

- a. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), Book IV, Chapter 12, section 1, John Calvin states:

"But because some persons, in their hatred of discipline, recoil from its very name, let them understand this: if no society, indeed, no house which has even a small family, can be kept in proper condition without discipline, it is much more necessary in the church, whose condition should be as ordered as possible. Accordingly, as the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the church, so does discipline serve as its sinews, through which the members of the body hold together, each in its own place. Therefore, all who desire to remove discipline or to hinder its restoration -- whether they do this deliberately or out of ignorance -- are surely contributing to the ultimate dissolution of the church. For what will happen if each is allowed to do what he pleases? Yet that would happen, if to the preaching of doctrine there were not added private admonitions, corrections, and other aids of the sort that sustain doctrine and do not let it remain idle. Therefore, discipline is like a bridle to restrain and tame those who rage against the doctrine of Christ; or like a spur to arouse those of little inclination; and also sometimes like a father's rod to chastise mildly and with the gentleness of Christ's Spirit those who have more seriously lapsed. When, therefore, we discern frightful devastation beginning to threaten the church because there is no concern and no means of restraining people, necessity itself cries out that a remedy is needed. Now, this is the sole remedy that Christ has enjoined and the one that has always been used among the godly."

- b. The *Scotch Confession of Faith* (1560), Article 18, states:

"The notes (signs) therefore of the true Kirk of God we believe, confesse, and avow to be, first, the true preaching of the Word of God, into the which God has revealed himself unto us, as the writings of the Prophets and Apostles do declare. Secondly, the right administration of the Sacraments of Christ Jesus, which man be annexed unto the word and promise of God, to seal and confirm the same in our hearts. Last, Ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered, as God's Word prescribes, whereby vice is repressed, and virtue nourished."

- c. The *Belgic Confession* (1561), Articles 29 and 32, state:

"The marks by which the true Church is known are these: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin; . . ."

"Therefore we admit only of that which tends to nourish and preserve concord and unity, and to keep all men in obedience to God. For this purpose excommunication or church discipline is requisite, with the several circumstances belonging to it, according to the Word of God."