

The Confession of Faith of the Calvary Baptist Church of Lamar, Colorado

On January 12, 2003, the Calvary Baptist Church of Lamar Colorado adopted the following confession of faith based on the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. This confession of faith expresses what the people of the Calvary Baptist Church of Lamar believe and forms the basis for the conduct of church and individual member affairs.

About the Philadelphia Confession of Faith

On September 25, 1742, “the elders and messengers of the baptized [Baptist] congregations in Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, met in Association at Philadelphia.” In that meeting “a motion was made in the Association for reprinting the confession of faith set forth by the elders of baptized congregations [that] met in London, AD 1689, with a short treatise of church discipline, to be annexed to the confession of faith.” The articles were then to be printed by Benjamin Franklin in 1743. This confession was the standard for American Baptist Churches until the middle of the nineteenth century when the churches adopted the shorter New Hampshire Confession of Faith.

Introduction to the Calvary Baptist Church Version

When Charles Spurgeon became the pastor of the New Park Street Chapel in London in the 1800s, he realized the importance of securing his people on a solid rock of biblical and baptistic doctrine. For this purpose he reprinted and distributed for his people the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689). He wrote an introduction, instructing his people on its right use. This is what he said:

This little volume is not issued as an authoritative rule, or code of faith, whereby you are to be fettered, but as an assistance to you in controversy, a confirmation in faith, and a means of edification in righteousness. Here the younger members of our church will have a body of divinity in small compass, and by means of Scriptural proofs, will be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in them. Be not ashamed of your faith; remember it is the ancient gospel of martyrs, confessors, reformers, and saints. Above all, it is the truth of God, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. Let your lives adorn your faith; let your example adorn your Creed. Above all, live in Christ Jesus, and walk in Him, giving credence to no teaching but that which is manifestly approved of Him, and owned by the Holy Spirit. Cleave fast to the Word of God which is here mapped out for you.

What Spurgeon said to his people is good for us as well: “Cleave fast to the Word of God which is here mapped out for you.” In these times when doctrinal is of less significance than practical issues, the Calvary Baptist Church stands on the conviction that we must “take heed unto [ourselves], and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this [we shall] both save [ourselves], and them that hear [us]” (1 Timothy 4:16).

Note: Superscript numbers indicate Scripture references that appear at the end of each chapter.

Chapter 1 - The Holy Scripture

Article One

The Bible is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.¹ While the light of nature, the works of creation, and providence manifests the goodness, wisdom, and power of God so as to leave men inexcusable, these are not sufficient in themselves to give the knowledge of God and His will necessary to salvation.² Therefore it pleased the Lord at different times and in various ways to reveal Himself and to declare His will to His church.³ In order to better preserve and propagate the truth and to better establish and comfort the church against the corruption of the flesh, the malice of Satan and the world, He has committed this truth wholly to writing. Thus, the Bible is now absolutely necessary because all the previous means of God’s revealing His will to His people have ceased.⁴

Article Two

Under the label of Holy Scripture or the written Word of God are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments. Of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. Of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2

Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation.

Article Three

The books known as the Apocrypha, being not divinely inspired, have no place in the canon (or rule) of the Scripture, nor are they to have any authority in the church. They are not to be otherwise approved or used except as human writings.⁵

Article Four

The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, does not depend on the testimony of any man or church. Because God, who is truth Himself, is the Author of the Holy Scripture, it is to be received as the Word of God.⁶

Article Five

The testimony of the church concerning the heavenly nature of its subject matter, the power of its doctrine, the majesty of its style, the agreement its contents, the unity of its scope (which is to give all glory to God), and its revelation of the only way of salvation should move us to esteem the Holy Scripture reverently. These and many other incomparable and perfect features are abundant evidence that it is the Word of God. However, in spite of this evidence, it is only the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts⁷ that will fully assure us of the infallible truth and divine authority of it.

Article Six

The Holy Scripture either expressly states or necessarily infers the whole counsel of God concerning everything necessary for His own glory and our salvation, faith, and life. Thus, nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit or by traditions of men.⁸ Nevertheless, the inward illumination of the Spirit of God is absolutely necessary to understand savingly the things revealed in the Word.⁹ We also recognize that there are some things common to society concerning the worship of God and the government of the church that can be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, which, according to the general rules of the Word, are always to be observed.¹⁰

Article Seven

Everything in Scripture is not equally plain or clear to all.¹¹ However, what is necessary for us to know, believe, and observe for salvation is clearly revealed in the Scripture so that both educated and uneducated people may, by due use of ordinary means, gain sufficient understanding of salvation.¹²

Article Eight

The Old Testament in Hebrew, the native language of the Israelites,¹³ and the New Testament in Greek, which, at the time the New Testament was written, was most generally known to the nations, having been inspired and kept pure in all ages by His care and providence, are, therefore, authentic. Thus, in all controversies of the faith, the churches are to appeal to the Scripture as the final authority.¹⁴ The original languages of Scripture are not known to all God's people. However, God's people all have a right to the Scripture, being commanded of God to ^{read}¹⁵ and search it.¹⁶ Therefore, the Scripture is to be translated into the common language of every nation.¹⁷ In this way, the Word of God is available to all for worshiping Him acceptably and so that, through patience and comfort of the Scripture, they may have hope.¹⁸

Article Nine

The infallible rule for the interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself. Therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (not many Scriptures but one only), it must be interpreted by other references in the Word that speak more clearly to the issue.¹⁹

Article Ten

The Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit is, therefore, the final authority by which all controversies of faith are to be determined. All decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and peculiar views are to be examined and finally resolved by Scripture alone.²⁰

References: ¹2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29, 31; Ephesians 2:20; ²Romans 1:19-21; 2:14, 15; Psalm 19:1-3; ³Hebrews 1:1; 4Proverbs 22:19-21; Romans 15:⁴; 2 Peter 1:19, 20; ⁵Luke 24:27, 44; Romans 3:2; ⁶2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:9; ⁷John 16:13-14; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12, 1 John 2:20, 27; ⁸2 Timothy 3:15-17; Galatians 1:8, 9; ⁹John 6:45; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12; ¹⁰1Corinthians 11:13, 14; 14:26, 40; ¹¹2 Peter 3:16; ¹²Psalm 19:7; 119:130; ¹³Romans 3:2; ¹⁴Isaiah 8:20; ¹⁵Acts 15:15; ¹⁶John 5:39; ¹⁷1 Corinthians 14:6, 9, 11, 12, 24, 28; ¹⁸Colossians 3:16; ¹⁹2 Peter 1:20, 21; Acts 15:15, 16; ²⁰Matthew 22:29, 31, 32; Ephesians 2:20; Acts 28:23.

Chapter 2 - God in Holy Trinity

The Lord our God is the one only living and true God.¹ His subsistence is in and of Himself,² infinite in being and perfection. His essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself.³ He is pure spirit,⁴ invisible, without body parts or passions. He only has immortality, dwelling in the light unto which no man can approach.⁵ He is immutable,⁶ immense,⁷ eternal,⁸ incomprehensible, almighty,⁹ every way infinite, holy,¹⁰ wise, free, and absolute (sovereign). He works all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and righteous will¹¹ for His own glory.¹² He is loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.¹³ He is just and terrible in His judgments,¹⁴ hating all sin,¹⁵ and will by no means clear the guilty.¹⁶

God, having all life,¹⁷ glory,¹⁸ goodness,¹⁹ and blessedness in and of Himself, is alone all-sufficient. He does not need any creature that He has made, nor does He derive any glory from them²⁰ but manifests His own glory in, by, unto, and on them. He is alone the fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things.²¹ He has sovereign dominion over all creatures to do by, for, or to them whatsoever He pleases.²² In His sight all things are open and manifest.²³ His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent of the creature so that nothing is to Him contingent or uncertain.²⁴ He is holy in all His counsels, works,²⁵ and commands. To Him is due from angels and men whatever worship,²⁶ service, or obedience they, as creatures, owe to the Creator and whatever He is pleased to require of them.

In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences: the Father, the Word (or Son), and the Holy Spirit.²⁷ All are of one substance, power, and eternity. Each possesses the whole divine essence without that essence being divided.²⁸ The Father is neither begotten nor proceeds from any. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father.²⁹ The Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.³⁰ All are infinite and without beginning. God is therefore but one God, undivided in nature and being, but distinguished by several singular relative properties and personal relations. The doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of our entire communion with God and dependence on Him.

References: ¹1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; Deuteronomy 6:4; ²Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 48:12; ³Exodus 3:14; ⁴John 4:24; ⁵1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 4:15, 16; ⁶Malachi 3:6; ⁷1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23; ⁸Psalm 90:2; ⁹Genesis 17:1; ¹⁰Isaiah 6:3; ¹¹Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 46:10; ¹²Proverbs 16:4; Romans 11:36; ¹³Exodus 34:6, 7; Hebrews 11:6; ¹⁴Nehemiah 9:32, 33; ¹⁵Psalm 5:5, 6; ¹⁶Exodus 34:7; Nahum 1:2-3; ¹⁷John 5:26; ¹⁸Psalm 148:13; ¹⁹Psalm 119:68; ²⁰Job 22:2, 3; ²¹Romans 11:34-36; ²²Daniel 4:25, 34, 35; ²³Hebrews 4:13; ²⁴Ezekiel 11:5; Acts 15:18; ²⁵Psalm 145:17; ²⁶Revelation 5:12-14; ²⁷1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; ²⁸Exodus 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Corinthians 8:6; ²⁹John 1:14, 18; ³⁰John 15:26; Galatians 4:6.

Chapter 3 - God's Decree

God has from all eternity freely and unchangeably decreed everything that comes to pass by the wise and holy counsel of His own will.¹ Yet all is so decreed that God is neither the author of sin nor is He complicit with any in sin.² On the other hand, His decree does not violate the will of the creature nor remove the liberty or contingency of second causes. Indeed, they are established.³ God's wisdom in ordering all things is revealed with His power and faithfulness in His use of second causes to accomplish His decree.⁴

Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass under any possible conditions,⁵ He did not decree anything because He foresaw it either as future or as it would likely come to pass under such conditions.⁶

God's decree includes, for the manifestation of His glory, that some men and angels are predestinated or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ.⁷ This decree is for the praise of His glorious grace.⁸ The rest of men and angels are left to their own sin for their just condemnation to the praise of His glorious justice.⁹

Predestination is particularly and unchangeably designed so that the number of the elect is certain and definite and can neither increase nor diminish.¹⁰

Those who are predestined to life are chosen in Christ to everlasting glory. This choice was made before the foundation of the world, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, in the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will. This choice was made solely of His free grace and love¹¹ without any contribution from the creature as a condition or cause moving Him to choose them.¹²

As God has appointed the elect to glory, so, by the eternal and free purpose of His will, He has foreordained all the means to bring them to glory.¹³ Therefore, the elect, and only the elect,¹⁴ though fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ.¹⁵ Only the elect are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit, and only the elect are in due season justified, adopted, sanctified,¹⁶ and kept by His power through faith unto salvation.¹⁷

The doctrine of predestination is a deep mystery and should be handled with special prudence and care. Devoting oneself to obeying the will of God as revealed in the Word will lead to certainty about one's effectual calling and thus should also give one assurance of his eternal election.¹⁸ In this way, the doctrine of election will be a matter for praise,¹⁹ reverence, and admiration of God. It will also be a matter of humility,²⁰ diligence, and consolation to all who sincerely obey the gospel.²¹

References: ¹Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9:15, 18; ²James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; ³Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11; ⁴Numbers 23:19; Ephesians 1:3-5; ⁵Acts 15:18; ⁶Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18; ⁷1 Timothy 5:21; Matthew 25:34; ⁸Ephesians 1:5, 6; ⁹Romans 9:22, 23; Jude 4; ¹⁰2 Timothy 2:19; John 13:18; ¹¹Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11; Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; ¹²Romans 9:13, 16; Ephesians 2:5, 12; ¹³1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; ¹⁴John 10:26; 17:9; 6:64; ¹⁵1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10; ¹⁶Romans 8:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; ¹⁷1 Peter 1:5; ¹⁸1 Thessalonians 1:4, 5; 2 Peter 1:10; ¹⁹Ephesians 1:6; Romans 11:33; ²⁰Romans 11:5, 6, 20; ²¹Luke 10:20.

Chapter 4 - Creation

In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,¹ for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power,² wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world and all that is in it, both visible and invisible. This creative process took place in the space of six ordinary twenty-four hour days. When it was finished, it was complete and without evil, God declaring it all to be very good.³

After God made all other creatures, He created man, male and female,⁴ with reasonable and immortal souls⁵ suited to live for God. He was made after the image of God in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness,⁶ having the law of God written on his heart.⁷ In this condition, he had the ability to obey that law but could also transgress it, having the liberty of his own will.⁸

Besides the law written in his heart, he received a command that he should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.⁹ As long as he kept this command, he was happy in his communion with God and his dominion over the creatures.¹⁰

References: ¹John 1:2, 3; Hebrews 1:2; Job 26:13; ²Romans 1:20; ³Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:31; ⁴Genesis 1:27; ⁵Genesis 2:7; ⁶Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 1:26; ⁷Romans 2:14, 15; ⁸Genesis 3:6; ⁹Genesis 2:17; ¹⁰Genesis 1:26, 28.

Chapter 5 - Divine Providence

By His wise and holy providence, God upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all creation¹ from the greatest to the least² for the purpose that they were created. All that He does in the creation is to the praise of His glory,³ revealing His almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, infinite goodness, and infallible foreknowledge by the free and immutable counsel of His own will. God's foreknowledge and decree are the source of all things, by which everything occurs immutably and infallibly.⁴ Nothing happens by chance or occurs outside His Providence.⁵

Ordinarily God orders things according to second causes (or means), either by necessity, freely, or contingently;⁶ however,⁷ He is also free to work without,⁸ above,⁹ or against any means¹⁰ if He so pleases. This control extends even to the fall of Adam and all the subsequent sinful acts of both men and angels.¹¹ His determinate counsel not merely permits but actually determines what He wisely orders and powerfully governs¹² to the many dispensations of His holy ends.¹³ In this, however, the creatures' sinful acts proceed only from the creature and not from God as a cause. He, being most holy and righteous, cannot be either the author or approver of sin.¹⁴

God often permits His own children for a time to suffer temptations either to chasten them for their sins or show to them the strength of their own corruption or the deceitfulness of their own hearts. These occasions should humble and draw the believers to a closer and constant dependence upon Him for their support. They should also make them sensitive to present occasions of sin and more watchful against future occasions. These temptations may also serve other just and holy purposes.¹⁵ Whatever happens to any of God's elect, however, is always by His appointment for His glory and their good.¹⁶

God, the righteous Judge, blinds and hardens wicked and ungodly men according to their sins.¹⁷ He not only withholds His enlightening and convicting grace from them¹⁸ but may also withdraw the gifts they already have,¹⁹ exposing them to sin and its corruption.²⁰ This leaves them to their own lusts, temptations of the world, and the power of Satan.²¹ Left to themselves, the ungodly harden themselves, even by those means God uses to the soften others.²²

The Providence of God, in general, reaches to all creatures but especially to the care of His church, disposing all things for good.²³

References: ¹Hebrews 1:3; Job 38:11; Isaiah 46:10, 11; Psalm 135:6; ²Matthew 10:29-31; ³Ephesians 1:11; ⁴Acts 2:23; ⁵Proverbs 16:33; ⁶Genesis 8:22; ⁷Acts 27:31, 44; Isaiah 55:10, 11; ⁸Hosea 1:7; ⁹Romans 4:19-21; ¹⁰Daniel 3:27; ¹¹Romans 11:32-34; 2 Samuel 24:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1; ¹²2 Kings 19:28; Psalm 76:10; ¹³Genesis 1:20; Isaiah 10:6, 7, 12; ¹⁴Psalm 50:21; 1 John 2:16; ¹⁵2 Chronicles 32:25, 26, 31; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; ¹⁶Romans 8:28; ¹⁷Romans 1:24-26, 28; 11:7-8; ¹⁸Deuteronomy 29:4; ¹⁹Matthew 13:12; ²⁰Deuteronomy 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12, 13; ²¹Psalm 81:11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; ²²Exodus 8:15, 32; Isaiah 6:9, 10; 1 Peter 2:7, 8; ²³1 Timothy 4:10; Amos 9:8, 9; Isaiah 43:3-5.

Chapter 6 - The Fall of Man, Sin, and Punishment

Then God created Adam upright and perfect, He gave him a righteous law by which he could keep his original innocence in obedience. If, on the other hand, he disobeyed, he would die.¹ Nevertheless, Adam did not remain in his perfect condition very long. Satan, using the subtlety of the serpent, subdued Eve and then, by her, seduced Adam. Without any compulsion, Adam willfully transgressed the law of creation and the command given to him in the eating of the forbidden fruit.² In His wise and holy counsel, God was pleased to permit this transgression, having purposed it for His own glory.

Our first parents sinned and fell from their original righteousness and communion with God. Adam's posterity also fell in him, bringing death on the whole race.³ Mankind is now dead in sin⁴ and completely defiled in every faculty and part of both soul and body.⁵

By God's appointment Adam represents the whole race; thus, his sin and guilt are imputed to and a corrupted nature conveyed to all his posterity by ordinary generation.⁶ Being conceived in sin⁷ all are by nature children of wrath⁸ and servants of sin by which they are subject to death⁹ and every misery, spiritual, temporal and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus sets them free.¹⁰

Out of this original corruption all actual transgressions come¹¹ because all humans are utterly indisposed, disabled, and contrary to all good, being wholly inclined to every evil.¹² The corrupt nature remains during this life even in those who are regenerated,¹³ pardoned by Christ, with the old nature put to death; yet both the corrupt nature and its tendencies are truly and properly sin.¹⁴

References: ¹Genesis 2:16, 17; ²Genesis 3:12, 13; 2 Corinthians 11:3; ³Romans 3:23; ⁴Romans 5:12-21; ⁵Titus 1:15; Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-19; ⁶Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45, 49; ⁷Psalm 51:5; Job 14:4; ⁸Ephesians 2:3; ⁹Romans 6:20; 5:12; ¹⁰Hebrews 2:14, 15; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; ¹¹James 1:14, 15; Matthew 15:19; ¹²Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21; ¹³Romans 7:18, 23; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8; ¹⁴Romans 7:23-25; Galatians 5:17.

Chapter 7 - The Covenant of Grace

Although reasonable creatures owe obedience to God, their Creator, the gap between them is so great that they can never attain the reward of life without the voluntary condescension of God, which He has been pleased to do by a covenant.¹

Since mankind brought itself under the curse of the law by the fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace² by which He freely offers life and salvation to sinners by Jesus Christ. He does this by requiring faith in

Christ in order that they might be saved.³ He also promises to give His Holy Spirit to all who are ordained to eternal life in order to make them willing and able to believe.⁴

This covenant was first revealed to Adam in the gospel promise of salvation by the seed of the woman.⁵ After that it was revealed in progressive stages until the full revelation was completed in the New Testament.⁶ This covenant is founded on the eternal covenantal transaction between the Father and the Son concerning the redemption of the elect.⁷ It is only by the grace of this covenant that any of fallen Adam's posterity will ever obtain life and immortality, since mankind can never find acceptance with God on the terms Adam originally stood in his innocence.⁸

References: ¹Luke 17:10; Job 35:7, 8; ²Genesis 2:17; Galatians 3:10; Romans 3:20, 21; ³Romans 8:3; Mark 16:15, 16; John 3:16; ⁴Ezekiel 36:26, 27; John 6:44, 45; Psalm 110:3; ⁵Genesis 3:15; ⁶Hebrews 1:1; ⁷2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; ⁸Hebrews 11:6, 13; Romans 4:1, 2; Acts 4:12; John 8:56.

Chapter 8 - Christ, Mediator of the Covenant

God was pleased to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man according to His eternal purpose and their mutual covenant.¹ In order to be the Mediator, He was made Prophet,² Priest,³ and King.⁴ He is also Head and Savior of His church,⁵ Heir of all things,⁶ and Judge of the world.⁷ The Father, from all eternity, gave His Son a people to be His seed, whom, in time, He would redeem, call, justify, sanctify, and glorify.⁸

The Son of God is the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory. He is of one substance, being equal with Him who made the world and who upholds and governs all things He has made. When the fullness of time was come, the Son took upon Him human nature with all the properties and infirmities common to humankind⁹ but without sin.¹⁰ He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the power of the Most High overshadowing her. In this way He was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah and of the seed of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures.¹¹ In Him the two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person without conversion, composition, or confusion. Jesus is very God and very man—one Christ and the only mediator between God and man.¹²

His human nature being united to the divine nature, the Lord Jesus was sanctified by and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure.¹³ In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge¹⁴ because it pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell,¹⁵ being holy, harmless, undefiled,¹⁶ and full of grace and truth,¹⁷ and that by these He is properly equipped for the office of mediator and surety.¹⁸ He did not take this office upon Himself but was called to it by His Father,¹⁹ who placed all authority and judgment into His hands with a charge to do it.²⁰

The Lord Jesus willingly undertook this office²¹ for which He was "made under the law,"²² perfectly fulfilling it. He also undertook the punishment that we would have suffered,²³ being made sin and a curse for us²⁴ and enduring great sorrows in His soul and painful suffering in His body.²⁵ He was crucified and died, His body remaining in physical death but without corruption.²⁶ After three days in the tomb, He arose from the dead²⁷ with the same body in which he suffered.²⁸ Then, after forty days He also ascended into heaven²⁹ to sit on the right hand of His Father to make intercession for us.³⁰ He will return to judge men and angels at the end of the age.³¹

The Lord Jesus, through the eternal Spirit, was once and for all offered up unto God, by which He fully satisfied the justice of God³² and, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice, procured reconciliation and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father gave to Him.³³

Although the price of redemption was not paid until after Christ's incarnation, the benefits were applied to the elect in every age from the beginning of the world and revealed to them in promises, types, and sacrifices. In these He was signified to be the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head,³⁴ being the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,³⁵ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.³⁶

Christ the Mediator acts according to both natures, each nature acting in what is proper to itself. However, because of the unity of the person, what is properly attributed to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the other nature.³⁷

Christ applies the benefit to and makes intercession for every one for whom He obtained eternal redemption,³⁸ uniting them to Himself by His Spirit. He reveals the mystery of salvation in and by the Word, persuading the elect to believe and obey³⁹ by governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit. By His almighty power and wisdom,⁴⁰ He

overcomes all obstacles⁴¹ in ways that are in harmony with His wonderful and unsearchable administration of free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them as the means of procuring salvation.⁴²

The offices of Prophet, Priest, and King are properly held only by Christ, our Mediator, and may not be transferred to any other either in whole or in part.⁴³ Their number and order is also necessary. Because of our ignorance, we stand in need of His prophetic office.⁴⁴ Because of our alienation from God and because our best service is full of imperfection, we need His priestly office to reconcile and present us as acceptable to God.⁴⁵ Also, because of our enmity and utter inability to return to God and for our rescue and security from spiritual adversaries, we need His kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us to His heavenly kingdom.⁴⁶

References: ¹Isaiah 42:1; ¹Peter 1:19, 20; ²Acts 3:22; ³Hebrews 5:5, 6; ⁴Psalm 2:6; Luke 1:33; ⁵Ephesians 1:22, 23; ⁶Hebrews 1:2; ⁷Acts 17:31; ⁸Isaiah 53:10; John 17:6; Romans 8:30; ⁹John 1:14; Galatians 4:4; ¹⁰Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14, 16, 17; 4:15; ¹¹Matthew 1:22, 23; Luke 1:27, 31, 35; ¹²Romans 9:5; ¹Timothy 2:5; ¹³Psalm 45:7; Acts 10:38; John 3:34; ¹⁴Colossians 2:3; ¹⁵Colossians 1:19; ¹⁶Hebrews 7:26; ¹⁷John 1:14; ¹⁸Hebrews 7:22; ¹⁹Hebrews 5:5; ²⁰John 5:22, 27; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36; ²¹Psalm 40:7, 8; Hebrews 10:5-10; John 10:18; ²²Galatians 4:4; Matthew 3:15; ²³Galatians 3:13; Isaiah 53:6; ¹Peter 3:18; ²⁴2 Corinthians 5:21; ²⁵Matthew 26:37, 38; Luke 22:44; Matthew 27:46; ²⁶Acts 13:37; ²⁷1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; ²⁸John 20:25, 27; ²⁹Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; ³⁰Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24; ³¹Acts 10:42; Romans 14:9, 10; Acts 1:11; ²Peter 2:4; ³²Hebrews 9:14; 10:14; Romans 3:25, 26; ³³John 17:2; Hebrews 9:15; ³⁴1 Corinthians 4:10; Hebrews 4:2; ¹Peter 1:10, 11; ³⁵Revelation 13:8; ³⁶Hebrews 13:8; ³⁷John 3:13; Acts 20:28; ³⁸John 6:37; 10:15, 16; 17:9; Romans 5:10; ³⁹John 17:6; Ephesians 1:9; ¹John 5:20; ⁴⁰Romans 8:9, 14; ⁴¹Psalm 110:1; ¹Corinthians 15:25, 26; ⁴²John 3:8; Ephesians 1:8; ⁴³1 Timothy 2:5; ⁴⁴John 1:18; ⁴⁵Colossians 1:21; Galatians 5:17; ⁴⁶John 16:8; Psalm 110:3; Luke 1:74, 75.

Chapter 9 - Free Will

God endued mankind with natural liberty and ability to act on choice. This ability to choose was not forced or determined to do good or evil.¹ In this state of innocence, Adam was free and able to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God,² but he also had the ability to choose to fall from the state of innocence.³

By his fall into sin, Adam and his posterity totally lost all ability to will any spiritual good that accompanies salvation.⁴ Therefore, being altogether averse to good, the natural man is dead in sin⁵ and unable either to prepare or to convert himself by his own strength.⁶

When God converts a sinner, translating him into the state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage to sin.⁷ By His grace alone God enables him freely to will and to do spiritual good.⁸ However, because of his remaining corruption, he does not perfectly nor only will that which is good but also wills evil.⁹ Only in the state of glory will believers be made completely and unchangeably free to do good and not to sin.¹⁰

References: ¹Matthew 17:12; James 1:14; Deuteronomy 30:19; ²Ecclesiastes 7:29; ³Genesis 3:6; ⁴Romans 5:6; 8:7; ⁵Ephesians 2:1, 5; ⁶Titus 3:3-5; John 6:44; ⁷Colossians 1:13; John 8:36; ⁸Philippians 2:13; ⁹Romans 7:15, 18, 19, 21, 23; ¹⁰Ephesians 4:13.

Chapter 10 - Effectual Calling

God is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call¹ those whom He has predestinated unto life. He calls them by His Word and Spirit out of the state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ.² This He does, spiritually and savingly, by enlightening their minds to understand the things of God.³ He takes away their hearts of stone, giving them hearts of flesh⁴ and renewing their wills. By His almighty power He determines them to that which is good, effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ,⁵ yet in such a way that they come freely, being made willing by His grace.⁶

Effectual calling is of God's free and special grace alone, not due to any foreseen cause in man. It is not from any power or agency by which the sinner⁷ cooperates with His special grace. The sinner is wholly passive, being dead in sins and trespasses until quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit.⁸ Only then is he enabled to answer this call and embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. Regeneration is by no less power than that which raised Christ from the dead.⁹

Elect infants who die in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit,¹⁰ who works when, where, and how He pleases.¹¹ This also applies to all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

All the non-elect, although they may be outwardly called by the ministry of the Word and may have some common operations of the Spirit,¹² are never effectually drawn by the Father. They never truly come to Christ and so cannot be saved.¹³ No one who does not receive the Christian faith can be saved, be he ever so diligent to conform his life to the light of nature and the law of the religion he does profess.¹⁴

References: ¹Romans 8:30; 11:7; Ephesians 1:10, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; ²Ephesians 2:1-6; ³Acts 26:18; Ephesians 1:17, 18; ⁴Ezekiel 36:26; ⁵Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:27; Ephesians 1:19; ⁶Psalms 110:3; Song of Solomon 1:4; ⁷2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 2:8; ⁸1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:5; John 5:25; ⁹Ephesians 1:19, 20; 10 John 3:3,5, 6; ¹¹John 3:8; ¹²Matthew 22:14; 13:20, 21; Hebrews 6:4, 5; ¹³John 6:44, 45, 65; 1 John 2:24, 25; ¹⁴Acts 4:12; John 4:22; 17:3.

Chapter 11 - Justification

Those whom God effectually calls He also freely justifies,¹ not by infusing righteousness into them but by pardoning their sins and accounting them righteous.² Justification is a judicial act for Christ's sake alone and is neither wrought in the elect.³ Justification is not the result of God's imputing faith as righteousness, mere acts of believing, or any other evangelical obedience done by the elect. They are justified only by God's imputing both Christ's active obedience to the law and passive obedience to death for them.⁴

Faith, the gift of God,⁵ is only the instrument of justification.⁶ By faith the elect receive Christ and rest on Him, however, it is always accompanied by other saving graces in justified persons. There is no dead faith but that which works by love.⁷

Christ, by His obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all who are justified. Christ was given by the Father for them, and in their place He endured the penalty of sin, making full satisfaction to God's justice by the blood of His cross.⁸ Their justification is of free grace only.⁹ This is in order that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.¹⁰

God decreed from all eternity to justify all the elect,¹¹ and Christ died in the fullness of time for their sins and rose again for their justification.¹² Nevertheless, the elect are not justified personally until the Holy Spirit in due time actually applies Christ's work to them.¹³

God continues to forgive the sins of those that are justified.¹⁴ In this way they can never fall from the state of justification.¹⁵ They may, however, fall under God's fatherly displeasure for their acts of sin.¹⁶ In that condition, the light of His countenance is not usually restored to them until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg His pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.¹⁷

The justification of believers under the Old Covenant was in all these respects like that of believers under the New Covenant,¹⁸ the difference being that Old Covenant believers did not have full assurance because their consciences were not fully cleared.

References: ¹Romans 3:24; 8:30; ²Romans 4:5-8; Ephesians 1:7; ³1 Corinthians 1:30, 31; Romans 5:17-19; ⁴Philippians 3:8, 9; Ephesians 2:8-10; ⁵John 1:12; Romans 5:17; ⁶Romans 3:28; ⁷Galatians 5:6; James 2:17, 22, 26; ⁸Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Isaiah 53:5,6; ⁹Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 5:21; ¹⁰Romans 3:26; Ephesians 1:6, 7; 2:7; ¹¹Galatians 3:8; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Timothy 2:6, 12; Romans 4:25; ¹²Romans 4:25; ¹³Colossians 1:21, 22; Titus 3:4-7; ¹⁴Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:7, 9; ¹⁵John 10:28; ¹⁶Psalms 89:31-33; ¹⁷Psalms 32:5; Psalm 51:1-19; Matthew 26:75; ¹⁸Galatians 3:9; Romans 4:22-24; Hebrews 9:9, 14; 10:2, 22.

Chapter 12 - Adoption

God has condescended to grant to all who are justified, for the sake of His only Son, Jesus Christ, the grace of adoption.¹ By this grant they become the children of God, enjoying all the liberties and privileges accorded to them.² They are given His name.³ They receive the spirit of adoption,⁴ giving them access to the throne of grace with boldness to cry, "Abba, Father."⁵ They are pitied,⁶ protected,⁷ provided for,⁸ and chastened by the Father.⁹ They are never cast off¹⁰ but are sealed unto the day of redemption,¹¹ when they will inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.¹²

References: ¹Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:4, 5; ²John 1:12; Romans 8:17; ³2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12; ⁴Romans 8:15; ⁵Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:18; ⁶Psalms 103:13; ⁷Proverbs 14:26; ⁸1 Peter 5:7; ⁹Hebrews 12:6; ¹⁰Isaiah 54:8, 9; Lamentations 3:31; ¹¹Ephesians 4:30; ¹²Hebrews 1:14; 6:12.

Chapter 13 - Sanctification

Those who are united to Christ, effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also sanctified¹ by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them.² The rule of the body of sin is destroyed,³ and its lusts are continually weakened and mortified.⁴ At the same time the believers are quickened and strengthened in all the saving graces.⁵ This enables them to practice true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.⁶

Sanctification acts on the whole person⁷ who is yet imperfect in this life because of remaining corruption,⁸ which is the source of continual and irreconcilable war. The flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.⁹

Although the remaining corruption for a time may prevail,¹⁰ through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate will eventually overcome¹¹ and grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Through sanctification believers press after heavenly life in evangelical obedience to all the commands of Christ as Head and King that His Word prescribes.¹²

References: ¹Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5, 6; ²John 17:17; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23; ³Romans 6:14; ⁴Galatians 5:24; ⁵Colossians 1:11; ⁶2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; ⁷1 Thessalonians 5:23; ⁸Romans 7:18, 23; ⁹Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11; ¹⁰Romans 7:23; ¹¹Romans 6:14; ¹²Ephesians 4:15, 16; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 7:1.

Chapter 14 - Saving Faith

The grace of faith whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls is the work of the Spirit.¹ Saving faith is produced in the sinner in association with the ministry of the Word.² Faith is increased and strengthened by the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, prayer and other means appointed of God.³

By faith a Christian believes whatever is revealed in the Word.⁴ In so doing, he apprehends the authority of the Word above all other writings.⁵ As the Word of God reveals the glory of God in His attributes, the excellence of Christ in His nature and offices, and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in His operations, the elect is enabled to cast his soul on the truth believed.⁶ The believer acts in accordance to what each particular passage contains, yielding obedience to the commands,⁷ trembling at its warnings,⁸ and embracing the promises of God.⁹ However, the principal act of saving faith is its immediate relationship to Christ-accepting, receiving, and resting on Him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life. This he does by virtue of the covenant of grace.¹⁰

Saving faith, although it varies in degree (weak or strong),¹¹ is, nevertheless, different in nature from the faith and common grace of temporary believers.¹² Therefore, though it may suffer many assaults and be temporarily weakened, yet it will be victorious.¹³ No matter how small it begins, it will grow up to attain full assurance through Christ,¹⁴ who is both the Author and Finisher of faith.¹⁵

References: ¹2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 2:8; ²Romans 10:14, 17; ³Luke 17:5; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:32; ⁴Acts 24:14; ⁵Psalms 19:7-10; 119:72; ⁶2 Timothy 1:12; ⁷John 15:14; ⁸Isaiah 66:2; ⁹Hebrews 11:13; ¹⁰John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Galatians 2:20; Acts 15:11; ¹¹Hebrews 5:13, 14; Matthew 6:30; Romans 4:19, 20; ¹²1 Peter 1:1; ¹³Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4-5; ¹⁴Hebrews 6:11, 12; Colossians 2:2; ¹⁵Hebrews 12:2.

Chapter 15 - Repentance unto Life and Salvation

God, in the effectual calling, gives to elect persons converted in their mature years repentance unto life¹ because they have lived for some time and served various lusts and pleasures.

There is none who does good and sins not;² thus, because of the power and deceitfulness of indwelling corruption and because of the prevalence of temptation, the best of men may fall into greater sins and provocations. Therefore, God has, in the covenant of grace, mercifully provided repentance unto salvation³ for believers who sin in order that they may be renewed.

This saving repentance is an evangelical grace.⁴ By faith in Christ, a person, made aware of the manifold evils of his sin by the Holy Spirit, humbles himself with godly sorrow and self-abhorrence.⁵ He then prays for pardon and strength of grace. The repentant person purposes to walk before God, endeavoring by the Spirit to be well-pleasing in all things.⁶

As repentance is to be continued through the whole course of life on account of the body of death and the motions of it, so everyone's duty is to repent particularly of his known sins.⁷

Such is the provision which God has made through Christ in the covenant of grace for the preservation of believers unto salvation. Although there is no sin so small but that it deserves damnation,⁸ yet there is no sin so great that it brings damnation on those who do repent.⁹ This makes the constant repentance necessary.

References: ¹Titus 3:2-5; ²Ecclesiastes 7:20; ³Luke 22:31, 32; ⁴Zechariah 12:10; Acts 11:18; ⁵Ezekiel 36:31; 2 Corinthians 7:11; ⁶Psalms 119:6, 128; ⁷Luke 19:8; 1 Timothy 1:13, 15; ⁸Romans 6:23; ⁹Isaiah 1:16-18; 55:7.

Chapter 16 - Good Works

Works that are considered good works by God are those that He has commanded in His Holy Word.¹ Works done by men out of mere zeal or with good intentions are not acceptable to God without His warrant.²

Obedience that is the fruit of true and living faith³ is also the evidence of such faith. By it believers display their thankfulness,⁴ strengthen their assurance,⁵ edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel,⁶ stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God.⁷ The goal of God's workmanship in those created in Christ Jesus is good works.⁸ Those who do them have their fruit unto holiness, the end of which is eternal life.⁹

The ability to do good works acceptable to God is wholly from the Spirit of Christ,¹⁰ who works in believers to will and to do of His good pleasure.¹¹ This fact, however, is no excuse for one to neglect his obligation to do good works, believing that this neglect is evidence that the Spirit is not working in him. Rather, he ought diligently to seek to stir up the grace of God that is in him.¹²

Those who in their obedience produce the best works possible in this life will never supererogate (never do more than God requires). They will always fall far short of their obligation.¹³

A believer's best works neither merit pardon for sin nor earn eternal life due to the great disparity between those works and the perfect glory of God. Finite works could never satisfy the debt of their sins against the infinite God.¹⁴ Therefore, believers are unprofitable servants because, when have done all they can, they have only done their duty. Works can be good only as they proceed from the Spirit,¹⁵ but they become defiled by human weakness and imperfection and, thus, could never endure the severity of God's judgment.¹⁶

Nevertheless, those who are accepted in Christ will also find that their good works are accepted in Him.¹⁷ Though they are not unreprouvable in God's sight, God is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although weak and imperfect.¹⁸

Works done by the unregenerate, although commanded of God and useful,¹⁹ do not proceed from a heart purified by faith.²⁰ They are not Spirit-empowered obedience to the Word²¹ or are they done for the glory of God.²² Thus, they are sinful and cannot please God. Those who do them will never qualify to receive grace from God.²³ On the other hand, the neglect of them makes the unregenerate person more sinful and displeasing to God.²⁴

References: ¹Micah 6:8; Hebrews 13:21; ²Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13; ³James 2:18, 22; ⁴Psalms 116:12, 13; ⁵1 John 2:3, 5; 2 Peter 1:5-11; ⁶Matthew 5:16; ⁷1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Peter 2:15; Philippians 1:11; ⁸Ephesians 2:10; ⁹Romans 6:22; ¹⁰John 15:4, 5, 11; Colossians 3:5; Philippians 2:13; ¹¹2 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 2:13; ¹²Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Isaiah 64:7; ¹³Job 9:2, 3; Galatians 5:17; Luke 17:10; ¹⁴Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 4:6; ¹⁵Galatians 5:22, 23; ¹⁶Isaiah 64:6; Psalm 143:2; ¹⁷Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5; ¹⁸Matthew 25:21, 23; Hebrews 6:10; ¹⁹2 Kings 10:30; 1 Kings 21:27, 29; ²⁰Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4, 6; ²¹1 Corinthians 13:1; ²²Matthew 6:2, 5; ²³Amos 5:21, 22; Romans 9:16; Titus 3:5; ²⁴Job 21:14, 15; Matthew 25:41-43.

Chapter 17 - Perseverance of the Saints

Those whom God has accepted in the Beloved, being effectually called and sanctified by the Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect, can neither totally nor finally fall from grace. They will certainly persevere in the faith to the end. They are eternally saved because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.¹ The Lord continually begets and nourishes faith in the elect along with repentance, love, joy, hope, and every grace of the Spirit.² Although many storms and floods arise to beat against them, they will never be moved off the foundation on which, by faith, they are fastened. Notwithstanding, due to periods of unbelief and/or the temptations of Satan, the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured.³ However, even in these times they remain secure,

kept by the power of God, their being engraved on the palm of His hands and their names written in the Book of Life from all eternity.⁴

The perseverance of the saints depends in no way on the believer's own free will but depends solely on the unchangeableness of the decree of election.⁵ This security flows from several things: (1) primarily, the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; (2) the effectiveness of the intercession of Jesus Christ, (3) the saints' union with Christ;⁶ (4) the oath of God;⁷ (5) the indwelling of His Spirit; (6) the seed of God within them;⁸ and (7) the nature of the covenant of grace.⁹

The saints may fall into and continue in dreadful sins for a time¹⁰ through the temptation of Satan and the world due to the corruption remaining in them. When they do so, they neglect the means of their preservation, incur God's displeasure, grieve His Holy Spirit,¹¹ impair their graces and comforts,¹² harden their hearts, and wound their consciences.¹³ They may also hurt and scandalize others and bring temporal judgments on themselves.¹⁴ However, this is only temporary because they must renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.¹⁵

References: ¹Romans 11:29; ²John 10:28, 29; ³Philippians 1:6; ⁴2 Timothy 2:19; ⁵1 John 2:19; ⁶Psalm 89:31, 32; ⁷1 Corinthians 11:32; ⁸Malachi 3:6; ⁹Romans 8:30; ¹⁰9:11, 16; ¹¹Romans 5:9, 10; ¹²John 14:19; ¹³Hebrews 6:17, 18; ¹⁴1 John 3:9; ¹⁵Jeremiah 32:40; ¹⁶Matthew 26:70, 72, 74; ¹⁷Isaiah 64:5, 9; ¹⁸Ephesians 4:30; ¹⁹Psalm 51:10, 12; ²⁰Psalm 32:3, 4; ²¹2 Samuel 12:14; ²²Luke 22:32, 61, 62.

Chapter 18 - Assurance of Grace and Salvation

Temporary believers and unregenerate persons deceive themselves with false hopes. They are presumptuous of the God's favor and salvation, but, their hope will perish.¹ However, those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus, who love Him sincerely, and who endeavor to walk in good conscience before Him may have assurance of their salvation and can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.² Such hope will never make them ashamed.³

This assurance is not a conjecture or mere probability based on a fallible hope but is of faith⁴ founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ as revealed in the Gospel.⁵ It is supported by the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit promised of God.⁶ It rests on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with the believer's spirit that he is a child of God.⁷ The fruit of this assurance keeps the heart both humble and holy.⁸

A true believer may struggle for a time before he actually gets assurance.⁹ Yet, the Spirit will enable him to know the things which are freely given him of God by the right use of means.¹⁰ Therefore, it is the duty of everyone to be diligent to confirm their calling and election. This assurance gives the believer peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, love and thankfulness to God, strength and cheerfulness in obedience, which are proper fruit.¹¹ These things insure that the believer will not be careless.¹²

However, true believers will find the assurance of their salvation shaken from time to time in various ways, usually by negligence in preserving it,¹³ falling into sins that wound the conscience and grieve the Spirit.¹⁴ Assurance can be shaken by some sudden or intense temptation.¹⁵ God may also withdraw the light of His countenance and permit those who fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light.¹⁶ Yet, even in such conditions, they are never destitute of the seed of God,¹⁷ the life of faith,¹⁸ the love of Christ and the brethren, the sincerity of heart, or the conscience of duty. Out of these things, by the operation of the Spirit, assurance will in due time be revived,¹⁹ preserving them from utter despair.²⁰

References: ¹Job 8:13, 14; ²Matthew 7:22, 23; ³1 John 2:3; ⁴3:14, 18, 19, 21, 24; ⁵5:13; ⁶Romans 5:2, 5; ⁷Hebrews 6:11, 19; ⁸Hebrews 6:17, 18; ⁹2 Peter 1:4, 5, 10, 11; ¹⁰Romans 8:15, 16; ¹¹1 John 3:1-3; ¹²Isaiah 50:10; ¹³Psalm 88:1-18; ¹⁴Psalm 77:1-12; ¹⁵1 John 4:13; ¹⁶Hebrews 6:11, 12; ¹⁷Romans 5:1, 2, 5; ¹⁸14:17; ¹⁹Psalm 119:32; ²⁰Romans 6:1, 2; ²¹Titus 2:11, 12, 14; ²²Song of Solomon 5:2, 3, 6; ²³Psalm 51:8, 12, 14; ²⁴Psalm 116:11; ²⁵77:7, 8; ²⁶31:22; ²⁷Psalm 30:7; ²⁸1 John 3:9; ²⁹Luke 22:32; ³⁰Psalm 42:5, 11; ³¹Lamentations 3:26-31.

Chapter 19 - The Law of God

God wrote a universal law on Adam's heart and then gave him a particular precept that he should not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.¹ In this law He bound both Adam and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience,² promising life for obedience, threatening death for disobedience, and enduing him with power and ability to keep His law.³

The same law that was first written in the heart of man continued to be the rule of righteousness after the fall.⁴ This law was then delivered to Israel by God on Mount Sinai in ten commandments, written in two tables. Four commandments contained duty to God, and six contained duty to man.⁵

Besides these commandments, commonly called the moral law, God also gave to Israel ceremonial laws containing typical ordinances for worship that prefigure Christ, His graces, acts, suffering, and benefits.⁶ These commandments hold various instructions for moral duties,⁷ being appointed only until the time of reformation by Jesus Christ. Being the true Messiah and only Lawgiver, He had authority from the Father to end that law, abrogate it, and take it away.⁸

The various judicial laws that God gave to Israel expired with the state of Israel and have no obligation for any now except by virtue of their general value in modern civil law.⁹

The moral law as reflected in the Ten Commandments forever binds all mankind, including justified persons,¹⁰ to obedience, which includes submission to the authority of the Creator who gave it.¹¹ Christ, in the gospel, does not dissolve the obligation of obedience but rather strengthens it because He insists that if one loves Him, he will keep His commandments.¹²

Although true believers are not under the law for either justification or condemnation,¹³ yet obedience to Christ is a rule of life. Thus, His commandments inform believers of the will of God and of their duty, directing and binding them to walk accordingly. In examining themselves by them, believers will (1) discover the sinful pollutions of their natures; (2) come to further conviction of sin, humility of heart, and hatred of evil;¹⁴ (3) have clearer insight of their need for Christ and the perfection of His obedience; (4) find restraint in that they forbid sin and show what sin deserves, though they are free from its curse. The promises for obedience likewise show what God approves and what blessings He bestows, although God owes nothing as a reward for obligation or obedience.

Since the commandments are valuable in encouraging the doing of good and refraining from evil, they should not be viewed as evidence that believers are under the law and not under grace.¹⁵ The commandments are not contrary to the grace of the gospel¹⁶ because it is the Spirit of Christ who subdues and enables the will of man freely and cheerfully to do what the will of God requires him to do.¹⁷

References: ¹Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 7:29; ²Romans 10:5; ³Galatians 3:10, 12; ⁴Romans 2:14, 15; ⁵Deuteronomy 10:4; ⁶Hebrews 10:1; Colossians 2:17; ⁷1 Corinthians 5:7; ⁸Colossians 2:14, 16, 17; Ephesians 2:14, 16; ⁹1 Corinthians 9:8-10; ¹⁰Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8, 10-12; ¹¹James 2:10, 11; ¹²John 14:15; Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 3:31; ¹³Romans 6:14; Galatians 2:16; Romans 8:1; 10:4; ¹⁴Romans 3:20; 7:7-25; ¹⁵Romans 6:12-14; 1 Peter 3:8-13; ¹⁶Galatians 3:21; ¹⁷Ezekiel 36:27.

Chapter 20 - The Gospel and the Extent of Grace

Because the transgression of Adam brought sin and death into the world, God was pleased to give to His elect the promise of a Savior, Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman. This promise is the means of calling the elect unto life, begetting in them faith and repentance.¹ In the promise of Genesis 3:15, the gospel is revealed in substance adequate for the conversion and salvation of sinners.²

The gospel of Christ and salvation is revealed only in the Word of God.³ The light of nature in the works of creation and providence reveal Christ and His grace in such a general or obscure way⁴ that men without the gospel revealed in Scripture could never attain saving faith or repentance.⁵

The revelation of the gospel to sinners at different times and in various ways with promises and precepts to the nations and persons to whom it was granted, was made solely by the sovereign will and good pleasure of God.⁶ This revelation is not annexed as any promise relating to one's improving his natural abilities, nor can the gospel be received by common light.⁷ Therefore, in all ages the preaching of the gospel has been granted to people and nations and either extended or limited according to the counsel of the will of God.

Although preaching the gospel is the outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace (being abundantly sufficient for it), yet those who are dead in trespasses can be born again, quickened, or regenerated only by the effectual work of the Holy Spirit. He produces spiritual life in them,⁸ without which no other means will affect their conversion to God.⁹

References: ¹Genesis 3:15; ²Revelation 13:8; ³Romans 1:17; ⁴Romans 10:14, 15, 17; ⁵Proverbs 29:18; Isaiah 25:7; 60:2, 3; ⁶Psalms 147:20; Acts 16:7; ⁷Romans 1:18-32; ⁸Psalms 110:3; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 1:19, 20; ⁹John 6:44; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6.

Chapter 21 - Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

The liberty that Christ purchased for believers under the gospel is freedom from the guilt of sin, the wrath of God in punishing sin, and the severity and curse of the law for sin.¹ This liberty also delivers believers from this present evil world,² bondage to Satan,³ dominion of sin,⁴ the evil of afflictions,⁵ the fear and sting of death, the fear and sting of death, the grave⁶ and everlasting damnation.⁷ It also gives them free access to God, rendering their obedience to Him, not of slavish fear,⁸ but of child-like love and willingness.⁹ These things were also common to believers under the law as to the substance of them,¹⁰ but under the New Testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the Mosaic law, giving New Testament believers greater boldness of access to the throne of grace and full communication of the free Spirit of God.¹¹

He alone is Lord of the conscience¹² and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men that are either contrary to His Word or not contained in it.¹³ To believe such doctrines or to obey such commands out of conscience is to betray true liberty of conscience.¹⁴ Therefore, to require implicit faith with absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason.¹⁵

Those who, upon pretext of Christian liberty, practice sin or cherish sinful lusts thereby pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction.¹⁶ In doing so, they completely destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is that, being delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives.¹⁷

References: ¹Galatians 3:13; ²Galatians 1:4; ³Acts 26:18; ⁴Romans 8:3; ⁵Romans 8:28; ⁶1 Corinthians 15:54-57; ⁷2 Thessalonians 1:10; ⁸Romans 8:15; ⁹Luke 1:73-75; 1 John 4:18; ¹⁰Galatians 3:9, 14; ¹¹John 7:38, 39; Hebrews 10:19-21; ¹²James 4:12; Romans 14:4; ¹³Acts 4:19, 29; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Matthew 15:9; ¹⁴Colossians 2:20, 22, 23; ¹⁵1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 1:24; ¹⁶Romans 6:1, 2; ¹⁷Galatians 5:13; 2 Peter 2:18, 21.

Chapter 22 - Worship and the Sabbath Day

The light of nature shows that there is a God who has lordship and sovereignty over all things but who is also just and good, doing good to all. He is, therefore, to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart and with all the soul and with all the might.¹ However, the only acceptable way to worship the true God has been instituted by Him² and limited by His own revealed will. He is not to be worshiped according to the imagination and devices of men or the suggestions of Satan. There are to be no visible representations of Him nor any practices not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.³

Worship is to be rendered to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and to Him alone.⁴ Worship is not to be given to angels, saints, or any other creature.⁵ Also, since the fall, worship is not to be engaged in without a Mediator⁶ or with a mediator other than Jesus Christ.⁷

God requires prayer and thanksgiving as a part of the natural worship of all men.⁸ However, for it to be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son⁹ by the help of the Spirit;¹⁰ according to His will;¹¹ with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance.¹² Prayer is to be made for lawful things and for all sorts of men living now or in the future¹³ but not for the dead.¹⁴ Prayer is not to be made for those known to have sinned the sin unto death.¹⁵

Worship must include public reading,¹⁶ preaching, and hearing the Word of God;¹⁷ teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord;¹⁸ and the administration of baptism¹⁹ and the Lord's Supper.²⁰ All parts of worship are to be performed in obedience to Him in a holy and solemn manner with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear. Solemn humiliation, with fasting²¹ and thanksgiving should also be exercised on special occasions.²²

Under the gospel, God's acceptance of prayer and worship does not depend on the place where it is performed. He can be worshiped everywhere in spirit and in truth,²³ including private²⁴ daily worship²⁵ both in personal²⁶ and family devotion. Public worship in assemblies must not be carelessly or willfully neglected, especially when God in His Word calls us to it.²⁷

As a law of nature, God also appoints a proportion of time to be set apart for His worship. In His Word, He appointed one day in seven to be kept holy for Him by perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages.²⁸ From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, that day was the last day of the week, the Sabbath. Since the resurrection of Christ, that day was changed to the first day of the week, the Lord's Day.²⁹ Sabbath observance has been abolished.

The Lord's Day ought to be reserved as holy to the Lord. After duly preparing their hearts and arranging their affairs beforehand, people are to avoid secular employment and recreation³⁰ but rather rest and spend their time in the public and private worship and in the duties of necessity and mercy.³¹

References: ¹Jeremiah 10:7; Mark 12:33; ²Deuteronomy 12:32; ³Exodus 20:4-6; ⁴Matthew 4:9, 10; John 6:23; Matthew 28:19; ⁵Romans 1:25; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10; ⁶John 14:6; ⁷1 Timothy 2:5; ⁸Psalms 95:1-7; 65:2; ⁹John 14:13, 14; ¹⁰Romans 8:26; ¹¹1 John 5:14; ¹²1 Corinthians 14:16, 17; ¹³1 Timothy 2:1, 2; 2 Samuel 7:29; ¹⁴Samuel 12:21-23; ¹⁵1 John 5:16; ¹⁶1 Timothy 4:13; ¹⁷2 Timothy 4:2; Luke 8:18; ¹⁸Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; ¹⁹Matthew 28:19, 20; ²⁰1 Corinthians 11:26; ²¹Esther 4:16; Joel 2:12; ²²Exodus 15:1-19; Psalm 107:1-43; ²³John 4:21; Malachi 1:11; 1 Timothy 2:8; ²⁴Acts 10:2; ²⁵Matthew 6:11; Psalm 55:17; ²⁶Matthew 6:6; ²⁷Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42; ²⁸Exodus 20:8; ²⁹1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10; ³⁰Isaiah 58:13; Nehemiah 13:15-22; ³¹Matthew 12:1-13.

Chapter 23 - The Use of Music in Worship

We believe that singing praise to God¹ is a holy ordinance of Christ, not merely a part of natural religion or moral duty. The whole church in public assembly as well as individuals in private ought to sing God's praises according to the best light that they have received.² Our Lord Jesus Christ practiced the singing of hymns with His disciples³ after He instituted and celebrated the ordinance of His holy supper, the commemorative token of redeeming love. However, while the churches of Christ should obey this divine injunction, believers should be cautioned that the use of music in worship, contrary to worldly standards, is not for the purpose of exhibiting talents or skills. Music used in worship is to be to the Lord alone, not for the entertainment of those in attendance of worship.⁴

References: ¹Acts 16:25; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; ²Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13; ³Matthew 26:30; ⁴Ephesians 5:19.

Chapter 24 - Civil Authority

God, the supreme Lord and King of the entire world, has ordained civil government to have authority for His glory and the public good. To this end He has armed civil authorities with "the power of the sword" (capital authority to enforce its laws for the defense and encouragement of those who do good and for the punishment of those who do wrong).¹

It is permitted in Scripture for Christians to accept and serve in public office, if they are able to do so without spiritual and moral compromise. In performing the duties of public office, officials are to maintain justice and peace² according to the laws of each government. To that end, they may, on New Testament authority, engage in warfare on just and necessary occasions.³

Civil government as established by God for His purposes requires that every citizen submit to every lawful ordinance. Thus, believers must submit to civil government as to the Lord, not only for wrath's sake but for conscience's sake.⁴ Believers, however, must always obey God when man's laws require disobedience but must also suffer the civil consequences of such disobedience.⁵ Believers are also to make supplication and prayer for kings and for all that are in authority in order that, under them, they may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.⁶

References: ¹Romans 13:1-4; ²2 Samuel 23:3; Psalm 82:3, 4; ³Luke 3:14; ⁴Romans 13:5-7; 1 Peter 2:17; ⁵Acts 4:19, 20; 5:29; ⁶1 Timothy 2:1, 2.

Chapter 25 - Marriage

Marriage is the union of one man and one woman for life. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife,¹ for the increase of mankind through legitimate offspring,² and for preventing the sin of moral uncleanness.³

Anyone may marry who is able, with judgment, to give his or her consent in it.⁴ However, it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord.⁵ Therefore, Christians may not marry unbelievers or idolaters; neither are the godly to be unequally yoked by marriage to those who live wickedly or support heresy.⁶

Marriage is to be governed by the Word of God,⁷ ruling out all unions that are forbidden in Scripture, such as incestuous, homosexual, and polygamous marriages.⁸ Such marriages can never be made lawful either by legislation or by consent.⁹

References: ¹Genesis 2:24; ²Genesis 1:28; ³1 Corinthians 7:2, 9; ⁴Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 4:3; ⁵1 Corinthians 7:39; ⁶Nehemiah 13:25-27; ⁷Leviticus 18:1-30; ⁸1 Corinthians 5:1; Romans 1:26, 27; Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:15; Matthew 19:5, 6; ⁹Mark 6:18; 1 Corinthians 5:1.

Chapter 26 - The Church

The universal church consists of all the elect that have been, are, and will be gathered into one under Christ. Some call it the invisible church because of the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace. The church is the wife, the body, and the fullness of Christ, who fills all in all.¹ The church is always manifested on earth through local visible assemblies. All who profess the faith of the gospel and obey God by Christ are called saints,² and only of such should all visible churches be constituted.³

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. He, by the appointment of the Father, has supreme and sovereign authority for the calling, institution, order, and government of the church.⁴ No one but Christ has this power, and anyone who exalts himself in the church against Christ shall be destroyed by the Lord with the brightness of His coming.⁵

Visible churches, even the purest, are subject to mixture and error.⁶ Some churches have even degenerated to the point of becoming synagogues of Satan.⁷ Nevertheless Christ always has had and always will have a kingdom in this world for those who believe in Him and openly profess His name.⁸ In executing His power, the Lord Jesus calls out of the world to Himself by His Spirit through the ministry of His Word those that are given to Him by the Father⁹ in order that they may walk before Him in obedience as prescribed in His Word.¹⁰ Those so called, He commands to walk together in particular societies or churches for their mutual edification and public worship.¹¹

Members of the churches are saints by calling but also visibly evidence that call by obedience to Christ,¹² walking together in willing consent by the appointment of Christ. They are to give themselves up to the Lord and to one another by the will of God in submission to Gospel ordinances.¹³ In order to make such obedience possible, Christ has given all power and authority necessary for the worship and discipline He has instituted for them to observe.¹⁴

Each particular church consists of both members and officers. The officers, bishops (or elders) and deacons,¹⁵ are appointed by Christ and are to be set apart by the church for the administration of the ordinances and the implementation of the duties Christ entrusts to them to be sustained until the end of the age. The calling of those fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit for the office of bishop or elder is to be by the common consent of the church,¹⁶ solemnly setting them apart by fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands of the eldership of the church.¹⁷ Deacons are also to be chosen and set apart in a similar manner.¹⁸

The duty of the pastor is to attend the service of Christ in His church, which consists of the ministry of the Word and prayer, watching for the souls of those for whom he must give account.¹⁹ Thus, it is the duty of the church to whom he ministers not only to give him due respect but also to provide for him according to their ability.²⁰ The pastor should have enough to sustain him and also have enough to exercise hospitality²¹ without his becoming entangled in secular work.²² This support is required both by the law of nature and by the express order of our Lord Jesus, who has ordained that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel.²³

Although a requisite of the office of bishop or pastor is the preaching the Word, yet preaching the Word is not necessarily limited to him. Others may and ought to preach the Word²⁴ if they are called and approved by the church, being gifted and equipped by the Holy Spirit.

All believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches when and where they have opportunity to do so. All who are thus admitted to the privileges of a church are also under its discipline and government by the rule of Christ.²⁵

A Church member who becomes offended should not disturb church order. He must not absent himself from the assemblies of the church or from the ordinances on account of the offence. After his doing scriptural duty (Matthew 18:15-20) to the offender, the offended member is to wait upon Christ in further disciplinary proceedings of the church.²⁶

Churches are bound to pray continually for the good and prosperity of all the other churches in Christ²⁷ in all places and on all occasions. When planted by the providence of God where they may do so, each church ought to join in fellowship with others of like faith and order for peace, love, and mutual edification.²⁸

Since each church is sovereign under Christ, where the churches in general are concerned, if they have differences either in point of doctrine or administration, the churches in fellowship ought to meet in order to consider and seek the mind of Christ on the matter. They should, then, give advice about the particular matter in difference, reporting their findings to all the churches concerned.²⁹ However, the messengers of the churches to these fellowship meetings are not to have any authority or jurisdiction over the churches themselves, nor are they to impose discipline over any church or person. They cannot impose their findings on the churches or their officers³⁰ but give advice only.

References: ¹Hebrews 12:23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:10, 22, 23; 5:23, 27, 32; ²1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 11:26; ³Romans 1:7; Ephesians 1:20-22; ⁴Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11, 12; ⁵2 Thessalonians 2:2-9; ⁶1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Revelation 2:1-29; 3:1-22; ⁷Revelation 18:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12; ⁸Matthew 16:18; Psalm 72:17; 102:28; Revelation 12:17; ⁹John 10:16; 12:32; ¹⁰Matthew 28:20; ¹¹Matthew 18:15-20; ¹²Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; ¹³Acts 2:41, 42; 5:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 9:13; ¹⁴Matthew 18:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 5:13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8; ¹⁵Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1; ¹⁶Acts 14:23; ¹⁷1 Timothy 4:14; ¹⁸Acts 6:3, 5, 6; ¹⁹Acts 6:4; Hebrews 13:17; ²⁰1 Timothy 5:17, 18; Galatians 6:6, 7; ²¹1 Timothy 3:2; ²²2 Timothy 2:4; ²³1 Corinthians 9:6-14; ²⁴Acts 11:19-21; 1 Peter 4:10, 11; ²⁵1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15; ²⁶Matthew 18:15-17; Ephesians 4:2, 3; ²⁷Ephesians 6:18; Psalm 122:6; ²⁸Romans 16:1, 2; 3 John 8-10; ²⁹Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23, 25; ³⁰2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 John 4:1.

Chapter 27 - The Communion of the Saints

As saints are united to Jesus Christ, their head, by His Spirit through faith by which they partake in Christ's suffering, death, resurrection, graces, and glory,¹ so they are also united to one another by gifts and graces in love and communion.² This union obligates them to public and private duties that contribute to their mutual good both in the inward and outward man.³ As saints by profession, they are bound to maintain holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, so they are to maintain other spiritual services tending to mutual edification.⁴ This involves relieving each other in outward needs according to each one's abilities and necessities.⁵ According to the rule of the gospel, this communion is to be exercised as to their relation, family⁶ or church,⁷ and, as God offers opportunity, is to extend to all the household of faith who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, in their sharing with one another as saints, each person retains possession and title of what belongs to him.⁸

References: ¹1 John 1:3; John 1:16; Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:5, 6; ²Ephesians 4:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 3:21-23; ³1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; Romans 1:12; 1 John 3:17, 18; Galatians 6:10; ⁴Hebrews 10:24, 25; 3:12, 13; ⁵Acts 11:29, 30; ⁶Ephesians 6:4; ⁷1 Corinthians 12:14-27; ⁸Acts 5:4; Ephesians 4:28.

Chapter 28 - The Ordinances

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are positive and sovereign ordinances appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only Law-giver, to be continued in His church to the end of the age.¹ These holy appointments are to be administered only by those who are qualified, having been called according to the commission of Christ.²

Baptism

Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to signify the fellowship of the one baptized with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. Baptism symbolizes the believer's being engrafted into Christ,³ his sins' being remitted (washed away),⁴ and his being dead to self in order to live to God through Jesus Christ, walking in newness of life.⁵

Only those who actually profess repentance towards God with faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus are the proper subjects of this ordinance.⁶ Water is to be used for baptism, wherein the candidate is to be baptized in the

name (singular) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit;⁷ Immersion or dipping of the whole person in water is the proper form of the administration of this ordinance.⁸

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ the same night He was betrayed with the command that His churches are to observe it until His Second Coming at the end of the age. Therefore, it is a perpetual remembrance of His death⁹ in order to confirm the faith of believers for their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him and to show their willingness to undertake every duty that they owe to Him. It is also a bond and pledge of their communion with Him and with each other.¹⁰

We reject every error of this ordinance that destroys Christ's sacrifice as the only propitiation for all the sins of the elect. We do not believe that these elements, in any way, are an actual offering up of Christ to His Father, nor do they constitute a real sacrifice made for remission of sins, either of the living or the dead. The supper is a memorial of that once-for-all¹¹ offering made by Christ on the cross with its spiritual oblation of praise unto God.¹²

The Lord Jesus has in this ordinance appointed His ministers to pray, sanctifying the elements of bread and fruit of the vine, setting them apart from a common to holy use. They are to take and break the bread, then take the cup, and give both to the communicants.¹³ Denying people the cup and worshiping the elements by lifting them up and carrying them about for adoration or reserving them for some pretended religious use is contrary to the nature of the ordinance and the institution of Christ.¹⁴

The elements in this ordinance, set apart to the use ordained by Christ, figuratively show Him crucified, although the terms used are the names of the things they represent, the body and blood of Christ,¹⁵ in substance and nature, the elements remain as they were before, only bread and wine.¹⁶

We reject the doctrine called transubstantiation that maintains that the substance of bread and wine are actually changed into the real body and blood of Christ by the consecration of a priest. This doctrine is not only not found in Scripture¹⁷ but it is against common sense and reason. It overthrows the nature of the ordinance, and has been the cause of many superstitions, even idolatry.¹⁸

Those who partake of the visible elements in this ordinance in a worthy manner do so inwardly by faith, not carnally and corporally. They spiritually receive and feed upon Christ crucified and on all the benefits of His death. Thus, in that ordinance, the body and blood of Christ are not corporally, but spiritually present to the faith of believers as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.¹⁹

Ignorant and ungodly persons are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ and, so, are unworthy of the Lord's Table. They cannot, without great sin partake of these holy mysteries and should not be admitted to them.²⁰ Indeed, whoever receives them unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, bringing judgment on himself.²¹

References: ¹Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26; ²Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 4:1; ³Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; ⁴Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16; ⁵Romans 6:4; ⁶Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36, 37; 2:41; 8:12; 18:8; ⁷Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8:38; ⁸Matthew 3:16, John 3:23 ⁹1 Corinthians 11:23-26; ¹⁰1 Corinthians 10:16, 17, 21; ¹¹Hebrews 9:25, 26, 28; ¹²1 Corinthians 11:24; Matthew 26:26, 27; ¹³1 Corinthians 11:23-26; ¹⁴Matthew 26:26-28; 15:9; Exodus 20:4, 5; ¹⁵1 Corinthians 11:27; ¹⁶1 Corinthians 11:26-28; ¹⁷Acts 3:21; Luke 24:6, 39; ¹⁸1 Corinthians 11:24, 25; ¹⁹1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-26; ²⁰2 Corinthians 6:14, 15; ²¹1 Corinthians 11:29; Matthew 7:6.

Chapter 29 - Man after Death and the Resurrection of the Dead

After death our bodies see corruption and return to dust,¹ but our immortal souls immediately return to God, who gave them.² The souls of the righteous, made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise to be with Christ while waiting for the full redemption of their bodies.³ There they will behold the face of God in light and glory.

The souls of the wicked are cast into hell to remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved for the judgment of the great day.⁴ The Scripture acknowledges nothing besides these two places for souls after death.

The saints who are alive when Christ returns shall not sleep but will be changed.⁵ The bodies of all the dead in Christ will be raised⁶ and reunited with their souls forever.⁷ The just shall be raised to honor, being made conformable to His own glorious body.⁸

At the end of Christ's millennial reign the bodies of the unjust shall be raised in dishonor to be judged and cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone forever.⁹

References: ¹Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36; ²Ecclesiastes 12:7; ³Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6, 8; Philippians 1:23, Hebrews 12:23; ⁴Jude 6, 7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23, 24; ⁵1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; ⁶Job 19:26, 27; ⁷1 Corinthians 15:42-43; ⁸Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; Philippians 3:21; ⁹Revelation 20:11-15; Daniel 12:2.

Chapter 30 - Christ's Return and Judgment

The Father has given all authority and judgment to Jesus Christ and has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by Him.¹ In that day all the apostate angels² and all the non-elect who have lived on the earth will be judged.³ This judgment is for the manifestation of His justice in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient,⁴ who know not God, and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These will be cast into eternal torments⁵ to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.⁶

Christ's second coming is also for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect. The righteous shall go into everlasting life and receive fullness of joy and glory with everlasting reward in the presence of the Lord.⁷

Certain knowledge of Christ's coming and judgment ought to deter men from sin and console the godly in their adversity.⁸ On the other hand, the timing of this day should shake off all carnal security, making us always watchful, because we do not know at what hour our Lord will come.⁹ Since there is confusion and disagreement between brethren, one's views concerning the timing of our Lord's return or concerning events at the end of the age should not be used as a test of fellowship. Let us be ever prepared to say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."¹⁰ Amen.

References: ¹Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27; ²1 Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6; ³2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:10, 12; Matthew 25:32-46; ⁴Romans 9:22, 23; ⁵Matthew 25:21, 34; 2 Timothy 4:8; ⁶Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; ⁷2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10, 11; ⁸2 Thessalonians 1:5-7; ⁹Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; ¹⁰Revelation 22:20.

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