

# Reformed Baptist Confession Of Faith

The 1689 London Baptist Confession Of Faith

Annotated by Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon (1855)

## Introduction

Speaking of the 1689 Baptist Confession Of Faith C.H. Spurgeon said:

*"This ancient document is the most excellent epitome of the things most surely believed among us. It is not issued as an authoritative rule or code of faith, whereby you may be fettered, but as a means of edification in righteousness. It is an excellent, though not inspired, expression of the teaching of those Holy Scriptures by which all confessions are to be measured. We hold to the humbling truths of God's sovereign grace in the salvation of lost sinners. Salvation is through Christ alone and by faith alone"*

Spurgeon edited and made slight revisions to the 1689 confession for use in his church, the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, England. The 32 items in the confession provide a concise summary of Spurgeon's theology and can serve as a study guide for the essential doctrines of theology from a "Reformed Baptist" perspective. Other than the distinctive item on Baptism, the rest of the document is identical to what is considered today to be "Reformed Theology".

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## 1. The Holy Scriptures

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 manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God so much that man is left without any excuse, they are not sufficient to provide that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary for salvation.

Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal Himself, and to declare His will to His church;

- and afterward, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church, protecting it against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and the world,

- it pleased the Lord to commit His revealed Truth wholly to writing. Therefore the Holy Scriptures are most necessary, those former ways by which God revealed His will unto His people having now ceased.

Under the title of Holy Scripture (or the written Word of God) are now contained all the following books of the Old and New Testament:-

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. OF THE NEW TESTAMENT Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, Jude, Revelation.

All these books are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

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

The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, depends not on the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God its Author (Who is Truth itself). Therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the people of God to gain a high and reverent estimation of the Holy Scriptures. We may be similarly affected by the nature of the Scriptures—the heavenliness of the contents, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God, the full disclosure it makes of the only way of man's salvation, together with many other

incomparable excellencies and entire perfections. By all the evidence the Scripture more than proves itself to be the Word of God. Yet, notwithstanding this, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth of Scripture and its divine authority, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

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, to which nothing is to be added at any time, either by new revelation of the Spirit, or by the 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.

There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and church government which are 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.

All things in scripture are not equally plain in themselves, nor equally clear to everyone, yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and revealed in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the educated but also the uneducated may attain a sufficient understanding of them by the due use of ordinary means.

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 its writing was most generally known to the nations) were immediately inspired by God, and were kept pure through subsequent ages by His singular care and providence. They are therefore authentic, so that in all controversies of religion, the church must appeal to them as final. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God who have a right to, and an interest in the Scriptures, and who are commanded to read and search them in the fear of God, the Scriptures are therefore to be translated into the ordinary language of every nation into which they come, so that, with the Word of God living richly in all, people may worship God in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

The infallible rule for the interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself, and therefore whenever 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 passages which speak more clearly.

The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and by which must be examined all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, and doctrines of men and private spirits can be no other than the Holy Scripture, delivered by the Spirit. And in the sentence of Scripture we are to rest, for it is in Scripture, delivered by the Spirit, that our faith is finally resolved.

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## **2. God and the Holy Trinity**

The Lord our God is the one and only living and true God; Whose subsistence is in and of Himself - Who is infinite in being and perfection; Whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself;

- Who is a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions
- Who only has immortality
- Who dwells in the light which no man can approach, Who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, in every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute;
- Who works all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory;
- Who is most loving, gracious, merciful, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth;
- Who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin;
- Who is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him;
- and Who, at the same time, is most just and terrible in His judgements, hating all sin and Who will by no means clear the guilty.

God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and from Himself, is unique in being all-sufficient, both in Himself and to Himself, not standing in need of any creature which He has made, nor deriving any glory from such. - On the contrary, it is God Who manifests His own glory in them, through them, to them and upon them. He is the only fountain of all being; from Whom, through Whom, and to Whom all things exist and move.

- He has completely sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do through them, for them, or to them whatever He pleases.
- In His sight all things are open and manifest; His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and not dependant on the creature.
- Therefore, nothing is for 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 whatever worship, service, or obedience, they owe as creatures to the Creator, and whatever else He is pleased to require from them.

In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and the Holy Spirit. All are one in substance, power, and eternity; each having the whole divine essence, yet this essence being undivided. The Father was not derived from any other being; He

was neither brought into being by, nor did He issue from any other being.

- The Son is eternally begotten of the Father.

- The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

- All three are infinite, without beginning, and are therefore only one God, Who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties, and also their personal relations.

- This doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and our comfortable dependence on Him.

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### **3. God's Decree**

God has decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things which shall ever come to pass. - Yet in such a way that God is neither the author of sin nor does He have fellowship with any in the committing of sins, 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 all this God's wisdom is displayed, disposing all things, and also His power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.

Although God knows everything which may or can come to pass under all imaginable conditions, yet He has not decreed anything because He foresaw it in the future, or because it would come to pass under certain conditions.

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 are left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice.

Those angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and the number of them is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

Those of mankind who are predestinated to life, God chose before the foundation of the world was laid, in accordance with His eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will. God chose them in Christ for everlasting glory, solely out of His free grace and love, without anything in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him to choose.

As God has appointed the elect unto glory, so, by the eternal and completely free intention of His will, He has foreordained all the means. Accordingly, those who are elected, being fallen in Adam: - are redeemed by Christ,

- are effectually called to faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season,
- are justified, adopted, sanctified,
- and are kept by His power through faith unto salvation;
- neither are any but the elect redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved.

The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, in order that men who are heeding the will of God revealed in His Word, and who are yielding obedience to it, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine provide cause for praise, reverence, admiration of God, and also provide cause for humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all who sincerely obey the Gospel.

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#### **4. Creation**

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 in it both visible and invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasoning and immortal souls, rendering them fit to live that life for Him for which they were created; - being made in the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and having the power to fulfil it;

- and yet living under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will which was subject to change.

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

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#### **5. Divine Providence**

God the good Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom, upholds, directs, disposes and governs all creatures and things, from the greatest to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, to the end for which they were created. - God governs according to His infallible foreknowledge and the free and unchanging counsel of His own will;

- for the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, boundless goodness, and mercy.

Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, Who is the First Cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that nothing happens to anyone by chance, or outside His providence, yet by His providence He orders events to occur according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

God, in His ordinary providence makes use of means, yet He is free to work outside, above, and against them at His pleasure.

The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that His determinate counsel extends even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions of both angels and men. - This is not merely by a bare permission, but by a form of permission in which He included the most wise and powerful limitations, and other means of restricting and controlling sin. These various limitations have been designed by God to bring about his most holy purposes.

- Yet, in all these affairs, the sinfulness of both angels and men comes only from them and not from God, Who is altogether holy and righteous, and can never be the author or approver of sin.

The most wise, righteous, and gracious God often leaves, for a time, His own children to various temptations, and to the corruptions of their own hearts, in order to chastise them for the sins which they have committed, or to show them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness still in their hearts, so that they may be humbled and aroused to a more close and constant dependence upon Himself for their support, and that they may be made more watchful against future occasions of sin. Other just and holy objectives are also served by such action by God. Therefore whatever happens to any of His select is by His appointment, for His glory, and for their good.

As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God as a righteous judge, blinds and hardens for former sin, from them He not only withholds His grace, by which they might have been enlightened in their understanding and affected in their hearts, but sometimes He also withdraws the gifts which they had and exposes them to certain objects which their corrupt state will make the occasion of sin. - God gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, so that eventually they harden themselves under the same influences which God uses for the softening of others.

As the providence of God in general reaches to all creatures, so, in a more special manner, it takes care of His church, and governs all things to the good of His church.

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## **6. The Fall of Man, Sin and Punishment**

Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which secured life for him while he kept it, and although God warned him that he would die if he broke it, yet man

did not live long in this honour. - Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, seduced Adam by her, and he, without any compulsion, wilfully transgressed the law of their creation and the command given to them by eating the forbidden fruit.

- And this act God, according to His wise and holy counsel, was pleased to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.

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

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

All actual transgressions proceed from this original corruption, by which we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil.

During this life the corruption of nature remains in those who are regenerated, and although it is pardoned and mortified through Christ, yet this corrupt nature and all its motions are truly and properly sinful.

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## **7. God's Covenant**

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 except by some voluntary condescension on God's part, and this He has been pleased to express in the form of a covenant.

Moreover, as man had brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace. In this covenant He freely offers to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring from them faith in Him that they may be saved, and promising to give to all who are appointed to eternal life His Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe.

This covenant is revealed through the Gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by further steps until the full revelation of it became complete in the New Testament. The covenant of salvation rests upon an eternal covenant transaction between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect. It is solely by the grace of this covenant that all the descendants of fallen Adam who have ever been saved have obtained life and blessed immortality, because man is now utterly incapable of gaining acceptance with God on the terms by which Adam stood in his state of innocency.

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## 8. Christ the Mediator

It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, in accordance with the covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and man; to be Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Saviour of His Church, the Heir of all things, and the Judge of all the world. To the Lord Jesus He gave, from all eternity, a people to be His seed. These, in time, would be redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified by the Lord Jesus.

The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being true and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of the same substance and equal with Him; - Who made the world, and Who upholds and governs all things which He has made,

- did, when the fullness of time had come, take upon Himself man's nature, with all its essential properties and common infirmities, with the exception of sin.

- He was 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, so that He was born to a woman from the tribe of Judah, a descendant of Abraham and David, in accordance with the Scriptures.

- Thus two whole, perfect and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion;

- So that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, yet He is one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

The Lord Jesus, His human nature thus united to the divine, once in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, having in Himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. It pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell in Him so that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety, a position and duty which He did not take upon Himself, but was called to perform by His Father. And the Father also put all power and judgement in His hand, and gave Him commandment to exercise the same.

This office and duty of Mediator and Surety the Lord Jesus undertook most willingly. To discharge it, He was made under the law, and perfectly fulfilled it, and He underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered. He was made sin and was made a curse for us; enduring the most grievous sorrows in His Soul with the most painful sufferings in His duty. He was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, but His body did not undergo any decomposition. On the third day He rose from the dead with the same body in which He had suffered, with which He also ascended into Heaven, and there sits at the right hand of His Father making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the

world.

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

Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ until after His incarnation yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit arising from His payment were communicated to the elect in all ages from the beginning of the world through those promises, types, and sacrifices in which He was revealed and signified as the seed which should bruise the serpent's head, and also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, for He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Christ, in His work of Mediator, acts according to both natures, each nature doing that which is proper to itself. Yet, because of the unity of His person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

To all those for whom Christ has obtained eternal redemption, He certainly and effectually applies and communicates this redemption, making intercession for them, uniting them to Himself by His Spirit, revealing to them in the Word and by the Word the mystery of salvation. He persuades them to believe and obey, governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit, and overcome all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom. This is achieved in such a manner and by such ways as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation, and it is all by free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them to procure it.

This office of Mediator between God and man is proper only to Christ, Who is the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church. Free Will of God, and this office may not be transferred from Him to any other, either in whole or in part.

This number and order of offices is essential. Because of our ignorance we need His prophetic office. Because of our alienation from God and the imperfection of the best of our service, we need His priestly office to reconcile us and present us to God as acceptable. Because of our aversion to, and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue and keeping from spiritual enemies, we need His kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us until we reach His heavenly kingdom.

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## **9. Free Will**

God has indued the will of man, by nature, with liberty and the power to choose and to act upon his choice. This free will is neither forced, nor destined by any necessity of nature to do good or evil.

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 he was unstable, so that he might fall from this condition.

Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has completely lost all ability of will to perform any of the spiritual good which accompanies salvation. As a natural man, he is altogether averse to spiritual good, and dead in sin. He is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself for conversion.

When God converts a sinner, and translates him into a state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage to sin, and by grace alone He enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good. But because of his remaining corruptions he does not only (or perfectly) will that which is good, but also wills that which is evil.

The will of man will only be made perfectly and immutably free to will good alone in the state of glory.

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## **10. Effectual Calling**

Those whom God has predestinated to life, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time to effectually call by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death which they are in by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. He enlightens their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God. He takes away their heart of stone and gives to them a heart of flesh. He renews their wills, and by His almighty power, causes them to desire and pursue that which is good. He effectually draws them to Jesus Christ, yet in such a way that they come absolutely freely, being made willing by His grace.

This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not on account of anything at all foreseen in man. It is not made because of any power or agency in the creature who is wholly passive in the matter. Man is dead in sins and trespasses until quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit. By this he is enabled to answer the call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed by it. This enabling power is no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead.

Infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, Who works when, where, and how He pleases. So also are all elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

Others are not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may experience some common operations of the Spirit, yet because they are not effectually drawn by the Father, they will not and cannot truly come to Christ and therefore cannot be saved. Much less can men who do not embrace the Christian religion be saved, however diligent they may be to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the requirements of the religion they profess.

## **11. Justification**

Those whom God effectually calls He also freely justifies, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting them as righteous, not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone. They are not justified because God reckons as their righteousness either their faith, their believing, or any other act of evangelical obedience. They are justified wholly and solely because God imputes to them Christ's righteousness. He imputes to them Christ's active obedience to the whole law and His passive obedience in death. They receive Christ's righteousness by faith, and rest on Him. They do not possess or produce this faith themselves, it is the gift of God.

Faith which receives Christ's righteousness and depends on Him is the sole instrument of justification, yet this faith is not alone in the person justified, but is always accompanied by all the other saving graces. And it is not a dead faith, but works by love.

Christ, by His obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified, and by the sacrifice of himself through the blood of His cross, underwent instead of them the penalty due to them, so making a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on their behalf. Yet because He was given by the Father for them, and because His obedience and satisfaction was accepted instead of theirs (and both freely, not because of anything in them), therefore they are justified entirely and solely by free grace, so that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

From all eternity God decreed to justify all the elect, and Christ, in the fullness of time, died for their sins, and rose again for their justification. Nevertheless, they are not personally justified until the Holy Spirit, in due time, actually applies Christ to them.

God continues to forgive the sins of those who are justified, and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may because of their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure. In that condition they will not usually have the light of God's countenance restored to them until they humble themselves, confess their sins, ask for pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

The justification of believers during the Old Testament period was in all these respects exactly the same as the justification of New Testament believers.

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## **12. Adoption**

God has vouchsafed, that in Christ, His only Son, and for His sake, all those who are justified shall be made partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number of the children of God and enjoy their liberties and privileges. They have His name put upon them, and receive the Spirit of adoption. They have access to the throne of grace with boldness, and are enabled to cry, 'Abba, Father!' They are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by Him as by a father, yet they are never cast off, but are sealed to the day of redemption, when they inherit

the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

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### **13. Sanctification**

Those who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having had a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are then further sanctified in a very real and personal way. Because of the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, and by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them, the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed. The different lusts of the body of sin are increasingly weakened and mortified, and Christ's people are increasingly quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to practise all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

This sanctification extends throughout the whole person, yet it remains imperfect in this life. Some remnants of corruption live on in every part, and from this arises a continuous war between irreconcilable parties - the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

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

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### **14. Saving Faith**

The grace of faith by which the elect are enabled to believe, so that their souls are saved, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily brought into being by the ministry of the Word. It is also increased and strengthened by the work of the Spirit through the ministry of the Word, and also by the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, prayer, and other means appointed by God.

By this faith a Christian believes to be true whatever is revealed in the Word because this Word has the authority of God Himself. Also, by this saving faith, a Christian apprehends an excellency in the Word which is higher than in all other writings and everything else in the world, because the Word shows forth the glory of God, revealing His attributes, showing the excellency of Christ's nature and offices, and also the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in His workings and operations. - So the Christian is enabled to cast his soul upon the Truth he has believed, and to see and respond to the different kinds of teaching which different passages of Scripture contain. Saving faith equips him to perceive and obey the commands, hear the threatenings with fear and respect, and to embrace the promises of God for this life and the life to come. - But the first and most important acts of saving faith are those directly to do with Christ, when the soul accepts, receives, and rests upon Him alone for justification, sanctification and

eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

This faith, although it differs in degree, and may be weak or strong, even at its very weakest is in an entirely different class and has a different nature (like other aspects of saving grace) from the kind of faith and common grace which is possessed by temporary believers. Therefore, though it may be frequently assailed and weakened, 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.

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## **15. Repentance and Salvation**

Those of the elect who are converted in riper years, having lived some time in the state of nature, and in this state served various lusts and pleasures, God gives repentance which leads to life, through an effectual call.

Because there is not one person who does good and commits no sin, and because the best of men may fall into great sins and provocations through the power and deceitfulness of their own indwelling corruption and the prevalency of temptation, God has mercifully provided in the covenant of grace that when believers sin and fall they shall be renewed through repentance to salvation.

Saving repentance is an evangelical grace by which a person who is made to feel, by the Holy Spirit, the manifold evils of his sin, and being given faith in Christ, humbles himself over his sin with godly sorrow, detestation of his sin and self-aborrancy. In such repentance the person also prays for pardon and strength of grace, and has a purpose and endeavour, by supplies of the Spirit's power, to walk before God and to totally please Him in all things.

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

Such is the provision which God has made through Christ in the covenant of grace for the preservation of believers in the way of salvation, that although even the smallest sin deserves damnation, yet there is no sin great enough to bring damnation on those who repent. This makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary.

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## **16. Good Works**

Good works are only those works which God has commanded in His Holy Word. Works which do not have the warrant of Scripture, and are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intentions are not good works.

Good works, performed in obedience to God's commandments, are these: the fruits and

evidences of a true and living faith. By these believers express and show 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 to perform good works, and to have fruits of holiness which lead to eternal life.

Their ability to do these good works does not in any way come from themselves, but comes wholly from the Spirit of Christ. To enable them to do good works, alongside the graces which they have already received, it is necessary for there to be a further real influence of the same Holy Spirit to cause them to will and to do of His good pleasure. But believers are not, on these grounds, to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless given a special motion by the Spirit, but they must be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

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

We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin or eternal life from the hand of God because of the great disproportion between our best works and the glory to come, and because of the infinite distance which is between us and God. With our works we cannot profit or satisfy God concerning the debt we owe on account of our sins. When we have done all we can, we have only done our duty, and are still unprofitable servants. And in any case, in so far as our works are good they originate from the work of the Holy Spirit. Even then, the good works are so defiled by us, and so mixed with weakness and imperfection, that they could not survive the severity of God's judgement.

Yet, quite apart from the fact that believers are accepted through Christ as individual souls, their good works are also accepted through Christ. It is not as though the believers are (in this life) wholly unblameable and unreprouable in God's sight, but because He looks upon them in His Son, and is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although it is accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

Works performed by unregenerate men, although they may in essence be things which God commands, and they may be good and beneficial both to themselves and others, yet because they do not proceed from a heart purified by faith, and are not done in a right manner according to the Word, and because it is not their underlying purpose to bring glory to God, therefore they are sinful, and cannot please God, nor can they make a man fit to receive grace from God. And yet, for unregenerate men to neglect such works is even more sinful and displeasing to God.

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## **17. The Perseverance of the Saints**

Those whom God has accepted in the beloved, and has effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but they will certainly persevere in that state to the end and be eternally saved. This is because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and therefore He continues to beget

and nourish in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the spirit which lead to immortality. And though many storms and floods arise and beat against the saints, yet these things shall never be able to sweep them off the foundation and rock which they are fastened upon by faith. Even though, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sight and feeling of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet God is still the same, and they are sure to be kept by His power until their salvation is complete, when they shall enjoy the purchased possession which is theirs, for they are engraved upon the palm of His hands, and their names have been written in His Book of Life from all eternity.

This perseverance of the saints does not depend on them - that is, on their own free will. It rests upon the immutability of the decree of election, which flows from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father. It also rests upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, and upon the union which true saints have with Him. - It rests upon the oath of God, and upon the abiding of His Spirit. - It depends upon the seed of God being within them and upon the very nature of the covenant of grace.

- All these factors give rise to the certainty and infallibility of the security and perseverance of the saints.

The saints may, through the temptation of Satan and the world, and because their remaining sinful tendencies prevail over them, and through their neglect of the means which God has provided to keep them, fall into grievous sins. They may continue in this state for some time, so that they incur God's displeasure, grieve His Holy Spirit, suffer the impairment of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened and their conscience wounded, and hurt and scandalise others. By this they will bring temporal judgements upon themselves. Yet they shall renew their repentance and be preserved, through faith in Christ Jesus, to the end.

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## **18. Assurance of Salvation**

Although temporary believers, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions that they are in the favour of God and in a state of salvation, such a hope on their part will perish. Yet those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, and who endeavour to walk in all good conscience before Him, may be certainly assured in this life that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And such a hope shall never make them ashamed.

This assurance is not merely a conjectural persuasion nor even a probable persuasion based upon a fallible hope. It is an infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel. It is also founded upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit in connection with definite promises made in the Scriptures, and also on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption who witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God, and who uses the experience of assurance to keep our hearts both humble and holy.

This infallible assurance is not so joined to the essence of faith that it is an automatic and

inevitable experience. A true believer may wait long and fight with many difficulties before he becomes a partaker of it. Yet, being enabled by the spirit to know the things which are freely given to him by God, he may, without any extraordinary revelation attain this assurance by using the means of grace in the right way. Therefore it is the duty of every one to give the utmost diligence to make his calling and election sure, so that his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness for carrying out the duties of obedience. These duties are the natural fruits of assurance, for it is far from inclining men to slackness.

True believers may have the assurance of their salvation in various ways shaken, diminished, or intermitted. This may be because of their negligence in preserving it, or by their falling into some special sin which wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit, or by some sudden or forceful temptation, or by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and causing even those who fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light. Yet, believers are never left without the seed of God and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren that sincerity of heart and that conscience about their spiritual duty. Out of these things, by the operation of the Spirit, their assurance can in due time be revived, and in the meantime the presence of these graces preserves them from utter despair.

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## **19. The Law of God**

God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience which was written in his heart, and He gave him very specific instruction about not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. By this Adam and all his descendants were bound to personal, total, exact, and perpetual obedience, being promised life upon the fulfilling of the law, and threatened with death upon the breach of it. At the same time Adam was endued with power and ability to keep it.

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 the ten commandments, and written in two tables, the first four containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man.

Besides this law, commonly called the moral law, God was pleased do give the people of Israel ceremonial laws containing several typical ordinances. These ordinances were partly about their worship, and in them Christ was prefigured along with His attributes and qualities, His actions, His sufferings and His benefits. These ordinances also gave instructions about different moral duties. All of these ceremonial laws were appointed only until the time of reformation, when Jesus Christ the true Messiah and the only lawgiver, Who was furnished with power from the Father for this end, cancelled them and took them away.

To the people of Israel He also gave sundry judicial laws which expired when they ceased to be a nation. These are not binding on anyone now by virtue of their being part of the laws of that nation, but their general equity continue to be applicable in modern times.

The moral law ever binds to obedience everyone, justified people as well as others, and not only out of regard for the matter contained in it, but also out of respect for the authority of God the Creator, Who gave the law. Nor does Christ in the Gospel dissolve this law in any way, but He considerably strengthens our obligation to obey it.

Although true believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, to be justified or condemned by it, yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, because as a rule of life it informs them of the will of God and their duty and directs and binds them to walk accordingly. It also reveals and exposes the sinful pollutions of their natures, hearts and lives, and using it for self-examination they may come to greater conviction of sin, greater humility and greater hatred of their sin. They will also gain a clearer sight of their need of Christ and the perfection of His own obedience. It is of further use to regenerate people to restrain their corruptions, because of the way in which it forbids sin. The threatenings of the law serve to show what their sins actually deserve, and what troubles may be expected in this life because of these sins even by regenerate people who are freed from the curse and undiminished rigours of the law. The promises connected with the law also show believers God's approval of obedience, and what blessings they may expect when the law is kept and obeyed, though blessing will not come to them because they have satisfied the law as a covenant of works. If a man does good and refrains from evil simply because the law encourages to the good and deters him from the evil, that is no evidence that he is under the law rather than under grace.

The aforementioned uses of the law are not contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but they sweetly comply with it, as the Spirit of Christ subdues and enables the will of man to do freely and cheerfully those things which the will of God, which is revealed in the law, requires to be done.

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## **20. The Gospel and Its Influence**

The covenant of works being broken by sin, and made unprofitable for life, God was pleased to promise Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling the elect and bringing to life within them faith and repentance. In this promise the substance of the Gospel was revealed and shown to be the effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.

This promise of Christ and the salvation which comes by Him, is revealed only by the Word of God. The works of creation and providence with the light of nature do not reveal Christ or His grace even in a general or obscure way. How much less, therefore, can those who are devoid of the revelation of Christ by the promise (or the Gospel) be enabled by the light of nature to arrive at saving faith or repentance.

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.

Although the Gospel is the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and as such is totally sufficient to accomplish this, yet more is necessary if men who are dead in trespasses are to be born again, brought to life or regenerated. It is necessary for there to be an effectual, insuperable work of the Holy Spirit upon the whole soul to produce in them a new spiritual life. Without this no other means will bring about their conversion to God.

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## **21. Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience**

The liberty which Christ has purchased for believers under the Gospel, lies in their freedom from the guilt of sin and the condemning wrath of God, from the rigours and curse of the law, and in their deliverance from this present evil world, from bondage to Satan, from dominion of sin, from the harm of afflictions, from the fear and sting of death, from the victory of the grave, and from everlasting damnation. - This liberty is also seen in their free access to God, and their ability to yield obedience to Him not out of slavish fear, but with childlike love and willing minds. All these freedoms were also experienced in substance by true believers under the Old Testament law, but for New Testament Christians this liberty is further enlarged, for they have freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law to which the Jewish church was subjected. They also have greater boldness of access to the throne of grace and fuller communications of the free Spirit of God than believers under the law normally experienced.

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from all doctrines and commandments of men which are in any respect contrary to His Word, or not contained in it. Thus to believe such doctrines or to obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience. The requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.

They who on pretence of Christian liberty practice any sin, or cherish any sinful lust, pervert the main purpose of the grace of the Gospel to their own destruction. They completely destroy the object of Christian liberty, which is that we, being delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our lives.

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## **22. Worship and the Sabbath Day**

The light of nature shows that there is a God Who has lordship and sovereignty over all, is just and good, and Who does good to all. Therefore He is 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 has been instituted by Himself, and therefore our method of worship is limited by His own revealed will. He may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan. He may not be worshipped by

way of visible representations, or by any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.

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, worship is not to be given without a mediator, nor by any other mediation than that of Christ.

Prayer, with thanksgiving, is one part of natural worship, and this God requires of all men. But to be accepted it must be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, and according to His will. It must be made with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and corporate prayer must be made in a known language.

Prayer is to be made for lawful things, and for all kinds of people who are alive now or who shall live in the future, but not for the dead, nor for those who are known to have sinned the 'sin leading to death'.

The reading of the Scriptures, preaching and hearing the Word of God, the teaching and admonishing of one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; as well as the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, are all parts of the worship of God. These are to be performed in obedience to Him, with understanding, faith, reverence and godly fear. Also to be used in a holy and reverent manner on special occasions are times of solemn humiliation, fastings, and thanksgivings.

Under the Gospel neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship is tied to, or made more acceptable by, any place in which it is performed or towards which it is directed. God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth, whether in private families daily, in secret by each individual, or solemnly in the public assemblies. These are not to be carelessly or wilfully neglected or forsaken, when God by His Word and providence calls us to them.

As it is the law of nature that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, should be set apart for the worship of God, so He has given in His Word a positive, moral and perpetual commandment, binding upon all men, in all ages to this effect. He has particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy for Him. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ this was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ it was changed to the first day of the week and called the Lord's Day. This is to be continued until the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week having been abolished.

The Sabbath is kept holy to the Lord by those who, after the necessary preparation of their hearts and prior arranging of their common affairs, observe all day a holy rest from their own works, words and thoughts about their worldly employment and recreations, and give themselves over to the public and private acts of worship for the whole time, and to carrying out duties of necessity and mercy.

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## **23. Lawful Oaths and Vows**

A lawful oath is an act of religious worship, in which the person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgement, solemnly calls God to witness what he swears, and to judge him according to the truth or falsity of it.

Only by the name of God can a righteous oath be sworn, and only if it is used with the utmost fear of God and reverence. Therefore, to swear vainly or rashly by the glorious and awesome name of God, or to swear by any other name or thing, is sinful, and to be regarded with disgust and detestation. But in matters of weight and moment, for the confirmation of truth, and for the ending of strife, an oath is sanctioned by the Word of God. Therefore a lawful oath being imposed by a lawful authority can rightly be taken in such circumstances.

Whoever takes an oath sanctioned by the Word of God is bound to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and affirm or confess to nothing except that which he knows to be true. For by rash, false, and vain oaths, the Lord is provoked and because of them this land mourns.

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

A vow, which is not to be made to any creature but to God alone, is to be made and performed with all the utmost care and faithfulness. But monastical vows (as in the Church of Rome) of a perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, so far from being degrees of higher perfection, are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

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## **24. The Civil Magistrate**

God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil magistrates to be under Him, over the people, for His own glory and the public good. For this purpose He has armed them with the power of the sword, agement of those that do good, and for the punishment of evil-doers.

It is lawful for Christians to accept and carry out the duties of a magistrate when called upon. In the performance of such office they are particularly responsible for maintaining justice and peace by application of the right and beneficial laws of the nation. Also, to maintain justice and peace, they may lawfully (under the New Testament) engage in war if it is just and essential.

Because civil magistrates are established by God for the purposes previously defined, we ought to be subject to all their lawful commands as part of our obedience to God, not only to avoid punishment, but for conscience sake. We ought also to make supplications and prayers for rulers and all that are in authority, that under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

## **25. Marriage**

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

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

It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry if they are able with judgement to give their consent. But it is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord, and therefore those who profess the true religion should not marry with infidels or idolaters. Nor should those who are godly be unequally yoked by marrying with those who are wicked in their life or who maintain heretical teaching condemned to judgement.

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 that such persons may live together as man and wife.

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## **26. The Church**

The universal Church, which may be called invisible (in respect of the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) consists of the entire number of the elect, all those who have been, who are, or who shall be gathered into one under Christ, Who is the Head. This universal Church is the wife, the body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all.

All people throughout the world who profess the faith of the Gospel and obedience to Christ on its terms, and who do not destroy their profession by any errors which contradict or overthrow Gospel fundamentals, or by unholy behaviour, are visible saints and may be regarded as such. All individual congregations ought to be constituted of such people.

The purest churches under Heaven are subject to mixture and error, and some have degenerated so much that they have ceased to be churches of Christ and have become synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless Christ always has had, and always will (to the end of time) have a kingdom in this world, made up of those who believe in Him, and make profession of His name.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. In Him, by the appointment of the Father, is vested in a supreme and sovereign manner all power for the calling, institution, order, or government of the Church. The Pope of Rome cannot in any sense be head of the Church, but he is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, who exalts himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God, who the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

In the exercise of the authority which has been entrusted to Him, the Lord Jesus calls to Himself from out of the world, through the ministry of His Word, by His Spirit, those who are given to Him by His Father, so that they may walk before Him in all the ways of obedience which He

prescribes to them in His Word. Those who are thus called, He commands to walk together in particular societies or churches, for their mutual edification, and for the due performance of that public worship, which He requires of them in the world.

The members of these churches are saints because they have been called by Christ, and because they visibly manifest and give evidence of their obedience to that call by their profession and walk. Such saints willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving themselves up to the Lord and to one another, according to God's will, in avowed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel.

To each of these churches thus gathered, according to the Lord's mind as declared in His Word, He has given all the power and authority which is in any way required for them to carry on the order of worship and discipline which He has instituted for them to observe. He has also given all the commands and rules for the due and right exercise of this power.

A particular church gathered and completely organised according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members. The officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church are bishops or elders and deacons. These are to be appointed for the peculiar administration of ordinances and the execution of power or duty with which the Lord has entrusted them and to which He has called them. This pattern of church order is to be continued to the end of the world.

The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit for the office of bishop or elder in a church, is that he is to be chosen by the common consent and vote of the church itself. Such a person should be solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with the laying on of hands of the eldership of the church (if there be any previously appointed elder or elders). The way of Christ for the calling of a deacon is that he is also to be chosen by the common consent and vote of the church and set apart by prayer, with the laying on of hands.

Because the work of pastors is to apply themselves constantly to the service of Christ in His churches by the ministry of the Word and prayer, and by watching for their souls as they that must give an account to Him, the churches to which they minister have a pressing obligation to give them not only all due respect, but also to impart to them a share of all their good things, according to their ability. This must be so done that the pastors may have a comfortable supply and that they may not have to be entangled in secular affairs, and may also be able to exercise hospitality towards others. All this is required by the law of nature and by the express command of our Lord Jesus, Who has ordained that they that preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel.

Although an obligation lies on the elders or pastors of the churches to be urgently preaching the Word by virtue of their office, yet the work of preaching the Word is not exclusively confined to them. Therefore others who are also gifted and qualified by the Holy Spirit for the task, and who are approved and called by the church, may and ought to perform it.

All believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches when and where they have opportunity so to do, and all who are admitted into the privileges of a church, are also under the censures and government of that church, in accordance with the rule of Christ.

No church members, because of any offence which has been given them by a fellow member, once they have performed their prescribed duty towards the person who has caused the offence, may disturb church order in anyway, or be absent from the meetings of the church or the administration of any ordinances on account of any such offence. On the contrary, they are to wait upon Christ in the further proceedings of the church.

Each church and all its members are obligated to pray constantly for the good and prosperity of all Christ's churches everywhere, and to help forward everyone who comes into their district or calling, by the exercise of their gifts and graces. It clearly follows that when churches are planted by the goodness of God they ought also to hold fellowship among themselves to promote peace, increasing love and mutual edification as and when they enjoy an opportunity to do so to their advantage.

In cases of difficulties or differences, either in matters of doctrine or administration, which concern the churches in general or any single church, and which affects their peace, union, and edification, or when any members of a church are injured because of any disciplinary proceedings not consistent with the Word and correct order, it is according to the mind of Christ, that many churches holding communion together do, through their appointed messengers meet to consider, and give their advice about the matter in dispute, and to report to all the churches concerned. However, when these messengers are assembled, they are not entrusted with any real church power, or with any jurisdiction over the churches involved in the problem. They cannot exercise any censure over any churches or persons, or impose their determination on the churches or their officers.

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## **27. The Communion of Saints**

All saints who are united to Jesus Christ, their Head, by His Spirit, and by faith, although they are not by this made one person with Him, have fellowship in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. Also, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obligated to the orderly performance of such public and private duties as lead to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

Saints, by their profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God and in performing such other spiritual services as advance their mutual edification. They are also to give relief to each other in outward things according to their different needs and abilities to meet them. This communion or fellowship, though chiefly exercised by saints in their immediate circle of fellow believers such as families, and churches, is also to be extended (according to the rule of the Gospel) to all the household of faith, as God gives the opportunity. This means all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, However, their communion with one another as saints does not take away or infringe the personal ownership which each man has of his goods and possessions.

## **28. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

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.

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

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## **29. Baptism**

Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be to the person who is baptised - a sign of his fellowship with Christ in His death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into Christ; of remission of sins; and of that person's giving up of himself to God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.

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

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

Immersion - the dipping of the person in water - is necessary for the due administration of this ordinance.

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## **30. The Lord's Supper**

The Supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by Him the same night on which He was betrayed to be observed in His churches until the end of the world for the perpetual remembrance, and showing forth of the sacrifice of Himself in His death. It was also instituted by Christ to confirm believers in all the benefits of His death; - for their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him; - for their further engagement in and commitment to all the duties which they owe to Him; - and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him and with their fellow believers.

In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to His Father, nor is there any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin (of the living or the dead). There is only a memorial of that one offering up of Christ by Himself upon the cross once for all, the memorial being accompanied by a spiritual oblation of all possible praise to God for Calvary. Therefore, the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable, being injurious to Christ's own sacrifice, which is the only propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

The Lord Jesus has, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to pray and bless the elements of bread and wine (so setting them apart from a common to a holy use) and to take and break the

bread, then to take the cup, and to give both to the communicants, also communicating themselves.

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

The outward elements in this ordinance which are correctly set apart and used as Christ ordained, so closely portray Him as crucified, that they are sometimes truly (but figuratively) referred to in terms of the things they represent, such as the body and blood of Christ. However in substance and nature they still remain truly and only bread and wine as they were before.

The doctrine commonly called transubstantiation, which maintains that a change occurs in the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of Christ's body and blood, when consecrated by a priest or by any other way, is repugnant not only to Scripture but even to common sense and reason. It overthrows the nature of the ordinance, and both has been and is the cause of a host of superstitions and of gross idolatries.

Worthy receivers, outwardly taking the visible elements in this ordinance, also receive them inwardly and spiritually by faith, truly and in fact, but not carnally and corporally, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of His death. The body and blood of Christ is not present corporally or carnally but it is spiritually present to the faith of believers in the ordinance, just as the elements are present to their outward senses.

All ignorant and ungodly persons who are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ are equally unworthy of the Lord's Table, and therefore cannot without great sin against Him, take a share in these holy mysteries or be admitted to the Supper while they remain in that condition. Indeed those who receive (the elements) unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgement to themselves.

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### **31. Man's State After Death and the Resurrection**

The bodies of men after death return to dust, and undergo 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 are then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise where they are with Christ, and look upon the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and under darkness, reserved to the judgement of the great day. The Scripture acknowledges no other place than these two for souls separated from their bodies.

At the last day, those of the saints who are still alive shall not sleep but shall be changed. And all the dead shall be raised up with their own, same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, and these bodies shall be united again to their souls for ever.

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

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### **32. The Last Judgement**

God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to Whom all power and judgement is given by the Father. In this day not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but also all people who have lived upon the earth. They 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 when in the body, whether good or evil.

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 also His justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. Then shall the righteous go into everlasting life and receive that fullness of joy and glory with everlasting reward 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.

As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there will be a day of judgement, both to deter all men from sin and to give greater consolation to the godly in their adversity, so also He will have the date of that day kept unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and always be watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come. Also, so that men may be affected in such a way that they ever say, 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!' Amen.

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