

Immanuel Free Reformed Church



Membership
Manual

January 2009

Immanuel Free Reformed Church

Schoeneck, Pennsylvania

www.ImmanuelFRC.org

www.sermonaudio.com/immanuelrc

Table of Contents

Church Covenant	5
Church Faith and Doctrine	13
Book of Church Order	53
Church Positions and Policies	71
Church Missions	77
Center for Family-Integrated Churches	87

“And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.”
(Isaiah 58:12)

Church Covenant





Out of a sincere desire to glorify God and advance His kingdom here on earth, and trusting in His sovereign mercy and grace that we have become members of the true body of Christ, we do now, in the presence of God and men, solemnly and willingly submit ourselves to Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this church according to the terms of this Covenant.

Authority

1. We affirm that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church and that His Word as revealed to us in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the ultimate and final authority in all matters of faith and practice (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23-24; John 8:31; Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Deuteronomy 11:1; 12:32).

2. We affirm, therefore, that the authority of the church is not independent or absolute, but rather the church's authority is derived from Christ and His Word, and that only as the church correctly interprets and applies the Scripture does the church have the authority to command and bind the conscience (Mark 7:7-13; Matthew 18:18; Titus 2:15).

3. We affirm that each local church stands directly under Christ and His Word, and that each local church has the authority to conduct its ministry free from the control of other churches, persons, or the state (Acts 20:17, 28; 5:29; Matthew 22:21).

4. We affirm that the church, as the ground and pillar of truth, is responsible to discern, declare, and live the truth of the Word of God, and that as a local church we are charged with the responsibility of holding forth a common confession (i.e., a statement of faith and practice) as a light and testimony to the truth in this dark world (1 Timothy 3:15; Jude 3; Matthew 5:14-16; Deuteronomy 4:5-8).

Interpretation

5. We affirm that this common confession to God's truth must be based on the whole counsel of God which 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 or traditions of men (Acts 20:7; Deuteronomy 4:2; Jeremiah 23:16; Matthew 15:3; 22:29-32).

6. We affirm that the true meaning of Scripture can only be discerned by a careful consideration of the context (both literary and historical) and the grammar of the text or passage in question, and that the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself, and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly (2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Corinthians 4:2; 2 Peter 3:16).

7. We affirm that the church is dependent upon the illumination of the Holy Spirit for a correct interpretation of Scripture, and only as each member is responsive to the Spirit speaking in the Word and humbly submits to His instruction can we hope for a common confession of the truth (Psalm 119:18, 26; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 1 John 2:27).

8. We affirm that Christ has given us teachers whom He has called and equipped by His Spirit to teach us the Word of God so that we might come to the unity of the faith (a common confession), and therefore, to these men, we must give all proper respect and attention. However, their teaching is to be received with discernment and members should be permitted to interact with the men who teach so as to foster unity and growth in the knowledge of the Scripture (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 5:17; 2 Timothy 4:1-4; Acts 17:11; 20:7-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 14:29)

Membership

9. We affirm that those who would be admitted to the membership of this church must give testimony to faith in Jesus Christ and have received Christian baptism according to the command of Christ and His Apostles. They must agree to submit themselves to Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this church according to the terms of this church's covenant, doctrinal standards, and church order (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Acts 2:41, 47; Romans 16:17; Matthew 18:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14; 1 Corinthians 5:12-13).

10. We affirm that each member of the church, both constituent and associate, is responsible to walk in fellowship with Christ and seek to live a blameless life of obedience to His commandments; to give themselves to the study of the Scriptures and to prayer; to walk in love towards one another, bearing with one another, forgiving one another, seeking to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; to serve in the church according to their gifts and abilities; to support the ministry of this church through their tithes and offerings; to admonish one another in love; to be submissive to the leadership and discipleship of this church, esteeming the leaders highly in love for their work's sake (Genesis 17:1; Deuteronomy 10:12; Psalm 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Timothy 5:17; Malachi 3:8-10; Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17).

11. We affirm that each individual member of the church has liberty of conscience in those matters of faith and practice where the church has not reached agreement or has not expressly defined the boundaries of liberty. Each member, in such cases, is to be convinced in their own mind as to the teaching of Scripture, be careful not to be a stumbling block to others, and to walk in faith before God. Christian liberty must never be construed as freedom to sin, but as freedom to serve God (Romans 14:1-23; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:23-32; Galatians 5:1; Romans 6:15-23).

Leadership

12. We affirm that Christ mediates His rule in the church through a plurality of godly men called "Elders." These men are prepared by Christ, and having distinguished themselves in both conduct and doctrine as being worthy of imitation, they are to be chosen and appointed by the church to serve as overseers. The work of Elders is to shepherd the church of God by teaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments, governing the church's affairs, acting as judges on her behalf, and by giving whatever care is necessary for the spiritual well-being of the members. Deacons are appointed by the church to assist the Elders in caring for the needs of the members, and to help in the administration and work of the local church (Acts 20:17, 28;

1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Corinthians 6:1-6; James 5:14)

13. We affirm that Christ gives to His church elders for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry. They are, in accord with their gifts, to govern the church and to labor in the Word and doctrine, preaching and teaching the Scriptures for the defense of the faith, the edification of believers and the evangelization of the lost (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 4:6-16; 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:23-26; 3:14-4:5).

Discipline

14. We affirm that we are to obey Christ by admonishing one another for unfaithfulness to the Word of God, and to hold one another accountable to the terms of this covenant. Those who sin are to be admonished according to the teaching of Scripture. Those who repent are to be forgiven and restored. Those who will not repent are to be disciplined by the church. Church discipline is necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for the deterring of others from like offences, for purging out that leaven which might infect the whole church, for vindicating the honor of Christ, and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall on the church, if we allow His covenant to be profaned by notorious and obstinate sinners (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; James 5:19-20).

Worship

15. We affirm our duty and privilege to gather on the Lord's Day to worship God in the assembly of His people, to praise Him in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; to join in prayer with our brothers and sisters; to partake of the Lord's Supper and Baptism; to receive instruction through the preaching of God's Word; and to keep the Lord's Day as a holy Sabbath for the glory of God and the refreshment of our bodies and souls (Psalm 95:1-7; 122:1; Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 2:42; Exodus 20:8-11; Revelation 1:10; Isaiah 58:13-14).

Mission

16. We affirm our responsibility to obey Christ's Great Commission to make disciples of all the nations, and we will endeavor, by God's grace, to obey this command. Therefore, we encourage each member to seek out opportunities of proclaiming the gospel and bearing witness to the faith by their example, word, and testimony, laboring for the extension of Christ's kingdom in all spheres of life (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-48).

Christian Piety and Responsibility

17. We affirm that a Christian is saved, not by good works, but for good works, and is enabled by the Holy Spirit to walk in obedience to God's Word. We affirm that the believer in Christ is to make his calling and election sure by giving all diligence to the disciplines and graces of the Christian life such as: frequent, earnest, and fervent prayer, both for his own life and that of others; fasting; meekness; virtue; knowledge; patience; brotherly kindness; and love, including love of enemies. These disciplines and graces are to flow from a life dedicated to the pursuit of God, and desiring to please and obey Him. We affirm that the duty of the Christian is to glorify God by seeking first the kingdom of God, by keeping God's commandments, by denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and by living soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14; Philippians 2:12-13; Romans 8:1-4; 2 Peter 1:4-10; Proverbs 25:21-22; Matthew 5:16; 6:33; John 14:15; Deuteronomy 4:6-8; Titus 2:12; Romans 12:1-2).

The Family

18. We affirm that the family is to be a vital center of Christian discipleship, and that as a church we will seek to support and strengthen this most important institution for the advance of God's kingdom (Genesis 1:28; Deuteronomy 32:46,47; Psalm 127:1-5).

19. We affirm that the husband is the head of the home, and that under Christ he is to give godly leadership, seeking to direct his family in the ways of the Lord; that parents are primarily responsible for the spiritual training of their children (this includes discipline and biblical instruction); and that our goal as parents is to raise up "godly seed" for the Lord (Ephesians 5:22- 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Proverbs 29:15, 17; Malachi 2:15

20. We affirm that men are to exercise godly dominion over the particular area of life that God has called them to. First, over his own personal life. Second, over his family, protecting them, providing for them, teaching and guiding them in the ways of God and maintaining a haven of peace and order. Third, over the wider society, as God has particularly called and enabled him, in church, community life, or civil government. The wife is given dominion, under the authority of her husband, to be a keeper at home, bearing children, and instilling into them all the virtues and qualities of life, to be a help meet and support to her husband in his dominion calling, and to manage the home in a way that is orderly, peaceful, and blessed (Genesis 1:27-28; Proverbs 31; Titus 2:4-5).

The Church

21. We affirm that the true church is the body of Christ, consisting of the elect of God, and is the ground and pillar of truth in the world. We affirm that the local church is a body of professing believers who covenant together to discern, declare, and live the Word of God, to worship God in spirit and truth, to edify one another in love, to observe the holy ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to carry out church discipline, and to advance Christ's kingdom in obedience to the Great Commission (1 Tim. 3:15; Jude 3; Colossians 3:12, 16-17; John 4:23-24; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Ephesians 4:16; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Matthew 5:13-20; 6:10; 28:18-20).

Civil Government

22. We affirm that civil government was instituted and ordained by God, and that the civil magistrate is God's minister charged with the duty of punishing evildoers according to the standards of God's law and of providing protection and peace for those who do well. Thus, only "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness" are fully qualified to serve as magistrates. At His ascension, Jesus Christ was invested with all authority in Heaven and earth, which includes authority over all magistrates and civil governments. Hence all rulers and nations are commanded to bow in submission to Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords (Genesis 9:1-7; Colossians 1:16-17; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20- 21; Proverbs 29:2; Psalm 2; Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 1:5; 19:16; Isaiah 60:12; 1 Timothy 1:9,10; Romans 13:1-6; Exodus 18:21).

Affiliation

23. We affirm our unity with each and every church that is founded upon Christ and His

Word and is faithful to keep His commandments (Ephesians 4:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; Ephesians 2:19-22).

24. We affirm the need, as a church body, to seek fellowship with other churches of like faith and practice that we might be a support and encouragement to one another; and that at certain times it is advisable to seek counsel and wisdom from the Elders of other churches (Acts 15:6-35; Proverbs 15:22).

Amendments

We affirm that the church is authoritative in all matters relating to the establishment and amendment of this covenant, and that we, as individual members of the church, are responsible to yield to the judgment of the church or to peaceably and honorably attempt to guide the church to a new consensus regarding the terms of this covenant.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through, the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which, is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; To whom be, glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

Church Faith & Doctrine





We affirm our belief in the historic confessions of the Christian Church as given in the:

a. The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic [universal] church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

b. The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and on the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets; and we believe in one holy catholic [universal] and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

c. The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689

We accept the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 and Keach's Catechism as our doctrinal standards with the following addendum:

1. Clarifications: In Chapter 10, paragraph 3, instead of "Infants dying in infancy," we would read, "Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated..." In Chapter 19, paragraph 4, we understand the "judicial laws" of the Old Testament as being a subset of the "moral law," and that the phrase "their general equity only being of modern use" indicates that the principles and standards of justice inherent in the judicial laws of Old Testament Israel are binding on nations in the New Testament age. In Chapter 24, paragraph 3, we understand "the wholesome laws of each kingdom and commonwealth" to refer to those laws that conform to the standards of God's revealed law. In Chapter 26, paragraph 4, we believe it best to end our confession with

the phrase “neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be the head thereof.” In Chapter 29, paragraph 4, we would read “Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is the best means for the due administration of this ordinance.”

2. Christ’s Mediatorial Kingdom. At His ascension Jesus Christ was exalted to the right of the Father and given authority over all things in heaven and earth. As a reward for His obedience unto death, He has been given the nations as His inheritance, and has been charged by the Father with the task of breaking the rebellion of the nations and putting all enemies to His reign under His feet. By His sovereign power Christ is going forth in the world to accomplish the subduing of His enemies, and will at last triumph over them and establish His kingdom to the four corners of earth so that the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the seas. Having fulfilled His commission as mediatorial king, Christ shall come again in glory, raise the dead, and deliver up the kingdom to the Father. (Psalm 2; 110; Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:9; Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 13:31-33; 28:18-20; Acts 2:32-36; 1 Corinthians 15:23-28; Ephesians 1:10; Philippians 2:8-11; Revelation 2:26-27; 7:9-10; 19:11-16)

London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)

Chapter 1: Of the Holy Scriptures

1. The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God’s revealing his will unto his people being now ceased. (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29, 31; Ephesians 2:20; Romans 1:19-21; Romans 2:14,15; Psalms 19:1-3; Hebrews 1:1; Proverbs 22:19-21; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19,20).

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

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, To Titus, To Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second, and third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation

All of which are given by the inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life. (2 Timothy

3:16)

3. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon or rule of the Scripture, and, therefore, are of no authority to the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings. (Luke 24:27, 44; Romans 3:2)

4. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God. (2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:9)

5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church of God to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts. (John 16:13,14; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20, 27)

6. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed. (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Galatians 1:8,9; John 6:45; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12; 1 Corinthians 11:13, 14; 1 Corinthians 14:26,40)

7. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them. (2 Peter 3:16; Psalms 19:7; Psalms 119:130)

8. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope. (Romans 3:2; Isaiah 8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39; 1 Corinthians 14:6, 9, 11, 12, 24, 28; Colossians 3:16)

9. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore when

there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; Acts 15:15, 16)

10. The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved. (Matthew 22:29, 31, 32; Ephesians 2:20; Acts 28:23)

Chapter 2: Of God and of the Holy Trinity

1. The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of himself, infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but himself; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty. (1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 48:12; Exodus 3:14; John 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 4:15, 16; Malachi 3:6; 1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23; Psalms 90:2; Genesis 17:1; Isaiah 6:3; Psalms 115:3; Isaiah 46:10; Proverbs 16:4; Romans 11:36; Exodus 34:6, 7; Hebrews 11:6; Nehemiah 9:32, 33; Psalms 5:5, 6; Exodus 34:7; Nahum 1:2, 3)

2. God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself, is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creature which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, and he hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth; in his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain; he is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands; to him is due from angels and men, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, as creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever he is further pleased to require of them. (John 5:26; Psalms 148:13; Psalms 119:68; Job 22:2, 3; Romans 11:34-36; Daniel 4:25, 34, 35; Hebrews 4:13; Ezekiel 11:5; Acts 15:18; Psalms 145:17; Revelation 5:12-14)

3. In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him. (1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Exodus 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:14,18; John 15:26; Galatians 4:6)

Chapter 3: Of God's Decree

1. God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his

own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established; in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree. (Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9:15, 18; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11; Numbers 23:19; Ephesians 1:3-5)

2. Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions. (Acts 15:18; Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18)

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice. (1 Timothy 5:21; Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:5, 6; Romans 9:22, 23; Jude 4)

4. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished. (2 Timothy 2:19; John 13:18)

5. Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto. (Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11; Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Romans 9:13, 16; Ephesians 2:5, 12)

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only. (1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10; Romans 8:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:5; John 10:26; John 17:9; John 6:64)

7. The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel. (1 Thessalonians 1:4, 5; 2 Peter 1:10; Ephesians 1:6; Romans 11:33; Romans 11:5, 6, 20; Luke 10:20)

Chapter 4: Of Creation

1. In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good. (John 1:2, 3; Hebrews 1:2; Job 26:13; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:31)

2. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, rendering them fit unto that life to God for which they were created;

being made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change. (Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 1:26; Romans 2:14, 15; Genesis 3:6)

3. Besides the law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which whilst they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures. (Genesis 2:17; Genesis 1:26, 28)

Chapter 5: Of Divine Providence

1. God the good Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will; to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy. (Hebrews 1:3; Job 38:11; Isaiah 46:10, 11; Psalms 135:6; Matthew 10:29-31; Ephesians 1:11)

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without his providence; yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently. (Acts 2:23; Proverbs 16:33; Genesis 8:22)

3. God, in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure. (Acts 27:31, 44; Isaiah 55:10, 11; Hosea 1:7; Romans 4:19-21; Daniel 3:27)

4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin. (Romans 11:32-34; 2 Samuel 24:1, 1 Chronicles 21:1; 2 Kings 19:28; Psalms 76:10; Genesis 1:20; Isaiah 10:6, 7, 12; Psalms 1:21; 1 John 2:16)

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends. So that whatsoever befalls any of his elect is by his appointment, for his glory, and their good. (2 Chronicles 32:25, 26, 31; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Romans 8:28)

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

world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, under those means which God useth for the softening of others. (Romans 1:24-26, 28; Romans 11:7, 8; Deuteronomy 29:4; Matthew 13:12; Deuteronomy 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12, 13; Psalms 81:11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Exodus 8:15, 32; Isaiah 6:9, 10; 1 Peter 2:7, 8)

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

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

1. Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof, yet he did not long abide in this honour; Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, then by her seducing Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit, which God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory. (Genesis 2:16, 17; Genesis 3:12,13; 2 Corinthians 11:3)

2. Our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them whereby death came upon all: all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. (Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12, etc; Titus 1:15; Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-19)

3. They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free. (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45, 49; Psalms 51:5; Job 14:4; Ephesians 2:3; Romans 6:20 Romans 5:12; Hebrews 2:14, 15; 1 Thessalonians 1:10)

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. (Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21; James 1:14, 15; Matthew 15:19)

5. The corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and the first motions thereof, are truly and properly sin. (Romans 7:18,23; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8; Romans 7:23-25; Galatians 5:17)

Chapter 7: Of God's Covenant

1. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to him as their creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant. (Luke 17:10; Job 35:7,8)

2. Moreover, man having brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace, wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation

by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe. (Genesis 2:17; Galatians 3:10; Romans 3:20, 21; Romans 8:3; Mark 16:15, 16; John 3:16; Ezekiel 36:26, 27; John 6:44, 45; Psalms 110:3)

3. This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament; and it is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect; and it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality, man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of innocency. (Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 11:6, 13; Romans 4:1, 2, &c.; Acts 4:12; John 8:56)

Chapter 8: Of Christ the Mediator

1. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man; the prophet, priest, and king; head and saviour of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified. (Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 1:19, 20; Acts 3:22; Hebrews 5:5, 6; Psalms 2:6; Luke 1:33; Ephesians 1:22, 23; Hebrews 1:2; Acts 17:31; Isaiah 53:10; John 17:6; Romans 8:30)

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

3. The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of mediator and surety; which office he took not upon himself, but was thereunto called by his Father; who also put all power and judgement in his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same. (Psalms 45:7; Acts 10:38; John 3:34; Colossians 2:3; Colossians 1:19; Hebrews 7:26; John 1:14; Hebrews 7:22; Hebrews 5:5; John 5:22, 27; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36)

4. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which that he might discharge he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us; enduring most grievous sorrows in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, yet saw no corruption: on the third day he arose from the

dead with the same body in which he suffered, with which he also ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world. (Psalms 40:7, 8; Hebrews 10:5-10; John 10:18; Gal 4:4; Matthew 3:15; Galatians 3:13; Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 26:37, 38; Luke 22:44; Matthew 27:46; Acts 13:37; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; John 20:25, 27; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24; Acts 10:42; Romans 14:9, 10; Acts 1:11; 2 Peter 2:4)

5. The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him. (Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:14; Romans 3:25, 26; John 17:2; Hebrews 9:15)

6. Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof were communicated to the elect in all ages, successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices wherein he was revealed, and signified to be the seed which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, being the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever. (1 Corinthians 4:10; Hebrews 4:2; 1 Peter 1:10, 11; Revelation 13:8; Hebrews 13:8)

7. Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture, attributed to the person denominated by the other nature. (John 3:13; Acts 20:28)

8. To all those for whom Christ hath obtained eternal redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them; uniting them to himself by his Spirit, revealing unto them, in and by his Word, the mystery of salvation, persuading them to believe and obey, governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit, and overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation; and all of free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them to procure it. (John 6:37; John 10:15, 16; John 17:9; Romans 5:10; John 17:6; Ephesians 1:9; 1 John 5:20; Romans 8:9, 14; Psalms 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26; John 3:8; Ephesians 1:8)

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

10. This number and order of offices is necessary; for in respect of our ignorance, we stand in need of his prophetic office; and in respect of our alienation from God, and imperfection of the best of our services, we need his priestly office to reconcile us and present us acceptable unto God; and in respect to our averseness and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue and security from our spiritual adversaries, we need his kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom. (John 1:18; Colossians 1:21; Galatians 5:17; John 16:8; Psalms 110:3; Luke 1:74, 75)

Chapter 9: Of Free Will

1. God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon

choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any necessity of nature determined to do good or evil. (Matthew 17:12; James 1:14; Deuteronomy 30:19)

2. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God, but yet was unstable, so that he might fall from it. (Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 3:6)

3. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto. (Romans 5:6; Romans 8:7; Ephesians 2:1, 5; Titus 3:3-5; John 6:44)

4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that by reason of his remaining corruptions, he doth not perfectly, nor only will, that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil. (Colossians 1:13; John 8:36; Philippians 2:13; Romans 7:15, 18, 19, 21, 23)

5. This will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory only. (Ephesians 4:13)

Chapter 10: Of Effectual Calling

1. Those whom God hath predestinated unto life, he is pleased in his appointed, and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace. (Romans 8:30; Romans 11:7; Ephesians 1:10, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; Ephesians 2:1-6; Acts 26:18; Ephesians 1:17, 18; Ezekiel 36:26; Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:27; Ephesians 1:19; Psalm 110:3; Song of Solomon 1:4)

2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit; he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead. (2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:5; John 5:25; Ephesians 1:19, 20)

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

4. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither will nor can truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men that receive not the Christian religion be saved; be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess. (Matthew 22:14; Matthew 13:20, 21; Hebrews 6:4, 5; John 6:44, 45, 65; 1 John 2:24, 25; Acts 4:12; John 4:22;

Chapter 11: Of Justification

1. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in his death for their whole and sole righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God. (Romans 3:24; Romans 8:30; Romans 4:5-8; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:30, 31; Romans 5:17-19; Philippians 3:8, 9; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Romans 5:17)

2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love. (Romans 3:28; Galatians 5:6; James 2:17, 22, 26)

3. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of himself in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf; yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners. (Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Isaiah 53:5, 6; Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26; Ephesians 1:6,7; Ephesians 2:7)

4. God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in time due actually apply Christ unto them. (Galatians 3:8; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Timothy 2:6; Romans 4:25; Colossians 1:21,22; Titus 3:4-7)

5. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified, and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure; and in that condition they have not usually the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance. (Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:7, 9; John 10:28; Psalms 89:31-33; Psalms 32:5; Psalms 51; Matthew 26:75)

6. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament. (Galatians 3:9; Romans 4:22-24)

Chapter 12: Of Adoption

All those that are justified, God vouchsafed, in and for the sake of his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled

to cry Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a Father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation. (Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:4, 5; John 1:12; Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:18; Psalms 103:13; Proverbs 14:26; 1 Peter 5:7; Hebrews 12:6; Isaiah 54:8, 9; Lamentations 3:31; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 1:14; Hebrews 6:12)

Chapter 13: Of Sanctification

1. They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also farther sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. (Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5, 6; John 17:17; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23; Romans 6:14; Galatians 5:24; Colossians 1:11; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14)

2. This sanctification is throughout the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Romans 7:18, 23; Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11)

3. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in His Word hath prescribed them. (Romans 7:23; Romans 6:14; Ephesians 4:15, 16; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 7:1)

Chapter 14: Of Saving Faith

1. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word; by which also, and by the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, prayer, and other means appointed of God, it is increased and strengthened. (2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 10:14, 17; Luke 17:5; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:32)

2. By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word for the authority of God himself, and also apprehendeth an excellency therein above all other writings and all things in the world, as it bears forth the glory of God in his attributes, the excellency of Christ in his nature and offices, and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in his workings and operations: and so is enabled to cast his soul upon the truth thus believed; and also acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come; but the principal acts of saving faith have immediate relation to Christ, accepting, receiving, and resting upon him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace. (Acts 24:14; Psalms 27:7-10; Psalms 119:72; 2 Timothy 1:12; John 14:14; Isaiah 66:2; Hebrews 11:13; John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Galatians 2:20; Acts 15:11)

3. This faith, although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or strong, yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it, as is all other saving grace, from the faith and common grace of temporary believers; and therefore, though it may be many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 5:13, 14; Matthew 6:30; Romans 4:19, 20; 2 Peter 1:1; Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4, 5; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Colossians 2:2; Hebrews 12:2)

Chapter 15: Of Repentance Unto Life and Salvation

1. Such of the elect as are converted at riper years, having sometime lived in the state of nature, and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, God in their effectual calling giveth them repentance unto life. (Titus 3:2-5)

2. Whereas there is none that doth good and sinneth not, and the best of men may, through the power and deceitfulness of their corruption dwelling in them, with the prevalency of temptation, fall into great sins and provocations; God hath, in the covenant of grace, mercifully provided that believers so sinning and falling be renewed through repentance unto salvation. (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Luke 22:31, 32)

3. This saving repentance is an evangelical grace, whereby a person, being by the Holy Spirit made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth, by faith in Christ, humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrency, praying for pardon and strength of grace, with a purpose and endeavour, by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things. (Zechariah 12:10; Acts 11:18; Ezekiel 36:31; 2 Corinthians 7:11; Psalms 119:6; Psalms 119:128)

4. As repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, upon the account of the body of death, and the motions thereof, so it is every man's duty to repent of his particular known sins particularly. (Luke 19:8; 1 Timothy 1:13, 15)

5. Such is the provision which God hath made through Christ in the covenant of grace for the preservation of believers unto salvation; that although there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; yet there is no sin so great that it shall bring damnation on them that repent; which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary. (Romans 6:23; Isaiah 1:16-18 Isaiah 55:7)

Chapter 16: Of Good Works

1. Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his Holy Word, and not such as without the warrant thereof are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intentions. (Micah 6:8; Hebrews 13:21; Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13)

2. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that having their fruit unto holiness they may have the end eternal life. (James 2:18, 22; Psalms 116:12, 13; 1 John 2:3, 5; 2 Peter 1:5-11; Matthew 5:16; 1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Peter 2:15; Philippians 1:11; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 6:22)

3. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ; and that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is necessary an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; yet they are not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them. (John 15:4, 5; 2 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 2:13; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Isaiah 64:7)

4. They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do. (Job 9:2, 3; Galatians 5:17; Luke 17:10)

5. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants; and because as they are good they proceed from his Spirit, and as they are wrought by us they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's punishment. (Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 4:6; Galatians 5:22, 23; Isaiah 64:6; Psalms 143:2)

6. Yet notwithstanding the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him; not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreprouvable in God's sight, but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections. (Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5; Matthew 25:21, 23; Hebrews 6:10)

7. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God, and yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God. (2 Kings 10:30; 1 Kings 21:27, 29; Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4, 6; 1 Corinthians 13:1; Matthew 6:2, 5; Amos 5:21, 22; Romans 9:16; Titus 3:5; Job 21:14, 15; Matthew 25:41- 43)

Chapter 17: Of The Perseverance of the Saints

1. Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence he still begets and nourisheth in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon; notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet he is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraven upon the palm of his hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity. (John 10:28, 29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1

John 2:19; Psalms 89:31, 32; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Malachi 3:6)

2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with him, the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof. (Romans 8:30 Romans 9:11, 16; Romans 5:9, 10; John 14:19; Hebrews 6:17, 18; 1 John 3:9; Jeremiah 32:40)

3. And though they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves, yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end. (Matthew 26:70, 72, 74; Isaiah 64:5, 9; Ephesians 4:30; Psalms 51:10, 12; Psalms 32:3, 4; 2 Samuel 12:14; Luke 22:32, 61, 62)

Chapter 18: Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

1. Although temporary believers, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God and state of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed. (Job 8:13, 14; Matthew 7:22, 23; 1 John 2:3; 1 John 3:14, 18, 19, 21, 24; 1 John 5:13; Romans 5:2, 5)

2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel; and also upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit unto which promises are made, and on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God; and, as a fruit thereof, keeping the heart both humble and holy. (Hebrews 6:11, 19; Hebrews 6:17, 18; 2 Peter 1:4, 5, 10, 11; Romans 8:15, 16; 1 John 3:1-3)

3. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of means, attain thereunto: and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; -so far is it from inclining men to looseness. (Isaiah 50:10; Psalms 88; Psalms 77:1-12; 1 John 4:13; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Romans 5:1, 2, 5; Romans 14:17; Psalms 119:32; Romans 6:1,2; Titus 2:11, 12, 14)

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

that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which, in the meantime, they are preserved from utter despair. (Canticles 5:2, 3, 6; Psalms 51:8, 12, 14; Psalms 116:11; Psalms 77:7, 8; Psalms 31:22; Psalms 30:7; 1 John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Psalms 42:5, 11; Lamentations 3:26-31)

Chapter 19: Of the Law of God

1. God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it. (Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:10, 12)

2. The same law that was first written in the heart of man continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall, and was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables, the four first containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man. (Romans 2:14, 15; Deuteronomy 10:4)

3. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties, all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are, by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end abrogated and taken away. (Hebrews 10:1; Colossians 2:17; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Colossians 2:14, 16, 17; Ephesians 2:14, 16)

4. To them also he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any now by virtue of that institution; their general equity only being of modern use. (1 Corinthians 9:8-10)

5. The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof, and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it; neither doth Christ in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation. (Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8, 10-12; James 2:10, 11; Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 3:31)

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

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

7. Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it, the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done. (Galatians 3:21; Ezekiel 36:27)

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

1. The covenant of works being broken by sin, and made unprofitable unto life, God was pleased to give forth the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling the elect, and begetting in them faith and repentance; in this promise the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and [is] therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners. (Genesis 3:15; Revelation 13:8)

2. This promise of Christ, and salvation by him, is revealed only by the Word of God; neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace by him, so much as in a general or obscure way; much less that men destitute of the revelation of Him by the promise or gospel, should be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance. (Romans 1:17; Romans 10:14,15,17; Proverbs 29:18; Isaiah 25:7; Isaiah 60:2, 3)

3. The revelation of the gospel unto sinners, made in divers times and by sundry parts, with the addition of promises and precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the nations and persons to whom it is granted, is merely of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God; not being annexed by virtue of any promise to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received without it, which none ever did make, or can do so; and therefore in all ages, the preaching of the gospel has been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent or straitening of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God. (Psalms 147:20; Acts 16:7; Romans 1:18-32)

4. Although the gospel be the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and is, as such, abundantly sufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in trespasses may be born again, quickened or regenerated, there is moreover necessary an effectual insuperable work of the Holy Spirit upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life; without which no other means will effect their conversion unto God. (Psalms 110:3; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 1:19, 20; John 6:44; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6)

Chapter 21: Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

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

All which were common also to believers under the law for the substance of them; but under the New Testament the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of a ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected, and in greater boldness

of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of. (Galatians 3:13; Galatians 1:4; Acts 26:18; Romans 8:3; Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 8:15; Luke 1:73-75; 1 John 4:18; Galatians 3:9, 14; John 7:38, 39; Hebrews 10:19-21)

2. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or not contained in it. So that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also. (James 4:12; Romans 14:4; Acts 4:19, 29; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:20, 22, 23; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 1:24)

3. They who upon pretence of Christian liberty do practice any sin, or cherish any sinful lust, as they do thereby pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction, so they wholly destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our lives. (Romans 6:1, 2; Galatians 5:13; 2 Peter 2:18, 21)

Chapter 22: Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

1. The light of nature shews that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is just, good and doth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. (Jeremiah 10:7; Mark 12:33; Deuteronomy 12:32; Exodus 20:4-6)

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

3. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one part of natural worship, is by God required of all men. But that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, according to his will; with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, in a known tongue. (Psalms 95:1-7; Psalms 65:2; John 14:13, 14; Romans 8:26; 1 John 5:14; 1 Corinthians 14:16, 17)

4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death. (1 Timothy 2:1, 2; 2 Samuel 7:29; 2 Samuel 12:21-23; 1 John 5:16)

5. The reading of the Scriptures, preaching, and hearing the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; as also the administration of baptism, and the Lord's supper, are all parts of religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to him, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear; moreover, solemn humiliation, with fastings, and thanksgivings, upon special occasions, ought to be used in an holy and religious manner. (1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2; Luke 8:18; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26; Esther 4:16;

Joel 2:12; Exodus 15:1-19, Psalms 107)

6. Neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the gospel, tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed; but God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself; so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly nor wilfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God by his word or providence calleth thereunto. (John 4:21; Malachi 1:11; 1 Timothy 2:8; Acts 10:2; Matthew 6:11; Psalms 55:17; Matthew 6:6; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42)

7. As it is the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God, so by his Word, in a positive moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's day: and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished. (Exodus 20:8; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10)

8. The sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations, but are also taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy. (Isaiah 58:13; Nehemiah 13:15-22; Matthew 12:1-13)

Chapter 23: Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

1. A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein the person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgement, solemnly calleth God to witness what he sweareth, and to judge him according to the truth or falseness thereof. (Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 10:20; Jeremiah 4:2; 2 Chronicles 6:22, 23)

2. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear; and therein it is to be used, with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred; yet as in matter of weight and moment, for confirmation of truth, and ending all strife, an oath is warranted by the word of God; so a lawful oath being imposed by lawful authority in such matters, ought to be taken. (Matthew 5:34, 37; James 5:12; Hebrews 6:16; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Nehemiah 13:25)

3. Whosoever taketh an oath warranted by the Word of God, ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he knoweth to be truth; for that by rash, false, and vain oaths, the Lord is provoked, and for them this land mourns. (Leviticus 19:12; Jeremiah 23:10)

4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. (Psalms 24:4)

5. A vow, which is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone, is to be made and performed with all religious care and faithfulness; but popish monastical vows of perpetual single

life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself. (Psalms 76:11; Genesis 28:20-22; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9; Ephesians 4:28; Matthew 19:11)

Chapter 24: Of the Civil Magistrate

1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him, over the people, for his own glory and the public good; and to this end hath armed them with the power of the sword, for defence and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil doers. (Romans 13:1-4)

2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate when called there unto; in the management whereof, as they ought especially to maintain justice and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each kingdom and commonwealth, so for that end they may lawfully now, under the New Testament wage war upon just and necessary occasions. (2 Samuel 23:3; Psalms 82:3, 4; Luke 3:14)

3. Civil magistrates being set up by God for the ends aforesaid; subjection, in all lawful things commanded by them, ought to be yielded by us in the Lord, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake; and we ought to make supplications and prayers for kings and all that are in authority, that under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. (Romans 13:5-7; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2)

Chapter 25: Of Marriage

1. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time. (Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:15; Matthew 19:5,6)

2. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and the preventing of uncleanness. (Genesis 2:18; Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9)

3. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent; yet it is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord; and therefore such as profess the true religion, should not marry with infidels, or idolaters; neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresy. (Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 4:3; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Nehemiah 13:25-27)

4. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity, forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful, by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife. (Leviticus 18; Mark 6:18; 1 Corinthians 5:1)

Chapter 26: Of the Church

1. The catholic or universal church, which (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. (Hebrews 12:23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:10,

22, 23; Ephesians 5:23, 27, 32)

2. All persons throughout the world, professing the faith of the gospel, and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any errors everting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation, are and may be called visible saints; and of such ought all particular congregations to be constituted. (1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 11:26; Romans 1:7; Ephesians 1:20-22)

3. The purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan; nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name. (1 Corinthians 5; Revelation 2; Revelation 3; Revelation 18:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12; Matthew 16:18; Psalms 72:17; Psalm 102:28; Revelation 12:17)

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, order or government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner; neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. (Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 2:2-9)

5. In the execution of this power wherewith he is so intrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the world unto himself, through the ministry of his word, by his Spirit, those that are given unto him by his Father, that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his word. Those thus called, he commandeth to walk together in particular societies, or churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship, which he requireth of them in the world. (John 10:16; John 12:32; Matthew 28:20; Matthew 18:15- 20)

6. The members of these churches are saints by calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto that call of Christ; and do willingly consent to walk together, according to the appointment of Christ; giving up themselves to the Lord, and one to another, by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel. (Romans. 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 5:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 9: 13)

7. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind declared in his word, he hath given all that power and authority, which is in any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe; with commands and rules for the due and right exerting, and executing of that power. (Matthew 18:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 5:13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8)

8. A particular church, gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members; and the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church (so called and gathered), for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power or duty, which he intrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are bishops or elders, and deacons. (Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1)

9. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto the office of bishop or elder in a church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the com-

mon suffrage of the church itself; and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands of the eldership of the church, if there be any before constituted therein; and of a deacon that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by prayer, and the like imposition of hands. (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; Acts 6:3, 5, 6)

10. The work of pastors being constantly to attend the service of Christ, in his churches, in the ministry of the word and prayer, with watching for their souls, as they that must give an account to Him; it is incumbent on the churches to whom they minister, not only to give them all due respect, but also to communicate to them of all their good things according to their ability, so as they may have a comfortable supply, without being themselves entangled in secular affairs; and may also be capable of exercising hospitality towards others; and this is required by the law of nature, and by the express order of our Lord Jesus, who hath ordained that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. (Acts 6:4; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17, 18; Galatians 6:6, 7; 2 Timothy 2:4; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Corinthians 9:6-14)

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

12. As all believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do; so all that are admitted unto the privileges of a church, are also under the censures and government thereof, according to the rule of Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15)

13. No church members, upon any offence taken by them, having performed their duty required of them towards the person they are offended at, ought to disturb any church-order, or absent themselves from the assemblies of the church, or administration of any ordinances, upon the account of such offence at any of their fellow members, but to wait upon Christ, in the further proceeding of the church. (Matthew 18:15-17; Ephesians 4:2, 3)

14. As each church, and all the members of it, are bound to pray continually for the good and prosperity of all the churches of Christ, in all places, and upon all occasions to further every one within the bounds of their places and callings, in the exercise of their gifts and graces, so the churches, when planted by the providence of God, so as they may enjoy opportunity and advantage for it, ought to hold communion among themselves, for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification. (Ephesians 6:18; Psalms 122:6; Romans 16:1, 2; 3 John 8-10)

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

Chapter 27: Of the Communion of Saints

1. All saints that are united to Jesus Christ, their head, by his Spirit, and faith, although they are not made thereby one person with him, have fellowship in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory; and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each others gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, in an orderly way, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man. (1 John 1:3; John 1:16; Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:5, 6; Ephesians 4:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; Romans 1:12; 1 John 3:17, 18; Galatians 6:10)

2. Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things according to their several abilities, and necessities; which communion, according to the rule of the gospel, though especially to be exercised by them, in the relation wherein they stand, whether in families, or churches, yet, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all the household of faith, even all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus; nevertheless their communion one with another as saints, doth not take away or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods and possessions. (Hebrews 10:24, 25; Hebrews 3:12, 13; Acts 11:29, 30; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Corinthians 12:14-27; Acts 5:4; Ephesians 4:28)

Chapter 28: Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution, appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver, to be continued in his church to the end of the world. (Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26)

2. These holy appointments are to be administered by those only who are qualified and thereunto called, according to the commission of Christ. (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 4:1)

Chapter 29: Of Baptism

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:4)

2. Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance. (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36, 37; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12; Acts 18:8)

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

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

Chapter 30: Of the Lord's Supper

1. The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by him the same night wherein he was betrayed, to be observed in his churches, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth the sacrifice of himself in his death, confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17, 21)

2. In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but only a memorial of that one offering up of himself by himself upon the cross, once for all; and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same. So that the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable, injurious to Christ's own sacrifice the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect. (Hebrews 9:25, 26, 28; 1 Corinthians 11:24; Matthew 26:26, 27)

3. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use, and to take and break the bread; to take the cup, and, they communicating also themselves, to give both to the communicants. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26, etc.)

4. The denial of the cup to the people, worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this ordinance, and to the institution of Christ. (Matthew 26:26-28; Matthew 15:9; Exodus 20:4, 5)

5. The outward elements in this ordinance, duly set apart to the use ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ, albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before. (1 Corinthians 11:27; 1 Corinthians 11:26-28)

6. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood, commonly called transubstantiation, by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the ordinance, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries. (Acts 3:21; Luke 14:6, 39; 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25)

7. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death; the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally, but spiritually present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses. (1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

8. All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against him, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto; yea, whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themselves. (2 Corinthians 6:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 11:29; Matthew 7:6)

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

1. The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell; where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day; besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none. (Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6,8; Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 12:23; Jude 6, 7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23, 24)

2. At the last day, such of the saints as are found alive, shall not sleep, but be changed; and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other; although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever. (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Job 19:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 15:42, 43)

Chapter 32: Of the Last Judgment

1. God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ; to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil. (Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:10, 12; Matthew 25:32-46)

2. The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient; for then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards, in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast aside into everlasting torments, and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. (Romans 9:22, 23; Matthew 25:21, 34; 2 Timothy 4:8; Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity, so will he have the day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may ever be prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus; come quickly. Amen. (2 Corinthians 5:10, 11; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-7; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; Revelation 22:20)

d. Keach's Catechism

Q. 1. Who is the first and best of beings?

A. God is the first and best of beings. (Isaiah 44:6; Psalm 8:1; 97:9)

Q. 2. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. (1 Cor. 10:31; Psalm 73:25-26)

Q. 3. How do we know there is a God?

A. The light of nature in man, and the works of God, plainly declare that there is a God; but His Word and Spirit only, do effectually reveal Him unto us for our salvation. (Rom. 1:18-20; Psalm 19:1,2; 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 1:21-24; 1 Cor. 2:9,10)

Q. 4. What is the Word of God?

A. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, being given by divine inspiration, are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; Isaiah 8:20)

Q. 5. How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God?

A. The Bible evidences itself to be God's Word by the heavenliness of its doctrine, the unity of its parts, its power to convert sinners and to edify saints; but the Spirit of God only, bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in our hearts, is able fully to persuade us that the Bible is the Word of God. (1 Cor. 2:6,7,13; Ps. 119:18, 129; Acts 10:43, 26:22; Acts 18:28; Heb 4:12; Ps. 19:7-9; Rom. 15:4; John 16:13,14; 1 John 2:20-27; 2 Cor. 3:14-17)

Q. 6. May all men make use of the Scriptures?

A. All men are not only permitted, but commanded and exhorted, to read, hear, and understand the Scriptures. (John 5:39; Luke 16:29; Acts 8:28-30; 17:11)

Q. 7. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man. (2 Tim. 3:16,17; John 20:31; Acts 24:14; 1 Cor. 10:11; Eccles. 12:13)

Q. 8. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. (John 4:24; Ps. 147:5; Ps. 90:2; James 1:17; Rev. 4:8; Ps. 89:14; Exod. 34:6,7; 1 Tim. 1:17)

Q. 9. Are there more gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God. (Deut. 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10)

Q. 10. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory. (1 Cor. 8:6; John 10:30; John 14:9; Acts 5:3,4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)

Q. 11. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby for His own glory, He has fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass (Eph. 1:11; Rom. 11:36; Dan. 4:35)

Q. 12. How does God execute His decrees?

A. God executes His decrees in the works of creation and providence. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; Matt. 6:26; Acts 14:17)

Q. 13. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the Word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good. (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3; Ex. 20:11; Gen. 1:31)

Q. 14. How did God create man?

A. God created man male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures. (Gen. 1:27; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24; Gen. 1:28)

Q. 15. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions. (Neh. 9:6; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; Ps. 103:19; Matt. 10:29,30)

Q. 16. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, He entered into a covenant of works with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death. (Gen. 2:16,17; Gal. 3:12; Rom. 5:12)

Q. 17. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God. (Gen. 3:6; Eccles. 7:29; Rom. 5:12)

Q. 18. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God. (1 John 3:4; Rom. 5:13)

Q. 19. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit. (Gen. 3:6,12,13)

Q. 20. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression. (1 Cor. 15:21,22; Rom. 5:12,18,19)

Q. 21. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery. (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:18,19; Is. 64:6)

Q. 22. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereunto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereunto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it. (Rom. 5:19; 3:10; Eph. 2:1; Is. 53:6; Ps. 51:5; Matt. 15:19)

Q. 23. What is the misery of that estate whereunto man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. (Gen. 3:8,24; Eph. 2:3; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41-46; Ps. 9:17)

Q. 24. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, having chosen a people to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation, by a Redeemer. (Eph. 1:3,4; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 5:21; Acts 13:8; Jer. 31:33)

Q. 25. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, forever. (Gal. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2:5; John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 9:5; Col. 2:9)

Q. 26. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ, the Son of God became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul; being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary and born of her, yet without sin. (Heb. 2:14; Matt. 26:38; Luke 2:52; John 12:27; Luke 1:31,35; Heb. 4:15; 7:26)

Q. 27. What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation. (Acts 3:22; Heb. 5:6; Ps. 2:6)

Q. 28. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by this Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation. (John 1:18; 14:26; 15:15)

Q. 29. How does Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executes the office of a priest, in His once offering up of Himself, a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us. (1 Peter 2:24; Heb. 9:28; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 2:17; 7:25; Rom. 8:34)

Q. 30. How does Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies. (Ps. 110:3; Matt. 2:6; 1 Cor. 15:25)

Q. 31. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross, in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time. (Luke 2:7; Gal. 4:4; Is. 53:3; Luke 22:44; Matt. 27:46; Phil. 2:8; Matt. 12:40; Mark 15:45,46)

Q. 32. Wherein consists Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consists in His rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day. (1 Cor. 15:4; Acts 1:11; Mark 16:19; Acts 17:31)

Q. 33. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us, by His Holy Spirit. (John 3:5,6; Titus 3:5,6)

Q. 34. How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. (Eph. 2:8; 3:17)

Q. 35. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel. (2 Tim. 1:9; John 16:8-11; Acts 2:37; 26:18; Ezekiel 36:26; John 6:44,45; 1 Cor. 12:3)

Q. 36. What benefits do they that are effectually called, partake of in this life?

A. They that are effectually called, do in this life partake of justification, adoption, sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them. (Rom. 8:30; Gal. 3:26; 1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 8:31,32; Eph. 1:5; 1 Cor. 1:30)

Q. 37. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone. (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:19; Phil. 3:9; Gal. 2:16)

Q. 38. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God. (1 John 3:1; John 1:12; Rom. 8:16,17)

Q. 39. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is a work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. (2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 4:23,24; Rom. 6:11)

Q. 40. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end. (Rom. 5:1-5; 14:17; Prov. 4:18; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 5:13)

Q. 41. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

A. The souls of believers are at death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory, and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection. (Heb. 12:23; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8; Luke 23:43; 1 Thess 4:14; Is. 57:2; Job 19:26)

Q. 42. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the Resurrection?

A. At the resurrection, believers become raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity. (Phil. 3:20,21; 1 Cor. 15:42,43; Matt. 10:32; 1 John 3:2; 1 Thess. 4:17)

Q. 43. What shall be done to the wicked at death?

A. The souls of the wicked shall at death, be cast into the torments of hell, and their bodies lie in their graves till the resurrection and judgement of the great day. (Luke 16:22-24; Ps. 49:14)

Q. 44. What shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgement?

A. At the day of judgement, the bodies of the wicked, being raised out of their graves, shall be sentenced, together with their souls, to unspeakable torments with the devil and his angels

forever. (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28,29; 2 Thess. 1:9; Matt. 25:41)

Q. 45. What is the duty which God requires of man?

A. The duty which God requires of man, is obedience to His revealed will. (Micah 6:8; Eccles. 12:13; Ps. 119:4; Luke 10:26-28)

Q. 46. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law. (Rom. 2:14,15; 5:13,14)

Q. 47. Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments. (Deut. 10:4; Matt. 19:17)

Q. 48. What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?

A. The sum of the Ten Commandments is, to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves. (Matt. 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-33)

Q. 49. What is the preface to the Ten Commandments?

A. The preface to the Ten Commandments is, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. (Exodus 20:2)

Q. 50. What does the preface to the Ten Commandments teach us?

A. The preface to the Ten Commandments teaches us, that because God is the Lord, and our God and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all His commandments. (Deut 11:1)

Q. 51. Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3)

Q. 52. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, and to worship and glorify Him accordingly. (Joshua 24:15; 1 Chron. 28:9; Deut. 26:17; Ps. 29:2; Matt. 4:10)

Q. 53. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment forbids the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God, as God and our God; and the giving that worship and glory to any other, which is due unto Him alone. (Joshua 24:27; Rom. 1:20,21; Ps. 14:1; Rom. 1:25)

Q. 54. What are we especially taught by these words, "before me," in the first commandment?

A. These words, "before me," in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who sees all things, takes notice of, and is much displeased with the sin of having any other God. (Deut. 30:17,18; Ps. 44:20,21; Ps. 90:8)

Q. 55. Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the

Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.” (Exodus 20:4-6)

Q. 56. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requires the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances, as God has appointed in His Word. (Deut. 32:46; Matt. 28:20; Deut. 12:32)

Q. 57. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment forbids the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in His Word. (Rom. 1:22,23; Deut. 4:15,16; Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:18)

Q. 58. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment, are, God’s sovereignty over us, His propriety in us, and the zeal He has for His own worship. (Ps. 45:11; Ex. 34:14; 1 Cor. 10:22)

Q. 59. Which is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” (Exodus 20:7)

Q. 60. What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God’s names, titles, attributes, ordinances, words, and works. (Ps. 29:2; Deut. 32:1-4; Deut. 28:58,59; Ps. 111:9; Matt. 6:9, Eccles. 5:1; Ps. 138:2, Job 36:24; Rev. 15:3,4; Rev 4:8)

Q. 61. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment forbids all profaning and abusing of any thing whereby God makes Himself known. (Malachi 1:6,7; Lev. 20:3;19:12; Matt. 5:34-37; Isa. 52:5)

Q. 62. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that howsoever the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape His righteous judgment. (Deut. 28:58,59; Malachi 2:2)

Q. 63. Which is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” (Exodus 20:8-11)

Q. 64. What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requires the keeping holy to God such set times as He has appointed in His Word, expressly one whole day in seven to be a holy Sabbath to Himself. (Lev. 19:30; Deut. 5:12)

Q. 65. Which day of the seven has God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

A. From the creation of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh

day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath. (Gen. 2:3; John 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1,2; Rev. 1:10)

Q. 66. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and spending the time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy. (Lev. 23:3; Isa. 58:13,14; Isa. 66:23; Matt. 12:11,12)

Q. 67. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment forbids the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about worldly employments or recreations. (Ezekiel 22:26; 23:38; Jer. 17:21; Neh. 13:15,17; Acts 20:7)

Q. 68. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, His challenging a special propriety in the seventh, His own example and His blessing the Sabbath day. (Exodus 34:21; 31:16,17; Gen. 2:2,3)

Q. 69. Which is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Exodus 20:12)

Q. 70. What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals. (Lev. 19:32; 1 Peter 2:17; Rom. 13:1; Eph. 5:21,22; Eph. 6:1,5,9; Col. 3:19-22; Rom. 12:10)

Q. 71. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbids the neglecting of, or doing anything against the honor and duty which belongs to every one in their several places and relations. (Prov. 30:17; Rom. 13:7,8)

Q. 72. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve God's glory and their own good), to all such as keep this commandment. (Eph. 6:2,3; Prov. 4:3-6; 6:20-22)

Q. 73. Which is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is, "Thou shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13)

Q. 74. What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment requires all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life and the life of others. (Eph. 5:29,30; Ps. 82:3,4; Prov. 24:11,12; Act 16:28)

Q. 75. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment forbids the taking away our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tends thereto. (Gen. 4:10,11; 9:6; Matt. 5:21-26)

Q. 76. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14)

Q. 77. What is required in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior. (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2; 2 Tim. 2:22; Matt. 5:28; 1 Peter 3:2)

Q. 78. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions. (Matt. 5:28-32; Job 31:1; Eph. 5:3,4; Rom. 13:13; Col. 4:6)

Q. 79. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal." (Exodus 20:15)

Q. 80. What is required in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment requires the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward state of ourselves and others. (Prov. 27:23; Lev. 25:35; Deut. 15:10; 22:14)

Q. 81. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment forbids whatsoever does or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbor's wealth or outward state. (1 Tim. 5:8; Prov. 28:19; 23:20,21; Eph. 4:28)

Q. 82. Which is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Exodus 20:16)

Q. 83. What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness bearing. (Zech. 8:16; Acts 25:10; Eccles. 7:1; 3 John 12; Prov. 14:5,25)

Q. 84. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own, or our neighbor's good name. (Eph. 4:25; Ps. 15:3; 2 Cor. 8:20,21)

Q. 85. Which is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." (Exodus 20:17)

Q. 86. What is required in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment requires full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit towards our neighbor, and all that is his. (Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:6; Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Lev. 19:18)

Q. 87. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his. (1 Cor. 10:10; James 5:9; Gal. 5:26; Col. 3:5)

Q. 88. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of

God, but daily breaks them in thought, word, and deed. (Eccles. 7:20; Gen. 6:5; Gen. 8:21; 1 John 1:8; James 3:8; James 3:2; Rom. 3:23)

Q. 89. What then is the purpose of the law since the fall?

A. The purpose of the law, since, the fall, is to reveal the perfect righteousness of God, that His people may know his will for their lives and the ungodly, being convicted of their sin, may be restrained therein and brought to Christ for salvation. (Ps. 19:7-11; Rom. 3:20,31; 7:7; 12:2; Titus 2:12-14; Gal. 3:22,24; 1 Tim. 1:8)

Q. 90. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A. Some sins in themselves and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others. (Ezekiel 8:13; John 19:11; 1 John 5:16)

Q. 91. What does every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and in that which is to come. (Eph. 5:6; Gal. 3:10; Prov. 3:33; Ps. 11:6; Rev. 21:8)

Q. 92. What does God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse, due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption. (Acts 20:21; Acts 16:30,31; 17:30)

Q. 93. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel. (Heb. 10:39; John 1:12; Phil. 3-9; Gal. 2:15,16)

Q. 94. What is repentance unto life?

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience. (Acts 2:37; Joel 2:13; Jer. 31:18,19; 2 Cor. 7:10,11; Rom. 6:18)

Q. 95. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are His ordinances, especially the Word, Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation. (Rom. 10:17; James 1:18; 1 Cor. 3:5; Acts 14:1; 2:41,42)

Q. 96. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation. (Ps. 119:11,18; 1 Thess. 1:6; 1 Peter 2:1,2; Rom. 1:16; Ps. 19:7)

Q. 97. How is the Word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation and prayer, receive it in faith and love, lay it up in our hearts and practice it in our lives. (Prov. 8:34; 1 Peter 2:1,2; 1 Tim. 4:13; Heb. 2:1,3; Heb. 4:2; 2 Thess. 2:10; Ps. 119:11; James 1:21,25)

Q. 98. How do Baptism and the Lord's Supper become effectual means of salvation?

A. Baptism and the Lord's Supper become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them or in him that administers them, but only by the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive them. (1 Peter 3:21; 1 Cor. 3:6,7; 1 Cor. 12:13)

Q. 99. Wherein do Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ from the other ordinances of God?

A. Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ from the other ordinances of God in that they were specially instituted by Christ to represent and apply to believers the benefits of the new covenant by visible and outward signs. (Matt. 28:19; Acts 22:16; Matt. 26:26-28; Rom. 6:4)

Q. 100. What is Baptism?

A. Baptism is an holy ordinance, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, signifies our ingrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's. (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:27)

Q. 101. To whom is Baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is to be administered to all those who actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ; and to none other. (Acts 2:38; Matt. 3:6; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12,36; 10:47,48)

Q. 102. Are the infants of such as are professing believers to be baptized?

A. The infants of such as are professing believers are not to be baptized; because there is neither command nor example in the Holy Scriptures, or certain consequence from them, to baptize such.

Q. 103. How is Baptism rightly administered?

A. Baptism is rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body of the person in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38,39)

Q. 104. What is the duty of those who are rightly baptized?

A. It is the duty of those who are rightly baptized to give up (join) themselves to some visible and orderly church of Jesus Christ, that they may walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (Acts 2:46,47; Acts 9:26; 1 Peter 2:5; Heb. 10:25; Rom. 16:5)

Q. 105. What is the visible church?

A. The visible church is the organized society of professing believers, in all ages and places, wherein the Gospel is truly preached and the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper rightly administered. (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Acts 7:38; Eph. 4:11,12)

Q. 106. What is the invisible church?

A. The invisible church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head. (Eph. 1:10; 1:22,23; John 10:16; 11:52)

Q. 107. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lord's Supper is a holy ordinance, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, His death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace. (1 Cor. 11:23-26; 10:16)

Q. 108. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

A. It is required of them that would worthily (that is, suitably) partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves, of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body; of their faith to feed upon Him; of their repentance, love, and new obedience: lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves. (1 Cor. 11:27-31; 1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 13:5)

Q. 109. What is Prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies. (1 John 5:14; 1 John 1:9; Phil. 4:6; Ps. 10:17; 145:19; John 14:13,14)

Q. 110. What rule has God given for our direction in prayer?

A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the special rule of direction is that prayer, which Christ taught His disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer. (Matt. 6:9-13; 2 Tim. 3:16,17)

Q. 111. What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, Our Father, which art in heaven, teaches us to draw near to God, with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us, and that we should pray with and for others. (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:13; Rom. 8:15; Acts 12:5; 1 Tim. 2:1-3)

Q. 112. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, which is "Hallowed be thy name," we pray that God would enable us and others to glorify Him in all that whereby He makes Himself known, and that He would dispose all things to His own glory. (Matt. 6:9; Ps. 67:1-3; Rom. 11:36; Rev. 4:11)

Q. 113. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, which is "Thy kingdom come," we pray that satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced; ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened. (Matt. 6:10; Ps. 68:1-18; Rom. 10:1; 2 Thess. 3:1; Matt. 9:37,38; Rev. 22:20)

Q. 114. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition, which is, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," we pray that God by His grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to His will in all things, as the angels do in heaven. (Matt. 6:10; Ps. 103:20,21; Ps. 25:4,5; Ps. 119:26)

Q. 115. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition, which is, "Give us this day our daily bread," we pray that of God's free gift, we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life and enjoy His blessing with them. (Matt. 6:11; Prov. 30:8,9; 1 Tim. 6:6-8; 4:4,5)

Q. 116. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, which is, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by His grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others. (Matt.

6:12; Ps. 51:1,3,7; Mark 11:25; Matt. 18:35)

Q. 117. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, which is, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted. (Matt. 6:13; 26:41; Ps. 19:13; 1 Cor. 10:13; John 17:15)

Q. 118. What does the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer, which is, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen,” teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise Him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to Him; and in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, AMEN. (Matt. 6:13; Dan. 9:18,19; 1 Chron. 29:11-13; 1 Cor. 14:16; Phil. 4:6; Rev. 22:20)

Book of Church Order





Article I. Membership

Each member of the Church is acknowledged to form a vital part of the body and to have a particular function in the life of that body. Practical considerations, such as the desire for fellowship with those who may not agree with all the doctrinal standards and practices of the church yet seek membership with us, new believers who cannot be expected to affirm doctrines and practices they either do not understand or haven't yet considered, lead us to establish two types of membership for this Church.

1. Constituent Membership.

a. Qualifications - Those who would be admitted to the constituent membership of the church must meet the qualifications set forth in paragraph 9 of the Church Covenant. In particular, they must be in agreement with the Church Doctrinal Standards and the Book of Church Order.

b. Privileges - All men in the membership who are heads of households, or single but over the age of 21, shall have the privilege of participating in interaction, attending membership meetings, voting on all matters before the congregation, and of serving in positions of leadership and teaching if they meet the additional qualifications required for any of these positions and are called to them by the membership.

c. Responsibilities - In addition to the responsibilities set forth in the Church Covenant, members shall be responsible to uphold, defend, and follow the doctrines and practices set forth in the Church Doctrinal Standards and the Book of Church Order.

d. Admission - Upon the recommendation of the elders and the majority vote of the membership new members shall be received into the membership of this church during a regular Lord's Day worship service.

e. Termination

(1) If a member can no longer in good conscience uphold the doctrines and practices of the London Baptist Confession of Faith or the Book of Church Order, then he will become an associate member or may seek a transfer of membership to another orthodox church.

(2) A member may request a transfer of their membership to another local church. This request will be submitted in writing to the elders and should give the specifics concerning the church where he is seeking membership and the specific reason(s) why a transfer is desired. The elders will have the authority to approve the request and grant the letter of transfer.

(3) If a member habitually absents himself from the stated meetings of this church without showing just cause, or if due to relocation he may be excluded from the membership at the discretion of the elders. Also, any member who personally so requests may after due admonition be excluded from the membership by the elders if they deem it appropriate to do so.

(4). Excommunication (See Article VI on Church Discipline for specifics).

2. Associate Membership.

a. Qualifications - Those who would be admitted to the associate membership of the church must meet the qualifications set forth in paragraph 9 of the Church Covenant. They must profess full belief in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and agree to receive the teaching of the church concerning the doctrines and practices set forth in the London Baptist Confession of Faith and the Book of Church Order without murmuring or disputing.

b. Privileges - All men in the associate membership who are heads of households, or single but over the age of 21, shall have the privilege of participating in interaction, attending membership meetings and participating in the discussions, serving on committees, and voting on all matters before the membership except amendments to the Church Covenant, Church Doctrinal Standards, or the Book of Church Order. Associate members will not be permitted to serve in leadership or teaching positions.

c. Responsibilities - Associate members shall be responsible to fulfill the terms of the Church Covenant and confess their faith in the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds. They are not responsible to believe, defend, and uphold the doctrines of the London Baptist Confession of Faith. Neither are they required to be in full agreement with all the details of the Book of Church Order. However, they are asked to respect the practices set forth in the Book of Church Order as they relate to the government and public meetings of the church, and not make them matters of contention.

d. Admission - Upon the recommendation of the elders and the majority vote of the membership, associate members shall be received into the membership of this church during a regular Lord's Day worship service.

e. Termination

(1) An associate member may request a transfer of their membership to another local church. This request will be submitted in writing to the elders and should give the specifics concerning the church where he is seeking membership and the specific reason(s) why a transfer is desired. The elders will have the authority to approve the request and grant the letter of transfer.

(2). If an associate member habitually absents himself from the stated meetings of this Church without showing just cause, or if due to relocation he may be excluded from the membership at the discretion of the elders. Also, any member who personally so requests may after due admonition be excluded from the membership by the elders if they deem it appropriate to do so.

(3). Excommunication (See Article VI on Church Discipline for specifics).

Article II. Officers

1. The Elders.

a. The functions and duties of the elders are given in paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Church Covenant.

b. For a man to qualify as an elder he must meet the requirements for an overseer as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He must be in agreement with the Church Covenant, Church Doctrinal Standards, and the Book of Church Order. He shall have been an active constituent member of this church for at least two years.

c. Selection of elders: see Article III.

d. The term of service for an elder shall be three years. An elder may serve as many terms as he is willing to serve and to which he is chosen by the church. An elder who has served two consecutive terms shall be encouraged to take a year's sabbatical.

e. Each year the elders shall select from among them one to serve as Chairman and one to serve as Secretary. The secretary will be responsible to keep a proper record of all the meetings of the congregation and to maintain the current membership roll. The Elder Board shall be the Official Board of the church and shall act as the Trustees.

f. An elder may be removed from office for manifest failure to carry out his responsibilities; for a change in thinking that means he can no longer uphold the Church Covenant, Church Doctrinal Standards, or Book of Church Order; or for serious moral failure that would leave him unqualified according to the standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 or Titus 1:6-9. A 2/3 majority vote of the regular members is required to remove an elder from office. No accusation against an elder will be received except from 2 or 3 witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19). Any elder accused will be given full opportunity to defend himself before the membership, and may request a council in accord with paragraph 24 of the Church Covenant.

2. The Deacons.

a. The functions and duties of the deacons are given in paragraph 12 of the Church Covenant.

b. To qualify as a deacon a man must meet the requirements for a deacon as given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. He must be in agreement with the Church Covenant, Church Doctrinal Standards, and Book of Church Order. He shall have been an active constituent member of this church for at least one year.

c. Selection of deacons: see Article III.

d. The term of service for a deacon will be three years. A deacon may serve as many terms as he is willing to serve and to which he is chosen by the church. A deacon who has served two consecutive terms shall be encouraged to take a year's sabbatical.

e. The deacons shall choose from among them one to serve as Chairman and one to serve as Secretary of the Deacon Board. The Secretary will be responsible to keep a proper record of all the meetings and proceedings of the Board.

f. A deacon may be removed from office for manifest failure to carry out his responsibilities; for a change in thinking that means he can no longer uphold the Church Covenant, Doctrinal Standards, or Book of Church Order; or for serious moral failure that would leave him unqualified according to the standards of 1 Timothy 3:8-13. A 2/3 majority vote of the regular members is required to remove a deacon from office. No accusation against a deacon will be received except from 2 or 3 witnesses. Any deacon accused will be given full opportunity to defend himself before the membership, and may request a council in accord with paragraph 24 of the Church Covenant.

3. Church Treasurer

a. A man shall be selected to serve the church in the specific responsibility of Treasurer. Due to the nature of this office, the treasurer will be considered a deacon and must meet the

qualifications for a deacon as given above (1 Chronicles 9:26; Nehemiah 13:13; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13). The Treasurer will be chosen according to the same procedure as the other Deacons (see Article III.)

b. The treasurer's deacon responsibilities will be primarily related to church finances (see Article V.)

c. The term of service for the Treasurer will be the same as specified for the other deacons.

Article III. Selection of Elders and Deacons

The Scripture does not give any direct or definite statement on the procedure for selecting leaders in the local church. However, the New Testament does give us a sufficiently clear outline of the procedure used in Apostolic times (Acts 6:3-6; 14:23; Titus 1:5).

1. Chosen by the membership.

a. The membership will first be instructed concerning the qualifications for the office of elder and the office of deacon as given in the New Testament (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 1:1-13; Acts 6: 3-6). The number of officers being sought will be noted and explained.

b. The membership (both constituent and associate) will then choose by ballot those whom they believe to be qualified to serve as elder and deacon. These ballots will be collected by a specified date and tabulated by the elders.

2. Confirmed by the Elders.

a. The elders shall meet to discuss the results of the membership's nominations and proceed to examine the men nominated to the respective offices. The only exceptions to this will be if the elders unanimously agree that a certain man is not truly qualified, or if a man nominated is not willing to serve.

b. The elders will be responsible to examine the men nominated to determine their fitness for the office according to the biblical standards and the terms of the Church Covenant, Church Doctrinal Standards, and Book of Church Order. Those nominated to the office of elder shall especially be examined in regards to their doctrinal beliefs and their ability to defend those beliefs from the Scriptures.

c. Those who are confirmed by the elders shall be ordained to office by the elders during the Lord's Day Service.

d. This procedure will be used whenever the need to select elders and deacons arises.

Article IV. Congregational Meetings

1. The centrality of the Lord's Day and our duty to meet together on that Day for worship is set forth in paragraph 15 of the Church Covenant and chapter 22 of the London Baptist Confession.

2. The membership shall convene for two regular business meetings each year: one in January and one in July. At the January meeting the membership will adopt a general budget for the year and transact any other necessary business. At the July meeting the membership will review the general budget and transact any other necessary business. Reports will be given at both meetings. Each meeting will be announced at least 2 Lord's Days in advance.

3. Special congregational meetings may be called by the elders whenever deemed necessary. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the church membership who are eligible to vote. At each meeting an agenda will be followed and parliamentary procedure will be observed.

Article V. Church Finances

1. Church Treasurer.

a. See Article III for the selection and qualifications of the Treasurer. Assistants to help the treasurer may be appointed by the elders and deacons as the need may arise.

b. The treasurer, under the direction of the elders, will be responsible to bank and disburse the funds of the church, and to maintain the system of accounts and accounting records in good order. Each month he shall post a statement of income and expenses. At the annual meeting of the membership he shall present a detailed statement of all church financial transactions for the previous calendar year.

2. Financial Procedures.

a. The deacons will be responsible for the receiving, counting, and depositing of the offerings. There shall be at least two persons counting the offerings, who will sign a statement as to the amount of the offering and give this statement to the chairman of the elder board..

b. The treasurer's books and records will be available at any time to the elders and deacons. An audit of all accounts will be conducted each year as directed by the elders and deacons. No organization or group within the church shall hold funds or have a treasury unless expressly authorized by the elders and deacons.

Article VI. Church Discipline

1. Purpose - The necessity and purpose of church discipline is set forth in paragraph 14 of the Church Covenant. Church discipline has a two-fold aim. The first is to maintain moral and doctrinal purity in the church. The second is to restore a brother or sister who have fallen into sin or grave doctrinal error. Its goal is not to condemn or hurt, but to help and heal. Church discipline is an aspect of the means of grace to keep God's children in the faith (Galatians 6:1-2; Matthew 18:15; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; James 5:19-20; 1 Timothy 6:3-5).

2. Procedure - The procedure for discipline shall be in accord with the teaching of Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. First, there is to be private reproof of the offending member by the one offended. Second, plural reproof of the offending member by the one offended and one or two other members as witnesses. Third, congregational reproof of the offending member with the elders presiding. Fourth, excommunication of the offending member by the assembled regular membership with the elders presiding. The process of discipline will advance only as far as necessary to effect repentance and restoration. The nature of some offenses are public,

and, thus, the elders will be responsible to lead the members to the congregational reproof of step three at the outset.

The third level of discipline is given further scriptural guidance in 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15. This text indicates that members are to “have no company with” those who will not obey the Word of God nor heed the admonition of the church.

3. Reason - Church discipline is for those who sin by the transgression of God’s law or by holding and teaching “damnable heresies” (1 John 3:4; Exodus 20:1-17; Proverbs 6:16-19; 1 Corinthians 5:11; Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Peter 2:1; Galatians 1:7-10; 1 Timothy 6:3-5).

4. Excommunication - If the offending member refuses to heed the censure and admonition of the church (step 3), they are to be put out of the church by recommendation of the elders and the majority vote of the congregation (step 4). Excommunication means that the offending and unrepentant member: 1) is delivered to Satan for the destruction of flesh (1 Corinthians 5:5); 2) is considered as a unbeliever (Matthew 18:17); 3) is excluded from the Lord’s Supper and ministry of the church to the saints (Matthew 7:6); 4) has his membership terminated along with any positions he may have held in the church; 5) members are not to keep close company with him (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

5. Restoration - If the excommunicated member repents they shall be forgiven and restored to membership upon the recommendation of the elders and the majority vote of the regular members. The elders will be responsible to guide the restoration and have the authority to do what is necessary for the welfare of the forgiven member and the congregation (2 Corinthians 2:6-8).

Article VII. The Ordinances

1. The church’s doctrine and practice of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper is set forth in chapters 28-30 of the London Baptist Confession and questions 98-104 of Keach’s Catechism.

2. Baptism, as the initiatory rite into the fellowship of the church, is required for membership and for participation in the Lord’s Supper.

3. This church will practice “open communion,” allowing non-members and visitors to participate in the Lord’s Supper if they profess faith in Jesus Christ, have received Christian baptism, and are not under sanctions by their home church.

Article VIII. Bible Translations

1. In the Church Covenant, paragraphs 1-8, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are declared to be the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. This would have ultimate reference to the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.

2. However, in light of the fact that most Christians do not have access to the original languages of the Bible and, therefore, must read God’s Word in an English translation, and because there are a bewildering number of English translations of varying quality, it is important for the sake of truth and unity that this church takes a position on Bible translation and the accepted English versions for church use.

3. The English versions of the Bible that are most faithful to the Word of God originally given in Hebrew and Greek are those versions that are based on the traditional texts of Holy Scripture

(the Masoretic text in the Old Testament and the Majority text, the “Textus Receptus”, in the New Testament), and follow the translation practice of formal equivalence (i.e., “literal” translation).

4. The English Version that best meets both of the above criteria is the Authorized (King James) Version.

5. Therefore, the accepted English Version for use in this church will be the Authorized Version (AV). This means that of all the English versions the membership will use the AV in the public reading and teaching of the Scriptures. All members are also urged to bring the AV to the services of this church.

Article IX. Interaction

1. Paragraph 8 of the Church Covenant states that members are to receive the public teaching on the Scriptures with discernment and that they should be permitted to interact with the men who teach them.

2. To this end, this church will practice a time of “interaction” when the hearers of the sermon or teaching have the opportunity to publicly question the teacher, evaluate the teaching as to its doctrinal soundness, give further insight and applications on the text, and enter into a general discussion on the text with the speaker.

3. The purpose of “interaction” is to assist the church in its understanding and application of Scripture; to evaluate the teaching regarding doctrinal soundness and proper exposition; to provide a time for the various gifts of the body to contribute to the upbuilding of the church; to exalt the Word of God as the sole authority; to promote unity through a common understanding of Scripture; and to support the biblical order for the family and challenge the husband to make his home a center of biblical learning.

4. The biblical basis for “interaction” is found in such passages as: Acts 20:7-12; 1 Timothy 2:11-12; 1 Corinthians 14:29, 34-35; Colossians 3:16.

5. Since “interaction” is an integral part of the public teaching ministry of this church, and since it is not proper for a woman to teach or have authority over men in the public services of the church, therefore, women will not be permitted to speak during “interaction” (1 Timothy 2:11-14; 1 Corinthians 14:34-40).

6. Furthermore, since “interaction” is primarily a function for those who have covenanted together in this local church to discern, declare, and live a common confession, therefore, only members (both regular and associate) will be normally permitted to speak during “interaction.” However, it seems wise to allow the teacher some discretion in this matter so that he may at times allow non-members to participate.

Article X. Ordination

1. Christ gives to His church Pastor-Teachers and Evangelists (missionary-church planters) for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). Through ministerial ordination we recognize and set apart those who have been called by Christ to the public ministry of the Word of God (1 Timothy 4:14; 1:12; 2 Timothy 2:1-2; 4:1-5).

2. The procedure for ordination shall be as follows:

a. When in the judgment of the elders there is reason to believe that a man has been called to the Christian ministry, they shall recommend to the congregation that the man be set apart for a period of no less than 6 months for the purpose of observing his gifts and spiritual maturity.

b. At the end of this trial period the congregation will vote to see if they favor the calling of an ordination council to examine the candidate as to his doctrinal soundness and ability to defend the faith. A 2/3-majority vote is needed to authorize the elders to call an ordination council.

c. If so authorized, the elders shall call an ordination council of at least 5, and no more than 10, pastors and elders to examine the candidate. 2 elders from this church will sit on the council along with pastors and elders of other churches of like faith and practice.

d. If the council determines that the candidate is doctrinally sound and fit for the awesome task of ministering the Word of God, then the elders will proceed with the public ordination service where the man is solemnly set apart as a Minister of the Word of God.

e. It shall be in the power of the board of elders to revoke the ordination of any man ordained by this church if it is judged that he is guilty of heresy or immorality. If a man's ordination is revoked, he shall be notified of it by registered mail.

Article XI. Role of Women

1. In paragraph 19 of the Church Covenant we affirm our belief that the husband is the head of the home. This structure of male headship that God has ordained for the home, He has also ordained for the church, lest there be confusion between the spheres of family and church. A woman is never to be in a position in the church where she might have authority over her husband (or father), or be the teacher of her husband (or Father), or usurp the leadership role that God has given to her husband (or Father) for their family (1 Timothy 2:11-14; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35).

2. Therefore, it is not biblically proper for a woman to serve as an elder, deacon, or a teacher of the congregation. Nor is it proper for her to lead the church in prayer, speak during "interaction," teach the congregation, or discuss and vote on matters at membership meetings of the church. In general, a woman should assume a demeanor of submission and silence (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-12), and avoid being in a position that will violate the man's role of providing spiritual leadership. Furthermore, as covenant head of the family, the husband is responsible to represent his family at the deliberations and decisions of the membership; bringing to those deliberations the collective wisdom of him and his wife (and, if applicable, his grown, unmarried children).

3. Furthermore, since male headship is established in the church by God, it is not biblically proper for a single woman (unmarried, divorced, or widowed) to take leadership, teach, or vote in the congregation. The church is the family of God, and it must not be imagined that the order for this family will be in contradiction to the order for the family (1 Timothy 2:11-14; 1 Corinthians 11:3). A single woman who does not have male representation in the membership (e.g., father, grandfather, older brother, son), shall be represented by the elders.

4. None of this suggests that a woman is inferior to a man; it is simply to say that she is a woman with a clearly defined role established by God. As a woman, she does have a very important and vital role for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. The primary role of the woman

is in her ministry to her husband and children, being a keeper at home, especially while the children are being reared (Genesis 2:18; 1 Timothy 2:15). Other important ministries for her include: the exercise of her spiritual gifts, teaching other women or children, evangelism, prayer, visitation, service ministries, showing mercy, giving, etc.

Article XII. Headcoverings

1. Out of a desire to show forth his submission to God's appointed order of headship, a man ought not to wear any type of covering on his head whenever the church gathers specifically for worship, for prayer, for baptism, for the Lord's Supper, or for the teaching of God's Word (1 Cor.11:2-16).

2. Also, out of a desire to show forth her submission to God's appointed order of headship, a woman ought to wear a type of head covering (e.g., a veil, scarf, shawl, or hat) whenever the church gathers specifically for worship, for prayer, for baptism, for the Lord's Supper, or for the teaching of God's Word (1 Cor.11:2-16). (Note: A woman's hair is not the covering of 1 Cor. 11:2-16).

Article XIII. Modesty and Dress

1. We believe that the Scripture commands us to practice modesty in all of our dress. Therefore, both men and women must be careful to clothe themselves in a manner consistent with these commands, and abstain from any clothing that draws inordinate attention to the body or to themselves (1 Thessalonians 4:4-7; 1 Timothy 2:9).

2. We believe that to uphold the created order of male and female, God has further commanded that men and women should not dress alike (Deuteronomy 22:5). Hence, it is the duty of men to not wear apparel that is proper to a woman, but clothe themselves in that which is distinctively masculine, and the duty of women to not wear apparel that is proper to a man, but cloth themselves in that which is distinctively feminine.

Article XIV. Divorce

1. In paragraph 18 of the Church Covenant we affirm the importance of the family and our commitment as a church to support and strengthen this most important institution. This commitment requires us to establish the following principles concerning divorce (Matthew 19:3-9).

2. Divorce was not part of God's original design for marriage. However, after the fall, divorce not only became a possibility, but a reality because of the sinful and hard heart of man (Matthew 19:4-6). Therefore, God has given commandments concerning divorce so as to protect the sanctity of marriage and to protect a marriage partner from the intolerable abuses of a wicked spouse. These intolerable abuses are the only grounds for divorce, and these grounds must be discerned from the Scriptures.

3. The grounds for divorce as set forth in Scripture are: 1) fornication, or "uncleanness" (Greek, *porneia*; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:9; Hebrew, 'erwa; Deut. 24:1); 2) the desertion of a believer by an unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:15). Divorce must never be considered as a solution to mere marital conflict between a Christian husband and wife (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

4. If a member seeks a divorce, the elders will be responsible to investigate the matter to determine if the member has biblical grounds for divorce. If they judge that the member does

have true biblical grounds, they shall put their judgment in writing. If they judge that the member does not have grounds and the member continues to pursue the divorce, then that member will be disciplined according to the principles of discipline outlined in paragraph 14 of the Church Covenant and Article VI of the Book of Church Order.

5. In each case, however, the church will do all in its power to effect reconciliation between the marriage partners.

6. Where divorce is granted on biblical grounds remarriage may be permitted (Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:8-9, 15, 27-28). Nevertheless, this church recommends that remarriage be pursued with caution, only after proper counsel, and only after circumstances seem to preclude any possible marital reconciliation with their former spouse.

7. Any member who is divorced unwillingly and without biblical grounds shall continue to be considered a member in good standing.

8. Any divorce or remarriage which occurred before a person's salvation shall be considered forgiven and part of their past life and will not be held to their account (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Hebrews 10:17; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

9. Any person seeking membership who has been previously divorced will be required to explain to the elders the circumstances surrounding his/her divorce. A previous divorce will not necessarily be an impediment to membership. However, the elders may determine that the divorce did not have biblical grounds, and, if judged necessary, may request the one seeking membership to make appropriate restitution (amends) and public repentance prior to being received into membership.

Article XV. Affiliation

1. In paragraphs 23-24 of the Church Covenant we express our unity with and our desire to seek fellowship with other churches of like faith and practice.

2. However, any affiliation or fellowship that we seek with other churches must not compromise paragraph 3 of the Church Covenant which sets forth the authority of this church to conduct its ministry free from the control of other churches.

3. The elders will be responsible to search out an acceptable affiliation for this church and make recommendation to the membership. A majority vote is needed for the approval of any recommendation.

4. This church may seek affiliation with more than one group of churches or organizations. If any affiliation proves to be undesirable, the church will cancel its affiliation upon the recommendation of the elders and a majority vote of the membership.

Article XVI. Missions

1. In accord with paragraph 18 of the Church Covenant, this church will seek to fulfill part of its responsibility to the Great Commission by supporting both home and foreign missionary endeavors.

2. The elders shall be responsible to thoroughly investigate the doctrine, qualifications, credentials, and ministry of potential candidates for missionary support from this church. Those

approved by the elders will be presented to the membership, along with a recommendation on the amount of support. After sufficient discussion, the membership will vote on the elders' proposals. A majority vote is needed to approve support.

3. If at any time the support of a missionary or ministry proves to be undesirable, the church shall cancel its support upon the recommendation of the elders and a majority vote of the membership.

Article XVII. Committees

1. Committees may be established to help carry out and further the work of this ministry. Each committee must be approved by the elders and shall function under their authority and direction.

2. Each committee shall draw up a policy statement, which includes its purpose, objectives, procedures, and guidelines. Each committee will have a chairman and a secretary who will keep a written record of the work of the committee and its meetings.

3. Committee members must be members (constituent or associate) in good standing in the church and be approved for service on the committee.

Article XVIII. Dissolution

1. This church shall have the right to own, buy, or sell tangible properties both real and personal in its name and through properly elected and instructed officers.

2. No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any person or persons from the assets, holdings, or other transactions, which this church may become involved in.

3. In the event of the dissolution of this church, all of its tangible assets and holdings shall be distributed to such other existing churches or Christian ministries, which would be in agreement with the principles of the Church Covenant. All decisions in this event will be made by a majority vote of the existing members of this church.

Article XIX. Indemnification

1. The officers of the church (elders, deacons) shall not be personally liable for monetary damages for any action taken, or failure to take action, as officers, except to the extent that by law an officer's liability for monetary damages may not be limited.

2. The church shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding by reason of the fact that such person is or was an officer, member, or agent of the church, against expenses, fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlements actually and reasonably incurred by such persons, unless the act or failure to act giving rise to the claim for indemnification is determined by a court to have constituted willful misconduct or recklessness.

3. The church shall have the power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is an officer, member, or agent of the church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify him against such liability under the provisions

of these Book of Church Order.

Article XX. Amendments

1. Church Covenant and Doctrinal Standards.

a. The proposed amendment shall be submitted to the elders for a study period of no longer than 2 months.

b. The proposed amendment shall be presented to the membership at a congregational business meeting within 60 days of the completion of the elders' study of the amendment.

c. The purpose of this meeting is to determine if the proposed amendment has enough Scriptural support to commend it for further study. The meeting and proposal to be discussed shall be announced two Sundays prior to the meeting date. Complete written copies of the proposal (with Scriptural arguments appended) along with the date of the meeting shall be mailed to every family in the church membership two weeks prior to the meeting. The meeting shall be convened by the elders and shall begin by a reading of the proposed amendment, the recommendation of the elders, the reasons for those recommendations, and any differences of opinion among the elders. After ample time has been given for discussion of the amendment by the membership, the matter shall be brought to a vote. A majority vote is necessary to commend the proposed amendment for further study.

d. Upon the passage of the proposal, a special meeting for the discussion of the amendment will be held 6 months from the date of the passage at the above business meeting.

e. During the intervening 6-month period, several things will take place: Each family will set aside time for the study and discussion of the proposed amendment. The elders will schedule Bible studies with the proposal as the topic. If the church feels the need for outside counsel, a council shall be called.

f. After the 6-month study period is over, a special business meeting will be convened after 2 weeks notice. It shall be convened and presided over by the elders. Full and ample time for discussion shall be allotted. A vote shall be taken on the proposed amendment. A 2/3-majority vote is necessary to approve an amendment to the Church Covenant or Doctrinal Standards.

2. Book of Church Order

a. The proposed amendment shall be submitted to the elders for a study period of no longer than 2 months. The elders shall call a congregational business meeting scheduled within 60 days after the completion of their study on the proposed amendment.

b. Certain aspects of the Book of Church Order may require the same procedure as that for amending the Church Covenant and Doctrinal Standards. If the elders believe that the issue at stake deserves that procedure, then they shall inform the congregation of their decision and why, and the above described process shall begin. If not, then the following procedure will be in force.

c. Written copies of the amendment shall be mailed to the members at least 2 weeks in advance.

d. The meeting shall be convened by the elders and shall begin by a reading of the proposed amendment, the recommendation of the elders, the reasons for those recommendations, and any differences of opinion among the elders.

e. After ample time has been given for discussion, the matter shall be brought to a vote. A 2/3 majority is necessary to amend the Book of Church Order.

Article XXI. Church Policies

At certain times and under certain circumstances it may be necessary or prudent for this church to adopt policy statements or procedural guidelines on matters relating to the ministry, order, and testimony of the church. In such cases, the elders shall be responsible to draw up the policy statement, or an amendment to an existing policy, and submit it to the review of the membership at least two weeks prior to the meeting where it will be voted on. A 2/3 majority is necessary for approval of any proposed policy or of an amendment to an existing policy. No policy or procedure may in any way contradict or conflict with the Church Covenant, Church Doctrinal Standards, or the Book of Church Order.

Church Positions and Policies





Position on Women in the Military

Immanuel Free Reformed Church confesses, along with all the true churches of Christ throughout the ages, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only infallible source by which we may know what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man.

The Teaching of the Bible Concerning Women In The Military

Immanuel Free Reformed Church finds that the Scriptures specify, in the Book of Numbers, Chapter 1, that Moses was to take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls; From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou [Moses] and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

We find in this passage the simple, and until recent times, virtually universally accepted principle, that warfare is the responsibility of qualified males.

From the Garden of Eden, the Lord God differentiated the roles of male and female. The primary sphere of responsibility for the woman is domestic (Church Covenant para.20). This truth is repeated throughout Scripture, being especially emphatic in the New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (see Ephesians 5 & 6, 1 Timothy 2, and the Book of Titus).

This teaching, we believe, has at its center, a design intended to protect women, whom the Bible denominates as the weaker sex (1 Peter 3: 7). God's holy Law continually provides greater protection to the vulnerable. The churches of Christ must insist on the fact that it is the duty of men to protect women and children.

Warfare, a result of sin in the world, is a horror, yet an occasional reality for which every sovereign nation must be prepared. We fully recognize the responsibility of Christian men to take part in just wars on behalf of the nation of which God has providentially made them members. We regard as an abomination, however, the forced inclusion of women to be among the ranks from which an army is to be mustered. Those who would point to Jael (Judges 4:17-21) as an imagined justification for female subscription, fail to note that this exceptional woman of valor performed her courageous and noble deed while interrupted in her fulfillment of her domestic duties. She was at home in her tent, not in combat on the field. The testimony of Scripture remains uniform: warfare, as such, is the responsibility of qualified men. It is the responsibility of man to bear whatever sorrows may be necessary to protect their women and children (Church Covenant para. 20).

Conclusion

1. The Membership of Immanuel Free Reformed Church, with the authority it has received from Christ our King declares our scriptural and conscientious decision that the women (i.e., a

man's wife or daughters yet in their parent's household) of our member families or other female members of the church may not be subject to a military draft (or enforced "national service"), may not be regarded as proper participants in any pool from which commissioned combatants are to be drawn, and ought not to be placed in any environment or circumstances which would otherwise compromise their high and holy calling as women of the covenant community of God's people.

2. The Membership of Immanuel Free Reformed Church also adopts the conclusion of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States: "The 250th session of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, upon due examination of Holy Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments, find no biblical warrant for women serving in enforced military service, but on the contrary, finds that women are to be protected from enforced military service that they might fulfill their calling and duties under God as set forth in the order of creation. Further, women are not to serve in combat roles."

(Approved by the unanimous vote of the membership of Immanuel Free Reformed Church on January 16, 2005)

The Duty of Parents in the Education of Their Children

Immanuel Free Reformed Church confesses, along with all true churches of Christ throughout the ages, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only infallible source by which we may know what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man.

The Teaching of the Bible Concerning the Education of Children

1. The Scriptures specify, in Paul's letter to the Ephesians (6:4), that fathers are given the explicit command to see that their children are brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The Greek word *paideia*, rendered "nurture" in the King James Version of the Bible, means "discipline or instruction." Discipline, according to the Holman Bible Dictionary, "comes from a Latin word 'disco' which means to learn or get to know, a direct kind of acquaintance with something or someone. Discipline refers to the process by which one learns a way of life." Thus, fathers should instruct their children in the context of a Christian (i.e., biblical) worldview, and with the goal of their children living all of life in obedience to God's law.

2. The education of children belongs to the sphere of family government (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 4:9-10; 6:6-7; Ps. 78:5-7; Prov. 1:8; Eph. 6:4, see also Paragraphs 18-20 on "The Family" in the Church Covenant.). Therefore, each family is given authority from God to educate their own children. Parents will be held accountable to God for their diligence or negligence to fulfill the commands given to them in Scripture. Parents may delegate some aspects of the education of their children to others, but they may not surrender their authority nor abdicate their overall responsibility to provide them with a Christian education. There is no area of instruction/education that is religiously neutral; for Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Mt. 12:30).

3. Instruction/education does not take place at a specific time or location. It is ever present and continuous. It is for that reason that God commanded His people "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine

heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deut. 6.4-7; see also Deut. 11.19).

4. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments teach that blessings attend obedience to God’s revealed law concerning the education of children, and we see that curses attend disobedience (Deut. 11.26-28) to those commands. We see that those blessings and curses affect not only the transgressor, but also the covenant community of which they are a part (Josh. 7).

5. The Scriptures, also teach that the office of civil magistrate, or the state, is ordained of God. However, its purpose and duty is to “bear the sword,” that it might be “the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom. 13:1-4). Nowhere in the Scriptures of the Old or New Testament, is the state given the authority or responsibility to educate its citizenry. That authority and responsibility has been given to parents, with the final authority and responsibility resting with fathers, as the head of their homes. Education of children falls within the sphere of family government, not within the sphere of church government or civil government.

6. Where the father is absent because of death, the final responsibility falls upon the mother, unless she marries another; or in the absence of both parents because of death, the responsibility falls upon the one who assumes or is given the guardianship of the children. And it must be noted that the state never has the role of guardianship, for that was not and is not its purpose and duty.

Conclusion

1. The Membership of Immanuel Free Reformed Church, believes that fathers and mothers are bound by the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments with the responsibility of raising their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” And furthermore, that they should instruct/ educate their children within a distinctively biblical worldview with a multi-generational vision of raising up a godly seed (Mal. 2.15) unto the Lord, so that they may learn “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever” (Keach’s Catechism, Q&A #2), which is their chief end.

2. The Membership of Immanuel Free Reformed Church also believes that the state has no God-given, biblical authority to assume the responsibility for the education of the children of our member families, or to compel them to attend a government school.

3. The Membership of Immanuel Free Reformed Church also concludes that even if the state were vested by God with the responsibility and authority to educate the children of its members (which we deny), we should not enroll our children in any secular and humanistic government system of education in America that is, at best, religiously agnostic and at worst atheistic. Indeed, we should not directly involve our children in this educational system because it would teach them that God is irrelevant, not only in culture and society at large, but also in their own personal lives. And if we should be compelled to do so, we ought, by God’s grace, to obey Him rather than man (Acts 4:19; 5.29).

(Appendix to The Duty of Parents in the Education of Their Children)

Biblical Policy on Keeping Covenant With God in the Education of Our Children

By Dr. Greg Bahnsen

As a confession of our faith, testimony to the world, and instruction to all true believers, the elders of this church have determined to record here our heartfelt and Biblically based conviction that the Lord has appointed to parents the responsibility and final authority to secure, guide and control the education of their children, that they might be trained regarding this world and in all areas of life to think God's thoughts after Him and walk in all His ways.

Man was created, as God's likeness and for God's glory, to study, subdue and develop the world in which God placed him (Gen. 1:26-28). Naturally, from the very beginning, it was a task which belonged to parents to instill this perspective in their children and help them to pursue it.

Ethical rebellion against God has resulted in a curse on mankind (Gen. 3:17-19) which is experienced not only spiritually (Rom. 8:5-8; Eph. 2:1-4) but also intellectually (Rom. 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 4:17-18), and which introduces an unavoidable antithesis between those antagonistic to God and those who belong to the promised Savior (Gen. 3:15).

The task of pursuing proper knowledge of the world and developing a God-glorifying culture therein thus encounters tremendous obstacles and distortions, making it imperative that parents educate their children within the perspective and power of God's revelation and grace. The redemption which Christ has secured for us not only spiritually saves us from the wrath to come, but also delivers us from intellectual futility and foolish reasoning in our methods and learning about the world in which we presently live.

Genuine knowledge of any subject whatsoever begins with reverence and submission to God (Prov. 1:7), particularly the fundamentals and philosophy which adhere to the Lord Jesus Christ rather than the fallen world or human traditions (Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:20). It is the word of God which sets apart His people in the truth (John 17:17). Thus neutrality in education is not only impossible (Matt. 12:30), but immoral (Jas. 4:4). Accordingly, the aim of Christian parents must be to encourage their children to "bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5), "in whom are deposited all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). Only if they are first disciples of Christ will they know the truth and enjoy real freedom (John 8:31-32).

Therefore, from the very beginning of history, then especially with the introduction of man's rebellion against God, and as well in light of the fundamental nature of any genuine knowledge, it is a parental duty to train and educate their children, regardless of the subject matter, in the nurture of the Lord and the light of His revelation (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 5:1-2; Ps. 36:9; 119:105, 130).

The responsibility rehearsed here has been part of the confession of faith of God's people from the earliest days, indeed a primary application of the first and great commandment (Deut. 6:4-5; cf. Matt. 22:37-38). It constitutes a central element in what it means for those who are saved to keep covenant with God: "And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart, and you shall teach them diligently unto your children" - constantly and consistently, in every time and place, covering all the spheres of human thought, activity and living (Deut. 6:6-9). Note is taken that this responsibility has been assigned directly by God to parents, rather than any other institution of society.

Regardless, then, of whatever children learn - from math and science to history, social studies, literature and the arts - parents have a God-given duty to see to it that their children learn it, as much as is possible (given the resources and opportunities available to their parents), with the perspective and application of the Christian worldview as derived from God's revelation. It is and shall be the policy of this church by instruction, preaching and pastoral care to inculcate

this educational responsibility in our parents, directing and helping them to walk in God's gracious covenant as faithful disciples of Christ.

(This policy/article was originally published in *Penpoint*, vol. 5:3, April 1994)

Purpose and Procedure for Administering Church Benevolence

Immanuel Free Reformed Church in the exercise of its religious and charitable purposes has established a benevolence fund to assist persons in financial need.

The financing and replenishing of the benevolence fund will be provided for in the following three ways:

1. Individual contributions.
2. A portion of the weekly offering, at the discretion of the deacons.
3. Interest or dividends received from investing the monies.

We will seek to maintain a reasonable and prudent balance in the fund that reflects both the needs and the giving of the congregation.

Any possible needs are to be ascertained in one of the following ways:

1. The deacons are responsible to monitor and investigate the needs of the congregation.
2. The membership is responsible to call to the deacons' attention any needs that may have escaped the deacons' notice and make recommendations concerning those needs.
3. Any person in the congregation who, of their own initiative, seeks financial assistance shall indicate such by putting their request in writing and submitting it to a deacon. They should explain the specific need and the amount of help that they are seeking from the church.
 - a. We encourage individuals seeking assistance to first seek help from his/her family who bear the primary responsibility (1 Timothy 5:8)
 - b. If the family is unwilling or is unable to help, the deacons will determine the reason for the need. It should be determined whether the need is due to slothfulness or irresponsibility on the part of the individual. (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

The order of priority for charity will be: (Galatians 6:10)

1. The members of Immanuel Free Reformed Church.
2. Other Christians.
3. Non-Christians.

Once the need has become known the deacons will be responsible to determine if the need is legitimate and meets the qualifications for biblical charity.

In situations where it has been determined that there is a legitimate need the deacons will have the authority to make disbursements up to \$500.00 per situation. Any disbursement between \$500.00 and \$1,500.00 would need the additional approval of the elders. Any disbursement over \$1,500.00 would need the approval of a majority of the membership.

There are three ways that a need could be met:

1. A one time charitable gift for a specific need.
 - a. If the gift is to pay a particular bill or purchase specific necessities the treasurer will seek to make the check payable to that entity.
2. An agreement to pay for a recurring expense for a certain period of time. (I.e. rent payment, utilities, medical treatment, etc.)
 - a. In case of a recurring expense the deacons shall always set a date with the individual when the assistance will expire. This is not to exceed 6 months from the initial payment. The case would then need to be reviewed and a decision would have to be made whether or not to continue.
3. A charitable, interest-free loan (Leviticus 25:35-37, Deuteronomy 15:7-8).
 - a. The terms of repayment would be agreed to in writing prior to any disbursement.

The church welcomes contributions to the fund. Donors are free to suggest beneficiaries of the fund or of their contributions to the fund. However, such suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. The administration of the fund, including all disbursements is subject to the control and discretion of the deacon board. The deacon board may consider suggested designations, but in no event is it bound in any way to honor them, since they are accepted only on the condition that they are merely nonbinding suggestions or recommendations. As a result, donors will not be permitted to recover a designated contribution on the ground that the church failed to honor the donor's designation.

Donors wishing to make contributions to the benevolence fund subject to these conditions may be able to deduct their contributions if they itemize their deductions on their federal income tax return. The church cannot guarantee this result, and recommends that donors who want assurance that their contributions are deductible seek the advice of a tax attorney or CPA. Checks should be made payable to the church, with a notation that the funds are to be placed in the church benevolence fund.

Policy on Church Borrowing

The Scripture does not specifically address the issue of a local church borrowing money to finance the purchase of property and/or a church building. Thus, general principles concerning the subject of borrowing need to be applied. Borrowing is neither forbidden, nor commanded in Scripture. It is therefore a matter of Christian liberty for the church. As in all matters of liberty, this church must act prudently (cf. 1 Cor. 10:23) in regard to borrowing, weighing the overall scriptural teaching on the subject of debt/borrowing, and only do so when it is clearly advantageous, and when it is approved by 2/3 majority vote of the church membership.

Church Missions





Immanuel Free Reformed Church supports the following ministries for the propagation of the Gospel in the world and the edification of the church.

SermonAudio

Immanuel Free Reformed Church is a full member of SermonAudio and through this service broadcasts all of its sermons on the world-wide web. By means of this service anyone in the world can listen to or download the sermons preached at IFRC. This ministry provides IFRC with its own homepage that lists all our sermons plus other significant information about our church and its ministry. Our home page is at www.sermonaudio.com/immanuelifrc

The Ministry and Impact of SermonAudio

The current listening audience reaches clear across the entire globe. Some of these countries include: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom to name a few. Indeed, we also have listeners in each and every state in the USA.

SermonAudio.com maintains a growing audience of thousands of regular listeners who like to listen to sermons on the site either at the office or at home. But a primary listening audience could be your own church members who perhaps wish to listen to last week's sermon again? Or maybe they would like to email that very sermon to their unsaved friends and loved ones. Missionaries, travelling members, or other church friends in various parts of the world will also appreciate being able to "keep up" with the weekly messages from your church.

SermonAudio.com is more than just technology: it is our conviction that millions of people are hungering and thirsting for solid, uncompromising, Bible preaching and teaching. One way to reach them and for many the only way to be reached is through the Internet.

SermonAudio.com delivers what no single church website can offer—an easy-to-use interface coupled with a large listening audience. SermonAudio makes it very easy for any church to post new audio sermons on a regular basis but more importantly, every church broadcasting on SermonAudio.com will immediately enjoy an already-established listening audience as indicated by the following statistics (sum total from all member churches on SermonAudio):

1. To date (2009), over 42,000,000 sermons have been downloaded all over the world!
2. Over 300,000 sermons are downloaded each week.
3. The site receives over 16,000,000 page views each month.
4. 150,500+ subscribers receive sermonaudio's weekly email newsletter.
5. SermonAudio.com consistently ranks in Google's Top search results when searching for audio sermons.

These figures are growing every day and ultimately translate into more people listening to your church's sermons, more people being saved, and more Christians growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. SermonAudio.com takes your ministry far beyond the walls of your building at a much lower cost than traditional forms of outreach.

Articles of Faith & Policy Statement for Broadcasting on SermonAudio:

FULL Members Only: SermonAudio.com embraces the historic Protestant faith and is not open to the dissemination of such distinctive Charismatic and Pentecostalist views as extra-Scriptural revelations, tongues, healing, women pastors/preachers/elders, etc.

Although the site is not affiliated with any particular denomination, we will only carry churches that are fundamental in doctrine and Bible-believing. Every church wishing to broadcast with us must adhere to the following Articles of Faith:

1. The Absolute Authority and Divine Verbal Inspiration of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God.

2. There is but one living and true God, and in the Godhead, there are three Persons, equal in power and glory, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

3. The Eternal Sonship, Virgin Birth, and Deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

4. The personality of God the Holy Spirit, and the absolute necessity of His work in Regeneration and Sanctification, and His Infilling of the Indwelt Believer for power to live and witness for Christ.

5. The Substitutionary Death of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Resurrection as the only way of Salvation through Faith.

6. God has appointed besides the Word and Prayer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

7. We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in Jesus Christ and cherish every Scriptural expression of that unity. However, we reject the unscriptural attempts at church union by such organizations as the World Council of Churches and Evangelicals and Catholics Together.

8. The visible and personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone without the addition of human works.

All broadcasters must adhere to these Articles of Faith. We reserve the right to remove any sermon, church, or organization that we feel is not in accordance with these Articles. All such decisions will be at the sole discretion of SermonAudio.com.

Please note that SermonAudio.com is not an association, organization, or denomination. Ecclesiastical fellowship is not necessarily implied by becoming a broadcaster. SermonAudio.com is a privately-owned and operated site that seeks to promote the "Fundamentals of the Faith".

Web Site - <http://www.sermonaudio.com>

Frontline Fellowship

Serving God in Angola, Nigeria, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Purpose

FRONTLINE FELLOWSHIP exists to further the cause of world evangelisation by missionary outreach to resistant or neglected areas and groups in Southern Africa. The Fellowship further seeks to encourage and mobilise more Christians into missions by providing prayer information, intensive training programmes and field outreach opportunities for suitable and interested Christians.

The Fellowship gives priority to: Assisting persecuted churches; Bible distribution and literature evangelism; Challenging Christians to return to the Bible, to seek God for revival and to dedicate ourselves to missionary outreach; Defending the Church against unBiblical teachings and heresies; Educating Christians about the threats of Humanism, godless Communism and militant Islam and inspiring them to love God, honour the Bible, defend our Faith and give themselves over to prayer, holy living and bold evangelism; Film evangelism in war zones; Giving emphasis to neglected doctrines, like the fear of God (Proverbs 1:7; 8:13; 9:10), hatred of evil (Psalm 119:53; 104; 110, 113, 158), loving the Lord with all our heart, soul, strength and mind (Mark 12:30), glorifying God by faith and action, in prayer and practise (1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31), trusting God for protection, provision and guidance (Psalm 62:5-8), the wrath of God (Deut 32:16, 19, 22), eternal judgement (Rev 20:11-15), the need for holy living (Hebrews 12:14), the Gospel of repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47), the need for nationwide revival (2 Chron 7:14), for purity in association (2 Cor. 6:14-17) and for persistence (Hebrews 10:32-39), excellence (Col 3:23; 4:17), obedience (1 John 5:3) and bold evangelism (2 Timothy 4:2); Holding Reformation and revival seminars, missions workshops, leadership training courses and evangelistic crusades; Intercession for the persecuted churches in communist and Islamic lands, for missionary outreach to unreached people, and for Reformation and revival in Africa.

Frontline Fellowship exists to glorify God by faith and obedience, in prayer and action, assisting persecuted churches and working for reformation and revival in Africa

Director - Peter Hammond

The official government of Sudan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs website includes an article that declares that missionary Peter "Hammond should expect to be bombed when he comes to Sudan ... he should expect to be shot on sight"! His latest book Slavery, Terrorism and Islam - The Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat has recieved death threats from Muslim militants by phone and fax.

Dr. Peter Hammond is a missionary who has pioneered evangelistic outreaches in the war zones of Mozambique, Angola and Sudan. Often travelling by off road motorbike, Peter has travelled hundreds of thousands of miles to deliver Bibles to persecuted Christians in Africa and Eastern Europe. In the course of his missionary activities Peter has been ambushed, come under aerial and artillery bombardments, been stabbed, shot at, beaten by mobs, arrested and imprisoned. On some mission trips he has flown far behind enemy lines to the beleaguered Nuba Mountains in Central Sudan with tonnes of Bibles, books and relief aid. He has then walked throughout the war devastated Nuba Mountains showing the Jesus film in Arabic, proclaiming

the Gospel, training pastors and evading enemy patrols.

Rev. Peter Hammond is the Founder and Director of Frontline Fellowship, the Founder and Chairman of Africa Christian Action, the Director of the Christian Action Network and the Co-ordinator of the Reformation Society of South Africa. He is the author of The Greatest Century of Missions, Faith Under Fire in Sudan, Holocaust in Rwanda, the Great Commission Manual, Putting Feet to Your Faith, In the Killing Fields of Mozambique, Biblical Principles for Africa, the Discipleship Handbook and Slavery, Terrorism and Islam - the Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat. In addition he has co-authored or contributed to: Fight for Life, Make a Difference, The Pink Agenda, South Africa - Renaissance or Reformation? and Character Assassins - dealing with Ecclesiastical Tyrants and Terrorists. He is the Editor of both Frontline Fellowship News and Christian Action.

Over the last 25 years, Peter has been dedicated to assisting persecuted Christians and to working for Reformation and revival in Africa. Peter has developed the Biblical Worldview Seminar and Great Commission Course to mobilise Churches to comprehensively apply the Lordship of Christ to all areas of life and to fulfill the Great Commission.

Peter was born in Cape Town (in 1960) and brought up in Bulawayo (in what was then war torn Rhodesia - now Zimbabwe). He was converted to Christ in 1977, worked in Scripture Union and Hospital Christian Fellowship, served in the South African Defence Force and studied at Baptist Theological College, Cape Town. He also earned a Doctorate in Missiology and has an honorary Doctorate of Divinity. Peter is married to Lenora (whose missionary parents Rev. Bill and Harriett Bathman, have pioneered missionary work into Eastern Europe for over 50 years). Peter and Lenora have been blessed with four children: Andrea, Daniela, Christopher and Calvin, whom they homeschool.

Web Site - <http://www.frontline.org.za/>

Trinitarian Bible Society

The Aims of the Trinitarian Bible Society

1. To publish and distribute the Holy Scriptures throughout the world in many languages.
2. To promote Bible translations which are accurate and trustworthy.
3. To be instrumental in bringing light and life, through the Gospel of Christ, to those who are lost in sin and in the darkness of false religion and unbelief.
4. To uphold the doctrines of reformed Christianity, bearing witness to the equal and eternal deity of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, One God in three Persons.
5. To uphold the Bible as the inspired, inerrant Word of God.

For the Glory of God and the Increase of His Kingdom

The Work of the Trinitarian Bible Society

Since 1831 the Trinitarian Bible Society has been engaged in the publication and distribution of faithful and trustworthy versions of the Holy Scriptures in many languages throughout the world. The Society desires to ensure that believers everywhere have reliable Bibles. Ministers, missionaries and Christian workers in more than 100 countries look to the Society for regular supplies of complete Bibles, New Testaments, Gospels, Scripture Booklets, Leaflets, and Text Cards. Many of the Scriptures supplied are offered, in cases of need, free of charge or at prices well below the cost of production.

The Basis of the Trinitarian Bible Society

The Society, as its name clearly implies, maintains a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. There are three Persons in the eternal Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God in three Persons, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Additionally, the Society makes clear acknowledgement of the miraculous virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, His sinless humanity, His substitutionary death on the cross, the atoning power of His precious blood, His physical resurrection and ascension into heaven where He is seated until He returns to judge all men, both the living and the dead, at the last day. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, the only begotten Son of God, is the only Saviour of sinners.

As the guiding principle of its work and witness, the Society acknowledges the whole Bible as the inspired, inerrant Word of God, the sole, supreme, and infallible rule of faith and practice, providentially preserved by God and able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The Society's publications contain the Word of God alone without note or comment beyond references and headings. The policy of the Society is not to use pictures of Bible characters or the sign of the cross.

The work of the Society is maintained under a solemn conviction that no true union can exist in any religious institution unless its principles be derived from the unerring Word of God, and its laws founded in accordance with the Word.

While perfection is not claimed for the Authorised Version (known in some countries as the King James Version), or for any other version, it is known that the translators of the Authorised Version acknowledged the Divine inspiration, authority and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures; the fruitful use of their translation for nearly 400 years is evidence of the Lord's blessing upon their work. It is the most accurate and trustworthy translation into English available and is the only English version published by the Society.

The Society acknowledges its dependence upon God for His provision in the continuance of the work and for His blessing upon His Word to make it effectual in the salvation of the lost.

The Texts of the Bible used by the Trinitarian Bible Society

The Hebrew Text: The Society uses the Hebrew Masoretic Text as the textual basis for the Old Testament in its translations. Great care was taken by the Jews over the centuries to preserve the Hebrew text in its purest form; their work produced what is commonly called the Masoretic Text. This text has been the standard Hebrew text for over one thousand years. When translating the Hebrew into other languages, occasionally ancient translations such as the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, and the Aramaic Targums are consulted because of the difficulty of the Hebrew. But, because God gave the text originally in Hebrew, these ancient translations must be treated as secondary to the Hebrew. The Masoretic Text is the most reliable form of

the text of the Old Testament, and is the basis of all of the Society's Old Testament publications.

The Greek Text: The Society uses the form of the Greek text of the New Testament known as the Textus Receptus or Received Text. This is the text which underlies the New Testament of the Authorised Version and the other Reformation translations. It is a faithful representation of the text which the church in different parts of the world has used for centuries. It is the result of the textual studies of conservative scholars during the years both before and after the Reformation, and represents for the most part over 5,000 available Greek manuscripts. The Society believes this text is superior to the texts used by the United Bible Societies and other Bible publishers, which texts have as their basis a relatively few seriously defective manuscripts from the 4th century and which have been compiled using 20th century rationalistic principles of scholarship.

Principles of Translation used by the Trinitarian Bible Society

In today's world, people are far more concerned with having the Scriptures in a form which is easy to read, a form which is sometimes already interpreted or paraphrased so that it reads like a storybook. Thus many Bible societies follow a principle known as 'dynamic equivalence' in translation. The underlying principle in dynamic equivalence is an attempt to reproduce in the receptor language the same effect which the original Scriptures had on those to whom they were first addressed; the dynamic equivalence translators seek to give the same thoughts or ideas to present-day readers that the Bible would have given to its first readers. This is a noble goal; however, it is attempted with little regard for the wording of the Greek and Hebrew texts. The actual words are no longer considered to be as important as the thoughts or ideas behind them. The question must be asked, How can the thoughts of a first-century writer be known or conveyed if not through his words?

Modern man does not have the thoughts of the writers of Scripture; we do, however, have their words, and must faithfully render those words into the languages of the peoples of the world. The Society, believing in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, that the very words of the Bible and not merely the thoughts or ideas are inspired and inerrant, uses the principle of translation known as 'formal equivalence'. This means that, whenever possible, the grammar, form, vocabulary and syntax of the Greek and Hebrew are followed. The Society seeks to follow the principle "as literal as possible, as free as necessary", so that every word of the text is taken into account in translation. These are the normal, traditional principles of translation, the principles used in the translation of Scripture and of the great works of literature throughout the ages.

The Society seeks to understand the norms and problems both of the original languages and the languages into which God's Word is being translated. Thus idioms, figures of speech and difficult vocabulary are translated carefully and with reverence. The Bible is, after all, the holy Word of God, and must be treated as such.

The Society seeks to follow the traditional principle of retaining the use of italics in the text. This principle, first used in 1534, is a helpful device to ensure that the reader is aware of any words or phrases which were added to the text. These words would include both the words which are demanded or implied by the original language and context and also other 'helper' words which complete the sense of the text.

A common practice in translation which is avoided by the Society's translators is the substitution of names where the Greek or Hebrew text has a pronoun--'he', 'she', or 'it'. Thus the reader has the opportunity of interpreting the Bible for himself without the subjective opinions of translators. Until recently this non-interpretative rendering of the pronoun was a standard practice in translation.

The Society believes that the Bible is God's Book, given by Divine inspiration to reveal Himself and the gospel of His grace to sinful mankind. As such it is not to be added to, subtracted from, changed to appeal to unbelievers, or modified to avoid offending modern man.

Today the aim of the Society's translators is to translate from the Greek and Hebrew texts. This is important. Other societies may use a trade language such as English or French or a simplified language version as the basis for their translation. The Society believes that people in every country and of every tongue should have the right and privilege of having the Bible translated from the original tongues rather than having it 'filtered' or 'sifted' through a third language.

In summary, the Society seeks to produce God-honouring, literal, idiomatic, trustworthy translations from the original languages.

The Need for the Trinitarian Bible Society

Bible-believing Christians in many parts of the world are expressing growing concern at the liberal and ecumenical tendencies of many of the organisations engaged in the publication and distribution of the Holy Scriptures. No longer are the inerrancy and authority of the Bible being upheld by these organisations, nor is their chief aim the glory and honour of God. Instead, they work to produce Bibles which are 'understandable' by the masses. Because they no longer hold the Bible to be inerrant, they feel free to translate in any way that they deem expedient. This often takes the form of paraphrase, of dynamic equivalence, and of co-operation with Roman Catholics, Unitarians, and Jews in the production of 'Common Bibles' for general use. The effect of this is that this type of Bible is no longer the Word of God as God gave it; these Bibles are now the Word of God as men have interpreted it. Too often this interpretation is opposed to the true doctrine of the Word of God. Often, these modern versions weaken the testimony of the Holy Scriptures to the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ in many important passages, and fall far short of the standard of accuracy and faithfulness which should be required in translating the Word of God.

More than one hundred Bible translation projects are being carried out by ecumenically aligned Bible Societies, and many evangelical Christians will feel that they cannot conscientiously join in such schemes or support the societies which promote them. The Society finds itself constrained to remain in the true Reformed tradition and to avoid the mere outward appearance of a 'unity' which can be achieved only by compromise. There is no desire to disparage what is good in the work of any other society or organisation, but these are vital issues and matters of important principle which make it impossible to integrate the work of the Society with the United Bible Societies or with any liberal ecumenical movement. The need for a clear and uncompromising testimony to the Divine inspiration, inerrancy and authority of the Holy Scriptures has never been greater than at the present time. The vital importance of preserving the purity of the Word of God and promoting the production and distribution of trustworthy translations is what underlies the need for the witness maintained by the Society.

The Support of the Trinitarian Bible Society

The Society has always been supported by congregations and individuals who stand where the Protestant Reformation martyrs stood in their affection for the pure doctrine of the Bible.

No doubt there are many discriminating believers to whom matters of Scriptural truth and principles are vital who are not yet associated with the Society. The Society desires to have fellowship with Bible-loving Christians in every part of the world who share its reverent regard for the Holy Scriptures as the Divinely inspired, inerrant and authoritative Word of God. It is also the Society's desire to co-ordinate the resources and efforts of those who are burdened with a sense of the world's great need of the pure Word of God.

The Society is devoted to these beliefs and to these tasks. This introduction is issued in the hope that many who earnestly desire to "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) will become members of the Society and support it by their prayers and by their gifts.

The Constitution of the Society

Laws and Regulations

Our Name

I. That this Society be designated the TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

Our Aim

II. The object of this Society is to promote the Glory of God and the salvation of men, by circulating, both at home and abroad, in dependence on the Divine blessing, the HOLY SCRIPTURES, which are given by inspiration of God, and are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Our Work

III. This Society shall circulate the HOLY SCRIPTURES, as comprised in the Canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, WITHOUT NOTE OR COMMENT, to the exclusion of the Apocrypha; the copies in the English language shall be those of the Authorised Version. In promoting and editing new translations, and selecting versions in Foreign languages, the competency of the translators employed, and the faithfulness, textual basis and Christian character of the versions, shall be ascertained by the Committee, before the circulation of such versions is in any way aided by this Society. The aim shall be to produce or select versions whose textual basis is as close as possible to the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Received texts underlying both the English Authorised Version and translations of comparable standing made from these texts into other European languages at the time of the Protestant Reformation.

Our Membership

IV. The MEMBERS of this Society shall consist of PROTESTANTS, who acknowledge in writing to the Society's Head Office their belief in the GODHEAD OF THE FATHER, OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST, THREE CO-EQUAL AND CO-ETERNAL PERSONS IN ONE LIVING AND TRUE GOD (as is more fully set forth in the Appendix to these laws); in the WHOLE BIBLE as the inspired and inerrant Word of God, the sole, supreme and infallible rule of faith and practice; and who unite to support the Society by contributing not less than FIVE POUNDS annually either directly to the Society's Head Office or through an Auxiliary or local representative. Members shall have the right of attending and voting at all General Meetings of the Society.... (Rest of the Constitution can be found on the TBS Web Site)

Web Site: <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/>

U.S. Branch: <http://www.trinitarianbiblesocietyusa.org>

National Center for Family- Integrated Churches





Immanuel Free Reformed Church is part of a network of like-minded churches that subscribe to the Nicene Creed and confess substantial agreement with the following confession for uniting church and family. IFRC has registered with the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches and the church appears on the Church Directory of the Center.

A Biblical Confession for Uniting Church and Family

Presented to the
National Conference for Uniting Church & Family

Introduction

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that the family is a holy institution, ordained and established by the Sovereign Triune God Who created the heavens and the earth. God's infallible revelation, the Bible, reveals that the family is an integral part of the unfolding of His eternal purpose for the redemption of sinners. This great and gracious salvation--purposed by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit--is in great measure passed on to succeeding generations as parents faithfully disciple the children God gives them. Therefore, the biblical order and unity of the family are crucial to the stability and health of the Church of Jesus Christ. In light of this, we recognize that the family--and especially fathers--are the focus of a fierce and unrelenting attack by the world, the flesh, and the Devil. This has escalated to the point that Christians must rise up in defense of the family in uncompromising biblical warfare.

Rather than helping in this battle, unfaithful church leadership bears the primary responsibility for the vulnerability of the family in the face of its enemies. Unfaithfulness to God's Word in our pulpits has produced the decline of biblical Christianity and the dissolution of the family in our pews. The abdication of God's authority leads to unbiblical practices in the churches and to the erosion of biblical manhood and leadership. This in turn leads to the perversion of the role of women, the destruction of our children, and the collapse of our society. Traditions, which have originated in the minds of devils and fallen men, counterfeit God's authority. False doctrines derived from Darwinism, Marxism, Feminism, Secular Humanism, Psychology, and countless other unbiblical sources, have emerged from a society that has discarded Divine Revelation and have contaminated or replaced God's standards in many professing churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. The bitter fruit of this is the fragmentation, not the unity of the family.

We believe that the only resolution to this problem is repentance. We must confess our failures, reject the traditions of men, and wholeheartedly return to God's revelation for the establishment and nurture of the family in loving obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. Our fervent prayer is that our God will raise up Spirit-filled and healthy family-integrated assemblies from the ashes of our fragmented, individualistic meetings.

ARTICLE I -- Scripture is Sufficient

We affirm that our all-wise God has revealed Himself and His will in a completed revelation--the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments--which is fully adequate in both content and clarity for “everything pertaining to life (salvation) and godliness (sanctification)” including the ordering of the church and the family (2 Pet. 1:3-4; 1 Tim. 3:15).

We deny that God’s people should treat His Word as inadequate for church and family life by supplementing His completed revelation with humanistic psychology, corporate business models, and modern marketing techniques.

ARTICLE II -- God Created Church and Family

We affirm that Almighty God is the sovereign Creator and Preserver of His people and all the institutions that bring blessing to mankind--including the church and the family--and is thus deserving of our highest honor and humble obedience (Col. 1:16-17).

We deny that we, being mere creatures, have a right to refashion the church and family according to our vain imaginations by altering God’s prescribed government, worship, gender-based roles, or any other normative patterns revealed in Scripture.

ARTICLE III -- Satan is a Deceiver

We affirm the warning of Holy Scripture that Satan, the father of lies and deceiver of the brethren, has used his subtle trickery from the beginning to question God’s Word: “Yea, Hath God said...?” (Gen. 3:1).

We deny that the children of God should embrace and employ the philosophies, goals, and methods of this fallen world in our churches and families, and thus succumb to the Adversary’s deception.

ARTICLE IV -- Church’s Head is Christ

We affirm our Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of His church, having purchased it with His own blood and having instructed it through His Word in order to make known the manifold wisdom of God and bring glory to Himself (Col. 1:18).

We deny/reject the self-importance and pride of man to usurp Christ’s headship of His church by creating personal kingdoms through churches with man-made rules that disregard the Law of Christ.

ARTICLE V -- Church’s Leadership and Ministry

We affirm God’s revealed pattern in Scripture that the church be led and fed by a plurality of biblically qualified elders whom the Holy Spirit raises up from within the local church, who equip all the saints to do the work of ministry, and who may or may not be remunerated (Acts 14:23; 20:28; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).

We deny/reject the two unbiblical extremes of our day: authoritarian, one-man leadership/one-man ministry that impedes the biblical functioning of the body, and leaderless house churches that disregard the biblical necessity of elders.

ARTICLE VI -- Church is a Family of Families

We affirm that our Heavenly Father designed His church to be a spiritual “family of families” where members know one another intimately, the shepherds understand the sheep effectively, and the various body parts function interactively (1 Tim. 3:15).

We deny/reject the current trend to value numbers and size more than intimacy and vitality by building impersonal mega-churches rather than the multiplication of family-like congregations.

ARTICLE VII -- Family is a Building Block

We affirm that the biblical family is a scripturally ordered household of parents, children, and sometimes others (such as singles, widows, divorcees, or grandparents), forming the God-ordained building blocks of the church (2 Tim. 4:19).

We deny/reject the church’s implementation of modern individualism by fragmenting the family through age-graded, peer-oriented, and special-interest classes, thus preventing rather than promoting family unity.

ARTICLE VIII -- Church and Family Mission is Generational

We affirm that God intends both church and family to carry out evangelism and discipleship through multiple generations, “so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God to keep all His statutes and His commandments” (Deut. 6:2; Lk. 1:50).

We deny/reject the contemporary seeker-sensitive and youth group philosophies which fail to “equip the saints” for spiritual ministry and maturity, resulting in adults and youth who become lukewarm and spiritually wayward.

ARTICLE IX -- Church and Family Method is Relationships

We affirm that the saints of God are to be equipped for spiritual ministry and maturity primarily through family-based, one-on-one, heart-level relationships, and especially by preparing fathers to be servant-leaders in family and church (1Tim. 3:4-5).

We deny/reject the popular church system that has replaced heart-level relationships with activity-based programs, and has supplanted father involvement with clergy dominance.

ARTICLE X -- Church and Family Milieu is Everyday Life

We affirm that the church’s relationships are nurtured primarily through daily discipleship in everyday life, especially fathers and mothers training their families and living out the gospel in ministry to the saints and witness to the lost (Eph. 5:21-6:4).

We deny/reject family-fragmenting, facility-based programs which disregard the Church as a people in community and which displace family-integrated outreach through “loving our neighbor as our self.”

ARTICLE XI -- God Requires Examination

We affirm that God enjoins us to “examine everything carefully, and hold fast to that which

is good"--moreover, to "let each one examine his own work"--particularly when the people of God are not thriving according to the New Testament pattern (1 Thes. 5:21; Gal. 6:4).

We deny that we who shepherd the flock of Christ--whether as fathers or as pastors--have adequately and vigilantly scrutinized the beliefs and practices of the modern church as well as our own role in it.

ARTICLE XII -- Judgment Begins With the Church

We affirm that God has declared "judgment begins with the household of God" and thus, we Christians are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, looking to judge ourselves lest we be chastened all the more (1 Pet. 4:17; 5:6).

We deny that the world, the flesh, and the devil are primarily to blame for the disintegration and destruction of the family, when in reality the modern church is much at fault.

WHEREFORE, in light of this our faith, we do hereby resolve to...

Rely upon the Scriptures alone for "everything pertaining to life and godliness," treating the Bible as fully sufficient for the ordering of the church and the family;

Honor Almighty God as Creator and Preserver of the church and the family, and humbly submit to His prescribed order for each of these fundamental institutions;

Resist Satan's deception designed to supplant God's goals and methods with the world's felt needs and opinion polls, but instead depend on God's Word, just as our Lord did in the wilderness;

Submit to the Headship of Christ over His church, embracing His manifold wisdom, not our own, for its structure and operation;

Reject the errors of both authoritarian one-man ministry and leaderless house churches, and return to plural leadership by godly elders who equip the saints for ministry;

Recognize the church to be a spiritual "family of families" who value intimacy and interaction and grow by the multiplication of family-like congregations;

Acknowledge families (which include singles, widows, divorcees, grandparents, etc.) as God's building blocks for the church, and maintain family-integrated rather than family-segregated meetings;

Develop a multi-generational vision for both the church and the family which stimulates personal sacrifice and maturity and preserves our spiritual posterity;

Equip whole households for ministry through heart-level relationships rather than activity-based programs, preparing and utilizing fathers as servant-leaders in family and church;

Pursue outreach through whole families "living out the gospel" in ministry to the saints and witness to the lost, rather than age-segregated programs;

Scrutinize the beliefs and practices of modern families and churches as well as our own role in both--whether as fathers or as church leaders--and make whatever changes are necessary to conform to God's revealed patterns for family and church;

Seek God while there is yet time so that, seeing our true repentance, He will withhold His hand of judgment upon our worldly families and churches.

Web Site: <http://www.visionforumministries.org/sections/ncfic/default.asp>

Notes, Additions, and Amendments