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CHAPTER 2. OF GOD AND OF THE HOLY TRINITY

1. The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of himself, infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but himself; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

(1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 48:12; Exodus 3:14; John 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 4:15, 16; Malachi 3:6; 1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23; Psalms 90:2; Genesis 17:1; Isaiah 6:3; Psalms 115:3; Isaiah 46:10; Proverbs 16:4; Romans 11:36; Exodus 34:6, 7; Hebrews 11:6; Nehemiah 9:32, 33; Psalms 5:5, 6; Exodus 34:7; Nahum 1:2, 3)

2. God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself, is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creature which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, and he hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth; in his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain; he is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands; to him is due from angels and men, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, as creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever he is further pleased to require of them.

(John 5:26; Psalms 148:13; Psalms 119:68; Job 22:2, 3; Romans 11:34-36; Daniel 4:25, 34, 35; Hebrews 4:13; Ezekiel 11:5; Acts 15:18; Psalms 145:17; Revelation 5:12-14)

I. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

1. The Holy Trinity

WE BELIEVE there is one true and living God; a pure spirit without any material parts whatever; whose very essence is love; who is self-sufficient, immutable, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, holy, almighty and incomprehensible. In all his relations outside himself he is sovereign, gracious, righteous, just, longsuffering, merciful, and approachable through Christ only.

Deut. 6:4; Jer. 10:10; 1 Cor. 8:4; John 4:24; Deut. 4:15-16; Luke 24:39; 1 John 4:8; 2 Cor. 13:11; Isa. 48:11-12; Mal. 3:6; James 1:17; Deut. 33:27; Psa. 90:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Isa. 40:13-14; 46: 9-10; Psa. 139:7-11; Jer. 23:24; Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8; Gen. 17:1; Rev. 1 :8; Job 11 :7; 26:14; 1 Tim. 6:14-16; Psa. 135:6; Eph. 1:11; Psa. 103:8; 111:4; Ex. 34:6; Isa. 45:21-22; John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5.

3. In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity,

each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided:

the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him.

(1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Exodus 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:14,18; John 15:26; Galatians 4:6)

United in the one essence of God there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These are separate persons since the Father is not the Son and not the Holy Spirit, and the Son is not the Holy Spirit. Each of these persons possesses the entire divine essence undivided, and therefore the perfections which belong to God belong to each of the three persons.

The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit is eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

Mat. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1. John 5:7; John 14:26; Psa. 90:2; John 1:14 and 18; 8:42; 16:28; 15:26.

Chapter 3: Of God's Decree

1. **God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established;** in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree.

(Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9:15, 18; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11; Numbers 23:19; Ephesians 1:3-5)

2. Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

(Acts 15:18; Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18)

3. **By the decree of God,** for the manifestation of his glory, **some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life** through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; **others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation,** to the praise of his glorious justice.

(1 Timothy 5:21; Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:5, 6; Romans 9:22, 23; Jude 4)

4. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

(2 Timothy 2:19; John 13:18)

5. **Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God,** before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, **hath chosen in Christ** unto everlasting glory, **out of his mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto.**

(Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11; Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Romans 9:13, 16; Ephesians 2:5, 12)

2. God's decree

God is love, and therefore all his counsels and actions proceed from this his essential nature.

John 3:16; 1 John 4:7-16.

God has decreed in himself before the world began, by his most holy, wise and sovereign will, all things whatsoever that come to pass, but in such a way that he is not the author of sin; nor is violence done to the will of the creature, nor is God's use of means or second causes removed but established by the decree. **God is sovereign and man is a responsible creature.**

Isa. 46:9-10; Rom. 9:15; Eph. 1:11; 1 Pet. 1:16; James 1:13; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; John 19:11; Prov. 16:33.

By this same decree, God has from eternity predestinated an innumerable multitude of persons to be conformed to the image of his Son with all the blessings of eternal life; the rest of mankind he has sovereignly left to act in their sin to their just condemnation.

Eph. 1:4 and 9 and 11; Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13; Mat. 11:25-26; Rom. 9:17-24; 1 Pet. 2:8; Rom. 1:28; 2 Cor. 13:5; 2 Tim. 3:8.

The predestinated persons, the elect,

were chosen by God before the world began, entirely of his own good pleasure, and not at all on account of any faith or good works foreseen in them.

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

(1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10; Romans 8:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:5; John 10:26; John 17:9; John 6:64)

7. The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

(1 Thessalonians 1:4, 5; 2 Peter 1:10; Ephesians 1:6; Romans 11:33; Romans 11:5, 6, 20; Luke 10:20)

As God has appointed the elect, and only the elect, to glory, so has he by the same decree foreordained all the means thereto, so that the elect being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, effectually called unto faith by the Spirit, justified, adopted, sanctified, made to persevere to the end, and at length glorified.

Eph. 1 :4-5; 2:8-10; Rom. 8:28-30; Phil. 1 :6.

This doctrine of predestination is to be taught with reverent prudence and care, that all men may be warned to be concerned for their state as sinners; and that the elect, making their calling and election sure, may be comforted and encouraged, and built up in their holy faith, to the glory of God's sovereign majesty.

Acts 20:27; Rev. 20:15; 2 Pet. 1 :5-10.

Chapter 4: Of Creation

1. In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

(John 1:2, 3; Hebrews 1:2; Job 26:13; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:31)

2. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, rendering them fit unto that life to God for which they were created; being made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change.

(Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 1:26; Romans 2:14, 15; Genesis 3:6)

3. Besides the law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which whilst they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

(Genesis 2:17; Genesis 1:26, 28)

3. Creation

In the beginning it pleased God, for the display of His glory, power, wisdom and goodness, to create out of nothing the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them.

God also created the first human pair, male and female, with intelligent and immortal souls, and made after the image of God, being perfectly righteous and holy,

and completely able to fulfil the law of God implanted in their nature.

The description of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 is not myth but an accurate historical account of creation given by divine revelation.

Gen. 1:1-2; John 1:3; Heb. 11:3; Psa. 19:1; Rom. 1:20; Gen. 1:27; Mat. 19:4; Gen. 9:6; James 3:9; Ecc. 7:29; Job 38 and 39; Psa. 104:24; 33:5, 6; Col. 1:16; Rom. 11:36; Isa. 43:7; Rev. 4:11

Chapter 5: Of Divine Providence

1. God the good Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will; to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy.

(Hebrews 1:3; Job 38:11; Isaiah 46:10, 11; Psalms 135:6; Matthew 10:29-31; Ephesians 1:11)

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without his providence; yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

(Acts 2:23; Proverbs 16:33; Genesis 8:22)

3. God, in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure.

(Acts 27:31, 44; Isaiah 55:10, 11; Hosea 1:7; Romans 4:19-21; Daniel 3:27)

4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

(Romans 11:32-34; 2 Samuel 24:1, 1 Chronicles 21:1; 2 Kings 19:28; Psalms 76:10; Genesis 1:20; Isaiah 10:6, 7, 12; Psalms 1:21; 1 John 2:16)

4. Divine providence

God the Creator, in his infinite power and wisdom, sustains and governs all creatures and things by his most wise and holy providence,

according to his infallible foreknowledge and unchangeable will,

to the glory of his invincible and righteous purpose.

Heb. 1 :3; Dan. 4:34-35; Acts 17:24-28; Mat. 10:29-30; Acts 15:18; Eph. 1:11; 3:9-10; Isa. 64:4.

Although all things come to pass with certainty according to God's foreknowledge and decree, so that nothing happens without his providence; yet by the same providence God often uses means so that things happen according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily or contingently.

Though God has normally worked in accordance with the laws of nature, or through second causes, there are occasions when he has worked directly or immediately. These extra-ordinary providences, or miracles, are a display of divine power wherein God works in a supernatural way, producing a result without recourse to the normal means. The miracles of Scripture were performed with a definite purpose in view, and were especially manifest during periods of unusual revelation.

Gen. 8:22; Jer. 31:35; Acts 27:31-44; Ex. 7:1; 1 Kings 18:38; John 2:11.

This same providence, by God's almighty power and wisdom governs the actions of men and spirits, so that while they act freely according to their natures, their deeds, whether good or bad, fall within the scope of the divine purpose. This applies equally to the case of those from whom God sovereignly withholds his mercies with the result that they are hardened in their sins. Nevertheless, sinfulness comes only from creatures and not from God.

Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; 14:16; Psa. 76:10; Isa. 10:5-7.

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends. So that whatsoever befalls any of his elect is by his appointment, for his glory, and their good.

(2 Chronicles 32:25, 26, 31; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Romans 8:28)

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as the righteous judge, for former sin doth blind and harden; from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, under those means which God useth for the softening of others.

(Romans 1:24-26, 28; Romans 11:7, 8; Deuteronomy 29:4; Matthew 13:12; Deuteronomy 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12, 13; Psalms 81:11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Exodus 8:15, 32; Isaiah 6:9, 10; 1 Peter 2:7, 8)

7. As the providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a more special manner it taketh care of his church, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof. (1 Timothy 4:10; Amos 9:8, 9; Isaiah 43:3-5)

While the providence of God governs all things, it is specially concerned with the sustaining and building up of the Church and the welfare of its members.

Psa. 23; 103; 125:2; Isa. 43:3-5; Eph. 4:11-16.

Chapter 1: Of The Holy Scriptures

1. The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

(2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29, 31; Ephesians 2:20; Romans 1:19-21; Romans 2:14,15; Psalms 19:1-3; Hebrews 1:1; Proverbs 22:19-21; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19,20)

2. Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:

Of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
Of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, To Titus, To Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second, and third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation

All of which are given by the inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.

(2 Timothy 3:16)

3. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon or rule of the Scripture, and, therefore, are of no authority to the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings.

Luke 24:27, 44; Romans 3:2

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

WE BELIEVE that in creation God has given a revelation of his power and glory leaving all men without excuse before him, but none by the light of nature alone can attain to a saving knowledge of God. This revelation leaves all men without excuse before God. For this reason it pleased God to give by the Scriptures a written revelation of that knowledge of himself and his will necessary to salvation.

Rom. 1 :18-21; 2:14, 15; Psa. 19:1; Heb. 1 :1; Rom. 3:1, 2.

By the Scriptures, or Bible, we mean only the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments.

The books known as the Apocrypha, not being inspired, form no part of the Scriptures.

7. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.

(2 Peter 3:16; Psalms 19:7; Psalms 119:130)

8. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

(Romans 3:2; Isaiah 8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39; 1 Corinthians 14:6, 9, 11, 12, 24, 28; Colossians 3:16)

4. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

(2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:9)

In the absence of the original manuscripts, God has divinely preserved his work in many faithful copies. Careful translations are to be made that all men might personally read God's Word in their own language.

Isa. 40:8; Mat. 5:18; John 5:39

The Scriptures have their origin in God himself; they are God-breathed, given by inspiration of God. This inspiration extends to all the books in their totality, down to the very words used, and is not limited in any way whatever either by man's understanding or response. The Scriptures do not therefore merely contain God's Word, they are God's Word.

Ex. 4:10-15; 2 Sam. 23: 1-2; Jer. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1 :19-21; John 17:17.

The authority of the Bible depends wholly upon God and is unique and supreme. It alone is the only sufficient, certain and infallible rule of saving knowledge, faith and obedience. Therefore the Bible is the authoritative Word of God to all people,

6. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

(2 Timothy 3:15-17; Galatians 1:8,9; John 6:45; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12; 1 Corinthians 11:13, 14; 1 Corinthians 14:26,40)

5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church of God to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

(John 16:13,14; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20, 27)

9. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly.

(2 Peter 1:20, 21; Acts 15:15, 16)

and a sure and complete guide in all matters of christian thinking, living and service.

2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Heb. 1:1; Rom. 15:4; Isa. 8:19, 20; Psa. 19:119:105; 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Thess. 2:13.

The Bible attests its own divine authority and this is not contrary to human reason,

but is demonstrated by convincing evidence.

This authority, however, is only experienced by faith, through the inward working of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts. In this way the power and teaching of the Holy Spirit in the Bible itself are made clear in the understanding, assurance, joy and eternal good of the individual believer.

1 Cor. 2: 4; 15:1-6; 1 Thess. 1:5; Luke 1:1-4; John 6:45; John 16:13, 14; 1 Cor. 2:9-14.

The Bible is its own interpreter, and so we compare Scripture with Scripture. The Bible is a unity of truth and contains no real contradictions. When, therefore, there is a question about the true meaning or full sense of any part of the Bible, it must be determined by other parts that speak more clearly.

1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1 :20-21; Acts 15:15-16.

The Bible is to be proclaimed and taught as having power in itself, through the Holy Spirit, to regenerate, convince, convert, save and keep all of God's children. God may use other means to these ends, but never without, or in a way inconsistent with, the truth of the Bible.

Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1 :23-25; Eph. 5:26; Acts 2:37.

10. The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.

(Matthew 22:29, 31, 32; Ephesians 2:20; Acts 28:23)

In all controversial matters, whether of religion or life, the teaching of the Bible is to be taken as decisive and final. If in anything the Bible appears to be silent, we cannot allow or approve of that which is inconsistent with any clearly defined principle or teaching of the Bible.

Isa. 8:20; Mat. 22:29-31; Acts 28:23; Rom. 4:3.

THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

WE BELIEVE in the existence of good and evil angels. These are spirit beings possessing intelligence, will and power, though subject to the limitations which belong to creatures.

Heb. 1 :7, 13, 14; Mark 13:32; Mat. 25:41; 2 Pet. 2:4.

All angels were created holy and some, maintaining their integrity, continue in a state of holiness and glory. They are employed in the worship and service of God and also to minister to God's redeemed people. The evil angels did not keep their first estate but, in opposition to God, became fallen spirits. They are commonly designated demons in Scripture.

Mat. 18:10; Rev. 5:11; Heb. 1 :14; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Mark 1:25.

Of these fallen spirits, one is clearly revealed as exalted in rank and authority over his associates. He is the Devil, or Satan, the great enemy of God and man. His power over the bodies and souls of men is very great. He is the opposer of all good and the promoter of all evil. Yet the Devil is not almighty, nor omnipresent nor omniscient. The powers of Satan and his angels are always and in all forms strictly under the sovereign control of God.

Mat. 4:1-11; John 8:44; Job 2:6; 2:7; Eph. 2:2; 6:12.

Satan and all demons can and ought to be resisted by all Christians in the strength and might of Christ who was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil. Every attempt to communicate with the spirit world is forbidden in Scripture. The final appointment of the Devil at the end of the age is to everlasting torment.

James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8; Gen. 3:15; Ex. 22:18; Gal. 5:19-20; Rev. 20:10.

Chapter 6: Of the Fall of Man, Of Sin, And of the Punishment Thereof

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN AND SIN

Nature, Origin and Results of Sin

WE BELIEVE that sin is disobedience to the law of God, resulting in a position of guilt and in a condition of positive evil in the nature of men. This condition is not only an absence of good or failure to do right, it is an entire distortion of human nature producing habitual rebellion against the will of God.

1 John 3:4; Rom. 3:19; 8:7; Col. 1:21.

Sin began, not in God, nor in man, but among the angels before the creation of man. The biblical history of the entry of sin into the world and of the fall of Adam is factual and is the foundation of basic doctrine in Scripture.

Gen. 2:15-17; 3; Rom. 5:12-21; 2 Cor. 11:3; John 9:3; 11: 4-15; Rev. 12:7-9; Isa. 14:12; Luke 10:18; Rom. 16:20.

1. Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof, yet he did not long abide in this honour; Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, then by her seducing Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit, which God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

(Genesis 2:16, 17; Genesis 3:12,13; 2 Corinthians 11:3)

3. They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free.

(Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45, 49; Psalms 51:5; Job 14:4; Ephesians 2:3; Romans 6:20 Romans 5:12; Hebrews 2:14, 15; 1 Thessalonians 1:10)

2. Our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them whereby death came upon all: all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

(Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12, etc; Titus 1:15; Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-19)

Adam was the representative of the human race and the sentence passed on him was passed on all mankind.

All Adam's posterity is without exception dead in sin, entirely defiled, guilty before God, subject to the death of the body, and deserving of eternal judgment. This explanation of man's plight is not an excuse for continuing in sin, for all are accountable to God. The body is not in itself sinful but is made the instrument of sin and the excuse for it by fallen man.

Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:20-25; Eph. 2:1-5; Ezek. 18:19-20.

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

(Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21; James 1:14, 15; Matthew 15:19)

<<Chapter 9: Of Free Will

9/1. God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any necessity of nature determined to do good or evil.

(Matthew 17:12; James 1:14; Deuteronomy 30:19)

9/2. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God, but yet was unstable, so that he might fall from it.

(Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 3:6)

9/3. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

(Romans 5:6; Romans 8:7; Ephesians 2:1, 5; Titus 3:3-5; John 6:44)

9/4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that by reason of his remaining corruptions, he doth not perfectly, nor only will, that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

(Colossians 1:13; John 8:36; Philippians 2:13; Romans 7:15, 18, 19, 21, 23)

9/5. This will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory only.

(Ephesians 4:13)>>

5. The corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and the first motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

(Romans 7:18,23; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8; Romans 7:23-25; Galatians 5:17)

Natural man is totally unable to receive God's truth or to desire true godliness because his mind is blinded and his heart is wholly inclined to evil.

Mat. 16:17; Eph. 4:18.

God has given man power to choose his own course of action. His will is not forced from outside himself against his inward disposition, but always operates in harmony with his own personality, emotional and intellectual state. He is thus responsible and accountable to God for his choices.

Until the fall man was able to choose either to please God or to disobey him.

Since the fall man still chooses freely according to his own nature, but that nature is now sinful and dead towards God. Consequently, all his decisions, both in material and spiritual affairs, lack the enlightenment of the divine will and he is completely unable to please God, to choose Christ, or in any way to contribute to his own salvation from sin.

Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; James 1:14; Mat. 7:15-20; 15:19; Gen. 2:16-17; 3:6; John 6:65; 15:5; Rom. 8:7-8; Eph. 2:1; John 6:44; Heb. 11:6; 9:14; Isa. 64:6.

In salvation God frees the sinner from this bondage enabling him to will and to enjoy all spiritual good. Indwelling sin, however, remains to ensnare the believer; he is still liable to choose evil, or to choose good and yet fail to achieve it, until he is perfected in glory.

John 8:36; Rom. 7:14-23; Eph. 2:5; 4:13; Gal. 5:16-17; Phil. 2:12-13; Jude 24; Eph. 6:10-18; 1 John 3:1-3; Psa. 17:15; Phil. 1:6.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE GRACE OF GOD

1. General and Special Grace

WE BELIEVE that God is gracious in his very nature. Grace is that perfection of God in which he shows unmerited and even forfeited favour in a general way to all mankind and in a special way to the elect.

Ex. 22:27; 34:6; Neh. 9:17 and 31; Psa. 86:15; 111:4; Isa. 30:18; Jonah 4:2.

There is that grace which is general, in that God is good to all. It appears in the natural blessings which God showers upon all in this present life, in spite of the fact that man has forfeited them and is in a state of condemnation. It is seen in all that God does to restrain the devastating influence and development of sin in the world, and to maintain and enrich the natural life of mankind in general. It is entirely due to this general grace of God that human existence is possible and life bearable, useful and of value.

Psa. 145:9; Mat. 5:45; Acts 14:17; Rom. 1 :24, 26, 28; 1 Tim. 4:10.

Special grace is that which secures and brings salvation to the elect of God. This is the crowning work of God's grace and is manifest in the whole scheme of salvation and its application to the individual believer in his life here on earth and in eternal glory. Thus it is that all true christians owe everything to the grace of God.

Rom. 3:24; 5:2 and 17-21; 1 Cor. 15:10; Eph. 1 :6, 7; 2:5-8; Col. 1 :6; Titus 2:11; 1 Pet. 5:10-12.

Chapter 7: Of God's Covenant

1. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to him as their creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

(Luke 17:10; Job 35:7,8)

2. Moreover, man having brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace, wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.

(Genesis 2:17; Galatians 3:10; Romans 3:20, 21; Romans 8:3; Mark 16:15, 16; John 3:16; Ezekiel 36:26, 27; John 6:44, 45; Psalms 110:3)

3. This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament; and it is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect; and

it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality,

man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of innocency.

(Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 11:6, 13; Romans 4:1, 2, &c.; Acts 4:12; John 8:56)

2. The Covenant of Grace

Having regard to man's helplessness as a sinner, God, being both righteous and gracious, has taken the initiative to save his people by his own act of mercy. He has done this by means of a covenant, known as the Covenant of Grace.

By this covenant God himself provides the surety in the person of the eternal Son who, by his passive and active obedience in his holy life and in his sufferings and death, merited a righteousness which is imputed to the elect. By this same covenant God himself imparts new life through the Holy Spirit to those who are by nature dead in sin, and brings them to the knowledge and experience of salvation.

On the grounds of this covenant sinners are made partakers of all the blessings of the gospel being, as to their standing before God, completely freed from the guilt of sin; and as to their experience, delivered from the dominion of sin though its presence and influence are still with them.

This covenant is entirely of grace, because it is produced by a unilateral and voluntary act of God and depends only upon the divine activity of the Trinity for its fulfilment. It is also eternal, being once and for all secured to the believer by the sacrificial death of Christ, and particular because its benefits are bestowed personally and individually upon the elect.

Isa. 42:6; 49:7-8; Jer. 31 :31-34; Rom. 4; Titus 1 :2; Rom. 1: 1-2; Heb. 8:6-10; John 17:2, 9, 10, 24; Heb. 7:22.

Chapter 8: Of Christ the Mediator

1. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man; the prophet, priest, and king; head and saviour of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

(Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 1:19, 20; Acts 3:22; Hebrews 5:5, 6; Psalms 2:6; Luke 1:33; Ephesians 1:22, 23; Hebrews 1:2; Acts 17:31; Isaiah 53:10; John 17:6; Romans 8:30)

2. The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with him who made the world, who upholdeth and governeth all things he hath made, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her: and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; and so was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures; so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man. (John 1:14; Galatians 4:4; Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14, 16, 17; Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 1:22, 23; Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Romans 9:5; 1 Timothy 2:5)

3. The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of mediator and surety; which office he took not upon himself, but was thereunto called by his Father; who also put all power and judgement in his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

(Psalms 45:7; Acts 10:38; John 3:34; Colossians 2:3; Colossians 1:19; Hebrews 7:26; John 1:14; Hebrews 7:22; Hebrews 5:5; John 5:22, 27; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36)

3. The Person and Work of Christ the Mediator

The nature of God's covenant of grace necessitates the office of a mediator to bring about the reconciliation of sinful man with a holy God.

This need, God in his wisdom and grace, has met in the person of Jesus Christ, who, truly God,

became also truly man, yet without sin.

He was born of the virgin Mary by the agency of the Holy Spirit

whereby the two natures, divine and human, are mystically joined in one glorious person, called in the Scriptures the mediator of the new covenant.

4. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which that he might discharge he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us; enduring most grievous sorrows in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, yet saw no corruption: on the third day he arose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered, with which he also ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.

(Psalms 40:7, 8; Hebrews 10:5-10; John 10:18; Gal 4:4; Matthew 3:15; Galatians 3:13; Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 26:37, 38; Luke 22:44; Matthew 27:46; Acts 13:37; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; John 20:25, 27; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24; Acts 10:42; Romans 14:9, 10; Acts 1:11; 2 Peter 2:4)

5. The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.

(Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:14; Romans 3:25, 26; John 17:2; Hebrews 9:15)

6. Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof were communicated to the elect in all ages, successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices wherein he was revealed, and signified to be the seed which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, being the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever.

(1 Corinthians 4:10; Hebrews 4:2; 1 Peter 1:10, 11; Revelation 13:8; Hebrews 13:8)

7. Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture, attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

(John 3:13; Acts 20:28)

This office the Lord Jesus willingly assumed and perfectly fulfilled.

He was crucified and died, and remained in the state of the dead, yet saw no corruption.

On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered. Afterwards he ascended into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of the Father, and from whence he shall return to be the Judge of all at the end of the world.

Psa. 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:5-10; John 10:18; Mat. 1:23; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; Acts 2:23, 24, 32, 33; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; John 20:25-27; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; Acts 10:42; Rom. 14:9, 10.

The work of the Lord Jesus Christ as mediator is exercised in all phases of redemption. In him the elect were chosen before the foundation of the world, and were predestinated to be conformed to his image. By his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself which he by the eternal Spirit offered up unto God in their stead, he has fully satisfied the justice of God, propitiated his wrath, and obtained for the elect redemption, reconciliation to God and an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven. By him they have access into the grace of God, and to God himself, and by him are assuredly called and kept.

Heb. 9:15; 1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 9:14; Rom. 3:24-26; Eph. 1:7; 2 Cor. 5:18-19; 2 Pet. 1:3-11; Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18; John 14:6; 10:3-5 and 27-29.

8. To all those for whom Christ hath obtained eternal redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them; uniting them to himself by his Spirit, revealing unto them, in and by his Word, the mystery of salvation, persuading them to believe and obey, governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit, and overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation; and all of free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them to procure it.

(John 6:37; John 10:15, 16; John 17:9; Romans 5:10; John 17:6; Ephesians 1:9; 1 John 5:20; Romans 8:9, 14; Psalms 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26; John 3:8; Ephesians 1:8)

9. This office of mediator between God and man is proper only to Christ, who is the prophet, priest, and king of the church of God; and may not be either in whole, or any part thereof, transferred from him to any other. (1 Timothy 2:5)

10. This number and order of offices is necessary; for in respect of our ignorance, we stand in need of his prophetic office; and in respect of our alienation from God, and imperfection of the best of our services, we need his priestly office to reconcile us and present us acceptable unto God; and in respect to our averseness and utter inability to return to God,

and for our rescue and security from our spiritual adversaries, we need his kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom.

(John 1:18; Colossians 1:21; Galatians 5:17; John 16:8; Psalms 110:3; Luke 1:74, 75)

9. This office of mediator between God and man is proper only to Christ, who is the prophet, priest, and king of the church of God; and may not be either in whole, or any part thereof, transferred from him to any other.

(1 Timothy 2:5)

As mediator the Lord Jesus Christ combines the offices of prophet, priest and king:

As prophet, both before and after his incarnation, he declares to men the nature and will of God.

As the great high priest, who in his perfect humanity is touched with the feeling of the infirmities of his people, he has passed into the heavens, offering his own blood, and ever lives to make intercession for them. The thanksgiving and prayers of the elect are presented to God through him.

As king, all power is given unto him in heaven and earth; the dead, both just and unjust, will be raised at his summons, and he shall reign until he has put all enemies under his feet.

Deut. 18:15-19; 1 Pet. 1:11; John 17:8; 1:18; Heb. 4:14-16; 9:11-15; 7:25; Rom. 1:8; John 14:13-14; Mat. 28:18; John 5:26-29; 1 Cor. 15:25.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only mediator whom God has appointed between himself and man, and only he, by his dual nature of God and man in one holy person, can possibly fulfil this office. Every soul that thirsts for the benefits of his mediatorial work has direct access to him without the exercise of any other intermediary, and all who thus come are assured of a gracious reception.

1 Tim. 2:5; John 7:37; 6:37

4. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is revealed in Scripture as the executor of the counsels and purposes of the Godhead. He is seen at work in the control of the material universe; in the inspiration, preservation and interpretation of the Scriptures; in relation to the Church and its witness in the world; and especially in his gracious dealings with the children of God.

The Holy Spirit is the divine agent in convicting men of sin, in the new birth and in all that follows in the christian life through saving faith, communion with God and power in prayer, and sanctification and transformation of character. It pleases God to give to believers or to churches, from time to time, unusual seasons of awakening and refreshing by the Holy Spirit.

Isa. 32:13-17; Zec, 12:10; Acts 3:19; 4:31.

It is the supreme work of the Holy Spirit to reveal the things of Christ, to guide into all truth and to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psa. 104:29, 30; 1 Pet. 1 :11; Acts 1 :16; 2 Tim. 3:16; Johc 3:5-8; 1 Cor. 2-12; Eph. 2:18; 3:5; Rom. 8:26, 27; Rom. 8:2-4, 11; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14.

5. Regeneration

Regeneration is the implanting of spiritual life of which the Holy Spirit is the source and agent. By this new birth all the elect are made, in God's appointed way and time, a new creation in Christ Jesus. There is conveyed in the new birth, in which man is entirely passive, that grace by which the sinner is enabled to receive a response to the saving revelation of God in Christ, and without which no man can receive the things of God.

At the new birth the various graces of the Spirit such as repentance and faith are conferred, and by means of these the recipients are brought to an experience of salvation in Christ Jesus.

The new birth, effectually uniting the sinner to Christ gives possession of eternal life.

Titus 3:5; John 3:5; 1:11-13; 3:8; Rom. 8:30; Psa. 110:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:1-6; John 1:12-13; 1 Cor. 2:14; Rom 6:17-18; John 10:27-28; 17:24; Rom. 8:14-17.

Chapter 10: Of Effectual Calling

1. Those whom God hath predestinated unto life, he is pleased in his appointed, and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

(Romans 8:30; Romans 11:7; Ephesians 1:10, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; Ephesians 2:1-6; Acts 26:18; Ephesians 1:17, 18; Ezekiel 36:26; Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:27; Ephesians 1:19; Psalm 110:3; Song of Solomon 1:4)

2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit; he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead.

(2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:5; John 5:25; Ephesians 1:19, 20)

3. Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit; who worketh when, and where, and how he pleases; so also are all elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word. (John 3:3, 5, 6; John 3:8)

4. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither will nor can truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men that receive not the Christian religion be saved; be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess.

(Matthew 22:14; Matthew 13:20, 21; Hebrews 6:4, 5; John 6:44, 45, 65; 1 John 2:24, 25; Acts 4:12; John 4:22; John 17:3)

6. Effectual Calling

Those whom God has predestinated unto life he effectually calls by his Word and by the Holy Spirit,

their minds being spiritually enlightened and their wills being renewed,

so that, being effectually drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ and enabled by His grace, they come most willingly.

This effectual call is of God's free grace alone, not from anything foreseen in man nor from any power or agency in the creature, being dead in trespasses and sins until quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit.

All men being dead in trespasses and sins neither can nor will truly come to Christ for salvation unless effectually drawn by the Father.

Rom. 8:30; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Thess. 1 :5; Eph. 1:17-18; Ezek. 36:26; John 6:37; Psa. 110:3; Eph. 2:8; 2 Tim. 1 :9; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-6; John 6:44.

Chapter 11: Of Justification

1. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in his death for their whole and sole righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God.

(Romans 3:24; Romans 8:30; Romans 4:5-8; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:30, 31; Romans 5:17-19; Philippians 3:8, 9; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Romans 5:17)

2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

(Romans 3:28; Galatians 5:6; James 2:17, 22, 26)

3. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of himself in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf; yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

(Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Isaiah 53:5, 6; Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26; Ephesians 1:6,7; Ephesians 2:7)

4. God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in time due actually apply Christ unto them.

(Galatians 3:8; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Timothy 2:6; Romans 4:25; Colossians 1:21,22; Titus 3:4-7)

7. Justification

Those whom God effectually calls, he also freely justifies by pardoning their sins and by accounting and accepting them as righteous. This he does, not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself but by imputing Christ's active obedience in his life unto the whole law, and passive obedience in his death for their complete and only righteousness.

Faith, receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the sole instrument of justification.

Rom. 3:24; 8:30; 4:5-8; Eph. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Rom. 5:17-19; Phil. 3:8-9; Eph. 2:8-10; Rom. 3:28.

Christ by his obedience and death has fully discharged the debt of all who are justified; and did by the sacrifice of himself – undergoing in their stead the penalty due to them – make a proper, real and full satisfaction to God's justice on their behalf.

5. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified, and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure; and in that condition they have not usually the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

(Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:7, 9; John 10:28; Psalms 89:31-33; Psalms 32:5; Psalms 51; Matthew 26:75)

6. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.

(Galatians 3:9; Romans 4:22-24)

Believers, being justified, have a standing in Christ which cannot alter, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure and so mar their state, losing the light of his countenance until sin is confessed and pardon assured through the continuing forgiveness of God.

Heb. 10:14; 1 Pet. 1 :18-19; Isa. 53:5-6; Rom. 3:24-26; 1 John 4:10; John 10:28; Psa. 89:31-33; 32:5; 51; Mat. 26:75; 6:12; 1 John 1 :7-9.

Chapter 12: Of Adoption

All those that are justified, God vouchsafed, in and for the sake of his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a Father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

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

8. Adoption

God undertakes, in and for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ, to confer the grace of adoption on all those who are justified. In this way they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges, of the children of God. They have his name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are entitled and enabled to call God, Father. They are pitied, protected, provided for, and disciplined by him as by a father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

Eph. 1 :5; Gal. 4:4-5; John 1 :12; Rom. 8:17; 2 Cor. 6:17-1 Rev. 3:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal; 4:6; Eph. 2:18; Psa. 103:13; Prov. 14:26; 1 Pet. 5:7; Heb. 12:6; Isa. 54:8-9; Lam. 3:31; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 1 :14; 6:12.

Chapter 13: Of Sanctification

1. They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also farther sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them;

the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

(Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5, 6; John 17:17; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23; Romans 6:14; Galatians 5:24; Colossians 1:11; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14)

2. This sanctification is throughout the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

(1 Thessalonians 5:23; Romans 7:18, 23; Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11)

3. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in His Word hath prescribed them.

(Romans 7:23; Romans 6:14; Ephesians 4:15, 16; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 7:1)

9. Sanctification

Those who are united to Christ

are sanctified in him. The work of sanctification in believers is, however, carried on through Christ's Word and the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. The effective ground of this sanctification is the blood of the covenant shed by Christ for his Church.

1 Cor. 1:2 and 30; Heb. 2:11; John 17:17; Eph. 3:16-19; 5:25-27; Heb. 9:13-14; 10:10 and 14 and 29.

Believers are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. As responsible beings they ought, through the Holy Spirit, to put to death the deeds of the body and, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; yet in this life they are never completely freed from the corruption of sin and from this corruption there arise a continual warfare between the flesh and the spirit.

Nevertheless through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ

the new nature does overcome and so believers grow in grace, perfect holiness in the fear of God, pressing after a heavenly life, in obedience to all the commands of Christ.

Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5; Titus 2:12; Rom. 7:18 and 23; Gal. 17; 1 Pet. 2:11; Rom. 6:14; 7:22-25; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 P et. 3:18; 2 Cor. 7:1.

THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

1. Conversion

WE BELIEVE that conversion results from effectual calling, and is the state in which the new nature implanted in regeneration becomes active, so that the called persons are consciously involved in salvation, and turn to God.

Conversion always includes the vital elements of repentance and saving faith.

Chapter 15: Of Repentance Unto Life and Salvation

1. Such of the elect as are converted at riper years, having sometime lived in the state of nature, and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, God in their effectual calling giveth them repentance unto life.

(Titus 3:2-5)

2. Whereas there is none that doth good and sinneth not, and the best of men may, through the power and deceitfulness of their corruption dwelling in them, with the prevalency of temptation, fall into great sins and provocations; God hath, in the covenant of grace, mercifully provided that believers so sinning and falling be renewed through repentance unto salvation.

(Ecclesiastes 7:20; Luke 22:31, 32)

3. This saving repentance is an evangelical grace, whereby a person, being by the Holy Spirit made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth, by faith in Christ, humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrency, praying for pardon and strength of grace, with a purpose and endeavour, by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things.

(Zechariah 12:10; Acts 11:18; Ezekiel 36:31; 2 Corinthians 7:11; Psalms 119:6; Psalms 119:128)

4. As repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, upon the account of the body of death, and the motions thereof, so it is every man's duty to repent of his particular known sins particularly.

(Luke 19:8; 1 Timothy 1:13, 15)

Repentance:

God commands all men everywhere to repent.

True repentance is a Spirit-wrought change both of mind and will, which brings a personal conviction of sin, a true sorrow for it and a turning from it. This repentance is experienced in different ways and at different times in the lives of the children of God, and increases in depth as the Holy Spirit reveals some fresh aspect of the corruptions of human nature.

Repentance is not necessarily and exclusively sorrow for particular sins committed by the individual, nor is it only remorse. It is the continuing work of the Holy Spirit leading to Christ, creating a consciousness of the sinfulness of the heart and life, and of failure to reach God's perfect standard.

Acts 17:30; 1 Thess. 1 :9-10; Acts 20:21; 26:16-18; Isa. 6:5; Luke 18:13; 2 Cor. 7:10.

5. Such is the provision which God hath made through Christ in the covenant of grace for the preservation of believers unto salvation; that although there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; yet there is no sin so great that it shall bring damnation on them that repent; which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary.

(Romans 6:23; Isaiah 1:16-18 Isaiah 55:7)

Chapter 14: Of Saving Faith

1. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word; by which also, and by the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, prayer, and other means appointed of God, it is increased and strengthened.

(2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 10:14, 17; Luke 17:5; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:32)

2. By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word for the authority of God himself, and also apprehendeth an excellency therein above all other writings and all things in the world, as it bears forth the glory of God in his attributes, the excellency of Christ in his nature and offices, and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in his workings and operations: and so is enabled to cast his soul upon the truth thus believed; and also acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come; but the principal acts of saving faith have immediate relation to Christ, accepting, receiving, and resting upon him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

(Acts 24:14; Psalms 27:7-10; Psalms 119:72; 2 Timothy 1:12; John 14:14; Isaiah 66:2; Hebrews 11:13; John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Galatians 2:20; Acts 15:11)

3. This faith, although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or strong, yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it, as is all other saving grace, from the faith and common grace of temporary believers; and therefore, though it may be many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.

(Hebrews 5:13, 14; Matthew 6:30; Romans 4:19, 20; 2 Peter 1:1; Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4, 5; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Colossians 2:2; Hebrews 12:2)

Saving Faith:

Faith, whereby the children of God come to trust in Christ to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Holy Spirit, and is commonly brought about by the ministry of the Word of God. Saving faith is the gracious gift of God bestowed upon the elect only, and this faith once given is never withdrawn, but the conscious enjoyment of it can be clouded by sin, by doubt, or by neglect of Bible reading, christian fellowship, and the ordinances of God's house.

John 1 :12; Acts 15:6-11; 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:8; 2 Tim 1:12.

Chapter 18: Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

1. Although temporary believers, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God and state of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

(Job 8:13, 14; Matthew 7:22, 23; 1 John 2:3; 1 John 3:14, 18, 19, 21, 24; 1 John 5:13; Romans 5:2, 5)

2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel; and also upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit unto which promises are made, and on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God; and, as a fruit thereof, keeping the heart both humble and holy.

(Hebrews 6:11, 19; Hebrews 6:17, 18; 2 Peter 1:4, 5, 10, 11; Romans 8:15, 16; 1 John 3:1-3)

3. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of means, attain thereunto: and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; -so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

(Isaiah 50:10; Psalms 88; Psalms 77:1-12; 1 John 4:13; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Romans 5:1, 2, 5; Romans 14:17; Psalms 119:32; Romans 6:1,2; Titus 2:11, 12, 14)

4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light, yet are they never destitute of the seed of God and

2. Assurance

Those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus and love him in sincerity, and who endeavour to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are, by grace, the children of God and are in a state of eternal blessing.

1 John 2:1-3; 3:14-24; 5:13; Rom. 5:2 and 5; 8:14-16; Heb. 10:22.

This certainty is clearly taught in the Scriptures and is based upon an understanding of the saving work of Christ, wherein the believer trusts; and it is further confirmed by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. It results in humility and a desire for holiness and fills the heart of the believer with deep joy and peace, and gives sacred purpose to his life and expectation of the life come.

Rom. 8:1 and 31-32; 1 John 3:1-3.

Normally faith in Christ, as including trust, carries with it a sense of security, but this is not experienced to the same degree by every believer.

The believer may also displease God and grieve the Holy Spirit, and so the comfort of assurance may be impaired.

life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren,
that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty out of
which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance
may in due time be revived, and by the which, in the
meantime, they are preserved from utter despair.

(Canticles 5:2, 3, 6; Psalms 51:8, 12, 14; Psalms 116:11; Psalms 77:7, 8; Psalms
31:22; Psalms 30:7; 1 John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Psalms 42:5, 11; Lamentations
3:26-31)

The development of assurance is brought about the
Holy Spirit as the fruit of reflection and growth in
grace. It is, therefore, the duty of the believer to give
all diligence to make his calling and election sure, so
that he may live humbly and happily as one of
God's children.

Mat. 6:30; Psa. 42:1-5; 73:1-17; Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 :10; 2
Cor. 6:14-18.

Chapter 16: Of Good Works

1. Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his Holy Word, and not such as without the warrant thereof are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intentions.

(Micah 6:8; Hebrews 13:21; Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13)

2. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that having their fruit unto holiness they may have the end eternal life.

(James 2:18, 22; Psalms 116:12, 13; 1 John 2:3, 5; 2 Peter 1:5-11; Matthew 5:16; 1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Peter 2:15; Philippians 1:11; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 6:22)

3. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ; and that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is necessary an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; yet they are not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

(John 15:4, 5; 2 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 2:13; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Isaiah 64:7)

4. They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do.

(Job 9:2, 3; Galatians 5:17; Luke 17:10)

5. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants; and because as they are good they proceed from his Spirit, and as they are wrought by us they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's punishment.

(Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 4:6; Galatians 5:22, 23; Isaiah 64:6; Psalms 143:2)

6. Yet notwithstanding the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him; not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unrepvable in God's sight, but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

(Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5; Matthew 25:21, 23; Hebrews 6:10)

7. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God, and yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God.

(2 Kings 10:30; 1 Kings 21:27, 29; Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4, 6; 1 Corinthians 13:1; Matthew 6:2, 5; Amos 5:21, 22; Romans 9:16; Titus 3:5; Job 21:14, 15; Matthew 25:41-43)

Chapter 17: Of The Perseverance of the Saints

1. Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence he still begets and nourisheth in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon; notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet he is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraven upon the palm of his hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity.

(John 10:28, 29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 John 2:19; Psalms 89:31, 32; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Malachi 3:6)

2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with him, the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

(Romans 8:30 Romans 9:11, 16; Romans 5:9, 10; John 14:19; Hebrews 6:17, 18; 1 John 3:9; Jeremiah 32:40)

3. Perseverance

Those whom God has regenerated and effectually called into the blessings of his grace can neither totally nor finally fall away, but they shall be graciously preserved throughout life here on earth and be eternally saved.

John 10:28-29; 2 Tim. 2:19.

This blessing of the eternal security of every true believer is based upon God's purpose and power, and not upon the free will and good works of the believer.

It might equally be termed "the preservation of the saints", and may be defined as that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart, is continued and brought to completion. It is because God never forsakes his work that believers endure to the end, yet the believer is to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, remembering that the Lord has said: "he that endureth to the end shall be saved".

Rom. 8:28-30 and 38-39; 5:8-10; Phil. 1:6; Heb. 6:17-18; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; Phil. 2:11-13; Mat. 10:22

3. And though they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves, yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.

(Matthew 26:70, 72, 74; Isaiah 64:5, 9; Ephesians 4:30; Psalms 51:10, 12; Psalms 32:3, 4; 2 Samuel 12:14; Luke 22:32, 61, 62)

Chapter 20: Of the Gospel, and of the Extent of the Grace Thereof

1. The covenant of works being broken by sin, and made unprofitable unto life, God was pleased to give forth the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling the elect, and begetting in them faith and repentance; in this promise the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and [is] therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.

(Genesis 3:15; Revelation 13:8)

2. This promise of Christ, and salvation by him, is revealed only by the Word of God; neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace by him, so much as in a general or obscure way; much less that men destitute of the revelation of Him by the promise or gospel, should be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance.

(Romans 1:17; Romans 10:14,15,17; Proverbs 29:18; Isaiah 25:7; Isaiah 60:2, 3)

3. The revelation of the gospel unto sinners, made in divers times and by sundry parts, with the addition of promises and precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the nations and persons to whom it is granted, is merely of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God; not being annexed by virtue of any promise to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received without it, which none ever did make, or can do so; and therefore in all ages, the preaching of the gospel has been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent or straitening of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God.

(Psalms 147:20; Acts 16:7; Romans 1:18-32)

4. Although the gospel be the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and is, as such, abundantly sufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in trespasses may be born again, quickened or regenerated, there is moreover necessary an effectual insuperable work of the Holy Spirit upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life; without which no other means will effect their conversion unto God.

(Psalms 110:3; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 1:19, 20; John 6:44; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6)

Chapter 21: Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

1. The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel, consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the rigour and curse of the law, and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the fear and sting of death, the victory of the grave, and ever- lasting damnation: as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto Him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love and willing mind.

All which were common also to believers under the law for the substance of them; but under the New Testament the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of a ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

(Galatians 3:13; Galatians 1:4; Acts 26:18; Romans 8:3; Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 8:15; Luke 1:73-75; 1 John 4:18; Galatians 3:9, 14; John 7:38, 39; Hebrews 10:19-21)

2. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or not contained in it. So that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.

(James 4:12; Romans 14:4; Acts 4:19, 29; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:20, 22, 23; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 1:24)

3. They who upon pretence of Christian liberty do practice any sin, or cherish any sinful lust, as they do thereby pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction, so they wholly 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 before Him, all the days of our lives.

(Romans 6:1, 2; Galatians 5:13; 2 Peter 2:18, 21)

Chapter 23: Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

1. A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein the person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgement, solemnly calleth God to witness what he sweareth, and to judge him according to the truth or falseness thereof.

(Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 10:20; Jeremiah 4:2; 2 Chronicles 6:22, 23)

2. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear; and therein it is to be used, with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred; yet as in matter of weight and moment, for confirmation of truth, and ending all strife, an oath is warranted by the word of God; so a lawful oath being imposed by lawful authority in such matters, ought to be taken.

(Matthew 5:34, 37; James 5:12; Hebrews 6:16; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Nehemiah 13:25)

3. Whosoever taketh an oath warranted by the Word of God, ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he knoweth to be truth; for that by rash, false, and vain oaths, the Lord is provoked, and for them this land mourns.

(Leviticus 19:12; Jeremiah 23:10)

4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation.

(Psalms 24:4) (Ps. 24:4)

5. A vow, which is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone, is to be made and performed with all religious care and faithfulness; but popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

(Psalms 76:11; Genesis 28:20-22; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9; Ephesians 4:28; Matthew 19:11)

Chapter 26: Of the Church

1. The catholic or universal church, which (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

(Hebrews 12:23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:10, 22, 23; Ephesians 5:23, 27, 32)

5. In the execution of this power wherewith he is so intrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the world unto himself, through the ministry of his word, by his Spirit, those that are given unto him by his Father, that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his word. Those thus called, he commandeth to walk together in particular societies, or churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship, which he requireth of them in the world.

(John 10:16; John 12:32; Matthew 28:20; Matthew 18:15-20)

12. ...all believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do...

(1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15)

7. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind declared in his word, he hath given all that power and authority, which is in any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe; with commands and rules for the due and right exerting, and executing of that power.

(Matthew 18:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 5:13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8)

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, order or government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner; neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

(Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 2:2-9)

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

1. The Nature of the Church

WE BELIEVE that the Universal Church is the innumerable company of God's elect in every age, who have been, are, or will be called out of the power of Satan to God, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and redeemed from sin through the blood of Christ. This Church will endure to the end, and will be complete and perfect in the day of Christ.

Mat. 16:18; John 17:24; Eph. 3:14-15; Acts 2:47; 26:18 Eph. 5:25-27; Phil. 1:6; Col. 1:12-14; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 7:9-17.

It is the duty of all believers, walking in the fear of the Lord, to unite with local churches, for their own sanctification, and the maintenance of gospel witness.

Such churches, having the presence of Christ as head, are responsible to him for their own administration, and in this respect are independent of every other form of control, whether of Church or State. They have the fulness of God, and to them is committed the stewardship of the Gospel, the defence of the truth, the discipline of disorderly members, the appointment of officers, and the administration of the ordinances.

Mat. 18:15-20; Eph. 1 :22-23; Acts 13:1-4; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thes 3:6; 1 John 4:1; Rev. 2 and 3.

Christ is the appointed head of the church, his authority never being delegated to men, but communicated to the church by his Holy Spirit.

compare & contrast 1689 ch 20

The church seeks, not merely to discover the opinion of the majority of the members, but rather through prayer and fellowship to know the mind of the Lord.

Mat. 28:18-20; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1 :22-23; Acts 2:1-4 and 41-47; 13:1-4; 15:28-31; 1 Cor. 5:4-5; Eph. 4:8-13.

The Church of Christ has been put in trust with the Gospel of the grace of God, and it is its solemn responsibility to go into all the world and proclaim that Gospel to every creature.

Mat. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; 1 Thess. 2:4.

2. The Local Church and its Worship

2. All persons throughout the world, professing the faith of the gospel, and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any errors everting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation, are and may be called visible saints; and of such ought all particular congregations to be constituted.

(1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 11:26; Romans 1:7; Ephesians 1:20-22)

6. The members of these churches are saints by calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto that call of Christ; and do willingly consent to walk together, according to the appointment of Christ; giving up themselves to the Lord, and one to another, by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel.

(Romans. 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 5:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 9:13)

The church is maintained and increased as the Lord adds to its number those who are being saved. The local church should be composed of those who are subjects of divine grace, exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, and hold the apostles' doctrine.

Acts 2:47; Rom. 14:1; 1 Thess. 1 :5-6.

Chapter 22: Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

1. The light of nature shews that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is just, good and doth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.

(Jeremiah 10:7; Mark 12:33; Deuteronomy 12:32; Exodus 20:4-6)

2. Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creatures; and since the fall, not without a mediator, nor in the mediation of any other but Christ alone. (Matthew 4:9, 10; John 6:23; Matthew 28:19; Romans 1:25; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10; John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5)

3. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one part of natural worship, is by God required of all men. But that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, according to his will; with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, in a known tongue.

(Psalms 95:1-7; Psalms 65:2; John 14:13, 14; Romans 8:26; 1 John 5:14; 1 Corinthians 14:16, 17)

We believe that all men should serve and fear God, but that true worship, springing from the hearts of the redeemed, must be with understanding, reverence, humility, faith, love and submission, through Christ the only mediator, and by the Spirit, to the Father. It is the duty of the church to provide for the united worship of the Lord's people in praise, prayer, edification and the proclamation of the Gospel in the locality of the church, in the country and throughout the world. Failure to fulfil these duties brings the Lord's displeasure, but obedience is encouraged by the promise of the Lord's presence and blessing.

Ex. 20:4-6; Psa. 95:1-7; Jer. 10:7; Mark 12:33; Mat. 4:9-10; John 4:23-24; 14:6; Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor. 14:15-17; Eph. 2:18; 4:15-16; 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:1-5; 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2; Mat. 28:19-20; Rev. 2:5.

4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.

(1 Timothy 2:1, 2; 2 Samuel 7:29; 2 Samuel 12:21-23; 1 John 5:16)

5. The reading of the Scriptures, preaching, and hearing the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; as also the administration of baptism, and the Lord's supper, are all parts of religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to him, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear; moreover, solemn humiliation, with fastings, and thanksgivings, upon special occasions, ought to be used in an holy and religious manner.

(1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2; Luke 8:18; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26; Esther 4:16; Joel 2:12; Exodus 15:1-19, Psalms 107)

Chapter 28: Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution, appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver, to be continued in his church to the end of the world.

(Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26)

2. These holy appointments are to be administered by those only who are qualified and thereunto called, according to the commission of Christ.

(Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 4:1)

3. The Ordinances

We recognise two ordinances, so called because ordained or established by Christ's authority, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

These ordinances are to be administered by those appointed by the church, and are to continue until the end of the world.

Mat. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

Chapter 29: Of Baptism

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ,

to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.

(Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:4)

2. Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.

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

3. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8:38)

4. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance. (Matthew 3:16; John 3:23)

Baptism

The ordinance of Baptism is to be administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The candidates in this ordinance express their separation from the world, and their identity with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection, and their devotion henceforth to him.

The ordinance is to be administered only to those who have exhibited repentance for sin and made a profession of their faith in Christ.

The ordinance is rightly administered by the total immersion of the candidate in water, this mode alone being scriptural and having reference to the burial and resurrection of Christ.

This ordinance is essential, not to salvation, but for obedience to the commandments of Christ, and for a full and complete profession of faith.

Rom. 6:4-6; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:5; Col. 2:12; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:41; Mat. 3:15, 16; Acts 8:38-39; Rom. 6:4; Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:44-48.

Chapter 30: Of the Lord's Supper

1. The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by him the same night wherein he was betrayed, to be observed in his churches, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth the sacrifice of himself in his death, confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other.

2. In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but only a memorial of that one offering up of himself by himself upon the cross, once for all; and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same. So that the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable, injurious to Christ's own sacrifice the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

(Hebrews 9:25, 26, 28; 1 Corinthians 11:24; Matthew 26:26, 27)

3. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use, and to take and break the bread; to take the cup, and, they communicating also themselves, to give both to the communicants.

(1 Corinthians 11:23-26, etc.)

4. The denial of the cup to the people, worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this ordinance, and to the institution of Christ.

(Matthew 26:26-28; Matthew 15:9; Exodus 20:4, 5)

5. The outward elements in this ordinance, duly set apart to the use ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ, albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.

(1 Corinthians 11:27; 1 Corinthians 11:26-28)

The Lord's Supper

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is regularly to be observed as a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ, and an expression of the inherent unity of the Church as one body in Christ, and as a means strengthening the faith of the believer.

It is in no sense a sacrifice, nor the continuation of the sacrifice of Calvary.

The administration of the ordinance involves the sharing of bread and wine, both of which are to be received by the communicants,

and are symbols of the body and blood of Christ. At no time during the course of the administration, or because of the administration, does any change of nature take place in the bread or the wine, which the communicants are themselves to take and to eat or drink.

6. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood, commonly called transubstantiation, by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the ordinance, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries.

(Acts 3:21; Luke 24:6, 39; 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25)

7. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death; the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally, but spiritually present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.

(1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

8. All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against him, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto; yea, whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themselves.

(2 Corinthians 6:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 11:29; Matthew 7:6)

This ordinance is a means of grace through the spiritual presence of Christ, apprehended by faith in the heart of the believer. Those worthily taking part feed upon Christ crucified and all the benefits of his death;

the body and blood of Christ being spiritually present to the faith of the believer,

as the elements themselves are to the outward senses.

Those who partake unworthily sin against Christ and are guilty of offence against the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themselves.

We believe the administration of this ordinance is to be restricted to baptised believers in the New Testament sense of those words, and such restriction is signified by the term "Strict Communion". Each local church applies this principle as it deems right and consistent in its administration of the Lord's Supper.

1 Cor. 11 :26; Heb. 10:12; 1 Cor. 11 :27-30 and 23-25; Luke 22:19-20; Mat. 26:26-27; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:29; Acts 2:41-46; Compare Acts 18:8 with 1 Cor. 10:16-17.

Chapter 27: Of the Communion of Saints

1. All saints that are united to Jesus Christ, their head, by his Spirit, and faith, although they are not made thereby one person with him, have fellowship in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory; and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each others gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, in an orderly way, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

(1 John 1:3; John 1:16; Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:5, 6; Ephesians 4:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; Romans 1:12; 1 John 3:17, 18; Galatians 6:10)

2. Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things according to their several abilities, and necessities; which communion, according to the rule of the gospel, though especially to be exercised by them, in the relation wherein they stand, whether in families, or churches, yet, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all the household of faith, even all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus; nevertheless their communion one with another as saints, doth not take away or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods and possessions.

(Hebrews 10:24, 25; Hebrews 3:12, 13; Acts 11:29, 30; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Corinthians 12:14-27; Acts 5:4; Ephesians 4:28)

4. The Responsibilities of Church Members

Members of churches are required first to give themselves to the Lord and then to one another by the will of God.

They are not to forsake the assembling of the church for public worship, fellowship in prayer and the Lord's Table, but are to seek the spiritual prosperity of other members, and to provide for the material relief of needy members.

Members are also required to support and to contribute regularly and sacrificially to the Lord's work at home and overseas through the funds of the church.

Acts 11 :29-30; 1 Cor. 12; 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; Eph. 4:28; 1 Thess. 5:14; Gal. 6:10; Heb. 3:12-13; 10:24-25; 1 John 3:17-18.

(Ch 26) 8. A particular church, gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members; and the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church (so called and gathered), for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power or duty, which he intrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are bishops or elders, and deacons.

(Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1)

26/10. The work of pastors being constantly to attend the service of Christ, in his churches, in the ministry of the word and prayer, with watching for their souls, as they that must give an account to Him; it is incumbent on the churches to whom they minister, not only to give them all due respect, but also to communicate to them of all their good things according to their ability, so as they may have a comfortable supply, without being themselves entangled in secular affairs; and may also be capable of exercising hospitality towards others; and this is required by the law of nature, and by the express order of our Lord Jesus, who hath ordained that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

(Acts 6:4; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17, 18; Galatians 6:6, 7; 2 Timothy 2:4; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Corinthians 9:6-14)

26/9. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto the office of bishop or elder in a church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the church itself; and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands of the eldership of the church, if there be any before constituted therein; and of a deacon that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by prayer, and the like imposition of hands.

(Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; Acts 6:3, 5, 6)

5. Church Officers and their Appointment

We believe that the ascended Lord bestows gifts upon men for the maintenance of his work on earth, and that the administration of local churches is to be by elders and deacons.

Among the elders are those whom we call pastors, and these are set apart for prayer and the study of the Word,

and should, so far as is possible, be adequately maintained in material necessities, so as to be disentangled from the cares of a secular calling.

Elders are responsible for the spiritual ministrations of the church, watching over the souls of the members as those who must give account. It is the duty of the members to support their elders by prayer, and to submit to their admonitions in the Lord.

Deacons are responsible for the business and secular affairs of the church, which are to be administered with spiritual grace.

Acts 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Eph. 4:7-12; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Heb. 13:17; 1 Cor. 9:6-14; Gal. 6:6-7; 1 Tim. 5:17-18.

The appointment of elders (including pastors) and deacons, for office within the local church, and of preachers and missionaries for the work of evangelism is the responsibility of the local church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Lord's ordination is recognised both by the experience of the inward conviction, and by the approval of the church observing the possession of those gifts and graces required by Scripture for the office concerned. The one so called should be set apart by the prayer of the whole church.

Acts 6:3-6; 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14; 1 Pet. 4:10-11; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Acts 13:1-4.

26/11. Although it be incumbent on the bishops or pastors of the churches, to be instant in preaching the word, by way of office, yet the work of preaching the word is not so peculiarly confined to them but that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved and called by the church, may and ought to perform it. (Acts 11:19-21; 1 Peter 4:10, 11)

12. As all believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do; so all that are admitted unto the privileges of a church, are also under the censures and government thereof, according to the rule of Christ.

(1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15)

26/13. No church members, upon any offence taken by them, having performed their duty required of them towards the person they are offended at, ought to disturb any church-order, or absent themselves from the assemblies of the church, or administration of any ordinances, upon the account of such offence at any of their fellow members, but to wait upon Christ, in the further proceeding of the church.

(Matthew 18:15-17; Ephesians 4:2, 3)

6. The Discipline of the Local Church

Believers are admitted through baptism into all the privileges of the local church and also into its discipline, being bound by prayer and endeavour to maintain unity and peace. Members who persist in denial of fundamental doctrine or who, by their ungodly conduct, bring dishonour on the church ought to be disciplined.

In matters of personal offence members should first seek reconciliation with one another privately, if this fails the elders of the church should be consulted, and if need be the matter should be submitted to the judgment of the church itself. Believers should not take brothers in Christ to the civil law, nor should they disturb the peace of the church over personal disputes.

All discipline in the church should be exercised with love and patience, as well as in accordance with the teaching and examples of the Word, and the end in view must always be the repentance and reconciliation of the offender, and the purity and blessing of the church.

Mat. 18:15-20; 2 Cor. 2:1-11; Eph. 4:2-3; 1 Cor. 6:1-7; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Acts 2:41; 9:18-25; Gal 6:1, 2.

7. Inter-Church Relationships

26/14. As each church, and all the members of it, are bound to pray continually for the good and prosperity of all the churches of Christ, in all places, and upon all occasions to further it (every one within the bounds of their places and callings, in the exercise of their gifts and graces) so the churches (when planted by the providence of God so as they may enjoy opportunity and advantage for it) ought to hold communion among themselves, for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification.

(Ephesians 6:18; Psalms 122:6; Romans 16:1, 2; 3 John 8-10)

26/15. In cases of difficulties or differences, either in point of doctrine or administration, wherein either the churches in general are concerned, or any one church, in their peace, union, and edification; or any member or members of any church are injured, in or by any proceedings in censures not agreeable to truth and order: it is according to the mind of Christ, that many churches holding communion together, do, by their messengers, meet to consider, and give their advice in or about that matter in difference, to be reported to all the churches concerned; howbeit these messengers assembled, are not intrusted with any church-power properly so called; or with any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any censures either over any churches or persons; or to impose their determination on the churches or officers. (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23, 25; 2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 John 4:1)

26/3. The purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan; nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.

(1 Corinthians 5; Revelation 2; Revelation 3; Revelation 18:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12; Matthew 16:18; Psalms 72:17; Psalm 102:28; Revelation 12:17)

Churches, likeminded in biblical faith and practice, have a responsibility to manifest their oneness in Christ in mutual fellowship and conference.

Acts 15:1-31; Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 6:14-16; 8 and 9; 1 Cor 16:1-3.

We believe that the division of the professing Church on earth into sections results largely from the departure of many from the truth of the Gospel, and in part from differences of biblical interpretation, temperament and culture. Those who are born again are bound together in an unbreakable spiritual unity in Christ.

Schisms arising from tradition and prejudice grieve the Holy Spirit and are not to be tolerated. Visible unity is desirable, but cannot be achieved by amalgamation of denominations, by joining true believers with those who are unregenerate, or by any means that compromises the evangelical faith.

Mat. 15:1-9; John 10:16; 17:20-23; Acts 15:36-41; 20:29-30; 1 Cor. 3:1-4; 2 Cor. 2:17; 11:1-5; Eph. 4:1-16 and 19-22; 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Chapter 19: Of the Law of God

1. God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

(Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:10, 12)

2. The same law that was first written in the heart of man continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall, and was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables, the four first containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man.

(Romans 2:14, 15; Deuteronomy 10:4)

4. To them also he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any now by virtue of that institution; their general equity only being of moral use.

(1 Corinthians 9:8-10)

5. The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof, and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it; neither doth Christ in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.

(Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8, 10-12; James 2:10, 11; Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 3:31)

6. Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned,

7. Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it,

1. The Law of God

WE BELIEVE that God has placed Adam and all his descendants under his holy law. By this law man is required both to love the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength and to love his neighbour as himself.

Following the fall, God elaborated these two principles in ten commandments setting out man's duty towards God and towards his fellows.

Rom. 2:13-15; Mark 12:28-31; Ex. 20:1-17

This law is binding upon the saved and the unsaved alike,

but the motive of its observance by the christian will be love to Christ who has redeemed him from its curse.

Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 2:20.

The christian is not justified by keeping the law, but he strives to do so because it comes to him with the authority of God, whom he loves; the man who dies unsaved is condemned by it. Its requirements are essentially spiritual, and no fallen man can fully comply with the law's demands. No such man can therefore by endeavouring to keep the law save his own soul.

One man alone, the Lord Jesus Christ, has fulfilled every requirement of the law. This he has done in his own person in the place of his people.

James 2:8-12; Mat. 5:17-19; Rom. 3:31; 7:14; Gal. 2:16; Rom. 10:4; Gal. 3:13.

6 cont) yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, in that as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their natures, hearts, and lives, so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against, sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ and the perfection of his obedience; it is likewise of use to the regenerate to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to shew what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse and unallayed rigour thereof. The promises of it likewise shew them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, though not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works; so as man's doing good and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law and not under grace.

(Romans 6:14; Galatians 2:16; Romans 8:1; Romans 10:4; Romans 3:20; Romans 7:7, etc; Romans 6:12-14; 1 Peter 3:8-13)

7. cont. the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

(Galatians 3:21; Ezekiel 36:27)

3. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties, all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are, by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end abrogated and taken away.

(Hebrews 10:1; Colossians 2:17; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Colossians 2:14, 16, 17; Ephesians 2:14, 16)

Among the purposes of the law are these:

(a) To restrain the unregenerate from sin and to show what the consequences of their sin must be.

(b) To convince the sinner of the true nature of sin and of his inability to resist it by keeping the law; to strip him of all self-confidence and condemn him, so compelling him to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only way of escape from his predicament.

(c) To show the believer the will of God and his duty to his fellows; also to remind him that, although he has been saved by grace, he still has to contend with a most sinful nature, and therefore daily needs both the aid of the Lord Jesus Christ and the perfection of his obedience.

Rom. 3:20; 7:7; Gal. 3:10-12 and 23-24; Rom. 7:14-25; 8:1-4; Heb. 4:14; James 2:10, 11; 1 John 1:7-10.

It is one of the functions of the Holy Spirit to make the believer able and willing to do that which the law of God requires of him.

In Old Testament times God placed the people of Israel under a ceremonial law which pointed forward to Christ; this ceremonial law, however, ceased to have effect at his coming.

Ezek. 36:25-27; Phil. 2:13; Heb. 10:1-10.

Chapter 22: Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

7. As it is the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God, so by his Word, in a positive moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's day: and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.

(Exodus 20:8; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10)

8. The sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations, but are also taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

(Isaiah 58:13; Nehemiah 13:15-22; Matthew 12:1-13)

2. The Lord's Day

We believe that God has set apart one day in seven and its observance is binding upon all men. It is to be kept holy and is designed also for man's benefit. The Church has a warrant to observe the first day of the week as the Lord's Day, because it is the day of our Lord's resurrection.

No detailed instructions are given in Scripture as to the way in which this day is to be kept, but ample allowance is made for works of mercy and necessity.

The day is to be used for rest from secular labour and worldly recreation, and for the occupation of the whole person in the worship and service of the Lord.

Ex. 20:8-11; Luke 4:16; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Rev 1:10.

3. Christian Behaviour

We believe the Scriptures teach that the christian faith is to be seen in its practical outworking between the believer and his fellow men. His words and deeds are to demonstrate the reality of his new life. He is justified by faith, and that faith will be seen in his works.

Christian behaviour is the maturing of the fruit of the Spirit as the believer learns more of the ways of God and man. The New Testament requires that due regard be given in public ministry to the exposition of the Gospel. In all his behaviour the christian will be motivated by the glory and fear of God and by loving obedience to the rule of Christ.

The believer's relationships to governments and men in general and to his fellow christians in particular are to manifest the Spirit of Christ. In his relationship with unbelievers the christian is to set an example of life and character in every respect even at the cost of personal suffering, thus glorifying God and both rebuking and instructing the ungodly.

James 2:14-26; John 15:1-8; 1 Tim. 2; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-25; Phil. 2:1-16.

4. The Christian Attitude to Material Things

Wealth and all material things justly obtained are to be received as God's gracious gifts, and to be used for worthy ends with a due sense of responsibility and stewardship.

For this reason and because of a deep desire to be just in all his dealings, the true christian should renounce all forms of gambling, the root of which is covetousness.

Gen. 1 :29, 30; 1 Chron. 29:13, 14; James 1 :17; Luke 12:15, 31; Matt. 25:14, 15; Matt. 7:12.

Chapter 24: Of the Civil Magistrate

1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him, over the people, for his own glory and the public good; and to this end hath armed them with the power of the sword, for defence and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil doers.

(Romans 13:1-4)

3. Civil magistrates being set up by God for the ends aforesaid; subjection, in all lawful things commanded by them, ought to be yielded by us in the Lord, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake; and we ought to make supplications and prayers for kings and all that are in authority, that under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

(Romans 13:5-7; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2)

2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate when called there unto; in the management whereof, as they ought especially to maintain justice and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each kingdom and commonwealth, so for that end they may lawfully now, under the New Testament wage war upon just and necessary occasions.

(2 Samuel 23:3; Psalms 82:3, 4; Luke 3:14)

5. The Christian and the State

We believe that rulers are ordained by God for the orderly conduct of affairs in the world and the good of his Church, and that to this end he sets up rulers and removes them as it pleases him.

It is the duty of christians to obey those who have the rule over them in all matters consistent with the teaching of the Bible and to seek to live quiet, peaceable and honest lives. Christians are under an obligation to pray for their rulers.

A Christian may properly accept public office both in central and local government and play his part in the affairs of the nation in so far as such service may be consistent with his christian profession.

Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-17.

6. The Christian and his Work

We believe that all men physically able to do so are under an obligation to work to support themselves and their families and to give to those in need. That everyone whatever his sphere of responsibility is to perform his daily tasks in accordance with the Scripture “whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might”.

We further believe that relationships between staff and management are to be governed by the principles set out in the New Testament. Employees are to work conscientiously and honestly and employers are to be just and fair with their staff, both in the sight of God.

Gen. 3:19; 2 Thess. 3:10-12; Eph. 4:28; 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-25; 4:1; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 2:18; 2 Cor. 6:14-17.

Chapter 25: Of Marriage

1. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.

(Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:15; Matthew 19:5,6)

4. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity, forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful, by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife.

(Leviticus 18; Mark 6:18; 1 Corinthians 5:1)

2. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and the preventing of uncleanness.

(Genesis 2:18; Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9)

3. It is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord; and therefore such as profess the true religion, should not marry with infidels, or idolaters; neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresy.

(Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 4:3; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Nehemiah 13:25-27)

7. Marriage and Family Life

We believe that marriage is a union between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others, sealed by vows which make it life-long.

Marriage within the prohibited degrees as laid down in the Bible is forbidden.

God instituted the marriage relationship for the mutual help and comfort of husband and wife, the procreation of children and the prevention of immorality.

The sexual relationship is sacred and is not to be indulged promiscuously but only within the bonds of marriage. Sexual intercourse outside marriage, whether in contemplation of marriage or otherwise, is forbidden by the Bible, and is sin.

Christians should only marry believers and should seek to teach their children similar standards.

In all relationships the christian should exercise forgiveness and strive for reconciliation. Divorce otherwise than upon the ground of adultery is contrary to the teaching of the Bible.

We further believe that it is the duty and privilege of christian parents to rear their children in a disciplined and loving way; to see that their children acquire a thorough knowledge of the Bible from an early age and so to live that by their faith and example the true nature of the christian religion may become apparent to their children; and that children are to obey their parents in the same spirit.

Gen. 2:24; Mat. 19:5-6; Gen. 2:18; 19:1-28; Lev. 18:6-22; 20:14; Deut. 23:17; Acts 15:29; 1 Cor. 6:13-20; Gal. 5:19; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Cor. 7:2 and 9 and 39; Heb. 13:4; 2 Cor. 6:14; Mat. 19:9; Eph. 6:1-4; Prov. 22:6; 23:13-14; 29:15-17; Col. 3:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:15.

All forms of sexual perversion are forbidden by the Scriptures, and there is for the believer complete deliverance from these things through the power of Christ.

Lev. 18:3, 20-23; Rom. 1:26, 27; 1 Cor. 5:1-9.

Chapter 31: Of the State of Man after Death and Of the Resurrection of the Dead

1. The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and 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; besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

(Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6,8; Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 12:23; Jude 6, 7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23, 24)

1. The State of Man after Death

WE BELIEVE that the bodies of men after death return to their natural elements but their souls, being immortal, immediately return to God who gave them.

The souls of believers go immediately upon the death of the body to be with the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, where they wait for the redemption of their bodies. The souls of the unsaved are reserved in hell to the day of the last Judgment.

Holy Scripture knows of no such place as Purgatory or of any intermediate state.

Gen. 3:19; Eccles. 12:7; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; 2 Pet. 2:9; Luke 23:43; Rom. 8:23; Luke 16:23.

. At the last day, such of the saints as are found alive, shall not sleep, but be changed;

and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other; although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever.

(1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Job 19:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 15:42, 43)

3. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honour, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.

(Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; Philippians 3:21)

2. The Resurrection

At a time known only to God, the Lord Jesus Christ shall return to this earth in glory, bringing with Him the souls of the believers who have died. At this time the bodies of those believers who are still alive on earth shall be transformed instantaneously and without death into a condition of glorious incorruptibility, conformable to Christ's own glorious body.

The bodies of those believers who have died shall rise in like glorified condition and be reunited with their souls. All believers shall then, in their glorified bodies be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so be with Him for ever.

The bodies of the unsaved shall also be raised by the power of Christ.

1 Thess. 4:14-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Acts 24:14-15; John 5:28-29; Phil. 3:20-21.

Chapter 32: Of the Last Judgment

1. God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ; to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

(Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:10, 12; Matthew 25:32-46)

2. The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient; for then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards, in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast aside into everlasting torments, and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

(Romans 9:22, 23; Matthew 25:21, 34; 2 Timothy 4:8; Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity, so will he have the day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may ever be prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus; come quickly. Amen.

(2 Corinthians 5:10, 11; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-7; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; Revelation 22:20)

3. The Last Judgment

God has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ.

All mankind, being resurrected from the dead, shall stand before him and he shall separate his redeemed people from the ungodly. The earth as it is at present shall be no more, and the redeemed shall take their place, glorified in Christ's likeness, in the new heaven and the new earth, where God himself shall be with them and be their God for all eternity. The unsaved, who know not God and do not obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Thus will be seen the glory of God's mercy in the eternal salvation of all believers, and the glory of God's righteous judgment in the condemnation of the ungodly.

Acts 17:31; Mat. 25:31-32; 2 Pet. 3:10-11; Rev. 21:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:47-49; 1 John 3:2; 2 Thess. 1 :6-10; 1 Pet. 1 :3-5; 1 Thess. 4:16-18.

4. The Lord's Return

We believe in the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth. The precise time of his coming again and of the day of judgment is not revealed, in order that, in the long suffering of God, men may come to repentance and ever seek to be prepared.

All true believers in times of adversity find consolation in the prospect of their Lord's return, be it sooner or later, and the whole Church of Christ may ever pray: "Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

Mark 13:32; 2 Pet. 3:9-10; 1 Thess. 4:16-18; Rev. 22:20.