

THE FIVE SOLAS

1. SCRIPTURE ALONE- Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, to such an extent that men are without excuse¹, yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will which is necessary for salvation.² Therefore it pleased the Lord, at various times and in diverse ways, to reveal himself and to declare his will to his church³; and afterward—for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and of the world—to commit this revelation wholly to writing.⁴ Therefore the Holy Scripture is most necessary⁵, God's former ways of revealing his will to his people having ceased.⁶ The authority of the Holy Scripture, because of which it ought to be believed and obeyed, does not depend upon the testimony of any man or church, but entirely upon God, its author (who is truth itself); therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.⁷ The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory and man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly stated in Scripture or by good and necessary inference may be deduced from Scripture, unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or by traditions of men.⁸ Nevertheless, we acknowledge that the inward illumination of the Spirit of God is necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word.⁹ We also acknowledge that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and the government of the church—circumstances common to human activities and societies—which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.¹⁰ The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself. Therefore, when there is a question about the true and full meaning of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), that meaning must be searched out and ascertained by other places that speak more clearly.¹¹ The supreme judge by whom all controversies of religion are to be settled and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and claims to private

1 Rom 2:14-15; Rom 1:19-20; Ps 19:1-4; Rom 1:32-2:1

2 John 17:3; 1 Cor 1:21; 1 Cor 2:13-14

3 Heb 1:1-2

4 Luke 1:3-4; Rom 15:4; Matt 4:4,7,10; Isa 8:20

5 2 Tim 3:15; 2 Pet 1:19

6 John 20:31; 1 Cor 14:37; 1 John 5:13; 1 Cor 10:11; Heb 1:1-2; Heb 2:2-4

7 2 Pet 1:19-20; 2 Tim 3:16; 1 John 5:9; 1 Thess 2:13; Rev 1:1-2

8 2 Tim 3:16-17; Gal 1:8-9; 2 Thess 2:2

9 John 6:45; 1 Cor 2:12,14-15; Eph 1:18; 2 Cor 4:6

10 1 Cor 11:13-14; 1 Cor 14:26,40

11 Acts 15:15; 2 Pet 1:20-21

revelations are to be examined, can be only the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture. With his decision we are to be satisfied.¹²

2. FAITH ALONE- The grace of faith, by which the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls¹³, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts¹⁴, and is ordinarily produced through the ministry of the Word.¹⁵ This faith is increased and strengthened by the same means, and also by the administration of the sacraments and prayer.¹⁶ By this faith, a Christian believes to be true whatever is revealed in the Word, because of the authority of God himself speaking in it.¹⁷ He also responds differently to what each particular passage contains—obeying the commands¹⁸, trembling at the threatenings¹⁹, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come.²⁰ But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.²¹ This faith varies in degrees. It may be weak or strong.²² It may often, and in many ways, be assailed and weakened, but it gains the victory.²³ It matures in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ²⁴, who is both the author and the perfecter of our faith.²⁵

3. GRACE ALONE- Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit.²⁶ God was pleased to permit this sin of theirs, according to his wise and holy counsel, because his purpose was, through it, to glorify himself.²⁷ By this sin

12 Mat 22:29,31; Eph 2:20 *with* Acts 28:25

13 Heb 10:39

14 Eph 1:17-19; 2:8; 2 Cor 4:13

15 Rom 10:14, 17

16 Luke 17:5; Acts 20:32; Rom 1:16-17; 4:11; 1 Pet 2:2

17 John 4:42; Acts 24:14; 1 Thes 2:13; 1 John 5:10

18 Rom 16:26

19 Isa 66:2

20 1 Tim 4:8; Heb 11:13

21 John 1:12; Acts 15:11; 16:31; Gal 2:20

22 Mat 6:30; 8:10; Rom 4:19-20; Heb 5:13-14

23 Luke 22:31-32; Eph 6:16; 1 John 5:4-5

24 Col 2:2; Heb 6:11-12; 10:22

25 Heb 12:2

26 Gen 3:13; 2 Cor 11:3

27 Rom 11:32

they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God²⁸, and so became dead in sin²⁹ and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.³⁰ Since they were the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed to³¹—and the same death in sin and corrupted nature were conveyed to—all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.³² From this original corruption, by which we are utterly disinclined, disabled, and antagonistic to all that is good³³ and wholly inclined to all that is evil³⁴, all actual transgressions proceed.³⁵ Every sin—both original and actual—is a transgression of the righteous law of God and contrary to it.³⁶ Therefore, every sin in its own nature brings guilt upon the sinner³⁷, on account of which he is bound over to the holy wrath of God³⁸ and the curse of the law.³⁹ Consequently, he is subject to death, with all miseries—spiritual, temporal, and eternal.⁴⁰ The distance between God and the creature is so great that, even though rational creatures are responsible to obey him as their Creator, yet they could never experience any enjoyment of him as their blessing and reward except by way of some voluntary condescension on his part, which he has been pleased to express by way of covenant.⁴¹ The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works in which life was promised to Adam and, in him, to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.⁴² Since man, by his fall, made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was then pleased to make a second covenant⁴³, commonly called the covenant of grace. In it God freely offers life and salvation by Jesus Christ to sinners, requiring of them faith in him, that

28 Gen 3:6-8; Eccl 7:29; Rom 3:23

29 Gen 2:17; Eph 2:1

30 Gen 6:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:10-19; Titus 1:15

31 Gen 1:27-28 and 2:16-17 and Acts 17:26 with Rom 5:12, 15-19 and 1 Cor 15:21-22; 1Cor 15:45, 49

32 Gen 5:3; Job 14:4; 15:14; Psa 51:5

33 Rom 5:6; 7:18; 8:7; Col 1:21

34 Gen 6:5; 8:21; Rom 3:10-12

35 Mat 15:19; Eph 2:2-3; James 1:14-15

36 1 John 3:4

37 Rom 2:15; 3:9, 19

38 Eph 2:3

39 Gal 3:10

40 Rom 6:23; Eph 4:18; Lam 3:39; Rom 8:20; Mat 25:41; 2 Thes 1:9

41 1 Sam 2:25; Job 9:32-33; 22:2-3; 35:7-8; Psa 100:2-3; 113:5-6; Isa 40:13-17; Luke 17:10; Acts 17:24-25

42 Gal 3:12; Rom 5:12-20; 10:5; Gen 2:17; Gal 3:10

43 Gen 3:15; Isa 42:6; Rom 3:20-21; 8:3; Gal 3:21

they may be saved⁴⁴, and promising to give his Holy Spirit to all those who are ordained to eternal life, to make them willing and able to believe.⁴⁵ This covenant of grace is sometimes presented in the Scriptures by the name of a will or testament, with reference to the death of Jesus Christ (the testator) and to the everlasting inheritance—with all that belongs to it—bequeathed in it.⁴⁶ In the time of the law, this covenant was administered differently than in the time of the gospel.⁴⁷ Under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the passover lamb, and other types and ordinances given to the Jewish people, all of which foreshadowed Christ to come.⁴⁸ Under the gospel, Christ (the reality)⁴⁹ having been revealed, the ordinances by which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper.⁵⁰ Therefore, there are not two covenants of grace differing in substance, but only one, under various administrations.⁵¹

4. CHRIST ALONE- God was pleased, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the mediator between God and man.⁵² As the mediator, he is the prophet, priest, and king⁵³, the Head and Savior of the church, the heir of all things, and the judge of the world.⁵⁴ God gave to him, from all eternity, a people to be his seed⁵⁵ and to be by him, in time, redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.⁵⁶ The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being truly and eternally God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time had come, take upon himself man's nature⁵⁷, with all its essential properties and common frailties, yet without sin.⁵⁸ He was conceived by the power of the Holy

44 Mark 16:15-16; John 3:16; Rom 10:6, 9; Gal 3:11

45 Ezek 36:26-27; John 6:44-45

46 Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 7:22; 9:15-17

47 2 Cor 3:6-9

48 Rom 4:11; Col 2:11-12; 1 Cor 5:7; Hebrews 8-10 *throughout*

49 Col 2:17

50 Mat 28:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-25

51 Psa 32:1 *with* Rom 4:3; Acts 15:11; Rom 3:21-23, 30; 4:6, 16-17, 23-24; Gal 3:14, 16; Heb 13:8

52 Isa 42:1; John 3:16; 2 Tim 2:5; 1 Pet 1:19-20

53 Acts 3:22; Heb 5:5-6; Psa 2:6; Luke 1:33

54 Eph 5:23; Heb 1:2; Acts 17:31

55 Psa 22:30; Isa 53:10; John 17:6

56 Isa 55:4-5; 1 Cor 1:30; 1 Tim 2:6

57 John 1:1, 14; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:6; 1 John 5:20

58 Heb 2:14, 16-17; 4:15

Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary and of her substance.⁵⁹ In this way, two whole natures, the divine and the human, perfect and distinct, were inseparably joined together in one person without being changed, mixed, or confused.⁶⁰ This person is truly God and truly man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.⁶¹ This office the Lord Jesus most willingly undertook⁶², and in order to discharge its obligations he was born under the law and perfectly fulfilled it.⁶³ He endured most grievous torments in his soul and most painful sufferings in his body⁶⁴; he was crucified, died⁶⁵, and was buried; he remained under the power of death, yet his body did not undergo decay⁶⁶; and he arose from the dead on the third day with the same body in which he had suffered.⁶⁷ In this body he ascended into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of his Father, making intercession⁶⁸, and he shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the age.⁶⁹ The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself—which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up to God—has fully satisfied the justice of his Father.⁷⁰ He purchased not only reconciliation but also an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father has given to him.⁷¹ Although the work of redemption was not actually accomplished by Christ until after his incarnation, yet the power, efficacy, and benefits of it were applied to the elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices by which Christ was revealed and signified to be the seed of the woman who would bruise the serpent's head, and to be the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.⁷² To all those for whom Christ purchased redemption, he certainly and effectually applies and communicates it.⁷³ He makes intercession

59 Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Gal 4:4

60 Luke 1:35; Rom 9:5; Col 2:9; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 3:18

61 Rom 1:3-4; 1 Tim 2:5

62 Psa 40:7-8 *with* Heb 10:5-10; John 10:18; Phil 2:8

63 Gal 4:4; Mat 3:15; 5:17

64 Mat 26:37-38; 27:46; Luke 22:44; Matthew 26-27 throughout

65 Phil 2:8

66 Acts 2:23-24, 27; 13:37; Rom 6:9

67 1 Cor 15:3-4; John 20:25, 27

68 Mark 16:19; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 9:24

69 Mat 13:40-42; Acts 1:11; 10:42; Rom 14:9-10; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 1:6

70 Rom 3:25-26; 5:19; Eph 5:2; Heb 9:14, 16; 10:14

71 Dan 9:24, 26; John 17:2; Eph 1:11, 14; Col 1:19-20; Heb 9:12, 15

72 Gen 3:15; Gal 4:4-5; Heb 13:8; Rev 13:8

73 John 6:37, 39; 10:15-16

for them⁷⁴ and reveals to them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation.⁷⁵ He effectually persuades them by his Spirit to believe and obey, and governs their hearts by his Word and Spirit.⁷⁶ He overcomes all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom in such a manner, and by such ways, as are most agreeable to his wonderful and unsearchable administration.⁷⁷

5. TO GOD ALONE THE GLORY- *Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God; Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. **For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.***⁷⁸

74 Rom 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2

75 John 15:13, 15; 17:6; Eph 1:7-9

76 John 14:16; 17:17; Rom 8:9, 14; 15:18-19; 2 Cor 4:13; Heb 12:2

77 Psa 110:1; Mal 4:2-3; 1 Cor 15:25-26; Col 2:15

78 1Co 10:31; 1Pe 4:11; Rev 1:6; 2Pe 3:1; Eph 3:21; Rev 7:12; Rom 11:36