Chapter five: Religious reform and consolidation, 1450–1600

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1. Condemnation of Jan Hus, 1415

In the early 1400s, the ideas of John Wyclif opposing papal authority and the selling of indulgences spread to Bohemia, where they were accepted and elaborated by a teacher at the University of Prague, John Hus. Hus began to preach to ever-larger audiences in and around Prague, and the papacy was not able to respond effectively, particularly because it was in the midst of a schism, with two and later three popes. In 1414, the Council of Constance was called to deal with the schism and address what the church saw as heretical beliefs. Hus traveled willingly to Constance, convinced that others would accept his ideas and protected by an imperial safe-conduct. The safe conduct proved ineffective, and he was arrested, imprisoned, charged with heresy, quickly tried, found guilty, and burned at the stake. He became a national hero to the Czech people, and the area in and around Prague did not return to loyalty to the papacy. In the formal condemnation, the council laid out what it saw as particularly dangerous about his teachings.

Sentence against Jan [John] Hus

The most holy general council of Constance, divinely assembled and representing the catholic church, for an everlasting record. Since a bad tree is wont to bear bad fruit, as truth itself testifies, so it is that John Wyclif, of cursed memory, by his deadly teaching, like a poisonous root, has brought forth many noxious sons, not in Christ Jesus through the gospel, as once the holy fathers brought forth faithful sons, but rather contrary to the saving faith of Christ, and he has left these sons as successors to his perverse teaching. This holy synod of Constance is compelled to act against these men as against spurious and illegitimate sons, and to cut away their errors from the Lord's field as if they were harmful briars, by means of vigilant care and the knife of ecclesiastical authority, lest they spread as a cancer to destroy others. Although, therefore, it was decreed at the sacred general council recently held at Rome that the teaching of John Wyclif, of cursed memory, should be condemned and the books of his containing this teaching should be burnt as heretical; although his teaching was in fact condemned and his books burnt as containing false and dangerous doctrine; and although a decree of this kind was approved by the authority of this present sacred council ; nevertheless a certain **John Hus**, here present in person at this sacred council, who is a disciple not of Christ but rather of the heresiarch John Wyclif, boldly and rashly contravening the condemnation and the decree after their enactment, has taught, asserted and preached many errors and heresies of John Wyclif which have been condemned both by God's church and by other reverend fathers in Christ, lord archbishops and bishops of various kingdoms, and masters in theology at many places of study. He has done this especially by publicly resisting in the schools and in sermons, together with his accomplices, the condemnation in scholastic form of the said articles of John Wyclif which has been made many times at the university of Prague, and he has declared the said John Wyclif to be a catholic man and an evangelical doctor, thus supporting his teaching, before a multitude of clergy and people. He has asserted and published certain articles listed below and many others, which are condemned and which are, as is well known, contained in the books and pamphlets of the said John Hus. Full

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information has been obtained about the aforesaid matters, and there has been careful deliberation by the most reverend fathers in Christ, lord cardinals of the holy Roman church, patriarchs archbishops, bishops and other prelates and doctors of holy scripture and of both laws, in large numbers. This most holy synod of Constance therefore declares and **defines** that the articles listed below, which have been found on examination, by many masters in sacred scripture, to be contained in his books and pamphlets written in his own hand, and which the same John Hus at a public hearing, before the fathers and prelates of this sacred council, has confessed to be contained in his books and pamphlets, are not catholic and should not be taught to be such but rather many of them are erroneous, others scandalous, others offensive to the ears of the devout, many of them are rash and seditious, and some of them are notoriously heretical and have long ago been rejected and condemned by holy fathers and by general councils, and it strictly forbids them to be preached, taught or in any way approved. Moreover, since the articles listed below are explicitly contained in his books or treatises, namely in the book entitled **De ecclesia** and in his other pamphlets, this most holy synod therefore reproves and condemns the aforesaid books and his teaching, as well as the other treatises and pamphlets written by him in Latin or in Czech, or translated by one or more other persons into any other language, and it decrees and determines that they should be publicly and solemnly burnt in the presence of the clergy and people in the city of Constance and elsewhere. On account of the above, moreover, all his teaching is and shall be deservedly suspect regarding the faith and is to be avoided by all of Christ's faithful. In order that this pernicious teaching may be eliminated from the midst of the church, this holy synod also orders that local ordinaries make careful inquiry about treatises and pamphlets of this kind, using the church's censures and even if necessary the punishment due for supporting heresy, and that they be publicly burnt when they have been found. This same holy synod decrees that local ordinaries and inquisitors of heresy are to proceed against any who violate or defy this sentence and decree as if they were persons suspected of heresy.

Sentence of degradation against J. Hus

Moreover, the acts and deliberations of the inquiry into heresy against the aforesaid John Hus have been examined. There was first a faithful and full account made by the commissioners deputed for the case and by other masters of theology and doctors of both laws, concerning the acts and deliberations and the depositions of very many trustworthy witnesses. These depositions were openly and publicly read out to the said John Hus before the fathers and prelates of this sacred council. It is very clearly established from the depositions of these witnesses that the said John has taught many evil, scandalous and seditious things, and dangerous heresies, and has publicly preached them during many years. This most holy synod of Constance, invoking Christ's name and having God alone before its eyes, therefore pronounces, decrees and **defines** by this definitive sentence, which is here written down, that the said John Hus was and is a true and manifest heretic and has taught and publicly preached, to the great offence of the divine Majesty, to the scandal of the universal church and to the detriment of the catholic faith, errors and heresies that have long ago been condemned by God's church and many things that are scandalous, offensive to the ears of the devout, rash and seditious, and that he has even

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despised *the keys* of the church and ecclesiastical censures. He has persisted in these things for many years with a hardened heart. He has greatly scandalised Christ's faithful by his obstinacy since, bypassing the church's intermediaries, he has made appeal directly to our lord Jesus Christ, as to the supreme judge, in which he has introduced many false, harmful and scandalous things to the contempt of the apostolic see, ecclesiastical censures and the keys. This holy synod therefore pronounces the said John Hus, on account of the aforesaid and many other matters, to have been a heretic and it judges him to be considered and condemned as a heretic, and it hereby condemns him. It rejects the said appeal of his as harmful and scandalous and offensive to the church's jurisdiction. It declares that the said John Hus seduced the christian people, especially in the kingdom of Bohemia, in his public sermons and in his writings; and that he was not a true preacher of Christ's gospel to the same christian people, according to the exposition of the holy doctors, but rather was a seducer. Since this most holy synod has learnt from what it has seen and heard, that the said John Hus is obstinate and incorrigible and as such does not desire to return to the bosom of holy mother the church, and is unwilling to abjure the heresies and errors which he has publicly defended and preached, this holy synod of Constance therefore declares and decrees that the same John Hus is to be deposed and degraded from the order of the priesthood and from the other orders held by him. It charges the reverend fathers in Christ, the archbishop of Milan and the bishops of Feltre Asti, Alessandria, Bangor and Lavour with duly carrying out the degradation in the presence of this most holy synod, in accordance with the procedure required by law.

Sentence Condemning John Hus

This holy synod of Constance, seeing that God's church has nothing more that it can do, relinquishes John Hus to the judgment of the secular authority and decrees that he is to be relinquished to the secular court. [Church courts generally did not carry out executions; that was handled by secular courts.]

2. Jan Hus, Final Declaration, July 1, 1415

As was common in trials for heresy, the judges at the Council of Constance gave Hus several opportunities to apologize and take back the statements they regarded as heretical. He did not. His final statement, issued several days before his execution, accuses his captors of saying that he said things he did not, and of misinterpreting his writings.

http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1415janhus.html

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3. Martin Luther, Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences (1517)

More commonly known as the 95 theses (and thus in form similar to the 900 theses of Pico della Mirandola, discussed in Chapter Four) these scholarly points of disputation lay out Luther's objections to indulgences. He drafted them in the autumn of 1517, and sent them in a letter to Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, whowas sending indulgence peddlers into the area around Wittenberg to collect money to finance his election to other church offices and to pay for the building of St. Peter's basilica in Rome. The story spread later that Luther also nailed them to the church door in Wittenberg. Whether this happened or not is impossible to say; what is *known for certain is that they were translated quickly from the Latin in which Luther had written them into German, published, and sold widely. From: Works of Martin Luther, ed. and trans. Adolph Spaeth, L.D. Reed, Henry Eyster Jacobs, et al. (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1915), Vol.1, pp. 29-38*

Out of love for the truth and the desire to bring it to light, the following propositions will be discussed at Wittenberg, under the presidency of the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and of Sacred Theology, and Lecturer in Ordinary on the same at that place. Wherefore he requests that those who are unable to be present and debate orally with us, may do so by letter.

In the Name our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Primary Sources

1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said Poenitentiam agite, willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance.

2. This word cannot be understood to mean sacramental penance, i.e., confession and satisfaction, which is administered by the priests.

3. Yet it means not inward repentance only; nay, there is no inward repentance which does not outwardly work divers mortifications of the flesh.

4. The penalty [of sin], therefore, continues so long as hatred of self continues; for this is the true inward repentance, and continues until our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

5. The pope does not intend to remit, and cannot remit any penalties other than those which he has imposed either by his own authority or by that of the Canons.

6. The pope cannot remit any guilt, except by declaring that it has been remitted by God and by assenting to God's remission; though, to be sure, he may grant remission in cases reserved to his judgment. If his right to grant remission in such cases were despised, the guilt would remain entirely unforgiven.

7. God remits guilt to no one whom He does not, at the same time, humble in all things and bring into subjection to His vicar, the priest.

8. The penitential canons are imposed only on the living, and, according to them, nothing should be imposed on the dying.

9. Therefore the Holy Spirit in the pope is kind to us, because in his decrees he always makes exception of the article of death and of necessity.

10. Ignorant and wicked are the doings of those priests who, in the case of the dying, reserve canonical penances for purgatory.

11. This changing of the canonical penalty to the penalty of purgatory is quite evidently one of the tares that were sown while the bishops slept.

12. In former times the canonical penalties were imposed not after, but before absolution, as tests of true contrition.

13. The dying are freed by death from all penalties; they are already dead to canonical rules, and have a right to be released from them.

14. The imperfect health [of soul], that is to say, the imperfect love, of the dying brings with it, of necessity, great fear; and the smaller the love, the greater is the fear.

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15. This fear and horror is sufficient of itself alone (to say nothing of other things) to constitute the penalty of purgatory, since it is very near to the horror of despair.

16. Hell, purgatory, and heaven seem to differ as do despair, almost-despair, and the assurance of safety.

17. With souls in purgatory it seems necessary that horror should grow less and love increase.

18. It seems unproved, either by reason or Scripture, that they are outside the state of merit, that is to say, of increasing love.

19. Again, it seems unproved that they, or at least that all of them, are certain or assured of their own blessedness, though we may be quite certain of it.

20. Therefore by "full remission of all penalties" the pope means not actually "of all," but only of those imposed by himself.

21. Therefore those preachers of indulgences are in error, who say that by the pope's indulgences a man is freed from every penalty, and saved;

22. Whereas he remits to souls in purgatory no penalty which, according to the canons, they would have had to pay in this life.

23. If it is at all possible to grant to any one the remission of all penalties whatsoever, it is certain that this remission can be granted only to the most perfect, that is, to the very fewest.

24. It must needs be, therefore, that the greater part of the people are deceived by that indiscriminate and highsounding promise of release from penalty.

25. The power which the pope has, in a general way, over purgatory, is just like the power which any bishop or curate has, in a special way, within his own diocese or parish.

26. The pope does well when he grants remission to souls [in purgatory], not by the power of the keys (which he does not possess), but by way of intercession.

27. They preach man who say that so soon as the penny jingles into the money-box, the soul flies out [of purgatory].

28. It is certain that when the penny jingles into the money-box, gain and avarice can be increased, but the result of the intercession of the Church is in the power of God alone.

29. Who knows whether all the souls in purgatory wish to be bought out of it, as in the

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legend of Sts. Severinus and Paschal.

30. No one is sure that his own contrition is sincere; much less that he has attained full remission.

31. Rare as is the man that is truly penitent, so rare is also the man who truly buys indulgences, i.e., such men are most rare.

32. They will be condemned eternally, together with their teachers, who believe themselves sure of their salvation because they have letters of pardon.

33. Men must be on their guard against those who say that the pope's pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to Him;

34. For these "graces of pardon" concern only the penalties of sacramental satisfaction, and these are appointed by man.

35. They preach no Christian doctrine who teach that contrition is not necessary in those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessionalia.

36. Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon.

37. Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has part in all the blessings of Christ and the Church; and this is granted him by God, even without letters of pardon.

38. Nevertheless, the remission and participation [in the blessings of the Church] which are granted by the pope are in no way to be despised, for they are, as I have said, the declaration of divine remission.

39. It is most difficult, even for the very keenest theologians, at one and the same time to commend to the people the abundance of pardons and [the need of] true contrition.

40. True contrition seeks and loves penalties, but liberal pardons only relax penalties and cause them to be hated, or at least, furnish an occasion [for hating them].

41. Apostolic pardons are to be preached with caution, lest the people may falsely think them preferable to other good works of love.

42. Christians are to be taught that the pope does not intend the buying of pardons to be compared in any way to works of mercy.

43. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better work than buying pardons;

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44. Because love grows by works of love, and man becomes better; but by pardons man does not grow better, only more free from penalty.

45. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a man in need, and passes him by, and gives [his money] for pardons, purchases not the indulgences of the pope, but the indignation of God.

46. Christians are to be taught that unless they have more than they need, they are bound to keep back what is necessary for their own families, and by no means to squander it on pardons.

47. Christians are to be taught that the buying of pardons is a matter of free will, and not of commandment.

48. Christians are to be taught that the pope, in granting pardons, needs, and therefore desires, their devout prayer for him more than the money they bring.

49. Christians are to be taught that the pope's pardons are useful, if they do not put their trust in them; but altogether harmful, if through them they lose their fear of God.

50. Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the pardon-preachers, he would rather that St. Peter's church should go to ashes, than that it should be built up with the skin, flesh and bones of his sheep.

51. Christians are to be taught that it would be the pope's wish, as it is his duty, to give of his own money to very many of those from whom certain hawkers of pardons cajole money, even though the church of St. Peter might have to be sold.

52. The assurance of salvation by letters of pardon is vain, even though the commissary, nay, even though the pope himself, were to stake his soul upon it.

53. They are enemies of Christ and of the pope, who bid the Word of God be altogether silent in some Churches, in order that pardons may be preached in others.

54. Injury is done the Word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or a longer time is spent on pardons than on this Word.

55. It must be the intention of the pope that if pardons, which are a very small thing, are celebrated with one bell, with single processions and ceremonies, then the Gospel, which is the very greatest thing, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, a hundred ceremonies.

56. The "treasures of the Church," out of which the pope. grants indulgences, are not sufficiently named or known among the people of Christ.

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57. That they are not temporal treasures is certainly evident, for many of the vendors do not pour out such treasures so easily, but only gather them.

58. Nor are they the merits of Christ and the Saints, for even without the pope, these always work grace for the inner man, and the cross, death, and hell for the outward man.

59. St. Lawrence said that the treasures of the Church were the Church's poor, but he spoke according to the usage of the word in his own time.

60. Without rashness we say that the keys of the Church, given by Christ's merit, are that treasure;

61. For it is clear that for the remission of penalties and of reserved cases, the power of the pope is of itself sufficient.

62. The true treasure of the Church is the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.

63. But this treasure is naturally most odious, for it makes the first to be last.

64. On the other hand, the treasure of indulgences is naturally most acceptable, for it makes the last to be first.

65. Therefore the treasures of the Gospel are nets with which they formerly were wont to fish for men of riches.

66. The treasures of the indulgences are nets with which they now fish for the riches of men.

67. The indulgences which the preachers cry as the "greatest graces" are known to be truly such, in so far as they promote gain.

68. Yet they are in truth the very smallest graces compared with the grace of God and the piety of the Cross.

69. Bishops and curates are bound to admit the commissaries of apostolic pardons, with all reverence.

70. But still more are they bound to strain all their eyes and attend with all their ears, lest these men preach their own dreams instead of the commission of the pope.

71. He who speaks against the truth of apostolic pardons, let him be anathema and accursed!

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72. But he who guards against the lust and license of the pardon-preachers, let him be blessed!

73. The pope justly thunders against those who, by any art, contrive the injury of the traffic in pardons.

74. But much more does he intend to thunder against those who use the pretext of pardons to contrive the injury of holy love and truth.

75. To think the papal pardons so great that they could absolve a man even if he had committed an impossible sin and violated the Mother of God -- this is madness.

76. We say, on the contrary, that the papal pardons are not able to remove the very least of venial sins, so far as its guilt is concerned.

77. It is said that even St. Peter, if he were now Pope, could not bestow greater graces; this is blasphemy against St. Peter and against the pope.

78. We say, on the contrary, that even the present pope, and any pope at all, has greater graces at his disposal; to wit, the Gospel, powers, gifts of healing, etc., as it is written in I. Corinthians xii.

79. To say that the cross, emblazoned with the papal arms, which is set up [by the preachers of indulgences], is of equal worth with the Cross of Christ, is blasphemy.

80. The bishops, curates and theologians who allow such talk to be spread among the people, will have an account to render.

81. This unbridled preaching of pardons makes it no easy matter, even for learned men, to rescue the reverence due to the pope from slander, or even from the shrewd questionings of the laity.

82. To wit: -- "Why does not the pope empty purgatory, for the sake of holy love and of the dire need of the souls that are there, if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a Church? The former reasons would be most just; the latter is most trivial."

83. Again: -- "Why are mortuary and anniversary masses for the dead continued, and why does he not return or permit the withdrawal of the endowments founded on their behalf, since it is wrong to pray for the redeemed?"

84. Again: -- "What is this new piety of God and the pope, that for money they allow a man who is impious and their enemy to buy out of purgatory the pious soul of a friend of God, and do not rather, because of that pious and beloved soul's own need, free it for pure

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love's sake?"

85. Again: -- "Why are the penitential canons long since in actual fact and through disuse abrogated and dead, now satisfied by the granting of indulgences, as though they were still alive and in force?"

86. Again: -- "Why does not the pope, whose wealth is to-day greater than the riches of the richest, build just this one church of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with the money of poor believers?"

87. Again: -- "What is it that the pope remits, and what participation does he grant to those who, by perfect contrition, have a right to full remission and participation?"

88. Again: -- "What greater blessing could come to the Church than if the pope were to do a hundred times a day what he now does once, and bestow on every believer these remissions and participations?"

89. "Since the pope, by his pardons, seeks the salvation of souls rather than money, why does he suspend the indulgences and pardons granted heretofore, since these have equal efficacy?"

90. To repress these arguments and scruples of the laity by force alone, and not to resolve them by giving reasons, is to expose the Church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies, and to make Christians unhappy.

91. If, therefore, pardons were preached according to the spirit and mind of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved; nay, they would not exist.

92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace!

93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Cross, cross," and there is no cross!

94. Christians are to be exhorted that they be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, and hell;

95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven rather through many tribulations, than through the assurance of peace.

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4. Martin Luther, *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,* 1520

In 1520, Luther published three documents that marked his clear break with the papacy, "The Freedom of a Christian," "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," and the "Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation." In the latter pamphlet, Luther attacked corruption in the Church and called on German rulers and nobles to reform it, asserting the right of lay authorities over matters of religion. Below is the opening to this pamphlet; the entire text can be found at: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/luther-nobility.html

To his most Serene and Mighty Imperial Majesty and to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation. Dr. Martinus Luther.

The grace and might of God be with you, Most Serene Majesty, most gracious, well-beloved gentlemen!

It is not out of mere arrogance and perversity that I, an individual poor man, have taken upon me to address your lordships. The distress and misery that oppress all the Christian estates, more especially in Germany, have led not only myself, but every one else, to cry aloud and to ask for help, and have now forced me too to cry out and to ask if God would give His Spirit to any one to reach a hand to His wretched people. Councils have often put forward some remedy, but it has adroitly been frustrated, and the evils have become worse, through the cunning of certain men. Their malice and wickedness I will now, by the help of God, expose, so that, being known, they may henceforth cease to be so obstructive and injurious. God has given us a young and noble sovereign [Charles V, who was at that point nineteen years old] , and by this has roused great hopes in many hearts; now it is right that we too should do what we can, and make good use of time and grace.

The first thing that we must do is to consider the matter with great earnestness, and, whatever we attempt, not to trust in our own strength and wisdom alone, even if the power of all the world were ours; for God will not endure that a good work should be begun trusting to our own strength and wisdom. He destroys it; it is all useless, as we read in Psalm xxxiii., "There is no king saved by the multitude of a host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength." And I fear it is for that reason that those beloved princes the Emperors Frederick, the First and the Second, and many other German emperors were, in former times, so piteously spurned and oppressed by the popes, though they were feared by all the world. Perchance they trusted rather in their own strength than in God; therefore they could not but fall; and how would the sanguinary tyrant Julius II. have

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risen so high in our own days but that, I fear, France, Germany, and Venice trusted to themselves? The children of Benjamin slew forty-two thousand Israelites, for this reason: that these trusted to their own strength (Judges xx., etc.).

That such a thing may not happen to us and to our noble Emperor Charles, we must remember that in this matter we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the darkness of this world (Eph. vi. 12), who may fill the world with war and bloodshed, but cannot themselves be overcome thereby. We must renounce all confidence in our natural strength, and take the matter in hand with humble trust in God; we must seek God's help with earnest prayer, and have nothing before our eyes but the misery and wretchedness of Christendom, irrespective of what punishment the wicked may deserve. If we do not act thus, we may begin the game with great pomp; but when we are well in it, the spirits of evil will make such confusion that the whole world will be immersed in blood, and yet nothing be done. Therefore let us act in the fear of God and prudently. The greater the might of the foe, the greater is the misfortune, if we do not act in the fear of God and with humility. If popes and Romanists have hitherto, with the devil's help, thrown kings into confusion, they may still do so, if we attempt things with our own strength and skill, without God's help.

5. Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, 1559

Several months after Elizabeth I assumed the throne in England, Parliament began debating bills laying out the structure of the English church and its services. In many ways, the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, passed in 1559, returned the church to what it had been under Edward VI, though, in deference to her gender, Elizabeth was not declared the "head," but instead "the only supreme governor of this realm ... as well in all spiritual things or causes, as temporal."

http://members.shaw.ca/reformation/1559supremacy.htm

http://members.shaw.ca/reformation/1559uniformity.htm

6. Letters from two Anabaptist martyrs, Netherlands 1552

During the period of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, individuals of many religious denominations were arrested, tried, imprisoned, tortured, and sometimes executed for their religious beliefs. The harshest treatment was accorded to Anabaptists, who denied the efficacy of infant baptism and often rejected other teachings accepted by most Protestants and Catholics. Many of the documents regarding the persecution of Anabaptists were collected into large volumes, and their stories were also told orally or formed the basis for hymns designed to be sung by the faithful. The following is an exchange of letters between a husband and wife, Jeronimus Segersz and Lijsken Dircks, who were executed as Anabaptists in Antwerp; a hymn written later praising their heroic deaths is included in the book. The letters include references

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to specific verses of the Bible, which many Anabaptists had memorized; the verse notations were added by a later editor. (Hermina Joldersma and Louis Grijp, ed. and trans., 'Elisabeth's manly courage': Testimonials and Songs of Martyred Anabaptist Women of the Low Countries *(Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001). Reprinted by permission.)*

Here Follows another Letter from Jeronimus Segersz to his Wife [excerpts]:
Grace, peace, a joyful heart, through the confession of Jesus Christ, be with you, my dear wife Lijsken in the Lord. I wish you, my dear Wife Lijsken, a passionate love for God, and a joyful spirit in Christ Jesus. Know that I remember you [Rom 1:9] day and night in my prayers, beseeching and sighing to God on your behalf; I am in great sorrow on your count because you will have to be imprisoned there for such a long time. I would have wished, had it been the Lord's will, that you would have been out of your bonds, but now the Lord's will was different, because he wants to test you, and to reveal his power and might through you, against all those who stand against truth. Therefore I cannot go against the Lord's will, so that I might not tempt him, but rather I will praise and thank him all the more because he has made us both [Acts 5:41] worthy to suffer for his name; for those whom he has chosen for that are all especially selected Lambs, for he has [Rev 4:4] redeemed them from among mortals as the first-fruits of God.

Further, my dearest one, therefore I have been very joyful up to this time, thanking and praising God, that he has made us fitting for this. But when I heard from you that you were more sorrowful than your tongue could express, that caused me to shed many a tear, and to have a downcast heart, for that is a great sorrow. I also understood that this might be so because you had told me so often to stop heeding Assverus [a silversmith who was a leaders among the Anabaptists], and I didn't do that; this has caused me many a tear, and I am very sorry about it. [Rom 9:19] Still, I can do nothing against the will of God, and if it had been his will, he would have given us a way out. But he has given us [Job 14:5] our measure, and we will not exceed it. Hence we cannot escape [Tob 13:2] from the Lord. Therefore let us not be sad because of the workings of the Lord, but much rather (as [Mt 5:12] Christ says) rejoice and be glad . . .

So I beseech you, my love, that you should not be sad any longer, for the Lord will keep you as the [Zech 2:8] apple of his eye; yes, "[Is 49:15] as little as a mother might forget her suckling child, so I will not forget you," says the Lord; yes, "[Job 10:27] my sheep hear my voice," (says the Lord), "and they follow me, and no one shall take them from my hand." Therefore, my very dearest, be content, and trust in the Lord, and [Heb 13:5] he will not forsake you. I also understood, partly from my sister, that you were also sad because you had not been more tolerant towards me. Listen, my dear lamb, you were not antagonistic towards me, and we lived with one another no differently than we were obliged to live, why would you then be sad? Be satisfied, for Christ will not count it against you, [Ezek 18:22] for he will not remember our sins. And I thank the Lord that you did live so submissively with me; I would be gladly imprisoned instead of you for a year on water and bread, indeed, and then would gladly die tenfold, if you were released. O, if only I could help you with my tears, and with my blood, how willingly would I suffer for you! but my suffering cannot help you. Therefore be at peace, I will beseech the Lord even more for you. I wrote this letter in tears, because I had heard that you were so sad. And I ask you to write me about how things are going with you. With this I commend you to the Lord.

This is a Letter from Lijsken, Jeronimus's wife, which she wrote to him in the prison in Antwerp.

.... My dear Husband in the Lord, whom I married before God and his congregation, about which they say that I have committed adultery because I was not married in Baal's temple. But

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the Lord says: [Mt 5:12] "Rejoice when everyone speaks evil of you for my name's sake, then rejoice and be glad, for you will be rewarded in heaven."

Know that I cried a great deal because you were sad on account of me, because you had heard that I had so often said to you that you should forsake Assverus and you didn't do that; rest your mind about that, my dearest in the Lord, if the Lord had not wanted it so, it would not have happened thus. [Mt 6:10] For the Lord's will must be done for the salvation of both our souls, for he does not let [1 Cor 10:13] us be tempted beyond our ability to endure. Therefore be comforted, my dearest in the Lord, and rejoice in the Lord as you have done from the beginning, praising and thanking him that he has so specially chosen us that we may be imprisoned for so long for his name's sake, and were found worthy for that [Acts 5:41], he knows what he foresaw with that. Although the children of [Num 14:8] Israel languished long in the wilderness, if they had obeyed the voice of the Lord, they too would have entered the Promised Land with Joshua and Caleb. Just so also we are now in the wilderness among these devouring animals who daily spread their [Ps 7:15, 57:6] nets to catch us with them. But the Lord who is so mighty, and who does not forsake his own who trust in him, those he will keep from all evil, yes, as the [Zech 2:8] apple of his eye. Therefore let us then be at peace in him, and take on our cross with joy and patience, and await with firm faith those promises which he has made us [Rev 2:13', not doubting them, for he is faithful who has promised it. This is so we might be crowned on [2 Esd 2:41, Rev 7:9] Zion's mountain, and be adorned with palms, and might follow the [Rev 14:4] Lamb. I pray you, my love in the Lord, be comforted in the Lord, with all the beloved friends, and [1 Th 5:25] pray to the Lord for me. Amen.

Here follows yet another Letter from Jeronimus Segersz to his Wife:

.... I wish my beloved wife, whom I married before God and his holy Congregation [1 Cor 7:2] as my own wife, just as [Gen 11:29] Abraham took Sara, and [Gen 24:15] Isaac Rebecca, and · Tob 7:14] Tobias his uncle's daughter as his wife, exactly so I took you, too, as my wife, [1 Cor 7:2, Mt 19:5] according to God's word and command, and not like this horribly blind world. On account of this I praise and thank the Lord night and day, that he spared us so long that we could get to know one another a little, and that we have had knowledge of the truth. Because of this they say that we have lived in adultery, because we were not joined in that idolatrous, mortal, vain, proud, gluttonous institution, and with that adulterous generation, which is nothing but an abomination before the eyes of God. That's why they lie about us, just as they lied about [Mt 11:19] Christ. And even if they said that you should tend to your sewing, that will not deter us, · Mt 11:28] for Christ has called all of us, [Jn 5:39] and led us to search Scripture, for it testifies of him. Further, Christ said that Mary [Lk 10:42] had chosen the best part, because she searched Scripture ....

And further I am letting you know, my beloved Wife in the Lord, that I am sorry that you cried, for when I heard that you were being questioned, I prayed to the Lord day and night all the more passionately for you. Know for certain that he will keep you as the [Zech 2:8] apple of his eye. I praise the Lord always, that he has made us both [Acts 5:41] worthy to suffer for his name's sake, for which reason I rejoice greatly. And when I read your Letter, and heard how things were with you, and that as a greeting you wished me the crucified Christ, so my heart and my soul sprang in my body for joy. Yes, so much so, that I could not finish the letter completely, I had to fall to my [Eph 3:14] knees before the Lord, and praise and thank him for his might, comfort, and joy, even though I was still sorrowful because of our Brethren, and for your sake, that you will have to be imprisoned there for so long. I have commended you to the hands of the Lord together with the fruit of your womb; trust him, and do not doubt that he will give you the

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same joy that he gives me, and will keep you [1 Pet 1:5] to the very end.

Another letter from Lijsken, Jeronimus' Wife (to friends and to her husband: excerpts):

.... I cannot thank nor praise the Lord enough for the wonderful grace, [Sir 43:27] and for the endless mercy, and for the great Love which he has shown to us, so that we might be his [2 Cor 6:18] sons and daughters if we overcome [Rev 3:21] just as he overcame. Oh, truly, we might well say [Heb 11:1] that upright faith reconciles itself to that which is not seen, [Gal 5:6] that which is working through love, that which shall bring us to glory, [Rom 8:17] provided that we suffer with him. Let us note, beloved Friends in the Lord, how great a love worldly people have one for another. There are those in the Steen [Antwerp's main prison] (it's been said), who rejoice when they are brought to the rack, because of those whom they love, so that they can be closer to them even though they cannot come together in person. Do hear, my beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, if the world has such love, oh, what love ought we then to have, who are expectant of such wonderful promises! I see another beautiful image before my eyes, of a Bride, how she adorns herself to please her Bridegroom of this world. Oh, how then ought we to adorn ourselves, that we might please our Bridegroom! [....] I pray to the Lord night and day, that he will grant us such burning love, so that we do not care what torments they might inflict on us [....]

Know, my dear Husband in the Lord, when I read that you were so very joyful in the Lord, I could not finish the Letter, I had to pray to the Lord that he would grant me, too, the same joy, and keep me to the very end, so that with joy we may present our sacrifice to the glory of our Father who is in heaven, and to the edification of all dear brothers and sisters. [Acts 20:32[] With this I want to commend you to the Lord, and the word of his mercy. Know that I thank you very much for your Letter which you wrote me. The grace of the Lord be with us always.

Another Letter from Lijsken written to her Husband (excerpts):

[....] I wish us both the crucified Christ as a Protector and Shepherd of our Souls. He himself will keep us in all righteousness, holiness and truth to the very end, and he will also keep us as his sons and daughters, if we keep our [Heb 3:14] Devotion to his being until the very end, indeed, as the [Zech 2:8] apple of his eye. Therefore let us trust in him, and he will not [Heb 13:5] desert us
in eternity, but will preserve us as he has done for his own from the beginning of the world. Let us not [1 Cor 10:13] be seized by any temptation except those which are human. The Lord is faithful (says Paul), he will not let us be tested beyond our ability. [2 Cor 1:3] Thanks be to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has made us [Acts 5:41] worthy to suffer for his name a short mortal suffering for such beautiful promises that he has made to us, together with all those who remain steadfast in his teaching. [Wis 3:5] In little we may suffer here, but in much will we be rewarded.

My dearly beloved husband in the Lord, you have prevailed through some trials; in those trials you have remained steadfast, the Lord be given eternal praise and glory for his great mercy. And I also pray the Lord, with weeping, that he will make me, too, fitting for that, to suffer for his name's sake [....]

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7. The Martyr's Mirror, 1660



One of the largest collections of stories about Christians killed for their beliefs, The Martyr's Mirror *was first published in Holland in Dutch in 1660, and later translated into other languages. It begins with accounts of martyrdom from the first century, but primarily concentrates on the martyrdoms of Anabaptists. The text is over 1000 pages long, and includes many engravings. A searchable version of the text can be found at:*

http://www.homecomers.org/mirror/intro.htm

The images from the 1685 edition, including the one here, can be found at the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College:

http://www.bethelks.edu/services/mla/images/martyrsmirror/

8. Baptism Rituals

Religion was not simply a matter of theology, but also of lived practice. The Christian church offered rituals for every stage of life, beginning with baptism. Many late-medieval baptism manuals provide slightly different prayers for the baptisms of boys and girls. They do not contain much gender-pertinent language, but demonstrate that right from the start male and female Christians were put into separate conceptual categories. These are the baptism prayers from the Salisbury manual; Protestant prayers did not depart extensively from these, and often maintained gender distinctions. From John D.C. Fisher, Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West, *Alcuin Club Collections 47 (London: SPCK, 1965), pp. 160-2*

The prayer for boys:

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God who didst appear to thy servant Moses on Mount Sinai, and didst lead they children Israel out of the land of Egypt, appointing for them the angel of they mercy, who should guard them by day and by night, we beseech thee, Lord, that thou woudst vouchsafe to send they holy angel from heaven, that he may likewise guard this servant N., and lead him to the grace of they baptism.

The prayer for girls:

God of heaven, God of earth, God of angels, God of archangels, God of patriarchs, God of prophets, God of apostles, God of martyrs, God of confessors, God of virgins, God of all that live good lives, God whom every tongue confesses and before whom every knew bows, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, I invoke thee, Lord, upon this thing handmaid N. that thou mightest vouchsafe to lead her to the grace of thy baptism.

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A very typical baptism scene, from L'Art de bien Vivre et de bien Mourir*, Paris 1492.*

9. Explaining baptism, Spain, sixteenth century

Protestant religious reformers criticized the official teachings of the Roman Church, and both they and Catholic reformers criticized popular religious practices that they thought challenged Church doctrine or derived too much from local traditions. As a part of the Catholic Reformation, the Catholic Church worked to bring some uniformity to the religious practices of its parishioners. In this piece, Bishop Francisco Manrique de Lara admonishes the parishioners of his diocese to follow Catholic orthodox practice more carefully. (From the diocesan synod of Francisco Manrique de Lara, bishop of Ourense (1542-1556), in Antonio García y García, Synodicon Hispanum, vol.1: Galicia*, (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1981), p. 236. Translated by Allyson Poska)*

Some people of this bishopric, either out of ignorance or out of malice, baptize their children one, two, and three times, and more, inviting new godfathers and godmothers each time to the said act. And another error accompanies this one: they do not take them to be baptized at the church where the font for holy baptism is, only baptizing them at home. And they fall into another great error. Many people leave their children without baptism for the period of one month, and even close to a year, because of certain vain and superstitious things; all of which is clearly in contradiction of the precepts established by the Church of faithful Christians.

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10. Prayers for Churching

Churching was the ceremony performed for women after childbirth in which they were welcomed back into the congregation and community. Some Protestants wanted to do away with it, but many women wanted it retained, and it was, though the language was changed slightly. Translated and quoted in Susan C. Karant-Nunn, The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany *(London and New York: Routledge, 1997)*

A prayer for churching from Germany before the Reformation begins:

Lord God, who through Your servant Moses commanded the people of Israel that when a woman had borne a son, she should refrain from entering the temple for forty days, consider this your servant worthy to be strengthened from every pollution of the flesh so that with a clean heart and pure mind she may serve to enter into the bosom of [our] mother, the church.

After the Reformation, references to the new mother's impurity were lessened. A Lutheran prayer from 1569 begins:

On account of sin this curse went out to all the daughters of Eve: "I will increase your labor and your groaning, and in labor you shall bear children"—which still remains as a reminder that children are conceived and borne in sin. All the same it is a special work of grace of God's creation, that a woman is blessed with the fruit of her body, that a little child is formed in the mother's body and is nourished and maintained, that the mother is delivered with great anxiety and labor pains, and is made happy with the joyous sight of a living, healthy fruit."

11. Villagers cope with religious change, Denmark 1543-44

Religious change often happened very quickly, and people found it difficult to give up practices they had carried out for many years. The church in Kippinge, Denmark, mentioned in the following text, had contained a chalice dedicated to St. Severin, reputed to be bleeding, which made it a popular destination for pilgrimages. The first Lutheran bishop of the Danish island of Zealand travelled widely in his diocese and wrote his experiences down in 1543-44, including stories that reveal how his audience needed to be reminded of the religious change that had been introduced in 1536 with the establishment of a Lutheran Church and state in Denmark. (Peder Palladius' Visitatsbog, *ed. by Lis Jacobsen, Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1925, p. 130-31. Translated by Grethe Jacobsen and Pernille Arenfeldt)*

… Another great abuse has been the visits to dead saints while forgetting the living saints … A good and honest man has become the parish minister in Holmstrup and Kippinge. Whoever arrives there in his ungodly business [i.e. to worship at the saint's shrine] he directs back to whence he came. Flames have consumed St. Severin and his statue has been taken away. You will not find what you are looking for. Last year, in Flakkebjerg County, a woman dropped her

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child by accident and it broke its neck. Her husband was not home. Fearing her husband's reaction, she took the dead child in her arms and ran to Kippinge, five miles away. As the parish minister realised that she had come as a pilgrim, he lectured to her about the proper belief and she laid her child in the cemetery and went home again. Still, I had to read her out of her belief in that and more when I visited here. Stay with your parish church and learn there what will benefit your soul and leave such ungodly ideas behind.

12. Work and the Sabbath, Spain, 1566

*Protestants were not the only ones to discover popular practices of which they did not approve. The Christian tradition that no work was to be done on Sundays or holidays was a source of regular conflict between parishioners and the ecclesiastical hierarchy in both Protestant and Catholic areas. Bishops and pastors wanted their parishioners to attend Mass and study on holy days, business owners wanted the additional income from being open on Sunday, and parishioners often preferred to spend the day socializing in bars. In this excerpt from a visit to a parish in northwestern Spain, a delegate from the bishop attempts to encourage parishioners to attend Mass by ordering the tavern owners to close until Mass was over. (*Libro de Visitas, Santa María Amarante, *Archivo Histórico Diocesano de Ourense, 24.1.13, Folio 9-10, 1566. Translated by Allyson Poska).*

His majesty is informed that on past visits Gregorio Gomez and Alonso Galente, inhabitants of Dacon, Juan de Momdian and Juan Bernáldez, inhabitants of Toscana, and Gabriel de Dacon all tavern owners, were admonished not to open the taverns nor sell wine, bread or meat to the parishioners on Sundays and holidays before High Mass. They have not wanted to comply, opening the taverns and selling wine and meat so that the parishioners quit coming to Mass in order to be there playing and drinking. Being compassionate with them he has fined and fines each one of them three reales for the fabric of the church for this first time, except Alonso Galente who is fined only one and a half reales on account of his poverty. Henceforth, they will be fined one ducat for each time that they open them during Mass.

13. Fights at a pilgrimage site, Spain 1606



Pilgrims on the road to a holy shrine, c. 1500

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Religious processions and festivals were central to early modern people's social and devotional lives. These events meant a day off from traditional work and an opportunity to celebrate with friends and family. As pious as many people were, religious processions could easily get out of hand with people eating and drinking to excess. In this case, a night of revelry led to a fight and eventually an accusation of blasphemy. (Relaciones de Causas, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Inquisición, legajo 2042, no. 43 folio 11v, 1606. Translated by Allyson Poska)

Pedro de Islas, a peasant from San Victorio, Tierra de Lemos, forty years old . . . four years ago, the accused was in a shrine where many people had gathered in pilgrimage. Next to the high altar, a certain person with a crucifix in his hand began to scuffle with the accused. And the accused with a sword in his hand went against the said person [with the crucifix in his hand] and slashed him with the iron and some of [the slashes] hit the Christ [on the crucifix] and that caused a great scandal in the said shrine. On the same occasion, the accused sat on top of the high altar in front of an image of Our Lady that was there with his back to the image and stayed that way for most of the night. He was reprimanded and exiled for one year from this city [Santiago de Compostela] and his parish and fined six thousand maravedis.

14. John Calvin, *Institutes*, 1536-1560



Calvin revised and expanded the Institutes, *his synthesis of Protestant thought, many times over several decades. A long work, it contains a clear discussion of predestination:*

http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/calvin-predest.html and

http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/calvin-predestin2.html

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A searchable, full-text version of the Institutes, along with many of Calvin's commentaries on the Bible, can be found at:

http://www.ccel.org/c/calvin/

15. Ignatius Loyola, Spiritual Exercises, 1520s



At almost exactly the same time that Luther was writing his reformation pamphlets, Loyola was drafting the Spiritual Exercises, which set out a training program of structured meditation designed to develop spiritual discipline. He wrote them in Spanish, so that they could be widely

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read. They have since been translated into many different languages, and still serve as important tools of spiritual guidance. A brief selection of their primary rules for the proper conduct of Christians can be found at:

http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/loyola-spirex.html

A searchable, full-text version of the Spiritual Exercises*, along with other of Loyola's writings, can be found at:*

http://www.ccel.org/ccel/ignatius/exercises.html

16. Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, 1545-63

Pope Paul III convened the Council of Trent in 1545 to define Catholic doctrine in answer to Protestant challenges and to reform abuses. It met in three sessions over the next eighteen years, and issued a long series of decrees about all aspects of belief and practice. In general, it reasserted traditional Catholic beliefs, though also called for broader religious education. Some of the decrees, especially from the first session, were issued in very forceful language, declaring that anyone who taught contrary to church teachings was "anathema," that is, denounced and excommunicated. They referred very specifically to ideas of Protestant reformers, such as justification by faith and predestination. Decrees from the last session were more often couched as suggestions to bishops; many of these were not accepted by Catholic churches everywhere, though the doctrinal decrees were uniformly accepted. Moral concerns are evident in the decree on the veneration of images included here, as the council warns against images "adorned with a beauty exciting to lust" and pilgrimages "perverted into revellings and drunkenness." The entire text of the decrees of Trent can be found at:
http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent.html

Decrees from the first session [1547]

ON JUSTIFICATION

CANON I.-If any one saith, that man may be justified before God by his own works, whether done through the teaching of human nature, or that of the law, without the grace of God through Jesus Christ; let him be anathema. …

CANON IV.-If any one saith, that man's free will moved and excited by God, by assenting to God exciting and calling, nowise co-operates towards disposing and preparing itself for obtaining the grace of Justification; that it cannot refuse its consent, if it would, but that, as something inanimate, it does nothing whatever and is merely passive; let him be anathema.

CANON V.-If any one saith, that, since Adam's sin, the free will of man is lost and

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extinguished; or, that it is a thing with only a name, yea a name without a reality, a figment, in fine, introduced into the Church by Satan; let him be anathema.

CANON VI.-If any one saith, that it is not in man's power to make his ways evil, but that the works that are evil God worketh as well as those that are good, not permissively only, but properly, and of Himself, in such wise that the treason of Judas is no less His own proper work than the vocation of Paul; let him be anathema.

CANON VII.-If any one saith, that all works done before Justification, in whatsoever way they be done, are truly sins, or merit the hatred of God; or that the more earnestly one strives to dispose himself for grace, the more grievously he sins: let him be anathema….

CANON IX.-If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema…

CANON XVII.-If any one saith, that the grace of Justification is only attained to by those who are predestined unto life; but that all others who are called, are called indeed, but receive not grace, as being, by the divine power, predestined unto evil; let him be anathema….

CANON XXIII.-lf any one saith, that a man once justified can sin no more, nor lose grace, and that therefore he that falls and sins was never truly justified; or, on the other hand, that he is able, during his whole life, to avoid all sins, even those that are venial,-except by a special privilege from God, as the Church holds in regard of the Blessed Virgin; let him be anathema. …

CANON XXVI.-If any one saith, that the just ought not, for their good works done in God, to expect and hope for an eternal recompense from God, through His mercy and the merit of Jesus Christ, if so be that they persevere to the end in well doing and in keeping the divine commandments; let him be anathema.

CANON XXIX.-If any one saith, that he, who has fallen after baptism, is not able by the grace of God to rise again; or, that he is able indeed to recover the justice which he has lost, but by faith alone without the sacrament of Penance, contrary to what the holy Roman and universal Church-instructed by Christ and his Apostles-has hitherto professed, observed, and taught; let him be anathema.

CANON XXX.-If any one saith, that, after the grace of Justification has been received, to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise, that there remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world, or in the next in Purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be opened (to him); let him be anathema.

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[From the final session, 1563]

DECREE CONCERNING PURGATORY

Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught, in sacred councils, and very recently in this oecumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the holy Synod enjoins on bishops that they diligently endeavour that the sound doctrine concerning Purgatory, transmitted by the holy Fathers and sacred councils, be believed, maintained, taught, and every where proclaimed by the faithful of Christ. But let the more difficult and subtle questions, and which tend not to edification, and from which for the most part there is no increase of piety, be excluded from popular discourses before the uneducated multitude. In like manner, such things as are uncertain, or which labour under an appearance of error, let them not allow to be made public and treated of. While those things which tend to a certain kind of curiosity or superstition, or which savour of filthy lucre, let them prohibit as scandals and stumbling-blocks of the faithful. But let the bishops take care, that the suffrages of the faithful who are living, to wit the sacrifices of masses, prayers, alms, and other works of piety, which have been wont to be performed by the faithful for the other faithful departed, be piously and devoutly performed, in accordance with the institutes of the church; and that whatsoever is due on their behalf, from the endowments of testators, or in other way, be discharged, not in a perfunctory manner, but diligently and accurately, by the priests and ministers of the church, and others who are bound to render this (service).

ON THE INVOCATION, VENERATION, AND RELICS, OF SAlNTS, AND ON SACRED IMAGES.

The holy Synod enjoins on all bishops, and others who sustain the office and charge of teaching, that, agreeably to the usage of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, received from the primitive times of the Christian religion, and agreeably to the consent of the holy Fathers, and to the decrees of sacred Councils, they especially instruct the faithful diligently concerning the intercession and invocation of saints; the honour (paid) to relics; and the legitimate use of images: teaching them, that the saints, who reign together with Christ, offer up their own prayers to God for men; that it is good and useful suppliantly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, aid, (and) help for obtaining benefits from God, through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who is our alone Redeemer and Saviour; but that they think impiously, who deny that the saints, who enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, are to be invocated; or who assert either that they do not pray for men; or, that the invocation of them to pray for each of us even in particular, is idolatry; or, that it is repugnant to the word of God; and is opposed to the honour of the one mediator of God and men, Christ Jesus; or, that it is foolish to supplicate, vocally, or mentally, those who reign in heaven. Also, that the holy bodies of holy martyrs, and of others now living with Christ,-which bodies were the living members of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Ghost, and which are by Him to be raised unto eternal life, and to be glorified,--are to be venerated by the faithful; through which (bodies) many benefits are bestowed by God on men; so that they who affirm that veneration and honour are not due

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to the relics of saints; or, that these, and other sacred monuments, are uselessly honoured by the faithful; and that the places dedicated to the memories of the saints are in vain visited with the view of obtaining their aid; are wholly to be condemned, as the Church has already long since condemned, and now also condemns them.

Moreover, that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints, are to be had and retained particularly in temples, and that due honour and veneration are to be given them; not that any divinity, or virtue, is believed to be in them, on account of which they are to be worshipped; or that anything is to be asked of them; or, that trust is to be reposed in images, as was of old done by the Gentiles who placed their hope in idols; but because the honour which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which those images represent; in such wise that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover the head, and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ; and we venerate the saints, whose similitude they bear: as, by the decrees of Councils, and especially of the second Synod of Nicaea, has been defined against the opponents of images.

And the bishops shall carefully teach this,-that, by means of the histories of the mysteries of our Redemption, portrayed by paintings or other representations, the people is instructed, and confirmed in (the habit of) remembering, and continually revolving in mind the articles of faith; as also that great profit is derived from all sacred images, not only because the people are thereby admonished of the benefits and gifts bestowed upon them by Christ, but also because the miracles which God has performed by means of the saints, and their salutary examples, are set before the eyes of the faithful; that so they may give God thanks for those things; may order their own lives and manners in imitation of the saints; and may be excited to adore and love God, and to cultivate piety. But if any one shall teach, or entertain sentiments, contrary to these decrees; let him be anathema.

And if any abuses have crept in amongst these holy and salutary observances, the holy Synod ardently desires that they be utterly abolished; in such wise that no images, (suggestive) of false doctrine, and furnishing occasion of dangerous error to the uneducated, be set up. And if at times, when expedient for the unlettered people; it happen that the facts and narratives of sacred Scripture are portrayed and represented; the people shall be taught, that not thereby is the Divinity represented, as though it could be seen by the eyes of the body, or be portrayed by colours or figures.

Moreover, in the invocation of saints, the veneration of relics, and the sacred use of images, every superstition shall be removed, all filthy lucre be abolished; finally, all lasciviousness be avoided; in such wise that figures shall not be painted or adorned with a beauty exciting to lust; nor the celebration of the saints, and the visitation of relics be by any perverted into revellings and drunkenness; as if festivals are celebrated to the honour of the saints by luxury and wantonness.

In fine, let so great care and diligence be used herein by bishops, as that there be nothing seen that is disorderly, or that is unbecomingly or confusedly arranged, nothing that is profane, nothing indecorous, seeing that holiness becometh the house of God.

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17. A women's confraternity, Italy 1547

The Catholic Reformation brought a revitalization of devotional life for many people, in which confraternities for lay people were important agents. Thousands of confraternities were formed throughout Catholic Europe. Many of these were for men only, and women sometimes objected to their exclusion. In 1547 a group of women in Bologna, Italy staged a public protest against their exclusion from the confraternity of S. Maria della Pietà, which supervised a very popular public shrine that held an image of the Virgin Mary. The women practiced their devotions at the shrine, but wanted to be allowed to join the confraternity as well. Their protest achieved this to a degree, because they gained their own subordinate company within the confraternity. But it was a hollow victory. From the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries women had been fully integrated as members into Bolognese confraternities (though without authority to hold office). In the fifteenth century, they were shut out as "temptresses." After the Pietà protest, women were brought back into many confraternities, but always in these "separate but equal" sub-groups. The general statutes of the confraternity (Document A) give one version of the events, and the separate statutes for the women's company (Document B) give a slightly different version. A. Prologue to the 1600 Statutes of the Confraternity of S. Maria della Pietà (Bologna). Archivio di Stato di Bologna, Fondo Demaniale, 10/7696, #4, fol. 3r.Prologue to the 1600 Statutes of the Women's Company of the Confraternity of S. Maria della Pietà (Bologna). B. Archivio di Stato di Bologna, Fondo Demaniale, 10/7696, #3, fol. 2r. Translations by Nicholas Terpstra.

A. The men's version:

Our company was formed under the emblem of . . . the Madonna della Pietà in 1502, under the pontificate of Julius II [sic], in our city of Bologna. (. . .) The image was found in an old ruined house by the city wall by some young girls, and from them it was bought by some pious and devout men. They fixed it here with highest devotion, whereupon a great devotion began, with infinite favors, miracles, and good deeds that Christ performed here for them in order to ensure that this holy place would be visited by many. For which reason the devotion grew with great alms . . . such that in the shortest time there was built the oratory and the portico to the amazement and wonder of all. A little afterwards Francia, a most famous painter in those times, made the picture of the middle altar with beautiful ornament. And because the Blessed Virgin in this place demonstrated gracious favor as much to one as to the other sex, many honored and celebrated it. Many women by their particular devotion gathered together and demanded that they too be numbered among those of the confraternity in service of the Madonna. This was graciously granted by a public vote of the whole confraternity, as it appears in their books. . . .

B. The women's version:

. . . the above mentioned women with proper permission entered the oratory, and in order to make their petition elected Mona Lucia, wife and consorte of M.Guaspare Bolza. They

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gathered together before Daily Office, and Mona Lucia on behalf of all her sisters demanded first of God on high, and then of the officials and men gathered, that they also be counted under the mantle of the virgin Mary, and that they be able to gather in this holy place to her service, honor, and glory, and to do all that the statutes commanded of them. And hearing all this, the men put it to a vote and all the votes were in favor, and so they accepted them as good mothers and sisters. The women then asked the men to give them a head and guide to keep them from error, and after prayer and by the will of God, they elected and confirmed the above mentioned Lucia for the whole of the following year of 1548. . . .

18. The Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572

The planned killing of thousands of Protestants in Paris and other French cities led to renewed open warfare in the decades-long French wars of religion. There are a number of eyewitness accounts from many points of view. This is one from the Protestant historian De Thou, who was a teenager when the massacre happened.

http://history.hanover.edu/texts/barth.html

19. The Spanish Armada, 1588

The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 was immediately celebrated as a providential victory in England. Queen Elizabeth had a special celebratory medal struck, with the motto "God blew, and the ships were scattered." This was just the sort of event perfect for early news-sheets. This is the first page of the four-page "English Mercury" detailing the actions of Francis Drake and others against the "bigoted and blood-thirty" Spaniards, printed only a few days after the battle. The whole text can be found at:

http://www.adelpha.com/~davidco/History/drake1.htm

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