That Rock Was Christ

A Baptist Response and Rebuttal
to *Rock and Sand* by Josiah Trenham

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Preface

A review owes its readers two things: a fair account of what a book says, and an honest judgment of whether it is true. *Rock and Sand*, by Archpriest Josiah Trenham, deserves both. It is the work of a learned man,[1] it is clearly written, and it asks questions that matter a great deal. Where does final authority lie? What is the Church? How is a sinner saved? What is baptism, and who should receive it? A book that asks such questions should not be waved aside. It should be answered.

The answers given here come from a Baptist, and it is better to say so at the start. No one writes from nowhere. Trenham writes as an Orthodox priest and does not pretend otherwise. This review is written from the other side of the table and does not pretend otherwise either. But a man may hold his own position firmly and still describe his neighbor's position fairly. That is the aim of these pages. Where Trenham is right, the review says so. Where he is wrong, it tries to show why, using evidence the reader can check.

This review is a defense, not an attack. Its subject is the book's arguments, not the author's character. Nor does it pretend that the differences are small, for they are not. It holds that the official Orthodox teaching on how a sinner is made right with God departs from the gospel of the New Testament, and Section 5 gives the reasons. A disagreement about the gospel cannot be settled by politeness. It can, however, be carried on with courtesy. The apostle Peter told Christians to give a defense of their hope "with humility and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15), and that is the rule these pages have tried to keep.

The Standard

Every contest needs a referee, and much depends on who it is. Trenham's referee is Holy Tradition as the Orthodox Church receives it. The referee of this review is Scripture: the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, read in their plain sense. Section 1 explains why the choice of referee matters so much, and why Scripture is the one referee both sides already accept.

The people of Berea set the pattern long ago. When the apostle Paul preached to them, they "examined the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were true" (Acts 17:11).[2] If an apostle could be checked in that way, so can a priest, and so can a reviewer.

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[1] Trenham holds a doctorate from the University of Durham, given in the Foreword as "Ph.D. Dunelm." Josiah Trenham, *Rock and Sand: An Orthodox Appraisal of the Protestant Reformers and Their Teachings*, 3rd ed. (Columbia, MO: Newrome Press, 2018), xv.

[2] Quoted from the translation described in the next note.

A Note on the Bible Used in This Review

Out of courtesy to the author, and to readers who are drawn to the Orthodox Church, I have quoted Scripture from the translation that *Rock and Sand* itself uses: *The Eastern / Greek Orthodox Bible*.[3] There is a second reason. An argument is strongest when it is made with the other side's own tools. No reader should be able to set this review aside on the ground that it depends on a different Bible. The New Testament of the Orthodox Church contains the same twenty-seven books as the New Testament read in Baptist churches, and every argument in these pages can be made from it.

The Orthodox Old Testament is translated from the Greek Septuagint, and some of its chapters are numbered differently from those in most English Bibles. Where this review refers to such a passage, the footnote gives both numbers. The Orthodox Old Testament also contains several books that Baptists do not accept as Scripture. This review does not quote them.

A Note on Terms and Sources

Trenham often appeals to "the Holy Fathers," the Christian teachers of the early centuries. This review calls them "early Christian writers," except when describing Trenham's own view.[4] Their writings are valuable evidence of what Christians believed and practiced in the early centuries. They are cited here as witnesses, never as authorities equal to Scripture, and the review does not claim that they always agreed with one another or with Baptists.

Appendix A is a documented list of factual errors, faulty reasoning, and loaded language in *Rock and Sand*, arranged by chapter. The footnotes refer to it by chapter, category, and item number, for example, "Appendix A, Ch. 4, Misuse of Scripture 1." Page numbers refer to the third edition of *Rock and Sand* (2018).

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[3] *The Eastern / Greek Orthodox Bible: New Testament*, ed. Laurent A. Cleenewerck. *Rock and Sand* identifies its Scripture quotations as taken from this translation (copyright page).

[4] Jesus said, "Call no man on the earth 'your father,' for one is your Father, he who is in heaven" (Matt. 23:9). The phrase "early Christian writers" also describes these men without assigning them authority.

1. How to Read *Rock and Sand*

Before anyone can judge an argument, he needs to know two things about it: whom it is meant to persuade, and what it takes for granted. Neither of these is a fault. Every argument has to start somewhere, and every writer has some reader in mind. But a reader who overlooks them may find himself agreeing with a conclusion without ever having been shown the reasons for it.

Whom the Book Is For

Trenham is candid about his purpose. Orthodox Christians in America, he explains, are often invited by Protestants to Bible studies and urged "to be saved." Since most of them know little about the history of Protestantism, they are unsure how to answer.[5] The book was written to help them. It gives Orthodox readers an outline of Protestant history, an account of past contact between the Orthodox East and the Protestant West, and a summary of Orthodox judgments on Protestant teaching.[6] It also serves those preparing to enter the Orthodox Church. Trenham reminds such converts that their change is not a move from one denomination to another but "a conversion from heresy to orthodoxy."[7] The Foreword sets the tone for all that follows. It names the Orthodox Church as the Rock and places every other body discussed in the book on "unstable and shifting Sand."[8]

There is nothing wrong in this. A father who explains to his children why the family keeps its customs is doing his duty, and he is not obliged to argue every point as though a stranger were listening. But a stranger who overhears the conversation should remember that it was not meant for him. Points that seem settled at the family table may never have been argued at all. That is the position of a Baptist reader of *Rock and Sand*. He is listening in on a conversation within another household, and he must be careful not to take its assumptions for proofs.

What the Book Takes for Granted

The largest assumption is stated in a single sentence: "We know where the Church is and is not."[9] The Orthodox Church, in Trenham's view, is the one Church that Christ founded, and the Protestant churches are "man-made religious bodies" outside it.[10] This is a very large claim. In *Rock and Sand* it is stated, not proved.

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[5] Josiah Trenham, *Rock and Sand: An Orthodox Appraisal of the Protestant Reformers and Their Teachings*, 3rd ed. (Columbia, MO: Newrome Press, 2018), xvii–xviii.

[6] *Rock and Sand*, xviii.

[7] *Rock and Sand*, 153.

[8] *Rock and Sand*, xv–xvi.

[9] *Rock and Sand*, 182.

[10] *Rock and Sand*, 182.

The book also explains how the Church knows what is true. Apostolic Tradition, Trenham writes, is "the ultimate authority in the Church."[11] Scripture must be read in agreement with the Holy Fathers,[12] and the agreement of the Fathers is "the traditional standard of infallible authority."[13]

Now notice what happens when these claims are put side by side. Suppose someone asks how the true Tradition can be known. The answer is that the Church has kept it. Suppose he then asks which body is the true Church. The answer is that it is the one that has kept the true Tradition. Each answer leans on the other, like two playing cards propped together on a table. They will stand, but only because neither is ever asked to stand alone.

The difficulty is the same as checking a measuring tape against itself. If a tape has been stretched, every measurement taken with it will agree with the tape perfectly, and every one will be wrong. The only way to learn whether a tape is true is to hold it against something other than itself. In the same way, the only fair way to test the claims of a church is to hold them against a standard that the church did not make.

Here, happily, the two sides have common ground. Trenham himself calls Scripture "the foundational authority in the Church" and "the inspired and infallible truth."[14] Whatever else Orthodox and Baptist Christians disagree about, they agree that the Scriptures are the word of God. That makes Scripture the one standard against which the book's claims can fairly be measured, and it is the standard this review uses.

It may be objected that Baptists also read the Bible through their own traditions. That is true. Every reader brings habits of mind to the page, and no one reads perfectly. But there is a difference between admitting that one may read Scripture wrongly and claiming that one's reading cannot be wrong. The first keeps the reader under the authority of the text. The second places the interpreter beyond correction. A Baptist who misreads the Bible can be corrected by the Bible. The question to ask of Trenham's position is whether anything could ever correct the Church.

A Fair Rule, Fairly Applied

In his Introduction, Trenham promises to rely on the Reformers' own words and on the Protestant confessions "in order to avoid misrepresentation and caricature."[15] That is a good rule, and it would be unfair to hold him to any other. Appendix A records the places where

[11] *Rock and Sand*, 161.
[12] *Rock and Sand*, 162.
[13] *Rock and Sand*, 21, n. 73.
[14] *Rock and Sand*, 159.
[15] *Rock and Sand*, xviii.

the book falls short of it. Most are matters of plain fact that any reader can check. Three examples will show the pattern.

The book says that Baptists believe children must "become like adults in order for them to be baptized and saved."[16] Baptists teach nothing of the kind. They do not believe that baptism saves anyone, child or adult. They believe that baptism is the obedience of someone who has already believed.[17] The book also says that the Reformers "denied the four characteristics or marks of the Church": one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.[18] Yet the Reformers' own confessions affirm the one holy Church that continues forever. What they disputed was where that Church is found, not whether it bears these marks.[19] And the book says that there are "tens of thousands of Protestant denominations in America alone."[20] Standard counts place the number of American denominations in the low hundreds. The larger figure counts independent congregations, which are not denominations at all.[21]

In other places the book uses labels where an argument is needed. It describes much Catholic and Protestant worship as "a man-centered entertainment service," and it calls common Protestant teaching on the sacraments "gnostic at its core."[22] Gnosticism was an ancient heresy that taught that the material world is evil, which Protestants do not believe. A label of this kind is a shortcut. It saves the trouble of an argument by announcing the verdict in advance. It may comfort readers who already agree, but it gives no help to anyone who is still trying to decide.

Even the appeal to the early writers is more selective than it first appears. Trenham calls Augustine "innovative" and faults the Reformers for leaning on him so heavily.[23] Yet he appeals to Augustine against Calvin on the Church's authority over Scripture,[24] and the Confession of Dositheos, which the book reprints, cites Augustine in support of infant baptism.[25] This need not be inconsistent, since a writer can be right on one point and wrong on another. But it shows that "the consensus of the Fathers" is not something a reader can simply look up. Someone has to decide which statements belong to the consensus and which are innovations, and that decision is made by the same Church whose claims are in question. The measuring tape has returned.

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[16] *Rock and Sand*, 68.

[17] Appendix A, Ch. 4, Misuse of Scripture 2.

[18] *Rock and Sand*, 181.

[19] Appendix A, Ch. 11, Other Misrepresentation 6, citing the Augsburg Confession (1530), Article VII.

[20] *Rock and Sand*, 36, n. 113.

[21] Appendix A, Ch. 2, Historical Inaccuracies 4.

[22] *Rock and Sand*, 171, 183. See Appendix A, Ch. 11, Biased Language 1 and 3.

[23] *Rock and Sand*, 21.

[24] *Rock and Sand*, 80.

[25] *Rock and Sand*, 206 (Appendix II, Decree XVI).

What Follows

None of this shows that Trenham is wrong about any doctrine. A man may misdescribe his opponents and still be right about the matter in dispute, just as a witness may get the color of a car wrong and still be right about the accident. The point is narrower. A careful reader of *Rock and Sand* will check its descriptions of others before trusting them, and will not mistake the confidence of its tone for the strength of its case.

Then he will turn to the questions themselves. Where does final authority lie? What is the Church? How is a sinner saved? Can a believer know that he is saved? What is baptism, and who should receive it? These questions are too important to be settled by the weight of a tradition, Baptist or Orthodox. They must be settled by the word of God. The sections that follow take them up in that order. But first, fairness requires a look at the places where Trenham's criticisms deserve to be heard.

2. Where Trenham Is Right

A man who is told that there is a smudge on his face may not enjoy hearing it, and he may not much like the person who told him. But he would be foolish to refuse the mirror. Criticism from an opponent is often the most useful kind, because an opponent has no reason to be gentle and every reason to look closely. *Rock and Sand* looks closely at Protestant churches, Baptist churches among them, and in several places it sees truly.

It is only fair to begin by noticing that Trenham does the same for Protestants. In his tenth chapter he praises their love of Scripture, their zeal for missions, and the personal devotion of many evangelical believers, and he says that he would not be a Christian at all without the Bible that Protestant scholars helped to place in his hands.[26] He adds that these virtues "do not validate the Protestant faith."[27] That is true, and the same principle runs the other way. The faults described below do not disprove the Baptist faith. They do, however, deserve an honest hearing.

Conversion Without Instruction

Trenham describes the revival meeting as many Americans have known it: the long gatherings, the testimonies, the emotional climax of the altar call, and the urgent appeal to make a "decision for Jesus Christ." He observes that this pattern of conversion is often detached from baptism altogether.[28] Many evangelicals, he writes, remember the day they prayed "the sinner's prayer" but do not know the day they were baptized, and some have been baptized several times.[29] He grants that the language of "receiving Jesus" comes from Scripture, but he objects that the method is often cut short, with little teaching and little place for baptism.[30]

Much of this is fair. Where conversion is reduced to a moment at the front of a room and a prayer repeated after a preacher, something has gone wrong. The pattern of the New Testament is different. On the day of Pentecost, "those who gladly received his word were baptized," and then "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers" (Acts 2:41–42). The Great Commission joins the same three things: making disciples, baptizing them, and "teaching them to observe all the things that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19–20). Faith, baptism, and instruction belong together.

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[26] Josiah Trenham, *Rock and Sand: An Orthodox Appraisal of the Protestant Reformers and Their Teachings*, 3rd ed. (Columbia, MO: Newrome Press, 2018), 155–158.

[27] *Rock and Sand*, 158.

[28] *Rock and Sand*, 136.

[29] *Rock and Sand*, 138.

[30] *Rock and Sand*, 138, n. 298. The phrase comes from John 1:12.

Baptists do distinguish the new birth from baptism, and later sections will defend that distinction from Scripture. But to distinguish two things is not to separate them, still less to neglect one of them. A church that treats baptism as an optional afterthought, or that lets new believers go untaught, has not kept Baptist convictions. It has abandoned them. And when the same believer is baptized again and again because he is never sure that the first time "counted," the fault lies either in the teaching he received or in his assurance of salvation. Section 6 will return to that second question.

Christians Without a Church

Trenham is also right that much of American Christianity has grown deeply individual. Many believers move from congregation to congregation as they might change grocery stores, and many others belong to no congregation at all. The rise of churches that answer to no one but themselves has sometimes made the problem worse. Trenham overstates the number of denominations, as Section 1 noted,[31] but the concern behind the number is real.

Scripture gives no encouragement to a solitary faith. "Let us consider how to stimulate each other to love and good works. Let us not abandon our own gatherings, which is the habit of some. Instead, exhort one another" (Heb. 10:24–25). The Christian life is lived among brothers and sisters who know one another, pray for one another, and correct one another. A Baptist who treats his church membership lightly has forgotten something his own tradition teaches. Baptists have always insisted on the local congregation, and Section 4 will show why.

Faith Without Memory

Trenham says that the Anabaptist method of reading Scripture is "firmly a-historical," as though the labors of earlier generations of Christians did not matter.[32] Whatever the truth of that charge about the sixteenth century, it describes many modern evangelicals well enough. A great many Christians could name the pastor who baptized them but could not name a single Christian who lived between the apostle John and the present century.

This is a loss, and an unnecessary one. Christians who hold Scripture as their final authority have nothing to fear from history. A man who is sure of his foundation can walk freely through the whole house. Some of the early Christian writers will appear in later sections of this review, and their testimony will prove to be more friendly to Baptist convictions than *Rock and Sand* suggests. But even where they disagree, they are worth knowing. It is no compliment to the Bible to pretend that God had nothing to say to His people for eighteen hundred years.

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[31] Appendix A, Ch. 2, Historical Inaccuracies 4.

[32] *Rock and Sand*, 61.

Old Wrongs

Two further points need only a brief word. First, Trenham's account of the abuses in the late medieval Roman Catholic Church is substantially accurate, including the sale of indulgences and the use of forged documents to support papal claims.[33] Baptists have no reason to dispute it.

Second, Trenham notes that the Southern Baptist Convention was formed in 1845 to defend slavery, and that the Convention formally renounced those roots in 1995.[34] That is true, and it is a matter for shame, not for excuse. Many Baptist churches, including independent Baptist churches, have never belonged to the Convention. The sins of slavery and racial prejudice were not confined to one denomination or one century, and no Christian tradition, Orthodox or Baptist, has a history free of them.

A Call to Self-Examination

What, then, should a Baptist reader do with these criticisms? Not deny them, and not despair over them. The apostle Paul told the Corinthians, "Test yourselves and see whether you are in the faith, yes, test your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5). That command applies to churches as well as to individuals. Where Trenham's criticism lands, the right response is repentance and reform, carried out by the same standard that judges every church: the word of God.

But notice what kind of faults these are. Every one of them is a failure to do what Scripture already teaches. Scripture joins baptism to teaching, and churches that separate them are departing from Scripture. Scripture commands Christians to gather, and believers who drift alone are disobeying it. The cure for each fault is more faithfulness to the Bible, not less.

Trenham sees the matter differently. He traces these faults, and many others, to the Protestant principle that Scripture is the final authority, a principle he calls the source "from which all other Protestant heresies flow."[35] If he is right, the faults described in this section are not accidents but symptoms, and reform by Scripture would only spread the disease. Whether he is right is the question of authority, and it is the subject of the next section.

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[33] *Rock and Sand*, xx–xxi, 3–4.

[34] *Rock and Sand*, 63.

[35] *Rock and Sand*, 167. See also 159.

3. Authority: Scripture and Tradition

Trenham does not treat Protestant errors as a scattered collection of mistakes. He sees them as branches growing from a single root. That root is the Protestant teaching that Scripture is the final authority for the Christian, often called by its Latin name, *sola scriptura*, "Scripture alone." In his words, it is the source "from which all other Protestant heresies flow."[36] If he is right about the root, there is little point in examining the branches. So this question must come first.

What Is Being Claimed

Before deciding whether a teaching is true, it is wise to be sure what it says. Trenham describes the Protestant view as the belief that every doctrine "must rest upon clear and explicit teaching of Scripture."[37] That is narrower than what Protestants have actually taught. Their confessions accept not only what Scripture states outright but also what follows from it by sound reasoning.[38] And the Baptist position is plainer still. It does not say that Scripture is the only thing worth reading, or that teachers, history, and the wisdom of earlier Christians are useless. It says that Scripture is the only rule that cannot be wrong, and therefore the rule by which every other teacher must be measured.

A country's laws offer a rough comparison. Judges, lawyers, and scholars write a great deal about what the laws mean, and much of what they write is wise and useful. But when two of them disagree, neither appeals to his own commentary as the final word. Both go back to the text of the law. The commentaries serve the law. They do not stand above it. That is all the Baptist means by "Scripture alone."

Where Trenham and Baptists Agree

Trenham opens his case with a statement that a Baptist could have written: the foundation of the Church is the teaching of the apostles. He points to the first Christians, who "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42), and he argues that no one can follow Christ without following the apostles He sent.[39] That is entirely true. He goes on to show that the New Testament calls the apostles' teaching "tradition," that is, what is handed down (2 Thess. 3:6).[40] That is also true. The apostles did hand down the faith, and Christians are bound to hold it.

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[36] Josiah Trenham, *Rock and Sand: An Orthodox Appraisal of the Protestant Reformers and Their Teachings*, 3rd ed. (Columbia, MO: Newrome Press, 2018), 167.

[37] *Rock and Sand*, 159.

[38] Appendix A, Ch. 10, Other Misrepresentation 1.

[39] *Rock and Sand*, 159.

[40] *Rock and Sand*, 160.

So the two sides are not arguing about whether the apostles' teaching is authoritative. They agree that it is. They are arguing about something else: where the apostles' teaching is to be found today. That is the real question, and it is worth keeping in view, because a good deal of Trenham's argument proves the first point, which no Baptist denies, and then treats it as though it had proved the second.

The Word of Mouth

Trenham's chief text is Paul's instruction to the Thessalonians: "stand firm and keep the traditions which we taught you, whether by word or by letter" (2 Thess. 2:15).[41] Here, he argues, are two forms of apostolic teaching, spoken and written, and both are binding. He asks his reader to imagine being a Christian in Thessalonica who had heard Paul preach for hours. Would such a person obey only what Paul later wrote down, and ignore what he had heard with his own ears?[42]

The answer, of course, is no. A Thessalonian who heard Paul speak was bound by what Paul said. But notice what made his position secure. He had heard the apostle himself. He knew the voice, and he could ask Paul or Timothy what was meant. Nothing stood between him and the source.

No one today is in that position. Suppose a man receives two things from his late grandfather. One is a letter in the grandfather's own hand. The other is a saying that has passed through many members of the family over many years, each of whom assures him that the grandfather really said it. Both may be true. But only one of them can still be checked. If the saying and the letter ever seem to disagree, a sensible man will trust the letter, not because spoken words are worth less than written ones, but because he can be sure the letter is his grandfather's.

That is the position of every Christian living two thousand years after the apostles. Paul's spoken teaching was every bit as authoritative as his letters. The difficulty is not its authority but its identity. What, exactly, did Paul say in Thessalonica that he did not write? The only apostolic teaching that can be confirmed as apostolic today is the teaching the apostles wrote down.

The same letter shows how this happened. Paul reminds the Thessalonians, "even when we were with you, we gave you this instruction: 'Anyone who will not work should not eat either'" (2 Thess. 3:10). Here is a spoken instruction, given in person, that the apostle then took the trouble to write. Trenham offers a similar example. Jesus' saying "It is more blessed to give than to receive" is not found in the four Gospels, which shows, he argues,

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[41] *Rock and Sand*, 162. Trenham's quotation of this verse reads "by word of mouth"; the EOB reads "by word."
[42] *Rock and Sand*, 162–163.

that the Lord taught more than the Gospels record.[43] That is true. But how do Christians know this saying today? Only because Luke wrote it down in the book of Acts (Acts 20:35). The example does not show that unwritten tradition preserved the saying. It shows that Scripture did.

A Test for Tradition

Trenham freely admits that not every tradition is holy. Jesus warned against human traditions that set aside the word of God, and Trenham agrees that such traditions exist.[44] But if there are two kinds of tradition, holy and unholy, a Christian needs some way to tell them apart. What test should he use?

Jesus Himself answered that question. When the Pharisees objected that His disciples did not keep the traditions of the elders, He did not reply by appealing to another tradition. He appealed to the written commandment. "You set aside the commandment of God and hold fast to human tradition," He told them, and He pointed to the law of Moses to show it: "Thus, you nullify the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down" (Mark 7:8–13). The Pharisees' traditions were old, respected, and taught by learned men. Jesus measured them against Scripture, and they failed.

Jesus did the same thing with the Sadducees, a party that disagreed sharply with the Pharisees about the meaning of Scripture. He did not conclude from their disagreement that Scripture was too unclear to settle anything. He told them, "Is this not why you are mistaken, by not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God?" (Mark 12:24). He held them responsible for what was written.

The people of Berea, who were mentioned in the Preface, applied the same test even to an apostle. They "examined the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were true" (Acts 17:11), and Luke commends them for it. Paul himself reminded Timothy, "From infancy, you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be fully qualified, completely equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:15–17). A rule that is complete for its purpose needs no partner of equal rank.

The Unwritten Customs

What, then, does Trenham offer as examples of unwritten apostolic tradition? He names the sign of the cross, baptism by threefold immersion, and praying toward the east, and he

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[43] *Rock and Sand*, 160–161.

[44] *Rock and Sand*, 162.

refers to a longer list of such customs given by Basil of Caesarea in the fourth century.[45] These are customs of worship, and many Christians have found them helpful. A Baptist need not quarrel with a man for facing east when he prays.

But notice what is missing from the list. None of these customs is a doctrine about how a sinner is saved. None of them teaches that infants should be baptized, that baptism is the new birth, or that a true believer may lose his salvation. Yet these are the very doctrines on which *Rock and Sand* parts company with Baptists. When unwritten tradition is called upon as a witness, it speaks about how Christians pray. It is silent on the questions this review must decide.

The Argument from Disagreement

Trenham returns again and again to one argument above all others. The Reformers all claimed that Scripture was clear, yet they could not agree with one another. Luther and Zwingli divided over the Lord's Supper. Calvinists and Arminians divided over predestination. Surely, Trenham argues, this proves that Scripture alone cannot unite the Church.[46]

The argument has real force, and it deserves a fair answer. Protestants have disagreed, often bitterly, and their divisions are a grief. But consider what the argument would prove if it were sound. When two doctors disagree about a patient, no one concludes that the study of medicine is worthless. Both doctors go back to the patient and look again. Disagreement shows that readers are fallible. It does not show that the thing they are reading is unclear.

Moreover, the argument proves too much, because churches that accept Tradition as their authority have also divided. Rome and Constantinople both appealed to the Tradition of the Church, and they parted in the Great Schism of 1054, an event Trenham himself calls "the most sorrowful event in the history of the undivided Church."[47] The Russian Orthodox Church suffered a lasting division in the seventeenth century over changes to its worship.[48] If disagreement among Protestants shows that Scripture cannot be the rule, then disagreement among those who follow Tradition shows that Tradition cannot be the rule either. An argument that would sink both ships is no help to either.

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[45] *Rock and Sand*, 163–164.
[46] *Rock and Sand*, 16–17, 50, 165.
[47] *Rock and Sand*, xviii.
[48] Appendix A, Ch. 10, Logical Fallacies 6.

Who Gave Us the Bible?

A further objection lies close at hand. If the Church decided which books belong in the Bible, does that not place the Church above the Bible? Trenham presses this point, observing that nothing in Scripture proves that the Church's list of books is infallible.[49]

The answer lies in the difference between making something and recognizing it. A jeweler who knows gold when he sees it does not make the gold. He only recognizes what was gold before he touched it. In the same way, the early churches did not give the books of the New Testament their authority. They recognized an authority the books already had because God had inspired them.

This is not a new or Protestant idea. Israel received the Scriptures of the Old Testament long before there was any Christian council. Paul says that the Jews "were entrusted with the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2). Israel had no infallible council to declare which books were Scripture, yet Jesus held the people of His day accountable to those books, as the passages above have shown. God's word was able to make itself known to His people before any church voted on it.

Trenham also points to Paul's description of the Church as "the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).[50] The image is a good one, and it is worth looking at carefully. A pillar holds something up and lifts it where others can see it. It does not create what it holds, and it does not stand above it. The church's calling is to uphold the truth and display it to the world. A church that does so is a faithful pillar. But a pillar can lean, and the same letter warns that "some will fall away from the faith" (1 Tim. 4:1). To know whether a church is still upholding the truth, one must know what the truth is, and that brings the question back to Scripture.

The Early Witnesses

It would be a mistake to think that this way of reasoning began with the Reformation. Irenaeus of Lyons, writing about A.D. 180 against false teachers who claimed secret traditions of their own, said that the apostles first preached the gospel aloud and then, by the will of God, "handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith."[51] It is striking that he applies to the Scriptures the very words that Paul applied to the Church.

Cyril of Jerusalem, instructing new converts in the fourth century, went further. He told them not to accept even his own teaching on the strength of his word alone: "Even to me, who tell you these things, give not absolute credence," unless they found the proof in the

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[49] *Rock and Sand*, 80.

[50] *Rock and Sand*, 80.

[51] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.1.1, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson.

Scriptures.[52] These men were not Baptists, and they held many views that Baptists do not share. But on this point they stood where Baptists stand: the teacher submits to the written word.

Conclusion

Trenham says that the trouble with Protestants is that, on this point, "they are not biblical enough."[53] It is a fair challenge, and the way to meet it is to accept it. When the question is put to Scripture, Scripture points back to itself. Jesus judged tradition by the written word. The apostles wrote down their spoken teaching. The Bereans checked an apostle against the Scriptures and were praised for it.

This is the measuring tape described in Section 1, the standard that no church made and that every church must answer to. It does not make Christians infallible readers, and it does not end every disagreement. But it gives them a place to stand when they disagree, and a way to be corrected when they are wrong. The next section turns to the question that has been in the background all along: if Scripture is the rule, what does Scripture say the Church is?

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[52] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 4.17, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, vol. 7, trans. Edwin Hamilton Gifford.

[53] *Rock and Sand*, 159.

4. The Church: Is Orthodoxy the Only True Church?

Trenham's chapter on the Church contains the claim on which the whole book rests. The Orthodox Church, he writes, is the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and Protestant bodies are not true churches but religious movements outside it.[54] He takes care to add that he is not calling Protestants unbelievers or saying that they live in total darkness. He is, as he puts it, "simply making an ecclesiological affirmation": a statement about where the Church is.[55]

That is a fair distinction, and it should be received in the spirit in which it is offered. But it does not make the claim smaller. If Trenham is right, every Baptist congregation in the world is something less than a church. Section 3 showed that Scripture is the proper standard for such a claim. This section asks what Scripture says the Church is, who leads it, what it is built on, and where Baptist churches came from.

What the Church Is

The New Testament uses the word "church" in two ways, and both are important. Sometimes it means the whole company of those who belong to Christ. God "granted him to be head over all things for the sake of the Church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:22–23). Sometimes it means a particular congregation in a particular place, as when Paul writes "to the Church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2), or when Jesus sends a separate message to each of seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2–3).

There is nothing puzzling about this. The word "family" works the same way. A man may speak of the human family, meaning everyone who has ever lived, and in the next breath speak of his own family, meaning the people around his table. Both are real families, and the larger is made up of the smaller. No one is confused by the double use, and no one thinks that loving the human family excuses a man from caring for his own household.

Who, then, belongs to the Church in the larger sense? Paul answers: "in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). The Church is made up of those whom the Spirit of God has joined to Christ, from every nation and every age. In the local sense, the Church is made up of believers who have confessed their faith in baptism and who gather together under the word of God. They pray, worship, and care for one another, as the first Christians did when they "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

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54 Josiah Trenham, *Rock and Sand: An Orthodox Appraisal of the Protestant Reformers and Their Teachings*, 3rd ed. (Columbia, MO: Newrome Press, 2018), 181–182.

55 *Rock and Sand*, 182.

The buildings in which a church meets, the order of its worship, and the form of its government are real and important, but they are not the church itself. They are the house, not the family. A family that loses its house is still a family, and Christians who have met in prisons, caves, and fields have been no less a church for the lack of a roof. The church is its people, gathered around Christ and His word.

This answers a charge that Trenham brings against Protestants. He says that many of them believe in an "invisible church" that a person joins simply by praying a prayer, "without any association whatsoever with a concrete church community."[56] Whatever may be true of some Protestants, the description does not fit Baptists. Baptists have always insisted on the local congregation: on baptism as the public confession of faith, on membership in a particular church, and on members who are accountable to one another. A Christian who holds himself apart from any church is not practicing Baptist faith. He is neglecting it.

Who Leads the Church

Trenham faults Baptists for congregational church government, which, he says, rejects the government of diocese and bishop that is "rooted in the New Testament."[57] To test this, it helps to look first at the words the New Testament uses for church leaders.

Two of those words are "elder" (in Greek, *presbyteros*, from which "presbyter" comes) and "overseer" (in Greek, *episkopos*, from which "bishop" comes). In the New Testament, they name the same office. Paul tells Titus to "appoint presbyters in every city," and in the next breath says that "the overseer must be beyond reproach, as God's steward" (Titus 1:5–7). In Acts, Paul calls for the elders of the church at Ephesus and tells those same men that the Holy Spirit has made them "overseers" of the flock (Acts 20:17, 28). Paul greets the church at Philippi "with the overseers and deacons" (Phil. 1:1), two offices, not three.

This is not a Baptist reading forced on the text. The Orthodox translation that this review quotes says the same thing in its own appendix on the subject. There the editors call it "an indisputable fact" that the earliest Christians used "bishop" and "presbyter" interchangeably.[58]

That same appendix goes on to argue that each early church nonetheless had one leading presbyter who presided over the others, as James did in Jerusalem.[59] On this point, too, Baptists can largely agree. Scripture indicates that each church is led by elders, one of whom leads the others and bears final responsibility. Baptists call him the pastor. When Peter was

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[56] *Rock and Sand*, 183. See Appendix A, Ch. 11, Other Misrepresentation 7.

[57] *Rock and Sand*, 63.

[58] *The Eastern / Greek Orthodox Bible: New Testament*, ed. Laurent A. Cleenewerck, Appendix A, "Presbyters and Bishops" (adapted from an article by Mark J. Bonocore).

[59] EOB, Appendix A, "Presbyters and Bishops," citing Acts 12:17; 21:18; Gal. 2:12; 1 Tim. 5:17–22.

freed from prison, he said, “Tell these things to James, and to the brethren” (Acts 12:17). At the council in Jerusalem, after the apostles and elders had spoken, James gave the decision: “Therefore, I judge…” (Acts 15:13, 19). The letter to the Hebrews tells believers to obey their leaders, “as they watch over your souls as people who will give an account” (Heb. 13:17).

The clearest picture of this leading elder may be found in the book of Revelation. Each of the seven letters to the churches is addressed to “the angel of the Church” in that city (Rev. 2:1, 8, and following), and the seven stars in Christ’s hand are “the angels of the seven Churches” (Rev. 1:20). The Greek word for angel also means “messenger,” and there are good reasons to think these messengers were the pastors of the churches. Each is addressed personally. Each is held responsible for the condition of his church. One is rebuked because “you tolerate the woman Jezebel” (Rev. 2:20); another is told to “remember, therefore, what you have received and heard. Keep it and repent!” (Rev. 3:3). Another is warned that unless he repents, Christ will remove his church’s lampstand from its place (Rev. 2:5). A heavenly angel is hardly rebuked for tolerating a false teacher in a congregation. A pastor may well be.

So the difference between Baptists and the Orthodox is not whether one man should lead among the elders. It lies in two other questions. The first is the scope of his charge. In the New Testament, the leading elder serves a single church whose members he can know and whose souls he must answer for. Rule by one bishop over many congregations is not found there. Timothy and Titus are sometimes offered as examples, since Paul gave each of them authority over elders in a wider region. But they served as the apostle’s traveling assistants, sent for a season and then called back. Paul tells Timothy, “Do your best to come before winter” (2 Tim. 4:21), and he asks Titus to join him at Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). Their work was part of the apostles’ own ministry, not a pattern for a settled office. The second is the source of his authority. Scripture gives the qualifications for an elder, and they are matters of character and doctrine: he must be blameless, faithful in his home, hospitable, self-controlled, and able to teach sound doctrine (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). The church recognizes those qualifications in a man and sets him apart. The first deacons were chosen this way. The apostles told the church, “select from among you, brethren, seven men,” and the apostles then laid their hands on the men the church had chosen (Acts 6:3–6). When the Jerusalem council sent its decision to Antioch, it was the apostles and elders “along with the whole Church” who chose the messengers (Acts 15:22).

An early Christian manual of church order, the *Didache*, gives the same instruction: “appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord.”[60] The congregation takes part in choosing its own leaders.

[60] *Didache* 15.1, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, trans. M. B. Riddle. The *Didache* is usually dated to the late first or early second century.

What Makes a Church Apostolic

Trenham says that Protestantism is not apostolic because it has rejected apostolic succession, the teaching that true bishops must stand in an unbroken line of ordination reaching back to the apostles.[61] It is worth asking what that line is supposed to guarantee.

Paul gave his own answer in his farewell to the elders of Ephesus. These were men he had trained and appointed himself, as close to the apostles as any leaders could ever be. Yet he warned them: "From among your own group, men will arise who will speak perverse things in order to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). If ordination by an apostle did not guarantee the faithfulness of the very next generation, no later chain of ordinations can guarantee it either.

What Paul told Timothy to pass on was not chiefly an office but a message: "What you heard from me among many witnesses, entrust likewise to faithful men who will be able to teach others as well" (2 Tim. 2:2).[62] A church is apostolic when it holds and teaches what the apostles taught. Consider a seed found sealed in an ancient jar. If it is planted today and grows, the plant is no less genuine for having no unbroken line of gardeners behind it. The life is in the seed. Peter says that believers have been "born again, not of corruptible but of incorruptible seed, through the word of God which lives and remains forever" (1 Pet. 1:23). Wherever that word is planted and believed, a church grows from it.

The Rock

The title of Trenham's book comes from Jesus' parable of the two builders, and the Foreword identifies the Orthodox Church as the house built on the rock.[63] But Scripture leaves no doubt about what the true foundation is. Paul writes, "no one can lay any other foundation than the one that has [already] been laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). The rock is not an institution but a Person. A church stands on the rock when it rests on Christ Himself and on the truth about Him.

Trenham is right that Christ wills His people to be one. Jesus prayed for all who would believe through the apostles' word, "so that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you" (John 17:21). But notice the kind of unity He describes. It is the unity of the Father and the Son, a unity of life and truth, not of administration. Paul describes it the same way: believers are to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," because "there is one body and one Spirit… one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:3–5). Unity of that kind is real wherever Christians share one Lord and one faith, even when they

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[61] *Rock and Sand*, 183.

[62] Trenham quotes this verse in support of oral tradition (*Rock and Sand*, 163).

[63] *Rock and Sand*, xv.

meet in different buildings under different pastors. Unity of administration, on the other hand, has not kept those who share it from dividing, as Section 3 showed.

Where Baptists Come From

Trenham places Baptists in his chapter on the Anabaptists, the radical reformers of the sixteenth century, and describes American evangelicals as sharing "many fundamental Anabaptist tenets."[64] The connection is not entirely wrong, but it is incomplete. The Anabaptists and the Baptists share the conviction that baptism belongs to believers. Their histories, however, are largely separate.

Most historians trace modern Baptists to English Separatists of the early seventeenth century. In 1608 a congregation led by John Smyth left England for Amsterdam to escape persecution. There Smyth became convinced that baptism belongs only to believers, and he baptized himself and then the rest of the group, beginning with Thomas Helwys. Trenham gives the year as 1609.[65] Soon afterward Smyth and some of his followers sought to join the Dutch Mennonites, descendants of the Anabaptists. Helwys and about a dozen others refused and separated from him. In late 1612 they returned to England and settled at Spitalfields, near London, forming what is often called the first General Baptist church. A second stream, the Particular Baptists, grew out of a London congregation founded in 1616. By 1640 both had concluded that immersion was the only scriptural form of baptism, and in 1644 seven London Particular Baptist churches published a confession of faith.[66]

Some Baptists have tried to go further and trace an unbroken chain of Baptist churches all the way back to the apostles. This review makes no such claim. It cannot be proved from history, and holding Trenham to a standard of evidence means keeping that standard here as well. More importantly, the claim is not needed. Baptists do not believe that a church is made true by its pedigree. They believe it is made true by the word of God. The seed was preserved in the Scriptures, and it has never lost its life.

Conclusion

Trenham asks his readers to believe that the true Church can be found only in one historical body. Scripture describes the Church differently. It is the whole company of those whom the Spirit has joined to Christ, and it takes visible form in congregations of baptized believers who gather under the word of God. Those congregations are led by qualified elders, one of whom leads the rest, and they are apostolic when they hold what the apostles taught. They are built on the one foundation that no one can replace, Jesus Christ Himself.

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[64] *Rock and Sand*, 53, 63.
[65] *Rock and Sand*, 59.
[66] "To Walk in All His Ways," *Christian History* 6 (Christian History Institute), christianhistoryinstitute.org.

That foundation raises the most important question of all. If the Church is made up of those who are joined to Christ, how does a sinner come to be joined to Him? That is the question of salvation, and it is the subject of the next section.

5. Salvation: By Grace Through Faith

The Preface stated that this review regards the official Orthodox teaching on how a sinner is made right with God as a departure from the gospel. That is a serious thing to say, and it ought not to be said lightly. This section gives the reasons. It begins, as fairness requires, with the places where Trenham is right.

Where Trenham Is Right

Trenham complains that Protestants have shrunk salvation down to a single idea. In Scripture, he says, salvation is a great deliverance from all of humanity's enemies: sin, condemnation, the wrath of God, the devil, the world, and finally death itself.[67] He is right about Scripture, though he is wrong about Protestants, whose own teaching names every one of those enemies.[68] Baptists believe that Christ saves His people from the penalty of sin, from its power, and at last from its very presence. Forgiveness is the door of salvation, not the whole house.

Trenham is also right that the New Testament speaks of salvation in the past, present, and future.[69] Believers have been saved, are being saved, and will be saved. Baptists teach the same thing, usually in other words: a believer has been justified, is being made holy, and will one day be glorified.

But notice how Paul connects the three. Trenham quotes him: since we are now justified by Christ's blood, "much more" shall we be saved from wrath through Him (Rom. 5:9–10).[70] The apostle reasons from the past to the future. Because God has already done the harder thing, reconciling His enemies, He will certainly do the easier thing, saving His friends. Paul does not make the past uncertain by pointing to the future. He makes the future certain by pointing to the past.

A man pulled from a stormy sea into a lifeboat can say three true things. He has been saved, for he is out of the water. He is being saved, for the boat is carrying him toward shore. And he will be saved, when at last he steps onto dry land. All three are true. But the second and third depend entirely on the first. He is being carried home only because he is already in the boat.

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[67] Josiah Trenham, *Rock and Sand: An Orthodox Appraisal of the Protestant Reformers and Their Teachings*, 3rd ed. (Columbia, MO: Newrome Press, 2018), 174.

[68] Appendix A, Ch. 11, Other Misrepresentation 1 and 3.

[69] *Rock and Sand*, 175.

[70] *Rock and Sand*, 177. The passage reads in the EOB: "Even more so then, since we are now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him! For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more shall we be saved by his life!"

Where the Disagreement Lies

So the two sides do not disagree about whether salvation is large or whether it has a future. They disagree about something more basic. How does a sinner first come to stand right with God? And what part do his own works play in it?

Trenham answers plainly. The Orthodox, he writes, "categorically deny" that a person is saved by faith alone.[71] Salvation is "a dynamic and synergistic work," that is, a work in which God and man cooperate.[72] The Confession of Dositheos, which Trenham reprints as an appendix to his book, is more precise still. It teaches that a man is justified "through faith and works." It rejects as "far from all Orthodoxy" the idea that faith is like a hand that takes hold of Christ's righteousness. And it describes good works as "in themselves meriting" a reward, through God's promises.[73]

It is only fair to add what the Orthodox do not mean. They do not teach that a man can earn heaven by his own unaided effort. They insist that grace comes first and that every good work is done with God's help. The disagreement is not between grace and no grace. It is between two answers to a single question: is a sinner accepted by God because of what Christ has done, received by faith, or because of what Christ has done together with what grace enables the sinner to do?

What Paul Says

Paul answers that question more than once, and his answer is the same each time. His clearest statement uses a picture from ordinary working life: "Now, to the one who works, the reward is not considered as a grace but as something owed. But to one who does not work but believes in the one who justifies the ungodly, it is faith that is accounted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:4–5).

Everyone understands the difference. A man who works all week expects his pay on Friday, and he does not thank his employer for it as though it were a present. He earned it. A gift is something else altogether. The moment a man has to work for it, it stops being a gift and becomes a wage. Paul says the same thing in another place: "if [it is] by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace" (Rom. 11:6). The two cannot be mixed. A gift with a price attached is not a gift with a discount. It is simply a sale.

Notice, too, whom God justifies in Romans 4:5. It is not the godly, the man who has cooperated well. It is "the ungodly," the man who has nothing to offer. That is why Paul can say that sinners are "justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (Rom. 3:28) and that

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[71] *Rock and Sand*, 175.

[72] *Rock and Sand*, 176.

[73] *Rock and Sand*, 202 (Appendix II, Decree XIII).

"all are being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

The same teaching runs through his other letters. "By grace you have been saved through faith, not by yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one would boast" (Eph. 2:8–9). God saved us "not by works of righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy" (Titus 3:5). Paul's own hope was to "be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own (from the law), but through faith in Christ (the righteousness which is from God by faith)" (Phil. 3:9).

The Confession of Dositheos objects to the picture of faith as a hand. But the picture is exactly right, and that is why it matters. A hand that receives a gift adds nothing to the gift. A beggar who holds out his hand for bread does not share the credit with the baker. Faith is not a work that earns salvation. It is the empty hand that receives it, and that is why Paul sets faith and works on opposite sides.

The Word "Alone"

Trenham points out that the word "alone" does not appear in the Greek text of Romans 3:28, and that Luther added it in his German translation.[74] That is true, and it should be granted at once. But it proves less than it seems to. Paul says that a person is justified by faith "apart from the works of the law." If a thing is received apart from works, then it is received by faith alone. The word "alone" adds nothing that the sentence does not already say. Luther was not changing Paul's meaning. He was underlining it.

What James Says

The strongest text on the other side is in the letter of James, and it must be faced directly. "You see, then, that one is justified by works, and not only by faith" (James 2:24). Trenham cites this chapter as plain proof that salvation is not by faith alone.[75] On the surface, James seems to say exactly the opposite of Paul.

But look at the question James is answering. "What good is it, my brethren, if someone claims to have faith but has no works? Can faith save such a person?" (James 2:14). The man in view only *claims* to have faith. James is not asking whether true faith needs works added to it. He is asking whether a faith that produces nothing is real at all, and he answers that it is "dead in itself" (2:17). Then comes the challenge: "Show me your faith without works, and by my works, I will show you my faith" (2:18). Works do not create faith. They show it.

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[74] *Rock and Sand*, 175, n. 354.

[75] *Rock and Sand*, 175, n. 354.

James's own example makes this clear. Abraham, he says, was "justified by works, by offering up his son Isaac on the altar" (2:21). Yet in the same breath he adds that this fulfilled the Scripture that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness" (2:23). That Scripture comes from Genesis 15. The offering of Isaac comes in Genesis 22, many years later. Abraham was counted righteous by faith long before he ever climbed the mountain with his son. When he did climb it, his obedience did not make him righteous. It proved that his faith had been real all along.

An apple tree is not made an apple tree by its apples. It is an apple tree first, and the apples show what it is. But a tree that bears no fruit, year after year, may fairly be suspected of being dead. Paul tells how a sinner is made right with God: by faith, apart from works. James tells how a sinner's faith is shown to be genuine: by the works it produces. The two apostles are not contradicting each other. They are answering different questions. Paul himself puts the two together in a single sentence: we are saved by grace through faith, "not of works," and we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Eph. 2:8–10).

Faith and Baptism

Trenham ties the moment of salvation to baptism. "We associate the definitive moment of salvation with holy Baptism," he writes; it is there that a person is forgiven, united to Christ, and indwelt by the Spirit.[76] This claim is important enough to deserve its own section, and Section 7 will examine it. Here it is enough to notice that every passage quoted above names faith, not baptism, as the means by which a sinner is justified. Baptism has its proper place, as the following sections will show. But it is not set beside faith as a second condition of acceptance with God.

Union with Christ

Trenham's deepest complaint is that Protestants neglect salvation as union with Christ, which Orthodox theology calls *theosis*, or deification.[77] He is right that union with Christ lies at the heart of the New Testament, and Protestant teachers have said so for centuries.[78] Baptists affirm it gladly. Paul could say, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Peter speaks of believers becoming "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). And John, in a verse Trenham himself quotes, says that when Christ appears, "we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).[79]

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[76] *Rock and Sand*, 175.

[77] *Rock and Sand*, 178–180.

[78] Appendix A, Ch. 11, Other Misrepresentation 4.

[79] As quoted in *Rock and Sand*, 180.

The difference, once again, is not in the destination but in the way. Union with Christ is not a summit that the believer slowly climbs toward, hoping at last to reach it. It is a gift given at the start. Paul prays that "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph. 3:17). The believer is joined to Christ when he believes, and the whole of his Christian life is the working out of a union that is already his. Baptists do not deny that a Christian grows. They deny that his growth is the ground of his acceptance.

The Early Witnesses

This understanding of grace is not a Protestant invention. Clement of Rome, writing to the church at Corinth near the end of the first century, said that Christians "are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all men."[80] An unknown Christian writer of the second century, in the work known as the *Epistle to Diognetus*, marveled at what God had done in Christ: "O sweet exchange!… That the wickedness of many should be hid in a single righteous One, and that the righteousness of One should justify many transgressors!"[81] These writers did not hold every Baptist conviction. But on this point their words could stand in any Baptist pulpit.

Why This Matters

It might seem that all this is a quarrel over words. It is not. If a sinner is accepted by God partly because of what grace enables him to do, then his acceptance depends in part on how well he has done it. And no honest man can be sure that he has done it well enough. He may hope, but he cannot know.

The gospel is good news precisely because it does not rest on the sinner. It rests on Christ, who has done everything required. "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). Peace is not the condition of a man who is still waiting to learn whether he has done enough. It is the condition of a man who has been told, on the word of God, that the matter is settled.

That brings the argument to its next question. Can a believer truly know that he is saved? And having been saved, can he ever be lost? Trenham's answers to both questions differ sharply from the Baptist answers. The next section examines them.

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[80] *1 Clement* 32.4, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 9, trans. John Keith.

[81] *Epistle to Diognetus* 9, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson.

6. Assurance and the Security of the Believer

Two questions are often run together, and it helps to separate them. The first is the question of assurance: can a believer know that he is saved? The second is the question of security: once a person is truly saved, can he ever be lost? A man might answer yes to the first and no to the second, or the other way around. *Rock and Sand* addresses both, and this section takes them in turn.

What Trenham Teaches

Trenham does not deny all confidence. An Orthodox Christian, he writes, may "confidently affirm that he has been saved, and at the same time labors to be saved."[82] But the confidence he allows is a confidence about the past. About the future he urges fear. Paul told the Philippians to work out their salvation "with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12), and Trenham takes this to mean that trembling over one's salvation is a mark of great faith. Salvation is a work in which our own wills must hold fast to the truth, "so that we do not become Judases." Christ has saved us, is saving us, and will save us, he writes, "unless we ruin ourselves."[83]

He believes that the Protestant view leads to "great overconfidence, a lack of ascetic discipline, and sinful presumption."[84] As evidence that even an apostle did not presume, he points to Paul's words about disciplining his body, "lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:27).[85]

There is something here that deserves respect. Trenham is right that presumption is a real danger. A man who says he is saved and lives as though it made no difference has reason to be afraid, and Scripture never flatters him. The question is not whether false confidence exists. It plainly does. The question is whether true confidence is possible.

Can a Believer Know?

The apostle John answers that question directly. Near the end of his first letter he explains why he wrote it: "I have written these things to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). He does not say "so that you may hope," or "so that you may wonder." He says "so that you may know."

Jesus spoke the same way. "Amen, amen, I tell you; the one who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of

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[82] Josiah Trenham, *Rock and Sand: An Orthodox Appraisal of the Protestant Reformers and Their Teachings*, 3rd ed. (Columbia, MO: Newrome Press, 2018), 175–176.
[83] *Rock and Sand*, 176.
[84] *Rock and Sand*, 176–177.
[85] *Rock and Sand*, 177.

death into life" (John 5:24). Every verb is in the present or the past. The believer *has* eternal life. He *has passed* from death to life. Paul writes that "the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16), and near the end of his life he could say, "I know him in whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to protect what I have committed to him until that Day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

It is important to see where this confidence rests. It does not rest on the believer's feelings, which rise and fall with his health and his circumstances. Nor does it rest on his performance, which is never as good as it ought to be. It rests on the promise of God and on the finished work of Christ. That is why the argument of Section 5 matters so much here. If a sinner's acceptance depended partly on his own works, assurance would be impossible, because he could never be sure that he had done enough. But if his acceptance rests entirely on Christ, then to doubt it is not humility. It is doubting Christ.

A small child who is sure of his father's love is not being proud. He is simply believing what his father has told him. If he were to say, "I hope my father will still love me tomorrow, but I dare not be sure," no one would praise him for his modesty. They would wonder what kind of father he had. Assurance of salvation is not a boast about the believer. It is trust in the character of God.

Can a Believer Be Lost?

The life that Christ gives is called eternal life. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This is worth thinking about slowly. A life that might end next year, or at the end of a long struggle, would not be eternal life. It would only be long life. The word itself describes a gift that does not run out.

Jesus also described salvation as a new birth (John 3:3–8), and Peter adds that believers have been "born again, not of corruptible but of incorruptible seed, through the word of God which lives and remains forever" (1 Pet. 1:23). Birth is an event that happens once, at a particular moment. A child may later wander far from home, disgrace his family, or refuse to speak to his father. But nothing he does can make him unborn. He remains his father's son. This is only an illustration, and illustrations can be pressed too far. But it is an illustration that Scripture itself supplies, and the seed from which the believer is born is said to be incorruptible.

The clearest statements, however, come from Jesus Himself. "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give eternal life to them; they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:27–29). It is sometimes

said that while no one else can snatch a believer from Christ's hand, the believer may still remove himself. But the believer is someone. "No one" includes him.

Elsewhere Jesus describes His Father's will: "that of all he has given me, I should lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day" (John 6:39). If even one true believer were finally lost, the Father's will would have failed. Paul writes that believers were "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," who is "a pledge of our inheritance, until the redemption" (Eph. 1:13–14), and that they were "sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). A pledge is a down payment that guarantees the rest will follow. God does not make down payments on purchases He does not intend to complete.

The same confidence runs through the New Testament. "God who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). Believers "by the power of God are protected through faith for a salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5). Christ "is also able to save to the very end those who draw near to God through him, because he lives forever to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). And Jude closes his letter with praise "to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory in great joy" (Jude 24).

Paul's great conclusion in Romans 8 should be heard in full: "I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38–39). Trenham warns that we may "ruin ourselves." But each believer is a created thing, and Paul has just said that no created thing can separate him from the love of God.

Those Who Fall Away

If true believers cannot be lost, what of those who once professed faith and later abandoned it? Every pastor has known such people, and Trenham is right to take them seriously. Scripture explains them. "They went out from us, but they did not belong to us! If they had belonged to us, they would have continued with us. But [in fact] they left, so that it might be revealed that none of them belonged to us!" (1 John 2:19). Their leaving did not undo a salvation they once had. It showed that they never had it.

Jesus describes such people in the Sermon on the Mount. They will say on that day, "Lord, Lord, did not we prophesy in your Name, cast out demons in your Name and do many deeds of power in your Name?" And He will answer, "I never knew you! Depart from me, you who do what is wicked" (Matt. 7:22–23). He does not say, "I once knew you, but you fell away." He says that He never knew them at all.

This also answers Trenham's warning about becoming a Judas. Judas was not a true believer who later lost his faith. Long before the betrayal, Jesus said, "there are some of you

who do not believe," and John adds that Jesus "knew from the beginning who were those who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him" (John 6:64). Jesus also said, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And [yet] one of you is a devil!" (John 6:70). Judas walked with the apostles, but he was never one of Christ's sheep. His fall is a warning against false profession, not evidence that true salvation can be lost.

Baptists do not believe that every person who has prayed a prayer or been baptized is therefore saved. A profession of faith that never changes the life is no evidence of salvation at all, as James warns (James 2:17). The doctrine of the believer's security is not a promise to everyone who once made a decision. It is a promise to those whom Christ has truly made His own, and their lives will, in time, show whose they are.

The Hard Passages

Several passages are often offered as proof that a believer can be lost. Each deserves a fair reading.

Philippians 2:12–13. Paul tells the Philippians to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," and then gives the reason: "for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work, according to his good purpose." They are to work *out* what God is already working *in*. They are not working *for* a salvation they do not yet have. The fear Paul commends is the reverent seriousness of those who know that God is at work in them, not the anxiety of those who fear He may abandon them. Paul says elsewhere that believers did not receive a spirit that leads back into fear, but the Spirit of adoption, by whom they cry, "Abba! Father!" (Rom. 8:15).

1 Corinthians 9:24–27. Paul compares the Christian life to a race, in which runners compete "in order to receive a corruptible crown, but we [seek] an incorruptible crown" (9:25). His fear is that he might be "disqualified" (9:27), that is, lose the prize. The same letter explains what that loss means. A believer's work will be tested by fire on the last day. If it stands, "a reward shall be received" (3:14). But if it is burned, "it will be lost, but that person shall be saved, as through fire" (3:15). Paul feared losing his reward and the usefulness of his ministry. He did not fear losing his Savior.

Hebrews 6:4–6. This is the most difficult passage, and it should be read carefully. It speaks of those who "were once enlightened, who tasted of the heavenly gift, became partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, but then fell away," and it says that "it is impossible to renew them again to repentance!" Notice first that if this passage teaches that a true believer can lose his salvation, it also teaches that he can never regain it. Yet the Orthodox Church, like most churches, receives back those who have lapsed and repent. Notice too that the writer goes on to compare such people to ground that drinks in the rain but produces only thorns (6:7–8), and then tells his

readers, “we are persuaded of better things for you, of things that accompany salvation” (6:9). The people described had tasted the gospel, seen its power, and shared in the life of the church. Like Judas, they had come very near. But they bore no fruit, and the writer clearly distinguishes them from those who are truly saved.

Hebrews 10:26–27. The same letter warns that “if we sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there is no more sacrifice for sins.” But it ends the warning with the same distinction: “we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who believe and so are saved” (10:39). The warning is real, and it is meant to be heeded. It separates those who merely know the truth from those who believe it.

2 Peter 2:20–22. Peter describes false teachers who had escaped the world’s corruption through knowing about Christ and then returned to it. He sums them up with a proverb: “The dog returns to his own vomit” and “the swine that had been washed [has returned] to wallowing in the mire.” The pig was washed on the outside, but it was still a pig. Its nature had never changed. These men had been cleaned up, but they had never been born again.

Other warnings, such as Galatians 5:4 and John 15:6, are best read the same way. They are not threats aimed at those whom Christ holds in His hand. They are the means by which God tests whether a profession of faith is real, and by which He keeps true believers walking with Him.

Does Security Lead to Carelessness?

Trenham’s deepest worry is practical. If a believer knows he cannot be lost, will he not grow careless? Paul heard the same objection in his own day. “Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? May it never be! We who died to sin, how could we live in it any longer?” (Rom. 6:1–2). The grace that saves is the same grace that changes. “The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. It has taught us that we should deny what is ungodly and worldly lusts” (Titus 2:11–12). Christ gave Himself “to purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good works” (Titus 2:14).

And a believer who strays does not escape his Father’s hand. He meets it. “For whom the Lord loves, he also chastens, and he disciplines every son whom he receives” (Heb. 12:6). Discipline is not the sign of a child about to be disowned. It is the sign of a child who belongs.

Consider a man who knows that his marriage is secure. His wife has promised to love him for life, and he knows she means it. Does that knowledge make him careless of her? It ought to do the opposite. The security of the bond does not release him from faithfulness. It makes faithfulness a joy rather than a fear. The man who serves his wife only because he is afraid she may leave him has not yet understood her love. The same is true of the believer and his God.

Conclusion

Trenham asks his readers to fear and tremble over their salvation, never quite sure that they will not ruin it. Scripture offers something better. It invites believers to know that they have eternal life, and to rest in the promise that no one, not even themselves, can snatch them from the Father's hand. "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). That is not presumption. It is faith in what God has said.

If salvation is received by faith and kept by the power of God, then a further question follows. What, then, is baptism? Trenham teaches that it is the moment of salvation itself, and that it should be given to infants. The next section examines that teaching.

7. Baptism: Its Meaning and Its Subjects

Baptists take their very name from their practice of baptism, so it is no surprise that *Rock and Sand* gives the subject special attention. Trenham calls the rejection of infant baptism "the central tenet of Anabaptism," and he believes that Baptist teaching on this point has shaped American individualism more than most people realize.[86] His case rests on four claims. Being "born again" means being baptized. Baptism is the moment of salvation. Infants should be baptized because infants were circumcised. And the New Testament shows whole households, infants included, being baptized together. This section examines each claim, but it begins with the ground the two sides share.

Common Ground

Baptists and Orthodox Christians agree on more about baptism than either sometimes remembers. Both believe that baptism was commanded by Christ Himself, who sent His disciples to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). Both take it seriously and refuse to treat it as a mere formality. And both baptize by immersion. Trenham names baptism by threefold immersion as an apostolic practice, and Orthodox churches still immerse, even infants.[87] On this point the Orthodox stand much closer to Baptists than do most Protestant churches.

Baptists also agree that baptism is the sign of the new covenant, as circumcision was the sign of the old. The disagreement is not over whether there is a covenant sign, but over what that sign marks and who should receive it.

What Baptism Follows

The simplest way to learn what baptism means is to watch it happen in the New Testament. The book of Acts records many baptisms, and the order of events is always the same.

On the day of Pentecost, the crowd heard Peter preach and were "cut to the heart." Peter told them to repent and be baptized, and "those who gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:37–41). In Samaria, "when they believed Philip [who was] preaching the Good News… they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). The Ethiopian official heard the gospel from Philip and asked, "What is keeping me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36).[88] In Philippi, Lydia heard Paul preach, and "the Lord opened her heart to listen to what Paul

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[86] Josiah Trenham, *Rock and Sand: An Orthodox Appraisal of the Protestant Reformers and Their Teachings*, 3rd ed. (Columbia, MO: Newrome Press, 2018), 64.

[87] *Rock and Sand*, 164; see also 35.

[88] The EOB, following the Byzantine text, includes Acts 8:37, in which Philip answers, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." Many ancient manuscripts omit the verse, and the argument here does not depend on it.

was saying." Then she and her household were baptized (Acts 16:14–15). In Corinth, "many Corinthians, when they heard, believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

The most striking case is the household of Cornelius. While Peter was still preaching, "the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the word," and they began speaking in other languages and praising God. Peter then asked, "Can anyone refuse the water to these people, seeing that they have received the Holy Spirit as well as we had…?" (Acts 10:44–47). Notice the reason Peter gives for baptizing them. It is not that baptism would give them the Spirit. It is that they had already received the Spirit. Baptism followed the reality. It did not create it.

Hearing, believing, then baptism: that is the order in every account. It is never reversed. Baptism is the public answer of a person who has already heard and believed the gospel.

Born of Water and Spirit

Trenham's strongest claim about baptism concerns the words of Jesus to Nicodemus. "Amen, amen, I tell you; unless one is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God!" (John 3:5). Trenham writes that "to be born again is to be born of water and the Spirit in Holy Baptism," and he calls the evangelical use of the phrase "born again" a misuse of Scripture.[89] Since the whole Baptist understanding of salvation is built on the new birth, this claim must be weighed carefully.

Begin with the conversation itself. Jesus tells Nicodemus that what is born of the Spirit is spirit, and that the Spirit is like the wind, which "blows where it wants to, and you hear its sound, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:6–8). That is a strange description of a rite performed by a priest at an appointed hour. It describes the free and unseen work of God.

Then Jesus asks Nicodemus a pointed question: "You are the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?" (John 3:10). He expected Nicodemus to understand already, which means the answer lay in the Scriptures Nicodemus knew. Christian baptism, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, had not yet been commanded. But the prophet Ezekiel had long ago spoken of a day when God would sprinkle clean water on His people to cleanse them, give them a new heart, and put His own Spirit within them (Ezek. 36:25–27).[90] Water and Spirit together: cleansing from sin and the gift of new life. That is the new birth Jesus was describing, and a teacher of Israel should have recognized it.

The rest of the New Testament points the same way. It says that believers are born again through the word of God. Peter writes that they have been "born again, not of corruptible

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[89] *Rock and Sand*, 137–138.

[90] Ezekiel 36 has the same chapter and verse numbers in the Septuagint and in most English Bibles.

but of incorruptible seed, through the word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23). James writes, "He brought us forth of his own will by the word of truth" (James 1:18). John says that to those who received Christ, "to those who believe in his Name," God gave the right to become His children, who were "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12–13).

Paul provides what may be the clearest test. He reminded the Corinthians that he had become their spiritual father: "in Christ Jesus, I became your father through the Good News" (1 Cor. 4:15). Yet in the same letter he says, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius," and adds, "Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the Good News" (1 Cor. 1:14, 17). If baptism were the new birth, these two statements could not stand together. Paul could not thank God that he had given new birth to so few of his own spiritual children. But if the new birth comes through the gospel, and baptism follows as its sign, then Paul's words make perfect sense. He begot them through preaching. Others could baptize them.

The Passages on Baptism and Forgiveness

Several verses seem to tie forgiveness directly to baptism, and they should be read fairly.

Acts 2:38. Peter told the crowd, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sins." Repentance and baptism belong together here, as they do throughout Acts. But Peter does not always mention both. Later he preached, "Repent therefore, and turn back [to God], so that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19), with no mention of baptism at all. And to Cornelius he said that "everyone who believes in him will receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43), and that household received the Spirit before any of them touched the water. Forgiveness is promised to faith and repentance. Baptism is the outward confession that goes with them.

Acts 22:16. Ananias told Paul, "Arise, be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the Name of the Lord." The washing is joined to calling on the Lord's name, and Paul himself later wrote, "Whoever will call on the Name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13). Baptism is the outward picture. Calling on Christ in faith is what saves.

1 Peter 3:21. Peter writes that Noah's family was saved through water, and that "this is an antitype of baptism, which now saves you." But he immediately explains what he means: "Baptism is not the putting away of the impurity of the flesh but the appeal of a good conscience… toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."[91] Peter himself says it is

[91] The EOB adds the words "in your relationship" in braces, which it uses for words supplied for theological clarity that should be skipped in public reading. They are omitted here.

not the water that saves. It is the appeal of the heart to God, made through the risen Christ. The ark was a picture of salvation, and so is baptism.

Titus 3:5. Paul writes that God saved us "through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." The washing here is regeneration itself, the cleansing that the Spirit performs. And the same verse says that God saved us "not by works of righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy." It is hard to read this as a description of a ceremony performed by men.

The Covenant Sign

Trenham's main argument for infant baptism is drawn from the covenant with Abraham. God commanded that every male child be circumcised on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12). Baptism has replaced circumcision as the sign of God's covenant, Trenham argues, so the children of believers should receive it as infants. He adds that any criticism of infant baptism could just as well be made against infant circumcision, and so against God's own command.[92]

Baptists agree with the first half of this argument. Baptism is indeed the sign of the new covenant, as circumcision was the sign of the old. But the two covenants are entered in different ways. A child born into Israel became a member of the old covenant by his physical birth, and the sign was given to mark what his birth had already made him. The new covenant is entered by a different birth. Its members are those born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). The sign marks what that birth has made them. So the principle is the same in both covenants: the sign follows the birth. Baptists do baptize infants. They baptize those who have just been born of the Spirit.

This is why the new covenant is described as it is. The prophet Jeremiah foretold, and the letter to the Hebrews repeats, that in the new covenant "all will know me, from their least to their greatest" (Heb. 8:11).[93] Israel had always included many who did not know the Lord. The new covenant, by its very definition, does not.

Abraham himself shows the order. Paul asks whether Abraham was counted righteous before or after he was circumcised, and he answers: "It was not after, but before he was circumcised!" Abraham "received the sign of circumcision, (a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was still uncircumcised), so that he might be the father of all those who believe" (Rom. 4:10–11). For Abraham, faith came first and the sign followed. And Paul adds that the true children of Abraham are those who share his faith: "those who are of faith are likewise Abraham's children" (Gal. 3:7).

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[92] *Rock and Sand*, 65–66.

[93] Quoting Jer. 31:34, which is numbered Jer. 38:34 in the Septuagint and in Orthodox Bibles.

Trenham points to Colossians 2:11–12, where Paul links circumcision and baptism.[94] But look at what the passage says. The circumcision Paul describes is "a circumcision not made with hands", a spiritual circumcision of the heart. And believers were buried with Christ in baptism and "raised with him through faith in the working of God" (Col. 2:11–12). The passage ties baptism to faith, not to infancy.

Trenham also quotes Peter's words at Pentecost, "the promise is to you, and to your children."[95] But the sentence does not end there. It continues, "and to all who are far away, even as many as the Lord our God will call to himself" (Acts 2:39). The promise is for every generation, but in every generation it reaches those whom God calls. Two verses later Luke tells us who was baptized that day: "those who gladly received his word" (Acts 2:41).

Finally, Trenham's warning that criticism of infant baptism is criticism of God's command misses the point. Baptists do not question God's right to give a sign to infants. He did so under the old covenant, and He was right to do it. The question is only whether He has commanded that the sign of the new covenant be given to infants. The New Testament contains no such command.

The Households

Trenham's second argument rests on what he calls the "*oikos* formula," from the Greek word for household. The New Testament, he observes, speaks repeatedly of whole households being saved and baptized, and he says this leads to the "undeniable conclusion" that entire households, including infants, were baptized together.[96]

It is true that the New Testament records the baptism of whole households. But not one of these passages mentions an infant. And several of them say plainly that the members of the household heard and believed. When the royal official's son was healed, "he believed, along with his whole household" (John 4:53). At Cornelius's house, the Spirit fell on "all those who heard the word" (Acts 10:44). The Philippian jailer's family heard the word spoken "to all those who were in his household," and afterward he "was filled with joy for believing in God, along with his entire household" (Acts 16:32, 34). "Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with his entire household" (Acts 18:8). The household of Stephanas, which Paul baptized, later "devoted themselves to serve the saints" (1 Cor. 16:15). Two of Trenham's own examples, the household of Zacchaeus and the household of Onesiphorus, do not mention baptism at all.[97]

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[94] *Rock and Sand*, 65–66.
[95] *Rock and Sand*, 66.
[96] *Rock and Sand*, 66–67.
[97] Appendix A, Ch. 4, Misuse of Scripture 1.

Trenham also argues that the New Testament never shows a child raised in a Christian home being baptized after he grew up, and he concludes, "It simply did not happen."[98] But this is an argument from silence, and silence proves very little. The New Testament covers only the first generation of the church, when nearly every believer was a convert. It also never records the baptism of an infant. A man's diary that never mentions breakfast does not prove that he went hungry every morning. It proves only that breakfast was not what he was writing about.

The Confession of Dositheos, which Trenham reprints, states the household argument in a single line: "in the Acts it is said that the whole houses were baptised, and consequently the infants."[99] Everything depends on the word "consequently." The text says that households were baptized. It does not say that the households contained infants, and in case after case it says that the households believed.

Children and the Kingdom

Trenham closes his chapter on the Anabaptists by quoting Jesus: unless a person changes and becomes like a little child, he will not enter the kingdom. He then says that Baptists believe children must become like adults in order to be baptized and saved.[100] As Section 1 noted, Baptists teach nothing of the kind.

The Gospels show what Jesus did with little children, and it is worth noticing. When people brought children to Him, He said, "Let the little children come to me! Do not forbid them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Then "he took the children in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them" (Mark 10:14–16). He blessed them, and He held them up as an example of humble trust. He did not baptize them. Baptist churches follow the same pattern. They bring their children to Christ in prayer, ask His blessing on them, and teach them the gospel from their earliest years, praying for the day when they will believe it for themselves.

Trenham objects that Baptists have no fixed age for baptism.[101] That is true, because the New Testament sets none. The question is never how old a person is. The question is whether he has heard the gospel and believed it. That was the only question asked in the book of Acts, and it is the only question Baptists ask today.

Baptizing Again?

Trenham observes that Baptists baptize people who were baptized as infants. Since Baptists do not accept infant baptism as true baptism, he suggests, they should understand why the

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98 *Rock and Sand*, 67.

99 *Rock and Sand*, 206 (Appendix II, Decree XVI).

100 *Rock and Sand*, 68. See Appendix A, Ch. 4, Misuse of Scripture 2.

101 *Rock and Sand*, 64, n. 171.

Orthodox do not accept Baptist baptism.[102] The point is fair, and it should be granted. Each side is acting consistently with its own convictions. The real question is which conviction agrees with Scripture.

From a Baptist point of view, a believer who was sprinkled or immersed as an infant and is later baptized as a believer is not being baptized twice. He is being baptized for the first time. Something similar happened at Ephesus, where Paul met disciples who had received only John's baptism. When they heard the full message about Jesus, "they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). Their earlier washing was sincere, but it was not Christian baptism, and Paul did not treat it as such.

This is quite different from the practice, mentioned in Section 2, of baptizing the same believer again and again because he is never sure that the first time counted. There is "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5), just as there is one new birth. A believer who has been baptized once as a believer does not need to be baptized again. What he needs is the assurance described in Section 6.

The Early Witnesses

Trenham says that infant baptism has "a great measure of unanimity in church history and tradition."[103] It is true that infant baptism later became the common practice of most churches. But the earliest evidence is not unanimous, and some of it points the other way.

The *Didache*, an early manual of church life, gives the oldest description of baptism outside the New Testament. It tells the church to baptize "having first said all these things," that is, after teaching the way of life set out in its first six chapters. It adds that "before the baptism let the baptizer fast, and the baptized," and that the one to be baptized should fast "one or two days before."[104] Instruction and fasting are hard to require of an infant.

Around A.D. 200, Tertullian of Carthage urged that baptism be delayed, "principally, however, in the case of little children." His counsel was simple: "let them become Christians when they have become able to know Christ."[105] Tertullian did not hold every Baptist conviction. But his words show that two centuries after the apostles, the baptism of infants was still a matter of debate, and that a respected Christian teacher believed baptism belonged to those who could know Christ.

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[102] *Rock and Sand*, 58, n. 160.

[103] *Rock and Sand*, 65.

[104] *Didache* 7, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, trans. M. B. Riddle.

[105] Tertullian, *On Baptism* 18, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, trans. S. Thelwall.

Conclusion

Baptism is not a small matter, and Baptists have never treated it as one. It is the public confession of a believer who has been born again. It pictures his death, burial, and resurrection with Christ: “we were buried with him through baptism to death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead… we might also walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). It is his first act of obedience to his Lord and his entrance into the fellowship of a local church. And because it is the sign of the new birth, it follows the new birth, just as the sign of the old covenant followed the birth it marked.

One subject in Trenham’s critique remains: the doctrine of God, and in particular the dispute over the Holy Spirit known as the *filioque*. It is not a dispute Baptists began, and it can be treated briefly.

8. A Brief Note on the *Filioque*

Trenham places one more charge at the head of his list of Protestant errors about God. It concerns a single Latin word, *filioque*, meaning "and the Son." In the original form of the Nicene Creed, the Holy Spirit is said to proceed "from the Father." Over several centuries, churches in the West added the words "and the Son," and the Eastern churches objected strongly, both to the doctrine and to the change in the Creed. The dispute was one of the causes of the separation between East and West.

Trenham regards the addition as the most serious error of the Western church. He calls it the area in which papal innovation was "most grievous and scandalous," describes the doctrine as "a diabolical and heretical attack upon the Lord God Himself," and faults the Reformers for keeping it.[106]

Why This Section Is Short

It may seem strange to give so little space to what Trenham considers so important. But there is a simple reason. Baptists did not start this dispute. It began among the churches of the East and the West many centuries before there were any Baptists, and the Reformers inherited the Western form of the Creed from the church they were reforming. No Baptist doctrine of salvation, baptism, or the church rests on the *filioque*. A Baptist reader can examine the question calmly, because nothing he believes about the gospel depends on the answer.

Nor are Protestants of one mind about it. Trenham himself notes that the Mennonite *Concept of Cologne* of 1591 confessed that the Spirit proceeds "from the Father through the Son," and he names it as a rare Protestant exception.[107] And in 1976 Anglican and Orthodox theologians, meeting in formal dialogue, agreed that the words should not be in the Creed; two years later the bishops of the Anglican Communion asked their churches to consider removing them.[108]

What Scripture Says

Baptists measure every doctrine by Scripture, and this one is no exception. The New Testament says several things about the Spirit's relation to the Father and the Son. Jesus calls Him "the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father" (John 15:26). In the same sentence He says that He Himself will send the Spirit "to you from the Father." He also speaks of "the Holy Spirit which the Father will send in my Name" (John 14:26), and He

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[106] Josiah Trenham, *Rock and Sand: An Orthodox Appraisal of the Protestant Reformers and Their Teachings*, 3rd ed. (Columbia, MO: Newrome Press, 2018), 168, 171, 174.

[107] *Rock and Sand*, 62.

[108] Appendix A, Ch. 11, Cherry-Picking 2.

tells His disciples, “if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7). Paul calls the Holy Spirit “the Spirit of his Son” (Gal. 4:6) and “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom. 8:9). And Peter says that the risen Christ, “having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit,” poured out the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:33).

A Baptist holds all of these statements together, exactly as Scripture gives them. The Spirit proceeds from the Father. He is sent by the Father and by the Son. He is the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of Christ. Beyond these words, Scripture says little about the eternal relations within the Godhead, and a wise reader will be cautious where Scripture is silent. When the subject is the inner life of God Himself, it is better to say less and be sure of it than to say more and be mistaken.

The Book’s History of the Dispute

Readers who wish to study the question further should know that several of the book’s historical claims about it need correction. It says that Augustine taught the doctrine without any earlier support, but Ambrose of Milan, Augustine’s own teacher, had already spoken of the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. It says that a council in 879–880 formally condemned the *filioque* as heresy, but the council forbade any change to the Creed without naming the doctrine. It presents Pope Leo III as an opponent of the doctrine, when in fact he accepted the doctrine and objected only to adding the words to the Creed.[109] None of these corrections settles the theological question. But they show that the history is less one-sided than the book suggests.

Conclusion

The *filioque* is a serious question for the churches that have argued over it for more than a thousand years. For a Baptist, it is not the place where the real disagreement with *Rock and Sand* lies. That disagreement concerns the questions examined in the earlier sections: the authority of Scripture, the nature of the Church, the way a sinner is saved, the security of the believer, and the meaning of baptism. It remains only to draw those threads together.

[109] Appendix A, Ch. 11, Historical Inaccuracies 1–2 and Cherry-Picking 1.

9. Closing Appeal

Rock and Sand takes its title from one of the best-known parables Jesus ever told. Two men build houses. One digs deep and lays his foundation on the rock; the other builds on the ground without a foundation. The storm comes to both. One house stands, and the other falls with a great crash. The Foreword applies the parable to churches, naming the Orthodox Church as the house on the rock and placing the others on sand.[110]

But the Foreword also says something that is easy to pass over. It acknowledges that the parable is first of all about "hearing and… incarnating the Gospel of Christ," and that this "is, after all, what our Saviour was addressing."[111] That is exactly right, and it is worth hearing the parable again in Jesus' own words. "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? I will show you what the person is like who comes to me, hears my words and does them. He is like a man building a house who dug and went deep, and laid a foundation on the rock" (Luke 6:46–48).[112]

The rock in the parable is not an institution, a tradition, or a line of bishops. It is the words of Christ, heard and obeyed. A man builds on the rock when he comes to Christ, listens to what He says, and does it. That is the foundation this review has tried to dig down to in every section.

What Has Been Shown

It may help to gather the threads.

Rock and Sand rests on a claim it does not prove: that the Orthodox Church is the one true Church, and that its Tradition is the final authority by which all teaching must be judged. Section 1 showed that this claim cannot be tested by itself, any more than a measuring tape can be checked against itself. The only fair standard is one that no church made and that both sides accept as the word of God: the Scriptures.

Section 2 acknowledged that Trenham's criticisms of Protestants are often deserved, and that the cure for those failings is greater faithfulness to Scripture, not less. Section 3 showed that Scripture presents itself as that standard. Jesus judged tradition by the written word, the apostles wrote down what they had taught, and the Bereans tested even an apostle by the Scriptures.

Section 4 showed that the Church, in Scripture, is the people whom the Spirit has joined to Christ, gathered in local congregations under the word of God and led by qualified elders,

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[110] Josiah Trenham, *Rock and Sand: An Orthodox Appraisal of the Protestant Reformers and Their Teachings*, 3rd ed. (Columbia, MO: Newrome Press, 2018), xv–xvi.

[111] *Rock and Sand*, xv.

[112] Luke 6:46–49 is the parallel to the passage quoted in the Foreword (Matt. 7:24–27).

one of whom leads the rest. Such churches are apostolic because they hold what the apostles taught, and they rest on the one foundation that no one can replace, Jesus Christ Himself.

Section 5 showed that a sinner is made right with God by grace through faith, apart from works, and that true faith shows itself in a changed life. Section 6 showed that a believer may know he has eternal life, and that no one can snatch him from the Father's hand. Section 7 showed that baptism follows the new birth as its public sign, and belongs to those who have heard the gospel and believed it. Section 8 explained why the dispute over the *filioque*, however serious for others, is not where the Baptist disagreement with *Rock and Sand* lies.

An Invitation to Every Reader

This review began by asking its readers to do what the people of Berea did: to examine the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are true. It ends with the same request. That request applies to *Rock and Sand*, and it applies equally to this review. Paul's instruction was simple: "Test all things, and hold firmly to what is good!" (1 Thess. 5:21). No reader should accept a conclusion here merely because it has been stated with confidence. Every reference has been given so that it can be checked.

To any reader who has wondered whether the faith he was taught can stand against the arguments of a learned book, the answer offered here is that it can, because it was never meant to stand on its own strength. It stands on the word of God. The promises examined in these pages were written so that believers might have confidence: "so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). That confidence does not depend on winning an argument. It depends on the faithfulness of the One who made the promise.

To readers who belong to the Orthodox Church or are drawn to it, this review offers its respect and its thanks. Trenham's book was written with conviction and learning, and it deserved a careful answer. The same invitation is extended to them as to everyone else. Open the Scriptures, which both sides honor as the word of God. Read them in their plain sense. Ask what they say about how a sinner is made right with God, and whether that promise rests on what Christ has done or on what we must add to it. The answer to that question matters more than any other in this review.

The House That Stands

Storms come to every house. They come to churches through false teaching and division, and they come to individual believers through doubt, suffering, and the arguments of others. The parable does not promise that the house on the rock will escape the storm. It promises that the house will stand.

It will stand not because its builders were clever or its walls were old, but because it was "founded on the rock" (Luke 6:48). That rock is Jesus Christ and the word He has spoken. No one can lay any other foundation, and no one needs to. Whoever comes to Him, hears His words, and does them is building on ground that will never give way.

Appendix A: Documented Issues in *Rock and Sand*

This appendix lists factual errors, faulty reasoning, and loaded language identified in *Rock and Sand*, section by section, from the Foreword through Appendix I of the book. Within each section, entries are arranged by category and numbered in page order. Page numbers refer to the third edition of *Rock and Sand* (2018). The footnotes of the review refer to these entries by chapter, category, and number.

Foreword

pp. xv–xvi

Logical Fallacies

1. p. xvi — *"having been established only over the past several centuries"*

Problem: Appeal to Antiquity. The Foreword concludes that certain church bodies stand on "unstable and shifting Sand" because they were established in recent centuries. Being recent does not by itself make a body unsound, and the Foreword gives no other reason. The parable it borrows, which supplies the book's title, uses a different test: whether a person hears Christ's words and does them. The Foreword acknowledges that this was the parable's original point (p. xv) but then applies the image by a different standard.

Evidence: "Everyone therefore who hears my words and does them, I will compare to a wise person who built his house on a rock.… But everyone who hears my words and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand" (Matt. 7:24, 26, EOB).

Sources

The Eastern / Greek Orthodox Bible: New Testament. Edited by Laurent A. Cleenewerck. Matthew 7:24, 26.

Introduction

pp. xvii–xxi

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. xvii — *"America, the world's most religiously diverse society"*

Problem: The text states this as fact. The best-known international measurement of religious diversity does not place the United States first or near the top.

Evidence: The Pew Research Center's Religious Diversity Index ranked the United States 68th of 232 countries and territories and classified it as "moderate" in diversity. Singapore ranked first (Cooperman and Lipka, 2014).

2. p. xix — *"have now been widely discarded in Western academia"*

Problem: The text says that the categories "Dark Ages," "Middle Ages," "Renaissance," and "Reformation" have been widely discarded by Western scholars. This is accurate for "Dark Ages," which most historians now avoid. It is not accurate for the other three, which remain standard terms in scholarship.

Evidence: The Introduction's own main source on this period is titled *The Reformation* (MacCulloch, 2003; cited at p. xvii, n. 1). The book also relies on Pelikan and Hotchkiss's *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (2003), whose relevant section is titled "Creeds and Confessions of the Reformation Era." The Medieval Academy of America continues to publish *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, founded in 1926.

3. p. xix, n. 3 — *"a sexually immoral relationship with the nun Héloïse"*

Problem: Héloïse was not a nun when the relationship began. The footnote misstates facts recorded in the very edition it cites.

Evidence: In his *Historia Calamitatum*, which is included in the Penguin edition cited in the footnote, Abelard states that he met Héloïse while lodging in the house of her uncle, Canon Fulbert, as her tutor. The two later married, and only afterward did Héloïse take the veil at Argenteuil, at Abelard's bidding (chs. VI–VIII). See also: Logical Fallacies.

4. p. xx — *"fabricated in order to place the ever-growing claims of papal arrogance and supremacy"*

Problem: The text states that the False Decretals were forged in order to advance papal supremacy. Standard reference works describe a different main purpose and state that the forgeries did not come from Rome. The text is accurate that the collection was compiled in ninth-century France and that later popes made use of it.

Evidence: The *Catholic Encyclopedia* states that the forger's immediate aim was to protect the authority of bishops, that papal rights appear mainly in the bishops' interest, and that the forgeries were the private work of individuals rather than products of Rome (Saltet, 1909). *Encyclopædia Britannica* likewise identifies the main aim as freeing the church, and its bishops, from interference by the state and by more powerful archbishops ("False Decretals").

5. pp. xx–xxi — *"Orthodox Emperor Michael Cerularius"*

Problem: Michael Cerularius was the Patriarch of Constantinople, not the emperor. The error misidentifies the recipient of Leo IX's letter and the office he held.

Evidence: The *Catholic Encyclopedia* identifies the letter in which Leo IX cited the Donation of Constantine as addressed to Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople (Kirsch, 1909).

6. p. xxi, n. 8 — *"had rejected the Pope's right to sell indulgences in their estates"*

Problem: The note states, without a source, that the imperial electors had rejected papal indulgence sales since 1485. The book's own narrative and the record of two leading electors contradict this.

Evidence: Albert of Brandenburg, Archbishop of Mainz and an elector of the Empire, was entrusted in 1517 with publishing the papal indulgence for St. Peter's and employed Tetzel to preach it (O'Malia, 1907). The book itself describes Albert's instructions for selling that indulgence (p. 4). Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, promoted his Wittenberg relic collection with a printed catalogue (1510) stating that each relic offered a hundred days of indulgence (Art Institute of Chicago, 1948.111).

Logical Fallacies

1. p. xix — *"Most examples of ecclesiastical histories authored in a Western context are distinctly biased"*

Problem: Hasty Generalization. A sweeping judgment about most Western church histories is stated without a single example or supporting study. A broad conclusion drawn from no presented evidence fits this pattern. The claim also sits in tension with the book's own method, which relies on Western-authored histories (MacCulloch, Duffy, Brecht, Oberman) for many of its facts, beginning in this Introduction.

2. p. xix, n. 3 — *"A good example is Peter Abelard"*

Problem: Hasty Generalization. The text claims that before the Reformation Western theology became detached from its ascetic setting and that theologians "became academics." Its only support is one theologian's sexual misconduct. A single case cannot establish a change across an entire period, and one man's personal sin is not evidence of the institutional shift the text describes. Abelard himself later became a monk at St. Denis (*Historia Calamitatum*, ch. VIII). See also: Historical Inaccuracies.

Unsupported Assumptions

1. pp. xvii–xviii — *"the Protestant's lack of familiarity with traditional Christianity"*

Problem: The phrase assumes that "traditional Christianity" means Orthodox Christianity and that Protestants are unfamiliar with it. Whether the Orthodox Church alone represents traditional Christianity is the main question the book sets out to argue. Treating it as settled in the opening pages assumes the book's conclusion before any argument is given.

Assumption: Orthodox belief and practice is the standard that defines "traditional Christianity." See also: Logical Fallacies.

2. p. xxi — *"obtained a copy as a young theologian"*

Problem: The text states that Luther obtained Nicholas of Cusa's work exposing the forgeries and that it "certainly" influenced him. The supporting footnote (n. 7) does not

mention Cusa. It states instead that Luther read Ulrich von Hutten's edition of Lorenzo Valla's treatise in February 1520. The claim about Cusa therefore rests on no cited evidence. The text is accurate that Cusa questioned these documents (Kirsch, 1909; Saltet, 1909).

Assumption: Luther knew and used Cusa's work on the forgeries.

3. p. xxi — *"more a land grab by the Protestant princes than about ecclesiastical renewal"*

Problem: The text says that "a strong argument can be made" for this view, but it neither makes the argument nor cites anyone who does. The claim assigns a motive to an entire group of rulers and recasts the Reformation as chiefly a contest over property. The separate point that princely protection helped the Reformation survive is not at issue here.

Assumption: The Protestant princes acted mainly to acquire church property.

Evidence: The book's own account points to broad popular demand that did not depend on princes. Luther's *Sermon on Indulgence and Grace* was reprinted more than twenty times in two years (p. 6), and 390 editions of his writings were published in Germany in 1523 alone (p. 13, n. 48).

Biased Language

1. p. xx — *"papal arrogance"*

Problem: The word "arrogance" passes judgment on the character of the popes rather than describing their claims. It leads the reader to regard those claims with contempt before they are examined.

Neutral alternative: "claims of papal authority and supremacy."

2. p. xx — *"the innovative deceptions of successive popes"*

Problem: The word "deceptions" implies that later popes knowingly deceived others. The same sentence states that these documents were generally believed authentic throughout the Western Middle Ages. Popes who relied on them would therefore have been misled themselves, not deceiving others.

Neutral alternative: "the claims of later popes."

Double Standard

1. p. xx — [The Donation of Constantine is presented only as a forgery used to advance papal claims.]

Problem: The text treats the Donation as an instrument of papal deception. It does not mention that the same forgery was also accepted in the Orthodox East, where canon lawyers included it in their collections and used it to support privileges for the clergy of Constantinople. The text is correct that the Donation is a forgery and that its authenticity is now universally rejected.

Evidence: The *Catholic Encyclopedia* reports that the Donation appears in the canonical collection of Theodore Balsamon (twelfth century), that Matthew Blastares admitted it into his collection around 1335, and that it was valued in the Greek East as support for privileges claimed for the Byzantine clergy (Kirsch, 1909).

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Chapter 1: The Life of Martin Luther, Founder of the German Reformation

pp. 1–17

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 9 — *"This bull of excommunication"*

Problem: *Exsurge Domine* (1520) did not excommunicate Luther. It condemned forty-one propositions drawn from his writings and gave him a period of sixty days to recant before

excommunication would follow. The book itself states on p. 12 that Luther was excommunicated by a later bull, *Decet Romanum Pontificem*, on January 3, 1521. The text is accurate that *Exsurge Domine* censured forty-one propositions.

Evidence: The text of *Exsurge Domine* sets a sixty-day period for Luther to desist before he is to be condemned as a heretic (Leo X, *Exsurge Domine*, Papal Encyclicals Online).

2. p. 9, n. 34 — *"saw to it that Luther's denial of human freedom stayed out of formal confessions"*

Problem: Luther's position did not stay out of the formal Lutheran confessions. The Formula of Concord (1577), part of the Lutheran *Book of Concord*, explicitly endorses Luther's *Bondage of the Will* on this subject. Even the Augsburg Confession (1530), written by Melanchthon and described by the book as moderating Luther's views (p. 30, n. 101), denies that the unaided will can achieve spiritual righteousness.

Evidence: The Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, ¶44, states that Luther explained and supported this position thoroughly in *De Servo Arbitrio* and appeals to that work. The same paragraph denies that the human will cooperates in conversion. Augsburg Confession, Article XVIII, allows the will some freedom in civil matters but states that without the Holy Spirit it has no power to work the righteousness of God.

3. p. 14 — *"was the only official Lutheran document written solely by Luther himself"*

Problem: The *Small Catechism* is not the only document in the official Lutheran confessions written by Luther alone. The *Large Catechism* (1529) and the Smalcald Articles are also Luther's own work and are also part of the *Book of Concord*.

Evidence: *Encyclopædia Britannica* lists "Martin Luther's Small and Large Catechisms (1529)" among the contents of the *Book of Concord* ("Book of Concord"). It also states that Luther wrote the Smalcald Articles in 1536 and that they were later included in the *Book of Concord* ("Schmalkaldic Articles").

4. p. 17 — *"for the first time since the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215"*

Problem: The Council of Trent was not the first multinational council convened by the papacy since 1215. Several general councils met in the intervening centuries, and the book's own Introduction mentions two of them, Lyons (1274) and Ferrara-Florence (1438–9), on p. xix.

Evidence: The *Catholic Encyclopedia* lists the general councils between Lateran IV and Trent as Lyons I (1245), Lyons II (1274), Vienne (1311–1313), Constance (1414–1418), Basel-Ferrara-Florence (1431–1439), and Lateran V (1512–1517) ("General Councils," 1909).

Logical Fallacies

1. p. 16 — *"proved the absurdity of any dependence on the clarity of Scripture alone"*

Problem: Non Sequitur. The text reasons that because Luther and Zwingli disagreed about the Eucharist at Marburg, reliance on the clarity of Scripture is shown to be absurd.

Disagreement among interpreters does not by itself show that a text is unclear, since interpreters may err. The same reasoning would also count against churches that rely on Scripture together with tradition, which have likewise divided. The book itself reports that the participants at Marburg agreed on fourteen of fifteen articles (p. 50), so the colloquy also shows substantial agreement.

Evidence: The Russian Orthodox Church divided in the seventeenth century when the Old Believers rejected the liturgical reforms of Patriarch Nikon (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Raskol"; "Old Believer"). The book itself describes the East–West schism of 1054 between two churches that both appeal to tradition (p. xviii). See also: Double Standard.

2. p. 16, n. 61 — *"This quote is assuredly devastating to contemporary Protestant Evangelicals"*

Problem: Non Sequitur. The note argues that because Evangelicals admire Luther, his condemnation of those who deny the bodily presence in the Eucharist is "devastating" to them. Admiring a historical figure does not commit anyone to all of that figure's views. Evangelicals do not regard Luther as a doctrinal authority, so his disagreement with them does not settle the question.

Cherry-Picking

1. p. 16 — *"disavowed Luther's teaching on the sacraments and church polity"*

Problem: The text lists Martin Bucer among the leaders who rejected Luther's teaching on the sacraments and describes Protestant disputes as irreconcilable. It leaves out that Bucer and other South German theologians later signed the Wittenberg Concord (1536) with Luther, an agreement on the Lord's Supper. The text is accurate that Bucer sided against Luther at Marburg in 1529.

Evidence: The Wittenberg Concord was signed on May 29, 1536, by Lutheran and South German Reformed theologians, including Luther and Bucer, as a resolution of their differences over Christ's presence in the Eucharist (Jensen, 2018; "Wittenberg Concord," Wikipedia, citing McNeill, 1963).

Unsupported Assumptions

1. p. 15 — *"did not take place until it was politically safe to effect"*

Problem: The text states that Luther delayed his marriage until the death of Elector Frederick because the marriage was not politically safe until then. No source is given for this account of Luther's motive. The close timing of the two events does not by itself show that one caused the other.

Assumption: Luther timed his marriage to Frederick's death for political reasons.

Misuse of Scripture

1. p. 8 — *"an assertion that contradicts scripture itself (Acts 15)"*

Problem: The text claims that Luther's view that general councils can err contradicts Acts 15. Acts 15 describes a single meeting of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. It does not state that later general councils cannot err or that they share the authority of the apostles. Using it to establish the infallibility of later councils adds a teaching the passage does not contain.

Context: "The apostles and the presbyters gathered together to discuss this matter" (Acts 15:6, EOB). "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose no greater burden on you than what is necessary" (Acts 15:28, EOB). In context, the decision concerns whether Gentile believers must be circumcised. It was made by a council that included the apostles themselves.

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Chapter 2: Lutheranism and Orthodoxy

pp. 19–37

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 24 — *"all monasteries were dissolved in Lutheran lands"*

Problem: Not all monastic houses were dissolved in Lutheran territories. Several women's convents accepted the Reformation and continued as Lutheran communities, some to the present day. The text is accurate that most monasteries were closed and that Luther opposed arrangements that kept them open (p. 24, n. 85).

Evidence: Lüne Abbey near Lüneburg accepted the Protestant duke's authority in 1535 but was not dissolved. It continued as a foundation for unmarried Protestant women, elected its first Protestant abbess in 1562, and remains an active Evangelical-Lutheran convent today ("Lüne Abbey," Wikipedia, citing Brandis, 2017).

2. p. 24 — *"There is no Church without monasticism"*

Problem: The text states that the Orthodox Church has "always taught" that monasticism is essential to the Church. Monasticism as an organized way of life did not exist in the Church's first centuries. Christians who practiced celibacy and voluntary poverty existed earlier, but they were not monks living under a monastic rule.

Evidence: The *Catholic Encyclopedia* states that monastic life "took definite shape in the fourth century" and dates the first monastery of Pachomius to about 318. It describes earlier Christian ascetics as forerunners rather than monks in the strict sense (Huddleston, 1911).

3. p. 27 — *"He completely rejected the idea of an invisible church"*

Problem: Luther did not completely reject the idea of an invisible church. He distinguished between the true, spiritual church known to God and the outward, visible church. The text is correct that Luther insisted the church is identified by outward marks such as the Word and the sacraments and did not treat it as a purely invisible body.

Evidence: In *On the Papacy in Rome* (1520), Luther distinguishes a "spiritual, internal Christendom," made up of believers, from a "physical, external Christendom" (summary in LCMS New Jersey District, "On the Papacy and the Church").

4. p. 36, n. 113 — *"tens of thousands of Protestant denominations in America alone"*

Problem: The number is far too high. Standard counts place the number of denominations in the United States in the low hundreds. The larger figure appears to count independent congregations, which are not denominations. The note also states that new denominations are registered with the government every week, but churches in the United States are not required to register or apply for tax-exempt status.

Evidence: The Hartford Institute for Religion Research reports that the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* listed 217 denominations. It separately reports more

than 35,000 independent or nondenominational congregations, citing the Religious Congregations and Membership Study (2010). IRS Publication 1828 states that churches meeting the requirements of section 501(c)(3) are automatically considered tax exempt.

Logical Fallacies

1. p. 22 — *"as one-sided and heretical in his promotion of marriage"*

Problem: False Analogy. The text equates Luther's promotion of marriage with the early Gnostic teaching that attacked marriage. The two are not alike in the relevant respect. The Gnostic teaching condemned marriage itself, while Luther did not forbid celibacy. The book itself notes that Luther left the door open for those able to live it (p. 24), and Luther's own treatise exempts those who remain unmarried for the kingdom of heaven.

Evidence: In *The Estate of Marriage* (1522), Luther names those who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:12) as one of three groups exempt from marriage (*Luther's Works*, vol. 45, trans. Walther I. Brandt).

2. p. 24 — *"was Jesus less than human?"*

Problem: Straw Man. The text asks whether Luther's views would make Jesus less than human, as if Luther held that every man must marry to be healthy. Luther's own treatise allows for those who remain celibate by God's gift, so the view being refuted is not the one Luther held.

Evidence: *The Estate of Marriage* (1522) exempts from marriage those who remain unmarried for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (*Luther's Works*, vol. 45).

Cherry-Picking

1. p. 19, n. 66 — *"immoderately ardent and violent in character"*

Problem: The note cites Calvin only as a witness to Luther's temper, in a chapter that asks whether Luther deserves to be regarded as a Christian hero. It omits Calvin's well-known overall judgment of Luther, which was strongly favorable even when Luther attacked him. The text is accurate that Calvin acknowledged Luther's vehemence.

Evidence: In his 1544 letter to Heinrich Bullinger, written after Luther's attacks on the Swiss Reformers, Calvin writes that even if Luther were to call him a devil, he would still acknowledge him to be an illustrious servant of God. In the same letter he regrets Luther's restless temperament (Calvin, *Tracts and Letters*; transcription by W. Travis McMaken).

2. p. 30 — *"careful to avoid the controversial word 'alone'"*

Problem: The text implies that Melanchthon deliberately kept the word "alone" out of the Augsburg Confession's teaching on justification. It is accurate that Article IV does not use the word. Two articles later, however, the Confession teaches salvation by faith alone, quoting a Church Father.

Evidence: Augsburg Confession, Article VI, quotes Ambrose as saying that whoever believes in Christ is saved "without works, by faith alone."

Unsupported Assumptions

1. p. 23 — *"Luther found it convenient to vilify the monastic estate"*

Problem: The text claims that Luther attacked monasticism in order to justify breaking his own vows. The book's own dates point the other way. Luther wrote *Of Monastic Vows* in 1521 (p. 23, n. 82), but he kept his monastic habit until 1524 (p. 13) and did not marry until 1525 (p. 15). No evidence is given that the treatise was written to excuse a later marriage.

Assumption: Luther's teaching on vows was motivated by a desire to excuse his own conduct.

Evidence: As late as November 30, 1524, Luther wrote to Spalatin that he did not intend to marry, because he daily expected the death of a heretic (quoted in Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 7).

2. p. 23 — *"Luther was not able to marry as long as Frederick lived"*

Problem: The text again presents the timing of Luther's marriage as caused by Frederick's death, without a source. Recurs from Chapter 1.

Assumption: Luther delayed his marriage until Frederick's death for political reasons.

3. p. 23 — *"he himself did not attend the wedding"*

Problem: The text states that Melanchthon stayed away from Luther's wedding because he opposed it. The book's own note (n. 83) reports that some sources say Melanchthon simply was not invited. The text gives no evidence for the motive it states. It is accurate that Melanchthon privately criticized the marriage as hasty.

Assumption: Melanchthon's absence reflected his opposition to the marriage.

Evidence: Schaff reports that Luther kept the marriage secret from his friends, that Melanchthon was not invited to the private ceremony of June 13, 1525, and that he was invited to the public wedding feast on June 27 (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 7).

Biased Language

1. p. 24 — *"In his self-justifying mania"*

Problem: The phrase attacks Luther's state of mind and motives instead of addressing his argument. "Mania" suggests mental disorder, leading the reader to dismiss Luther's position before it is examined.

Neutral alternative: "In defending his position."

2. p. 26 — *"fanatically promoting the breaking of monastic vows"*

Problem: The word "fanatically" labels Luther's advocacy as irrational extremism instead of describing what he taught. It invites the reader to dismiss his position as fanaticism rather than weigh it.

Neutral alternative: "actively encouraging monks and nuns to leave their vows."

3. p. 34, n. 110 — *"Here we see the Protestant arrogance in full bloom"*

Problem: The note describes the Lutheran theologians' hope of persuading the Orthodox as arrogance. Seeking to persuade others of one's convictions is ordinary in theological dialogue. The book's own account shows that the Patriarch likewise argued point by point for the Orthodox positions (pp. 34–36), yet it applies the label only to the Lutherans. The phrase stirs resentment rather than informing the reader.

Neutral alternative: "The Lutherans hoped to persuade the Orthodox of their position."

4. p. 35 — *"rightly points out this hypocrisy"*

Problem: Hypocrisy means professing one thing while doing another. The Lutherans openly stated which works they regarded as commanded by God and which they did not. That is a disagreement about which works are good, not insincerity. The word charges bad faith instead of describing a theological difference.

Neutral alternative: "points out what he saw as an inconsistency."

5. p. 37 — *"on a fast track to extinction"*

Problem: The phrase overstates membership decline as imminent disappearance. It invites the reader to see Lutheranism as dying rather than conveying measurable facts.

Neutral alternative: "has experienced significant membership decline."

Misuse of Scripture

1. p. 23, n. 81 — *"the supremacy of consecrated celibacy is one of the most obvious teachings of the New Testament"*

Problem: The note cites 1 Corinthians 7 and Matthew 19 as obvious proof of the supremacy of consecrated celibacy, and it then treats this as proof that monasticism is supreme. Paul does say that the man who does not marry "does better" (7:38). He frames this as a concession, ties it to a gift that not all have and to "the present distress," and states that marrying is not sin. Neither passage mentions monastic vows or monastic communities.

Context: "Nevertheless, I say this by way of concession, not as a command. Indeed, I wish that everyone would be like me. However, each person has his own gift from God, one of this kind, and another of that kind" (1 Cor. 7:6–7, EOB). "I think that it is good, (in view of the present distress,) for a man to remain as he is" (1 Cor. 7:26, EOB). "But if you do marry, you have not sinned" (1 Cor. 7:28, EOB). In context, Paul is answering questions the Corinthians had written to him about marriage (7:1).

Double Standard

1. p. 33 — *"only temporary and local theological standards"*

Problem: The text faults Protestant confessions for becoming only temporary and local standards. It does not apply the same judgment to the Orthodox confessions of the same era. The book itself says those confessions have only uncertain authority today and doubts that most Orthodox have heard of them (p. 28). It also describes one of them, Peter Mogila's Confession, as revised to reduce Latin influences and as the most Latinized statement ever adopted by an Orthodox synod (p. 94).

Evidence: The parallel is documented in the book's own account of the Orthodox confessions of Mogila (1638–1640), Critopoulos (1625), and Dositheos (1672) (pp. 28, 94).

Other Misrepresentation

1. p. 32 — *"the authors are at a loss for how to recommend fasting"*

Problem: The text claims that the authors of the Augsburg Confession could not find a way to recommend fasting and ascetic discipline without making them mandatory. Article XXVI does exactly that. It urges bodily discipline at all times and states that it does not condemn fasting. It objects only to rules that bind consciences or treat such works as earning grace.

Evidence: Augsburg Confession, Article XXVI, ¶¶33–39, states that every Christian ought to train and subdue himself with bodily exercises, not to merit grace, and that "we do not condemn fasting in itself."

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Chapter 3: The Life and Teachings of Ulrich Zwingli

pp. 39–52

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 43 — *“when Zwingli launched a series of commentary-style homilies”*

Problem: The text dates the start of Zwingli’s continuous preaching through the Gospel of Matthew to 1522. Zwingli began that series on his first day as People’s Priest in Zurich, January 1, 1519, three years earlier. The text may be correct that no written record of his earlier sermons survives, but the series itself did not begin in 1522.

Evidence: Zwingli gave his first sermon in Zurich on January 1, 1519, and began preaching straight through the Gospel of Matthew (“Huldrych Zwingli,” Wikipedia). *Encyclopædia Britannica* likewise states that after his appointment he began a series of expositions of the New Testament (“Huldrych Zwingli”).

2. p. 45 — *“participated in publicly eating cooked sausages”*

Problem: Zwingli was present at the Lenten sausage meal of March 1522, but he did not eat the sausages. He afterward defended those who did, which the text correctly describes.

Evidence: Zwingli did not eat the sausages himself but defended the printer Froschauer, who served them, against charges of heresy (“Affair of the Sausages,” Wikipedia, citing Locher, *Die Zwinglische Reformation*).

3. p. 46 — *“The monasteries, 350 of them, were dissolved”*

Problem: The figure of 350 is the number the book gives for all the monasteries in the Diocese of Constance (p. 40). That diocese was the largest in the German lands and covered far more than Zurich. The Zurich council could dissolve only the religious houses in its own territory, so the number overstates the event.

Evidence: The book itself describes the Diocese of Constance as leading all German dioceses in size, with about 1,800 parishes and 350 monasteries, and Zurich as one part of it (p. 40).

Logical Fallacies

1. p. 44, n. 130 — *"removing the speck from another's eye"*

Problem: Tu Quoque (Ad Hominem). The note answers Zwingli's public denunciation of immoral priests and monks by pointing to Zwingli's own conduct. Whether a criticism is true does not depend on the conduct of the person who makes it. The note turns attention from the clergy's behavior to Zwingli's character without assessing the criticism itself.

2. p. 46, n. 133 — *"was living in fornication while he was articulating evangelicalism"*

Problem: Ad Hominem. The note presents Zwingli's private life as a reason to distrust the theology he was teaching. Whether Zwingli's teaching was true or false does not depend on his personal conduct. The book itself describes the relationship as a secret union (p. 46), and historians describe it as a secret marriage in 1522 that was made public later.

Evidence: Zwingli and Anna Reinhart's marriage was at first kept secret in 1522 ("Anna Zwingli," Wikipedia, citing Potgieter, 2016).

3. p. 51 — *"This is a highly suspect assertion"*

Problem: Non Sequitur. The text rejects the view that Zwingli went to Kappel as a chaplain carrying a banner rather than weapons. Its only reason is that Zwingli had urged the war. Supporting a war does not show what a person carried or did on the battlefield, and the text cites no source on that question.

Cherry-Picking

1. p. 48, n. 140 — *"Despite the fact that it is used this way by the Scriptures themselves!"*

Problem: The note objects to Zwingli's Thesis 27, which says Christians should call no one on earth "father," and cites 2 Kings 2:12, Luke 1:73, and 16:24 to show that Scripture uses the title. It omits the passage the thesis plainly echoes, Jesus' own instruction in Matthew 23:8–9. The texts it cites concern Elisha's cry to Elijah and Abraham as an ancestor. Whatever one concludes about the title, the reader is not told that Zwingli was repeating Jesus' words.

Evidence: Thesis 27 reads that all Christians are brothers of Christ and of one another and "ought not to call anyone father on earth" (Sixty-Seven Articles, trans. Peter Chapman). "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for one is your teacher, the Christ, and all of you are brothers. Call no man on the earth 'your father,' for one is your Father, he who is in heaven" (Matt. 23:8–9, EOB).

Biased Language

1. p. 47 — *"his newfangled Eucharistic service"*

Problem: "Newfangled" is a dismissive word that mocks the service as a fad. It invites contempt rather than describing what the service contained, which the text describes accurately elsewhere on the page.

Neutral alternative: "his new order for the Lord's Supper."

2. p. 47, n. 135 — *"Protestant theft on a grand scale"*

Problem: "Theft" frames the civil confiscation of monastic property as common crime and extends the charge to Protestants generally. The note also assigns a single motive to all Protestants without evidence. The text is accurate that the Zurich authorities took over monastic lands and later used some of them for secular purposes, and it notes that the lands were first dedicated to charitable causes (p. 47).

Neutral alternative: "the confiscation of monastic property by the civil authorities."

3. p. 50, n. 141 — *"Zwinglianism is thoroughly gnostic"*

Problem: Gnosticism was an ancient heresy that regarded matter as evil and taught salvation through secret knowledge. Applying the label to Zwingli's view of the sacraments attaches a condemned heresy to a position that does not share those defining features. The effect is to discredit the view by association rather than to explain it.

Neutral alternative: "Zwingli denied that the sacraments convey grace through physical means."

Misquoted or Unreliable Sources

1. p. 49 — *"to fix a time for this is demonic"*

Problem: The book's version of Thesis 60 leaves out what Zwingli was condemning. The thesis objects to setting fixed periods of purgatory for sins and to lying for financial gain. Without that clause, Zwingli appears to condemn any fixed time of prayer for the dead, which changes the meaning of the thesis.

Evidence: Thesis 60 reads that seeking grace for the dead is not harmful, "but to set a fixed time for this (seven years for a mortal sin), and to lie for the sake of gain, is not human but diabolical" (Sixty-Seven Articles, trans. Peter Chapman).

Double Standard

1. p. 49 — *"This was a complete novelty"*

Problem: The text calls the Zurich council's role in judging doctrine at the disputations a complete novelty typical of Protestant statism, and p. 52 adds that the arrangement had no precedent in Christian history. The book itself reports that, before the Reformation, Swiss civil governments already regulated church property, monastery funds, the behavior of clergy, and marriage laws (p. 41). It also does not acknowledge that Byzantine emperors acted in doctrinal matters. Emperor Justinian issued an edict condemning the Three Chapters before the Fifth Ecumenical Council, which the Orthodox Church recognizes, condemned them in 553. The roles are not identical: at Chalcedon, for example, imperial officials directed the proceedings but did not rule on doctrine.

Evidence: An edict condemning the Three Chapters was issued in Justinian's name at the end of 543 or the beginning of 544, and the Second Council of Constantinople later condemned them (Bacchus, "Three Chapters," 1912). At Chalcedon (451), imperial commissioners appointed by Emperor Marcian directed the order of business (Schaefer, "Council of Chalcedon," 1908).

Other Misrepresentation

1. p. 48, n. 138 — *"This is the great parenthesis presupposed by all the Protestant Reformers"*

Problem: The note states that all the Reformers assumed the truth was absent or unclear from the death of the apostles until their own time. The Reformers did hold that the medieval church had fallen into serious errors, but they did not teach that the true Church or its truth had disappeared. The book itself reports that the Lutherans compiled patristic testimonies (p. 22, n. 79) and that Calvin read and quoted many Church Fathers (p. 76).

Evidence: Augsburg Confession, Article VII, opens: "One holy Church is to continue forever."

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Chapter 4: The Anabaptist Reformation and Its Triumph in America

pp. 53–68

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 54 — *"By 1522, he was one of Luther's most bitter opponents"*

Problem: The chapter's opening chronology is off by one to two years on two points. Thomas Müntzer's public attacks on Luther were published in 1524, not by 1522. The text also dates the first signs of the peasants' political radicalism to the spring of 1525, but the Peasants' War began in 1524. The text is accurate that the uprising spread widely in the spring of 1525.

Evidence: Luther recommended Müntzer for a post at Zwickau in 1519, and Müntzer's *Sermon Before the Princes* (July 1524) and *Highly Provoked Vindication* (late 1524) were his public attacks on Luther ("Thomas Müntzer," Wikipedia). The war began in 1524 at Stühlingen, south of the Black Forest ("German Peasants' War," Wikipedia).

2. p. 55 — *"Numerous invented and detailed schemes of eschatological drama"*

Problem: The text places the "1000-year earthly millennium" among the novel, invented schemes that arose in Protestant circles, chiefly since the nineteenth century. Belief in an earthly thousand-year reign is not a modern invention. It was taught by second-century Church Fathers. The text is accurate that the detailed pre-, mid-, and post-tribulation rapture schemes are modern developments, and the early Fathers did not hold this view unanimously.

Evidence: Justin Martyr writes that he and other right-minded Christians are assured of "a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem," while acknowledging that many true Christians think otherwise (*Dialogue with Trypho*, ch. 80, ANF vol. 1). Irenaeus describes the righteous reigning on the renewed earth after the resurrection (*Against Heresies* V.32, ANF vol. 1).

3. p. 56 — *"Jan Mathijs served as the new 'King David' for six weeks"*

Problem: Jan Matthys did not rule Münster as "King David." He was killed on Easter Sunday 1534 while leading a small sortie out of the besieged city. It was his successor, John of Leiden (Jan Bockelson), who proclaimed himself the new King David and ruled until the city fell in June 1535.

Evidence: Matthys died on Easter Sunday 1534 after leading twelve followers out of the city. John of Leiden then took royal regalia and absolute power as successor of David, and the city fell on June 24, 1535 ("Münster rebellion," Wikipedia).

4. p. 62 — *"of which the largest number live in America"*

Problem: The largest number of Mennonite and related Anabaptist church members do not live in America. Africa has led all continents in membership since the early 2000s. The worldwide total in 2018 was also about twice the "some one million" the text reports.

Evidence: In 2003 Mennonite World Conference reported that African members (451,959) had come to outnumber those of any other continent, including North America (451,180) (*The Alabama Baptist*, July 3, 2003). By 2018 worldwide membership had grown to 2,131,000, with 738,315 in Africa (*Anabaptist World*, "A growing church").

Logical Fallacies

1. p. 62 — *"the confession reproduces the language of the Council of Ferrara-Florence"*

Problem: Non Sequitur. The text presents the *Concept of Cologne* as virtually the only Protestant confession not to embrace the *filioque*, and its evidence is that the confession reproduces the language of the Council of Ferrara-Florence. That council affirmed the *filioque*, so echoing its language cannot show that the doctrine was rejected. The phrase "through the Son" has older Eastern use, but the reason the text gives does not support its conclusion.

Evidence: At Florence the Greeks agreed on June 3, 1439, to recognize the procession of the Holy Spirit "from the Father and the Son as from one 'principium'" (Van der Essen, "Council of Florence," 1909).

2. p. 64, n. 171 — *"There is no consistent age affirmed as appropriate for baptism"*

Problem: Straw Man. The text describes the Baptist position as baptizing those mentally mature "enough" to decide, and the note faults Baptists for having no fixed age. Baptists do not make age or mental maturity the condition for baptism. The condition is a personal profession of faith, so the absence of a fixed age is not an inconsistency in their position.

Evidence: The *Baptist Faith and Message* (2000), Article VII, defines baptism as the immersion of a believer and as "an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith."

3. p. 67 — *"It simply did not happen"*

Problem: Argument from Silence. The text reasons that because the New Testament never records the baptism of an adult raised in a Christian home, such baptisms did not occur. The New Testament also never explicitly records the baptism of an infant, yet the text concludes that infants were baptized. The same kind of silence is treated as proof on one side and dismissed on the other. The New Testament narratives also cover only the first generation of the church, when few children of converts would have reached adulthood. See also: Misuse of Scripture.

Cherry-Picking

1. pp. 65, 67–68 — *"a great measure of unanimity in church history and tradition"*

Problem: The text claims a great measure of unanimity for infant baptism in church history (p. 65), but the section on its historical practice (pp. 67–68) cites no early sources. It omits well-known evidence that some Fathers advised delaying baptism and that several leading Fathers raised by Christian mothers were baptized as adults. The text is accurate

that infant baptism is attested early. Cyprian's Council of Carthage, for example, held that infants need not wait until the eighth day.

Evidence: Tertullian advises that "the delay of baptism is preferable; principally, however, in the case of little children" (*On Baptism*, ch. 18, ANF vol. 3). Gregory of Nazianzus advises baptizing children at once if in danger, but otherwise waiting "till the end of the third year" (*Oration* 40.28, NPNF2 vol. 7). Augustine records that his baptism was deferred although his mother had sought it (*Confessions* I.11). For early support of infant baptism, see Cyprian, *Epistle* 58 (ANF vol. 5).

2. p. 67 — *"was not the practice of the first Christians"*

Problem: The text claims that baptizing individuals one by one was not the practice of the first Christians and that household salvation was the usual pattern. It omits the individual baptisms the New Testament records alongside the household baptisms.

Evidence: Samaritan believers "were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12, EOB). Philip baptized the Ethiopian official (Acts 8:38), and Saul "arose and was baptized" (Acts 9:18, EOB). See also: Misuse of Scripture.

Unsupported Assumptions

1. p. 61 — *"the Anabaptist theological method in general is firmly a-historical"*

Problem: The text asserts that the Anabaptists treated earlier generations' work as irrelevant. Balthasar Hubmaier, whom the book calls the movement's most able theologian (p. 57), compiled testimonies from earlier church teachers to support believers' baptism. The text is accurate that Anabaptists did not treat tradition as an authority equal to Scripture.

Assumption: Rejecting tradition as a binding authority means disregarding the writings of earlier Christians altogether.

Evidence: Hubmaier's *Der uralten und gar neuen Lehrer Urteil* (1526) is a collection of quotations from older and newer church teachers on baptism ("Hubmaier, Balthasar," *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*).

2. p. 63 — *"which is rooted in the New Testament"*

Problem: The text asserts that the polity of diocese and bishop is rooted in the New Testament and uses this to fault Baptist congregational polity. No passage is cited. In the New Testament the words for "elder" and "overseer" (bishop) are used for the same leaders, appointed in the plural in each town or church. The text is accurate that bishops are clearly attested in the early second century, as it notes in discussing St. Ignatius (p. 44).

Assumption: The later office of a diocesan bishop over presbyters is found in the New Testament.

Evidence: Paul "called to himself the presbyters of the Church" of Ephesus and told them the Holy Spirit had made them "overseers" (Acts 20:17, 28, EOB). Titus is told to "appoint

presbyters in every city," and the next verses describe the same office as "the overseer" (Titus 1:5, 7, EOB).

Biased Language

1. p. 56, n. 154 — *"the Protestant Princes could steal land at will from the papacy"*

Problem: "Steal land at will" describes the princes' confiscations as crime and generalizes the charge to Protestant princes as a group. It invites contempt rather than informing the reader. Recurs from Chapter 3.

Neutral alternative: "Protestant princes confiscated church lands, but the peasants' demands were suppressed."

2. p. 61 — *"the rather naïve biblicism and disregard for traditional dogma"*

Problem: "Naïve" and "disregard" dismiss the Anabaptists' method as simple-minded and careless instead of describing it. The words lead the reader to discount their position before it is examined.

Neutral alternative: "the strict biblicism and rejection of tradition as an authority."

Misuse of Scripture

1. pp. 66–67 — *"leads to the undeniable conclusion"*

Problem: The text cites household passages as proof that infants were baptized. None of the cited passages mentions infants. Two of them, Luke 19:9 and the blessing on Onesiphorus' household, do not mention baptism at all, and the latter is miscited as 1 Timothy 1:16 rather than 2 Timothy 1:16. Several household passages, including one the text itself cites (John 4:53), state that the household members believed. The text is accurate that the New Testament records the baptism of whole households.

Context: "And he believed, along with his whole household" (John 4:53, EOB). "Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all those who were in his household"; afterward "he was filled with joy for believing in God, along with his entire household" (Acts 16:32, 34, EOB). "Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with his entire household" (Acts 18:8, EOB). "May the Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus" (2 Tim. 1:16, EOB).

2. p. 68 — *"unless you are converted and become like children"*

Problem: The text uses Matthew 18:3 to argue for infant baptism and against the Baptist position. In context, Jesus is teaching his disciples humility, not addressing baptism or the status of infants. The text also states that Baptists believe children must become like adults to be baptized and saved. Baptist teaching does not make baptism a condition of salvation, but treats it as an act of obedience by a believer.

Context: "Amen, I tell you that unless you change and become as little children, you will in no way enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever humbles himself as this little child

is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 18:3–4, EOB). The passage answers the disciples' question, "Who then is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" (18:1). On Baptist teaching, see *Baptist Faith and Message* (2000), Article VII.

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Chapter 5: The Life and Teachings of John Calvin

pp. 69–83

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 73 — *"abolished Christmas day and made it a normal workday"*

Problem: The text attributes the abolition of Christmas to the consistory and adds that Calvin's hand was intimately involved in its decisions. The holy days were abolished by Geneva's magistrates, and Calvin wrote that it was done without his knowledge or desire. The text is accurate that Christmas ceased to be a holiday in Geneva.

Evidence: In a letter to Johannes Haller, Calvin wrote that the abolition was "accomplished without my knowledge and without my desire" (quoted in Bruce Gordon, "The Grinch that Didn't Steal Christmas: A Reformation Story," *ISM Review* 3.1, 2016).

2. p. 79 — *"including his immediate successor in Geneva, Theodore Beza, abandoned"*

Problem: Theodore Beza did not abandon Calvin's teaching on predestination. He developed it in an even stricter form, known as supralapsarianism, in which God's decree of election and reprobation is considered logically prior to the decree to permit the Fall. The text is accurate that some later Reformed theologians moderated Calvin's position.

Evidence: Beza is described as Calvin's "alter ego" whose writings elucidate "a fundamental supralapsarian mode of thought," and the Swiss delegates at Bern in 1588 judged his teaching orthodox ("Theodore Beza," Wikipedia).

3. p. 80 — *"argued that the Epistle of St. James should be removed from the canon"*

Problem: Luther did not remove James from the canon. He questioned its standing, ranked it below the chief books of the New Testament, and placed it near the end of his translation with Hebrews, Jude, and Revelation, but he kept it in his Bible. The text also says Calvin "rails against" Luther on this point, but Calvin's introduction to James simply accepts the letter without attacking anyone by name. The text is accurate that Luther judged James harshly and that Calvin accepted it.

Evidence: Luther's 1522 German New Testament kept James, placing it with Hebrews, Jude, and Revelation as books that "have from ancient times had a different reputation" ("Luther's canon," Wikipedia, citing *Das Newe Testament Deutzsch*, 1522). Calvin writes that he is "inclined to receive it without controversy, because I see no just cause for rejecting it" (*Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, Argument to James).

4. p. 80 — *"none of the major Reformed traditions could agree on the sacraments"*

Problem: The major Reformed churches of Switzerland did reach a formal agreement on the sacraments in Calvin's own lifetime. The text is accurate that disagreements remained with the Lutherans, and Bern did not accept the agreement.

Evidence: The Consensus Tigurinus, written by Calvin and Heinrich Bullinger in 1549, was accepted by the churches of Zurich, Geneva, St. Gallen, Schaffhausen, the Grisons, Neuchâtel, and eventually Basel ("Consensus Tigurinus," Wikipedia).

5. p. 82 — *"assumed by Luther and all traditional Christianity"*

Problem: The ubiquity of Christ's glorified body, which the book defines as its omnipresence (n. 204), was not held by all traditional Christianity. It was a distinctively Lutheran teaching developed in the sixteenth century, and the Roman Catholic Church regarded it as contrary to its teaching. The text is accurate that Calvin rejected it.

Evidence: The doctrine was formulated by the Lutheran Johannes Brenz at the synod of Stuttgart in 1559, developing Luther's view of the communication of attributes, and was considered contrary to Catholic teaching ("Ubiquitarianism," Wikipedia).

Logical Fallacies

1. pp. 76–77 — *"too submissive to worldly powers"*

Problem: Straw Man and Tu Quoque. In the quoted passage, Calvin says certain Fathers made concessions on free will out of a desire to please "the wise of the world," meaning the philosophers. The text restates this as a charge that the Fathers were "too submissive to worldly powers." It then answers with a list of Calvin's personal failings: his marriage, his salary, his temper, and his comfortable death. Calvin's actual claim concerns intellectual accommodation, and his personal conduct does not show whether that claim is true or false.

Biased Language

1. p. 76 — *"Here is Calvin in all his arrogance and theological overconfidence"*

Problem: The sentence passes judgment on Calvin's character immediately after quoting him, instead of addressing what he argued. It invites the reader to dismiss the quotation as a display of arrogance before it is evaluated.

Neutral alternative: "Here Calvin criticizes some of the Fathers' teaching on free will."

2. p. 81 — *"leading in this instance to very ugly Reformed church buildings"*

Problem: "Very ugly" states a matter of taste as fact. It leads the reader to look down on Reformed worship rather than describing the plainness of its buildings.

Neutral alternative: "leading to plain and unadorned Reformed church buildings."

Other Misrepresentation

1. p. 72, n. 188 — *"This radical and unsubstantiated presupposition"*

Problem: The note treats a single quotation as Calvin's general view that each church may set up its own order because the Lord gave no directions. Calvin taught that the basic offices of the church were instituted by Christ, as the opening of his own *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*

states. The freedom he allowed concerned outward arrangements, not the church's fundamental structure.

Evidence: The *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* of 1541 begin: "First there are four orders of offices instituted by our Saviour for the government of his Church" (University of Oregon text of the Ordinances).

2. p. 77 — *"imputing moral depravity where none objectively existed"*

Problem: The text says Calvin imputed moral depravity to the Fathers to justify their "universal disagreement with him." The quotation the text itself gives (p. 76) calls those Fathers "these good persons" and attributes their view to a desire not to offend philosophers, not to depravity. The book also states on p. 76 that Calvin admired Chrysostom's commentaries and was a devotee of Augustine, so the Fathers did not universally disagree with him.

Evidence: The text's own quotation of Calvin, p. 76, and its description of Calvin's regard for Chrysostom, Augustine, Cyprian, and Athanasius on the same page. On predestination in particular, Augustine describes one of the two cities as predestined "to suffer eternal punishment with the devil" (*City of God* XV.1, NPNF1 vol. 2), so the Fathers were not unanimous against Calvin on this point.

3. p. 78 — *"apart from any merit or fault of their own"*

Problem: The text states that, in Calvin's teaching, God chose those who would be damned apart from any fault of their own. Calvin taught that election is apart from merit, but he explicitly taught that the condemned perish through their own sin. The text is accurate that Calvin taught double predestination, which grounds reprobation in God's will.

Evidence: Calvin writes that although the reprobate fall as God's providence ordains, "the cause and matter of it is in themselves" (*Institutes* III.23.8). He also argues that if all are taken from a corrupt mass, "it is not strange that all are subject to condemnation" (*Institutes* III.23.3).

4. pp. 79–80 — *"How sola scriptura justifies ordination without a laying on of hands"*

Problem: The text faults Calvin's principle of *sola scriptura* for ordination without the laying on of hands. The book itself reports that Calvin required the laying on of hands and that the Genevans rejected it (pp. 74, 79–80). Calvin taught that the apostles' practice of laying on hands should be followed. The practice the text criticizes was the city's decision, not Calvin's teaching. The text is accurate that Calvin himself does not appear to have been ordained.

Evidence: In *Institutes* IV.3.16, Calvin writes that the apostles used no other ceremony than the laying on of hands, treats their constant practice as a rule for the church, and calls the rite useful provided it is not superstitiously abused.

5. p. 82 — *"Calvin's rejection of the traditional notions of real union with Christ and theosis"*

Problem: The text states that Calvin rejected real union with Christ and *theosis*, the Orthodox teaching that believers come to share in the divine life. On p. 79 the book itself says that Calvin "greatly emphasized" the believer's union with Christ. Calvin also described the goal of the Gospel in terms of deification, while denying any mixing of the divine essence with ours. Scholars debate how close his view is to the Orthodox doctrine, but "rejection" misstates it.

Evidence: Commenting on 2 Peter 1:4, Calvin writes that "the end of the gospel is, to render us eventually conformable to God, and, if we may so speak, to deify us," explaining that "nature" here means quality, not essence (*Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, 2 Pet. 1:4).

6. p. 82 — *"Calvin denied the reality of Christ's descent into Hell"*

Problem: Calvin did not deny the article of the Creed. He affirmed it as important to redemption, rejected the view that it merely repeats the burial, and interpreted it as Christ's enduring the torments of a condemned soul. One may disagree with his interpretation, but the text presents a different reading as a denial and calls it an attack on the Gospel.

Evidence: Calvin states that the descent was "of no little importance to the accomplishment of redemption" and declines to treat it as a repetition of the burial clause (*Institutes* II.16.8). He explains that Christ "bore in his soul the tortures of condemned and ruined man" (*Institutes* II.16.10).

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Chapter 6: Calvinism and Orthodoxy

pp. 85–96

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 85, n. 208 — *"This was Calvin's response to the Latin accusation"*

Problem: The note presents the slogan *ecclesia reformata et semper reformanda* as Calvin's own response to his critics. The note gives no source for this attribution, and the slogan is generally associated instead with seventeenth-century Dutch Reformed writers and was popularized in the twentieth century. The note's charge that Calvin was a case of "do as I say, not as I do" rests on this attribution. The text is accurate that the slogan is widely used in Reformed churches today.

Evidence: The idea behind the variant phrase appears in Jodocus van Lodenstein's *Beschouwinge van Zion* (Amsterdam, 1674–1678), and the phrase was popularized by Karl Barth in the twentieth century ("Ecclesia semper reformanda est," Wikipedia, citing Michael Bush, "Calvin and the Reformanda Sayings," 2008).

2. p. 86 — *"the first Synod of the French Protestants in 1539"*

Problem: The first national synod of the French Reformed churches was held in 1559, not 1539. The text is accurate that the French churches were organized on Calvin's principles.

Evidence: "The first national synod of the Reformed Churches was held in 1559" ("Reformed Church of France," Wikipedia).

3. p. 88 — *"essentially ended episcopacy in Scotland altogether"*

Problem: The Scottish Reformation did not end episcopacy for good. Bishops were restored under James VI, abolished again in 1638, and restored once more after 1660. Presbyterian government was settled only in 1690. The text is accurate that Scotland established presbyteries on a national scale and remains the mother country of Presbyterianism.

Evidence: James VI gradually restored bishops; the General Assembly of 1638 abolished them; episcopacy returned after the Restoration; and the settlement of 1690 guaranteed Presbyterian government ("Church of Scotland," Wikipedia).

4. p. 89 — *"Most of the churches in the early colonial times were established upon a Presbyterian model"*

Problem: The Puritan churches of colonial New England were organized on a Congregational model, not a Presbyterian one. Elsewhere the Anglican Church was

established in several colonies. The book itself notes that colonial Congregational churches were usually led by Puritan pastors (p. 63, n. 168). The text is accurate that New England Puritanism was Calvinist in doctrine.

Evidence: The Cambridge Platform (1648), which served as the church constitution of Massachusetts until 1780, set out a Congregational polity in which each local church governs itself ("Cambridge Platform," Wikipedia).

5. p. 96 — *"the person of Lucaris himself was not referenced"*

Problem: The text states that Lucaris himself was not referenced by Patriarch Dositheos and the Confession, and it is uncertain why. The Acts of the 1672 Synod of Jerusalem, held under Dositheos, discuss Lucaris at length. They argue that he did not write the Confession issued under his name, defend him by quoting his own words and deeds, and add that even if he had written it, it would remain only the private opinion of a heretic. This answers the question the text leaves open. The text is accurate that the eighteen decrees refute the Confession point by point.

Evidence: The Synod's acts deny that the Eastern Church ever held the opinions attributed to Lucaris and make "an elaborate attempt" to prove that he did not write the Confession ("Synod of Jerusalem (1672)," Wikipedia, summarizing J. N. W. B. Robertson, trans., *The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem*, 1899).

Logical Fallacies

1. p. 90 — *"It is ironic that the study of the same Epistle by different Reformers"*

Problem: Non Sequitur. The text again treats disagreement among interpreters of Romans as evidence against the clarity of Scripture. Disagreement does not by itself show that a text is unclear. The same chapter shows that reading Scripture together with tradition did not prevent serious disputes either: the Orthodox Church needed at least six councils between 1638 and 1691 to address the confession issued under its own Patriarch's name (pp. 93–94). The Reformed confessions also never claimed that every part of Scripture is equally clear, only that what is necessary for salvation is. Recurs from Chapter 1.

Evidence: Westminster Confession of Faith 1.7: "All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all," but "those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded" that the unlearned may understand them. The book's own definition of perspicuity is limited to "essential matters" (p. 16, n. 63).

Biased Language

1. p. 96 — *"as Luther in his madness claimed"*

Problem: "In his madness" is the author's own wording, not the Confession's, which speaks of "the followers of Luther." The phrase attacks Luther's state of mind instead of describing his view. It also attributes impanation to Luther himself, although the book's own

note states that the Lutheran Formula of Concord explicitly rejects impanation (p. 96, n. 226).

Neutral alternative: "nor, as the Confession says some of Luther's followers held, by impanation."

Evidence: The Confession of Dositheos, Decree XVII, as printed in the book's own Appendix II (p. 208), rejects impanation "as the followers of Luther most ignorantly and wretchedly suppose." See also: Other Misrepresentation.

Double Standard

1. p. 88 — *"the divisions that always follow the embrace of Protestantism"*

Problem: The text lists several Presbyterian bodies in Scotland as proof that division always follows Protestantism. It does not acknowledge that Orthodox churches have also divided. The book itself notes that the Orthodox in America remain divided along ethnic lines, holding up the Lutherans as an example to them (p. 37, n. 114). The word "always" also generalizes from a single country, and it omits that the major Scottish divisions arose largely from disputes over the state's control of church appointments and that most of them were later healed.

Evidence: The Russian Orthodox Church divided in the seventeenth century when the Old Believers rejected the liturgical reforms of Patriarch Nikon (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Old Believer"). The book's own note on Orthodox ethnic divisions in America appears at p. 37, n. 114. In Scotland, the secession of 1733 and the Disruption of 1843 followed from the Patronage Act of 1711, which let landowners appoint ministers; reunions followed in 1900 and 1929 ("Church of Scotland," Wikipedia). See also: Logical Fallacies.

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Chapter 7: The Church of England

pp. 97–114

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 101 — *"almost all of them were martyred for their Protestant faith"*

Problem: The text says almost all of the Cambridge Protestant leaders were martyred and then lists them. Several on its own list were not martyred. Matthew Parker survived Mary's reign and died as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1575. Nicholas Heath remained a Catholic: he became Mary's Catholic Archbishop of York and died in retirement in 1578. Edward Foxe, Bishop of Hereford, died in 1538 and was not executed. The text is accurate that Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and Barnes were executed.

Evidence: Parker died at Lambeth on May 17, 1575 ("Matthew Parker," Wikipedia). Heath was the last Catholic Archbishop of York, deprived in 1559 for refusing Elizabeth's settlement, and died at Chobham in 1578 ("Nicholas Heath," Wikipedia). Foxe died on May 8, 1538, and was buried in London ("Edward Foxe," Wikipedia).

2. p. 101 — *"without the words 'church' or 'priest'"*

Problem: Tyndale's New Testament did use the words "priest" and "church." He rendered the Greek *hiereus*, the word for a sacrificing priest, as "priest," while translating *presbyteros* as "elder," and he used "churches" for pagan temples in Acts 19:37. The text is accurate that Tyndale used "elder" and "congregation" where the traditional English versions had "priest" and "church."

Evidence: Tyndale's 1534 New Testament renders Matthew 8:4 as "go and shewe thy selfe to the preste" (Matt. 8:4), Acts 19:14 as "chefe of the prestes," and Acts 19:37 as "robbers of churches" (Tyndale Bible, 1534).

3. p. 102 — *"Cranmer convinced Henry VIII to put this Bible in all English churches"*

Problem: The Bible ordered placed in English churches was the Great Bible of 1539, prepared by Myles Coverdale under commission from Thomas Cromwell, not the Matthew Bible. The text also says Tyndale placed Luther's theology in the Matthew Bible, but that Bible was compiled by John Rogers and published in 1537, after Tyndale's execution in October 1536. It used Tyndale's earlier translations. The text is accurate that the Matthew Bible was licensed by the king and drew heavily on Tyndale's work.

Evidence: The Matthew Bible was compiled by John Rogers under the name "Thomas Matthew" and published in 1537; Tyndale was executed on October 6, 1536 ("Matthew Bible," Wikipedia). Cromwell directed the clergy to provide "one book of the Bible of the largest volume in English" for their churches, and the Great Bible, prepared by Coverdale, was produced for that purpose; Cranmer wrote the preface to its second edition (1540) ("Great Bible," Wikipedia).

4. p. 103 — *"professor at Cambridge until his death in 1549"*

Problem: Martin Bucer died in 1551, not 1549. The book itself gives the correct year elsewhere (pp. 8–9, n. 33).

Evidence: Bucer died in Cambridge on February 28, 1551 ("Martin Bucer," Wikipedia).

5. p. 104 — *"She attempted to restore monastic lands, and alienated the nobility"*

Problem: Mary's reconciliation with Rome left the former monastic lands with their lay owners. This guarantee was a major concession that made the reunion possible. The text is accurate that the landholders' interest in these properties was a serious concern during her reign.

Evidence: The confiscated monastic lands "were not returned to the church but remained in the hands of their influential new owners," a concession by Mary and Pope Julius III ("Mary I of England," Wikipedia).

6. p. 104 — *"Based upon her father's invention that the sovereign was head of the Church"*

Problem: Mary did not act on the claim that the sovereign was head of the Church. She rejected that claim. She stopped using the title of Supreme Head, and under her the English church was returned to the jurisdiction of Rome.

Evidence: The title of Supreme Head was "repugnant to Mary's Catholicism, and she omitted it after Christmas 1553"; Parliament then repealed Henry's religious laws and returned the English church to Roman jurisdiction ("Mary I of England," Wikipedia).

7. p. 105 — *"Most were exiled for the sin of breaking their monastic vows"*

Problem: The Marian exiles were not, for the most part, banished, and they were not mostly former monks. They were Protestants who fled to the Continent during Mary's reign. The known exiles were chiefly gentry, clergy, and theological students, together with merchants and artisans. The text is accurate that several hundred English Protestants went abroad and that married clergy were separated from their wives.

Evidence: Of about 500 known exiles, 166 were gentry, 67 clergy, 119 theological students, and 40 merchants, with smaller numbers of artisans, printers, and others; the exiles are described as Protestants who "fled to continental Europe" during the reign of Mary and Philip ("Marian exiles," Wikipedia).

8. p. 105 — *"together with altars and the crucifix"*

Problem: The Elizabethan settlement did not retain altars. Under the Act of Uniformity of 1559, the altar was replaced by a communion table, one of the most visible differences from Catholic churches. The text is accurate that traditional vestments were retained and that Elizabeth kept candles and a crucifix in her own chapel.

Evidence: The 1559 Act of Uniformity replaced the altar with a communion table, while Elizabeth was "happy enough to have such quintessential Catholic elements as candles and a

crucifix in her own private chapel" (World History Encyclopedia, "The Elizabethan Religious Settlement").

9. p. 106 — *"Bishop Richard Hooker"*

Problem: Richard Hooker was never a bishop. He was a priest whose posts included Master of the Temple in London and several parish livings. The text is accurate that he was the leading theologian of the Elizabethan church.

Evidence: Hooker was ordained a priest in 1579 and served as Master of the Temple (1585), subdean of Salisbury, and rector of Bishopsbourne ("Richard Hooker," Wikipedia).

10. p. 110 — *"In the 17th century, the Non-Juror bishops"*

Problem: The text dates the Non-Jurors' dialogue with the Orthodox to the seventeenth century and says it reached substantial theological agreement. The book's own note dates the negotiations to 1716–1725, in the eighteenth century, and says they "came to nothing" (p. 110, n. 254). The text is accurate that the Non-Jurors did not accept the Seventh Council's teaching on icons.

Evidence: The book's own footnote, p. 110, n. 254.

11. p. 113 — *"Neither the Roman Catholic nor Orthodox Churches have ever officially recognized"*

Problem: Several Orthodox churches did officially recognize Anglican orders in the twentieth century, though with conditions. The text is accurate that the Roman Catholic Church has not recognized them and that these Orthodox recognitions did not lead to intercommunion or represent the position of every Orthodox church.

Evidence: In 1922 the Synod of Constantinople under Patriarch Meletios IV conditionally declared Anglican orders valid ("Meletius Metaxakis," Wikipedia). The Patriarchate of Jerusalem (1923), the Church of Cyprus (1923), and the Patriarchate of Alexandria (1930) issued similar statements (texts compiled in "Official Eastern Orthodox Statements on Anglican Orders").

Logical Fallacies

1. pp. 98–99, n. 233 — *"a complete rejection of traditional Church hierarchy and apostolic succession"*

Problem: Hasty Generalization. From a single statement by Cranmer, the note concludes that the Anglican tradition completely rejects traditional hierarchy and apostolic succession. One statement does not establish the position of a whole church. The Ordinal that Cranmer himself largely prepared kept the threefold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons and affirmed that it dated from the apostles' time.

Evidence: The preface to the Ordinal begins, "It is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons" (*Book of Common*

Prayer, 1662, Ordinal). The 1550 Ordinal containing this preface was largely prepared by Cranmer ("Edwardine Ordinals," Wikipedia).

2. p. 106, n. 248 — *"In Hooker we see how inauthentic the Anglican affirmation"*

Problem: Hasty Generalization. The note judges the Church of England's official position on apostolic succession by the private opinion of one theologian. Hooker's view of continental ministers did not change the Church's formal rule, which required episcopal ordination for ministry in the Church of England.

Evidence: The preface to the 1662 Ordinal states that "no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in the Church of England" unless admitted by its form or having "had formerly Episcopal Consecration or Ordination" (*Book of Common Prayer*, 1662, Ordinal).

3. p. 113 — *"to be a member of the Episcopal Church USA today means your faith is secularist"*

Problem: Hasty Generalization. The text concludes that every member of the Episcopal Church holds a secularist faith and endorses the denomination's positions, based on the decisions of its leadership and a few congregations. Membership in a denomination does not show that each member holds all of its official positions. The book's own account of a lifelong Episcopalian who protested her church's direction (p. 114) shows that members differed from their leaders.

Cherry-Picking

1. p. 99 — *"in direct contradiction to scriptural injunction and canon law"*

Problem: The text presents the papal dispensation for Henry's marriage to his brother's widow as directly contrary to Scripture. It cites the prohibition but omits the law of levirate marriage, which commands a man to marry his dead brother's childless widow. Catherine's first husband, Arthur, had died without children. Both passages were central to the debate over Henry's marriage, so the question was not as one-sided as the text presents it.

Evidence: "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife" (Lev. 18:16, ESV). "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son … Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife" (Deut. 25:5, ESV). The book itself refers to levirate law elsewhere (p. 25).

2. p. 112 — *"St. Raphael's judgment is that of Holy Orthodoxy"*

Problem: The text presents St. Raphael's 1912 judgment as the unchanged Orthodox position to the present day. It omits the later official Anglican–Orthodox dialogue, in which the Anglicans agreed with the Orthodox on one of the specific objections Raphael raised, the *filioque*. The text is accurate that significant differences remain and that no intercommunion has resulted.

Evidence: The 1976 Moscow Agreed Statement of the Anglican–Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission stated that "the *Filioque* clause should not be included in this Creed," and the 1978 Lambeth Conference asked Anglican churches to consider omitting it (quoted in "The Filioque and Its Current Status," North American Anglican).

Unsupported Assumptions

1. p. 102, n. 238 — *"Cranmer was quite capable of trickery"*

Problem: The note charges Cranmer with trickery, but the only support it offers is an account of Henry VIII persuading Parliament to restrict Bible reading to the upper classes. That account describes an action of Henry and Parliament and says nothing about any deception by Cranmer.

Assumption: Cranmer used deception to place the English Bible in the churches.

Biased Language

1. p. 98 — *"the immoral wishes of a corrupt and vile king"*

Problem: "Corrupt and vile" condemns Henry's character instead of describing his actions, which the text describes elsewhere. The words invite contempt rather than informing the reader.

Neutral alternative: "Henry VIII's desire to annul his marriage."

2. p. 102 — *"stealing all their treasure"*

Problem: "Stealing" frames the Crown's confiscation of monastic property as common theft. Recurs from Chapter 3.

Neutral alternative: "confiscating their property."

3. p. 103, n. 244 — *"He was a true puppet"*

Problem: The note calls Cranmer "a true puppet," says he "showed little conscience," and concludes that for him "the ends often justified the means." These are judgments of his character rather than descriptions of his actions, which the note also reports.

Neutral alternative: "At the king's request, Cranmer declared these marriages null."

4. p. 112 — *"wandered so feverishly and fervently away from traditional Christianity"*

Problem: "Feverishly and fervently" portrays doctrinal change as frenzy rather than describing what changed. The specific changes are listed on the following page.

Neutral alternative: "has departed further from traditional Christian teaching."

5. p. 112 — *"has become spiritually vacuous"*

Problem: "Spiritually vacuous" pronounces an entire church empty of spiritual life. The evidence offered concerns membership and attendance, which do not measure the spiritual condition of those who remain.

Neutral alternative: "has seen a steep decline in membership and attendance."

6. p. 113 — *"has been in an out of control spiral ever since"*

Problem: "Out of control spiral" describes a series of decisions by church bodies as a chaotic collapse. The decisions themselves are listed and can be evaluated without the image.

Neutral alternative: "its teaching on marriage and sexuality has continued to change since then."

7. p. 113, n. 260 — *"the secularized and lifeless shell of Christianity"*

Problem: "Lifeless shell" dismisses the faith of an entire denomination with an image of death rather than identifying the doctrines in dispute.

Neutral alternative: "the positions of the Episcopal Church's leadership."

8. p. 113, n. 262 — *"A rather unaccomplished homosexual San Francisco Supervisor"*

Problem: The note belittles a public official as "unaccomplished" and identifies him by his sexuality in a way meant to discredit. This is a personal judgment rather than information.

Neutral alternative: "Harvey Milk, a San Francisco supervisor killed in 1978."

9. p. 114 — *"do not endorse the perversions of faith and practice"*

Problem: "Perversions" labels the changes in Episcopal and English teaching as corruptions rather than describing them.

Neutral alternative: "do not accept the changes in teaching and practice."

10. p. 114 — *"the reckless abandonment of the traditional Christian faith"*

Problem: "Reckless abandonment" and "zealous Episcopal endorsement of immorality" attribute heedlessness and zeal for wrongdoing to a church body instead of stating the decisions that led to the withdrawal.

Neutral alternative: "In response to the Episcopal Church's changes in teaching on marriage and sexuality."

Misquoted or Unreliable Sources

1. p. 111 — *"a foul thing, vainly invented"*

Problem: The quoted statement by St. Raphael gives the words of Article XXII as calling these teachings "a foul thing." The Article says "a fond thing," meaning a foolish one. The book prints the altered wording as the Article's own words here and again in Appendix IV (p. 231) without correction. Whether the error began with Raphael or with the book, it makes the Article sound more hostile than it is.

Evidence: Article XXII states that the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, images, relics, "and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture" (Articles of Religion, *Book of Common Prayer*, 1662).

Double Standard

1. p. 108 — *"Here we see an expression of the Erastian nature of the Church of England"*

Problem: The text treats Article 21's statement that general councils are gathered by the will of princes as evidence of Anglican statism. The ecumenical councils the Orthodox Church accepts were themselves summoned by emperors. The text does not acknowledge this parallel.

Evidence: The *Catholic Encyclopedia* states that the convocation of the first eight general councils "was regularly issued by the Christian emperors." Constantine summoned Nicaea (325), Theodosius II and Valentinian III convened Ephesus (431), and Marcian summoned Chalcedon (451) ("General Councils," 1908).

Other Misrepresentation

1. p. 101, n. 237 — *"Conveniently, but not honestly"*

Problem: The note states that the NIV translates every reference to apostolic tradition as "teaching" and reserves "tradition" for man-made tradition, and it accuses the translators of dishonesty. The current NIV renders apostolic tradition as "traditions" in 1 Corinthians 11:2 and gives "traditions" as a footnote reading in other passages. The note is accurate that the NIV uses "teaching" in some of these passages.

Evidence: "I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you" (1 Cor. 11:2, NIV). At 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and 3:6, the NIV text reads "teachings" and "teaching," with footnotes giving "traditions" and "tradition."

2. p. 104 — *"Foxe skips to the Protestants"*

Problem: The text says that after a few early martyrs, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* skips directly to the sixteenth century, implying a gap of more than a thousand years. Foxe's work covers English martyrs from the fourteenth century onward, including the period before the Reformation.

Evidence: *Encyclopædia Britannica* describes the work as focusing primarily on English martyrs "from the 14th century up to the reign of Queen Mary I" ("The Book of Martyrs").

3. p. 112 — *"Seventy percent of English children are born outside of wedlock"*

Problem: The figure is substantially overstated and no source is given. The official figure is a little under half. The same page states that only about one million people self-identify as members of the Church of England, while surveys show that several million do; the figure appears to reflect church attendance rather than self-identification. The text uses it as evidence of a moral crisis, so the error affects the argument.

Evidence: In 2017, 48.1 percent of live births in England and Wales occurred outside marriage or civil partnership (Office for National Statistics, *Births in England and Wales: 2017*). In the 2017 British Social Attitudes survey, 14 percent of British adults described themselves as belonging to the Church of England (*Church Times*, September 14, 2018).

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Chapter 8: The Catholic Counter-Reformation

pp. 115–131

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 121 — *“was elected Pope on Emperor Charles V’s wishes”*

Problem: Paul IV was elected against the wishes of Charles V, not because of them. He was strongly anti-Habsburg, and his reign led to war between the Papal States and Spain. The text is accurate that he headed the Inquisition, refused to reconvene the Council of Trent, and oversaw the creation of the Index of Forbidden Books.

Evidence: *Encyclopædia Britannica* states that at Carafa’s election “even the veto of the Holy Roman emperor Charles V was ignored” (“Paul IV”). Carafa was elected “in the face of opposition from Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor”; his anti-Spanish policy led Philip II to invade the Papal States in 1556 (“Pope Paul IV,” Wikipedia).

2. p. 130 — *“by some 95%”*

Problem: The text states that the number of Roman Catholic monks, nuns, and members of religious orders in the United States has fallen by about 95 percent, without a source. The decline has been large, but well short of that figure. Religious sisters, by far the largest group, declined by about 72 percent between 1965 and 2014.

Evidence: The number of U.S. Catholic sisters fell “from roughly 180,000 in 1965 to about 50,000 in 2014” (Pew Research Center, citing the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, Georgetown University, 2014).

3. p. 130 — *“were educating some 6 million children before Vatican II”*

Problem: The text states, without a source, that Catholic parochial schools educated about six million children before Vatican II and now educate about 25 percent of that number. Both figures overstate the decline. Enrollment peaked at a little over five million, and recent

enrollment is about a third of that peak. The text is accurate that enrollment has fallen sharply.

Evidence: Catholic school enrollment peaked in the early 1960s at "more than 5.2 million students"; in 2014, 1.8 million students were enrolled (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Catholic Schools Fact Sheet").

Biased Language

1. p. 115 — *"as an answer to the Protestant aggression"*

Problem: "Aggression" casts the Reformation as an attack rather than a religious movement, inviting the reader to see Protestants as aggressors before their claims are examined.

Neutral alternative: "as a response to the Protestant Reformation."

2. p. 121 — *"Paul IV was apparently something of a paranoid fanatic"*

Problem: "Paranoid fanatic" is a psychological label applied to a historical figure, and the text gives no source for it. The facts that follow, his hostility to Protestants and his persecution of the Jews of Rome, can be stated directly.

Neutral alternative: "Paul IV was severe and suspicious toward those he considered threats to the Church."

3. p. 129 — *"banjos and guitars and architectural monstrosities"*

Problem: The passage describes modern Catholic worship as "radically Protestantized, degraded," and its buildings as "monstrosities." These words express contempt and present matters of taste as fact, rather than describing the specific liturgical changes after Vatican II.

Neutral alternative: "Traditional chant and church architecture have often been replaced by contemporary music and modern building styles."

4. p. 130, n. 286 — *"fought valiantly against the legalization of same-sex marriage"*

Problem: The note praises one side of a public controversy as "valiant" and describes its critics' actions as "persecution." Compared with the dismissive description of a San Francisco supervisor in the previous chapter (p. 113, n. 262), the wording assigns praise and blame by the side taken rather than by the facts.

Neutral alternative: "Cardinal Levada opposed the legalization of same-sex marriage and was criticized by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors." See also: Chapter 7, Biased Language.

Double Standard

1. p. 128 — *"not 'Take, parade' or 'Take, adore'"*

Problem: The text argues that because Christ said "Take, eat," carrying the consecrated Eucharist in procession and venerating it outside of Communion is a Latin abuse. The

Orthodox Church itself carries the already consecrated Gifts in procession at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, while the faithful make full prostrations. The text does not apply its own reasoning to this Orthodox practice. It is accurate that Corpus Christi processions and adoration in a monstrance are not Orthodox practices.

Evidence: In the Presanctified Liturgy, the presanctified Gifts are "brought into the holy altar in a procession resembling the great entrance" (Orthodox Church in America, "Vespers with Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts"), made "in absolute silence, while everyone makes a full prostration" ("Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts," Wikipedia).

Other Misrepresentation

1. p. 124, n. 282 — *"to be children of the Roman Church without even knowing it"*

Problem: The note states that the Decree on Ecumenism explicitly affirms many non-Roman Christians to be children of the Roman Church. The decree does not say this. It calls baptized Christians outside the Catholic Church brothers of the Catholic faithful and describes their communion with the Catholic Church as real but imperfect. The note is accurate that the decree uses the language of "separated brethren" and grounds this in baptism.

Evidence: The Decree states that "all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ's body" and "are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church," and that such believers "are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect" (Second Vatican Council, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, §3).

2. p. 128, n. 284 — *"the unworthiness of a priest administering the sacraments does not nullify the sacraments"*

Problem: The note defines *ex opere operato* as the teaching that a priest's unworthiness does not nullify the sacraments. At Trent the phrase meant that the sacraments confer grace by the act performed, as opposed to faith alone in the divine promise; the minister's unworthiness is addressed in a separate canon. The definition also obscures the actual disagreement, since the Lutherans agreed with Rome that an unworthy minister does not nullify the sacraments.

Evidence: Trent, Session 7, canon 8, condemns anyone who says that grace is not conferred "through the act performed, but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices"; canon 12 separately addresses a minister in mortal sin (Council of Trent, Session 7, Papal Encyclicals Online). Augsburg Confession, Article VIII, teaches that the sacraments are effectual "notwithstanding they be administered by evil men."

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Chapter 9: America's Folk Religion: Evangelicalism and the Rise of Non-Denominationalism

pp. 133–150

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 134 — *"the majority of evangelicals today have found the historical Protestant denominational structures wanting"*

Problem: Most American evangelicals still belong to denominations. Nondenominational churches are a growing but minority share of the evangelical tradition, and a single denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, is larger. The text is accurate that nondenominational churches have grown.

Evidence: In Pew's most recent Religious Landscape Study (2023–24), conducted after the book appeared, evangelical Protestants make up 23 percent of U.S. adults; nondenominational evangelical churches account for 3 percent and the Southern Baptist Convention for 4 percent (Pew Research Center, "Evangelical Protestants").

2. p. 135 — *"The middle colonies were more closely tied to the Church of England"*

Problem: The Church of England was established in the southern colonies, not the middle colonies. Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware had no established church and were known for religious diversity, including Quakers and many German Protestant groups. The

text is accurate that New England was associated with Reformed churches and that Rhode Island had the first Baptist congregation.

Evidence: The Church of England was established in southern colonies "such as Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia," and in Maryland from 1692; Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey had no official church ("Religion in the Thirteen Colonies," Wikipedia).

3. p. 135 — *"claimed to have been converted in heart after some time already as clergymen"*

Problem: This is true of John Wesley, whose Aldersgate experience (1738) came years after his ordination. It is not true of George Whitefield or Jonathan Edwards, both of whom described their conversions before entering the ministry.

Evidence: Whitefield's conversion took place while he was a student at Oxford, before his ordination as deacon on June 20, 1736 ("George Whitefield," Wikipedia). Edwards's conversion came during his last year at Yale, before his first pastoral service in New York in 1722–1723 ("Jonathan Edwards," Wikipedia).

4. p. 140 — *"at a house on Bonnie Brae Street, where Parham was staying"*

Problem: Charles Parham was not staying at the Bonnie Brae Street house and was not in Los Angeles when speaking in tongues began there on April 9, 1906. The house belonged to Richard and Ruth Asberry, and the meetings were led by William Seymour. Parham first came to Azusa Street in October 1906. The text also places the house "in Azusa, CA"; Azusa Street and the Bonnie Brae Street house were in Los Angeles.

Evidence: The Bonnie Brae Street home belonged to Richard and Ruth Asberry; Parham had moved his headquarters to Houston and first came to Azusa Street in October 1906 ("Azusa Street Revival," Wikipedia).

5. p. 143 — *"The 19th century witnessed the conversion of more persons"*

Problem: The twentieth century, not the nineteenth, saw the largest growth of Christianity in history, especially in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The book itself describes evangelical growth over the last century as "astronomical" (p. 133). The text is accurate that the nineteenth century was a great age of Protestant missions.

Evidence: The number of Christians worldwide grew from about 600 million in 1910 to more than 2 billion in 2010; in sub-Saharan Africa it rose from fewer than 9 million to more than 516 million (Pew Research Center, *Global Christianity*, 2011).

6. p. 143 — *"Korea had surpassed America in the number of missionaries sent"*

Problem: South Korea did not surpass the United States in the number of missionaries sent. The United States has remained by far the largest sending country. The text is accurate that South Korea became a major sending country relative to its size.

Evidence: In 2010 the United States sent about 127,000 missionaries, compared with 34,000 from second-ranked Brazil; South Korea ranked fifth per million church members (Center for the Study of Global Christianity, reported in *Christianity Today*, July 2013).

7. p. 144 — *"the divorce rate of active evangelicals is higher than the average divorce rate for all Americans"*

Problem: Studies of active, church-attending evangelicals find lower divorce rates than among nominal evangelicals and the unaffiliated. The claim that evangelicals divorce more often than average appears to rest on surveys that did not distinguish active from nominal members. No source is given.

Evidence: Sociologist Bradley Wright found that about 60 percent of evangelicals who never attend church had been divorced or separated, compared with 38 percent of weekly attenders. Brad Wilcox found that Americans who attend services several times a month were about 35 percent less likely to divorce than the unaffiliated (reported in "Christians question divorce stats," Baptist Press, via *Baptist & Reflector*).

Logical Fallacies

1. p. 141, n. 302 — *"both of these ethics stigmatize our Lord Jesus Christ as a sinner"*

Problem: Straw Man. The note claims that total abstinence from alcohol implies that Christ sinned by drinking wine. Evangelicals who advocate abstinence generally ground it in the harms of alcohol today, not in a claim that drinking is sinful in itself or that Christ sinned. The book's own tradition offers a parallel: Orthodox monastics abstain from meat for life without implying that Christ sinned by eating it.

Evidence: The Southern Baptist Convention's 2006 resolution "On Alcohol Use in America" bases its call for abstinence on physical harm, highway deaths, family breakdown, and addiction; it does not claim that drinking is inherently sinful or mention Christ.

2. p. 148 — *"evangelicals radically reject traditional Christian reliance on"*

Problem: Hasty Generalization. The text states that evangelicals as a group radically reject patristic teaching, liturgy, and the Creed. On the same page, the book includes within evangelicalism "portions of all traditionally main-line denominations," many of which use the historic creeds in worship. It also describes evangelical Anglicans within the Church of England (p. 109) and an evangelical theologian who calls for embracing the theology of the first four ecumenical councils (p. 147, n. 313). The book's own description shows that the rejection is not general.

3. p. 150 — *"evangelicalism is permeated by theological chaos"*

Problem: Hasty Generalization. The text draws a conclusion about evangelicalism as a whole from four pastors who "at one time or another" held erroneous views of the Trinity. The book's own note on John MacArthur acknowledges that his view changed (p. 150, n.

321). Four examples, some since corrected, cannot establish that a movement of some 70 million Americans (p. 146) is permeated by chaos.

Unsupported Assumptions

1. p. 138 — *"Most have been baptized more than once, and some even many times"*

Problem: The text states as fact that most evangelicals have been baptized more than once and do not know the day of their baptism. No source or data is given for either claim, and the conclusion that evangelicals have "very little respect for Holy Baptism" rests on them.

Assumption: Most evangelicals have been baptized more than once and do not know when they were baptized.

Biased Language

1. p. 134 — *"the very worst form of denominationalism itself"*

Problem: "In a vain effort" and "the very worst form of denominationalism" condemn independent congregations before any argument is made. The point that such congregations function as denominations of one could be stated without the superlative.

Neutral alternative: "These non-denominational congregations function, in effect, as single-congregation denominations."

2. p. 138 — *"some such intangible, pseudo-sacrament"*

Problem: "Pseudo-sacrament" mocks evangelical conversion practices as counterfeits. Evangelicals do not regard the altar call as a sacrament, so the label also misdescribes their view.

Neutral alternative: "substitutes a conversion experience, such as responding to an altar call, for the role Orthodox teaching assigns to Baptism."

3. p. 141 — *"reek as the work of charlatans"*

Problem: "Reek" and "charlatans" charge Pentecostal practitioners with fraud and invite disgust, rather than describing the practices or explaining why they are judged to be false.

Neutral alternative: "Some of these experiences and practices are judged by the Orthodox to be spurious."

4. p. 146 — *"the penchant of modern suburbanites for fast-food religion"*

Problem: "Fast-food religion" and "pastors of this ilk" ridicule large evangelical churches and their members rather than describing their practices. The features listed after the phrase can be described without it.

Neutral alternative: "the preference of many suburban churchgoers for informal, low-commitment worship."

5. p. 147 — *"jumped into the naïve ocean of 'non-denominationalism'"*

Problem: "Naïve" dismisses the judgment of those who join non-denominational churches. Recurs from Chapter 4.

Neutral alternative: "Many have joined non-denominational churches."

6. p. 148 — *"No culture in the history of mankind has produced more religious quacks"*

Problem: "Quacks" ridicules rather than describes, and the sweeping comparison with all of human history is offered without evidence. The sentence invites contempt for American religion in general.

Neutral alternative: "America's religious freedom has produced many new religious movements."

7. p. 149, n. 319 — *"Gnosticism is expressed in many forms of Evangelical Christianity"*

Problem: The label attaches an ancient condemned heresy to evangelical sacramental views that do not share its defining features. Recurs from Chapter 3.

Neutral alternative: "Many evangelicals do not regard the sacraments as the ordinary means of grace."

Misquoted or Unreliable Sources

1. p. 150, n. 323 — *"The internet is replete with documentation"*

Problem: The note charges Chuck Smith with preaching "many heresies" on the Incarnation and the resurrection body, and its only support is that the internet contains documentation from former members. No statement by Smith is quoted and no source is named. An unspecified appeal to the internet cannot support a charge of heresy against a named person.

Double Standard

1. pp. 138–139 — *"A tree can be judged by its fruits"*

Problem: The text treats the divisions that followed the Great Awakenings as evidence that the revivalists' conversions were not genuine, since true conversion leads to unity. The book does not apply this test to divisions within Orthodoxy, such as the Old Believer schism in the Russian Church, or to the East–West schism it describes in the Introduction. Recurs from Chapter 6.

Evidence: The Russian Orthodox Church divided in the seventeenth century when the Old Believers rejected the liturgical reforms of Patriarch Nikon (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Old Believer").

Other Misrepresentation

1. p. 150, n. 321 — *"Jesus is not the "co-eternal" Son of God"*

Problem: The note says MacArthur taught a form of adoptionism in the first edition of his commentary on Galatians. MacArthur's former view, called incarnational sonship, held that the title "Son" applied to Christ from the incarnation, while affirming that Christ is eternally God. Adoptionism denies Christ's eternal deity, so the label misstates his view. The view appeared in his 1983 commentary on Hebrews, not Galatians. The note is accurate that MacArthur once held this view and later changed it.

Evidence: In "Re-examining the Eternal Sonship of Christ," MacArthur states that he first published the incarnational sonship view in his 1983 commentary on Hebrews, that he always held an "unqualified and unequivocal commitment" to Christ being eternally God, and that he now affirms Christ's eternal sonship (Banner of Truth).

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Chapter 10: An Orthodox Appreciation of Protestant Virtues

pp. 151–165

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 151 — *"the 100-year correspondence between the Lutheran theologians of Tübingen"*

Problem: The correspondence between the Tübingen Lutherans and Patriarch Jeremias II lasted only a few years, not a century. It began when the Lutherans sent the Patriarch the Augsburg Confession in 1575 and ended in 1581. The text is accurate that the exchange took place and that it was an important early contact between Orthodoxy and Protestantism.

Evidence: The Tübingen theologians presented the Augsburg Confession to Jeremias II on May 24, 1575, and "from 1576 to 1581 he conducted the first important theological exchanges between Orthodoxy and Protestants" ("Jeremias II of Constantinople," Wikipedia).

2. p. 155 — *"the seventy million Protestants of our land"*

Problem: The figure of seventy million greatly understates the number of American Protestants. It matches the book's own estimate of evangelicals alone (p. 146). Including mainline and historically black Protestants, the number of Protestant adults is well over one hundred million.

Evidence: Pew Research Center's 2014 Religious Landscape Study counted about 62 million evangelical Protestant adults, about 36 million mainline Protestant adults, and nearly 16 million in historically black Protestant churches, out of an adult population of nearly 245 million (Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape," 2015).

Logical Fallacies

1. p. 154 — *"He would be an Orthodox Christian or a heretic. Nothing else."*

Problem: Begging the Question. The argument assumes that every Christian community before the sixteenth century held the faith of today's Orthodox Church, which is the point in dispute. The book's own example undercuts the assumption. A Christian in eighth-century Gaul belonged to the Frankish church, whose Council of Frankfurt (794) rejected the Second Council of Nicaea's decree on the veneration of icons. The book treats that decree as binding Orthodox teaching (p. 110, n. 255). The text is accurate that Lutheran, Reformed, and Anabaptist churches did not exist as institutions before the sixteenth century.

Evidence: The Council of Frankfurt overturned Nicaea II's rulings on icons, "allowing that images could be useful educational devices, but denying that they were worthy of veneration" ("Council of Frankfurt," Wikipedia).

2. p. 161 — *"that teaching was authoritative and remains so"*

Problem: Non Sequitur. The text cites the saying "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35) to show that Jesus' unwritten teaching remains authoritative today. The saying is known only because Luke wrote it down in Acts, which is part of the canon. The example shows that the Gospels did not record everything Jesus said, which Scripture itself states (John 21:25). It does not show that any unwritten teaching can still be identified today, which is the point the argument needs.

Evidence: "There are also many other things which Jesus did. If they were all written, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25, EOB).

3. p. 162 — *"the Bible alone is the authority of the Church"*

Problem: Straw Man. On p. 159 the text defines *sola scriptura* correctly, as the teaching that the Bible is "the only infallible rule." Here and on p. 165, it restates the doctrine as the claim that the Bible is the only authority of any kind, and argues against that version. The Reformers did not hold it. They received the ancient creeds and gave councils and teachers a real but lower authority, tested by Scripture.

Evidence: The Formula of Concord (1577) states that the writings of earlier and later teachers "are in nowise to be equalled to the Holy Scriptures, but are all to be esteemed inferior to them," and of the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, "we publicly profess that we embrace them" (Epitome, Of the Compendious Rule and Norm, I–II). The Westminster Confession states that the decrees of synods and councils, "if consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission" (31.3).

4. p. 163 — *"Are we to suppose, as the sola scriptura theory would have it"*

Problem: Straw Man. The text claims that *sola scriptura* would require first-century Thessalonians to ignore what Paul taught them in person. Protestant confessions do not teach this. They hold that the apostles' oral teaching was authoritative while it was being given, and that Scripture is now the only infallible record of that teaching. The argument refutes a position its opponents do not hold.

Evidence: The Westminster Confession (1646) acknowledges that God revealed His will "at sundry times, and in divers manners," and then committed it wholly to writing, "those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased" (Westminster Confession of Faith, 1.1).

5. p. 165 — *"each Reformer made himself a pope"*

Problem: Hasty Generalization. The text claims that every Reformer made himself a pope. Its only support is one accusation by Luther's Swiss opponents that Luther acted like a pope (n. 340). A single opponent's charge against one Reformer does not establish a claim about all of them.

6. p. 165 — *"Why could not Luther and Zwingli and the other Reformers agree"*

Problem: Non Sequitur. The text again argues that disagreement among the Reformers proves that *sola scriptura* is false, and it concludes that the doctrine "has borne the fruit of division." Disagreement among interpreters does not by itself show that a standard is wrong, and churches that accept tradition as an authority have also divided. Recurs from Chapter 1.

Evidence: The Russian Orthodox Church divided in the seventeenth century when the Old Believers rejected the liturgical reforms of Patriarch Nikon (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Old Believer"). The book itself describes the East–West schism between two churches that both appeal to tradition (p. xviii). See also: Double Standard.

Biased Language

1. p. 152 — *"naïve theological peaceniks who assume that"*

Problem: "Naïve theological peaceniks" ridicules those who take a less severe view of doctrinal division, and it assigns them a motive, that they "do not understand theology," without evidence. It dismisses a group rather than answering its view.

Neutral alternative: "those who regard these theological divisions as less important."

Other Misrepresentation

1. p. 159 — *"all dogma must rest upon clear and explicit teaching of Scripture"*

Problem: The text states that the Protestant confessions require every doctrine to rest on clear and explicit statements of Scripture. The major confessions also accept doctrines proved from Scripture or deduced from it by necessary inference. Stating the principle as "explicit teaching" only makes it appear narrower and easier to refute than it is.

Evidence: The Westminster Confession (1.6) includes what is "expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture." The Thirty-Nine Articles (Article VI) exclude from required belief only what "is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby" (*Book of Common Prayer*, 1662).

2. p. 164, n. 339 — *"possesses a self-sufficient power, higher than the Church"*

Problem: The note says the Roman Catholic doctrine of the indelible character of ordination places the priest's power above the Church. Catholic teaching holds that ordination cannot be repeated or undone, but that the Church can discharge a priest from his duties or forbid him to exercise them. The note is accurate that, in Catholic teaching, a priest cannot be returned to the lay state in the strict sense.

Evidence: The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that a validly ordained man can, for a grave reason, be discharged from the obligations and functions of ordination or forbidden to exercise them, "but he cannot become a layman again in the strict sense, because the character imprinted by ordination is for ever" (§1583).

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Chapter 11: The Heresies of Protestantism

pp. 167–185

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 168 — *"articulated the double procession of the Holy Spirit without patristic precedent"*

Problem: The text says Augustine introduced the double procession of the Holy Spirit without any earlier patristic support, and repeats this on p. 169. Earlier Western writers, including Ambrose of Milan, Augustine's own teacher, had already spoken of the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. The text is accurate that Augustine gave the doctrine its fullest early form and that it was not part of the Creed he confessed.

Evidence: Tertullian, Jerome, and Ambrose are among the Western writers before Augustine who spoke of the Spirit coming from the Father and the Son; Ambrose writes that the Spirit "proceeds from (*procedit a*) the Father and the Son" ("Filioque," Wikipedia, citing Ambrose, *On the Holy Spirit* 1.11.120).

2. p. 170 — *"formally anathematized the filioque doctrine as heresy"*

Problem: The Council of Constantinople of 879–880 did not name or anathematize the *filioque* doctrine. It forbade any additions to or subtractions from the Creed. The text is

accurate that the council forbade altering the Creed, and Orthodox writers have read that decree as a condemnation of the added clause. That reading, however, is an interpretation, not the council's formal wording.

Evidence: The council's decree condemns those who put forth "illegitimate words, or additions, or subtractions" to the Creed without naming the clause; it "implicitly condemned" the addition ("Fourth Council of Constantinople (Eastern Orthodox)," Wikipedia).

Cherry-Picking

1. p. 169 — *"Pope Leo III wrote a letter to these Western monks"*

Problem: The text presents Pope Leo III as an example of papal humility on the *filioque* question, implying that he opposed it. It omits that Leo accepted the doctrine of the double procession, which the book calls a heresy. He objected only to adding the clause to the Creed. The text is accurate that Leo refused the addition and displayed the Creed without it on silver plaques.

Evidence: "Although Leo III did not disapprove the Filioque doctrine," he held that the clause should not be included in the Creed, and in 810 had the Creed posted without it in Greek and Latin ("Filioque," Wikipedia).

2. p. 174 — *"who reiterated and continue to reiterate the filioque"*

Problem: The text says Protestants continue to reaffirm the *filioque*. It omits that decades before this edition, the Anglican Communion, in official dialogue with the Orthodox, agreed that the clause should not be in the Creed and asked its churches to consider dropping it. The text is accurate that the Reformers kept the clause and that most Protestant churches still use it. Recurs from Chapter 7.

Evidence: The 1976 Moscow Agreed Statement of the Anglican–Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission stated that "the *Filioque* clause should not be included in this Creed," and the 1978 Lambeth Conference asked Anglican churches to consider omitting it (quoted in "The Filioque and Its Current Status," North American Anglican).

Biased Language

1. p. 171 — *"a man-centered entertainment service"*

Problem: The phrase describes the worship of Catholics and Protestants in general as entertainment rather than worship. It dismisses the worship of hundreds of millions of people with a single label and offers no evidence.

Neutral alternative: "changes in Catholic and Protestant worship."

2. p. 171 — *"a diabolical and heretical attack upon the Lord God Himself"*

Problem: Calling a doctrine heretical states the author's church's judgment. "Diabolical," along with "heinous teaching" (p. 172) and "emasculates the Father's hypostasis" (p. 174), adds emotional force in place of the theological argument the chapter goes on to give.

Neutral alternative: "Why do the Orthodox regard the *filioque* as a serious heresy?"

3. p. 183 — *"Common Protestant teaching on the sacraments is gnostic at its core"*

Problem: "Gnostic" labels Protestant sacramental teaching with the name of an ancient heresy that taught matter is evil, which Protestants do not hold. Recurs from Chapter 9.

Neutral alternative: "Many Protestants deny that grace is conveyed through the sacraments."

Misquoted or Unreliable Sources

1. p. 178, n. 360 — *"Westminster Confession of Faith, VIII.5"*

Problem: The quoted sentence ("Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt …") is from Chapter XI, "Of Justification," not Chapter VIII, "Of Christ the Mediator." The text presents a sentence about justification as the Reformed doctrine of the atonement and calls it reductionistic. The Confession's chapter on Christ's work goes on to describe Christ "overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom" (VIII.8).

Evidence: Westminster Confession of Faith, XI.3: "Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified." VIII.5 begins, "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience, and sacrifice of himself … hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father." See also: Other Misrepresentation.

Other Misrepresentation

1. p. 174 — *"salvation is essentially a deliverance from the wrath of God"*

Problem: The text states that in Protestant teaching salvation is essentially deliverance from God's wrath, and on p. 176 that it is "reduced to being saved from God Himself." The major Protestant catechisms describe salvation as deliverance from sin, death, and the devil as well. The text is accurate that Protestant theology places strong emphasis on justification and forgiveness.

Evidence: Luther's *Small Catechism* says Christ has "purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil" (Second Article). The Heidelberg Catechism (1563), Answer 1, says Christ "has set me free from the tyranny of the devil."

2. p. 176 — *"to fear and tremble about salvation is a sign of a lack of faith"*

Problem: The text says that in most Protestant theology, fear about one's salvation shows a lack of faith, and that once a Protestant is justified "there is not much left to fear." This treats the belief that salvation cannot be lost as the Protestant norm. On p. 175 the book

itself grants that Protestant confessions disagree on this point. Lutheran and Methodist confessions teach that a justified believer can fall from grace.

Evidence: The Augsburg Confession (1530), Article XII, condemns those "who deny that those once justified can lose the Holy Ghost." The Methodist Articles of Religion, Article XII, state, "After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin."

3. p. 178 — *"which ignored the traditional emphases on the conquering of death"*

Problem: The text says Protestant teaching on the atonement ignored Christ's victory over death and the demons. The Westminster Confession, which the text quotes, teaches Christ's victory over all the enemies of His people, and Luther's catechism names death and the devil among the powers from which Christ redeems. The text is accurate that Protestant theology gives central place to Christ's satisfaction of God's justice.

Evidence: Westminster Confession of Faith, VIII.8, describes Christ "overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom." Luther's *Small Catechism*, Second Article, names deliverance "from death, and from the power of the devil."

4. p. 178 — *"the immense neglect of emphasis upon the heart of the New Testament teaching"*

Problem: The text says Protestant teaching neglects salvation as union with Christ. Union with Christ is central in Reformed theology, beginning with Calvin. The text is accurate that the Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* is not a standard category in Protestant theology. Recurs from Chapter 5.

Evidence: Calvin opens Book III of the *Institutes* by stating that "so long as we are without Christ and separated from him, nothing which he suffered and did for the salvation of the human race is of the least benefit to us," and that believers are "ingrafted into him" (*Institutes* III.1.1).

5. p. 180 — *"The Protestant tradition has no saints"*

Problem: The text states here and on pp. 178 and 183 that Protestantism has no saints. Protestant churches confess the communion of saints in the Apostles' Creed, and the Church of England, which the book treats as Protestant (Chapter 7), commemorates holy men and women in its calendar, including figures after the Reformation. The text is accurate that Protestants do not invoke the saints or canonize them in the Orthodox or Roman Catholic manner.

Evidence: The Church of England's calendar commemorates "Charles, King and Martyr, 1649" on January 30; the commemoration was restored in the Alternative Service Book (1980), and Common Worship (2000) provides a collect for it ("King Charles the Martyr," Wikipedia). The Augsburg Confession, Article XXI, teaches "that the memory of saints may be set before us" as examples of faith and good works.

6. p. 181 — *"the Protestant Reformers denied the four characteristics or marks of the Church"*

Problem: The Reformers did not deny the four marks of the Church in the Creed. Their confessions affirm one holy, catholic Church, and they added the preaching of the Word and the sacraments as the means by which that Church is recognized. The book may argue that Protestant bodies fail to show the marks, but the Reformers did not reject them.

Evidence: Augsburg Confession, Article VII: "Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever." The Westminster Confession (XXV.1) speaks of "the catholic or universal church."

7. p. 183 — *"without any association whatsoever with a concrete church community"*

Problem: The text says the Protestant doctrine of the invisible church holds that people become members of Christ's body without any connection to a church community, clergy, or sacraments. The confessions that teach an invisible church also teach the necessity of the visible church. Recurs from Chapter 2.

Evidence: The Westminster Confession describes the visible church as "the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation" (XXV.2).

8. p. 183 — *"refusing to be governed by bishops and synods"*

Problem: The text says Protestantism refuses to be governed by bishops and synods. Reformed and Lutheran churches are governed by synods, and the Church of England retained bishops, as the book itself states (p. 105). The text is accurate that most Protestant churches rejected apostolic succession as Orthodox and Roman Catholics understand it.

Evidence: The Westminster Confession states that "there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called synods or councils" (XXXI.1). The book: "Bishops were maintained, together with a claim to apostolic succession" (p. 105).

9. p. 184 — *"It has rejected monasticism"*

Problem: The text says Protestantism has rejected monasticism and offers no consecrated path except marriage. Anglican religious orders of monks and nuns have existed since the 1840s. The text is accurate that the Reformers closed the monasteries and that most Protestant churches have no monastic tradition.

Evidence: Anglican religious life was revived in the mid-nineteenth century, including the Park Village Community (1845), the Community of St John Baptist, Clewer (1849), and the Society of St John the Evangelist (1866) ("Anglican religious order," Wikipedia).

10. p. 184 — *"It has rejected the traditional fasts of the Church"*

Problem: The text says Protestantism has rejected the traditional fasts. The *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England prescribes Lent, the Ember Days, the Rogation Days, and all Fridays as days of fasting or abstinence. The text is accurate that many Protestant churches do not keep a fasting calendar.

Evidence: The 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, "A Table of the Vigils, Fasts, and Days of Abstinence," lists the forty days of Lent, the Ember Days, the three Rogation Days, and "All the Fridays in the Year, except Christmas Day."

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Appendix I: On the Use of the Word "Heresy/Heretic" in the Scriptures and in the Holy Orthodox Church

pp. 187–192

Historical Inaccuracies

1. p. 191 — *"the Synodikon of the Seventh Ecumenical Council"*

Problem: The Synodikon of Orthodoxy was not issued by the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787). It was composed by Patriarch Methodios for the restoration of icon veneration in 843, and later additions, beginning in the eleventh century, condemn heretics who lived long after 787. The text is accurate that the Synodikon upholds the Seventh Council's teaching and is proclaimed on the first Sunday of Great Lent.

Evidence: At the Council of Constantinople in 843, the people recited "the Synodikon of Orthodoxy, a short profession of the validity of icon veneration which was authored by Patriarch Methodios"; the council was convened to reinforce the decisions of the Second Council of Nicaea (787), and the Synodikon received additions starting in the mid-eleventh century ("Council of Constantinople (843)," Wikipedia).

Cherry-Picking

1. p. 188 — *"one of the characteristics of heresies is that they are often named"*

Problem: The text treats being named after a founder as a mark of heresy and lists "Lutheranism" and "Calvinism" as examples. It omits that these names were given by opponents and that Luther himself rejected the use of his name. The text is accurate that many ancient heresies were named after their founders.

Evidence: Johann Eck is credited with coining the term "Lutheran" at the Leipzig Debate of 1519. Luther wrote, "I ask that people make no reference to my name; let them call themselves Christians, not Lutherans" (*A Sincere Admonition to All Christians to Guard Against Insurrection and Rebellion*, 1522, *Luther's Works*, vol. 45, p. 70; quoted in "What's in a Name?" *Gottesdienst*, 2018).

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Appendix B: Glossary of Logical Fallacies

The fallacies identified in Appendix A, with the places where each occurs.

Ad Hominem

Attacking the character, motives, or circumstances of a person instead of answering the person's argument. Latin for "to the man."

Found at: Chapter 3, p. 44, n. 130 (as tu quoque); Chapter 3, p. 46, n. 133.

Appeal to Antiquity

Treating a belief or group as true or sound because it is old, or as false or unsound because it is new, without other evidence. Also called appeal to tradition.

Found at: Foreword, p. xvi.

Argument from Silence

Concluding that something did not happen or was not believed because a source does not mention it. Silence alone rarely proves anything, since writers leave out many things.

Found at: Chapter 4, p. 67.

Begging the Question

Assuming the very point that is in dispute as one of the reasons for accepting it, so that the argument proves nothing beyond its starting assumption. Also called circular reasoning.

Found at: Chapter 10, p. 154.

False Analogy

Arguing that because two things are alike in some ways, they must be alike in the way that matters to the argument, when the likeness does not hold at that point.

Found at: Chapter 2, p. 22.

Hasty Generalization

Drawing a broad conclusion about a whole group from too few cases, or from cases that do not represent the group.

Found at: Introduction, p. xix; Introduction, p. xix, n. 3; Chapter 7, pp. 98–99, n. 233; Chapter 7, p. 106, n. 248; Chapter 7, p. 113; Chapter 9, p. 148; Chapter 9, p. 150; Chapter 10, p. 165.

Non Sequitur

A conclusion that does not follow from the reasons or evidence given. Latin for "it does not follow."

Found at: Chapter 1, p. 16; Chapter 1, p. 16, n. 61; Chapter 3, p. 51; Chapter 4, p. 62; Chapter 6, p. 90; Chapter 10, p. 161; Chapter 10, p. 165.

Straw Man

Restating an opponent's view in a weaker, more extreme, or different form than the opponent actually holds, and then refuting that version instead of the real one.

Found at: Chapter 2, p. 24; Chapter 4, p. 64, n. 171; Chapter 5, pp. 76–77; Chapter 9, p. 141, n. 302; Chapter 10, p. 162; Chapter 10, p. 163.

Tu Quoque

Dismissing a criticism by pointing out that the critic, or the critic's side, is guilty of the same thing. Whether or not the charge against the critic is true, it does not answer the criticism. Latin for "you too"; a form of ad hominem.

Found at: Chapter 3, p. 44, n. 130; Chapter 5, pp. 76–77.