



City of Grace Church

Statement of Faith

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CHAPTER 1 – THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

1. The Holy Scripture is the all-sufficient, certain and infallible rule or standard of the knowledge, faith and obedience that constitute salvation. Although the light of nature, and God's works of creation and providence, give such clear testimony to His goodness, wisdom and power that men who reject them have no excuse, yet they are not enough to give that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary for salvation. In consequence the merciful Lord from time to time and in a variety of ways has revealed Himself, and made known His will to His church. And furthermore, to ensure that the truth is preserved and spread, and to establish and comfort the church against the corrupt nature of man and the malice of Satan and the world, He caused this revelation of Himself and His will to be written down in all its fullness. And because the way God formerly revealed His will has long ceased, the Holy Scripture becomes absolutely essential to men.

Pss 19:1-3; Prov 22:19-21; Isa 8:20; Luke 16:29,31; Rom 1:19-21, 2:14-15, 15:4; Eph 2:20; 2Tim 3:15-17; Heb 1:1; 2Pet 1:19-20.

The Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, consists of the 66 books which together make up the Old and New Testaments. All these books are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule or standard of faith and life.

2Tim 3:16.

1. The Scripture is self-authenticating. Its authority does not depend upon the testimony of any man or church, but entirely upon God, its author, who is truth itself. It is to be received because it is the Word of God.

1Thess 2:13; 2Tim 3:16; 2Pet 1:19-21; 1John 5:9.

1. The testimony of the church of God may influence and persuade us to hold the Scripture in the highest esteem. The heavenliness of its contents, the efficacy of its doctrine, the majesty of its style, the agreement between all its parts from first to last, the fact that throughout it gives all glory to God, the full revelation it gives of the only way of salvation—these, together with many other incomparably high qualities and full perfections, supply abundant evidence that it is the Word of God. At the same time, however, we recognize that our full persuasion and assurance of its infallible truth and divine authority is the outcome of the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts. John 16:13-14; 1Cor 2:10-12; 1John 2:20,27.
2. The sum total of God's revelation concerning all things essential to His own glory, and to the salvation and faith and life of men, is either stated or implied in the Holy Scripture. Nothing, whether a supposed revelation of the Spirit or man's traditions, is ever to be added to Scripture.

At the same time, however, we acknowledge that inward enlightenment from the Spirit of God is necessary to understand rightly what Scripture reveals. We also accept that certain aspects of the worship of God and of church government, which are commonly used in society, are to be determined by the light of nature and Christian common sense, in line with the general rules of God's Word from which there must be no departure.

John 6:45; 1Cor 2:9-12, 11:13-14, 14:26,40; Gal 1:8-9; 2Tim 3:15-17.

1. The contents of the Scripture vary in their degree of clarity, and some men have a better understanding of them than others. Yet those things that are essential to man's salvation and that must be known, believed and obeyed, are so clearly stated and explained in one place or another, that men educated or uneducated may attain to a sufficient understanding of them if they but use the ordinary means of grace.

Pss 19:7, 119:130; 2Pet 3:16.

1. The Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek (that is to say, in their original languages before translation) were inspired by God at first hand, and ever since, by His particular care and providence, they have been kept pure. They are therefore authentic and, for the church, constitute the final court of appeal in all religious controversies. All God's people have a right to, and an interest in, the Scripture, and they are commanded in the fear of God to read and search it. But as the Hebrew and Greek are not known to all such readers, Scripture is to be translated into every human language, so that as men thus acquire knowledge of God they may worship Him in an acceptable manner, and 'through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope'.

Isa 8:20; John 5:39; Acts 15:15; Rom 3:2, 15:4; 1Cor 14:6,9,11-12,24,28; Col 3:16.

1. It is an infallible rule that Scripture is to be interpreted by Scripture, that is to say, one part by another. Hence any dispute as to the true, full and evident meaning of a particular passage must be determined in the light of clearer, comparable passages.

Acts 15:15-16; 2Pet 1:20-21.

1. All religious controversies are to be settled by Scripture, and by Scripture alone. All decrees of Councils, opinions of ancient writers, and doctrines of men taken together or individually, are similarly to be accepted or rejected according to the verdict of the Scripture given to us by the Holy Spirit. In that verdict faith finds its final rest.

Mat 22:29,31-32; Acts 28:23; Eph 2:20.

CHAPTER 2 – GOD AND THE HOLY TRINITY

1. THERE is but one, and only one, living and true God. He is self-existent and infinite in His being and His perfections. He alone can comprehend His essence. He is pure spirit, invisible, and without body, parts, or the changeable feelings of men. He alone possesses immortality, and dwells amid the light insufferably bright to mortal men. He never changes. He is great beyond all our conceptions, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty and infinite. He is most holy, wise, free and absolute. All that He does is the out-working of His changeless,

righteous will, and for His own glory. He is most loving, gracious, merciful and compassionate. He abounds in goodness and truth. He forgives iniquity, transgression and sin. He rewards those who seek Him diligently. But He hates sin. He will not overlook guilt or spare the guilty, and He is perfectly just in executing judgment.

Gen. 17:1; Exod. 3:14; 34:6,7; Deut. 4:15,16; 6:4; 1 Kings 8:27; Neh.9:32,33; Ps.

5:5,6; 90:2; 115:3; Prov. 16:4; Isa. 6:3; 46:10; 48:12; Jer. 10:10; 23:23,24; Nah. 1:2,3; Mal. 3:6; John 4:24; Rom.11:36; 1 Cor. 8:4,6; 1 Tim.1:17; Heb. 11:6.

1. God is all-sufficient, and all life, glory, goodness and blessedness are found in Him and in Him alone. He does not stand in need of any of the creatures that He has made, nor does He derive receive any part of His glory from them. On the contrary, He reveals His own glory in and by them. He is the fountain of all being, and the origin, channel and end of all things. Over all His creatures He is sovereign. He uses them as He pleases, and does for them or to them all that He wills. He sees to the heart of all things. His knowledge is infinite and infallible. No single thing is to Him at risk or uncertain, for He is not dependent upon created things. In all His decisions, doings and demands He is most holy. Angels and men owe to Him as their creator all worship, service and obedience, and whatever else He may require at their hands.

Job 22:2,3; Ps. 119:68; 145:17; 148:13; Ezek.11:5; Dan. 4:25,34,35; John 5:26; Acts 15:18; Rom. 11:34-36; Heb. 4:13; Rev. 5:12-14.

1. Three divine Persons constitute the Godhead—the Father, the Son (or the Word), and the Holy Spirit. They are one in substance, in power, and in eternity. Each is fully God, and yet the Godhead is one and indivisible. The Father owes His being to none. He is Father to the Son who is eternally begotten of Him. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. These Persons, one infinite and eternal God not to be divided in being, are discussed differently in Scripture by their personal nature or in relations within the Godhead, and by the variety of works which they undertake. Their tri-unity (that is, the doctrine of the Trinity) is

the foundation of all our fellowship with God, and of the comfort we receive from our dependence upon Him.

Exod. 3:14; Matt. 28:19; John 1:14,18; 14:11; 15:26; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 5:7.

CHAPTER 3 – GOD’S DECREE

1. FROM all eternity God decreed all that should happen in time, and this He did freely and unchangeably, considering only His own wise and holy will. Yet in so doing He does not become in any sense the author of sin, nor does He share responsibility for sin with sinners. Further, his decree does not violate the will of any creature whom He has made. Nor does his decree set aside the free working of second causes; rather, his decree determines the second causes. In all these matters the divine wisdom appears, as also does God’s power and faithfulness in causing to happen that which He has purposed.

Num. 23:19; Isa. 46:10; John 19:11; Acts 4:27,28; Rom. 9:15,18; Eph. 1:3-5,11; Heb. 6:17; Jas. 1:13; 1 John 1:5.

1. God’s decree is not based upon His foreknowledge that, under certain conditions, certain things will take place, but is independent of all such foreknowledge.

Acts 15:18; Rom. 9:11,13,16,18.

1. By His decree, and to show His glory, God has predestinated (or foreordained) certain men and angels to eternal life through Jesus Christ, thus revealing His grace. Others, whom He has left to perish in their sins, show the terrors of His justice.

Mat.25:34; Rom.9:22,23; Eph.1:5,6; 1Tim.5:21; Jude4.

1. The angels and men who are the subjects of God's predestination are clearly and irreversibly designated, and their number is unalterably fixed.

John 13:18; 2 Tim. 2:19.

1. Before the world was made, God's eternal, unchangeable purpose, which originated in the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, moved Him to choose (or to elect), in Christ, certain of mankind to everlasting glory. Out of His mere free grace and love He predestinated these chosen ones to life, although there was nothing in them to cause Him to choose them.

Rom. 8:30; 9:13,16; Eph. 1:4,9,11; 2:5,12; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Tim. 1:9.

1. Not only has God appointed the elect to glory in accordance with the eternal and free purpose of His will, but He has also determined ahead of time how He will accomplish His purpose. Since His elect are children of Adam and therefore among those ruined by Adam's fall into sin, He willed that they should be redeemed by Christ, and effectually called to faith in Christ. Furthermore, by the working of His Spirit at the right time they are justified, adopted, sanctified, and "kept by His power through faith unto salvation." None but the elect receive any of these great benefits.

John 6:64; 10:26; 17:9; Rom. 8:30; 1 Thess. 5:9,10; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1Pet. 1:2,5.

1. The high mystery of predestination needs to be handled with special care, so that men, being directed to the will of God revealed in His Word and obeying His Word, may become assured of their eternal election through the certainty of their effectual calling. By this means predestination will promote the praise of God, and reverential awe and wonder. It will encourage humility and carefulness, and bring much comfort to all who sincerely obey the gospel.

Luke 10:20; Rom.11:5,6,20,33; Eph. 1:6; 1 Thess.1:4,5; 2 Pet. 1:10.

CHAPTER 4 – CREATION

1. IN the beginning it pleased the Triune God-Father, Son and Holy Spirit-to create the world and all things in it in six days. All was very good. In this way God glorified His eternal power, wisdom and goodness.

Gen. 1:31; Job 26:13; John 1:2,3; Rom. 1:20; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2.

1. All creatures were made by God, the last to be fashioned being man and woman who received authority over all other creatures on the earth. God gave man and woman reasoning and immortal souls, and in all respects fitted them to live in harmony with Himself. They were created in His image, having knowledge, righteousness and true holiness. The divine law was written in their hearts, and they had power to obey it fully. Yet,

being left to the freedom of their own changeable wills, it was possible for them to violate the law.

Gen. 1:26,27; 2:7; 3:6; Eccles. 7:29; Rom. 2:14,15.

1. The law of God in general was written in the hearts of Adam and Eve, but at the same time they were placed under a special rule not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their happiness and fellowship with God, and continued authority over the creatures, depended upon their obeying God's will.

Gen. 1:26,28; Gen. 2:17.

CHAPTER 5 – DIVINE PROVIDENCE

1. GOD who, in infinite power and wisdom, has created all things, upholds, directs, controls and governs them, both living and non-living, great and small, by a providence supremely wise and holy, and in accordance with His perfect foreknowledge and the free and unchangeable decisions of His will. He fulfills the purposes for which He created them, so that His wisdom, power and justice, together with His infinite goodness and mercy, might be praised and glorified.

Job 38:11; Ps. 135:6; Isa. 46:10,11; Matt. 10:29-31; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 1:3.

1. Nothing happens by chance or outside God's providence. As God is the First Cause of all events, they happen unchangeably and perfectly according to His foreknowledge and decree. Yet by His providence God so controls them, that second causes, operating either as fixed laws, or freely, or in dependence upon still other causes, play their part in bringing them about.

Gen. 8:22; Prov. 16:33; Acts 2:23.

1. Ordinarily, in His providence, God makes use of means; yet He is free to work without them, to give them effectiveness above what they normally possess, and even to work contrary to them, at His pleasure.

Isa. 55:10,11; Dan. 3:27; Hos. 1:7; Acts 27:31,44; Rom. 4:19-21.

1. God's almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness are so farreaching and all-pervading, that both the fall of the first man into sin, and all other sinful actions of angels and men, proceed according to His sovereign purposes. It is not that He gives His bare permission, for in a variety of ways He wisely and powerfully limits, orders and governs sinful actions, so that they work out His holy designs. Yet the sinfulness involved in the actions comes only from angels and men and not from God who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

Gen. 50:20; 2 Sam. 24:1; 2 Kings 19:28; 1 Chron. 21:1; Ps. 50:21; 76:10; Isa. 10:6,7,12; Rom. 11:32-34; 1 John 2:16.

1. God, who is most wise, righteous and gracious, frequently allows His own people to fall for a time into a variety of temptations, and to experience the sinfulness of their own hearts. This He does to discipline them for sins that they have committed, or to teach them humility by revealing to them the hidden strength of evil and deceitfulness remaining in their hearts. His purpose is also to cause them to realize their need to depend fully and at all times upon

Himself, and to help them to guard against sin in the future. In these and other ways, His just and holy purposes are worked out, so that all that happens to His elect ones is by His appointment, for His glory, and for their good.

2 Chron. 32:25,26,31; Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 12:7-9.

1. God, as a righteous judge, deals differently with wicked and ungodly men. For their sins, He blinds and hardens their hearts. He withholds from them the grace that might have enlightened their minds and moved their hearts, and in some cases takes back the gifts He had given them. Also, He sets them in situations that their evil hearts seize upon as opportunities for sin. In other words, He abandons them to their own inborn corruptions, to the temptations of the world, and to the power of Satan, so that they harden themselves by the use of the very ways that God uses to soften the hearts of others.

Exod. 8:15,32; Deut. 2:30; 29:4; 2 Kings 8:12,13; Ps. 81:11,12; Isa. 6:9, 10; Matt. 13:12; Rom. 1:24-26,28; 11:7,8; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; 1 Pet. 2:7,8.

1. God's general providence reaches out to all creatures, but in a very special way He works to care for His church. All things are controlled providentially for the good of the church.

Isa. 43:3-5; Amos 9:8,9; 1 Tim. 4:10.

CHAPTER 6 – THE FALL OF MAN: SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT

1. Man, as he came from the hand of God, his creator, was upright and perfect. The righteous law which God gave him spoke of life as depending upon his obedience, and threatened death upon his disobedience. Adam's obedience was short-lived. Satan used the subtle serpent to draw Eve into sin. She seduced Adam who, without anyone forcing him, willfully broke the law under which they had been created, and also God's command not to eat of the forbidden fruit. To fulfill His own wise and holy purposes God permitted this to happen, for He was directing all to His own glory.

Gen. 2:16,17; Gen. 3:12,13; 2 Cor.11:3.

1. By this sin our first parents lost their former righteousness, and their happy communion with God was severed. Their sin involved us all, and by it death came to all. All men became dead in sin, and totally polluted in all parts and abilities of both soul and body.

Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-19,23; 5:12-21; Titus 1:15.

1. The family of man is rooted in the first human pair. As Adam and Eve stood in the place of all mankind, the guilt of their sin was counted by God to all their descendants, who also from birth drew from them a polluted nature. Conceived in sin and by nature children under God's anger, the servants of sin and under the sentence of death, all men are now given up to unspeakable miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus Christ sets them free.

Job 14:4; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-19; Rom. 6:20; 1Cor. 15:21-22, 15:45, 15:49; Eph. 2:3; 1Thess. 1:10; Heb. 2:14-15.

1. The actual sins that men commit are the fruit of the corrupt nature given to them by our first parents. Because of this corruption, all men become wholly inclined to all evil; sin disables them. They are completely against all that is good.

Matt. 15:19; Rom. 8:7; Col. 1:21; Jas. 1:14.

1. During this earthly life corrupt nature remains in those who are born of God, that is to say, regenerated. Through Christ it is pardoned and put to death, yet both the corruption itself, and all that comes from it, are truly sin.

Eccles. 7:20; Rom. 7:18,23-25; Gal. 5:17; 1 John 1:8.

CHAPTER 7 – GOD’S COVENANT

1. The distance between God and His creature man is so great that, although men have the ability to reason, and thus should obey Him as their creator, yet they could never have gained life as their reward had not God, by willingly lowering Himself, made this possible by the making of a covenant.

Job 35:7,8; Luke 17:10.

1. Furthermore, since man, because of his fall into sin, had brought himself under the curse of God’s law, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace, in which He freely offers life and salvation by Jesus Christ to sinners. On their part He requires faith in Him that they may be saved, and promises to give His Holy Spirit to all those who are elected to eternal life, in order that they may be made willing and able to believe.

Gen. 2:17; Ps. 110:3; Ezek. 36:26,27; Mark 16:15,16; John 3:16; 6:44,45; Rom. 3:20,21; 8:3; Gal. 3:10.

1. God’s covenant is revealed in the gospel; in the first place to Adam in the promise of salvation by “the seed” (or offspring) “of the woman,” and afterwards, step by step, until salvation was fully revealed in the New Testament. The salvation of the elect is based upon a covenant of redemption that was made in eternity between the Father and the Son; and it is solely through the grace given by this covenant that all the descendants of fallen Adam who have been saved have obtained life and a blessed eternal life; for the blessings on Adam before he sinned do not apply to his descendants to make them acceptable to God.

Gen. 3:15; John 8:56; Acts 4:12; Rom. 4:1-5; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2; Heb.1:1,2; 11:6,13.

CHAPTER 8 – CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

1. TO work out His eternal purpose God chose and ordained the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, as planned in the covenant into which they had entered, to be the mediator between God and man; also to be prophet, priest, king, head and savior of His church; also to be the heir of all things and judge of the world. From all eternity God had given to His Son those who were to be His children, and the Son engaged in time (as distinct from eternity) to redeem, call, justify, sanctify, and glorify them.

Ps. 2:6; Isa. 42:1, 53:10; Luke 1:33; John 17:6; Acts 3:22, 17:31; Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:22-23; Heb. 1:2, 5:5-6; 1Pet. 1:19-20.

1. The divine Person who made the world, and upholds and governs all things that He has made, is the Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity. He is true and eternal God, the “brightness of the Father’s glory,” of the same substance (or essence) as the Father, and equal with Him. It is He who, at the set time, took upon Himself the nature of man, with all its essential characteristics and its common weaknesses, except sin. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, a woman who belonged to the tribe of Judah, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her and the power of God most High overshadowing her. And so, as the Scripture tells us, He was made of a woman, a descendant of Abraham and David. In this way it came about that the two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the divine and the human, were inseparably joined together in one Person, without turning one nature into the other, and without mixing one nature with the other; in other words, without confusion. Thus the Son of God is now both true God and true man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

Matt. 1:22,23; Luke 1:27,31,35; John 1:14; Rom. 8:3; 9:5; Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:14,16,17; 4:15.

1. The two natures, divine and human, being thus united in the person of God’s Son, He was sanctified and given an unlimited anointing with the Holy Spirit, and in the Son are found all treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He has everything that is pleasing to the Father, being holy, untouched by sin, and full of grace and truth. Thus He has become fully qualified to serve as mediator and surety. He did not take this work upon Himself uncalled, but was commissioned to it by His Father. His Father also gave Him full powers of jurisdiction and commanded Him to judge everyone.

Ps. 45:7; Matt. 28:18; John 1:14; 3:34; 5:22,27; Acts 2:36; 10:38; Col. 1:19; 2:3; Heb. 5:5; 7:22,26.

1. The Lord Jesus most willingly accepted the office of a mediator, and in order that He might do that work He became subject to God’s law, which He perfectly fulfilled. He also suffered the punishment we deserved, which we should have suffered, for He carried our sins and was cursed for our sakes. He endured sorrows in His soul severe beyond our conception, and most painful sufferings in His body. His death was by crucifixion. While He remained in the state of the dead, His body did not decay. The third day saw His resurrection in the same body in which He had suffered. In the same body also He ascended into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of His Father, interceding for His own. At the end of the world He will return to judge men and angels.

Ps. 40:7-8; Isa. 53:6; Matt. 3:15, 26:37-38, 27:46; Mark 16:19; Luke 22:44; John 10:18, 20:25, 20:27; Acts 1:9-11; 10:42; 13:37; Rom. 8:34; 14:9-10; 1Cor. 15:3,4; 2Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 4:4; Heb. 9:24; 10:5-10; 1Pet. 3:18; 2Pet. 2:4.

1. By perfectly obeying God’s law, and by a once-for-all offering up of Himself to God as a sacrifice through the eternal Spirit, the Lord Jesus has fully satisfied all the claims of divine justice. He has brought about reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those given to Him by His Father.

John 17:2; Rom. 3:25,26; Heb. 9:14,15.

1. The price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ until after His birth in this world, but the value, effectiveness, and benefits of His redemptive work succeeds for His elect in all ages from the beginning of the world. This was accomplished by the promises, the

types and the sacrifices in which He was revealed in the Old Testament, and which showed Him to be the woman's "seed" (offspring) who should bruise the head of the serpent (the devil), also "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." As the Christ He is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

1 Cor. 4:10; Heb. 4:2; 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:10,11; Rev. 13:8.

1. In His work as mediator between God and men, Christ acts according to His two natures, one divine, one human, in each nature doing that which is appropriate to it. Yet because He is one Person, that which is appropriate to one of His natures is, in Scripture, sometimes attributed to the Person called by the other nature.

John 3:13; Acts 20:28.

1. Christ certainly and effectually applies and gives eternal redemption to all those for whom He has obtained it. His work of intercession is on their behalf. He

unites them to Himself by His Spirit; He reveals to them, in and by the Word, the mystery of salvation; He persuades them to believe and obey, governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit; He overcomes all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom, using those methods that most fit His wonderful and unsearchable providence. He does all these things by His free and sovereign grace, unconditionally, without looking ahead to any merit in the elect.

Ps. 110:1; John 3:8; 6:37; 10:15,16; 17:6,9; Rom. 5:10; 8:9,14; 1 Cor. 15:25,26; Eph. 1:8,9; 1 John 5:20.

1. Christ, and Christ alone, is fitted to be mediator between God and man. He is the prophet, priest, and king of the church of God. His office as mediator cannot be given, even in part, to anyone else.

1 Tim. 2:5.

1. Christ's three offices are necessary for us. Because of our ignorance we need His service as prophet; because of our estrangement from God and the imperfection of our works at their best, we need His priestly service to reconcile us to God and make us acceptable to Him; because we have turned away from God and are utterly unable to return to Him, and also because we need to be rescued and made secure from our spiritual adversaries, we need His kingly service to convince, subdue, draw, sustain, deliver and preserve us, until we finally enter His heavenly kingdom.

Ps. 110:3; Luke 1:74,75; John 1:18; 16:8; Gal. 5:17; Col. 1:21.

CHAPTER 9 – FREE WILL

1. In the natural order God has given man's will liberty and the power to choose, so that it is neither forced from without, nor compelled from within, to do good or evil.

Deut. 30:19; Mat. 17:12; Jas. 1:14.

1. In his state of innocency, before he sinned, man had freedom and power to desire and to do what was good and acceptable to God. Yet, being unstable, it was possible for him to fall from his uprightness.

Gen. 3:6; Eccles. 7:29.

1. Because of his fall into a state of sin, man has lost all ability to desire to perform of any of those spiritually good works that accompany salvation. As a natural (unspiritual) man, he is dead in sin and completely opposed to that which is good. Hence he is not able, by any of his own strength, to turn himself to God, or even to prepare himself to turn to God.

John 6:44; Rom. 5:6; 8:7; Eph. 2:1,5; Titus 3:3-5.

1. When God converts a sinner, and brings him out of sin into the state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage to sin and, by His grace alone, He enables him freely to desire and to do that which is spiritually good. Nevertheless certain corruptions remain in the sinner, so that his will is never completely and perfectly captive to that which is good, but it also entertains evil.

John 8:36; Rom. 7:15,18,19,21,23; Phil. 2:13; Col.1:13.

1. It is not until man enters the state of glory that he is made perfectly and unchangeably free to desire that which is good, and that alone.

Eph. 4:13.

CHAPTER 10 – EFFECTUAL CALLING

1. At a time appointed by and acceptable to God, those whom God has predestinated to life are effectually called by His Word and Spirit out of the state of death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. Their minds are given spiritual enlightenment and, as those who are being saved, they begin to understand the things of God. God takes away their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh. He renews their will, and by His almighty power He causes them to seek and follow that which is good, at the same time effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ. And to all these changes they come most freely, for they are made willing by divine grace.

Deut. 30:6; Ps. 110:3; Song 1:4; Ezek. 36:26,27; Acts 26:18; Rom. 8:30; 11:7; Eph. 1:10,11,17,19; 2:1-6; 2 Thess. 2:13,14.

1. God's effectual call is the result of His free and special grace alone. Until a man is given life, and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is dead in sins and trespasses, and so is entirely passive in this work of salvation, a work that is not caused by anything good that God foresaw in him, nor from any power or ability in him. The power that enables him to answer God's call, and to embrace the grace offered and given in that call, is no less than that which raised Christ from the dead.

John 5:25; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 1:19-20; 2:5,8; 2 Tim. 1:9.

1. Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when and where and how He pleases. The same is true of all elect persons who are unable to be outwardly called through the preaching of the gospel.

John 3:3,5,6,8.

1. Men who are not elected, even though they may be urged to embrace salvation by the preachers of the gospel, and may experience some common works of the Spirit, cannot be saved, because they are not effectually drawn to Christ by the Father, meaning they neither can, nor will, truly come to Him. Much less can men who do not receive the Christian religion be saved, no matter how diligently they follow the light of nature and the teachings of their religion .

Matt. 13:20,21; 22:14; John 4:22; 6:44,45,65; 17:3; Acts 4:12; Heb. 6:4-6; 1 John 2:24,25.

CHAPTER 11 – JUSTIFICATION

1. God freely justifies the persons whom He effectually calls. He does this, not by putting righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins and by accounting them, and accepting them, as righteous. This He does for Christ's sake alone, and not for anything done in or by them. The righteousness that is imputed to them, that is, given to them as a credit, is neither their faith nor the act of believing nor any other obedience they have made to the gospel, but Christ's obedience alone. Christ's one obedience is twofold—His active obedience to the entire divine law, and His passive obedience in His death. Those thus justified receive and rest by faith upon Christ's righteousness; and this faith they have, not from themselves, but as the gift of God.

John 1:12; Rom. 3:24; 4:5-8; 5:17-19; 8:30; 1Cor. 1:30-31; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; Phil. 3:8,9.

1. The only means of justification is faith that receives and rests on Christ and His righteousness. Yet this faith is never alone in the person justified, but is always accompanied by all other saving graces. Nor is it a dead faith, for it works by love.

Rom. 3:28; Gal. 5:6; Jas. 2:17,22,26.

1. By His obedience and death, Christ paid in full the debt of all those who are justified. By the sacrifice of Himself in His blood-shedding on Calvary, and His suffering on their behalf of the penalty they deserved, He fully and absolutely satisfied all the claims that God's justice had upon them. Yet their justification is altogether of free grace, first because Christ was the free gift of the Father to act on their behalf; second because Christ's obedience and His satisfying the

demands of the law were freely accepted on their behalf; and third because nothing in them earned these mercies. Therefore, God's exact justice and His rich grace are equally glorious in the justification of sinners.

Isa. 53:5,6; Rom. 3:26; 8:32; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:6,7; 2:7; Heb. 10:14; 1 Pet.1:18,19.

1. From all eternity, God decreed to justify all the elect, and when the planned time came, Christ died for their sins and rose again for their justification. Nevertheless, they are not justified personally until, in due time, the Holy Spirit actually applies to them the benefits of Christ's Person and work.

Rom. 4:25; Gal. 3:8; Col. 1:21,22; 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Pet. 1:2.

1. God continues to forgive the sins of all the justified. They can never lose their justification; but they may, because of sin, fall under God's fatherly displeasure; in which case, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg God's pardon, and renew their faith and repentance, God will not usually restore to them "the light of His countenance."

Ps. 32:5; Ps. 51; Ps. 89:31-33; Matt. 6:12; 26:75; John 10:28; 1 John 1:7,9.

1. Believers in Old Testament times were justified in precisely the same way as New Testament believers.

Rom. 4:22-24; Gal. 3:9.

CHAPTER 12 – ADOPTION

1. For the sake of His only Son, Jesus Christ, God has been pleased to make all justified persons sharers in the grace of adoption, by which they are counted with, and enjoy the freedoms and privileges of children of God. Furthermore, God's name is put upon them, they receive the spirit of adoption, and they are enabled to come boldly to the throne of grace and to cry "Abba, Father." They are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by God as by a Father. He never casts them off, but, as they remain sealed to the day of redemption, they inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

Ps. 103:13; Prov. 14:26; Isa. 54:8,9; Lam. 3:31; John 1:12; Rom. 8:15,17; 2 Cor.

6:18; Gal. 4:4-6; Eph. 1:5; 2:18; 4:30; Heb. 1:14; 6:12; 12:6; 1 Pet. 5:7; Rev. 3:12.

CHAPTER 13 – SANCTIFICATION

1. Those who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, have a new heart and a new spirit created in them; and this personal work of sanctification is carried further by His Word and Spirit dwelling within them. All these blessings

are given to them because of the merits of Christ's death and resurrection. Sin's mastery over them is completely broken; the evil desires to which it gives birth are increasingly weakened and dealt their death-blow; and saving graces in them are increasingly enlivened and strengthened. In all these ways, God promotes the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

John 17:17; Acts 20:32; Rom. 6:5,6,14; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 3:16-19; Col. 1:11; 1 Thess. 5:21-23; Heb. 12:14.

1. Sanctification, as defined in this way, extends to every part of man, yet remains incomplete in this life. Sin's corrupt remains continue to defile all parts of man, causing within him a continual warfare that can never be reconciled; the flesh rises up against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.

Rom. 7:18,23; Gal. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Pet. 2:11.

1. In the war of flesh versus Spirit, sin's corrupt remains may for a time gain the upper hand, yet the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ enables man as a

new creature to gain the victory. And so the saints grow in grace, moving on towards a fullness of holiness in the fear of God. They earnestly try to live according to heaven's laws, and to give gospel obedience to all the commands which Christ, as their head and king, has laid down for them in His Word.

Rom. 6:14; 7:23; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Eph. 4:15,16.

CHAPTER 14 – SAVING FAITH

1. THE Spirit works in the hearts of the elect the grace of faith by which they are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls. Normally it is brought into being through the preaching of the Word. Faith is increased and strengthened by the Word and its ministry, by the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, by prayer, and also by other means appointed by God.

Luke 17:5; Acts 20:32; Rom. 10:14,17; 2 Cor. 4:13; Eph. 2:8; 1 Pet. 2:2.

1. By faith a Christian believes everything to be true that is made known in the Word, in which God speaks authoritatively. He also perceives in the Word an excellence superior to all other writings, indeed to all things that the world contains. The Word shows the glory of God as seen in His various attributes, the excellence of Christ in His nature and in the offices He holds, and the power and perfection of the Holy Spirit in all the works in which He is engaged. In this way, God enables the Christian to trust himself entirely to the truth believed, and to serve according to the different requirements of the various parts of Scripture. To the commands he yields obedience; when he hears warnings he trembles; as for the divine promises concerning this life and the life to come, he embraces them.

But the primary acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life; and all by virtue of the covenant of grace.

Ps. 19:7-10; 119:72; Isa. 66:2; John 1:12; 15:14; Acts 15:11; 16:31; 24:14; Gal. 2:20; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 11:13.

1. Saving faith has different degrees of strength. It may be weak or strong. Yet, like all other kinds of saving grace, even at its lowest level it is quite different in its nature from the faith and common grace of temporary believers. As a result, though it may be frequently attacked and weakened, it continues on to victory, developing in many Christians until they reach full assurance through Christ, who is both the "author and finisher of our faith."

Matt. 6:30; Rom. 4:19,20; Eph. 6:16; Col. 2:2; Heb. 5:13,14; 6:11,12; 12:2; 2 Pet. 1:1; 1 John 5:4,5.

CHAPTER 15 – REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE AND SALVATION

1. SOME of the elect are not converted until much later in life, having continued in the state in which they were born, and having followed after all kinds of evil cravings and pleasures. Then God's effectual call reaches them and He gives them repentance leading on to life eternal.

Titus 3:2-5.

1. There is not a man on earth who does good and is without sin; and the best of men, through the power and deceitfulness of their indwelling corruptions and the strength of temptation, may commit great sins hateful to God. Because of this, in the covenant of grace God has

mercifully provided that believers who so sin and fall shall be restored, through repentance, to salvation.

Eccles. 7:20; Luke 22:31,32.

1. The repentance that leads on to salvation is a gospel grace by which a person who is caused by the Holy Spirit to feel the many evils of sin is also caused by faith in Christ to humble himself on account of sin. This humiliation is characterized by godly sorrow, a hatred of the sin, and self-loathing. It is accompanied by prayer for pardon and strength of grace, and also by a purpose and effort, in the power supplied by the Spirit, to conduct himself in the sight of God with the consistent living that pleases Him.

Ps. 119:6,128; Ezek. 36:31; Zech. 12:10; Acts 11:18; 2 Cor. 7:11.

1. Because we carry about with us (as Scripture tells us) a “body of death” biased towards evil, repentance is to continue through the whole course of our lives.

Hence it is every man’s duty to repent of each particular sin of which he is aware, and to do so with special care.

Luke 19:8; 1 Tim 1:13,15.

1. In the covenant of grace God has made full provision for the preservation of believers in a state of salvation, so that, although even though the smallest of sins deserves damnation, there is no sin so great that it will bring damnation to them that repent. This makes constant preaching of repentance essential.

Isa. 1:16-18; Rom. 6:23.

CHAPTER 16 – GOOD WORKS

1. ONLY the works that God has commanded in His holy Word are to be accounted good works. Such works, as men have invented out of blind zeal or based on the false claim of good intentions, are not good, for they are not approved by Holy Scripture.

Isa. 29:13; Mic. 6:8; Matt. 15:9; Heb. 13:21.

1. Works that are truly good, and which are done in obedience to God’s commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith. Through these good works, believers make show their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance of salvation, edify their brothers, make beautiful their Christian witness, and take away their opponents’ arguments against the gospel. In sum, these good works glorify God who has made believers what they are—, namely, new creatures in Christ; and as such they produce fruit that reveals holiness, with the ultimate outcome being eternal life.

Ps. 116:12,13; Matt. 5:16; Rom. 6:22; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:1; Jas. 2:18,22; 1 Pet. 2:15; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 1 John 2:3,5.

1. The ability of believers to do good works does not spring in any way from themselves, but flows from the Spirit of Christ alone. But besides the graces that they receive from Christ to desire to do good works, believers need His further actual influence to give them the will and ability to perform the works that please Him. Yet this does not mean that, without Christ’s

special influence, they are at liberty to grow careless of duty, for they must be diligent in stirring into activity the grace of God that is in them.

Isa. 64:7; John 15:4,5; 2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:12,13; Heb. 6:11,12.

1. In obeying God, those believers who reach the greatest height possible in this life are so far from performing works above what God actually requires that they still fall short of many of their duties.

Job. 9:2,3; Gal. 5:17.

1. We cannot, even by our best works, merit either the pardon of sin or the granting of eternal life, because our works are so small compared to the glory to come. Further, there is infinite distance between us and God, and no works of ours can profit God or pay the debt of our former sins. Indeed, when we have done all that we can, we have done but our duty and remain unprofitable servants. We must also remember that, so far as our works are good, they are produced by His Spirit. As far as they are our work they are marred and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they utterly fail to meet God's high standards.

Ps. 143:2; Isa. 64:6; Luke 17:10; Rom. 3:20; 4:6; Gal. 5:22,23; Eph. 2:8,9.

1. Nevertheless, since believers are accepted by God through Christ, their works also are accepted as being accomplished in Christ. This does not mean that, during this life, believers always do what pleases God. Rather, it means that, as He looks upon believers in His Son, the Father is pleased to accept and reward sincere obedience, even though it is weak and imperfect.

Matt. 25:21,23; Eph. 1:6; Heb. 6:10; 1 Pet. 2:5.

1. As for works done by men who have not been born again, even though God may have commanded those good works, and they may be highly useful both to those who do them and to others, yet the works remain sinful for the following reasons: they do not come from a heart purified by faith; they are not done in the right manner given in Scripture; and their purpose is not the glory of God. As a result, these works cannot please God, nor can they make a man ready to receive grace. Yet it is more sinful and more displeasing to God to fail to do these works than to perform them.

Gen. 4:5; 1 Kings 21:27,29; 2 Kings 10:30; Job 21:14,15; Amos 5:21,22; Matt. 6:2,5; 25:41-43; Rom. 9:16; 1 Cor. 13:1; Titus 3:5; Heb. 11:4,6.

CHAPTER 17 – THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

1. THE saints are those whom God has accepted in Christ the Beloved, and effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit. To them He has given the precious faith provided to all His elect. The persons to whom such blessings have been imparted can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but they shall certainly persevere in grace to the end and be eternally saved, for God will never repent of having called them and given gifts to them. Consequently, He continues to give and to nourish in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit that lead to immortality. Many storms and floods may arise and beat upon them, yet they can never be moved from the foundation and rock on which by faith they are firmly established. Even if unbelief and Satan's temptations cause them for a time to lose the sight and comfort of the light and love of God,

yet the unchanging God remains their God, and He will certainly keep and save them by His power until they come to enjoy what God has purchased for them; for they are written on the palms of His hands, and their names have been written in the book of life from all eternity.

Ps. 89:31,32; Mal. 3:6; John 10:28,29; 1 Cor. 11:32; Phil. 1:6; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 John 2:19.

1. It is on no free will of their own that the saints' perseverance depends, but on the unchangeableness of the decree of election, which depends upon the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, the accepted merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and the saints' union with Him, the oath of God, the abiding character of the Spirit's indwelling of the saints, the divine nature that they share and, lastly, the terms of the covenant of grace. All these factors guarantee that the saints certainly will persevere.

Jer. 32:40; John 14:19; Rom. 5:9,10; 8:30; 9:11,16; Heb. 6:17,18; 1 John 3:9.

1. In various ways—the temptations of Satan and of the world, the straining of indwelling sin to get the upper hand, the neglect of the methods God chose to preserve them—saints may fall into terrible sins, and may even continue in them for a time. In this way they incur God's displeasure, grieve His Holy Spirit, damage His gracious work in their lives, weaken their comforts, experience hardness of heart and accusations of conscience, hurt and offend others, and cause God to discipline them. Yet being saints, their repentance will be renewed, and through faith they will be preserved in Christ Jesus to the end.

2 Sam. 12:14; Ps. 32:3,4; 51:10,12; Isa. 64:5,9; Matt. 26:70,72,74; Luke 22:32,61,62; Eph. 4:30.

CHAPTER 18 – THE ASSURANCE OF GRACE AND SALVATION

1. ALTHOUGH temporary believers and other unregenerate persons may be deceived by mistaken, self-created ideas into thinking that they are in God's favor and in a state of salvation—false and dying hopes indeed!—yet all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and sincerely love Him, working to conduct themselves in all good conscience according to His will, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace. They may rejoice in hope of the glory of God, knowing that such a hope will never put them to shame.

Job 8:13,14; Matt. 7:22,23; Rom. 5:2,5; 1 John 2:3; 3:14,18,19,21,24; 5:13.

1. The saints of God enjoy perfect certainty that they are saved because they place their faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the gospel, rather than merely speculating and hoping in things that can fail. They also enjoy this certainty through the inward proof of the graces of the Holy Spirit working in

them. Further, it is based on the testimony of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption, for He bears His witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. This witness of the Spirit that we are God's children keeps our hearts both humble and holy.

Rom. 8:15,16; Heb. 6:11,17-19; 2 Pet. 1:4,5,10,11; 1 John 3:1-3.

1. The perfect assurance of salvation is not an essential part of salvation, for a true believer may wait for a long time, and struggle with many difficulties, before he experiences it. It is not a matter of receiving an unusual revelation from God. Rather, he may well experience it by rightly using God's normal ways of giving grace, and by being enabled by the Spirit to

know the things that believers receive freely from God. Therefore, it is the duty of everyone to be as diligent as possible in making sure that he is called and elect. By doing this he will experience greater peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, greater love and thankfulness to God, and more strength and cheerfulness in obeying God. These things naturally flow from the assurance of salvation, and they powerfully show that enjoying assurance that does not lead one to live in sin.

Ps. 77:1-12; Ps. 88; 119:32; Isa. 50:10; Rom. 5:1,2,5; 6:1,2; 14:17; Titus 2:11,12,14; Heb. 6:11,12; 1 John 4:13.

1. True believers may find that their assurance of salvation rises and falls. They may neglect to protect it—as for example, if they give in to some sin that wounds their conscience and grieves the Spirit; or a strong temptation may suddenly spring upon them; or God may withdraw “the light of His countenance” and cause darkness to surround them, a course He sometimes takes even with those who fear His name. Yet, whatever happens, certain things always remain with them—the new nature which is born of God, the life of faith, the love of Christ and their brothers and sisters, sincerity of heart and conscience of duty. As a result, and by the work of the Spirit in them, they are protected from utter despair and may eventually be assured of their salvation again.

Ps. 30:7; 31:22; 42:5,11; 51:8,12,14; 77:7,8; 116:11; Song 5:2,3,6; Lam. 3:26-31; Luke 22:32; 1 John 3:9.

CHAPTER 19 – THE LAW OF GOD

1. GOD gave Adam a law, written in his heart, that required his full obedience. God also gave Adam one command in particular—namely, that he must not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Thus, God required Adam and all his descendants to obey personally, completely, exactly, and constantly. God promised Adam life for fulfilling the law, and threatened death for violating the law; and he gave Adam power and ability to keep His law.

Gen. 2:16,17; Eccles. 7:29; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:10,12.

1. The same law that was first written in man’s heart continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after Adam fell into sin, and was given by God upon Mount Sinai in the form of ten commandments, written in two tables. The first four commandments show our duty towards God and the remaining six our duty to man. The ten are known as the moral law.

Deut. 10:4; Rom. 2:14,15.

1. Besides the moral law, God also gave to the people of Israel ceremonial laws that pointed towards things to come. These laws fell into two main groups. In one group were rites, partly relating to worship, which pointed to Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and the blessings He gained for us. The other group contained a variety of instructions about moral duties. By God’s plan, all these ceremonial laws were to be obeyed, but only until they were ended in New Testament days by Jesus Christ, the true Messiah and only law-giver who was empowered by the Father to end them.

1. Cor. 5:7; Eph. 2:14,16; Col. 2:14,16,17; Heb. 10:1.

2. God also gave the people of Israel various judicial laws that applied as long as Israel remained a nation. The laws contain principles of fairness that are still true, not because they are found in Moses’ laws but because the principles never change.

1Cor. 9:8-10.

1. Believers and non-believers are forever required to obey the moral law because it is the law and because God, the creator, is its author. In the gospel, Christ in no way cancels this need to obey the law; on the contrary He greatly stresses our obligation to obey the moral law.

Mat. 5:17-19; Rom. 3:31; 13:8-10; Jas. 2:8,10-12.

1. The law does not apply to true believers as a covenant of works by which they are justified or condemned. Yet in other ways, it is very useful because it informs men of God's will for how to live and instructs them in their duty. Having done this, it then directs and requires them to obey. It also reveals to men the sinfulness of their natures, their hearts and their lives, so that, as they examine themselves in the light of the law, they may be convicted more deeply of sin, and caused to humble themselves because of their sin and to hate it even more. At the same time, the law also gives them a clearer sight of their need of Christ, and the perfection of Christ's own obedience to the law. Similarly, the law causes the regenerate to fight against the evil urges to sin that they find in themselves. Furthermore, the threats of the law show the regenerate what their sins deserve, and what troubles their own disobedience may cause them in this life, even while they are free from the curse of the law. God promises blessings for obeying the

law, but not because the law creates a covenant of salvation by works. Merely because a man sees that the law encourages good and discourages evil, and therefore obeys, is no proof that he is a non-believer attempting to justify himself by keeping the law.

Rom. 3:20; 6:12-14; 7:7; 8:1; 10:4; Gal. 2:16; 1 Pet. 3:8-13.

1. All of these uses of the law of God do not contradict the grace of the gospel, but are most happily in line with it, for the Spirit of Christ subdues man's will and enables it to obey the will of God, as revealed in the law, freely and with cheerfulness.

Ezek. 36:27; Gal. 3:21.

CHAPTER 20 – THE GOSPEL AND ITS GRACIOUS EXTENT

1. AS the covenant of works was broken by man's sin and was unable to give life, God in His mercy promised to send Christ, who would be born from a woman. By this promise, God would call the elect and work in their hearts faith and repentance. Thus, the promise is the substance of the gospel to convert and save sinners.

Gen. 3:15; Rev. 7:9.

1. This promise of Christ and of salvation by Him is revealed to men by the Word of God alone. Neither the works of creation and providence, nor human reason, reveal Christ and His grace to men, not even in a general or obscure way. Thus, men who have not had Christ revealed to them by the promise of the gospel lack any power in themselves to gain saving faith or repentance.

Prov. 29:18; Isa. 25:7; 60:2,3; Rom. 1:17; 10:14,15,17.

1. In his sovereign will and good pleasure, God has revealed the gospel to sinners, both to nations and to certain persons, together with the promises and principles of obeying the gospel, at various times and in a variety of places. God did not make his promise to spread

the gospel message depend on human reason or plans. Thus, throughout history, the spread of the gospel message, whether near or far, to persons or nations, has always depended solely on God's perfectly wise will.

Ps. 147:20; Acts 16:7; Rom. 1:18-32.

1. The gospel is the only outward way of making Christ and saving grace known to men, and it is completely adequate for this purpose. But something more is needed for men who are dead in their sins to be born again (in other words, made alive, or regenerated)—namely, an effectual, unstoppable work of the Holy Spirit

on every part of the soul of man, producing a new spiritual life. That alone will convert men to God.

Ps. 110:3; John 6:44; 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4,6; Eph. 1:19,20.

CHAPTER 21 – CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

1. As an essential part of the gospel, CHRIST has purchased for all believers freedom—from the guilt of sin, from the condemnation that follows guilt, from the wrath of God, and from the severity and curse of God's law. This freedom also includes deliverance from this present evil world, and from all such things as bondage to Satan, sin's domination, the pain of troubles, the fear and sting of death, the victory of the grave, and eternal damnation. Further, it includes free access to God and giving obedience to Him, not as a slave fears his master, but as a child loves and readily obeys his father.

All these blessings were more or less enjoyed by believers in Old Testament days, but under New Testament conditions Christian liberty becomes more extensive. It includes freedom from the burdens imposed by the ceremonial law on Israel, greater boldness in approaching the throne of grace, and more of the free Spirit of God than was normally granted to saints in the pre-Christian era.

Luke 1:73-75; John 7:38,39; Acts 26:18; Rom. 8:3,15,28; 1 Cor. 15:54-57; Gal. 1:4; 3:9,13,14; 2 Thess. 1:10; Heb. 10:19-21; 1 John 4:18.

1. God alone is Lord of the conscience. He has set it free from all obligation to receive or obey any such doctrines or demands of men that in any way oppose His Word or not contained in it. Indeed, to believe and obey such doctrines and demands betrays true freedom of conscience. When men demand that others absolutely and blindly obey them, that is completely unreasonable and destroys the freedom of the conscience purchased by Christ in the gospel.

Matt. 15:9; Acts 4:19,29; Rom. 14:4; 1 Cor. 3:5; 7:23; 2 Cor. 1:24; Col. 2:20,22,23; Jas. 4:12.

1. To practice any sin, or harbor sin's evil desires, while supposedly enjoying Christian liberty, perverts the main purpose of gospel grace, and imperils puts in danger those guilty of such an offense, because relying on this excuse destroys the very purpose of Christian liberty—namely, that the Lord's people, "being delivered out of the hand of their enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all their days."

Luke 1:74,75; Rom. 6:1,2; Gal. 5:13; 2 Pet. 2:18,21.

CHAPTER 22 – RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, AND THE LORD’S DAY

1. THE light of nature shows that there is a God who has dominion and sovereignty over all. He is just and good, and He does good to all. He is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called on, trusted and served by men with all their hearts and souls and minds and strength. But the only acceptable way of worshipping the true God is the way He decides Himself, in line with His own will. Consequently He may not be worshipped however men may wish, or as proceeding from Satan’s suggestions. Visible symbols of God, and all other forms of worship not prescribed in the Holy Scripture, are expressly forbidden.

Exod. 20:4-6; Deut. 12:32; Jer. 10:7; Mark 12:33.

1. Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to Him alone. It is not to be given to angels, saints, or any other creatures. Since man’s fall into sin, worship cannot be given to God without a mediator; and the only accepted mediation is that of Christ.

Matt. 4:9,10; 28:19; John 5:23; 14:6; Rom. 1:25; Col. 2:18; 1 Tim. 2:5; Rev. 19:10.

1. God requires all men to pray to Him, and to give thanks, as one part of natural worship. But to render such prayer acceptable, several things are required: The prayer must be made in the name of God’s Son; it must be Spirit-aided; and it must fit with the will of God. It must also be reverent, humble, fervent and persevering, and linked with faith, love and understanding. Prayer with other believers must always be in a language understood by someone present.

Ps. 65:2; 95:1-7; John 14:13,14; Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor. 14:16,17; 1 John 5:14.

1. Prayer is to be made for things that are legal and allowed by Scripture, and for men of all sorts now living or as yet unborn. But prayer is not to be made for the dead, nor for those who are known to be guilty of “the sin unto death.”

2 Sam. 7:29; 12:21-23; 1 Tim. 2:1,2; 1 John 5:16.

1. The reading of the Scripture, the preaching and hearing of the Word of God, the instructing and admonishing of one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with heartfelt thankfulness to the Lord, observing baptism and the Lord’s supper—these are all parts of divine worship to be performed obediently, intelligently, faithfully, reverently, and with godly fear. Moreover, on special occasions, solemn humiliation, fastings, and thanksgivings ought to be observed in a holy and reverential manner.

Exod. 15:1-19; Esther 4:16; Ps. 107; Joel 2:12; Matt. 28:19,20; Luke 8:18; 1 Cor.

11:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2.

1. In present gospel days neither prayer nor any other aspect of religious worship depends on the place where it is performed or towards which it is directed, for God is everywhere to be worshipped in spirit and in truth—as, for instance, in the daily worship carried on in private families; in the worship in which individual Christians engage in secret; and in the public assembly of the congregation. Such assemblies are held in accordance with God’s Word and providence, and believers must neither carelessly neglect them nor willfully forsake them.

Ps. 55:17; Mal. 1:11; Matt. 6:6; John 4:21; Acts 2:42; 10:2; 1 Tim. 2:8; Heb. 10:25.

1. As it is a law of nature, applicable to all, that a proportion of time, determined by God, should be allocated for the worship of God, so, by His Word, He has particularly appointed one day in seven to be kept as a holy Sabbath to Himself. The Sabbath command is positive, moral, and lasting. It covers all men in all ages. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, the Sabbath was the last day of the week; but when Christ rose, the Sabbath was changed to the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's day. It is to be continued to the world's end as the Christian Sabbath, the observance of the seventh day being abolished.

Exod. 20:8; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1,2; Rev. 1:10.

1. Men keep the Sabbath holy to the Lord when, having prepared their hearts and completed their other activities ahead of time, for the sake of the Lord's command they devote the Lord's day to the public and private exercises of God's worship, and to duties of necessity and mercy.

Neh. 13:15-22; Isa. 58:13; Mat. 12:1-13.

CHAPTER 23 – LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS

1. A LAWFUL oath is an aspect of religious worship in which the swearer, having God's truth, justice and righteousness in view, solemnly calls God to witness what he swears, and to judge him according to the truth or falsity of his words.

Exod. 20:7; Deut. 10:20; 2 Chron. 6:22,23; Jer. 4:2.

1. An oath is only lawful when it is taken in the name of God, with all holy fear and reverence. To swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dread name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful and to be hated. God's Word allows the taking of an oath when weighty and momentous matters are engaging attention, and when truth requires confirmation and an end to strife is desired. In such circumstances, men may take a lawful oath imposed by lawful authority.

Neh. 13:25; Matt. 5:34,37; 2 Cor. 1:23; Heb. 6:16; Jas. 5:12.

1. Each and every person who takes an oath as allowed by the Word of God must well consider the seriousness of such a solemn act, and be extremely careful to say nothing except what he knows to be truth; for rash, false and empty oaths provoke the Lord, and cause Him to bring a land to misery.

Lev. 19:12; Jer. 23:10.

1. An oath should use words in their plain and ordinary sense, without muddying the statement with confusing or uncertain words.

Ps. 24:4.

1. Vows are to be made to God alone and not to any creature. Once made they are to be performed scrupulously and faithfully. But monastic vows of singleness, poverty, and obedience, authorized by the Roman Catholic Church are merely superstitious and sinful snares in which no Christian ought to entangle himself.

Gen. 28:20-22; Ps. 76:11; Matt. 19:11; 1 Cor. 7:2,9; Eph. 4:28.

CHAPTER 24 – CIVIL GOVERNMENT

1. AS the world's supreme Lord and King, God has established civil governments and authorities, under His authority, to rule for His own glory and the public good. For these purposes to be achieved, He has given governments the powers of life and death—both to keep safe, and to encourage, all men of good behavior, and to punish the wicked.

Rom. 13:1-4.

1. Christians are allowed to serve as government officials when called upon to do so, in which case it becomes their responsibility to maintain justice and peace by following the sound laws of the kingdoms and states that they serve. New Testament teaching authorizes officials to wage war when this is found to be just and necessary.

2 Sam. 23:3; Ps. 82:3,4; Luke 3:14.

3. As government leaders are appointed by God for these purposes, Christians should obey all their lawful requirements—to please the Lord and to keep a clear conscience, and not merely to avoid punishment. Christians should offer requests and prayers for kings and all those in authority, that under their rule they may live a “quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

Rom. 13:5-7; 1 Tim. 2:1,2; 1 Pet. 2:17.

CHAPTER 25 – MARRIAGE

1. MARRIAGE is to be between one man and one woman. It is not lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.

Gen. 2:24; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:5,6.

1. God instituted marriage to benefit both husband and wife, to increase mankind in accordance with God's laws, and to prevent immorality.

Gen. 1:28; 2:18; 1 Cor. 7:2,9.

1. All sorts of people may marry, provided that they are able to give their rational consent. But it is the duty of Christians to marry only “in the Lord.” Thus, believers should not marry unbelievers or idolaters. It is also quite unfitting for godly persons to marry persons who lead wicked lives or who believe damnable heresies.

Neh. 13:25-27; 1 Cor. 7:39; 1 Tim. 4:3; Heb. 13:4.

1. People may not marry if they are relatives whom Scripture forbids to marry. When such incestuous marriages occur, they can never be made lawful— either by human laws or by the agreement of the man and woman, who can never rightly live together as man and wife.

Lev. 18; Mark 6: 18; 1 Cor. 5: 1.

CHAPTER 26 – THE CHURCH

1. THE catholic or universal church is invisible as to the internal work of the Spirit and whether men have received grace. The universal church consists of the whole number of the elect who have been, who are being, or who yet shall be gathered into one under Christ who is the church's head. The church is the wife, the body, the fullness of Christ, who "fills all in all."

Eph. 1:10,22,23; 5:23,27,32; Col. 1:18; Heb. 12:23.

1. All persons throughout the world who profess to believe the gospel and to give gospel obedience to God by Christ are, and may be called, visible saints, provided that they do not undermine their claim to be believers by holding fundamental errors or by living unholy lives. All local churches should be composed of visible saints.

Acts 11:26; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:20-22.

1. Even the purest churches are at risk of mixing believers and unbelievers, and falling into error, and some have fallen so far as not to be churches of Christ at all,

but "synagogues of Satan." Nevertheless, Christ always has had a kingdom in this world of those who believe in Him and profess His name, and He always will have such a kingdom to the world's end.

Ps. 72:17; 102:28; Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 2:11,12; Rev. 2; 3; 12:17; 18:2.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church. By the decision of the Father, all authority required to call, establish, order, and govern the church exists supremely and sovereignly in Jesus.

Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:11,12; Col. 1:18; 2 Thess. 2:2-9.

1. In exercising the authority entrusted to Him, the Lord Jesus, through the ministry of the Word and by His Spirit, calls to Himself out of the world those who are given to Him by His Father, that they may live in His sight, giving Him the obedience He requires of them in the Scripture. He commands those he calls to form particular churches to benefit one another, and to engage in the public worship that He requires while they are in the world.

Matt. 18:15-20; 28:20; John 10:16; 12:32.

1. As a result of the call of Jesus, the members of these churches are saints, who show and declare that they obey Christ's call by confessing Him and living for Him. They willingly consent to fellowship together as Christ instructs, giving themselves to the Lord and to one another as God wills, and fully agreeing with the requirements of the gospel.

Acts 2:41,42; 5:13,14; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 9:13.

1. To each of these churches gathered as described in God's Word, the Lord has given all the power and authority needed to worship Him and to engage in church discipline as He requires—including by establishing rules needed to use this power and authority properly.

Matt. 18:17,18; 1 Cor. 5:4,5; 5:13; 2 Cor. 2:6-8.

1. A local church, gathered and fully organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members. By Christ's appointment, the officers to be chosen and set apart by the church are bishops (otherwise called elders) and deacons. It is their special responsibility use their powers to do what the Lord has said, and their work will continue in the church until the world ends.

Acts 20:17,28; Phil. 1:1.

1. By Christ's appointment, any person who has been qualified and given the necessary gifts by the Holy Spirit for the work of bishop or elder in a church, must be chosen and called to that office by the church itself. He must be solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with the laying on of the hands of the existing elders (if any). Similarly, deacons are to be chosen by the church, and set apart by prayer and the laying on of hands.

Acts 6:3,5,6; 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14.

1. Pastors are required constantly to serve Christ in His churches; they are to be engaged in the ministry of the Word and in prayer, and to seek the welfare of men's souls as those that must give account to the Lord. It is therefore imperative that the churches to which they minister should provide for them, according to the churches' ability, not only all due honor, but such abundance of this world's material good as will enable them to live in comfort and enable them to show hospitality towards others. Such an arrangement is required by the law of nature itself, and by the express command of our Lord Jesus, who has decreed that "they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Acts 6:4; 1 Cor. 9:6-14; Gal. 6:6,7; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17,18; 2 Tim. 2:4; Heb. 13:17.

1. Although elders or pastors of the churches have a duty to be constantly active in preaching the Word, the Holy Spirit may gift others to preach, as well. When such men are approved and called to the work by the church, they may and ought to perform it.

Acts 11:19-21; 1 Pet. 4:10,11.

1. All believers must join local churches when and where they have opportunity to do so. All who are admitted to the privileges of church fellowship also become subject to the discipline and government of the church in accordance with the rule of Christ.

1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6,14,15.

1. Any church members who have taken offense at the behavior towards them of other church members, and who have obeyed the instructions laid down in Scripture for dealing with such cases, must not disturb the peace of the church or turn away from the church. Instead, they should participate in church assemblies and the church ordinances and wait on Christ, acting through the church, to address the person who has offended them.

Matt. 18:15-17; Eph. 4:2,3.

1. All members of each local church should pray continually for the good of all churches of Christ, wherever located, and, as they are called and able, always to help all other believers to exercise their gifts and graces. Therefore, churches should seek fellowship one with another as much as God's providence allows.

Ps. 122:6; Rom. 16:1,2; Eph. 6:18; 3 John 8-10.

1. Problems over doctrine or church government may threaten the peace, unity, and welfare of believers in one church or the churches in general. Likewise, faulty church discipline in a church may harm one member or many members. In such cases as these, it is Christ-like for many churches in fellowship to discuss the matter through their chosen representatives, who may give advice to all the churches concerned. It must be understood, however, that the representatives discussing the matter are not entrusted with any church power. They have no jurisdiction to discipline or force their decisions on any churches or persons.

Acts 15:2,4,6,22,23,25; 2 Cor. 1:24; 1 John 4:1.

CHAPTER 27 – THE FELLOWSHIP OF SAINTS

1. ALL saints are united to Jesus Christ their head by His Spirit and by faith. But this does not mean that they become one person with Him. Yet they have fellowship in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. Also, as they are united to one another in love, they enjoy fellowship in the gifts and graces of one another, and must serve publicly and privately to promote the mutual wellbeing of one another, in both spiritual and temporal matters.

John 1:16; Rom. 1:12; 6:5,6; 1 Cor. 3:21-23; 12:7; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 4:15, 16; Phil. 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:11,14; 1 John 1:3; 3:17,18.

1. By professing faith, saints commit to keeping a holy fellowship and communion with one another in worshipping God, and to serving one another for the common good. They are also required to relieve one another from physical and other earthly needs as they have the ability. This type of fellowship particularly applies to the family and church relationships of saints, but also extends, as God gives opportunity, to the whole household of faith—that is, to everyone everywhere who believes in Jesus. At the same time, however, sharing one with another as saints does not deprive any man of owning his own property.

Acts 5:4; 11:29,30; 1 Cor. 12:14-27; Eph. 4:28; 6:4; Heb. 3:12,13; 10:24,25.

CHAPTER 28 – BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

1. BAPTISM and the Lord’s supper are ordinances which have been explicitly and sovereignly instituted by the Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver, who has determined that his church should continue these ordinances to the end of the world.

Matt. 28:19,20; 1 Cor. 11:26.

1. These holy ordinances are to be administered by those alone who are qualified and called to do so, as they are commissioned by Christ.

Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 4:1.

CHAPTER 29 – BAPTISM

1. BAPTISM is an ordinance of the New Testament instituted by Jesus Christ. It is intended to be, to the person baptized, a sign of his fellowship with Christ in His death and resurrection, and of his being grafted into Christ, and of the remission of sins. It also indicates that the baptized person has given himself up to God, through Jesus Christ, so that he may live and conduct himself “in newness of life.”

Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12.

1. The only persons who can rightly follow this ordinance are those who actually profess repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 16:16; Acts 2:41; 8:12,36,37; 18:8.

1. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, in which the believer is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 8:38.

CHAPTER 30 – THE LORD’S SUPPER

1. THE Lord’s supper was instituted by the Lord on the night He was betrayed. It is to be practiced in His churches until the world ends, so that men may always remember the Lord and to show the sacrifice of Himself in His death. The Lord also instituted the supper to give the saints confidence that all the benefits flowing from Christ’s sacrifice belong to them. Further, the Lord meant His supper to nourish His people spiritually and help them grow in Him, and to strengthen their commitment to obey Him. The Lord’s supper is also a bond and pledge of the fellowship that believers have with Christ and with one another.

1 Cor. 10:16,17,21; 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

1. In the Lord’s Supper, Christ is not sacrificed to His father; and no real sacrifice is made in any sense to cancel the sin of the living or the dead. The supper is only a ceremony to help us remember the one-time offering up of Christ, by Himself, upon the cross, once for all. It is also a spiritual offering up of all possible praise to God for the once-for-all work of Calvary. Hence the Roman Catholic sacrifice of the mass, as it is called, is utterly abominable, and injures Christ’s own sacrifice, which is the sole propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:24; Heb. 9:25,26,28.

1. In this ordinance the Lord Jesus has directed his ministers to pray, and to bless the elements of bread and wine, and in this way to set them apart from a common to a holy use. They are to take and break the bread, then to take the cup, and to give both to the communicants, while the ministers also participate in the communion.

1 Cor. 11:23-26.

1. Refusing to give the people the cup, worshipping the bread and wine, lifting up or carrying the bread and wine to cause people to adore them, and keeping the bread and wine special for some supposed religious use, are all contrary to the nature of the ordinance and to Christ’s intention in appointing it.

Exod. 20:4,5; Matt. 15:9; 26:26-28.

1. The outward elements in the Lord’s supper—bread and wine—set apart for the use appointed by Christ, bear such a relation to the Lord crucified that they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent (namely, the body and blood of Christ) even though, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before being set apart for their special use.

1. Cor. 11:26-28.

2. The doctrine commonly called transubstantiation, which teaches that in the supper the bread and wine become the substance of Christ's body and blood through consecration by a priest or in any other way, contradicts Scripture, common sense, and reason. Further, it ruins the nature of the ordinance, and has been, and is, the cause of all kinds of superstitions and massive idolatries.

Luke 24:6,39; Acts 3:21; 1 Cor. 11:24,25.

1. Those who, as worthy participants, outwardly eat and drink the visible bread and wine, at the same time receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and receive all the benefits from His death. This they really and in fact do, not as if feeding on the actual flesh and blood of a person's body, but inwardly and by faith. In the supper, the body and blood of Christ are present to the faith of believers, not in any actual physical way, but in a spiritual way, just as the bread and wine themselves are present to their outward physical senses.

1. Cor. 10:16; 11:23-26.

2. All persons who take communion unworthily sin against the body and blood of the Lord and bring themselves under divine judgment. Likewise, all ignorant and ungodly persons are not fit to enjoy fellowship with Christ and, thus, are unworthy to share His table. And while they remain ignorant and ungodly, they cannot rightly be allowed to take communion, as that would be a great sin against Christ.

Matt. 7:6; 1 Cor. 11:29; 2 Cor. 6:14,15.

CHAPTER 31 – THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH

AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

1. THE bodies of men after death return to dust and suffer decay, but their souls are inherently immortal and thus neither die nor become unconscious. Instead, they immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, whose holiness is perfected at death, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, looking upon the face of God in light and glory, and waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Souls separated from their bodies are in either paradise or hell, for the Scripture speaks of no other homes for the departed.

Gen. 3:19; Eccles. 12:7; Luke 16:23,24; 23:43; Acts 13:36; 2 Cor. 5:1,6,8; Phil. 1:23; Heb. 12:23; 1 Pet. 3:19; Jude 6,7.

1. At the last day, saints alive on the earth will not die, but be changed. All the dead will be raised up with their same bodies (which will have different qualities), and shall be united with their souls forever.

Job 19:26,27; 1 Cor. 15:42,43,51,52; 1 Thess. 4:17.

1. By the power of Christ, the bodies of the unrighteous will be raised to dishonor. By His Spirit, Christ will raise the bodies of the righteous to honor, for they will be refashioned after the pattern of His own glorious body.

John 5:28,29; Acts 24:15; Phil. 3:21.

CHAPTER 32 – THE LAST JUDGMENT

1. GOD has set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom the Father has given all authority and power to judge. On that day, the rebelling angels will be judged. So too will all persons who have lived upon the earth; they will appear before Christ's judgment throne to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds, and to receive His award for what they have done in this earthly life, whether good or evil.

Eccles. 12:14; Matt. 12:36; 25:32-46; John 5:22,27; Acts 17:31; Rom. 14:10,12; 1 Cor. 6:3; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 6.

1. God's purpose in appointing a day of judgment is to make known the glory of His mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and the glory of His justice in the eternal damnation of the wicked and disobedient. In that day, the righteous will inherit everlasting life, and receive a fullness of joy and glory in the Lord's

presence as their eternal reward. But the wicked, who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be given over to everlasting torments and "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

Matt. 25:21,34,46; Mark 9:48; Rom. 9:22,23; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2 Tim. 4:8.

1. To deter all men from sin on the one hand, and to give greater comfort to the godly in their troubles on the other, Christ desires that we be firmly convinced that the judgment day is coming. For these same reasons, He has not revealed the date—so that men may shake off all confidence in themselves and may be ever watching and prepared to say, "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly. Amen."

Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; 2 Cor. 5: 10, 11; 2 Thess. 1: 5-7; Rev. 22:20.

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