

BYLAWS
OF
REDEMPTION BIBLE CHURCH CASA GRANDE

The name of the organization is Redemption Bible Church Casa Grande. The IRS automatically recognizes churches as 501(c)(3) charitable organizations if they meet the IRS requirements, and this organization has agreed to do so by following these requirements. There is no need for churches to seek formal recognition from the IRS or submit annual information returns. The organization has not been formed for the making of any profit, or personal financial gain. The assets and income of the organization shall not be distributable to, or benefit the trustees, directors, or officers or other individuals. The assets and income shall only be used to promote corporate purposes as described below. Nothing contained herein, however, shall be deemed to prohibit the payment of reasonable compensation to employees and independent contractors for services provided for the benefit of the organization. This organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from federal income tax. The purpose of the organization is the following:

An Evangelical Christian Church

ARTICLE I
MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Meeting. An annual meeting shall be held once each calendar year for the purpose of electing or renewing or replacing Directing Elders (also known as Pastors) and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting. The annual meeting shall be held at the time and place designated by the Voting Church Members from time to time.

Section 2. Special Meetings. Special meetings maybe be requested by either the majority of the Directing Elders or by four or more of the Voting Church Members with at least one not being a relative of the same family. A special meeting of Voting Church Members is not required to be held at a geographic location if the meeting is held by means of the internet of other electronic communications technology in a manner pursuant to which the members have the opportunity to read or hear the proceedings substantially concurrent with the occurrence of the proceedings, note on matters submitted to the members, pose questions, and make comments.

Section 3. Notice. Written notice of all meetings shall be provided under this section or as otherwise required by law. The Notice shall state the place, date, and hour of meeting, and if for a special meeting, the purpose of the meeting. Such notice shall be mailed to all Voting Church Members of record at the address shown on the corporate books, at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Such notice shall be deemed effective when deposited in ordinary U.S. mail, properly addressed, with postage prepaid.

Section 4. Place of Meeting. Meetings shall be held at the organization's principal place of business unless otherwise stated in the notice. Unless the articles of incorporation or bylaws provide otherwise, the Voting Church Members may permit any or all Voting Church Members to participate in a regular or special meeting by, or conduct the meeting through the use of, any means of communication by which all Voting Church Members participating may simultaneously hear each other during this meeting. A Voting Church Members participating in a meeting by this means shall be deemed to be present in person at the meeting.

Section 5. Quorum. A majority of the Voting Church Members shall constitute at quorum at a meeting. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Voting Church Members may adjourn the meeting to another time without further notice. If a quorum is represented at an adjourned meeting, any business may be transacted that might have been transacted at the meeting as originally scheduled. The Voting Church Members present at a meeting represented by a quorum may continue to transact business until adjournment, even if the withdrawal of some Voting Church Members results in representation of less than a quorum.

Section 6. Informal Action. Any action required to be taken, or which may be taken, at a meeting, may be taken without a meeting and without prior notice if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, is signed by the Voting Church Members with respect to the subject matter of the vote.

ARTICLE II

DIRECTING ELDERS & VOTING CHURCH MEMBERS

Section 1. Number of Voting Church Members. Final authority shall reside in the Voting Church Members consisting of at least 5 Voting Church Members. The Directing Elders will also be listed among the Voting Church Members. This number may increase as new Voting Church Members are added by a majority of the current Voting Church Members. Voting Church Members must be those who have attended Redemption Bible Church for at least two years (unless they are a Founding Directing Elder), be at least 18 years of age or older, demonstrate a moral life that is the result of true faith in the Gospel, agree to the terms of the Redemption Bible Church Membership Covenant, and agree to participate in the majority of Voting Church

Member meetings. Voting Church Members are members for life unless they are removed on account of church disciplinary actions by the majority of other Voting Church Members.

Section 2. Election and Term of Office for Directing Elders. The Directing Elders shall be elected at an annual meeting when a vacancy arises or the need for an additional Directing Elder is required. Each Directing Elder shall serve a life term, subject to yearly review or disciplinary actions. Directing Elders shall have executive decision-making authority on behalf of the Voting Church Members. The decisions concerning general operations made by the Directing Elders shall not occur in secret (unless required by law), but with full transparency to all Voting Church Members. Directing Elders are also Voting Church Members unless they are removed by a majority of the other Voting Church Members.

Section 3. Quorum.A majority of directors shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4. Procedures. Whether it is a meeting of Voting Church Members or a meeting of the Directing Elders, the vote of a majority of those present at a properly called meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of that meeting, unless the vote of a greater number is required by law or by these by-laws for a particular resolution. The board of those meetings shall keep written minutes of its proceedings in its permanent records.

Section 5. Removal / Vacancies. A Directing Elder or Voting Church Member shall be subject to removal, with or without cause, at a meeting called for that purpose. Any vacancy that occurs within the board of Directing Elders, whether by death, resignation, removal or any other cause, may be filled by the Voting Church Members. A Directing Elder elected to fill a vacancy shall serve the remaining term of his or her predecessor, or until a successor has been elected and qualified.

Section 6. Committees. To the extent permitted by law, the Voting Church Members may appoint from its members a committee or committees, temporary or permanent, and designate the duties, powers and authorities of such committees.

ARTICLE III CORPORATE SEAL, EXECUTION OF INSTRUMENTS

The organization shall not have a corporate seal. All instruments that are executed on behalf of the organization which are acknowledged and which affect an interest in real estate shall be executed by the Directing Elders of the church. All other instruments executed by the

organization, including a release of mortgage or lien, may be executed by the Directing Elders of the church. Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this section, any written instrument may be executed by any officer(s) or agent(s) that are specifically designated by resolution of the Voting Church Members.

ARTICLE IV AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS

The bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed by the Voting Church Members by a majority of a quorum vote at any regular or special meeting. The text of the proposed change shall be distributed to all board members at least ten (10) days before the meeting.

ARTICLE V INDEMNIFICATION

Any director or officer who is involved in litigation by reason of his or her position as a director or officer of this organization shall be indemnified and held harmless by the organization to the fullest extent authorized by law as it now exists or may subsequently be amended (but, in the case of any such amendment, only to the extent that such amendment permits the organization to provide broader indemnification rights).

ARTICLE VI DISSOLUTION

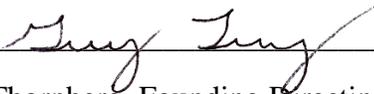
The organization may be dissolved only with authorization of its Voting Church Members given at a special meeting called for that purpose, and with the subsequent approval by no less than two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members. In the event of the dissolution of the organization, the assets shall be applied and distributed as follows:

All liabilities and obligations shall be paid, satisfied and discharged, or adequate provision shall be made therefore. Assets not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance to any other organization or individual shall be distributed, transferred, or conveyed, in trust or otherwise, to charitable and educational organization, organized as a non-profit of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, of a similar or like nature to this organization, as determined by the Voting Church Members.

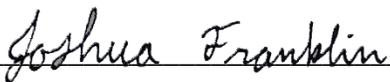
Certification

Gregory J Thornberg, Founding Directing Elder, and Joshua Franklin, Founding Directing Elder, certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the bylaws of the above-named organization, duly adopted by the initial Voting Church Members on October 27, 2020.

I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the bylaws of the above-named organization, duly adopted by the initial Voting Church Members on October 27, 2020.

By: 
Gregory J Thornberg, Founding Directing Elder

Date: 10-27-2020

By: 
Joshua Franklin, Founding Directing Elder

Date: 10-27-2020

APPENDIX 1

Redemption Bible Church - Membership Covenant

COVENANT

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We will rejoice at each others' happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

APPENDIX II

Redemption Bible Church Doctrinal Statement of Faith

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1. What We Believe About the Gospel

I. We believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the central message to be preached in every church. All teachings of Scripture are summed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ^[a] because all of Scripture--its promises, benefits, commands, and truths--points to Christ as its fulfillment^[b] or flows from the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a direct benefit of the work of Christ.^[c] The Gospel is the power of life,^[d] the way to communion with God,^[e] the doorway to enlightenment,^[f] the cause of our obedience,^[g] the means by which we receive the Holy Spirit,^[h] our source of adoption as children of God,^[i] the source of our lasting inheritance,^[j] and, in every way, the manner in which we fulfill our ultimate meaning in life--the glorifying of God.^[k] Therefore, every sermon preached must be grounded in the work of Jesus Christ by either pointing to Him or flowing from Him, otherwise it is not effective (or even Christian) preaching for the salvation of man and the glory of God.

[a] 2 Cor. 1:20 | [b] Luke 24:44 | [c] Rom 8:32 | [d] Rom 1:16 | [e] John 14:6 | [f] 1 Cor 2:12 | [g] Rom 1:5 | [h] Eph 1:13 | [i] Rom 8:15; Eph 1:5 | [j] Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 1:4 | [k] Ephesians 1:12; Ephesians 1:14; Philippians 1:11; 1 Peter 1:7

2. What We Believe About Scripture

I. Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence do display the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men without excuse,^[a] yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of His will, which is necessary for salvation.^[b] Therefore, it pleased the Lord, at various times, and in diverse manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare His will to His Church;^[c] and afterwards, 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 His sufficient and perfect words to writing.^[d] This makes the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary.^[e] Also, the former ways of God's revealing His will to His people through the prophets and Apostles have now ceased.^[f]

[a] Rom. 2:14, 15; Rom. 1:19, 20; Ps. 19:1, 2, 3; Rom. 1:32, with chap. 2:1. | [b] I Cor. 1:21; I Cor. 2:13, 14. | [c] Heb. 1:1. | [d] Prov. 22:19, 20, 21; Luke 1:3, 4; Rom. 15:4; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Isa. 8:19, 20. | [e] II Tim. 3:15; II Pet. 1:19. | [f] Heb. 1:1, 2.

II. The title of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God, belongs only to the books of the Old and New Testament, 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 Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Of the New Testament:

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's epistles of Romans, Corinthians I., Corinthians II., Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians I., Thessalonians II., To Timothy I., To Timothy II., To Titus, To Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, The Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second, and third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, and The Revelation of John.

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

^[g] Luke 16:29, 31; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 22:18, 19; II Tim. 3:16.

III. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are not part of the canon of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.^[h]

^[h] Luke 24:27, 44; Rom. 3:2; II Pet. 1:21.

IV. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but entirely upon God (who is truth itself) and is the ultimate author of Scripture. Scripture, therefore, is to be received because it is the Word of God.^[i]

^[i] II Pet. 1:19, 21; II Tim. 3:16; I John 5:9; I Thess. 2:13.

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture.^[k] And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, 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, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it does abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God. This said, our full persuasion and assurance of

the infallible truth and divine authority of Scripture, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.^[l]

^[k] I Tim. 3:15. | ^[l] I John 2:20, 27; John 16:13, 14; I Cor. 2:10, 11, 12; Isa. 59:21.

VI. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.^[m] 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:^[n] 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.^[o]

^[m] II Tim. 3:15, 16, 17; Gal. 1:8, 9; II Thess. 2:2. | ^[n] John 6:45, I Cor. 2:9 to 12. | ^[o] I Cor. 11:13, 14; I Cor. 14:26, 40.

VII. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all:^[p] yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly put forward and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary skills of man, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.^[q]

^[p] II Pet. 3:16. | ^[q] Psalm 119:105, 130.

VIII. 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 the authentic Scriptures;^[r] so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal to these original writings.^[s] But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right to them, and an interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them,^[t] therefore they are to be translated into the common and contemporary language of every nation to which they are sent and received,^[u] that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner;^[w] and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.^[x]

^[r] Matt. 5:18. | ^[s] Isa. 8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39, 46. | ^[t] John 5:39. | ^[u] I Cor. 14:6, 9, 11, 12, 24, 27, 28. | ^[w] Col. 3:16. | ^[x] Rom. 15:4.

IX. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself. This means that Scripture will always interpret other Scripture infallibly as, for example, the epistles do when

they cite and interpret the Old Testament. 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 and known by other places that speak more clearly.^[y]

^[y] II Pet. 1:20, 21; Acts 15:15, 16.

X. 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 Spirit speaking in the Scripture.^[z]

^[z] Matt. 22:29, 31; Eph. 2:20 with Acts 28:25.

3. What We Believe About God, and The Holy Trinity

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I. There is but one only,^[a] living, and true God:^[b] who is infinite in being and perfection,^[c] a most pure spirit,^[d] invisible,^[e] without body, parts,^[f] or changing passions,^[g] immutable,^[h] immense,^[i] eternal,^[k] incomprehensible,^[l] almighty,^[m] most wise,^[n] most holy,^[o] most free,^[p] most absolute,^[q] working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will,^[r] for His own glory;^[s] most loving,^[t] gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;^[u] the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him;^[w] and withal, most just and terrible in His judgments,^[x] hating all sin,^[y] and who will by no means clear the guilty.^[z]

^[a] Deut. 6:4; I Cor. 8:4, 6. | ^[b] I Thess. 1:9; Jer. 10:10. | ^[c] Job 11:7, 8, 9; Job 26:14. | ^[d] John 4:24. | ^[e] I Tim. 1:17. | ^[f] Deut. 4:15, 16; John 4:24, with Luke 24:39. | ^[g] Acts 14:11, 15. | ^[h] James 1:17; Mal. 3:6. | ^[i] I Kings 8:27; Jer. 23:23, 24. | ^[k] Ps. 90:2; I Tim. 1:17. | ^[l] Ps. 145:3. | ^[m] Gen. 17:1; Rev. 4:8. | ^[n] Rom. 16:27. | ^[o] Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8. | ^[p] Ps. 115:3. | ^[q] Exod. 3:14. | ^[r] Eph. 1:11. | ^[s] Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11:36. | ^[t] I John 4:8, 16. | ^[u] Exod. 34:6, 7. | ^[w] Heb. 11:6. | ^[x] Neh. 9:32, 33. | ^[y] Ps. 5:5, 6. | ^[z] Nah. 1:2, 3; Exod. 34:7.

II. God has all life,^[a] glory,^[b] goodness,^[c] blessedness,^[d] in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He has made,^[e] nor deriving any glory from them,^[f] 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;^[g] and has the most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleases.^[h] In His sight all things are open and manifest;^[i] His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature,^[k] so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain.^[l] He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands.^[m] To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or

obedience He is pleased to require of them.^[n]

^[a] John 5:26. | ^[b] Acts 7:2. | ^[c] Ps. 119:68. | ^[d] I Tim. 6:15; Rom. 9:5. | ^[e] Acts 17:24, 25. | ^[f] Job 22:2, 3. | ^[g] Rom 11:36. | ^[h] Rev. 4:11; I Tim. 6:15; Dan. 4:25, 35. | ^[i] Heb. 4:13. | ^[k] Rom. 11:33, 34; Ps. 147:5. | ^[l] Acts 15:18; Ezek. 11:5. | ^[m] Ps. 145:17; Rom. 7:12. | ^[n] Rev. 5:12, 13, 14.

III. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.^[o] The Father's existence is from none, neither begotten, nor proceeding: the Son is eternally begotten of the Father:^[p] the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.^[q]

^[o] I John 5:7; Matt. 3:16, 17; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14. | ^[p] John 1:14, 18. | ^[q] John 15:26; Gal. 4:6.

4. What We Believe About God's Eternal Decree

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I. God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass:^[a] yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin,^[b] nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.^[c]

^[a] Eph. 1:11; Rom. 11:33; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:15, 18. | ^[b] Jam. 1:13, 17; I John 1:5. | ^[c] Acts 2:23; Matt. 17:12; Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11; Prov. 16:33.

II. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions,^[d] yet has He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.^[e]

^[d] Acts 15:18; I Sam. 23:11, 12; Matt. 11:21, 23. | ^[e] Rom. 9:11, 13, 16, 18.

III. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels^[f] are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death.^[g] And because God is most just and good by nature,^(g2) none of His actions, in sovereignly decreeing who is saved and who is not, are unfair or unjust because God by nature cannot do what is unjust or lacks goodness.

^[f] I Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:41. | ^[g] Rom. 9:22, 23; Eph. 1:5, 6; Prov. 16:4. | ^(g2) Deut 32:4

IV. These angels and men, thus predestinated, and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either

increased or diminished.^[h]

^[h] II Tim. 2:19; John 13:18.

V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto 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, has chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory,^[i] out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him to predestine them:^[k] and all to the praise of His glorious grace.^[l]

^[i] Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; Rom. 8:30; II Tim. 1:9; I Thess. 5:9. | ^[k] Rom. 9:11, 13, 16; Eph. 1:4, 9. | ^[l] Eph. 1:6, 12.

VI. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, fore-ordained all the means thereunto.^[m] Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ,^[n] are effectually and certainly called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified,^[o] and kept by His power through faith, unto salvation.^[p] Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.^[q]

^[m] I Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:4, 5; Eph. 2:10; II Thess. 2:13. | ^[n] I Thess. 5:9, 10; Titus 2:14. | ^[o] Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:5; II Thess. 2:13. | ^[p] I Pet. 1:5. | ^[q] John 17:9; Rom. 8:28 to the end; John 6:64, 65; John 10:26; John 8:47; I John 2:19.

VII. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extends or withholds mercy, as He pleases, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath, for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.^[r]

^[r] Matt. 11:25, 26; Rom. 9:17, 18, 21, 22; II Tim. 2:19, 20; Jude ver. 4; I Pet. 2:8.

VIII. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care,^[s] 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.^[t] So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God,^[u] and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.^[w]

^[s] Rom. 9:20; Rom. 11:33; Deut. 29:29. | ^[t] II Pet. 1:10. | ^[u] Eph. 1:6; Rom. 11:33. | ^[w] Rom. 11:5, 6, 20; II Pet. 1:10; Rom. 8:33; Luke 10:20.

5. What We Believe About Creation

I. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,^[a] for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness,^[b] in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.^[c]

^[a] Heb. 1:2; John 1:2, 3; Gen. 1:2; Job. 26:13; Job. 33:4. | ^[b] Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:12; Ps. 104:24; Ps. 33:5, 6. | ^[c] Gen. 1 chap.; Heb. 11:3; Col. 1:16; Acts 17:24.

II. After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female,^[d] with reasonable and immortal souls,^[e] endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image;^[f] having the law of God written in their hearts,^[g] and power to fulfil it:^[h] and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change.^[i] Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God,^[k] and had dominion over the creatures.^[l]

^[d] Gen. 1:27. | ^[e] Gen. 2:7 with Eccles. 12:7 & Luke 23:43 and Matt. 10:28. | ^[f] Gen. 1:26; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24. | ^[g] Rom. 2:14, 15. | ^[h] Eccles. 7:29. | ^[i] Gen. 3:6; Eccles. 7:29. | ^[k] Gen. 2:17; Gen. 3:8, 9, 10, 11, 23. | ^[l] Gen. 1:26, 28.

6. What We Believe About God's Providence

I. God the great Creator of all things does uphold,^[a] direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things,^[b] from the greatest even to the least,^[c] by His most wise and holy providence,^[d] according to His infallible fore-knowledge,^[e] and the free and immutable counsel of His own will,^[f] to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.^[g]

^[a] Heb. 1:3. | ^[b] Dan. 4:34, 35; Ps. 135:6; Acts 17:25, 26, 28; Job 38 to 41 chapters. | ^[c] Matt. 10:29, 30, 31. | ^[d] Prov. 15:3; Ps. 104:24; Ps. 145:17. | ^[e] Acts 15:18; Ps. 94:8, 9, 10, 11. | ^[f] Eph. 1:11; Ps. 33:10, 11. | ^[g] Isa. 63:14; Eph. 3:10; Rom. 9:17; Gen. 45:7; Ps. 145:7.

II. Although, in relation to the fore-knowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly:^[h] yet, by the same providence, He orders them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.^[i]

^[h] Acts 2:23. | ^[i] Gen. 8:22; Jer. 31:35; Exod. 21:13 with Deut. 19:5; I Kings 22:28, 34; Isa. 10:6, 7.

III. God in His ordinary providence makes use of means,^[k] yet is free to work without,^[l] above,^[m] and against them at His pleasure.^[n]

^[k] Acts 27:31, 44; Isa. 55:10, 11; Hos. 2:21, 22. | ^[l] Hos. 1:7; Matt. 4:4; Job 34:20. | ^[m] Rom. 4:19, 20, 21. | ^[n] II Kings 6:6; Dan. 3:27. |

IV. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extends itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men;^[o] and that not by a bare permission,^[p] but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding,^[q] and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends;^[r] yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceeds only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be, the author or approver of sin.^[s]

^[o] Rom. 11:32, 33, 34; II Sam. 24:1 with I Chron. 21:1; I Kings 22:22, 23; I Chron. 10:4, 13, 14; II Sam. 16:10; Acts 2:23; Acts 4:27, 28. | ^[p] Acts 14:16. | ^[q] Ps. 76:10; II Kings 19:28. | ^[r] Gen. 50:20; Isa. 10:6, 7, 12. | ^[s] James 1:13, 14, 17; I John 2:16; Ps. 50:21.

V. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God does oftentimes leave for a season His own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to discipline them for their former sins, or to help them discover the hidden strength of corruption, and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled;^[t] 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 various other just and holy ends.^[u]

^[t] II Chron. 32:25, 26, 31; II Sam. 24:1. | ^[u] II Cor. 12:7, 8, 9; Ps. 73 throughout; Ps. 77:1 to 12; Mark 14:66 to the end, with John 21:15, 16, 17.

VI. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous Judge, for former sins, does blind and harden,^[w] from them He not only withholds His grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts;^[x] but sometimes also withdraws the gifts which they had,^[y] and exposes them to such objects as their corruption makes occasions of sin;^[z] and, withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan:^[a] whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God uses for the softening of others.^[b]

^[w] Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; Rom. 11:7, 8. | ^[x] Deut. 29:4. | ^[y] Matt. 13:12; Matt. 25:29. | ^[z] Deut. 2:30; II Kings 8:12, 13. | ^[a] Ps. 81:11, 12; II Thess. 2:10, 11, 12. | ^[b] Exod. 7:3 with Exod. 8:15, 32; II Cor. 2:15, 16; Isa. 8:14; I Pet. 2:7, 8; Isa. 6:9, 10 with Acts 28:26, 27.

VII. As the providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a most special

manner, it taketh care of His Church, and disposes all things to the good thereof.^[c]

^[c] I Tim. 4:10; Amos 9:8, 9; Rom. 8:28; Isa. 43:3, 4, 5, 14.

7. What We Believe About the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Fall's Punishment

I. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit.^[a] This their sin God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.^[b]

^[a] Gen. 3:13; II Cor. 11:3. | ^[b] Rom. 11:32.

II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion, with God,^[c] and so became dead in sin,^[d] and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.^[e]

^[c] Gen. 3:6, 7, 8; Eccles. 7:29; Rom. 3:23. | ^[d] Gen. 2:17; Eph. 2:1. | ^[e] Tit. 1:15; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10 to 19.

III. They were the root of all mankind, and the guilt of their sin was imputed to us,^[f] and the same death in sin and corrupted nature they received was passed on to us, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.^[g]

^[f] Gen. 1:27, 28 & Gen. 2:16, 17 and Acts 17:26 with Rom. 5:12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and I Cor. 15:21, 22, 49. | ^[g] Ps. 51:5; Gen. 5:3; Job 14:4, Job 15:14.

IV. From this original corruption (by which we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good,^[h] and wholly inclined to all evil^[i]) proceeds all actual transgressions.^[k]

^[h] Rom. 5:6; Rom. 8:7, Rom. 7:18; Col. 1:21. | ^[i] Gen. 6:5; Gen. 8:21; Rom. 3:10, 11, 12. | ^[k] James 1:14, 15; Eph. 2:2, 3; Matt. 15:19.

V. This corruption of nature, during this life, still remains in those that are regenerated;^[l] and although it is, through Christ, pardoned and put to death, yet both itself and all the motions of this sin are truly and properly sin.^[m]

^[l] I John 1:8, 10; Rom. 7:14, 17, 18, 23; James 3:2; Prov. 20:9; Eccles. 7:20. | ^[m] Rom. 7:5, 7, 8, 25; Gal. 5:17.

VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary to it,^[n] does, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner;^[o] by which he is bound over to the wrath of God,^[p] and curse of the law,^[q] and so made subject to death,^[r] with all miseries

spiritual,^[s] temporal,^[t] and eternal.^[u]

^[n] I John 3:4. | ^[o] Rom. 2:15; Rom. 3:9, 19. | ^[p] Ephes. 2:3. | ^[q] Gal. 3:10. | ^[r] Rom. 6:23. | ^[s] Ephes. 4:18. | ^[t] Rom. 8:20; Lam. 3:39. | ^[u] Matt. 25:41, II Thess. 1:9.

8. What We Believe About God's Covenant with Man

I. 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 any results of Him being their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He has been pleased to express by way of covenant.^[a]

^[a] Isa. 40:13, 14, 15, 16, 17; Job. 9:32, 33; I Sam. 2:25; Ps. 113:5, 6; Ps. 100:2, 3; Job. 22:2, 3; Job 35:7, 8; Luke 17:10; Acts 17:24, 25.

II. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works,^[b] wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity,^[c] upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.^[d]

^[b] Gal. 3:12. | ^[c] Rom. 10:5, Rom. 5:12 to 20. | ^[d] Gen. 2:17; Gal. 3:10.

III. Because man, by his fall, made himself incapable of eternal life by the covenant of works, the Lord was pleased to make a other progressively revealed covenants,^[e] the most important and only fully saving of them is called the Covenant of Grace. All other covenants (Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic) are fulfilled by and in the Covenant of Grace by which God freely offers to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved,^[f] and promising to give to all those that are ordained to eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.^[g]

^[e] Gal. 3:21; Rom. 8:3; Rom. 3:20, 21; Gen. 3:15; Isa. 42:6. | ^[f] Mark 16:15, 16; John 3:16; Rom. 10:6, 9; Gal. 3:11. | ^[g] Ezek. 36:26, 27; John 6:44, 45.

IV. This Covenant of Grace is frequently set forth in Scripture by the name of a Testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the Testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.^[h]

^[h] Heb. 9:15, 16, 17; Heb. 7:22; Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25.

V. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the Gospel:^[i] under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come:^[k] which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the

operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah,^[l] by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called, the Old Testament.^[m]

^[i] II Cor. 3:6, 7, 8, 9. | ^[k] Heb. 8, 9, 10 chapters; Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11, 12; I Cor. 5:7. | ^[l] I Cor. 10:1, 2, 3, 4; Heb. 11:13; John 8:56. | ^[m] Gal. 3:7, 8, 9, 14.

VI. Under the Gospel, when Christ, the substance,^[n] was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper:^[o] which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory; yet, in them, it is held forth in more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy,^[p] to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles;^[q] and is called the New Testament.^[r] There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.^[s]

^[n] Col. 2:17. | ^[o] Matt. 28:19, 20; I Cor. 11:23, 24, 25. | ^[p] Heb. 12:22 to 28; Jer. 31:33, 34. | ^[q] Matt. 28:19; Eph. 2:15, 16, 17, 18, 19. | ^[r] Luke 22:20. | ^[s] Gal. 3:14, 16; Rom 3:21, 22, 23, 30; Ps. 32:1 with Rom. 4:3, 6, 16, 17, 23, 24; Heb. 13:8; Acts 15:11.

9. What We Believe About Christ the Mediator

I. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man;^[a] the Prophet,^[b] Priest,^[c] and King,^[d] the Head and Savior of His Church,^[e] the Heir of all things,^[f] and Judge of the world:^[g] unto whom He did from all eternity give a people, to be His seed,^[h] and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.^[i]

^[a] Isa. 42:1; I Pet. 19, 20; John 3:16; I Tim. 2:5. | ^[b] Acts 3:22. | ^[c] Heb. 5:5, 6. | ^[d] Ps. 2:6; Luke 1:33. | ^[e] Eph. 5:23. | ^[f] Heb. 1:2. | ^[g] Acts 17:31. | ^[h] John 17:6; Ps. 22:30, Isa. 53:10. | ^[i] I Tim. 2:6; Isa. 55:4, 5; I Cor. 1:30.

II. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time had come, took upon Himself man's nature,^[k] with all the essential properties and common infirmities of it, yet He was without sin:^[l] being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance.^[m] So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion.^[n] This person called Jesus Christ is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.^[o]

^[k] John 1:1, 14; I John 5:20; Phil. 2:6; Gal. 4:4. | ^[l] Heb. 2:14, 16, 17; Heb. 4:15. | ^[m] Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Gal. 4:4. | ^[n] Luke 1:35; Col. 2:9; Rom. 9:5; I Pet. 3:18; I Tim. 3:16. | ^[o] Rom.

1:3, 4; I Tim. 2:5.

III. The Lord Jesus, in His human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit, above measure,^[p] having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,^[q] in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell;^[r] to the end that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth,^[s] He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator and surety.^[t] Which office He took not unto Himself, but was called to it by His Father,^[u] who put all power and judgment into His hand, and gave Him commandment to execute the same.^[w]

^[p] Ps. 45:7; John 3:34. | ^[q] Col. 2:3. | ^[r] Col. 1:19. | ^[s] Heb. 7:26; John 1:14. | ^[t] Acts 10:38; Heb. 12:24; Heb. 7:22. | ^[u] Heb. 5:4, 5. | ^[w] John 5:22, 27; Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36.

IV. This office mediator and surety the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake,^[x] which that He might discharge, He was made under the law,^[y] and did perfectly fulfill it,^[z] endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul,^[a] and most painful sufferings in His body;^[b] was crucified, and died;^[c] was buried, and remained under the power of death; yet saw no corruption.^[d] On the third day He arose from the dead,^[e] with the same body in which He suffered,^[f] with which also he ascended into heaven, and there He sits at the right hand of His Father,^[g] making intercession,^[h] and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.^[i]

^[x] Ps. 40:7, 8 with Heb. 10:5 to 10; John 10:18; Phil. 2:8. | ^[y] Gal. 4:4. | ^[z] Matt. 3:15; Matt. 5:17. | ^[a] Matt. 26:37, 38; Luke 22:44; Matt. 27:46. | ^[b] Matt. 26, 27 chapters. | ^[c] Phil. 2:8. | ^[d] Acts. 2:23, 24, 27; Acts 13:37; Rom. 6:9. | ^[e] I Cor. 15:3, 4. | ^[f] John 20:25, 27. | ^[g] Mark 16:19. | ^[h] Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; Heb. 7:25. | ^[i] Rom. 14:9, 10; Acts 1:11; Acts 10:42; Matt. 13:40, 41, 42; Jude ver. 6; II Pet. 2:4.

V. The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He, through the eternal Spirit, offered up only once to God, has fully satisfied the justice of His Father;^[k] and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father has given unto Him.^[l]

^[k] Rom. 5:19; Heb. 9:14, 16; Heb. 10:14; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 3:25, 26. | ^[l] Dan. 9:24, 26; Col. 1:19, 20; Eph. 1:11, 14; John 17:2; Heb. 9:12, 15.

VI. Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits of it were communicated to the elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, in which He was revealed, and signified to be the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world: being yesterday and to-day the same, and forever.^[m]

^[m] Gal. 4:4, 5; Gen. 3:15; Rev. 13:8; Heb. 13:8.

VII. Christ, in the work of mediation, acted according to both natures (human and divine), by each nature doing that which is proper to itself:^[n] 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.^[o]

^[n] Heb. 9:14; I Pet. 3:18. | ^[o] Acts 20:28; John 3:13; I John 3:16.

VIII. To all those for whom Christ has purchased redemption, He does certainly and effectually apply and communicate this redemption,^[p] making intercession for them,^[q] and revealing to them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation,^[r] effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit;^[s] 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.^[t]

^[p] John 6:37, 39; John 10:15, 16. | ^[q] I John 2:1, 2; Rom. 8:34. | ^[r] John 15:13, 15; Eph. 1:7, 8, 9; John 17:6. | ^[s] John 14:26; Heb. 12:2; II Cor. 4:13; Rom. 8:9, 14; Rom. 15:18, 19; John 17:17. | ^[t] Ps. 110:1; I Cor. 15:25, 26; Mal. 4:2, 3; Col. 2:15.

10. What We Believe About Free Will

I. God had endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil.^[a]

^[a] Matt. 17:12; James 1:14; Deut. 30:19.

II. Man, in his state of innocence, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good, and well pleasing to God;^[b] but yet, mutably, so that he might fall from it.^[c]

^[b] Eccles. 7:29; Gen. 1:26. | ^[c] Gen. 2:16, 17; Gen. 3:6.

III. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation:^[d] so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good,^[e] and dead in sin,^[f] is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself for these things.^[g]

^[d] Rom. 5:6; Rom 8:7; John 15:5. | ^[e] Rom. 3:10, 12. | ^[f] Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13. | ^[g] John 6:44, 65; Eph. 2:2, 3, 4, 5; I Cor. 2:14; Titus 3:3, 4, 5.

IV. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace in this life, He frees

him from his natural bondage under sin;^[h] and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good;^[i] yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he does not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but does also continue to will that which is evil.^[k]

^[h] Col. 1:13; John 8:34, 36. | ^[i] Phil. 2:13; Rom. 6:18, 22. | ^[k] Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:15, 18, 19, 21, 23.

V. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone, in the state of glory only.^[l]

^[l] Eph. 4:13; Heb. 12:23; I John 3:2; Jude ver. 24.

11. What We Believe About Effectual Calling, Commonly Called Irresistible Grace

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I. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time to effectually call,^[a] by His Word and Spirit,^[b] out of that state of sin and death, in which they were by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ;^[c] enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God,^[d] taking away their heart of stone, and giving to them a heart of flesh;^[e] renewing their wills, and, by His almighty power determining them to that which is good,^[f] and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ:^[g] while this is so, they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.^[h]

^[a] Rom. 8:30; Rom. 11:7; Eph. 1:10, 11. | ^[b] II Thess. 2:13, 14; II Cor. 3:3, 6. | ^[c] Rom. 8:2; Eph. 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5; II Tim. 1:9, 10. | ^[d] Acts 26:18; I Cor. 2:10, 12; Eph. 1:17, 18. | ^[e] Ezek. 36:26. | ^[f] Ezek. 11:19; Phil. 2:13; Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27. | ^[g] Eph. 1:19; John 6:44, 45. | ^[h] Cant. 1:4; Ps. 110:3; John 6:37; Rom. 6:16, 17, 18.

II. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man,^[i] who is altogether passive in this process, until being made alive and renewed by the Holy Spirit,^[k] he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.^[l]

^[i] II Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:4, 5; Eph. 2:4, 5, 8, 9; Rom. 9:11. | ^[k] I Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:5. | ^[l] John 6:37; Ezek. 36:27; John 5:25.

III. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ through the Spirit,^[m] who worketh when, and where, and how He pleases.^[n] so also, are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word (mentally disabled, severely handicapped, etc.).^[o]

^[m] Luke 18:15, 16, and Acts 2:38, 39 and John 3:3, 5 and I John 5:12 & Rom. 8:9 compared. | ^[n] John 3:8. | ^[o] I John 5:12; Acts 4:12.

IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word,^[p] and may have some common operations of the Spirit,^[q] yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved:^[r] much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, being that they never do diligent adjust their lives according to what they know about God in the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess.^[s] And to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested.^[t]

^[p] Matt. 22:14. | ^[q] Matt. 7:22; Matt. 13:20, 21; Heb. 6:4, 5. | ^[r] John 6:64, 65, 66; John 8:24. | ^[s] Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Eph. 2:12; John 4:22; John 17:3. | ^[t] II John ver. 9, 10, 11; I Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:6, 7, 8.

12. What We Believe About Justification

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I. Those whom God effectually calls, He also freely justifies;^[a] 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; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them,^[b] they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.^[c] God does work through us to make us truly righteous, but this process is not called justification but rather Sanctification, which is discussed below.

^[a] Rom. 8:30; Rom. 3:24. | ^[b] Rom. 4:5, 6, 7, 8; II Cor. 5:19, 21; Rom. 3:22, 24, 25, 27, 28; Tit. 3:5, 7; Eph. 1:7; Jer. 23:6; I Cor. 1:30, 31; Rom. 5:17, 18, 19. | ^[c] Acts 10:43; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:19; Acts 13:38, 39; Eph. 2:7, 8.

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

^[d] John 1:12; Rom. 3:28; Rom. 5:1. | ^[e] Jam. 2:17, 22, 26; Gal. 5:6.

III. Christ, by His obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to His Father's justice in their behalf.^[f] Yet, inasmuch as He was given by the Father for them,^[g] and His obedience and satisfaction was accepted in their place;^[h] and both freely, not for anything in them; their justification is only of free grace;^[i] that both the exact justice, and rich grace of God, might be

glorified in the justification of sinners.^[k]

^[f] Rom. 5:8, 9, 10, 19; I Tim. 2:5, 6; Heb. 10:10, 14; Dan. 9:24, 26; Isa. 53:4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12. | ^[g] Rom. 8:32. | ^[h] II Cor. 5:21; Matt. 3:17; Eph. 5:2. | ^[i] Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7. | ^[k] Rom. 3:26; Eph. 2:7.

IV. God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect,^[l] and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification:^[m] nevertheless, they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them.^[n]

^[l] Gal. 3:8; I Pet. 1:2, 19, 20; Rom. 8:30. | ^[m] Gal. 4:4; I Tim. 2:6; Rom. 4:25. | ^[n] Col. 1:21, 22; Gal. 2:16; Tit. 3:3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

V. God does continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified:^[o] and although they can never fall from the state of justification;^[p] yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of His countenance restored to them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.^[q]

^[o] Matt. 6:12; I John 1:7, 9; I John 2:1, 2. | ^[p] Luke 22:32; John 10:28; Heb. 10:14. | ^[q] Ps. 89:31, 32, 33; Ps. 51:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; Ps. 32:5; Matt. 26:75; I Cor. 11:30, 32; Luke 1:20.

VI. 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.^[r]

^[r] Gal. 3:9, 13, 14; Rom. 4:22, 23, 24; Heb. 13:8.

13. What We Believe About Adoption as Children of God

I. All those that are justified, God causes them (in and for Jesus Christ) to become partakers of the grace of adoption:^[a] by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God,^[b] have His name put upon them,^[c] receive the spirit of adoption,^[d] have access to the throne of grace with boldness,^[e] are enabled to cry, Abba, Father,^[f] are pitied,^[g] protected,^[h] provided for,^[i] and disciplined by Him as by a Father;^[k] yet they are never cast off,^[l] but sealed and secured to the day of redemption,^[m] and they will certainly inherit the promises,^[n] as heirs of everlasting salvation.^[o]

^[a] Eph. 1:5. | ^[b] Gal. 4:4, 5; Rom. 8:17; John 1:12. | ^[c] Jer. 14:9; II Cor. 6:18; Rev. 3:12. | ^[d] Rom. 8:15. | ^[e] Eph. 3:12; Rom. 5:2. | ^[f] Gal. 4:6. | ^[g] Ps. 103:13. | ^[h] Prov. 14:26. | ^[i] Matt. 6:30, 32; I Pet. 5:7. | ^[k] Heb. 12:6. | ^[l] Lam. 3:31. | ^[m] Eph. 4:30. | ^[n] Heb. 6:12. | ^[o] I Pet. 1:3, 4; Heb. 1:14.

14. What We Believe About Sanctification

I. All who are savingly called and regenerated (born again), having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection,^[a] by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them:^[b] the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed,^[c] and the several lusts of the body are more and more weakened and put to death;^[d] and they are more and more made alive and strengthened in all saving graces,^[e] to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.^[f]

^[a] I Cor. 6:11; Acts 20:32; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 6:5, 6. | ^[b] John 17:17; Eph. 5:26; II Thess. 2:13. | ^[c] Rom. 6:6, 14. | ^[d] Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13. | ^[e] Col. 1:11; Eph. 3:16, 17, 18, 19. | ^[f] II Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14.

II. This sanctification affects and changes the whole person;^[g] and yet it will be imperfect in this life, because there still remains some remnants of corruption in every part of the person:^[h] from which arises a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.^[i]

^[g] I Thess. 5:23. | ^[h] I John 1:10; Rom. 7:18, 23; Phil. 3:12. | ^[i] Gal. 5:17; I Pet. 2:11.

III. In this war of the Spirit against the flesh, the remaining corruption may prevail for a time;^[k] yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying work of the Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part does overcome;^[l] and so, the saints grow in grace,^[m] perfecting holiness in the fear of God.^[n]

^[k] Rom. 7:23. | ^[l] Rom. 6:14; I John 5:4; Eph. 4:15, 16. | ^[m] II Pet. 3:18; II Cor. 3:18. | ^[n] II Cor. 7:1.

15. What We Believe About Saving Faith

I. The grace of faith, by which the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls,^[a] is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts;^[b] and is ordinarily produced by the ministry of the Word:^[c] by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.^[d]

^[a] Heb. 10:39. | ^[b] II Cor. 4:13; Eph. 1:17, 18, 19; Eph. 2:8. | ^[c] Rom. 10:14, 17. | ^[d] I Pet. 2:2; Acts 20:32; Rom. 4:11; Luke 17:5; Rom. 1:16, 17.

II. By this faith, a Christian believes that what is revealed in the Bible is true, for the authority of

God Himself speaks in it;^[e] and yields obedience to the commands,^[f] trembling at the threatenings,^[g] and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come.^[h] But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.^[i]

^[e] John 4:42; I Thess. 2:13; I John 5:10; Acts 24:14. | ^[f] Rom. 16:26. | ^[g] Isa. 66:2. | ^[h] Heb. 11:13; I Tim. 4:8. | ^[i] John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Acts 15:11.

III. This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong;^[k] may be often and in many ways attacked, and weakened, but it always gets the victory;^[l] growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ,^[m] who is both the author and finisher of our faith.^[n]

^[k] Heb. 5:13, 14; Rom. 4:19, 20; Matt. 6:30; Matt. 8:10. | ^[l] Luke 22:31, 32; Eph. 6:16; I John 5:4, 5. | ^[m] Heb. 6:11, 12; Heb. 10:22; Col. 2:2. | ^[n] Heb. 12:2.

16. What We Believe About Repentance Unto Life

I. Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace,^[a] the doctrine of this grace is to be preached by every minister of the Gospel, as well as the doctrine of faith in Christ.^[b]

^[a] Zech. 12:10; Acts 11:18. | ^[b] Luke 24:47; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21.

II. By this grace, a sinner, out of the sight and sense not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God; and upon the understanding of his mercy in Christ to sinners such as they become repentant, and they grieve for, and hate sins, as to turn from their sins to God,^[c] purposing and endeavoring to walk with Him in all the ways of His commandments.^[d]

^[c] Ezek. 18:30, 31; Ezek. 36:31; Isa. 30:22; Ps. 51:4; Jer. 31:18, 19; Joel 2:12, 13; Amos 5:15; Ps. 119:128; II Cor. 7:11. | ^[d] Ps. 119:6, 59, 106; Luke 1:6; II Kings 23:25.

III. Although repentance be not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of one's own pardon,^[e] which is the act of God's free grace in Christ;^[f] yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.^[g]

^[e] Ezek. 36:31, 32; Ezek. 16:61, 62, 63. | ^[f] Hosea 14:2, 4; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7. | ^[g] Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30, 31.

IV. As there is no sin so small that does not deserve punishment in hell,^[h] so there is no sin so great, that it can bring hell upon those who truly repent.^[i]

^[h] Rom. 6:23; Rom. 5:12; Matt. 12:36. | ^[i] Isa. 55:7; Rom. 8:1; Isa. 1:16, 18.

V. Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins, particularly.^[k]

^[k] Ps. 19:13; Luke 19:8; I Tim. 1:13, 15.

VI. As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon of them;^[l] upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy:^[m] so, he that sins against his brother, or the Church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession, and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended,^[n] who are to then be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him.^[o]

^[l] Ps. 51:4, 5, 7, 9, 14; Ps. 32:5, 6. | ^[m] Prov. 28:13; I John 1:9. | ^[n] James 5:16; Luke 17:3, 4; Joshua 7:19; Ps. 51 throughout. | ^[o] II Cor. 2:8.

17. What We Believe About Good Works

I. Good works are only those things God has commanded in His holy Word.^[a] They are not the inventions by men, or done out of blind zeal, or things done upon any pretense of good intention.^[b]

^[a] Micah 6:8; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 13:21. | ^[b] Matt. 15:9; Isa. 29:13; I Pet. 1:18; Rom. 10:2; John 16:2; I Sam. 15:21, 22, 23.

II. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith:^[c] and by them believers manifest their thankfulness,^[d] strengthen their assurance,^[e] edify their brethren,^[f] adorn the profession of the Gospel,^[g] stop the mouths of the adversaries,^[h] and glorify God,^[i] whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto;^[k] that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.^[l]

^[c] James 2:18, 22. | ^[d] Ps. 116:12, 13; I Pet. 2:9. | ^[e] I John 2:3, 5; II Pet. 1:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. | ^[f] II Cor. 9:2; Matt. 5:16. | ^[g] Tit. 2:5, 9, 10, 11, 12; I Tim. 6:1. | ^[h] I Pet. 2:15. | ^[i] I Pet. 2:12; Phil. 1:11; John 15:8. | ^[k] Eph. 2:10. | ^[l] Rom. 6:22.

III. A Christian's ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ.^[m] And that they may be enabled towards these good works, besides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure:^[n] yet are they not because of these things 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.^[o]

^[m] John 15:4, 5; Ezek. 36:26, 27. | ^[n] Phil. 2:13; Phil. 4:13; II Cor. 3:5. | ^[o] Phil. 2:12; Heb.

6:11, 12; II Pet. 1:3, 5, 10, 11; Isa. 64:7; II Tim. 1:6; Acts 26:6, 7; Jude ver. 20, 21.

IV. 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 the Roman Catholic Church falsely teaches), as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do.^[p]

^[p] Luke 17:10; Neh. 13:22; Job 9:2, 3; Gal. 5:17.

V. 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,^[q] but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants;^[r] and because, as they are good, they proceed from His Spirit,^[s] 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 judgment.^[t]

^[q] Rom. 3:20; Rom. 4:2, 4, 6; Eph. 2:8, 9; Tit. 3:5, 6, 7; Rom. 8:18; Ps. 16:2; Job 22:2, 3; Job 35:7, 8. | ^[r] Luke 17:10. | ^[s] Gal. 5:22, 23. | ^[t] Isa. 64:6; Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:15, 18; Ps. 143:2; Ps. 130:3.

VI. Yet notwithstanding, because the believer has been accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in Him,^[u] not as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unproveable in God's sight;^[w] but that He, looking upon believers in His Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.^[x]

^[u] Eph. 1:6; I Pet. 2:5; Exod. 28:38; Gen. 4:4 with Heb. 11:4. | ^[w] Job. 9:20; Ps. 143:2. | ^[x] Heb. 13:20, 21; II Cor. 8:12; Heb. 6:10; Matt. 25:21, 23.

VII. 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:^[y] yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith;^[z] nor are done in a right manner according to the Word;^[a] nor to a right end, the glory of God;^[b] they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God.^[c] And yet, their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God.^[d]

^[y] II Kings 10:30, 31; I Kings 21:27, 29; Phil. 1:15, 16, 18. | ^[z] Gen. 4:5 with Heb. 11:4; Heb. 11:6. | ^[a] I Cor. 13:3; Isa. 1:12. | ^[b] Matt. 6:2, 5, 16. | ^[c] Hag. 2:14; Tit. 1:15; Amos 5:22, 23; Hosea 1:4; Rom. 9:16; Titus 3:5. | ^[d] Ps. 14:4; Ps. 36:3; Job 21:14, 15; Matt. 25:41, 42, 43, 45; Matt. 23:23.

18. What We Believe About the Perseverance of the Saints

I. They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally, nor finally, fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.^[a]

^[a] Phil. 1:6; II Pet. 1:10; John 10:28, 29; I John 3:9; I Pet. 1:5, 9.

II. 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;^[b] upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ;^[c] the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them;^[d] and the nature of the covenant of grace:^[e] from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof.^[f]

^[b] II Tim. 2:18, 19; Jer. 31:3. | ^[c] Heb. 10:10, 14; Heb. 13:20, 21; Heb. 9:12, 13, 14, 15; Rom. 8:33 to the end; John 17:11, 24; Luke 22:32; Heb. 7:25. | ^[d] John 14:16, 17; I John 2:27; I John 3:9. | ^[e] Jer. 32:40. | ^[f] John 10:28; II Thess. 3:3; I John 2:19.

III. Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins;^[g] and, for a time, continue in them:^[h] whereby they incur God's displeasure,^[i] and grieve His Holy Spirit,^[k] come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts,^[l] have their hearts hardened,^[m] and their consciences wounded,^[n] hurt and scandalize others,^[o] and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.^[p]

^[g] Matt. 26:70, 72, 74. | ^[h] Ps. 51 title and ver. 14. | ^[i] Isa. 64:5, 7, 9; II Sam. 11:27. | ^[k] Eph. 4:30. | ^[l] Ps. 51:8, 10, 12; Rev. 2:4 | ^[m] Isa. 63:17; Mark 6:52; Mark 16:14. | ^[n] Ps. 32:3, 4; Ps. 51:8. | ^[o] II Sam. 12:14. | ^[p] Ps. 89:31, 32; I Cor. 11:32.

19. What We Believe About the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

I. Although hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes, and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God, and in the state of salvation;^[a] this hope of theirs shall perish:^[b] yet those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace,^[c] and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.^[d]

^[a] Job 8:13, 14; Mic. 3:11; Deut. 29:19; John 8:41. | ^[b] Matt. 7:22, 23. | ^[c] I John 2:3; I John 3:14, 18, 19, 21, 24; I John 5:13. | ^[d] Rom. 5:2, 5.

II. This certainty of salvation is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope;^[e] but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises

of salvation,^[f] the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made,^[g] the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God:^[h] which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.^[i]

^[e] Heb. 6:11, 19. | ^[f] Heb. 6:17, 18. | ^[g] II Pet. 1:4, 5, 10, 11; I John 2:3; I John 3:14; II Cor. 1:12. | ^[h] Rom. 8:15, 16. | ^[i] Eph. 1:13, 14; Eph. 4:30; II Cor. 1:21, 22.

III. This infallible assurance does not immediately belong to the essence of faith. A true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he becomes a partaker of this assurance:^[k] 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 ordinary means, gain it.^[l] And therefore it is the duty of everyone to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure;^[m] that through such diligence his heart^[m] may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance:^[n] so far is it from inclining men to looseness.^[o]

^[k] I John 5:13; Isa. 50:10; Mark 9:24; Ps. 88 throughout; Ps. 77 to ver. 12. | ^[l] I Cor. 2:12; I John 4:13; Heb. 6:11, 12; Eph. 3:17, 18, 19. | ^[m] II Pet. 1:10. | ^[n] Rom. 5:1, 2, 5; Rom. 14:17; Rom. 15:13; Eph. 1:3, 4; Ps. 4:6, 7; Ps. 119:32. | ^[o] I John 2:1, 2; Rom. 6:1, 2; Tit. 2:11, 12, 14; II Cor. 7:1; Rom. 8:1, 12; I John 3:2, 3; Ps. 130:4; I John 1:6, 7.

IV. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation in many ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin, which wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and permitting even such as fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light:^[p] yet are they never so utterly destitute of that seed of God, and 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;^[q] and by the which, in the meantime, they are supported from utter despair.^[r]

^[p] Cant. 5:2, 3, 6; Ps. 51:8, 12, 14; Eph. 4:30, 31; Ps. 77:1 to 10; Matt. 26:69, 70, 71, 72; Ps. 31:22; Ps. 88 throughout; Isa. 50:10. | ^[q] I John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Job 13:15; Ps. 73:15; Ps. 51:8, 12; Isa. 50:10. | ^[r] Mic. 7:7, 8, 9; Jer. 32:40; Isa. 54:7, 8, 9, 10; Ps. 22:1; Ps. 88 throughout.

20. What We Believe About the Law of God

I. God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his descendants to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon Adam's fulfilling it, and threatened death upon the breach of it: and endued him with power and ability to keep it.^[a]

^[a] Gen. 1:26, 27 with Gen. 2:17; Rom. 2:14, 15; Rom. 10:5; Rom. 5:12, 19; Gal. 3:10, 12; Eccles. 7:29; Job 28:28.

II. God's law, after Adam's fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was again delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables:^[b] the four first commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six our duty to man.^[c]

^[b] James 1:25; James 2:8, 10, 11, 12; Rom. 13:8, 9; Deut. 5:32; Deut. 10:4; Ex. 34:1. | ^[c] Matt. 22:37, 38, 39, 40.

III. Beside this law, commonly called the moral law, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits;^[d] and partly holding forth various instructions of moral duties.^[e] All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the new testament.^[f]

^[d] Heb. 9 chap.; Heb. 10:1; Gal. 4:1, 2, 3; Col. 2:17. | ^[e] I Cor. 5:7; II Cor. 6:17; Jude ver. 23. | ^[f] Col. 2:14, 16, 17; Dan. 9:27; Eph. 2:15, 16.

IV. To Israel also, as a body politic, He gave various judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; these in their exact Old Testament state are no longer obligatory, though God's righteous standards, as we are able to discern and model them, remain binding.^[g]

^[g] Ex. 21 chap.; Ex. 22:1 to 29; Gen. 49:10 with I Pet. 2:13, 14; Matt. 5:17, with ver. 38, 39; I Cor. 9:8, 9, 10.

V. The moral law does for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience of it;^[h] 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:^[i] neither does Christ, in the Gospel, in any way dissolve our duty, but it much strengthens this obligation.^[k]

^[h] Rom. 13:8, 9, 10; Eph. 6:2; I John 2:3, 4, 7, 8. | ^[i] James 2:10, 11. | ^[k] Matt. 5:17, 18, 19; James 2:8; Rom. 3:31.

VI. Although true believers are not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be justified by it or condemned by it;^[l] 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;^[m] discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives;^[n] so as, examining themselves by it, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin;^[o] together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of His obedience.^[p] It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin:^[q] and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve; and what

afflictions, in this life, they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law.^[r] The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approval of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof;^[s] although not as due to them by the law, as a covenant of works.^[t] So as, a man's doing good, and refraining from evil (because the law encourages us to the one and deters from the other) is no evidence of his being under the law; and not under grace.^[u]

^[l] Rom. 6:14; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:13; Gal. 4:4, 5; Acts 13:39; Rom. 8:1. | ^[m] Rom. 7:12, 22, 25; Ps. 119:4, 5, 6; I Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. | ^[n] Rom. 7:7; Rom. 3:20. | ^[o] James 1:23, 24, 25; Rom. 7:9, 14, 24. | ^[p] Gal. 3:24; Rom. 7:24, 25; Rom. 8:3, 4. | ^[q] Jam. 2:11; Ps. 119:101, 104, 128. | ^[r] Ezra 9:13, 14; Ps. 89:30, 31, 32, 33, 34. | ^[s] Lev. 26:1 to 14 with II Cor. 6:16; Eph. 6:2, 3; Ps. 37:11 with Matt. 5:5; Ps. 19:11. | ^[t] Gal. 2:16; Luke 17:10. | ^[u] Rom. 6:12, 14; I Pet. 3:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, with Ps. 34:12, 13, 14, 15, 16; Heb. 12:28, 29.

VII. Neither are the above uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it;^[w] the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to freely and cheerfully do that which the will of God, revealed in the law, requires to be done.^[x]

^[w] Gal. 3:21. | ^[x] Ezek. 36:27; Heb. 8:10 with Jer. 31:33.

21. What We Believe About Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience

I. The liberty which Christ has purchased for believers under the Gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, and condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law;^[a] and, in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin;^[b] from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grace, and everlasting damnation;^[c] as also, in their free access to God,^[d] and their yielding obedience unto Him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love and willing mind.^[e] All which were common also to believers under the law.^[f] But, under the New Testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish Church was subjected;^[g] and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace,^[h] and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.^[i]

^[a] Tit. 2:14; I Thess. 1:10; Gal. 3:13. | ^[b] Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18; Rom. 6:14. | ^[c] Rom. 8:28; Ps. 119:71; I Cor. 15:54, 55, 56, 57; Rom. 8:1. | ^[d] Rom. 5:1, 2. | ^[e] Rom. 8:14, 15; I John 4:18. | ^[f] Gal. 3:9, 14. | ^[g] Gal. 4:1, 2, 3, 6, 7; Gal. 5:1; Acts 15:10, 11. | ^[h] Heb. 4:14, 16; Heb. 10:19, 20, 21, 22. | ^[i] John 7:38, 39; II Cor. 3:13, 17, 18.

II. God alone is Lord of the conscience,^[k] and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of

faith or worship.^[l] So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience,^[m] is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.^[n]

^[k] Jam. 4:12; Rom. 14:4. | ^[l] Acts 4:19; Acts 5:29; I Cor. 7:23; Matt. 23:8, 9, 10; II Cor. 1:24; Matt. 15:9. | ^[m] Col. 2:20, 22, 23; Gal. 1:10; Gal. 2:4, 5; Gal. 5:1. | ^[n] Rom. 10:17; Rom. 14:23; Isa. 8:20; Acts 17:11; John 4:22; Hos. 5:11; Rev. 13:12, 16, 17; Jer. 8:9.

III. They who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, practice any sin or cherish any lust, destroy the goal of Christian liberty. This goal is that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.^[o]

^[o] Gal. 5:13; I Pet. 2:16; II Pet. 2:19; John 8:34; Luke 1:74, 75.

IV. And because the powers which God has ordained, and the liberty which Christ has purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another. Anyone, upon the pretense of "Christian liberty," who oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, are resisting the ordinance of God.^[p] And, for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or, to the power of godliness; or, such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church, they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church,^[q] and by the power of the civil magistrate.^[r]

^[p] Matt. 12:25; I Pet. 2:13, 14, 16; Rom. 13:1 to 8; Heb. 13:17. | ^[q] Rom. 1:32 with I Cor. 5:1, 5, 11, 13; II John ver. 10, 11, and II Thess. 3:14, and I Tim. 6:3, 4, 5, and Tit. 1:10, 11, 13, and Tit. 3:10 with Matt. 18:15, 16, 17; I Tim. 1:19, 20; Rev. 2:2, 14, 15, 20; Rev. 3:9. | ^[r] Deut. 13:6 to 12; Rom. 13:3, 4 with II John ver. 10, 11; Ezra 7:23, 25, 26, 27, 28; Rev. 17:12, 16, 17; Neh. 13:15, 17, 21, 22, 25, 30; II Kings 23:5, 6, 9, 20, 21; II Chron. 34:33; II Chron. 15:12, 13, 16; Dan. 3:29; I Tim. 2:2; Isa. 49:23; Zech. 13:2, 3.

22. What We Believe About Religious Worship and the Sabbath-Day

I. The light of nature shows that there is a God, who has lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and does good to all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our might.^[a] But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and is to be limited by His own revealed will. He is not to be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the

holy Scripture.^[b]

^[a] Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:24; Ps. 119:68; Jer. 10:7; Ps. 31:23; Ps. 18:3; Rom. 10:12; Ps. 62:8; Josh. 24:14; Mark 12:33. | ^[b] Deut. 12:32; Matt. 15:9; Acts 17:25; Matt. 4:9, 10; Deut. 4:15 to 20; Exod. 20:4, 5, 6; Col. 2:23.

II. Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to Him alone;^[c] not to angels, saints, or any other creature:^[d] and since the fall, not without a Mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.^[e]

^[c] Matt. 4:10 with John 5:23 and II Cor. 13:14. | ^[d] Col. 2:18, Rev. 19:10; Rom. 1:25. | ^[e] John 14:6; I Tim. 2:5; Eph. 2:18; Col. 3:17.

III. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship,^[f] is required by God of all men:^[g] and that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son,^[h] by the help of His Spirit,^[i] according to His will,^[k] with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance;^[l] and, if vocal, in a known tongue.^[m]

^[f] Phil. 4:6. | ^[g] Ps. 65:2. | ^[h] John 14:13, 14; I Pet. 2:5. | ^[i] Rom. 8:26. | ^[k] I John 5:14. | ^[l] Ps. 47:7; Eccles. 5:1, 2; Heb. 12:28; Gen. 18:27; James 5:16; James 1:6, 7; Mark 11:24; Matt. 6:12, 14, 15; Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18. | ^[m] I Cor. 14:14.

IV. Prayer is to be made for things lawful;^[n] and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter:^[o] but not for the dead,^[p] nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.^[q]

^[n] I John 5:14. | ^[o] I Tim. 2:1, 2; John 17:20; II Sam. 7:29; Ruth 4:12. | ^[p] II Sam. 12:21, 22, 23 with Luke 16:25, 26; Rev. 14:13. | ^[q] I John 5:16.

V. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear,^[r] the sound preaching^[s] and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith and reverence,^[t] singing of psalms with grace in the heart;^[u] as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God:^[w] beside religious oaths,^[x] vows,^[y] solemn fastings,^[z] and thanksgivings, upon special occasions,^[a] which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner.^[b]

^[r] Acts 15:21; Rev. 1:3. | ^[s] II Tim. 4:2. | ^[t] James 1:22; Acts 10:33; Matt. 13:19; Heb. 4:2; Isa. 66:2. | ^[u] Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; James 5:13. | ^[w] Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:23 to 29; Acts 2:42. | ^[x] Deut. 6:13 with Neh. 10:29. | ^[y] Isa. 19:21 with Eccles. 5:4, 5. | ^[z] Joel 2:12; Esther 4:16; Matt. 9:15; I Cor. 7:5. | ^[a] Ps. 107 throughout; Esther 9:22. | ^[b] Heb. 12:28.

VI. Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the Gospel either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is

directed:^[c] but God is to be worshipped everywhere,^[d] in spirit and truth;^[e] as in private families^[f] daily,^[g] and in secret each one by himself;^[h] so, more solemnly, in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by His Word or providence, calls us to gather together.^[i]

^[c] John 4:21. | ^[d] Mal. 1:11; I Tim. 2:8. | ^[e] John 4:23, 24. | ^[f] Jer. 10:25; Deut. 6:6, 7; Job 1:5; II Sam. 6:18, 20; I Pet. 3:7; Acts 10:2. | ^[g] Matt. 6:11. | ^[h] Matt. 6:6; Eph. 6:18. | ^[i] Isa. 56:6, 7; Heb. 10:25; Prov. 1:20, 21, 24; Prov. 8:34; Acts 13:42; Luke 4:16; Acts 2:42.

VII. As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by 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:^[k] 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,^[l] which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day,^[m] and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.^[n]

^[k] Exod. 20:8, 10, 11; Isa. 56:2, 4, 6, 7. | ^[l] Gen. 2:2, 3; I Cor. 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7. | ^[m] Rev. 1:10. | ^[n] Exod. 20:8, 10, with Matt. 5:17, 18.

VIII. This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe a holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations,^[o] but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.^[p]

^[o] Exod. 20:8; Exod. 16:23, 25, 26, 29, 30; Exod. 31:15, 16, 17; Isa. 58:13; Neh. 13:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22. | ^[p] Isa. 58:13; Matt. 12:1 to 13.

23. What We Believe About Lawful Oaths and Vows

I. A lawful oath part of religious worship,^[a] wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calls God to witness what he asserts, or promises, and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he swears.^[b]

^[a] Deut. 10:20. | ^[b] Exod. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; II Cor. 1:23, II Chron. 6:22, 23.

II. 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.^[c] 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.^[d] Yet, as in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the Word of God, under the New Testament, as well as under the Old;^[e] so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters ought to

be taken.^[f]

^[c] Deut. 6:13. | ^[d] Exod. 20:7; Jer. 5:7; Matt. 5:34, 37; James 5:12. | ^[e] Heb. 6:16; II Cor. 1:23; Isa. 65:16. | ^[f] I Kings 8:31; Neh. 13:25; Ezra 10:5.

III. Whosoever taketh an oath ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act; and therein to assert nothing, but what he is fully persuaded is the truth.^[g] Neither may any man bind himself by oath to anything but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform.^[h] Yet is it a sin to refuse an oath touching anything that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority.^[i]

^[g] Exod. 20:7; Jer. 4:2. | ^[h] Gen. 24:2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9. | ^[i] Num. 5:19, 21; Neh. 5:12; Exod. 22:7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

IV. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation, or mental reservation.^[k] It must not oblige a person to sin: but in anything not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, even if it is to a man's own hurt.^[l] Such a vow is not to be broken even when it is made to heretics or unbelievers.^[m]

^[k] Jer. 4:2; Ps. 24:4. | ^[l] I Sam. 25:22, 32, 33, 34; Ps. 15:4. | ^[m] Ezek. 17:16, 18, 19; Josh. 9:18, 19 with II Sam. 21:1.

V. A vow is in nature like a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the same religious care, and to be performed with the same faithfulness.^[n]

^[n] Isa. 19:21; Eccles. 5:4, 5, 6; Ps. 61:8; Ps. 66:13, 14.

VI. A vow is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone:^[o] and that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith, and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for the obtaining of what we want; whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties; or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.^[p]

^[o] Ps. 76:11; Jer. 44:25, 26. | ^[p] Deut. 23:21, 22, 23; Ps. 50:14; Gen. 28:20, 21, 22; I Sam. 1:11; Ps. 66:13, 14; Ps. 132:2, 3, 4, 5.

VII. No man may vow to do anything forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty God has commanded, or which is not in his own power to keep, and for the performance of the vow he has no promise of ability from God.^[q] In which respects, Roman Catholic 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.^[r]

^[q] Acts 23:12, 14; Mark 6:26; Numb. 30:5, 8, 12, 13. | ^[r] Matt. 19:11, 12; I Cor. 7:2, 9; Eph.

4:28; I Peter 4:2; I Cor. 7:23.

24. What We Believe About the Government

I. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil leaders, to be, under Him, over the people, for His own glory, and the public good: and, to this end, God has armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense of the people and the encouragement of those that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers.^[a]

^[a] Rom. 13:1, 2, 3, 4; I Pet. 2:13, 14.

II. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a government ruler, when called to it;^[b] in the management of these powers, they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth;^[c] so for that end, they may lawfully now, under the New Testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion.^[d]

^[b] Prov. 8:15, 16; Rom. 13:1, 2, 4. | ^[c] Ps. 2:10, 11, 12; I Tim. 2:2; Ps. 82:3, 4; II Sam. 23:3; I Pet. 2:13. | ^[d] Luke 3:14; Rom. 13:4; Matt. 8:9, 10; Acts 10:1, 2; Rev. 17:14, 16.

III. No government leader may assume to himself the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven:^[e] yet he has true God-given authority, and it is his duty before God to see to it that unity and peace be preserved for the sake of the Church and that the truth of God remain unmolested by the government.^[f]

^[e] II Chron. 26:18 with Matt. 18:17 and Matt. 16:19; I Cor. 12:28, 29; Eph. 4:11, 12; I Cor. 4:1, 2; Rom. 10:15; Heb. 5:4. | ^[f] Isa. 49:23; Ps. 122:9; Ezra 7:23, 25, 26, 27, 28; Lev. 24:16; Deut. 13:5, 6, 12; I Kings 18:4; I Chron. 13:1 to 9; II Kings 23:1 to 26; II Chron. 34:33; II Chron. 15:12, 13.

IV. It is the duty of people to pray for all leaders regardless of their political affiliation,^[h] to honor such persons as having been established by God,^[i] to pay them tribute or other dues,^[k] to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake.^[l] Infidelity, or difference in religion, does not void a leaders' just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them:^[m] from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted.^[n]

^[h] I Tim. 2:1, 2. | ^[i] I Pet. 2:17. | ^[k] Rom. 13:6, 7. | ^[l] Rom. 13:5; Tit. 3:1. | ^[m] I Pet. 2:13, 14, 16. | ^[n] Rom. 13:1; I Kings 2:35; Acts 25:9, 10, 11; II Pet. 2:1, 10, 11; Jude ver. 8, 9, 10, 11.

25. What We Believe About Marriage and Divorce

I. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman. It is not biblically lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband; at the same time.^[a] Also, those of the same gender are not to be married to each other or engage in same-sex relations.^[b] So-called gender reassignments do not alter a person's nature as to make them truly another gender and then able to marry, but gender is decided by God upon conception.^[c] That some are born with deformaties, such as hermaphrodites, do not make for an exception to this rule. That there are imperfections in all human bodies is the result of the curse of sin brought upon the world by Adam and Eve.^[d] Scripture is clear that marriage is for one man and one woman who are fit for marriage and its duties prior to marriage.^[e] If any are mentally or physically disabled so as to be incapable of fulfilling this duty prior to marriage, they ought to remain single and to serve the Lord with a single devotion as they are able. If any are married who were fit for marriage but later become unfit due to injury or sickness, they are to remain married. If any homosexual "marriage" has occurred prior to coming to faith, those who are in such relationships ought to sever such relations because of the following reasons: First, the only proper repentance for a sinful vow is to break that vow because a sinful vow is sin and sin must be turned away from.^[f] Second, Scripture nowhere acknowledges the legitimacy of such marriages, therefore there is not a true marriage bond in God's eyes for same-sex couples and no obligation to remain in the relationship. Third, the Gospel requires all believers to repent (turn from sin)^[g] and those who remain in a sinful sexual relationship cannot rightly claim to have come to know Christ while willfully remaining in rebellion to Christ.

[a] Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5, 6; Prov. 2:17. [b] Lev 17; Rom 1:26-27. [c] Gen 1:27. [d] Gen 3:14-19. [e] SOS 8:4, 8-9. [f] Ezek 33:14. [g] Acts 17:30.

II. The chief purpose of marriage is for the husband to demonstrate, as a living parable, the sacrificial love of Christ for the church and for the wife to demonstrate the devotion of the church to its head.^[a] As such, the husband is to be a model of sacrifice^[b] by submissively seeking the will of God the Father^[c] by forsaking his own will for the good of his wife and family. He is to lead, but not by force, by being the chief of servants, not lording it over others, placing others before himself, as a model of setting aside his own will to accomplish the will of God, and to serve his wife just as as Christ came to serve His church and set for them an example. Just as Christ leads the church by winning its affections, not by force but by revealing Himself to be a supremely desirable treasure, so also a husband is to lead by winning the affections of his wife and making himself in every way appealing, good, and a fountain of blessings. Thus a man who is self-willed, domineering, and seeks to impose "his own vision" for his family is a tyrant, disobedient to God, and an unfaithful husband because he has failed to exemplify Christ in his marriage. The wife is to imitate the church in its submission to Christ. But because her husband still has the remnants of sinful flesh still in him, she is not to submit unto sin nor is she to neglect her duty to confront sins remaining in her husband. She is to love her husband by submitting to him in all things by laying aside her own will, with a wise and thinking mind, but never sinning in her submission (for she cannot submit where her husband is asking her to sin), and not neglecting the duty of addressing sins that remain in her husband. But in confronting sin, she is not to be a contentious wife, not self-willed, not impatient, but gentle, self-controlled, humble,

placing others before herself, and patient.

The secondary purposes of marriage are for the mutual help and delight of husband and wife,^[b] for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with a holy seed;^[c] and for preventing of uncleanness.^[d]

^[a] Eph 5:23. ^[b] Eph 5:25. ^[c] Matt 6:10; Matt 26:39 ^[b] Gen. 2:18. Prov 5:19. | ^[c] Mal. 2:15. | ^[d] I Cor. 7:2, 9.

III. It is lawful for all interracial, international, inter-socioeconomic, inter-educated kinds of people to marry and intermarry, who are able with judgment to give their consent.^[e] Yet is it the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord:^[f] and therefore those who profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, doctrinally unorthodox Christians, or idolaters: neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies.^[g]

^[e] Heb. 13:4; I Tim. 4:3; I Cor. 7:36, 37, 38; Gen. 24:57, 58. | ^[f] I Cor. 7:39. | ^[g] Gen. 34:14; Exod. 34:16; Deut. 7:3, 4; I Kings 11:4; Neh. 13:25, 26, 27; Mal. 2:11, 12; II Cor. 6:14.

IV. Marriage should not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden by the Word;^[h] 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.^[i]

^[h] Lev. 18 ch.; I Cor. 5:1; Amos 2:7. | ^[i] Mark 6:18; Lev. 18:24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

V. Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, gives just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract.^[l] In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce:^[m] and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.^[n]

^[l] Matt. 1:18, 19, 20. | ^[m] Matt. 5:31, 32. | ^[n] Matt. 19:9; Rom. 7:2, 3.

VI. Although the corruption of man is such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage: yet nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage:^[o] wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion, in their own case.^[p]

^[o] Matt. 19:8, 9; I Cor. 7:15; Matt. 19:6. | ^[p] Deut. 24:1, 2, 3, 4.

26. What We Believe About the Church

I. The true universal Church which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head over it; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of Him that fills all in all.^[a]

^[a] Eph. 1:10, 22, 23; Eph. 5:23, 27, 32; Col. 1:18.

II. The visible Church, which is also universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion;^[b] and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ,^[c] the house and family of God,^[d] out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.^[e]

^[b] I Cor. 1:2; I Cor. 12:12, 13; Ps. 2:8; Rev. 7:9; Rom. 15:9, 10, 11, 12. | ^[c] Matt. 13:47; Isa. 9:7. | ^[d] Eph. 2:19; Eph. 3:15. | ^[e] Acts 2:47.

III. Unto this visible Church Christ has given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and does by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.^[g]

^[g] I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11, 12, 13; Matt. 28:19, 20; Isa. 59:21.

IV. This universal Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible.^[h] And particular Churches, which are members of it, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the Gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.^[i]

^[h] Rom. 11:3, 4; Rev. 12:6, 14. | ^[i] Rev. 2 and 3; I Cor. 5:6, 7.

V. The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error.^[k] and some have so degenerated, as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan.^[l] Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth, to worship God according to His will.^[m]

^[k] I Cor. 13:12; Rev. 2 and 3; Matt. 13:24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47. | ^[l] Rev. 18:2; Rom. 11:18, 19, 20, 21, 22. | ^[m] Matt. 16:18; Ps. 72:17; Ps. 102:28; Matt. 28:19, 20.

VI. There is no other head of the Church, but the Lord Jesus Christ.^[n]

^[n] Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22.

27. What We Believe About the Communion of the Saints

I. All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head by His Spirit and by faith, have fellowship

with Him in His grace, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory:^[a] and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces,^[b] and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.^[c]

^[a] John 1:3; Eph. 3:16, 17, 18, 19; John 1:16; Eph. 2:5, 6; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 6:5, 6; II Tim. 2:12. | ^[b] Eph. 4:15, 16; I Cor. 12:7; I Cor. 3:21, 22, 23; Col. 2:19. | ^[c] I Thess. 5:11, 14; Rom. 1:11, 12, 14; I John 3:16, 17, 18; Gal. 6:10.

II. Saints by profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God; and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification;^[d] as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities, and necessities. This communion, as God offers opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.^[e]

^[d] Heb. 10:24, 25; Acts 2:42, 46; Isa. 2:3; I Cor. 11:20. | ^[e] Acts 2:44, 45; I John 3:17; II Cor. 8 and 9 chapters; Acts 11:29, 30.

III. This communion which the saints have with Christ, does not make them, in any way, partakers of the substance of His Godhead; or to be equal with Christ, in any respect: to affirm either of which is impious and blasphemous.^[f] Nor does their communion one with another, as saints, take away, or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods and possessions.^[g]

^[f] Col. 1:18, 19; I Cor. 8:6; Isa. 42:8; I Tim. 6:15, 16; Ps. 45:7, with Heb. 1:8, 9. | ^[g] Exod. 20:15; Eph. 4:28; Acts 5:4.

28. What We Believe About the Ordinances - Baptism and Communion

I. Ordinances are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace,^[a] immediately instituted by God,^[b] to represent Christ and His benefits; and to confirm our interest in Him;^[c] as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church, and the rest of the world;^[d] and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word.^[e]

^[a] Rom. 4:11; Gen. 17:7, 10. | ^[b] Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:23. | ^[c] I Cor. 10:16; I Cor. 11:25, 26; Gal. 3:17. | ^[d] Rom. 15:8; Exod. 12:48; Gen. 34:14. | ^[e] Rom. 6:3, 4; I Cor. 10:16, 21.

II. There is in every ordinance a truly spiritual relationship between the sign and the thing signified^[f]. This is similar to how there is a truly spiritual relationship between proclaiming the Gospel of salvation and God's savingly working on the hearts of people.

^[f] Gen. 17:10; Matt. 26:27, 28; Tit. 3:5.

III. The grace which is exhibited in or by the ordinances rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither does the efficacy of a ordinance depend upon the piety or intention of him that administers it:^[g] but it depends upon the work of the Spirit,^[h] and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use of it, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.^[i]

^[g] Rom. 2:28, 29; I Pet. 3:21. | ^[h] Matt. 3:11; I Cor. 12:13. | ^[i] Matt. 26:27, 28; Matt. 28:19, 20.

IV. There are only two ordinances commanded by Christ our Lord in the Gospel: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Neither of which may be dispensed by any but by a minister of the Word lawfully ordained.^[k]

^[k] Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:20, 23, I Cor. 4:1; Heb. 5:4.

V. The ordinances of the Old Testament, in regard to the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the New Testament.^[l]

^[l] I Cor. 10:1, 2, 3, 4.

29. What We Believe About Baptism

I. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be for 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.^[a]

^[a] Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:4.

II. 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.^[a]

^[a] Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36, 37; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12; Acts 18:8.

III. 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.^[a]

^[a] Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8:38.

IV. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is the preferred administration of this ordinance^[a] though exceptions such as death bed conversions and the like may require sprinkling to symbolize the washing of sins.^[b]

[^a] Matthew 3:16; John 3:2. | [^b] Heb. 9:10, 19, 20, 21, 22; Acts 2:41; Acts 16:33; Mark 7:4.

V. Although it is a sin to neglect this ordinance,^[ⁿ] yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it;^[^o] or, that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.^[^p]

[ⁿ] Luke 7:30 with Exod. 4:24, 25, 26. | [^o] Rom. 4:11; Acts 10:2, 4, 22, 31, 45, 47. | [^p] Acts 8:13, 23.

30. What We Believe About the Lord's Supper

I. Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein He was betrayed, instituted the ordinance of His body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in His Church, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death; the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His body, the church.^[^a]

[^a] I Cor. 11:23, 24, 25, 26; I Cor. 10:16, 17, 21; I Cor. 12:13.

II. In this ordinance, Christ is not offered up to His Father; nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sins of the living or dead;^[^b] but only a commemoration of that one offering up of Himself, by Himself, upon the cross, once for all: and a spiritual offering of all possible praise to God for the same:^[^c] so that the Roman Catholic "sacrifice" of the mass (as they call it) is most contrary and heretical to Christ's one, only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of His elect.^[^d]

[^b] Heb. 9:22, 25, 26, 28. | [^c] I Cor. 11:24, 25, 26; Matt. 26:26, 27. | [^d] Heb. 7:23, 24, 27; Heb. 10:11, 12, 14, 18.

III. The Lord Jesus has, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to declare His word of institution to the people; 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.^[^e]

[^e] Matt. 26:26, 27, 28 & Mark 14:22, 23, 24 and Luke 22:19, 20 with I Cor. 11:23, 24, 25, 26.

IV. The outward elements in this ordinance, are truly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, and have such relation to Him crucified that they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent--"the body and blood of Christ"^[^k]--but in their substance and nature they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.^[^l]

^[k] Matt. 26:26, 27, 28. | ^[l] I Cor. 11:26, 27, 28; Matt. 26:29.

V. 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; is contrary to the actual biblical nature of the ordinance, and has been the cause of many superstitions and of gross idolatries.^[m]

^[m] Acts 3:21 with I Cor. 11:24, 25, 26; Luke 24:6, 39.

VI. Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance,^[n] do then also, inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then, not corporally or carnally, in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet, as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.^[o]

^[n] I Cor. 11:28. | ^[o] I Cor. 10:16.

VII. Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this ordinance: yet they do not receive the thing signified by it, but by their unworthy coming to it, they are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord to their own damnation. All unbelievers are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, thus they are they unworthy of the Lord's table. While such people remain unbelievers, they cannot partake of these holy mysteries rightly,^[p] or be admitted to them.^[q]

^[p] I Cor. 11:27, 28, 29; II Cor. 6:14, 15, 16. | ^[q] I Cor. 5:6, 7, 13; II Thess. 3:6, 14, 15; Matt. 7:6.

31. What We Believe About Church Censures

I. The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, has appointed a church government, in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.^[a]

^[a] Isa. 9:6, 7; I Tim. 5:17; I Thess. 5:12; Acts 20:17, 28; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; I Cor. 12:28; Matt. 28:18, 19, 20.

II. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed: by virtue whereof, they have power respectively to retain, and remit sins; to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the Word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the Gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require.^[b]

^[b] Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:17, 18; John 20:21, 22, 23; II Cor. 2:6, 7, 8.

III. Church censures are necessary, for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from the like offences, for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump, for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the Gospel, and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if they should suffer His covenant and the seals thereof to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.^[c]

^[c] I Cor. 5 chap.; I Tim. 5:20; Matt. 7:6; I Tim. 1:20; I Cor. 11:27 to the end, with Jude ver. 23.

IV. For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition; suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season; and by excommunication from the Church; according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person.^[d]

^[d] I Thess. 5:12; II Thess. 3:6, 14, 15; I Cor. 5:4, 5, 13; Matt. 18:17; Tit. 3:10.

32. What We Believe about Synods and Councils

I. For the better government, and further edification of the Church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called synods or councils.^[a]

^[a] Acts 15:2, 4, 6.

II. As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with, about matters of religion;^[b] so when a certain magistrate becomes an open enemy to the Church (as was the case of the Judaizers in Acts or Arius in the early church), the ministers of Christ of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons upon delegation from their Churches, may meet together in such assemblies to address such issues.^[c]

^[b] Isa. 49:23; I Tim. 2:1, 2; II Chron. 19:8, 9, 10, 11; II Chron. 29, 30 chaps.; Matt. 2:4, 5; Prov. 11:14. | ^[c] Acts 15:2, 4, 22, 23, 25.

III. It belongs to synods and councils, ministerially to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his Church; to receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in His Word.^[d]

^[d] Acts 15:15, 19, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31; Acts 16:4; Matt. 18:17, 18, 19, 20.

IV. All synods or councils, since the Apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err; and many have erred. Therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith, or practice; but to be used as a help in both.^[e]

^[e] Eph. 2:20; Acts 17:11; I Cor. 2:5; II Cor. 1:24.

V. Synods and councils are to handle, or conclude, nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth; unless by way of humble petition, in cases extraordinary; or by way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate.^[f] They should preach concerning the sins of rulers^[g] and even ought to proclaim the Gospel to them.^[h]

^[f] Luke 12:13, 14; John 18:36. | ^[g] Matt 14:4. | ^[h] Acts 26.

33. Of the State of Man After Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead

I. The bodies of men, after death, return to dust and see corruption:^[a] but their souls (which neither die nor sleep) having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them:^[b] the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies.^[c] And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day.^[d]

^[a] Gen. 3:19; Acts 13:36. | ^[b] Luke 23:43; Eccles. 12:7. | ^[c] Heb. 12:23; II Cor. 5:1, 6, 8; Phil. 1:23, with Acts 3:21 & Eph. 4:10. | ^[d] Luke 16:23, 24; Acts 1:25; Jude ver. 6, 7; I Pet. 3:19.

II. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed:^[e] 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 for ever.^[f]

^[e] I Thess. 4:17; I Cor. 15:51, 52. | ^[f] Job 19:26, 27; I Cor. 15:42, 43, 44.

III. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor: the bodies of the just, by His Spirit, unto honour; and be made conformable to His own glorious body.^[g]

^[g] Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; I Cor. 15:43; Phil. 3:21.

34. What We Believe About the Last Judgment

I. God has appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus

Christ,^[a] to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father.^[b] In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged,^[c] but likewise all persons that have lived upon 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.^[d]

[a] Acts 17:31. | [b] John 5:22, 27. | [c] I Cor. 6:3; Jude ver. 6; II Pet. 2:4. | [d] II Cor. 5:10; Eccles. 12:14; Rom. 2:16; Rom. 14:10, 12; Matt. 12:36, 37.

II. 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 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 refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord: but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.^[e]

[e] Matt. 25:31 to the end; Rom. 2:5, 6; Rom. 9:22, 23; Matt. 25:21; Acts 3:19; II Thess. 1:7, 8, 9, 10.

III. 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;^[f] so will He have that 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 be ever prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen.^[g]

[f] II Pet. 3:11, 14; II Cor. 5:10, 11; II Thess. 1:5, 6, 7; Luke 21:27, 28; Rom. 8:23, 24, 25. | [g] Matt. 24:36, 42, 43, 44; Mark 13:35, 36, 37; Luke 12:35, 36; Rev. 22:20.

35. What We Believe About the Spiritual Gifts

I. The spiritual gifts (the charismata) of the church *remain until* the return of Christ^[a] with the exception of the offices of apostleship and prophet.^[b] They remain because the body of Christ, the church, continually is in need of mutual edification, the leadership of pastors, the instruction of teachers, the service of deacons, and every other form of the spiritual gifts that minister to the church *under* the final authority of the Word of God.^[c] However, the canon of Scripture, now being complete and sufficient,^[d] and the final and complete revelation by Christ,^[e] make the offices of apostleship and prophet now obsolete. Therefore, the preaching and teaching done by the church is to find all of its special revelatory truths from the Word of God.^[f]

[a] 1 Cor 1:7; 13:10. | [b] 1 Cor 15:8; Heb 1:1-2. | [c] 1 Cor 14:37; Eph 2:20; 4:9-16. | [d] 2 Tim 3:16-18. | [e] Heb 1:1-2 | [f] 2 Tim 4:2

36. The Christian Life and Suffering - A Response to the Prosperity Gospel

I. Suffering in the Christian life is a necessity for the Christian life. Scriptures say, "[T]hrough many tribulations [θλίψεων] we must [δεῖ] enter the kingdom of God."^[a] Because suffering is a necessity, it is contrary to the true Gospel to promise prosperity and complete victory in this present life. Christ has purchased our final victory on the cross^[b] and Christians await their final victory at the return of Christ.^[c] Although the course of the Christian life is one of abundant overcoming, our overcoming is in the context of suffering and persecution.^[d] Suffering is used by God to increase the Christian in godly endurance, character, and hope.^[e] Suffering is also used by God to test and reveal genuine faith^[f] and to expose those who pretend to believe but are not able to persevere to the end due to the fear of man or the love of this world.^[g]

^[a] Acts 14:22. | ^[b] Rev 12:11. | ^[c] 1 Pet 1:5 | ^[d] Rom 8:36-37 | ^[e] Rom 5:1-5 | ^[f] 1 Pet 1:7 | ^[g] Matt 13:18-23

37. What We Believe About Persecution

I. Scripture teaches us that persecution is to be expected because those who are unsaved are hostile to God,^[a] enemies of the cross,^[b] and enslaved to the devil^[c] who is filled with rage against both the Jews and those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Jewish Messiah.^[d] Jesus warned that the unsaved will hate us because they first hated Him.^[e] What should Christians do when persecuted? First, it is commanded of Christ to flee when we are persecuted to sustain our lives^[f] and for the purpose of protecting the ministry of the Gospel's proclamation.^[g] Second, it is required of Christians that they persevere.^[h] Third, it is lawful for the persecuted who cannot escape to seek government protection.^[i] Fourth, Christians should use persecution as a tool from the Lord for self-examination, to determine the genuineness of their faith or to expose the lack of true faith, thereby revealing that they are yet unsaved.^[j] Fifth, our response is to live a life of holiness so that by our lives we put to shame the evil scheming of the world.^[k] Finally, by persecution, we are to remind ourselves that our inheritance is not in this world, but that we are sojourners awaiting an eternal kingdom, one that is to come.^[l]

^[a] Rom 8:6-8. | ^[b] Phil 3:18. | ^[c] 2 Tim 2:26. | ^[d] Rev 12:17. | ^[e] John 15:18. | ^[f] Matt 10:23 | ^[g] Acts 8:4 | ^[h] 1 Cor 4:12; 2 Tim 2:12; Heb 10:36. | ^[i] Acts 25:11. | ^[j] 2 Cor 13:15; Matt 13:21. | ^[k] Tit 2:8; 1 Pet 3:16. | ^[l] Heb 11.

38. What We Believe About The Antichrist, The Deception of the World, and Return of Christ

We affirm that in the days before Christ's Second Coming, there will first be a great rebellion and then the Antichrist, an actual "man of lawlessness," will be revealed.^[a] The church will be able to identify the Antichrist because of the powerful working of the devil and counterfeit miracles.^[b] Those who know Christ will not be deceived nor can they be deceived, so they need not fear his appearance.^[c] But among all who do not believe in Jesus Christ, these the Lord will hand over to believe the lies of the devil and the Antichrist so that such people will perish in their sins.^[d] The Antichrist will be destroyed on the day of the appearance of Christ by the very hand of Christ.^[e] And when Christ appears, the dead in Christ will rise first. After this, believers who remain alive will also be glorified and will be caught up in the sky to meet Him.^[f] From that day forward, we shall be with the Lord forever^[g] and no more harm shall come to God's people.

[a] 2 Thess 2:1-4 | [b] 2 Thess 2:9 | [c] Mark 13:22; John 10:5; 1 John 2:26-27 | [d] 2 Thess 2:9-12. | [e] 2 Thess 2:8 | [f] 1 Thess 4:15-17 | [g] 1 Thess 4:17

39. What We Believe About The Duties of Parents

We affirm that the ideal end of our family ministry is that fathers will take on the duties of family discipleship. By targeting fathers, we are fashioning our plan according to the biblical model for revival and multigenerational faithfulness. Scripture directs its imperatives for child discipleship specifically to fathers.^[a] From the first of such imperatives, God expected Abraham, a father, to disciple his children (Gen 18:9). Similarly, Moses commanded Israel to disciple its children (Deut 6:4-11), a command that David said was directed to fathers (Psalm 78:5; Hebrew אב). And Malachi 6:6 foretells of revival that occurs when the hearts of fathers (from the Hebrew אב) are turned to their children. The result of fathers doing this, according to Luke, is that fathers (πατέρων) will “make ready for the Lord a people prepared” (Luke 1:17). That is, the direct result of father-led discipleship is that children will be made ready for the Gospel of Christ. This biblical pattern of revival is precisely why family-integrated churches believe that “particularly fathers—should be the primary disciple-makers in their children’s lives.” Therefore, our plan here shares the same ideal goal of churches such as the "family-integrated" churches and "homeschool-friendly" churches but, as we will see below, there are some obvious barriers to being a church comprised entirely of intact homeschooling families. Our goal is that every person from every family type (homeschooled, intact, divorced, single-parent, believing children from unbelieving households, etc.) be accepted and discipled.

Things Required for Success Success in our primary goal requires accomplishing a few preliminary goals. First, parents need to be trained in the Gospel before they can teach the Gospel to children. One obstacle to this goal is that we live in an individualistic society, “a major obstacle to living the complete Christian life.”^[b] That God gave pastors “to equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph 4:12) runs contrary to western thinking. This is a problem because those who are not equipped by pastors will lack the necessary skills for ministry in the home.

Therefore, a prerequisite to fathers leading families is to equip them through pastoral ministry. Second, fathers particularly need to know that family discipleship is their biblical duty. Years ago, in my book *Fathers Leading Families*, I commented,

Why does it matter that fathers teach instead of professional youth ministers? It matters because of these words,

“So that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments...”

(Psalms 78:5-7) When fathers teach, God’s works are remembered and children walk in the commandments of the

Lord. When fathers are not teaching, rebellion against God naturally ensues.^[c]

Fathers need a sense of the necessity, urgency, and weightiness of their labors. As J.C. Ryle put it, fathers must “[t]rain [their] children with an abiding persuasion on your mind that much depends upon [them].”^[d]

Fathers have been appointed by God for the duty of family discipleship. Fathers have an impact. When nations apostatize, God blames fathers (Psalm 78:8). But when fathers are faithful, Psalm 78 sets out the expectation that God, through His covenant faithfulness, will produce multigenerational faithfulness.

Finally, because not all children have Christian fathers. Mothers and/or the influence of "families-in-faith" (spiritually adoptive families) will be required. That mothers are instrumental is attested to in Scripture. Paul traced the faith of Timothy back to his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice (2 Tim 1:5). Though He uses fathers greatly, God does not need Christian fathers for the next generation to be saved. And in the absence of Christians fathers and mothers, church families can “adopt” children in the faith to supplement for the absence of parents. We cannot be so narrow in our focus on fathers that we neglect the other means God has given for family discipleship. .

[a] Gen 18:9; Deut 6:4-11; Psalm 78:5; Mal 6:6; Luke 1:17; Eph 6:4; Col 3:21 | [b] Ajith Fernando, *Discipling in a Multicultural World* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2019) 62. | [c] Greg Thornberg, *Fathers Leading Families* (Coolidge, AZ: Thornberg Christian Books, 2013), 13. | [d] J.C. Ryle, *The Duties of Parents and The Baptist Catechism* (Coolidge, AZ: Thornberg Christian Books, 2014), 8.

40. What We Believe About The Things That Deny the Gospel's Power

We believe that the church is ever prone to seek so-called "better" things and so-called "better" movements than the sufficiency of the Gospel itself and the promises that accompany the Gospel. No sooner has true revival come along when the devil comes to deceive the church with the lie that he has a "better" solution to holiness and pleasing God. But the things that the devil

suggests to the churches have more to do with distractions from the Gospel such as unbiblical political views, isolationism, unbiblical degrees of sheltering, false food doctrines, militance, anti-authority sentiments, physical fitness and the like. Of such things Paul said, "These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh" (Col 2:23) and in other places he calls these the "teachings of demons" (1 Tim 4). Along these lines, we believe that Christians and pastors who teach on the alleged "necessity" of unbiblical marriage practices, strict food teachings, and other extreme extrabiblical practices have handed themselves over to be instruments of the devil's own teachings to the destruction and division of the church. Redemption Church affirms the sufficiency of the Gospel to save, of the Word and the Spirit to sanctify and in all other legitimate biblical practices for the sanctification of the church. Though the Bible has many things to actually teach about these topics, We forbid all false doctrines on food, marriage, politics, fitness, family-size, seperation, and the like. These things deny the power of the Gospel and the sufficiency of the Gospel to sustain Christians in holiness. We strive to maintain a balanced and wise Gospel-centered life and seek not only to avoid such errors but also to rebuke it both locally and publicly.