

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT OF GRACE COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP

THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

The Holy Scripture is the all sufficient, certain and infallible rule or standard of the knowledge, faith and obedience that constitute salvation. Although the light of nature, and God's works of creation, give such clear testimony to His goodness, wisdom and power that men who spurn them are left inexcusable, yet they are not sufficient of themselves to give that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary for salvation. In consequence the merciful Lord from time to time and in a variety of ways has revealed Himself, and made known His will to believers. And furthermore, in order to ensure the preservation and propagation of the truth, and the establishment and comfort of the church against the corrupt nature of man and the malice of Satan and the world, He caused this revelation of Himself and His will to be written down in all its fullness. And as the manner in which God formerly revealed His will has long ceased, the Holy Scripture becomes absolutely essential to men.

The sum total of God's revelation concerning all things essential to His own glory, and to the salvation and faith and life of men, is either explicitly set down or implicitly contained in the Holy Scripture. Nothing, whether a supposed revelation of the Spirit or man's traditions, is ever to be added to Scripture.

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

The Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, consists of the following books which together make up the Old and New Testaments:

The Old Testament

Genesis	1 Kings	Ecclesiastes	Obadiah
Exodus	2 Kings	Song of Solomon	Jonah
Leviticus	1 Chronicles	Isaiah	Micah
Numbers	2 Chronicles	Jeremiah	Nahum
Deuteronomy	Ezra	Lamentations	Habakkuk
Joshua	Nehemiah	Ezekiel	Zephaniah
Judges	Esther	Daniel	Haggai
Ruth	Job	Hosea	Zechariah
1 Samuel	Psalms	Joel	Malachi
2 Samuel	Proverbs	Amos	

The New Testament

Matthew	2 Corinthians	1 Timothy	2 Peter
Mark	Galatians	2 Timothy	1 John
Luke	Ephesians	Titus	2 John
John	Philippians	Philemon	3 John
Acts	Colossians	Hebrews	Jude
Romans	1 Thessalonians	James	Revelation
1 Corinthians	2 Thessalonians	1 Peter	

All these books are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule or standard of faith and life.
2 Tim. 3:16.

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

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

The testimony of the church of God may influence and persuade us to hold the Scripture in the highest esteem. The heavenliness of its contents, the efficacy of its doctrine, the majesty of its style, the agreement between all its parts from first to last, the fact that throughout it gives all glory to God, the full revelation it gives of the only way of salvation - these, together with many other incomparably high qualities and full perfections, supply abundant evidence that it is the Word of God. At the same time, however, we recognize that our full persuasion and assurance of its infallible truth and divine authority is the outcome of the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

John 16:13, 14; 1 Cor. 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20, 27.

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

Ps. 19:7; 119:130; 2 Pet. 3:16.

The Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek (that is to say, in their original languages before translation) were inspired by God at first hand, and ever since, by His particular care and providence, they have been kept pure. They are therefore authentic and, for the church, constitute the final court of appeal in all religious controversies.

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

It is an infallible rule that Scripture is to be interpreted by Scripture, that is to say, one part by another. Hence any dispute as to the true, full and evident meaning of a particular passage must be determined in the light of clearer, comparable passages. The Scriptures are to be studied, practiced, passed on (Ezra 7:10) and must be interpreted according to the form of language in which they were written and the rules which govern that form (Ex. 14-15) for the purpose of arriving at the author's meaning (Jn 2:19-23, 11:11-14) acknowledging the author may be willed implications within the pattern of meaning while being unaware of all the implications (Matt. 5:21-30).

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

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

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

GOD AND THE HOLY TRINITY

There is but one, and only one, living and true God. He is self-existent and infinite in His being and His perfections. None but He can comprehend or understand His essence. He is pure spirit, invisible, and without body, parts, or the changeable feelings of men. He alone possesses immortality, and dwells amid the light insufferably bright to mortal men. His nature and His Word never changes. He is great beyond all our conceptions, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty and infinite. He is most holy, wise, free and absolute. All that He does is the out-working of His changeless, righteous will, and for His own glory. He is most loving, gracious, merciful and compassionate. He abounds in goodness and truth. He forgives iniquity, transgression and sin. He rewards those who seek Him diligently. But He hates sin. He will not overlook guilt or spare the guilty, and He is perfectly just in executing judgment.

Gen. 17:1; Exod. 3:14; 34:6, 7; Deut. 4:15, 16; 6:4; 1 Kings 8:27; Neh. 9:32, 33; Ps. 5:5, 6; 90:2; 115:3; Prov. 16:4; Isa. 6:3; 46:10; 48:12; Jer. 10:10; 23:23, 24; Nah. 1:2, 3; Mal. 3:6; John 4:24; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:6.

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

Job 22:2, 3; Ps. 119:58; 145:17; 148:13; Ezek. 11:5; Dan. 4:25, 34, 35; John 5:26; Acts 15:18; Rom. 11:34-35; Heb. 4:13; Rev. 5:12-14.

Three divine Persons constitute the Godhead - the Father, the Son (or the Word), and the Holy Spirit. They are one in substance, in power, and in eternity. Each is fully God, and yet the Godhead is one and indivisible. The Father owes His being to none. He is Father to the Son who is eternally begotten of Him. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. These Persons, one infinite and eternal God not to be divided in nature or in being, are distinguished in Scripture by their personal relations within the Godhead by their distinct roles, and by the variety of works which they undertake. Their tri-unity (that is, the doctrine of the Trinity) is the essential basis of all our fellowship with God, and of the comfort we derive from our dependence upon Him.

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

GOD'S DECREE

From all eternity God decreed all that should happen in time, and this He did freely and unalterably, consulting only His own wise and holy will. Yet in so doing He does not become in any sense the author of sin, nor does He share responsibility for sin with sinners. Neither, by reason of His decree, does God eliminate or preclude the real choices of man or man's responsibility for those choices. In all these matters the divine wisdom appears, as also does God's power and faithfulness in effecting that which He has purposed.

Gen. 3:1-7; Num 23:19; Isa. 45:7; Isa. 46: 8-11; John 19:11; Acts 4:27-28; Rom. 9: 6-18; Eph. 1:3-5, 11; Heb. 6:17-18; Jas. 1:13; 1 John 1:5

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

Rom. 8:29-30; 9:11, 13, 16, 18; 1 Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:5

By His decree, and for the manifestation of His glory, God has predestinated (or foreordained) certain men to eternal life through Jesus Christ, thus revealing His grace. Others, whom He has left to perish in their sins, show the terrors of His justice. Men who are the subject of God's predestination are clearly and irreversibly designated.

Matt. 25:34; Rom. 8:29-30; 9:22-23; Eph. 1:5-6; 2:7; Jude 4.

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

Rom. 8:29-30, 9:13,16; Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; 2:5,12; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Tim. 1:9.

Not only has God appointed the elect to glory in accordance with the eternal and free purpose of His will, but He has also foreordained the means by which His purpose will be effected. Since His elect are children of Adam and therefore among those ruined by Adam's fall into sin, He willed that they should be redeemed by Christ, and effectually called to faith in Christ. Furthermore, by the working of His Spirit in due season they are justified, adopted, sanctified, and 'kept by His power through faith unto salvation'.

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

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

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

CREATION

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

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

All creatures were made by God, the last to be fashioned being man and woman who received dominion over all other creatures on the earth. God gave man and woman rational and immortal souls, and in all respects fitted them for a life in harmony with Himself. They were created in His image, with knowledge, and without sin. God communicated the requirements for obedience and they had the ability to obey it. Yet, being left to the liberty of their own mutable wills, transgression of the law was a possibility.

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

They were placed under a special prohibition not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their joy and fellowship with God depended upon their obedience to His will.

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

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

God, who, in infinite power and wisdom, has created all things, upholds, directs, controls and governs them, both animate and inanimate, great and small, by a providence supremely wise and holy, and in accordance with His infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable decisions of His will. He fulfils the purposes for which He created them, so that His wisdom, power and justice, together with His infinite goodness and mercy, might be praised and glorified.

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

Nothing befalls any by chance or outside the sphere of God's providence. They happen immutably and infallibly according to His foreknowledge and decree, and are controlled by God through either the real choices of men or fixed laws.

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

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

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

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

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

God, who is most wise, righteous and gracious, frequently allows His own people to fall for a time into a variety of temptations, and to experience the sinfulness of their own hearts. This He does in order to chastise them for sins which they have committed, or to teach them humility by revealing to them the hidden strength of evil and deceitfulness remaining in their hearts. His purpose is also to cause them to realize their need to depend fully and at all times upon Himself, and to help them to guard against sin in the future. In these and other ways His just and holy purposes are worked out, so that all that happens to His elect ones is by His appointment, for His glory, and for their good.

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

God, as a righteous judge, deals otherwise with wicked and ungodly men, He awards them blindness and hardness of heart for their sins. He withholds from them the grace which might have enlightened their minds and exercised their hearts, and in some cases recalls the understanding He had bestowed upon them. Also, He sets them in situations which their evil hearts seize upon as opportunities for sin. In other words, He abandons them to their own innate corruptions, to the

temptations of the world, and to the power of Satan, with the consequence that they harden themselves by the use of the very means which God employs for softening the hearts of others.

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

God's general providence reaches out to all creatures, but in a very special way it is directed to the care of Israel and the church. All things are controlled, providentially for the good of His chosen ones and for His glory.

1 Tim. 4:10; Eph. 1:11.

THE FALL OF MAN: SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT

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

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

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

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

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

Job 14:4; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-19; 6:20; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22, 45, 29; Eph. 2:3; 1 Thess. 1:10; Heb. 2:14, 15.

The actual sins that men commit are the fruit of the corrupt nature transmitted to them by our first parents. By reason of this corruption, all men become wholly inclined to evil. Sin disables them. They are utterly indisposed to, and, indeed, rendered opposite to, all that is good.

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

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

Eccles. 7:20; Rom. 7:18, 23-25; Gal. 5:17; 1 John 1:8; Rom. 6.

GOD'S GRACE

Man is sinful, separated from God, and unable to satisfy God's righteous requirements. Creation renders man without excuse. God's wrath justifiably rests upon man for his suppression of the truth. Man is dead in sins and aliens, separated from God and without hope. This condition of sin extends to all humanity. This sin has resulted in a spiritual death and will cause death and separation from God and punishment in hell after our physical death.

Rom. 1:18f; Eph 2:1-5,12; Rom 3:9-19; Rev 20:11-15

Man possess nothing good in himself that would allow him to approach God and restore this relationship. All efforts to approach God are unsatisfactory and are no more appealing to Him than a filthy rags or garments.

Rom 7:18; Rom 3:9-19; Is 64:6

The Law, a series of commandments and statutes given to the Old Testament people of Israel, shows how they were to demonstrate faithfulness and approach God. However, the Law does not, and cannot remove the sin in our lives nor save us from eternal judgment. The Law is only capable of revealing sin, and rousing more sin.

Deut 6; Heb 10:1-4; Rom 3:20, 7:7; Matt 5:19, Jer 17:9, Ecc 7:20, 1 John 1:8

GOD'S PROVISION (HIS PLAN REVEALED)

God extends His grace to man, providing a means to be justified before Him. Grace (God's unmerited favor, extended not upon the condition of man but upon God's will) is expressed throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament God extends "grace" or "favor" to Noah, Lot, Abraham and his descendants without any action on their part. In the New Testament God extends "grace" to Paul and to all believers.

Gen. 6:8; Gen. 19:19; Acts 20:24; Acts 20:32; Rom. 1:5; Rom 3:24; Rom. 4:4-16; Eph. 2:8

Jesus, God incarnate, is the expression of God's grace. The gospel, that the ungodly is justified freely by God's grace through faith, is the same gospel that Peter, Paul and all the apostles taught. The method God chose to extend His grace to the ungodly was through the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Sinful man is saved by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ's cross.

John 1:14,16-17; Acts 15:11; Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 2:8-9; Gal 2

God's method of extending grace was through the substitutionary atoning death of Christ on the cross. Substitution was pictured in the Old Testament and realized in the New Testament through Jesus.

Lev 1:4; Heb 7:27; 10:1,10,12-14, 2:9; Is 53

CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

To give effect to His eternal purpose, God chose and ordained the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the mediator between God and man; also to be prophet, priest, king, head and savior of His church; also to be the heir of all things and judge of the world. From all eternity God had given to

His Son those who were to be His progeny, and the Son engaged in time (as distinct from eternity) to redeem, call, justify, sanctify, and glorify them.

Ps. 2:6; Isa. 42:1; 53:10; Luke 1:33; John 17:6; Acts 3:22; 17:31; Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:22, 23; Heb. 1:2; 5:5, 6; 1 Pet. 1:19, 20; Col.6:16; Rom. 3:21-25.

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

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

The two natures, divine and human, being thus united in the person of God's Son, He was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit to an unlimited extent, and in Him are found all treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is replete with all that is pleasing to the Father, being holy, unharmed and unstained by sin, and full of grace and truth. Thus He has become thoroughly qualified to execute the work of a mediator and surety. He did not take this work upon Himself uncalled, but was commissioned by His Father so to act. His Father also conferred upon Him full powers of jurisdiction and commanded Him to pass judgment on all.

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

The Lord Jesus most willingly undertook the office of mediator, and in order that He might discharge it He became subject to God's law, which he perfectly fulfilled. He also underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered, for He bore our sins and was accursed for our sakes. He endured sorrows in His soul severe beyond our conception, and most painful sufferings in His Body. His death was by crucifixion. While He remained in the state of the dead His body sustained no decay. The third day saw His resurrection in the same body in which He had suffered. In the same body also He ascended into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of His Father, interceding for His own. At the end of the world He will return to judge men and angels.

Ps. 40:7, 8; Isa. 53:6; Matt. 3:15; 26:37, 38; 27:46; Mark 16:19; Luke 22:44; John 10:18; 20:25, 27; Acts 1:9-11; 10:42; 12:37; Rom. 8:34; 14:9, 10; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 4:4; Heb. 9:24; 10:5-10; 1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Pet. 2:4.

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

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

The price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ until after His birth in this world, but the value, efficacy and benefits of His redemptive work availed for His elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world. This was accomplished by the promises, the types and the sacrifices in which He was revealed, and which signified Him to be the woman's 'seed' (offspring) who should bruise the head of the serpent (the devil), also 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world'. As the Christ He is 'the same yesterday, and today, and forever'.

Heb. 13:8; 1 pet. 1:10, 11; Rev. 13:8; Heb. 11:13; Rom. 4:1-9.

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

John 3:13; Acts 20:28.

Christ certainly and effectually applies and communicates eternal redemption for the elect. His work of intercession is on their behalf. He unites them to Himself by His Spirit; He reveals to them, in and by the Word, the mystery of salvation; He persuades them to believe and obey, governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit; He overcomes all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom, using those methods and ways which are most agreeable to the wonderful and unsearchable appointments of His providence. All these things are carried out in His free and sovereign grace, and unconditionally, nothing of merit being foreseen by Him in the elect.

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

Christ, and Christ alone, is fitted to be mediator between God and man. He is the prophet, priest and king of the church of God. His office as mediator cannot be transferred from Him to any other, either in whole or in part.

1 Tim. 2:5.

Christ's threefold offices are necessary for us. Because of our ignorance we stand in need of His prophetic office; because of our estrangement from God and the imperfection of our services at their best, we need His priestly office to reconcile us to God and render us acceptable to Him; because we have turned away from God and are utterly unable to return to Him, and also because we need to be rescued and rendered secure from our spiritual adversaries, we need His kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, sustain, deliver and preserve us, until we finally enter His heavenly kingdom.

Ps. 110:3; Luk3 1:74, 75; John 1:18, 16:8; Gal. 5:17; Col. 1:21.

FREE WILL

In the natural order God has endued man's will with liberty and the power to act upon choice, so that it is neither forced from without, nor by any necessity arising from within itself, compelled to do good or evil.

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

In his state of innocence, man had freedom and power to will and to do what was good and acceptable to God. Yet, it was possible for him to fall from his uprightness.

Gen. 3:6

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

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

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

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

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

Eph. 4:13; Rom. 8:23.

EFFECTUAL CALLING

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

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

God's effectual call is the outcome of His free and special grace alone. Until a man is given life, and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is dead in sins and trespasses, so is entirely passive in this work of salvation, a work that does not proceed from anything good foreseen in him, nor from any power or agency resident in him. The power that enables him to answer God's call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, is no less than that which effected the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

John 5:25; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 1:19, 20; 2:5, 8; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 2:1-10.

Men who are not elected, even though they may be called upon to embrace salvation by the preachers of the gospel, and may be the subjects of some common operations of the Spirit, cannot be saved, because they are not effectually drawn to Christ by the Father, for which reason they neither can, nor will, truly come to Him. Much less can men who do not receive the Gospel be saved, no matter how diligent they are to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the teachings of the religion which they follow.

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

JUSTIFICATION

GOD freely justifies the persons whom He effectually calls. He does this, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins and by accounting them, and accepting them, as righteous. This He does on the basis of Christ's sacrifice alone, and not for anything wrought in them or done by them. The righteousness which is imputed to them, that is, reckoned to their account, is neither their faith nor the act of believing nor any other obedience to the gospel which they have rendered, but Christ's obedience alone. Christ's one obedience is twofold - His active obedience rendered to the entire divine law, and His passive obedience rendered in His death. Those thus justified receive and rest by faith upon Christ's righteousness; and his faith they have, not of themselves, but as the gift of God.

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

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

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

By His obedience and death Christ paid in full the debt of all those who are justified. By the sacrifice of Himself in His blood-shedding on Calvary, and His suffering on their behalf of the penalty they had incurred, He fully and absolutely satisfied all the claims which God's justice had upon them. Yet their justification is altogether of free grace, firstly because Christ was the free gift of the Father to act on their behalf; secondly because Christ's obedience and His satisfying the demands of the law was freely accepted on their behalf; and thirdly because nothing in them merited these mercies. Hence God's exact justice and His rich grace are alike rendered glorious in the justification of sinners.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADOPTION

On the basis of Christ's sacrifice, God has been pleased to make all justified persons sharers in the grace of adoption, by means of which they are numbered with, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of children of God. Furthermore, God's name is put upon them, they receive the spirit of adoption, and they are enabled to come boldly to the throne of grace and to cry 'Abba, Father' They are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by God as by a Father. He never casts them off, but, as they

remain sealed waiting eagerly for the completion of their adoption as sons, the redemption of their bodies to the day of redemption, they inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

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

SANCTIFICATION: INCREASING IN HOLINESS

Those who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, have a new heart and a new spirit created in them; and by His Word and Spirit dwelling within them, this personal work of sanctification is indeed carried further. All these blessings accrue to them by reason of the merits of Christ's death and resurrection. Sin's mastery over them is completely broken; the evil desires to which it gives birth are increasingly weakened and dealt their death-blow; and saving graces in them are increasingly enlivened and strengthened. The practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, is thus promoted.

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

Sanctification, as defined in this way, extends to every part of man, yet remains incomplete in this life. Sins corrupt remnants continue to defile all parts of man, causing within him a continual warfare that does not admit of reconciliation; the flesh rises up against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.

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

In the war of flesh versus Spirit, sin's corrupt remnants may for a time gain the upper hand, yet the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ enables man as a new creature to gain the victory. And so the saints grow in grace, moving on towards a fullness of holiness in the fear of God. They earnestly endeavor to live according to heaven's laws, and to render gospel obedience to all the commands which Christ, as their head and king, has laid down for them in His Word.

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

SAVING FAITH

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

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

A Christian expresses faith in believing everything to be true that is made known in the Word, in which God speaks authoritatively. He also perceives in the Word a degree of excellence superior to all other writings, indeed to all things that the world contains. The Word shows the glory of God as seen in His various attributes, the excellence of Christ in His nature and in the offices He bears, and the power and perfection of the Holy Spirit in all the works in which He is engaged. In this way the Christian is enabled to trust himself implicitly to the truth thus believed, and to render service according to the different requirements of the various parts of Scripture. To the commands he yields obedience; when he hears threatenings he trembles; as for the divine promises concerning this life and that which is to come, he embraces them. But the principal acts of saving faith relate in the first instance to Christ as the believer accepts, receives and rests upon Him alone for justification,

sanctification, and eternal life; and all by virtue of grace.

Saving faith has its gradations. It may be weak or strong but even at its lowest ebb it is quite different in its nature from the faith and common grace of those who profess to be believers but who are not. In consequence, though it may be frequently attacked and weakened, it wins through to victory, developing in many Christians until they attain to full assurance through Christ, who is both the 'author and finisher of our faith'.

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

REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE AND SALVATION

Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ.

By it, a sinner, out of the sight and sense not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature, and righteous law of God; and upon the apprehension of his mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for, and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God, purposing and endeavoring to walk with him in all the ways of his commandments.

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

As there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great, that is can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.

Men should not content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins, particularly.

As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof; upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy; so, he that scandalizes his brother, or the church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession, and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended, who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him.

GOOD WORKS

Works that are truly good, and which are done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith. By means of them believers make known their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance of salvation, edify their brethren, adorn their Christian witness, and deprive their opponents of arguments against the gospel. In sum, they glorify God who has made them what they are, namely, new creatures in Christ; and as such they yield fruit that evidences holiness.

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

The ability of believers to do good works does not spring in any way from themselves, but is derived

from the Spirit of Christ alone. Besides the graces which they receive from Him in the first instance, they need His further actual influence to give them the will and ability to perform the works that please Him. Yet this does not mean that, without that special influence, they are at liberty to grow careless of duty, for they must be diligent in stirring into activity the grace of God that is in them.

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

We cannot, even by our best works, merit either the pardon of sin or the granting of eternal life at the hand of God. There is infinite distance between us and God, and no works of ours can yield Him profit or act as payment for the debt of our sins. Indeed, when we have done all that we can, we have done but our duty and remain unprofitable servants. We are also to remember that, so far as our works are good, they are produced by His Spirit. As far as they are our work they are marred, and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they fail utterly to meet the searching requirements of God's standards.

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

Nevertheless, since believers as to their persons are accepted by God through Christ, their works also are accepted as being wrought in Christ. Not as though they were, during this life, beyond reproach and unreprouvable in the sight of God, but that, as He looks upon them in His Son, He is pleased to accept and reward that which is done in obedience to Him, even though it is accompanied by many weaknesses and imperfections.

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

As for works done by unregenerate men, even though God may have commanded them, and they may be highly useful both to themselves and to others, yet they remain sinful works for the following reasons: they do not originate in a heart purified by faith; they are not done in the right manner prescribed in Scripture; and they are not directed to the glory of God as the only right end. Hence they cannot please God, nor can they make a man fit for the reception of grace.

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

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

The saints are those whom God has accepted in Christ the Beloved, and effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit. To them He has given the precious faith that pertains to all His elect. The persons to whom such blessings have been imparted can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but they shall certainly persevere in grace to the end and be eternally saved, for God will never repent of having called them and made gifts to them. Consequently He continues to beget and to nourish in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit that issue in immortality. Many storms and floods may arise and beat upon them, yet they can never be moved from the foundation and rock on which by faith they are firmly established. Even if unbelief and Satan's temptations cause them for a time to lose the sight and comfort of the light and love of God, the unchanging God remains their God, and He will certainly keep and save them by His power until they come to the enjoyment of their purchased possession; for they are engraved on the palms of His hands, and their names have been written in the book of life from all eternity.

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

The Saints' perseverance depends not on their own free will but on the immutability of the decree of election, which in its turn depends upon the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, the efficacious merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and the saints' union with Him, the oath of God, the abiding character of the Spirit's indwelling of the saints, the divine nature of which they are partakers and, lastly, the terms of the covenant of grace. All these factors guarantee the certainty and infallibility of the saints' perseverance.

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

In various ways—the temptations of Satan and of the world, the striving of indwelling sin to get the upper hand, the neglect of the means appointed for their preservation—saints may fall into dreadful sins, and may even continue in them for a time. In this way they incur God's displeasure, grieve His Holy Spirit, do injury to their graces, diminish their comforts, experience hardness of heart and accusations of conscience, hurt and scandalize others, and bring God's chastisements on themselves. Yet being saints, through faith they will be preserved in Christ Jesus to the end.

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

THE ASSURANCE OF GRACE AND SALVATION

All who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and love Him in sincerity, endeavoring to conduct themselves in all good conscience according to His will, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace. They may rejoice in hope of the glory of God, knowing that such a hope will never put them to shame.

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

The certainty of salvation enjoyed by the saints of God is not mere conjecture and probability based upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith based upon the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the gospel. It also results from the inward evidences of the graces of the Holy Spirit, for to those graces God speaks promises. In addition, it is based upon the testimony of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoration, for He bears His witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. Such witness results in the keeping of our hearts both humble and holy.

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

The infallible assurance of salvation is not an essential part of salvation, for a true believer may wait for a long time, and struggle with many difficulties, before he attains to it. It is not a matter of extraordinary revelation, for if he makes a right use of the means of grace, and is enabled by the Spirit to know the things that believers receive freely from God, he may well attain to it. It therefore becomes the duty of every one to be as diligent as possible in making his calling and election sure. By doing this he will experience greater peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, greater love and thankfulness to God, and an increased strength and cheerfulness in dutiful obedience. These things are the natural outcome of the assurance of salvation, and they constitute strong evidence that assurance does not lead men into loose living.

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

True believers may find that their assurance of salvation fluctuates; sometimes more, sometimes less. They may prove neglectful in preserving it, as for example, if they give way to some particular sin that wounds their conscience and grieves the Spirit; or a strong temptation may suddenly spring

upon them; or God may see fit to withdraw 'the light of His countenance' and cause darkness to envelop them, a course He sometimes takes even with those who fear His name. Yet, whatever happens, certain things inevitably remain with them, such as the new nature which is born of God, that through the work carried on by the Spirit within them, the assurance of salvation may in due time be revived. In the meantime the same influences preserve them from utter despair.

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

THE LAW OF GOD

God gave Adam a law that required his full obedience, namely that he must not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of the law:-

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

After Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, all mankind is born with that knowledge, the law of God having been written upon their hearts. This same law was given by God upon Mount Sinai in the form of the ten commandments. The first four commandments constitute our duty toward God and the remaining six our duty to man. The ten are known as the moral law.

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

Besides the moral law God also gave to the people of Israel ceremonial laws which served as types of things to come. They fell into two main groups. In one group were rites, partly relating to worship, which pre-figured Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and the blessings He procured for us. The other group contained a variety of instructions about moral duties. By divine appointment all these ceremonial laws were to be observed, but only until they were abrogated in New Testament days by Jesus Christ, the true Messiah and only law-giver, who was empowered by the Father to terminate them.

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

To the people of Israel God also gave sundry judicial laws which applied as long as they remained a nation. The principles of equity which appear in them are still valid, not because they are found in Moses' laws but in virtue of their unchanging character.

1 Cor. 9:8-10.

Obedience to the moral law remains forever binding upon all persons. This moral law is also of the authority of God, the creator, who is its author. In the gospel Christ in no way cancels the necessity for this obedience; on the contrary He greatly stresses our obligation to obey the moral law.

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

So far as the law is a covenant of works under which justification or condemnation is awarded, it has no application to true believers. Yet in certain other ways it is of great use to them as well as to others, for as a rule of life it informs them of the will of God and instructs them in their duty. This done, it directs and binds them to obey it. It also reveals to them the sinful defilement of their natures, their hearts and their lives, so that as they examine themselves by the light of the law, they may be convicted more deeply of sin, and caused to humble themselves on account of sin and to hate it the

more. At the same time the law also gives them a clearer sight of their need of Christ, and the perfection of Christ's own obedience to the law. Similarly, as the law forbids sin, it causes the regenerate to fight against the evil inclinations to sin that they find in themselves. Furthermore, the threatenings of the law are of value in showing the regenerate what their sins deserve, and what afflictions their own disobedience may cause them in this life, even while they stand delivered from the curse and the unrestricted rigor of the law. In similar manner the promises attached to the law intimate God's approbation of obedience and set forth the blessings which flow from the fulfillment of the law, but with the proviso that those blessings do not accrue to men from the law viewed as a covenant of works. The fact that a man does good and refrains from evil because the law encourages the former and deters from the latter, is no evidence that the man is under the law and not under grace.

Rom. 3:20; 5:12-14; 7:7; 8:1; 10:4; Gal. 2:16; 1 Pet. 3:8-13.

The aforementioned uses of the law of God do not run contrary to the grace of the gospel, but are most happily in line with it, for the Spirit of Christ subdues the will of the believer submitted to Him and enables to do freely and with cheerfulness that which the will of God, as revealed in the law, requires to be done.

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

THE GOSPEL AND ITS GRACIOUS EXTENT

Man, having disobeyed God's command to abstain from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and thus having sinned, lost life. God in His mercy promised to send Christ, who would be woman-born; and by means of the promise the elect would be called, and faith and repentance wrought in their hearts. In this promise the very substance of the gospel was revealed as the effectual means for the conversion and salvation of sinners.

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

This promise of Christ and of salvation by Him is revealed to men by the Word of God alone. Neither the works of creation and providence, nor the light of nature, reveal Christ and His grace to men, not even in a general or obscure way; much less it is possible by their means for men who lack the revelation of Christ by the promise of the gospel to attain to saving faith or repentance.

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

The revelation of the gospel to sinners, both to nations and to certain persons, together with the promises and precepts which belong to gospel obedience, has been made at various times and in a variety of places, according to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God. The promise of the making known of the gospel has not been made contingent upon any good use made by men of their native abilities developed by means of light common to all, for such a development has never taken place, nor can it do so. Hence in all ages the extent to which the gospel has been proclaimed, whether to wider or more confined areas, has been granted to persons and nations in greatly varying measures according to the all-wise will of God.

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

The gospel is the only external means of making Christ and saving grace known to men, and it is completely adequate for this purpose. But that men who are dead in their sins may be born again—that is to say, made alive, or regenerated—something further is essential, namely, an effectual, invincible work of the Holy Spirit upon every part of the soul of man, whereby a new spiritual life is

produced. Nothing less than such a work will bring about conversion to God.

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

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND LIBERTY OF THE CONSCIENCE

Christ has purchased for all believers a liberty inherent in the gospel. It comprises freedom from the guilt of sin, from the condemnation that follows upon guilt, from the wrath of God and from the severity and curse of God's law. It also includes deliverance from this present evil world, and from all such things as bondage to Satan, sin's domination, the hurtfulness of afflictions, the fear and sting of death, the victory of the grave, and eternal damnation. Furthermore, it includes free access to God and the yielding of obedience to Him, not as it were with the fear of a slave for his master, but with a childlike love and willing mind.

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

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

God alone is Lord of the conscience. He has set it free from all obligation to receive or obey any such doctrines or demands of men as are in any respect in opposition to His Word or not contained in it. Indeed, to believe and obey such doctrines and demands is tantamount to a betrayal of true liberty of conscience. It is against all reason, and nothing less than the destruction of liberty of conscience, when men demand of others an implicit faith, in other words, an absolute and blind obedience.

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

To practice any sin, or harbor sin's evil desires, on a pretense of enjoying Christian liberty, perverts the main purpose of gospel grace, and imperils those guilty of such an offence, for thereby they destroy the very purpose of Christian liberty, namely, that the Lord's people, 'being delivered out of the hand of their enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all their days.'

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

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND THE LORD'S DAY

The light of nature shows that there is a God who has dominion and sovereignty over all. He is just and good, and He does good to all. He is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, invoked, trusted and served by men with all their heart and soul and strength. But the only acceptable way of worshiping the true God is appointed by Himself, in accordance with His own will. Consequently He may not be worshiped in ways of mere human contrivance, or proceeding from Satan's suggestions. Visible symbols of God, and all other forms of worship not prescribed in the Holy Scripture, are expressly forbidden.

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

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

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

God requires all men to pray to Him, and to give thanks, this being one part of worship. But to render such prayer acceptable, several things are requisite: it must be made in the name of God's Son, it must be Spirit-aided, and it must accord with the will of God. It must also be reverent, humble, fervent and persevering, and linked with faith, love and understanding. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all men

Ps. 65:2; 95:1-7; 2 Sam. 7:29; 12:21-23; John 14:13, 14; Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor. 14:16, 17; 1 Tim. 2:1,2; 1 John 5:14, 16.

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

Exod. 15:1-19; Esther 4:16; Ps. 107; Joel 2:12; Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 8:18; 1 Cor. 11:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2.

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

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

God by his example and command established in the Old Covenant a day of each week, the Sabbath, to be set apart as a day of rest and reflection upon Him and His works. No such command is given in the New Covenant, but the Church has, since the resurrection, set aside Sunday, the day of the resurrection, as a day to worship God and fellowship with other believers, and the New Testament instructs believers to regularly assemble together.

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

CIVIL GOVERNMENT

As the world's supreme Lord and King, God has instituted civil government and has set up civil authorities, subject to Himself, to rule over communities for His own glory and the public good. For these purposes to be achieved He has given them the powers of life and death, both for the safety and encouragement of all men of good behavior, and for the punishment of the wicked.

Rom. 13:1-4.

It is lawful for Christians to accept and carry out the duties of public office when called upon to do so,

in which case it becomes their responsibility to maintain justice and peace in accordance with the sound laws of the kingdoms and states which they serve. New Testament teaching authorizes them to wage war when this is found to be just and necessary.

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

As civil rulers are set up by God for the aforesaid purposes, Christians are to be subject to them in respect of all their lawful requirements, and that, for the Lord's sake and for conscience' sake, and not merely to avoid punishment. They should offer supplications and prayers for kings and all that are in authority, that under their rule they may live a 'quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.'

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

MARRIAGE

God instituted marriage and ordained it to be between one man and one woman for life. It is not lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at one and the same time.

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

Marriage is for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind in accordance with His laws, and for the prevention of immorality.

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

Marriage is ordained by God both for believers and unbelievers, yet Christians are to marry only Christians.

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

God has ordained not only marriage but the nature of the relationship between a husband and a wife. By God's design, a husband and a wife are to compliment one another. The husband is to be a loving servant-leader and the wife is to be a completer. The husband-wife relationship should reflect the nature of the relationship of Christ and the Church.

Eph. 5, Gen. 1; 2.

THE CHURCH

The universal church is invisible in respect of the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace. It consists of the whole number of the elect who have been, who are being, or who yet shall be gathered into one under Christ who is the church's head. The church is the wife, the body, the fullness of Christ, who 'fills all in all.'

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

The purest churches under heaven are liable to be troubled by confusion and error, and some have so far degenerated as no longer to be churches of Christ at all. Nevertheless, Christ

always has had a kingdom in this world of such as believe in Him and profess His name, and He ever will have such a kingdom to the world's end.

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

The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church. By the appointment of the Father, all authority requisite for the calling, establishment, ordering and governing of the church is supremely and sovereignly invested in Him

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

In the exercise of the authority which has been entrusted to Him, the Lord Jesus, through the ministry of the Word and by His Spirit, calls to Himself out of the world those who are given to him by his Father, that they may live in His sight, rendering Him the obedience prescribed by Him for them in the Scripture. He commands those thus called to form particular societies or churches to promote their common welfare, and to engage in the public worship which He requires them to carry on while they continue in the world.

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

The members of these churches are saints by reason of the divine call, and in a visible manner they demonstrate and declare, both by their confession of Christ and their manner of life, that they obey Christ's call. They willingly consent to hold fellowship together according to Christ's instructions, giving themselves to the Lord and to one another as God wills, and yielding full assent to the requirements of the gospel.

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

To each of these churches thus gathered according to the divine will made known in His Word, the Lord has given all the power and authority requisite for the carrying on of the form of worship and discipline which He has appointed for their observance. This extends to the provision of such commands and rules as are needful for the rightful and proper use of the power conferred on the churches.

Matt. 18:17, 19; 1 Cor. 5:4, 5; 5:13; 2 Cor. 2:6-8.

A local church, gathered and fully organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of elders, deacons and members. By Christ's appointment the elders and deacons are to be set apart by the church as called and gathered. It is their special responsibility to arrange for the carrying out of what the Lord has ordained, and to use the powers entrusted to them for the execution of their duties; and such arrangements are to continue in the church until the world ends.

Acts 20:17, 29; Phil. 1:1.

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

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

Elders are required to give constant attention to the service of Christ in His churches; they are to be engaged in the ministry of the Word and in prayer, and to seek the welfare of men's souls as those that must give account to the Lord. It is imperative that the church to which a fulltime teaching elder ministers should give him, according to the churches' ability, not only all due honor, but such abundance of this worlds material good as will enable him to live in comfort, without the need to entangle themselves in secular employment, and which will also suffice to enable him to exercise hospitality towards others. Such an arrangement is required by the law of nature itself, and by the express command of our Lord Jesus, who has decreed that 'they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel.'

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

Although it is the duty of the elders or pastors of the churches, according to their office, to be constantly active in preaching the Word, yet such a work is not to be regarded as confined wholly to them, for the Holy Spirit may qualify others for the same work by giving them the necessary gifts. In this case, when such men are approved and called to the work by the church, they may and ought to perform it.

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

All believers are under obligation to join themselves to local churches when and where they have opportunity to do so. It follows that all who are admitted to the privileges of church fellowship also become subject to the discipline and government of the church in accordance with the rule of Christ.

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

Any church members who have taken offense at the behavior towards them of other church members, and who have obeyed the instructions laid down in Scripture for dealing with such cases, must refrain from disturbing the peace of the church, nor should they absent themselves from church assemblies or the administration of church ordinances on account of their being offended by certain of their fellow-members; but they must wait upon Christ in the further proceedings of the church.

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

All members of each local church are engaged to pray continually for the good and the prosperity of all churches of Christ, wherever located, and upon all occasions to assist all other believers, within the limits of their own areas and callings, in the exercise of their gifts and graces. It follows, therefore, that churches should seek fellowship one with another, so far as the providence of God provides opportunity for the enjoyment of such benefits.

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

When difficulties or differences occur in respect of doctrine or church government, and peace, unity and edification are at risk, one church only may be involved, or the churches in general may be concerned. Again, a member or members of a church may be injured by disciplinary proceedings not agreeable to truth and church order. In such cases as these it is according to the mind of Christ that many churches in fellowship together should meet and confer together through their chosen representatives, who are able to give their advice on the matters in dispute to all the churches concerned. It must be understood, however, that the representatives assembled are not entrusted with any church power properly so called, nor have they any jurisdiction over the churches themselves to exercise discipline upon any churches or persons, or to impose their conclusions on the churches or their officers.

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

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SAINTS

All saints are united to Jesus Christ their head by His Spirit and by faith. But this does not mean that they become one person with Him. Yet they have fellowship in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. Also, as they are united to one another in love, they enjoy fellowship in the gifts and graces one of another, and are under obligation to render such services, public and private, as promote their mutual well-being, in both spiritual and temporal matters.

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

By their profession of faith, saints are committed to the maintenance of a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God and in the performance of such other special services as promote their mutual well-being. They are also bound to relieve one another in their temporal concerns according to their various needs and abilities. According to the rule of the gospel, this type of fellowship, while it particularly applies to the family and church relationships of saints, is to be extended, as God gives opportunity, to the whole household of faith, that is to say, to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. At the same time, however, it must be understood that such a sharing one with another as saints, does not deprive any man of the title and proprietorship which he has in his own goods and possessions, nor does it infringe such title.

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

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Baptism and the Lord's supper are ordinances which have been explicitly and sovereignly instituted by the Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver, who has appointed that they are to be continued in his church to the end of the world.

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

It is the pattern that these holy ordinances are to be administered within the context of a local church and by those to whom Christ commissioned.

Acts 2:42-45, Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 4:1.

BAPTISM

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

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

The only persons who can rightly submit themselves to this ordinance are those who actually

profess repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, being willing to yield obedience to Him.

Mark 16:16; Acts 2:41; 8:12, 26, 27; 18:8.

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

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

Immersion, that is to say, the dipping of the believer in water, is the Biblical pattern for the due administration of this ordinance.

Matt. 3:16; John 3:23.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper was instituted by the Lord on the same night in which He was betrayed. It is to be observed in His churches to the world's end, for a perpetual remembrance of Him and to show forth the sacrifice of Himself in His death. It was instituted also to confirm saints in the belief that all the benefits stemming from Christ's sacrifice belong to them. The Lord's supper is also a bond and pledge of the fellowship which believers have with Christ and with one another.

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

In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to His Father, nor is any real sacrifice made in any sense of that term for remission of sin of the living or the dead. The supper is only a memorial of the one offering up of Christ, by Himself, upon the cross, once for all. It is also a lifting up of all possible praise to God for the once-for-all work of Calvary.

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

The outward elements in the Lord's supper - bread and wine - bear such a relation to the Lord crucified that, in a true sense although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, namely, the body and blood of Christ, even though, in substance and nature, they will remain truly and only bread and wine.

1 Cor. 11:26-28.

Every believer should search his soul for sin and repent thereof before partaking of the body and blood of the Lord. All persons who participate at the Lord's table unworthily are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and their eating and drinking brings them under divine judgment. It follows, therefore, that all unregenerate persons, being unfit to enjoy fellowship with Christ, are similarly unworthy to be communicants at the Lord's table; and while they remain as they are they cannot rightly be admitted to partake of Christ's holy ordinance, for thereby great sin against Christ would be committed.

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

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

There were two kinds of gifts given the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles'

message and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. With the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message, and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message. Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers. The only gifts in operation today are those non-revelatory equipping gifts given for edification. No one possesses the gift of healing today but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted.

Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:1; 1 Corinthians 13:8-12; 13-14:12; Revelation 13:13-14 Romans 12:6-8; Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15

THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

The bodies of men after death return to dust and suffer decay, but their souls which neither die nor sink into a state of unconsciousness - they are inherently immortal. The souls of the righteous, whose holiness is at death perfected, are received into the presence of God, where they are with Christ, looking upon the face of God in light and glory, and waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the wicked are cast into Hades, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Souls separated from their bodies are in either in the presence of God or Hades, for the Scripture speaks of no other dwelling of the departed.

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

At the rapture, saints then alive on the earth will not die, but be changed. By the power of Christ, He will raise the bodies of the righteous to honor, for they will be refashioned after the pattern of His own glorious body.

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

At the final judgment by the power of Christ, the bodies of the unrighteous will be raised to judgment.

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

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

There will be a personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven year tribulation to translate His church from this earth and, between this event and His glorious return with His saints, to reward believers according to their works.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13; John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:11

THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

Immediately following the removal of the church from the earth the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world, and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth. At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged. This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy. The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign.

John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16; Matthew 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Daniel 12:2-3; Revelation 20:4-6; Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46.

After the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David and establish His messianic kingdom for a thousand years on the earth. During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth. This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world.

Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30; Revelation 20:1-7; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11-16; Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 20:1-7

The kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience. The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing.

Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17; Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29; Deuteronomy 28:15-68

This time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life, and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan.

Isaiah 11; 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38; Revelation 20:7

THE JUDGMENT OF THE LOST

Following the release of Satan after the thousand year reign of Christ, Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven. Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone whereupon Christ, who is the Judge of all men, will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne judgment.

Revelation 20:7; Revelation 20:9; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10; John 5:22

This resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment, they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire. Romans 14:10-13, Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15

ETERNITY

After the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers, the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells. Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another. Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever.

2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15, 2 Peter 3:10; Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15, 21-22; Revelation 21:2; John 17:3; Revelation 21-22; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; 1 Corinthians 15:28