

Sermon I

"An Introductory Sermon on the Evidences of the Gospel and the Genuineness of Paul's Epistles"

by

Joseph Lathrop

"I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of those things which you have seen, and of those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom now I send you" (Acts 26:16,17).

Paul, in the preceding verses, declares before Agrippa the time and manner of his conversion to the faith of Christ and the extraordinary circumstances which attended it. And in the words now read he subjoins an account of the commission which he received from Christ--to preach his gospel among the Jews and especially among the Gentiles.

The singular method which Jesus took to convince Paul of the truth of the gospel was not out of partial favor to him, for surely he had done nothing to recommend himself; but rather [it was] out of a general benevolence to mankind, for this man was a chosen vessel, a suitable instrument to convey Christ's name among them. Jesus miraculously appeared to him to make him a minister of the gospel and a witness of those facts by which its truth is supported. And having furnished him for his work, Jesus sent him forth to publish the doctrines and display the evidences of the gospel among the people of the Jews and among the heathen nations.

The words teach us that the Apostle Paul was a notable and illustrious instrument in spreading the knowledge and confirming the truth of the religion of Christ. Such he appears from the history given of him in the Acts of the Apostles and from the writings which he himself has left for the use of the church.

My design is to give a summary view of the evidences of Christianity, and particularly to illustrate the evidences derived from the conversion, preaching, and writings of this eminent minister and witness.

[Evidences of Christianity]

The Christian religion does now exist, and for many ages it has existed in the world. To account for its existence without admitting its truth, it is impossible.¹ For it did not take place by the

1 **KM Note:** This sentence could be misunderstood. He is not saying that since Christianity has existed for over 2000 years and that therefore it must be true. A number of religions have been around for even longer and are not true. The reader must take into account Dr. Lathrop's whole argument. There is much in the early history of Christianity that should have made it impossible to continue and even thrive had it not been given and protected by God himself. This early history of Christianity is what Dr. Lathrop develops at length in this sermon.

influence of human authority or the terror of military power, but by familiar instructions and obvious miracles. The credit of it depends on these plain facts: [1] that about eighteen hundred years ago there arose in Judea an extraordinary person called Jesus of Nazareth, who declared himself to be divinely sent into the world as an instructor, reformer, and savior of men; [2] that he lived a most virtuous and holy life; [3] that he taught a religion in some respects new, in many respects more perfect than had ever been taught before, and in all respects pure and excellent; [4] that he wrought [worked] many great and astonishing miracles; [5] that he foretold many things, humanly improbable, which were verified in event; [6] that he suffered death by a public crucifixion, and on the third day rose again and appeared to many in different times and places, not only to single persons but to companies, and to more than five hundred at once, and frequently to those who had most intimately known him before his death and who, consequently, could not mistake another person for him; [7] that after about forty days he, in the presence of a large concourse of disciples, visibly ascended on high and disappeared from the admiring spectators; [8] that soon after this, according to his previous promise, the disciples whom he had chosen to be the witnesses of his works and the ministers of his word were endued with extraordinary gifts, qualifying them to go forth and proclaim his religion in the world.

If such facts as these did really exist, the religion of the gospel is indubitably true. They who disbelieve the gospel must deny that there ever was such a man, or that he ever wrought such miracles and died and rose again in the manner alleged.

Miracles, which are effects produced above the common powers and in a way different from the stated course of nature, plainly discover [reveal] God's immediate interposition. From the goodness and veracity [truthfulness] of God, we may conclude that he never will immediately interpose to give such credibility to a falsehood, [and] that men, inquiring honestly and judging rationally, must receive it as a truth.

The miracles of Christ (admitting for the present the Christian history to be true) were great and numerous, and he constantly appealed to them as evidences of the divinity of his mission and doctrines. To suppose that in such a case God should enable an impostor to perform these marvelous works, which are related of Jesus, is contrary to all our ideas of the divine character.

They who saw Christ heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils, and still the storms; they who saw him yield himself to death and then, exactly according to his prediction, return from the grave, ascend into heaven, and shed down on his disciples the promised gifts of his spirit (especially they who felt themselves partakers of these wonderful gifts), could not doubt but that he was what he declared himself to be--the Son of God and the Savior of the men--and that his religion was a heavenly institution.

The disciples of Jesus (allowing that there were such persons) were credible witnesses of these facts, for they related them as matters which fell under their own observation. That which they saw and heard they declared to the world. Whether they really saw the dead arise, the sick and lame restored to health and soundness, thousands fed with a few small loaves; whether they themselves were able to work miracles and speak with divers [a variety of] tongues [languages]; whether Jesus, who was crucified, actually arose and appeared to them; whether they conversed with him, saw his wounds and heard his instructions--[these] were facts in which they could not be deceived. If, then, their relation [eyewitness account] was not true, they must have intended

to deceive mankind.

But it is not conceivable that they should have such a dishonest intention, for by their testimony to the miracles and resurrection of Christ they exposed themselves to poverty, reproach, misery, and death. And it cannot be imagined, [1] that a number of men should deliberately associate to sacrifice everything that is dear in life--and even life itself--for the sake of imposing on the world a falsehood which never would do mankind or themselves any good; [2] that they should persevere in this design after they began to feel its consequences; [3] that they should persist in it until death; [4] that never a single man should desert the cause and discover [reveal] the fraud. This would surpass all miracles!

If their design had been a fraud, it might, in [at] the time of it, have been easily detected and suppressed.

The facts, which they relate, they declared were done publicly and recently, and that they were known and remembered by many then living. If there had been no such person as Jesus Christ, or if he had performed no such miracles as are ascribed to him, no credit would have been given to their report.

The disciples of Jesus had enemies who wished to confound them. The Jewish rulers spared no pains to suppress the Christian cause. Their enmity to it would have excited them to convict the witnesses of falsehood, if they had not known that the facts asserted were indisputable. If they had discovered any fraud, they would immediately have made it public. As they never denied the facts but only studied to evade the conclusion drawn from them, they must have been convinced that the facts themselves were undeniable.

These witnesses have left a written testimony which has come down to us with every desirable circumstance of credibility.

There are four men who have professedly written distinct histories of the life, ministry, and works of Jesus Christ. Two of them, Matthew and John, were his attendant disciples from the beginning to the end of his public life. The other two, Mark and Luke, were contemporary and conversant with his disciples. Four others, Peter, James, Jude, and Paul, have written epistles to particular societies of Christians, or to Christians in general. In these epistles they recognize the character, assert or allude to the miracles, and teach the doctrines of Jesus, in substance, as they are related by the before mentioned historians. Three of these letter writers were Christ's disciples. The last was a contemporary Jew, a man of uncommon zeal, learning, and ability, much conversant in public affairs, [and] for a while an enemy to Christianity but afterward converted to the belief of it; so that the Christian history stands on the credit of eight different persons, most of them disciples, and all of them contemporaries. They wrote separately on different occasions without any appearance of concert, and yet they all substantially agree. These writings were received as genuine in the time when the authors lived, and in the next succeeding age, and from age to age ever since down to the present time. There is no ancient history extant which is so completely authenticated.

The conversion, ministry, and epistles of the Apostle Paul afford strong and undeniable evidence of the truth of the Christian religion. To these I shall now pay particular attention.

[The Apostle Paul]

The account which we have of him is given by Luke in his history of the Acts of the Apostles. This Luke appears to have been a man of learning; such his writings show him to be. He was an esteemed and eminent physician; so Paul calls him. He was admitted to an acquaintance with men of the first distinction, as appears by the dedication of his works to the most excellent Theophilus. He was highly regarded among the Christians of his time, and his praise for the gospel which he wrote was in all the churches. He was an intimate companion of St. Paul and accompanied him for a considerable time in his travels. From him we have particular information concerning Paul's early life, remarkable conversion, and subsequent conduct. And everything related by Luke we find confirmed in the writings of Paul himself.

Paul, who was a Jew by nation, had been educated in the rigid principles of the sect called Pharisees, and formed to eminent learning in the celebrated school of Gamaliel. He was a man of distinction among his country and famous for his zeal in opposing Christianity. His worldly interest and preferment, the sentiments imbibed from his education, and the prevalent opinion of the Jewish rulers and priests all concurred to fill him with violent prejudices against the gospel of Christ. In human view, no man was more unlikely than he to be converted to the belief of it, and no time was more unpromising for his conversion than that in which it took place.

He had just consented to and assisted in the execution of an eminent preacher of the gospel. Breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, he had sought and obtained from the Jewish high priest a commission to bind and bring to Jerusalem for public punishment all, both men and women, whom he found professing the faith of Jesus Christ. And for the execution of this bloody commission he was now going to Damascus. His zeal against the gospel was at this time wound up to the highest strain. Who would suspect that this man should become a Christian?

But so it was. When he came near to Damascus, he was at noonday suddenly surprised with a light from heaven, far exceeding the brightness of the sun. This was followed with an articulate voice calling him by name, expostulating with him for his persecution of the church of Christ, and warning him of the ruin which he would bring on himself. Struck with conviction of his guilt, Paul inquired, "Lord, what will You have me to do?" The same voice directed him to proceed on his journey into the city, where he should meet with instruction adapted to his case. In consequence of this vision he fell blind. He was led by some of the company which attended him into the city. There he spent his time in prayer. After some days a Christian disciple came to him, related to him the purpose of the vision, and restored him to his sight by laying his hands on him in the name of Christ. Soon after this Paul became a preacher of the gospel. That this wonderful scene was real and not imaginary no man can reasonably doubt.

There is nothing in Paul's conduct or writings that favours of fanaticism; but, on the contrary, he uniformly appears to have possessed a good understanding and a sound judgment. If he had been an enthusiast, yet he never would have fancied a revelation in opposition to his religious principles, his worldly interest, and all his strong prejudices. Enthusiasm never takes this turn, but always falls in with some previous passion, interest, or humor.

Paul was now actually engaged in a design to extirpate [destroy totally] Christianity, and he was persuaded that his design was laudable. If he had been a fanatic, he might have fancied a revelation in favor of his design; but it was impossible that imagination should create a light and voice in direct opposition to a design which he had so much at heart and which he thought so pious.

Besides, this whole scene was open and public, and attended with none of those circumstances of secrecy and disguise, which usually attend the revelations of enthusiasts and impostors. It took place not in the night but in full day, not in a private apartment or retired desert but in the high road and near a populous city, not when Paul was alone but when he was in the company of a number of people who all saw the light and heard the voice as well as he, though they understood not the words which were spoken. And these were not Christians but enemies to Christianity, as well as he.

Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that a number of men, all violent opposers of the gospel, should happen all at the same moment to fancy that they saw a light and heard a voice in confirmation of the gospel, and that one of them fell blind and continued so for several days if no such thing had taken place.

That this story was not a fiction of the writer but a fact fully believed by him is as evident as any ancient historical fact can possibly be. It is publicly asserted by Luke soon after it is said to have happened; and the time, place, and circumstances are pointed out so that it might easily have been disproved if it had not been true. Paul himself, in two of his public defences and in the presence of numbers of Jews, relates the story and appeals to it as a proof of his Apostleship, which he would not have done if there had not been full evidence of the truth of it. He alludes to it also in several of his epistles, which shows that it was then fully believed in the churches.

This vision produced in Paul a mighty change. From this time he became a firm, unwavering believer and a zealous, intrepid preacher of the gospel. He openly professed his faith that Jesus was the Son of God, and he immediately received baptism, the instituted badge of discipleship. And being divinely instructed that he was appointed a minister and witness of Jesus, he straightway preached him in Damascus, proving that he was the very Christ [Messiah] foretold by the prophets. From Damascus, where he first began his ministry and where he soon found his life in danger, he privately escaped to Jerusalem. There he joined the other Apostles and spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. Afterward, being ordained by certain prophets and teachers of the church as an Apostle of the Gentiles, he travelled through the various provinces of the lesser Asia [Asia Minor]. Then he passed into Europe and visited the most noted places in ancient Greece. From thence he went into Syria and returned to Jerusalem. Afterward he went over a considerable part of the same ground again, confirming the churches which he had planted.

Wherever he went he boldly preached this new religion in the most conspicuous places, especially in the Jewish synagogues; for there were Jews dispersed in all parts of the Roman empire. In many places he met with great opposition, chiefly from the malice of the Jews. He was imprisoned, tortured, whipped, stoned, and once handled so violently that he fell and was dragged away for dead. But none of these things moved him, neither counted he his own life dear

to him, that so he might finish with joy the ministry which he had received. God wrought special miracles by his hands in expelling evil spirits, healing the sick, and raising the dead. In many places churches under his ministry were planted, improved, and increased to great celebrity. Thus he continued his work until he was made a prisoner at Rome, where he remained two years confined to his own hired house; yet with so much liberty that he received all who came to him, preaching to them the kingdom of God, and testifying the things which concern the Lord Jesus, with all confidence.

Paul could not have conducted [himself] in this manner if he had not believed the gospel to be divine. He could not have had such great success if he had not exhibited evidence of its divinity. The miracles which he wrought confirmed the testimony which he gave in its favor.

And certainly Luke's narrative of these matters must have been true or it never could have gained credit, nor would he have thought of writing it. For, it should be observed, this is not a narrative of Paul's *private life* but of *his public ministry*. If Paul had never performed such travels, preached in such places, erected such churches, wrought such miracles, met with such persecutions, stood before such councils and magistrates, and made such speeches in his public defence, the historian who should relate these things as recently done would have gained no credit, but must have met with perfect contempt.

There are thirteen epistles ascribed to this Paul, and whoever reads them with attention will easily see that they were written by the same man whose life and actions Luke has related to us. They breathe the spirit of that celebrated preacher, they contain the same doctrines which Luke says Paul preached, and they narrate or allude to the same transactions which the historian has ascribed to him. If you read Luke's history and Paul's letters, you will see there is no collusion, no combination to support each other's credit. But yet there is a remarkable coincidence of facts--a coincidence which is worthy of notice, as it strongly confirms the credit of both writers. For where two men write independently, in a different manner, on different occasions, and without concert, their agreement in the relation of facts must be supposed to spring from truth.

Paul's early sentiments and manner of life, his persecution of the church, his conversion, his preaching in Damascus, his danger in and escape from that city, his sufferings, the places to which he carried the gospel, the success and the opposition which he found in them, his assistance from other Apostles, his imprisonments, his self-denials, his labors for his own support, his constancy and perseverance, [and] his miraculous works are represented in his epistles as they are related in the history of the Acts, with only this difference--Luke relates them with the freedom and boldness of a historian writing of another man; Paul alludes to them with the modesty, or appeals to them with the reluctance, of an honest man constrained to speak of himself.

Any discerning person reading the writings of the New Testament and comparing them together will find decisive evidence of their genuineness and authenticity.

But we have still farther evidence in their favor.

[The New Testament]

Every man in the least acquainted with history knows that in the time when the books of the New Testament are supposed to have been written there were those persons who are here mentioned--as Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, Herod, Pilate, Felix, Festus, Caiaphas, and many others; and that there were those sects and classes of men which are here described--as Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, and Herodians; and that there were those customs and usages which are here related--as the feasts of the Passover and Pentecost, the ceremony and circumcision, a great strictness in observing the Sabbath and in reading the law. It was well known that the Jews were under the Roman government, paid tribute to the emperor, received their chief magistrates by his appointment, could put no man to death without his permission, and many other things too numerous to be here mentioned.

Now if the writings of the New Testament exhibit a true account of the state of things in that age, we must believe they were extant in or near that age. And if the authors have strictly regarded the truth in everything else, why should their veracity be questioned in things which concern the Lord Jesus. If we believe there were such men as Caesar, Herod, and Pilate, who performed the works ascribed to them, why may we not believe there was such a person as *Jesus Christ*, who performed the works ascribed to *him*?

That there was an extraordinary person called by this name who did many wonderful things and was put to death under Tiberius, and that there was such a sect as Christians denominated from [named after] him which made a great noise and became very numerous in the world soon after the death of their founder, we have evidence from heathen as well as Christian writers.

The books of the New Testament were early received as the genuine works of the men whose names they bear; and in this character they have been handed down to the present time. Of this we have as good evidence as we have of any ancient facts. Writers who flourished soon after the Apostles, and who were conversant with them or with their immediate disciples, can even now at this distance of time be produced as witnesses of the genuineness of almost all the books of the New Testament--as the four Gospels, the Acts, thirteen Epistles of Paul, the first of Peter, and the first of John. And writers but little later bear witness to the authority of them all.

[1] A certain writer named *Papias*, who lived soon after the Apostles and was conversant with their immediate disciples, is quoted by *Eusebius*, a church historian, in confirmation of the gospel of Matthew.

[2] *Justin*, *Irenaeus*, and *Clement* of Alexandria, who wrote about the middle of the second century, quote several passages out of Mark's gospel, and prove that he wrote it and that it was seen and commended by the Apostle Peter.

[3] Paul himself has given his sanction to Luke's gospel by quoting a passage from it in his first epistle to Timothy.

[4] The ancients generally apply to Luke these words of Paul to the Corinthians, "We have sent the brother, whose praise is in the gospel, through all the churches."

[5] *Origen* declares that Luke's gospel was approved by Paul. It is quoted by *Justin* and others in

the second century, near the times of the Apostles.

[6] *Irenaeus*, who was acquainted with *Polycarp*, a disciple of the Apostle John, has with great accuracy proved the genuineness of the gospel received under the name of that Apostle. Several other early fathers ascribe it to him and say that the authority of it was never controverted in the church.

[7] *Eusebius* informs us that John read and approved the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and added his own as a supplement to them. The book called the Acts of the Apostles, compared with Luke's gospel, appears to have been written by the same author. All the ancients agree that it was composed by Luke and received in the church as an authentic history. As such it is quoted by *Clement* of Rome, who was a companion with Paul; by *Papias*, who conversed with men of the Apostles' times; by *Polycarp*, who was John's disciple; and by *Irenaeus*, who lived in the second century.

Thirteen of Paul's epistles, with the first of Peter and the first of John, were never questioned; for there were particular churches or persons to whom all the originals, except the two last mentioned epistles, were directed. These originals were carefully preserved in the churches which received them, as *Tertullian* says, down to his time, which was the third century. They were acknowledged without hesitancy by the whole Christian church, as *Clement* and *Origen* affirm. They were cited as Paul's epistles in the very age in which they were written, and in the next succeeding age, and so on in every age since.

The epistle to the Hebrews, that of James, and that of Jude, the second of Peter, the second and third of John, and the Revelation, were not at first universally received. But we find, by the testimony of a number of the before mentioned fathers, that after some inquiry they were admitted as genuine and authentic in the earliest times. As these books were written either to Christians dispersed abroad or to private persons, it was not so easy at once to ascertain their authority as it was that of the other books which were directed to particular churches; for there the author's handwriting and the character of the messengers who brought them were well known, and there they were immediately and repeatedly read.

The caution with which the churches received some of the books of the present canon shows that in this important matter they did not act with a hasty credulity, but with a just concern to avoid imposition [imposing their opinion by authority]. So that [and thus] the canon of the New Testament stands on better footing than if no doubts had arisen about any part of it.

Not only were these books universally received by Christians of the early ages but publicly read in the churches. Paul orders his first epistle to the Thessalonians to be read to all the holy brethren, and his epistle to the Colossians to be communicated to the church of the Laodiceans. And Peter in his second epistle signifies that Paul had written a number of epistles which were generally known in the churches. Justin Martyr, in a book which he wrote about forty years after the Apostolic age, speaks of the writings of the Apostles as read every Sabbath in the Christian congregations.

From these testimonies it appears that the books of the New Testament were in that age in which they were written, and in the next succeeding age, received as the genuine works of the

men whose names they bear. And from age to age the testimonies of their reception became more and more numerous. Yea, we find within about fifty years after the Apostles the testimonies of heathens and infidels, that there were such books extant as those which we now receive and that these books were acknowledged and revered by Christians.

These writings were early, probably within forty or fifty years after Christ's ascension, collected into a volume, and treated by Christians with peculiar marks of faith and reverence.

Now if these books had not been genuine, it is impossible that they should have gained such universal credit among Christians. If there had been no such men known as their reputed authors, they never could have obtained any credit at all. The authors appear under appropriate names and characters, [and] call themselves apostles and disciples of Jesus; relate many remarkable facts as then recent and notorious; mention many miraculous works performed and supernatural gifts exercised by them in such places and in the presence of such persons and churches; appeal to the public for the truth of many of the facts related; represent themselves and other apostles as having been present in these and those places, and there preached, wrought miracles, made converts, formed churches, and imparted supernatural gifts.

Now it is impossible that any persons, especially societies, should have received these books if they had never seen such men, known such facts, or heard of such churches. Everyone who saw the writings would naturally inquire, "Where are the churches which are here addressed? Who are the men that speak of themselves as so generally known? Who has ever been acquainted with the matters which they relate with so much assurance?" Ask yourselves: Would the history of the late American war and the revolution which followed be received with any regard among the people of American in the present age if no such events had taken place? Or would such a fictitious history go down with credit to succeeding ages? The reception of a history relating to facts of recent existence and public notoriety is an evidence of its truth.

If any man doubts the genuineness of these books, let him say when they were forged. It was not while the apostles were living, for they would have detected and suppressed the fraud. It was not after their death, for then the cheat would not have succeeded. The books pretend [presume] to have been sent abroad by the authors themselves. Paul's epistles, for example, profess to have been written by him at such a time and in such a place, to have been sent to such churches by such messengers, and to have been signed by his own hand. Now if these churches had never received such letters or seen such messengers, or if Christians in general had never heard of such writings until some years after they pretend to have been sent abroad and publicly read, this would have been a sufficient reason never to have admitted them!

Most of Paul's epistles were written to noted churches in populous cities; and, consequently, if they were genuine they must have been known before his death. If they had not appeared until after his death, the churches to which they pretend to have been sent would have declared they never received them, and thus have exposed the deception.

In short, if we suppose the books of the New Testament to be spurious, we must suppose that the Christians in the Apostolic and succeeding ages (among whom were many learned and doubtless many honest men) did all, in the several different countries of Christendom, without any conceivable motive confederate [conspire] in a fraud and agree to impose [it] on the world--a

supposition this, which, if admitted, puts an end to all historical credit.

Besides, as one well observes,

It is easy to discover the writings of the New Testament, particularly Paul's epistles, to be original. His very soul speaks in all his writings. There is that undissembled [undisguised] zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of mankind; that courage, that disregard to his own interest when it interfered with higher views; that boldness of expression; that life and spirit which are hard to be counterfeited. The same force and energy which animated all his actions and empowered him to spread the gospel from east to west ennoble all his compositions. And it would be almost as impossible for an impostor to write as Paul did as it would be to act as he did. It is very difficult to impersonate such a warm, affectionate and interesting writer. There is an exact resemblance in his speeches and in his epistles. In both there is the same greatness of spirit, the same glowing language, the same elevated thoughts, warm from the heart. In both he speaks and writes with too animated a zeal to be a cold deceiver, with too much sense, solidity and consistence to be an enthusiast.

Of our preceding reasonings, this is the result: THE RELIGION OF THE GOSPEL IS DIVINE.

This religion, if it be divine, must be supremely important. Do you believe that God has sent into the world a Savior from heaven; has borne witness to him by miracles and wonders; has subjected him to death for our redemption and raised him from the dead by his mighty power; has given support to the religion which this Savior taught, and by a wonderful providence has conveyed it down to our day with full evidence of its heavenly original? Do you believe all this? Surely you must believe that this is a religion in which mankind are infinitely concerned. Come forward then. Make an open profession of it and tell the world you are not ashamed of it.

Faithfully attend on the instituted worship of God. This is a great security against irreligion and infidelity. That Christians may hold fast the profession of their faith, the Apostle enjoins them to keep up their religious assemblies.

Be solicitous to obtain a share in the great blessings which this religion offers to you. Seek pardon and glory in the way which it prescribes, by repentance of sin and faith in the Redeemer. There is no other name by which you can be saved.

Endeavor to extend the knowledge, advance the honor, and promote the success of the gospel. Put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Confirm them who waver, strengthen such as are weak, encourage the young and tender, and guard them against the instructions which cause to err. If you ask how this shall be done, take the Apostle's advice: "Only let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel of Christ."

Sermon I from *A View of the Doctrines and Duties of the Christian Religion, in Fortynine Discourses on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, by Joseph Lathrop (Worcester: Isaiah Thomas, 1801). **Note:** The text has not been modified, except that punctuation and KJV-era pronouns and verb forms have been modernized, and long paragraphs have been divided.