-18)

Sometimes you may need to fast and pray to seek God's face and know His will or to persevere for a delayed answer or for some serious circumstances (Dan 9:3; Acts 13:2,3). As with prayers, fasting should be only between you and God not for show-off, not for men to see (Matt. 6:5, 16-18). But Christians can fast together (Acts 13:2,3).

D. ANSWER TO PRAYER:

God answers every prayer made as explained above. The answer may be immediate (Acts 16:24-26) or delayed (Dan 10:12-14) or a better alternative (2 Cor. 12:7-10). God's Word, circumstances and the inner Witness will help you know when and what God answers. Prayers made in a strange or unscriptural manner may bring the wrath of God, instead of His mercy on you. (1 Cor. 15:13,15; Lev. 10:1-3).

E. DEVOTION TIME (QUIET TIME)

This is the time you set apart to study and meditate on the Bible and to pray. God speaks to you through His Word, purifying you, and you speak to God, renewing your strength to serve Him.

Discipline yourself to make out a time when you can have this fellowship with God everyday. A time that you will not sleep off; a time you will not be tired; a time you will not be interrupted or disturbed by noise. And at a suitable place. It may be early in the morning or late in the night. There and then, be alone with God in Bible study and prayer everyday.

NOTE: PRAY ALWAYS, WITHOUT FAINTING (LUKE 18:1).

[Table_of_Contents](#)

STUDY 6

OVERCOMING AFFLICTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Afflictions or tribulations constitute a necessary vital aspect of the Christian life experience. The Bible teaches us that we must pass through tribulations before we enter God's Heavenly kingdom (Acts 14:22). As long as we live this present life we must be tempted, but God makes the way of escape for His children (1Cor. 10:13; Rev. 3:10). Jesus promised us persecutions (John 5:18-21; Mark 10:29,30). God says that if He does not chasten us, we are not His sons (Heb. 12:8). We Christians are ever ready for afflictions.

Praise God for you now know that when you are in afflictions or tribulations, but through self-examination you bring yourself to stand at the centre of God's will, you should rejoice because God is with you and victory is yours.

To overcome means to resist through endurance (2Tim. 4:5; Rom. 5:3) till we conquer and become victorious by the Blood of Christ and our testimony (confession of God's Word and work) (Rev. 12:11). All Christians must suffer persecutions (2 Tim. 3:12). Paul prayed that he might know Christ, the resurrection power, and sufferings (Phil. 3:10).

A. FORMS OF AFFLICTIONS

- (i) TEMPTATIONS: *Enticement to sin*. God does not tempt anyone (Jas. 1:3). Satan is the tempter (Matt. 4:3,10). He has the right to tempt any human on earth – Christ was tempted by him (Matt. 4:1-11) – even if you were full of the Holy Spirit. However, God does not allow him to tempt us beyond our capacity (Job. 1:12; 2:6). God also makes a way of escape for his children (1Cor 10:13) so that we can endure and overcome. Temptation is not sin but yielding to temptation is sin. Therefore resist the Devil (Jas 1:12; 4:7).

- (ii) TRIALS: *Testing to Prove Obedience*. God tries, not Satan. The Commandments and promises of God were given for the trial of our obedience to God. (Exc. 15:25b-26; 16:44). God tried Abraham (Heb. 11:17). As you have now said you are a child of God; He will surely try you. So be ready and do not disappoint Him. Prove to God that you really love Him.

- (iii) CHASTENING: *Child Training or Discipline*. This is another work God does on His sons (Heb. 12:6-10). He allows certain difficult circumstances around us to check our excesses and teach us self-control and mature spiritual character. Paul was chastened with a thorn in the flesh (2Cor. 12:7-10). God used the temptation of Job to chasten him (Job 42:1-6). The result is that they turned out to be pruned to bring forth fruit (John 15:2). God's grace is usually abundantly sufficient to us in every

affliction (2Cor. 12:9), so we must never despair nor be discouraged (2Cor. 4:8).

- (iv) **PERSECUTIONS:** *Maltreatment for Christ's sake.* This happens when unbelievers (both non-Christians and ignorant Church goers John 16:1-3), under the manipulations of Satan harass us so as to injure, grieve or frustrate us because of our belief in, and obedience to Jesus Christ (Eph. 6:11-13). However, you must work circumspectly so as not to suffer unnecessarily because of your foolishness (Eph. 5:15-17) nor as an evil-doer. (1 Peter 4: 14-16).

The Apostles were persecuted (Acts 12:1-3). Surely, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. We shall overcome (Rom 8:35-39).

- (v) **DISGUISED BLESSING:** These are those instances when God moves in mysterious ways to perform His wonders. All things work together for our good, if we love God. (Rom 8:28)
- (vi) **SACRIFICES AND DIFFICULTIES:** We might make some sacrifices to serve God better. Sometimes material needs or other obstacles may stand on our way in life. However, as long as we are doing the will of God, then we are all right. We shall surely overcome (Acts 20:23, 24; 23:11).

- (vii) **BACKSLIDING:** *Growing cold in the faith* and losing interest in the Lord, the Bible, prayer, attendance to fellowships, and witnessing for Christ. This may be due to yielding to various temptations, failures in trials, discouragement in chastenings, despair in persecutions, or general lack of knowledge. Nevertheless, if you return, God will always heal you (Jer. 3:22; Hos. 14:4). But if you fall away, God will cut you off (Matt. 5:13; John 15:3-6; Rom. 11:22; 1Cor. 10:1-13). God forbid.

B. SOURCES OF AFFLICTIONS:

As you have seen, afflictions or tribulations can come from anywhere: your desire (Jas 1:14,15; 1John 2:16), the world (2Tim. 4:10); pleasures of the flesh (Neh. 13:26), Satan (Matt. 4:1), unbelieving friends (Prov. 1:10), Christian friends (Matt. 16:22,23), secret and presumptuous sins (Psm 19:12, 13), pride (Prov. 16:18), etc.

C RIGHT ATTITUDE TO AFFLICTIONS

How to overcome

- (i) Examine yourself, be in God's will, remain faithful (Rev. 2:10, 11; 2Cor. 13:5).
- (ii) Seek God's guidance and strengthening in prayers (Matt. 26:41).
- (iii) Fear not but flee if necessary (Matt. 10:23,28; Isa 1:10).
- (iv) Be confident and gentle (Rom. 12:14,18; 1Peter 3:15).
- (v) Be patient, be glad, glorify God (Rom. 12:12; John 16:33; Acts 5:41).
- (vi) Endure in hope of God's deliverance and blessing (Jas 1:12)

NOTE: WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS (ROM. 8:37)

[Table_of_Contents](#)

PART FOUR

REACHING OUT

STUDY 7

FELLOWSHIP AND STEWARDSHIP

A. FELLOWSHIP

The Scriptures teach us that Christianity is personal but not an everybody-on-his-own affair (1John 1:3). We come to Christ personally, but we fellowship corporately with the Trinity of the Godhead as well as with other believers – OUR fellowship. Jesus wants at least two people to GATHER in His name so that He will go to be in their midst (Matt. 18:20). The Father also wants at least two believers to agree together and ask Him (Matt. 18:19). The Holy Spirit fellowships with us too (2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1).

The body is made up of hands, legs, eyes, mouth, belly and so on, but these do not want to stay separately and alone – in fact they cannot be – so is the Church, which is Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:1). If you are a believer, **you are Baptised with the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:13; 1 Cor. 12:13)**. You cannot say, "I do not need the fellowship of others" or "I want to be alone", because no part of your body can say so (1 Cor. 12:21). No matter how big or small you may think of yourself, the Church (Christ's body) needs you and you need the Church.

We all should meet regularly, work together, help one another, whether big or small, everybody contributing all he/she is enabled to do (1Cor. 12:13-27; Rom 12:4-5). We must be joined as one in LOVE Eph. 4:15,16). Since the Holy Spirit has joined us as one, then let no man put asunder. Gladly attend Christian Fellowships (Psm. 122:1).

Again, the Word of God has commanded us not to forsake assembling ourselves together to exhort one another (Heb. 10:25). Be obedient to this commandment and attend Fellowship meetings, Bible study meetings, prayer meetings, Revival meetings in addition to Sunday service (Acts 2:42). Do not just attend but contribute and participate actively according to the ability which God has given you.

Finally, watch and pray so that you do not join a fellowship that will lead you astray (1John 4:1-3; Eph. 4:14).

B STEWARDSHIP:

Stewardship means works of service or ministry.

The Church, to which you belong, is the BODY OF CHRIST. Christ is the Chief Cornerstone of the foundation of the Church (Eph. 2:20). He is also the Head of the Church (Col. 1:18).

The Church is still under construction, the Holy Spirit is the perfect constructor, and we believers are the building blocks. The Holy Spirit is using us to build up a spiritual house till we reach the unity of faith

and the full mature stature of Christ to become a perfect dwelling place for God (Eph. 2:21,22; 4:13).

The only way to become an effective and useful building block is to do works of service or Ministry – stewardship (Eph. 4:12). The Spirit puts in the believers, **gifts** (Supernatural Spiritual abilities) and **fruit** (Supernatural Spiritual character) so as to enable us occupy our positions properly in the Church of God, and glorify God in our lives (1Peter 4:1). As human beings, we believers also have our life-time, natural abilities (talents), possessions and positions. All these ought to be separated from the world and consecrated to fulfil our stewardship to our Lord (Gal. 2:20; Rom 12:1,2).

In stewardship we show our faithfulness to God (1 Cor. 4:1,2): how much we trust, love (Mark 12:30) and believe in Him. We use all that He has given us to serve and please Him always.

C STEPS IN STEWADSHIP

You repented because the Holy Spirit convicted you of sin (Jon 16:8). You were born again when you believed and the Holy Spirit sealed you (Eph. 1:13), anointed you (2Cor. 1:21,22), baptised you into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) and began to dwell in you (Rom 8:9) and lead you (Rom 8:14). From then on you began to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit and to live a holy life, increasing daily from glory to glory (2Cor. 4:16; 2Cor. 3:18). Yet our need to be filled and continue being filled with the Holy Spirit for power to do the work of

service (Ministry) as a faithful steward of our God (Eph. 5:18; 4:11-13).

1. So as you continue to serve God to the best of your ability, be filled with the Holy Spirit to receive power. The New Testament does not mention only 9 spiritual gifts as some teach today. In fact we can count over 20 gifts of the Holy Spirit from the following passages: Eph. 4:11,12, 1Cor. 12:7-11, 28-30; Rom. 12:6-8; Acts 2:4,17; 1Peter 4:10,11; and 1Cor. 13:1-3). All these gifts are manifestations for ministry in the Spirit's power.
2. Discover your gifts and ministry. Whatever your gift (or gifts) is, do not neglect it (1Tim. 4:14) rather fan it into flame (2Tim, 1:6) and magnify it (Rom. 11:13). But do not be proud about it (Rom 12:3). Instead, mix it with love to profit everybody.

You can ask for any (or more) gift that you earnestly desire (1Cor. 12:31). However, remember, the Spirit gives according to His will (1Cor. 12:11). Ask for gifts that will help you to show love to, (1Cor. 14:1), and edify others (1Cor. 14:12,13).

3. Yield yourself more and more to the control of the Holy Spirit so that in His power you will produce all the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-25; 2Pet. 1:5-8). The greatest and the matrix of the fruit of the Holy Spirit is LOVE (1Cor. 13). LOVE is the more excellent way (1Cor. 12:31b). Love and love, more and more (Heb. 13:1).

4. Consecrate all your natural privileges to the services of God:-

- (a) *Time*: (Your working and relaxation time, as long as you live) Eph. 5:16; Gal. 2:20.
- (b) *Talent*: (Your natural abilities, like strength, writing, technique, music, etc) Eccl. 9:10.
- (c) *Possession*: (the Church and the poor need you and your substance) Mat. 2:10-11, 2Cor. 9:7,8.
- (d) *Position*: (in the family, at work, in business, in the society) Esth. 4:16; 1King 18:4; Luke 12:42, 43.

God will bless you more in this life, and reward you in heaven (1Tim. 4:8). Do all to glorify God, whom we shall account to (2Cor. 5:10).

NOTE: YOUR LABOUR IS NOT IN VAIN (1COR. 15:58)

[Table_of_Contents](#)

STUDY 8

WITNESSING AND SOUL WINNING

INTRODUCTION:

We witness for Christ to win souls for Him (John 1:7). Some Christians are called to be Evangelists and Preachers, but EVERY Christian is called to be a witness and a soulwinner. The final speech made by our Lord Jesus Christ was: -

“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
(Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19).

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His (Christ’s) name among all nations...and ye are witnesses.... “
(Luke 24:47,48)

This is what evangelism, witnessing and soul winning is all about.

Witnessing is to DECLARE what you have seen, heard and handled (which is Christ, the Word of Life) and to BEHAVE as one who has fellowship with the Father, the Son Jesus Christ and believers in the power of the Holy Spirit (1John 1:1,3).

Soul winning is to convert a sinner from the error of his way that his soul may be saved from death (Jas. 5:20); to fish people out of the water of sin and worldliness into the ship of Christ (Matt. 4:19).

This is all the Church is commissioned to do in this present age. We were reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and have been given the Ministry (service or assignment) to preach the Word of Reconciliation to the World (2Cor. 5:18,19).

If you truly love Christ and have love in your heart, then this love of Christ will compel you to preach the gospel (1Cor. 9:16; 2Cor. 5:14; John 21:17).

A FOR EFFECTIVE WITNESSING AND SOULWINNING:

- (i) You must be born again (or saved) and be sure of your Salvation (see Study One)
- (ii) You must lead a pure life separated and consecrated to Christ both inwardly and in outward appearance (see study two).
- (iii) You should be filled with the Holy Spirit and be full of power, leading a Spirit-controlled life, overflowing with love, patience and humility. Be compassionate (Acts 20:19,31b).
- (iv) You need to have a fair knowledge of the Word of God- “rightly dividing the word of Truth”. (2Tim. 2:15). Preach the Word not logic or morality, but the Word.
- (v) You must be a man or a woman of prayer; an intercessor. Depend on the power of the Holy Spirit and the power in the

Word to convert the sinner (John 16:8; Heb. 4:12). Count not on your cleverness, eloquence and logic.

- (vi) You must be prepared for insults, rejections, hindrances and discouragements. Overcome all these and continue to love and persuade (2Cor. 5:11a). Avoid argument (2Tim. 2:23). Preach as far as possible at the given time.
- (vii) Aim ultimately to bring the sinner to the point of repentance is granted by God through godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 5:31) but this must not always take place (2 Tim. 2:24,25).
- (viii) Be confident, never be ashamed (2Tim. 1:12; Rom. 1:6). You will know unspeakable joy when you win a soul (Pslm. 126:5,6), Preach with burden and passion. Reap with joy. It may be better to preach to one soul alone at a time. Why?
- (ix) Go! Reach out! Do not wait till sinners come to you, Go to where the sinners are “Go ye....” Do not wait until the sinner speaks up, open the conversation, establish rapport and preach Christ.
- (x) When a soul is converted pray with him/her, give him/her some assuring verses from the Bible (See study one). Ensure that he/she be followed up. Maintain contact, pray and intercede for the converted soul (Eph. 1:15-17). Make a book, like this one, available to him/her.

B. THE GOSPEL YOU SHOULD PREACH IS THAT

- (i) God, by His standard, has concluded that all have sinned. (Rom 3:23; 5:12; Gal. 3:22).

- (ii) Because all have sinned, God has condemned all to death (Rom 6:23).
- (iii) On our own, as humans, we cannot do anything to save ourselves from this condemnation (Isa. 64:6). No amount of good-works can save us; only by grace through faith in Christ alone must anyone be saved (Eph. 2:8,9; Acts 4:12; 16:31). Only Christ could satisfy God's just demands for us. This is why Christ came; He came to save us through love (John 3:16).
- (iv) All should REPENT (Regret one's sinfulness), be CONVERTED (Turn to God from one's sins) and BELIEVE trust in, rely and depend on) Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God. (Acts 3:19; 20:21; John 20:31). Note that it is not ourselves who repent and believe but it is God who regenerates and converts us, helping us by the Word and the Holy Spirit.
- (v) One should confess his sins to God asking for forgiveness based ONLY on the belief that Jesus has finished the work of Salvation on his behalf (Rom. 3:22-28); 10:9,10).
- (vi) To be saved one must agree that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Saviour and Lord. That He was BORN of the virgin Mary, DIED and shed the atoning blood (Heb. 9:12) on the cross, was BURIED and ROSE on the third day, ASCENDED into heaven where He sits on the right hand of God. His resurrection is a proof that He is the Son of God (Acts 17:31; Rom 1:4) and has finished the work of Salvation (1Cor. 15:3,4; Acts 10:39-41; 1Pet. 3:22).

- (vii) Above all, the convert should receive Jesus into his/her whole life, allowing Him to direct his/her life and Lord. And one should believe that one has been saved (i.e. born again) according to God's Word (John 1:12; 3:16; Rom. 5:1,2; 1John 5:11,12) and began to live the new Life.

This is the GOODNEWS (Gospel) of Salvation in Christ. The entire above message could be communicated using only: Romans 5:11; 5:8; 10:9,10,13, and 5:1,2. You can even use only one verse to win a soul.

NOTE: WOE IS ME IF I PREACH NOT (1COR. 9:16)

[Table of Contents](#)

SUPPLEMENT

SUPPLEMENT 1

CHRISTIAN WATER BAPTISM

INTRODUCTION

We can only be saved by GRACE through our FAITH only in the Name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12; Gal. 3:22; Eph. 2:8). Salvation is the Justification and Regeneration unto Eternal Life in Christ Jesus. Other terms used to describe our salvation in Christ include: Reconciliation, Redemption, Newbirth and Conversion.

This Salvation or Newbirth is granted to us through the instrumentality. – Tit 3:3-8; 1John 5:6-9):

1. Of the Word of God which we perceive, **received**, believe and confess (Eph. 5:26;1:13; 1Peter 1:23);
2. Of the Blood of Jesus Christ which the Godhead **sprinkled** on our hearts (Heb. 10:22; 9:14; Eph. 1:7);
3. Of the Holy Spirit which the Godhead has **poured** on us to dwell in our hearts (John 3:5,14); and
4. Of the water which the Church of Christ applied on our bodies in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, at Water Baptism (1Pet. 3:21; Matt. 28:19; John 20:23; Acts 22:16).

(A) WATER BAPTISM IS A SACRAMENT

Water Baptism is one of the TWO Sacraments received from the Apostles, as instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The other is the Lord's Supper (Also called Eucharist or Holy Communion).

Sacraments are holy ordinances instituted by Christ to symbolize the mysteries of grace. They celebrate key spiritual pledges of the New Covenant which they also represent as assuring signs and seals. A Sacrament is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace".

Water Baptism signifies the grace of the New Covenant in, and regeneration into Christ. The Lord's Supper signifies the grace of deliverance by, and communion with Christ. Baptism is the sacrament of the **one** initiatory incorporation or regeneration **into** Christ, while the Eucharist is the sacrament of the **continuous** sanctifying participation or communion **in** Christ. Whereas Water Baptism is the equivalent of Circumcision of the Old Testament, the Lord's Supper is the counterpart of the Passover Feast. Sacraments then are necessary and effectual means of grace when received rightly; they also strengthen Faith. Sacraments are means and marks of God's Grace towards us, as well as our response of Faith and obedience towards God. Sacraments do not go without the Word (Matt. 28:19; Acts 22:16; 1Cor.11:23-26). These Sacraments are divinely appointed as necessary for our salvation, though they are not so absolutely indispensable means of grace such that God cannot work

without them if He chooses to; nor must sacraments minister grace except they be rightly received.

(B) WHY WE MUST BAPTISE:

Regeneration or Newbirth has two necessary aspects to it. One aspect is Newbirth OF Water; the other is Newbirth OF the Spirit (John 3:5). One is an outward ritual and purification by **washing** (Acts 22:16) or **sprinkling**, (Heb. 10:22; Ezk 36:25) and, the other is an inward renewal and transformation (Tit.3:5; Rom. 12:2). One is of water by the **Church**; the other is of the Spirit by the **Lord**. Yet the two belong to the ONE regeneration, which is symbolized and sealed by the ONE Baptism.

The ONE Baptism, which is one of the seven marks of unity of the Church (Eph. 4:4-6), has two essential aspects to it. One is water Baptism (an outward sign and seal), the other is Spirit Baptism (an inward grace and seal), Acts 10:44-48. By the one we are sprinkled (Ezk. 36:25) or washed (Acts 22:16) clean, by the other we are converted to walk in God's ways (Ezk. 36:26,27; Acts 2:38; 3:19). Water Baptism replaces the outward physical circumcision of the body with hands while Spirit Baptism replaces the inward spiritual circumcision of the heart without hands (Col. 2:11; Ro. 2:28, 29; Jer. 4:4,14). Water Baptism regenerates us into the New Covenant (or promises) and Spirit Baptism regenerates us into the New Creation (of Power). Yet, the two belong to the ONE BAPTISM. Great is the unsearchable mystery of godliness!!!

It is through this ONE New birth or Regeneration and this ONE Baptism, as the Word of God teaches, that we are saved. Christian Water Baptism is therefore essential and necessary for our salvation, by God's grace towards us and through our faith in Christ. We must baptise whether we be young or old so as:-

- (1) To be saved (1 Pet. 3:21; Mrk 16:16), since ALL need this salvation (Rom. 5:12-16).
- (2) To complete the Newbirth (John 3:5; Acts 10:47).
- (3) To become disciples and be added to the Church (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:41).
- (4) To wash and be cleansed from sins (Acts 22:16; Heb/ 10:22; Ezk. 36:25).
- (5) To fulfil all righteousness (Matt. 3:15).
- (6) To receive the New Covenant promises of the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38;39).
- (7) To have part with Jesus Christ and be bound to the Church (John 13:8; Matt. 16:19; 18:18).
- (8) To have the mark of unity of the Church on our bodies (Eph. 4:3-6).
- (9) To follow the apostolic tradition (Acts 10:48 16:15,33).
- (10) To obey the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15).

However, Water Baptism ALONE does not save, except the BLOOD and the Spirit bear witness (1John 5:6-8) that the recipient has faith and good conscience towards God (1Pet 3:21). Spirit Baptism (i.e Regeneration) may occur before, during or after Water Baptism. The

two do not have to occur invariably together. Salvation does not ALWAYS accompany Water Baptism. (John 13:10-13; Acts 8:13, 21-23), yet it is a valid sign of God's grace and a seal of His promises. The fact faith is important does not mean that Water Baptism is not necessary (Acts 9:17,18; 10:47,48).

C HOW MAY WE BAPTISE?

Christ water Baptism is a sacrament whereby the Church, in accordance with the institution of Christ, admits (or receives) men into the membership of the ONE visible Church. Those who receive Water Baptism rightly are added to (Acts 2:41) or gathered into (John 11:52) or grafted into (Rom. 11:17) the Messianic Community, which is the one, holy, universal (catholic), and Apostolic Church of the New Testament, and so partake of the promises of the same New Covenant. At Water Baptism, the disciple IDENTIFIES with the Church, and the Church INITIATES the disciple. At Spirit Baptism, the convert IDENTIFIES with Christ and Christ INCORPORATES the convert (1Cor. 12:13). All are done by grace through faith, not of works but unto good works. (Eph. 2:8-10). So baptism demands a continuous obedience and faith on the disciple whether young or old.

The Word of God does not emphasize HOW water MUST be applied but gives WHAT should be SAID and IMPLIED at Water Baptism (Matt. 28:19). But what possible modes could we find in the Bible?

- (1) **SPRINKLING:** This was one of the modes of ceremonial cleansing or purification given by God in the Law of Moses (Num. 19:13-18), revealed by God for the New Testament (Ezk. 36:25) and we find both its enactment and fulfilment in Christ for the flesh and the heart. (Heb. 9:13,14; 10:22).

- (ii) **WASHING:** Baptism is like a ceremonial washing or purification (John 3:23-26) where parts of the body are washed with water (Exd. 30:18-20; Lev. 8:6; Ps, 51:7; Heb. 10:22; John 13:5-11). This was done with Water from a river (John 1:26-28) or water containers (Exd. 30:17-21; John 3:23-26).
Many allusions to Baptism were as washing away of sins (Acts 22:16; Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5; 1Pet. 3:21 and Mark 7:4).

- (iii) **POURING:** This is one way in which the Holy Spirit Baptism is figured in the Scriptures (Ezk. 36:27; Acts 2:17; 10:45), sometimes as poured for our drinking (1Cor. 12:13; John 7:37-39) and at other times as poured on our whole being (Act 2:23). The New Testament baptisms appear to have been by this mode (e.g. Acts 10:47,48; 16:33; 19:5; 9:18).

- (iii) **DRINKING:** This is one way in which the RECEIVING of the Holy Spirit Baptism is figured in the Scriptures in the Scriptures (1Cor. 12:13; John 4:14; 7:37). This pictures the indwelling by the Holy Spirit as same as the Spirit Baptism.

(iv) IMMERSION: Nowhere in the Scriptures, both in the Old and New testaments do we have this form of Baptism or ceremonial purification or washing. The 16h Century Anabaptist doctrine that water baptism must be by immersion was based on Acts 8:38, but it is clear that the “going down to the water” in this verse is distinguished from the baptismal act performed by Philip on the Ethiopian Eunuch. The same explanation applies to Christ’s “going up from the water” of Mark 1:9,10. Before being baptised by immersion or by pouring or sprinkling, in a river, you have to go down to the river and after baptism you have to go up from the river which is, of course, distinguished from the actual baptism and does not imply immersion. Concerning the meaning of the Greek word “*Baptizo*” translated “to baptise”, even the 16th Century Anabaptists agreed that it did not only mean “to dip” nor does it so necessarily express the action of “putting under” water. Again, in the baptism of Moses (1Cor. 10:2) and of Noah (1Peter 3:20), **it was those who were immersed and overwhelmed with water, not those sprinkled, that perished!!!** The Greek word for “to dip” is “*bapto*” (see Lk. 16:24; John 13:26; Rev. 19:13) and not “*baptizo*” which means, “to baptise”.

Therefore, we conclude with the reformers and with the Church of all ages that Baptism cannot be bent to mean immersion either from Scripture or from Greek. And that it does not matter HOW water was applied to the recipient: **whether he is put into water or the water is poured or even sprinkled on him.** As Anglicans, we baptise by pouring or by immersion and do not disregard sprinkling. This is

because the Bible clearly teaches that purification with water does not necessarily depend on the extent to which we wash (John 13:10) but on our relationship with God (1Peter 3:21).

Appeals to use Rom. 6:4,5 and Col. 2:12 to make baptism, an immersion would then mean that the ceremony would be theatrical drama of all the symbolic significances of Baptism (see below), which would be quite ridiculous. All the same, we know that the early Church baptised by immersion in a number of cases.

EVEN IF BAPTISM IS TO MEAN IMMERSION, IT CANNOT MEAN THE TEMPORARY DIPPING INTO WATER WHICH THE ANABAPTISTS HAVE PROPOSED AND PROPAGATED, BUT THE PERMANENT INCORPORATION OF THE BELIEVER INTO THE NAME AND BODY OF CHRIST. This is more so since BAPTIZO implies the PERPETUATION or PROLONGATION (more duration not more depth) of BAPTO. In Greek, BAPTO means MOMENTARY dipping, however deep the dipping. BAPTIZO means PERMANENT dipping (NOT DEEPER dipping). The Christian *Baptizo* cannot be “INTO” (Grk= “eis”) water as the object to which we are baptised. If so, that would mean drowning or “aquatization”. Baptism is however done “WITH” (Grk= “en”) water as the instrument, INTO permanent participation in Christ’s Body as the Object to which we are baptised.

D SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

These are not meant to be dramatized but to be “RECKONED” and appropriated by faith. Water Baptism is a Christian rite for purification and initiation into the Church and symbolizes:

1. Covenant or pledge (1Pet. 3:21)
2. Death (Rom 6:3)
3. Burial (Rom.6:4. Col. 2:12)
4. Quickening or Revival (Col. 2:13)
5. Circumcision (Col. 2:11)
6. Putting OFF sinfulness (Col. 2:11)
7. Putting ON Christ (Gal. 3:27)
8. Being put INTO Christ (Gal. 3:27)
9. Regeneration or Newbirth (John 3:5; Tit. 3:5; Ezk. 36:26).
10. Cleansing or purification (Eph. 5:26; Ezk. 36:25; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

E. WHO MAY WE BAPTISE?

We may baptise anyone whosoever agree to, and comes forward for Baptism, declaring acceptance of the testimony of Jesus Christ according to the Gospel. These may be males, female, young, old, bond, free both as individual and as households. (1Cor. 1:14-16).

There is no REBAPTISM for there is ONLY ONE BAPTISM just as there is ONE NEWBIRTH and ONE CHURCH. It is unscriptural and unapostolic to baptise anyone more than once in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. For, there is only ONE FATHER,

and ONE SON and ONE SPIRIT (Eph. 4:3-6). The Israelites did not RECIRCUMCISE!!! No, not even when the child grew up, nor after a backsliding.

Baptism is for ALL nations and flesh (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:17) and for WHOSOEVER that COMES to Jesus whether Jews or Gentiles. It is for whosoever comes to Christ who is human, created in the image of God, whether newly born or nearly dead.

F. SHOULD WE DESPISE CHILDREN

Since the 16th century, the Anabaptists and other well meaning Christians have introduced a baptismal doctrine that despises children. This they have done despite Christ's warning in Mathew 18:1-10 and His rebuke in Mark 10:13 and 14; despite Christ's teaching that children are EXAMPLES of, not EXCEPTIONS from, the Kingdom of heaven. Matt. 18:3,4,10.

The Bible teaches us to baptise believing parents with their households. **Not for once are we told to exempt children. Nor are we for once told to train up our children for later baptism when they grow up. Never are we told in the Scriptures that Christ excluded the infants when He established the New Covenant. Never are we taught that God cannot reach the infants (or even the deaf, dumb, and imbecile) to save them through Christ.** Instead we are told that the New Covenant promises are for the believing parents and their children (Acts 2:39); for believing parents

and their household (Acts 16:33). Or **did the New Testament expand to include the Gentiles only to retract and exclude children?** God forbid!

G. ARGUMENTS AGAINST INFANT BAPTISM

Those who argue against infant baptism claim:

1. That baptism has no symbolic similarity with circumcision. (Despite what the Scripture says!). They rather associate it with only death and burial. (Even then infants can still die and be buried. On the other hand the law did not disannul the Abrahamic promises and its need for a sign and seal).
2. That there is no explicit command to baptise children (But even so there is no explicit command NOT TO BAPTISE CHILDREN nor any explicit command to baptise only adults nor any explicit command to postpone baptism of children of believing parent till adulthood. Not all things are explicit as such, for there is no explicit command to include women in the Lord's Supper! Now the Bible teaches us explicitly to baptise believing parents with their households. Or are children not members of the households?).
3. That there is no example of children baptism (even so there is no example of a child of a believer who was later baptised in adulthood. By the way, did not the baptism of Moses include children? (1Cor. 10:1-6); are children not members of households? (1Cor. 1:16).

4. That children are not capable of exercising conscious faith, which must necessarily be present before baptism. And since children cannot hear and understand the gospel, they cannot believe. But was the same not applicable to the children of the Old Testament who could neither have the faith of Abraham nor understand the Law of Moses? Yet, they were circumcised into the covenant. Was Christ not once an infant? Moreover, are infants not in the image of God as the adults are? Again, do we say that the children of believers are then condemned to hell? God forbid! The Bible says that they are clean and holy if their parents believe (1 Cor. 7:14). Besides what about the deaf, dumb and imbecile?

H. WHY WE SHOULD BAPTISE THE LITTLE ONES

Little ones who belong to BELIEVING PARENTS should be baptised when they are brought forward (by their parents or older relatives and guardians) because the Word of God teaches us so.

- (1) On God's Covenant relationship with man. A Covenant is a solemn binding relationship. When it is between God and Man, it is God who takes the initiative (i.e. God makes the first move) by His grace to call and chose a people (Heb. 8:7-12), whom He promises to bless under certain conditions, such as obedience, repentance, faith and receiving of the sign and seal of the covenant. God gave Abraham circumcision as the sign (Rom., 4:11) while Christ gave us Water Baptism (in place of circumcision which has ceased to function in the New Testament). Circumcision was for only Jewish males but Water

Baptism has included females and non-Jews: WHOSOEVER. Praise God! Every covenant with parents always included their children except the children themselves renounce their allegiance; and the New Covenant is not an exception.

God deals with man individually, as a household and as a called out people (i.e. Church). So God covenants with the Children of covenant-parents (Deut. 7:9; 29:11-13; Gen. 9:9), and such children MUST bear the sign and seal of that covenant or be “cut off” from the people of the covenant (Gen. 17:9-14). It is those children who have the sign of the covenant that could be vowed to God (Lev. 27:2,6) or be lent to God (1 Sam. 1:28). Such children should be sanctified together with their parents (2 Chron. 31:16,18) and be part of public prayer gatherings even if they were ‘unconscious’ of the events (2 Chron.20:13; Acts 21:5).

In the Old Covenant, God required the Israelites to ‘dedicate’ only the FIRST MALE CHILD to HIM because God has claimed them as His own while He killed the first – born of Egypt. So every first male child should have been a priest but in their place God took the Levites, (Numb. 3:44-51).

However, every parent was to bring such a child before the Lord, and give God (and the Levites) some offering so as to buy back the first born male, whom God has dedicated to Himself even before the were born (Luke 2:23; Exd. 13:2, 12-15; 34:20). In the New Testament, we

are all priests (Pet. 2:9). We are not to buy ourselves back with offering but should consecrate ourselves daily for service unto the Lord. The dedication of unbaptised children was not commanded nor practiced by the Apostles nor the sub-apostolic Church until some Anabaptists, on their own, introduced it (as a substitute for a sign of covenant in place of Water Baptism which Christ commanded. Besides you cannot dedicate a child who is outside the covenant, for he/she does not have the sign of the covenant and should be “cut off”

(2) On Christ’s Teaching and the Apostolic Tradition: -

In the New Testament we see the apostles preaching salvation for **“you and your household”** and baptising believing parents **“with all their household”** (Acts 11:14; 16:14,15, 31-34; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16). They also saw the children of believing parents as clean and Holy (1Cor. 7:14) and as having their parents’ faith in them (2Tim. 1:5). This is because the Apostles understood that the Gospel of Christ is an organic covenant message – for the parents and their children, for the least and the greatest (Acts 2:17; Heb. 8:10-12). **We Gentile have a skewed mentality about this whole thing, but we must shift to think like the Scriptures.**

The Apostles also recorded that Christ taught them that Children of disciples are **“great in the kingdom of God”** and therefore should **“not be despised”** nor be kept away when they are brought to Christ in the arms of their believing parents (Matt. 18:1-11; Mk. 10:13-15). In the above passages the little ones were seen as being amongst

Christ disciples and were to be **“received in Christ’ Name”** (by Baptism?) into the Church: just as the adults or even more so than the adults!

So we see Peter concluding his Pentecost outreach sermon by saying that the New Testament promises were as well for the Parents as their children (as with the Old Testament), and for all nations (as enlarged further by Christ) Acts 2:38,39. And we see Children as members of the Apostolic Church (Acts 21:5; 1Tim.3: 4, 5; Eph. 6:1).

3. On the role of the covenant parents

God’s covenant grace always rests upon the children of covenant parents as we have seen (Acts 11:4; 16:14,15,31; Tim. 1:5; Mk. 7:29; Matt. 9:18, 25; Psm. 103:17). This grace is only for such children that have the sign of the covenant. **When such children come to “the age of discretion” they can either confirm or renounce their allegiance to such a covenant.** If they confirm they shall continue to enjoy the covenant promises and blessings. If they renounce or neglect the covenant pledge they shall suffer **“curses”** (Deut 28:15-19ff) and if their parents deny them the covenant sign, they shall be **“cut off”** from the covenant (Gen 17:10-14).

Therefore believing parents must first, put the sign of the covenant (which is now Water Baptism) on their children as early as possible and hereafter teach and commit the contents of the covenant to them

(Deut. 6:7; 32:46) and train them up to walk in it. (Heb. 12:8-10; 1 Tim. 3:4,5; Tit.: 6; Eph. 6:4b). God has promised that if we did this, our children would not depart from the truth (Prov. 22:6). This applied both to the Old and New Covenants.

On the other hand if a covenant parent fails or refuses to put the sign of the covenant on his children and train them up in the faith, such children will suffer God's wrath and condemnation (Gen. 9:22-27; 17:12,14; Exd. 20:5; Lev. 26:39; Rom. 3:15-19); and such parents shall be guilty of causing the children to stumble, and of despising them (Matt. 18:10). The result is both **woe** and **death** (Exd 4:24-26; Matt. 18:6,7) because this provokes Divine **indignation** (Mark 10:13-16).

Baptism should be as soon as possible, whether with infants or with adults. Christ gave us two steps on disciple making. First is to get people to accept His baptism, next is to teach them the commandments of the New Covenant (Matt. 28:19,20).

4. On God's Direct Dealing with Children:

God is Almighty (Shaddai) and He can reach children of the Saints by His Spirit. God is not limited by "Conscious faith" or any such things as "discretion". After all we do not have conscious faith when we are asleep, yet God reaches us. Besides, Christ talked about "little ones who **believe** in Him" (Matt. 18:6).

Now faith is not necessarily conscious; nor must regeneration depend on human conscious co-operation (John 1:13; 3:8), rather it is solely done by God through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:10,11). However, the New Covenant, which grants New Birth, also demands New Life, which is a life of **confident trust and committed obedience** towards Christ, working out the salvation in us with diligence (Phil. 2:12). For if God has turned us (or called us), then we have to turn (Acts 3:25, 26; 26:20) whether we be young or old. So baptised children should be taught that by covenant, they owe the responsibility of personal trust and obedience to Christ.

The Word of God talks about children:- who are filled with the Spirit in the womb (Lk 1:15; Jer. 1:5); who are called according to God's purpose before birth (Rom 9:11); who can hear the Word of God (Deut. 31:13; Acts 10:44; Josh. 8:32), and understand Scriptures (2Tim. 3:15). In fact God has ORDAINED infants and suckling to offer PERFECT praise (Matt. 21:15,1) – that is if they were not CUT OFF from the covenant people of God! Who says that consciousness is a limitation to the power of God? Even children who sin unconsciously could receive drastic punishment from God (2King 2:23,24; Gen. 17:12,14).

Apart from the eleven Apostles, (Lk. 24:5) the only other people blessed by Christ were the children of His disciples (Mark 10:13-16). Christ did not baptise anyone (John 4:2). Children need salvation, and Christ came for them according to the Father's will (Matt. 18:11-

14), for ALL (adults and children) have sinned in Adam (Rom. 3:23; 5:12; Psm. 51:5).

5. On Membership of the Household:

Children do not have to be specifically mentioned before we know they are members of the household. Or do we also say those households (apart from Lydia's) mentioned in the Scriptures have no women or wives or mothers? Children are members of the household (Acts 11:14; 16:14, 15; 31-34; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16), for God includes them in the household (Prov. 31:27; Deut. 29:11; 1 Cor. 7:14; Psm. 128:3; Col. 3:18-22).

Also children, we all know, are included in the "all nations" of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19) and "all flesh" of the great promise (Acts 2:17) for children are, as the adults, created in the image of God, both spiritually and physically. Or are they not? Oh yes, our God can reach anybody as He wills and purpose. God is not man. As it were, those who reject infant baptism, paradoxically, believe and preach that children initiated into demonic cults "unconsciously" become actually demonised, and must renounce before they could be free. Ah brethren! Is God weaker than Satan?

1. THE CHURCH ALWAYS BAPTISED INFANTS

From Church history, we know that the Church has never had problems with baptising children (nor with the mode of baptism) until the Anabaptists came. The Church has seen various moves for

reformation yet no reformer has even questioned baptism of infants as against Scriptures or against the Apostolic tradition. To do that would be same as questioning the doctrine of the Trinity or the canonicity of the New Testament, all of which were put in place by the sub-apostolic primitive Church (which kept the Apostolic Traditions in agreement with the New Testament).

Origen in about 200 AD, while commenting on Romans 6:5-7 said “For this reason ***the Church received from the Apostles, the tradition of baptising children too***”. Before Origen was even born, Bishop Polycarp in 155 AD, before he was martyred, confessed that he had been a Christian for 86 years.. Meaning that he was baptised as a baby in 69 AD in Asia Minor where Apostle John was overseeing as the Elder.

Bishop Irenaeus who was a contemporary of Polycarp, while writing his *Against Heresies* stated that Jesus “passed through every age to sanctify every age” and that He came “to save all who are born: youth, and old men”. This was the common concept and practice of the Apostolic and sub-apostolic church, ever before the Roman Church gained prominence and even before the New Testament Canon was compiled.

All the Historic, Protestant, Reformation Churches (Presbyterians, Anglicans, and all the continental Reformed Churches), were unanimous on this matter, except the Anabaptists who were quite few

and mostly unlearned in the **Scripture** but depended on **scruples**. For this they were greatly criticized by Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and other Reformers; yet they continued without heeding. Would to God that it were possible for the sincerity of those scrupulous but unscriptural Anabaptists to compensate for their doctrinal inexactitude. **PROPHETIC AND APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURE IS MORE RELIABLE THAN GENTILE SCRUPLES.**

We thank God for what He has done in the Church with sincere and well-meaning brethren who have imbibed the Anabaptist doctrine of despising children and disregarding the ONE baptism. But we would encourage these brethren to go further and accept this one more basic truth as with the Church of all ages, so as to save themselves, and their followers, from the “woe” pronounced by Christ in Mathew 18:5-7.

Brethren take heed and save yourselves, for God will require of you on the day of judgment, what you have done with His sacrament and with our little ones created after His own image.

[Table_of_Contents](#)

SUPPLEMENT 2

THE 39 ARTICLES OF FAITH

ARTICLES AGREED UPON BY THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF BOTH PROVINCES (OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND) AND THE WHOLE CLERGY IN THE CONVOCATION HOLDEN AT LODON IN THE YEAR 1562 FOR THE AVOIDING OF DIVERSITIES OF OPINIONS AND FOR THE ESTABLISHING OF CONSENT THE TOUCHING TRUE RELIGION.

A TABLE OF THE ARTICLES

1. [*Of Faith in the Holy Trinity*](#)
2. [*Of Christ the Son of God*](#)
3. [*Of His Going Down into Hell*](#)
4. [*Of His Resurrection*](#)
5. [*Of the Holy Ghost*](#)
6. [*Of the Sufficiency of the Scripture*](#)
7. [*Of the Old Testament*](#)
8. [*Of the Three Creeds*](#)
9. [*Of Original or Birth-sin*](#)
10. [*Of Free-Will*](#)
11. [*Of Justification*](#)
12. [*Of Good Works*](#)
13. [*Of Works before justification*](#)
14. [*Of Works of Supererogation*](#)
15. [*Of Christ Alone Without Sin*](#)

16. [Of Sin after Baptism](#)
17. [Of Predestination and Election](#)
18. [Of Obtaining Salvation by Christ](#)

To Table of Articles

19. [Of the Church](#)
20. [Of the Authority of the Church](#)
21. [Of the Authority of General Councils](#)
22. [Of Purgatory](#)
23. [Of Ministering in the Congregation](#)
24. [Of Speaking in the Congregation](#)
25. [Of the Sacraments](#)
26. [Of the Unworthiness of Ministers](#)
27. [Of Baptism](#)
28. [Of the Lord's Supper](#)
29. [Of the Wicked, Which Eat not the Body of Christ](#)
30. [Of Both Kinds](#)
31. [Of Christ's one Oblation](#)
32. [Of the Marriage of Priest](#)
33. [Of Excommunicate Persons](#)
34. [Of the Traditions of the Church](#)
35. [Of the Homilies](#)
36. [Of Consecrating of Ministers](#)
37. [Of Civil Magistrates](#)
38. [Of Christian Men's Goods.](#)
39. [Of Christian Man's Oath](#)
[The Ratification](#)

To Table of Articles

ARTICLES OF RELIGION

I: Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.

THERE is but one living and true God, everlasting without body, parts, or passions: of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker, and preserve of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

II: Of the Word or Son of God, which was Made Very Man.

THE Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.

III: Of the going down of Christ into Hell.

As Christi died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that He went down into Hell.

To Table of Articles

IV: Of the Resurrection of Christ.

CHRIST did truly rise again from death, and took again His body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until He return to judge all men at the last day.

V: Of the Holy Ghost.

THE Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and Son, very and eternal God.

VI: Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.

HOLY Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of Holy Scripture, we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Of the Names and Number of the Canonical Books.

Genesis.

Exodus.

Leviticus.

Numbers.

Deuteronomy.

To Table of Articles

Joshua.

Judges.

Ruth.

The First Book of Samuel.

The Second Book of Samuel.

The First Book of Kings.

The Second Book of Kings.

The First Book of Chronicles.

The Second Book of Chronicles.

The First Book of Esdras.

The Second Book of Esdras.

The Book of Esther.

The Book of Job.

The Psalms.

The Proverbs.

Ecclesiastes, or Preacher.

Cantica, or Songs of Solomon.

Four Prophets the Greater.

Twelve prophets the Less.

And the other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following:

The Third Book of Esdras.

The Fourth Book of Esdras.

The Book of Tobias.

To Table of Articles

The Book of Judith.

The rest of the Book of Esther.

The Book of Wisdom.

Jesus the Son of Sirach.

Baruch the prophet.

The Song of the Three Children.

The Story of Susanna.

Of Bel and Dragon.

The Prayer of Manasses.

The First Book of Maccabees.
The Second Book of Maccabees.

All the Books of the New Testament as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical.

VII: Of the Old Testament.

THE Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandment which are called Moral.

[*To Table of Articles*](#)

VIII: Of the Three Creeds.

THE three creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.

IX: Of Original or Birth-sin.

ORIGINAL sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek *phronema sarkos*, which some do expound the Wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostles doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

[*To Table of Articles*](#)

X: Of Free-Will.

THE condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good work, to faith, and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

XI: Of the Justification of Man.

WE are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not. for our own work or deservings: Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine, and full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

XII: Of Good Works.

ALBEIT that Good works, which are the fruit of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's Judgement; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ and do spring out necessarily of true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently know as a tree discerned by the fruit.

XIII: Of Works before Justification.

WORKS done before grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of Faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

[To Table of Articles](#)

XIV: Of Works of Supererogation.

VOLUNTARY Works besides, over and above God's Commandments, which they call work of supererogation, cannot be taught without arogancy and impiety: for by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, when ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, we are unprofitable servants.

XV: Of Christ Alone Without Sin.

CHRIST in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which He was clearly void, both in His flesh, and in His spirit. He came to be the lamb without spot, Who, by sacrifice of Himself once made, should take away the sins of the world: and sin, as S. John saith, was not in him. But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things: and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and truth is not in us.

XVI: Of Sin after Baptism.

NOT every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin and by the grace of God we may

arise again and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

To Table of Articles

XVII: Of Predestination and Election.

PREDESTINATION to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us. To deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting Salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by His Spirit working in due season; they through God's grace obey the calling: they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: so for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set, forth to us in Holy Scripture; and in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

To Table of Articles

XVIII: Of Obtaining Eternal Salvation Only by the Name of Christ.

THEY also are to be had accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

XIX: Of the Church.

THE visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be dully ministered according

to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.

To Table of Articles

XX: Of the Authority of the Church.

THE Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith; and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ: yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation.

XXI: Of the Authority of General Councils.

GENERAL Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.

XXII: Of Purgatory.

THE Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, worshipping and adoration as well of Images as of Reliques, and also Invocation of Saint, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrantly of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.

To Table of Articles

XXIII: Of Ministering in the Congregation.

IT is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

XXIV: Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People Understandeth.

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have public prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people

XXV: Of the Sacraments.

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel that is to say Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say Confirmation, Penance, Order, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should dully use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that received them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith.

[To Table of Articles](#)

XXVI: Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers which Hinders not the Effect of the Sacraments.

ALTHOUGH in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by His commission and authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the word of God, and in receiving of the Sacraments, neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men.

Nevertheless, it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that enquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and finally being found guilty, by just judgement be deposed.

XXVII: Of Baptism.

BAPTISM is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or new Birth; whereby as by an instrument, they that received Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

[To Table of Articles](#)

XXVIII: Of the Lord's Supper.

The supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves, one to another; but rather is a sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread, which we break, is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but us repugnant to the plain words of Scripture overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Super is Faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

XXIX: Of the Wicked which Eat not the Body of Christ in the Use of the Lord's Supper.

THE Wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as S. Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ, but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing.

[To Table of Articles](#)

XXX: Of Both Kinds.

THE Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay-people: for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament by Christ's Ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.

XXXI: Of the One Oblation of Christ Finished upon the Cross.

THE OFFERING OF Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said that the Priests did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

XXXII: Of the Marriage of Priest

BISHOPS, Priests and Deacons are not commanded by God's laws, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage. Therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

XXXIII: Of Excommunicate Persons, How They are to be Avoided.

THAT person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful, as an Heathen and publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge that hath authority thereunto.

[To Table of Articles](#)

XXXIV: Of the Traditions of the Church.

IT is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, time and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word. Whosoever through his private judgement, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like), as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.

Every particular or national church hath authority to ordain, change and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

XXXV: Of the Homilies.

THE second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this Article, doth contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth; and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people.

To Table of Articles

Of the Names of the Homilies.

1. Of the Right use of the Church.
2. Against Peril of Idolatry.
3. Of the Repairing and Keeping Clean of Churches.
4. Of Good Works: First of Fasting.
5. Against Gluttony and Drunkenness.
6. Against Excess of Apparel.
7. Of Prayer.
8. Of the Place and Time of Prayer.
9. That Common Prayers and Sacraments ought to be ministered in a Known Tongue.
10. Of the Reverend Estimation of God's Word.
11. Of Alms-doing.
12. Of the Nativity of Christ.
13. Of the Passion of Christ.
14. Of the Resurrection of Christ.
15. Of the Worthy Receiving of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.
16. Of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.
17. For the Rogation-days.
18. Of the State of Matrimony.
19. Of Repentance.
20. Against Idleness.
21. Against Rebellion.

To Table of Articles

XXXVI: Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers.

THE Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Orderings of Priests and Deacons lately set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and confirmed at the same time by authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering; neither hath it any thing, that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the rites of that Book, since the second year of the forenamed King – Edward unto this time, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites; we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

XXXVII: Of the Civil Magistrates.

THE King's Majesty hath the chief power in the Realm of England, and other his Dominions, unto whom the Chief Government of all Estates of this realms,

whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

Where we attribute to the King's Majesty the Chief government, by which Titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended; we give not to our princes the ministering either of God's word, or of the sacraments, the which thing the injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our Queen do most plainly testify; but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to godly princes in Holy Scriptures by God himself, that is, that they should rule all estates and degree committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evildoers.

The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England.

The Laws of the Realm may punish Christian men with death for heinous and grievous offences.

It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars.

[To Table of Articles](#)

XXXVIII: Of Christian Men's Goods, which are not Common.

THE Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth; liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

XXXIX: Of a Christian Man's Oath

As we confess that vain and rash Swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his Apostle, so we judge; that Christian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the Magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching, in justice, judgement, and truth

THE RATIFICATION.

THIS book of Articles before rehearsed, is again approved and allowed to be holden and executed within the Realm, by the assent and consent of our Sovereign Lady ELIZABETH, by the grace of God, of England, France, and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith etc. Which Articles were deliberately read, and confirmed again by the subscription of the hands of the Archbishop and Bishops of the Upper-house, and by the subscription of the whole Clergy of the Nether-house in their Convocation, in the year of our Lord 1571.

[To Table of Articles](#)

[Table_of_Contents](#)

[Table_of_Contents](#)

FOLLOW-UP CHECK SHEET

Study	Date	Teacher	Remarks
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

[Table_of_Contents](#)

[Top of the Document](#)

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