

The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith

Table of Contents

- Chapter 1. Of the Holy Scriptures
- Chapter 2. Of God and of the Holy Trinity
- Chapter 3. Of God's Decree
- Chapter 4. Of Creation
- Chapter 5. Of Divine Providence
- Chapter 6. Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof
- Chapter 7. Of God's Covenant
- Chapter 8. Of Christ the Mediator
- Chapter 9. Of Free Will
- Chapter 10. Of Effectual Calling
- Chapter 11. Of Justification
- Chapter 12. Of Adoption
- Chapter 13. Of Sanctification
- Chapter 14. Of Saving Faith
- Chapter 15. Of Repentance Unto Life and Salvation
- Chapter 16. Of Good Works
- Chapter 17. Of the Perseverance of the Saints
- Chapter 18. Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation
- Chapter 19. Of the Law of God
- Chapter 20. Of the Gospel and the Extent of Grace thereof
- Chapter 21. Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience
- Chapter 22. Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day
- Chapter 23. Of Lawful Oaths and Vows
- Chapter 24. Of the Civil magistrate
- Chapter 25. Of Marriage
- Chapter 26. Of the Church
- Chapter 27. Of the Communion of Saints
- Chapter 28. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- Chapter 29. Of Baptism
- Chapter 30. Of the Lord's Supper
- Chapter 31. Of the State of Man after Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead
- Chapter 32. Of the Last Judgment

Chapter 1. Of the Holy Scriptures

1. The Bible Is Infallible, Sufficient, and Necessary The Bible is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29, 31; Ephesians 2:20). The light of nature and the works of creation and providence clearly demonstrate the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, so that people have no excuse. However, these things are not sufficient to give the knowledge of God and his will that is necessary for salvation (Romans 1:19-21; Romans 2:14-15; Psalms 19:1-3). Therefore, the Lord was pleased at various times and in various manners to reveal himself and to declare his will to his church (Hebrews 1:1). Then, to better preserve and propagate the truth, and to better establish and comfort the church against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and the world, God put his revelations completely into writing. Now, the Bible is necessary because God's former ways of revealing his will to his people have ceased (Proverbs 22:19-21; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19-20).

2. The Books of the Bible The Bible, or the written Word of God, contain the Old and New Testaments, which are these:

THE OLD TESTAMENT

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

THE NEW TESTAMENT

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

These are all given by the inspiration of God to be the standard of faith and life (2 Timothy 3:16).

3. The Apocrypha Are Not Inspired The books commonly called the Apocrypha were not inspired and are not part of the Bible canon. Therefore, they have no authority for the church of God and should be viewed and used as other merely human writings (Luke 24:27, 44; Romans 3:2).

4. The Bible is Authoritative Because It Is the Word of God The Bible should be believed because of its authority, which does not depend upon the testimony of any person or church, but rather upon God, who is the author and is truth itself. Therefore, the Bible should be received because it is the Word of God (2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:9).

5. Reasons We Should Believe the Bible The testimony of the church of God may stir and persuade us to have a high and reverent view of the Bible. Furthermore, these all provide evidence that the Bible is the Word of God:

- the heavenliness of its contents
- the power of its teachings
- the majesty of its style
- the harmony of all its parts
- the central focus on giving all glory to God
- the full revelation of the only way to be saved
- many other incomparable qualities and complete perfections

Ultimately, however, we believe the Bible because of the internal work of the Holy Spirit, who bears witness by and with the Bible in our hearts (John 16:13-14; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20, 27).

6. The Bible Is Sufficient and Complete Everything we need to know about God's glory and our salvation, faith, and life is either explicitly stated in or necessarily inferred by the Bible. Nothing should ever be added to the Bible, either by new revelation of the Spirit or by human traditions (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Galatians 1:8-9). At the same time, we acknowledge that the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit is necessary for a saving understanding of what is revealed in the Bible (John 6:45; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12). We also acknowledge that some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the church, which are common to human actions and societies, should be ordered by the light of nature and Christian wisdom, according to general principles in the Bible, which should always be observed (1 Corinthians 11:13-14; 1 Corinthians 14:26, 40).

7. Everyone Can Obtain Saving Knowledge Through the Bible; at the Same Time, Parts of the Bible Are Clearer to Some Than Others Some things in the Bible are easier to understand than others, and some people understand the Bible better than others (2 Peter 3:16). However, the things that need to be known, believed, and obeyed for salvation are so clearly taught in at least one part of the Bible that both the educated and uneducated can gain a sufficient understanding of them using normal means (Psalms 19:7; Psalms 119:130).

8. The Bible Should Be Translated So It Is Accessible to Everyone The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, which was the native language of the Israelites (Romans 3:2). The New Testament was written in Greek, which was the most common language when it was written. These Testaments were inspired by God, and by God's care and providence they were preserved throughout history. Therefore, they are authentic and the church should appeal to them for all religious controversies (Isaiah 8:20). God's people have a right to, and desire to, read the Bible, and they are commanded to read the Bible in the fear of God (Acts 15:15) and to search the Bible (John 5:39). Since not all Christians know these original languages, the Bible should be translated into the language of every nation they come to (1 Corinthians 14:6, 9, 11-12, 24, 28). This way, the Bible can dwell richly in everyone, and everyone can both worship God acceptably and have hope through the patience and comfort of the Bible (Colossians 3:16).

9. The Ultimate Standard for Interpreting the Bible Is the Bible Itself The infallible standard for interpreting the Bible is the Bible itself. When there is a question about the true interpretation of any Bible passage (and there is only one true interpretation), that passage must be interpreted using other passages that are more clear (2 Peter 1:20-21; Acts 15:15-16).

10. The Bible Is the Ultimate Standard of Authority The Bible, which was delivered by the Holy Spirit, is the ultimate standard we should use to resolve all religious controversies and to examine all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, human teachings, and individual interpretations. We find the final answers for our faith in the Bible (Matthew 22:29, 31-32; Ephesians 2:20; Acts 28:23).

1. Who Is God? (Part 1) God is the one living and true God (1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; Deuteronomy 6:4). He is self-existent (Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 48:12) and infinite in being and perfection. His essence cannot be understood by anyone except him (Exodus 3:14). God is a perfectly pure spirit (John 4:24). He is invisible and has no body, parts, or changeable emotions. He alone is immortal, and he dwells in light that no person can approach (1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 4:15-16). He is unchangeable (Malachi 3:6), immense (1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23), eternal (Psalms 90:2), incomprehensible, almighty (Genesis 17:1), infinite in every way, perfectly holy (Isaiah 6:3), perfectly wise, completely free, completely absolute. He works all things according to the counsel of his own unchangeable and perfectly righteous will (Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 46:10) for His own glory (Proverbs 16:4; Romans 11:36). He is perfectly loving, gracious, merciful, patient. He is full of goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. He rewards those who diligently seek him (Exodus 34:6-7; Hebrews 11:6). At the same time, he is perfectly just and terrifying in his judgments (Nehemiah 9:32-33). He hates all sin (Psalms 5:5-6) and will definitely not clear those who are guilty (Exodus 34:7; Nahum 1:2-3).

2. Who Is God? (Part 2) God has all life (John 5:26), glory (Psalms 148:13), goodness (Psalms 119:68), and blessedness in and of himself. He alone is completely self-sufficient. He does not need any creature he has made and does not gain any glory from them (Job 22:2-3). Rather, he demonstrates his glory in, by, and to creatures he has made. He alone is the source of all being. Everything is from him, through him, and to him (Romans 11:34-36). He is completely sovereign over all creatures, and does whatever he wants by them, for them, or to them (Daniel 4:25, 34, 35). He can see everything openly and clearly (Hebrews 4:13). His knowledge is infinite and infallible, independent of any creature. God's knowledge is never dependent upon anything or uncertain (Ezekiel 11:5; Acts 15:18). He is perfectly holy in all of his decisions, works (Psalms 145:17), and commands. He deserves from angels and people the worship (Revelation 5:12-14), service, and obedience that they owe to their creator, and also anything else he requires from them.

3. What Is the Trinity? The divine and infinite Godhead consists of three persons: 1) the Father, 2) the Word or Son, and 3) the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). At the same time, these three persons have the same substance, power, and eternity. They are each fully God, yet God is undivided (Exodus 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Corinthians 8:6). The Father is not begotten of nor proceeding from anyone. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father (John 1:14, 18). The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 15:26; Galatians 4:6). All three are infinite and have no beginning, so they are all only one God, who is not divided in nature and being. The three persons are distinguished by several unique characteristics and personal relations. The doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all of our fellowship with and comforting dependence upon God.

Chapter 3. Of God's Decree

1. From Eternity, God Decreed Everything that Happens From eternity, God, with perfect wisdom and by his own free will, decreed everything that happens (Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9:15, 18). At the same time, God is not the author of sin and does not have fellowship with anyone in their sin (James 1:13; 1 John 1:5). God does not violate the will of the creature; furthermore, there still exists secondary causes, which have liberty and *make real decisions* (contingency). Rather, God's decree establishes these things (Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11). God's decree demonstrates his wisdom in directing everything and his power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree (Numbers 23:19; Ephesians 1:3-5).

2. God Knows Everything, and His Knowledge Is Not Based Upon Passive Foreknowledge

God knows everything that could possibly happen (Acts 15:18). It should be recognized that God did not decree anything because he foresaw it in the future or foresaw that it would happen (Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18).

3. God Predestines Some for Salvation and Leaves Some in Their Sin God has decreed, to demonstrate his glory, to predestine (or foreordain) some men and angels to eternal life through Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 5:21; Matthew 25:34), to the praise of His glorious grace (Ephesians 1:5-6). God leaves others to live in their sin, which results in their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice (Romans 9:22-23; Jude 4).

4. God's Predestination Is Individual and Unchangeable The angels and men God has predestined and foreordained are individually and unchangeably chosen, and the number of the predestined is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or decreased (2 Timothy 2:19; John 13:18).

5. Predestination Is Unconditional Those who are predestined to life were chosen by God before the foundation of the world. He chose them according to his eternal and unchanging purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will. He chose them in Christ for eternal glory merely because of his free grace and love (Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11; Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9). Nothing in the creature was a condition or cause for God's predestination (Romans 9:13, 16; Ephesians 2:5, 12).

6. God Saves the Elect Through Means By his eternal and completely free purpose of his will, God has both appointed the elect to glory and foreordained all the means through which they will be saved (1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13). The elect, who are fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10) and are effectually called to faith in Christ by his Spirit working at the appropriate time. The elect are justified, adopted, sanctified (Romans 8:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13), and kept by his power through faith to salvation (1 Peter 1:5). The elect are the only people who are redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved (John 10:26, 17:9, 6:64).

7. The Elect Can Have Assurance of Salvation The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination should be handled with special caution and care, so that people who seek and obey the will of God revealed in his word can have assurance of their eternal election from being sure of their effectual calling (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 2 Peter 1:10). If this is done, this doctrine will result in reasons for praise (Ephesians 1:6; Romans 11:33), reverence, and admiration of God, as well as humility (Romans 11:5-6, 20), diligence, and abundant comfort to everyone who sincerely obeys the gospel (Luke 10:20).

Chapter 4. Of Creation

1. God Is the Creator In the beginning, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was pleased (John 1:2-3; Hebrews 1:2; Job 26:13) — to demonstrate the glory of his eternal power (Romans 1:20), wisdom, and goodness to create or make the world and everything in it, both visible and invisible, in six days (Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:31).

2. God Created Humans In His Own Image After God made all other creatures, he created humanity. Humans were created male and female (Genesis 1:27), with rational and immortal souls (Genesis 2:7), which makes them able to live a life for God, which they were created to do. They were created in the image of God, with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness (Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 1:26). They were created with the law of God written in their hearts

(Romans 2:14-15) and the power to fulfill it. However, it was possible for them to disobey the law, since they were left to the liberty of their own will, which could change (Genesis 3:6).

3. God's Command Not to Eat From the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil In addition to the law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17; 3:8-10). As long as they obeyed this command, they would be happy in their communion with God and had dominion over the creatures (Genesis 1:26, 28).

Chapter 5. Of Divine Providence

1. God Governs All Things God, the good Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom, upholds, directs, determines, and governs all creatures and things (Hebrews 1:3; Job 38:11; Isaiah 46:10,11; Psalms 135:6), from the greatest to the least (Matthew 10:29-31). He does this by his perfectly wise and holy providence, for the purpose for which they were created, according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and unchangeable counsel of his own will. All of this results in praise for the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy (Ephesians 1:11).

2. First Cause and Secondary Causes Regarding the foreknowledge and decree of God, who is the first cause, everything happens unchangeably and infallibly (Acts 2:23) — Nothing happens by chance, or apart from his providence (Proverbs 16:33). At the same time, by the same providence, he decreed things to happen through secondary causes, either necessarily, freely, or conditionally (Genesis 8:22).

3. God Usually Uses Means In his ordinary providence, God uses means (Acts 27:31, 44; Isaiah 55:10-11), but he is free to work apart from them (Hosea 1:7), beyond them (Romans 4:19-21), or against them (Daniel 3:27), according to his pleasure.

4. God Is Sovereign Even Over Sin The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God are so demonstrated in his providence that his sovereignty includes even the first fall and every other sinful action of both angels and humans (Romans 11:32-34; 2 Samuel 24:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1). These sinful actions are not merely permitted by God. Rather, God wisely and powerfully binds and also directs and governs (2 Kings 19:28; Psalms 76:10) them to accomplish his perfectly holy purposes (Genesis 1:20; Isaiah 10:6-7,12). In all of this, the sinfulness of these actions originate only from the creators, and not from God. Since God is perfectly holy and righteous, he cannot be the author or approver of sin (1 John 2:16).

5. God Often Disciplines or Tests His Children The perfectly wise, righteous, and gracious God often leaves his children to various temptations and the sinfulness of their own hearts:

- to discipline them for their former sins, or
- to teach them the hidden strength of the sinfulness and deceitfulness of their hearts, for the purpose of humbling them. He also does this:
 - to lead them to more closely and constantly depend upon him for their support,
 - to make them more cautious against future temptations to sin, and
 - for other just and holy purposes (2 Chronicles 32:25-26, 31; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9)

Therefore, whatever happens to any of his elect is because of his decree and happens for his glory and their good (Romans 8:28).

6. God Sometimes Hardens the Wicked There are wicked and ungodly people whom God, the righteous judge, blinds and hardens because of their sins (Romans 1:24-26, 28, 11:7-8).

Regarding these people, he not only withholds his grace, through which they might have been enlightened in their understanding and had their hearts changed (Deuteronomy 29:4), but he also sometimes takes away the gifts they already had (Matthew 13:12) and exposes them to circumstances that their corrupt natures will use as an opportunity to sin (Deuteronomy 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12-13). Furthermore, he gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and Satan's power (Psalms 81:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12), so that they harden themselves in response to the same means that God uses to soften others (Exodus 8:15, 32; Isaiah 6:9-10; 1 Peter 2:7-8).

7. God's Providence Cares Especially for His Church Although God's providence in a general way includes all creatures, his providence in a special way takes care of his church and works all things to its good (1 Timothy 4:10; Amos 9:8-9; Isaiah 43:3-5).

Chapter 6. Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof

1. The Fall God created humans upright and perfect, and he gave them a righteous law that would have resulted in life if they had kept it, but threatened death if they broke it (Genesis 2:16-17). However, they did not remain in this honored position for long. Satan used the subtlety of the serpent to trick Eve, who then seduced Adam. Without any compulsion, Adam willfully disobeyed the law *written in his heart* (of their creation) and God's command by eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:12-13; 2 Corinthians 11:3). God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit this because he had planned to use Adam's sin for his own glory.

2. Adam Represented the Human Race Because of this sin, our first parents fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we fell with them. In this way, death came to all (Romans 3:23). All became dead in sin (Romans 5:12, etc.) and completely corrupt in all the capabilities and parts of the soul and body (Titus 1:15; Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-19).

3. Original Sin By God's decree, Adam and Eve represented the entire human race. The guilt of their sin was imputed and their corrupted nature was passed on to all of their offspring who descend from them by normal procreation (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45, 49). Humans are now:

- conceived in sin (Psalms 51:5; Job 14:4)
- by nature children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3)
- servants of sin
- the subjects of death (Romans 6:20, 5:12)
- and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal

unless the Lord Jesus sets them free (Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 1:10)

4. All Committed Sin Results From Original Sin Original sin — which causes us to be completely completely against, disabled, and hostile to all good, as well as completely inclined towards evil (Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21) — is the source of all committed sin (James 1:14-15; Matthew 15:19).

5. Those Who Are Regenerated Still Have a Corrupted Nature Those who are regenerated still have a corrupted nature (Romans 7:18, 23; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8). Although, through Christ, it is pardoned and put to death, this corrupted nature and all sinful actions that result from it are still truly and actually sin (Romans 7:23-25; Galatians 5:17).

Chapter 7. Of God's Covenant

1. God's Plan of Salvation Utilizes a Covenant Although rational creatures are commanded to obey their creator, the distance between God and these creatures is so great that they cannot obtain the reward of life unless God voluntarily acts. God has been pleased to save sinners by using a covenant (Luke 17:10; Job 35:7, 8).

2. The Covenant of Grace Because humanity brought itself under the curse of the law by its fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace (Genesis 2:17; Galatians 3:10; Romans 3:20-21). In this covenant, he freely offers sinners life and salvation through Jesus Christ. To be saved, they must have faith in him (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45, 49). To those who are ordained to eternal life, God promises to give his Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe (Romans 8:3; Mark 16:15-16; John 3:16).

3. The Revelation of the Covenant of Grace The covenant of grace is revealed in the gospel. It was first revealed to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15), and then gradually, until it was fully revealed in the New Testament (Hebrews 1:1). It is based upon the eternal covenant transaction between the Father and the Son regarding the redemption of the elect (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2). 7 The covenant of grace is the only means through which all of the descendants of Adam that have ever been saved obtained life and blessed immortality, since humanity is now completely incapable of being accepted by God according to the terms that Adam had with God when he was in a state of innocence (Hebrews 11:6, 13; Romans 4:1-2ff.; Acts 4:12; John 8:56).

Chapter 8. Of Christ the Mediator

1. God Chose Jesus to Save Sinners In his eternal purpose and according to the covenant made between them, God was pleased to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten son, to be:

- the mediator between God and humanity (Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 1:19-20)
- the prophet (Acts 3:22)
- priest (Hebrews 5:5-6)
- and king (Psalms 2:6; Luke 1:33)
- head and savior of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23)
- the heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2),
- and judge of the world (Acts 17:31).

From all eternity, God gave Jesus a people to be his offspring and to be redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified at some point in time through him (Isaiah 53:10; John 17:6; Romans 8:30).

2. Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity The Son of God is the second person of the Holy Trinity and:

- is fully and eternally God
- is the brightness of the Father's glory
- is of the same substance as the Father and equal with the Father who made the world
- sustains and governs everything he made

At the proper time, he took on a human nature, along with all of its essential properties and common weaknesses (John 1:14; Galatians 4:4), except sin (Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14, 16-17,

4:15). He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary when the Holy Spirit came down upon her and the power of the Most High overshadowed her. He was born from a woman of the tribe of Judah and was a descendent of Abraham and David, according to the Scriptures (Matthew 1:22-23). In this way, two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person. One nature never converts into the other, and the two natures are completely pure and unmixed. This person is fully God and fully human, and at the same time one Christ. He is the only mediator between God and humanity (Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Romans 9:5; 1 Timothy 2:5).

3. Jesus Is Mediator The Lord Jesus, as someone whose human nature was in this way united with his divine nature (the person of the Son), was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit beyond measure (Psalms 45:7; Acts 10:38; John 3:34). He had in himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). It pleased the Father that all fullness would dwell in him (Colossians 1:19), so that, as someone who was holy, harmless, undefiled (Hebrews 7:26), and full of grace and truth (John 1:14), he would be fully qualified to fulfill the office of mediator and guarantor (Hebrews 7:22). He did not take this office upon himself, but rather was called to it by his father (Hebrews 5:5), who also put all power and judgment into his hand and commanded him to execute this power and judgment (John 5:22, 27; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36).

4. Jesus' Atoning Work Jesus willingly accepted this office (Psalms 40:7-8; Hebrews 10:5-10; John 10:18). In order to fulfill it, he was born under the law (Galatians 4:4; Matthew 3:15). He perfectly fulfilled the law and suffered the punishment we deserved, which we should have endured and suffered (Galatians 3:13; Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 3:18). He was made sin and a curse for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). He endured extremely serious sorrows in his soul and extremely painful sufferings in his body (Matthew 26:37, 38; Luke 22:44; Matthew 27:46). He was crucified and died, and remained in a state of death, but his body did not decay (Acts 13:37). On the third day, he rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) with the same body in which he suffered (John 20:25, 27). In this body, he also ascended into heaven (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11), where he sits at the right hand of his Father and intercedes (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24). He will return to judge humanity and angels at the end of the age (Acts 10:42; Romans 14:9-10; Acts 1:11; 2 Peter 2:4).

5. Jesus Accomplished Reconciliation By his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he offered up to God through the eternal Spirit, the Lord Jesus has

- fully satisfied the justice of God (Hebrews 9:14, 10:14; Romans 3:25-26)
- obtained reconciliation
- and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven

for everyone whom the Father has given to Jesus (John 17:2; Hebrews 9:15).

6. Jesus Is Also the Savior of Old Testament Saints The price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ until after his incarnation. However, the virtue, effectiveness, and benefit of it was applied to the elect throughout all of history, from the beginning of the world. This was done through the promises, types, and sacrifices which revealed him and demonstrated that he would be the seed that would bruise the serpent's head (Hebrews 4:2; 1 Peter 1:10-11) and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

7. As mediator, Christ acts according to both natures. Each nature does what is proper for that nature. However, because the two natures are unified in one person, the Bible sometimes attributes what is proper for one nature to the other nature in the one person (John 3:13; Acts 20:28).

8. Christ Fully Saves Everyone He Died For To everyone for whom Christ has obtained eternal redemption, he certainly and effectually applies and imparts it. He:

- intercedes for them (John 6:37, 10:15-16, 17:9; Romans 5:10)
- unites them to himself by his Spirit
- reveals to them the mystery of salvation in and by his word
- persuades them to believe (John 17:6; Ephesians 1:9; 1 John 5:20)
- governs their hearts by his Word and Spirit (Romans 8:9, 14) and overcomes all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom (Psalms 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25-26).

He uses means and ways that are perfectly consistent with his wonderful and unsearchable governance. All of this is by his free and absolute grace, not because he foresaw any merit in them (John 3:8; Ephesians 1:8).

9. Jesus Is the Only Savior and Mediator Jesus is the only mediator between God and humanity. He is the prophet, priest, and king of the church of God. This office of mediator cannot be transferred from him to anyone else, either in whole or in any part (1 Timothy 2:5).

10. Jesus As Prophet, Priest, and King The number and nature of these offices is necessary. We need him as **prophet** because of our ignorance (John 1:18). We need him as **priest** to reconcile us and present us as acceptable to God because we are alienated from God and imperfect in even the best of our service to God (Colossians 1:21; Galatians 5:17). We need him as **king** to convince, subdue, draw, sustain, deliver, and preserve us for his heavenly kingdom and to rescue and secure us from our spiritual enemies because we are hostile and completely unable to turn towards God (John 16:8; Psalms 110:3; Luke 1:74-75).

Chapter 9. Of Free Will

1. We Have Natural Liberty In That We Do Not Act By Force or Necessity of Nature God has given humans a will with natural liberty and the power to act upon choice. This choice is not forced, and it does not do good or evil because of inherent properties (Matthew 17:12; James 1:14; Deuteronomy 30:19).

2. Adam Had Power to Choose Good In their state of innocence, humans had freedom and power to choose and do things that are good and pleasing to God (Ecclesiastes 7:29), but this state of innocence was not guaranteed and they had the ability to fall from this state (Genesis 3:6).

3. After the Fall, Humans Lost the Ability to Choose Good After the fall into sin, humanity lost the ability to choose anything good related to salvation (Romans 5:6, 8:7). In their natural state, they are completely hostile to everything good and dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1, 5). By their own power, they are unable to convert themselves or prepare themselves for conversion (Titus 3:3-5; John 6:44).

4. Conversion Results In the Ability to Choose Good When God converts sinners and transforms them into a state of grace, he frees them from their natural bondage to sin (Colossians 1:13; John 8:36). By his grace alone, he enables them to freely choose and do things that are spiritually good (Philippians 2:13). However, at the same time, because of their remaining corruption, they do not perfectly or solely choose things that are good, but they also choose things that are evil (Romans 7:15, 18-19, 21, 23).

5. Perfect Ability to Choose Good Comes with the State of Glory Humans are only perfectly and unchangeably free to choose good alone when they are in the state of glory (Ephesians 4:13).

Chapter 10. Of Effectual Calling

1. God Effectually Calls the Elect In his appointed and decided time, God effectually calls those whom he has predestined to life (Romans 8:30, 11:7; Ephesians 1:10, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14) out of their natural state of sin and death to grace and salvation through Jesus Christ. He effectually calls them through his Word and Spirit (Ephesians 2:1-6). He enlightens their minds spiritually and savingly so they can understand the things of God (Acts 26:18; Ephesians 1:17-18). He takes away their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). He renews their wills, and by his almighty power he gives them a desire to do things that are good. He effectually draws them to Jesus Christ (Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:27; Ephesians 1:19), so that they come freely, since by his grace, he has caused them to be willing to come (Psalms 110:3; Song of Solomon 1:4).

2. Effectual Calling Is Unconditional Effectual calling is a result of God's free and special grace alone, and not from anything God foresees in anyone or from any power or ability in the creature (2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 2:8). Humans are completely passive and dead in their sins and trespasses until they are quickened and made alive by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:5; John 5:25). After being made alive, humans are then enabled to answer God's call and to embrace the grace that is offered and communicated in it. The power that enables them to answer God's call is the same power that raised Christ from the dead (Ephesians 1:19-20).

3. Elect Infants Are Regenerated and Saved by Christ Elect infants that die in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit (John 3:3, 5-6), who works when, where, and how he pleases (John 3:8). The same is true of all the elect who are unable to be outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

4. The Non-Elect Will Not Come to Christ or Be Saved Those who are not elected may be called by the ministry of the Word and may experience some common working of the Spirit (Matthew 22:14, 13:20-21; Hebrews 6:4-5). However, since they have not been effectually drawn by the Father, they will not and cannot truly come to Christ or be saved (John 6:44-45, 65; 1 John 2:24-25). It is even more impossible for people who do not hear the Christian religion to be saved, no matter how diligent they are to orient their lives according to the light of nature and the teachings of the religion that they profess (Acts 4:12; John 4:22, 17:3).

Chapter 11. Of Justification

1. Justification Is Forgiveness and Imputation of Righteousness Everyone whom God effectually calls he also freely justifies (Romans 3:24, 8:30). God does not justify people by infusing them with righteousness, but rather by forgiving them and by counting and accepting them as righteous (Romans 4:5-8, Ephesians 1:7). Justification is not based upon anything done within or by them, but is based upon Christ alone (1 Corinthians 1:30-31, Romans 5:17-19). It does not impute faith, the act of believing, or any other gospel obedience to them as their righteousness. Rather, it imputes Christ's active obedience to the entire law and his passive obedience in his death for their entire and only righteousness by faith (Philippians 3:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-10), and that faith is not of themselves, it is the gift of God. (John 1:12, Romans 5:17).

2. Justification Is by Faith Alone Faith that receives and rests upon Christ and his righteousness is the only means of justification (Romans 3:28). At the same time, faith is never alone, but is always accompanied with every other saving grace. Faith is never dead, but rather, it works through love (Galatians 5:6, James 2:17, 22, 26).

3. Christ Provides Full Satisfaction of God's Justice By his obedience and death, Christ fully paid for the debt of all who are justified. By sacrificing himself in shedding his blood on the cross and suffering the penalty they deserved in their place, Christ provided a proper, real, and full satisfaction of God's justice on their behalf (Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Isaiah 53:5-6). Because Christ was given to them by the Father and because God freely accepted his obedience and satisfaction in their place apart from anything in them (Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 5:21), their justification is from free grace alone. This way, God is glorified in the justification of sinners through both his exact justice and rich grace (Romans 3:26; Ephesians 1:6-7, 2:7).

4. Justification Does Not Occur Until It Is Applied From all eternity, God decreed to justify all the elect (Galatians 3:8, 1 Peter 1:2, 1 Timothy 2:6), and at the appropriate time, Christ died for their sins and rose again for their justification (Romans 4:25). At the same time, they are not justified personally until the Holy Spirit, at the proper time, actually applies Christ to them (Colossians 1:21-22, Titus 3:4-7).

5. Those Who Are Justified Can Still Sin God continues to forgive the sins of those who are justified (Matthew 6:12, 1 John 1:7, 9). Although they can never fall from the state of justification (John 10:28), they can still fall under God's fatherly displeasure because of their sins (Psalms 89:31-33). When this happens, they usually do not have the light of his face restored to them until they humble themselves, ask for forgiveness, and renew their faith and repentance (Psalms 32:5, Psalms 51, Matthew 26:75).

6. Justification Was the Same in the Old Testament The justification of believers in the Old Testament was in every way exactly the same as the justification of believers in the New Testament (Galatians 3:9; Romans 4:22-24).

Chapter 12. Of Adoption

1. The Blessings of Adoption To all who are justified, God chose to give the grace of adoption in and for the sake of his only Son Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:4-5). Through adoption, they are included among the children of God and enjoy the freedoms and privileges of being children of God (John 1:12; Romans 8:17). They

- have his name put on them (2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12)
- receive the spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15)
- have access to the throne of grace with boldness
- enabled to cry Abba, Father (Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:18)
- are pitied (Psalms 103:13)
- protected (Proverbs 14:26; 1 Peter 5:7)
- provided for (Hebrews 12:6)
- and disciplined by him as by a Father (Isaiah 54:8-9)
- but never cast off (Lamentations 3:31)
- but are sealed until the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30),
- and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation (Hebrews 1:14, 6:12).

Chapter 13. Of Sanctification

1. All Who Are Saved Will Pursue Holiness All who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated with a new heart and spirit created in them through the work of Christ's death and resurrection are also in addition sanctified, both objectively and personally (Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5-6), through the same work of Christ. They are sanctified by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them (John 17:17; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23). Through sanctification, the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed (Romans 6:14) and its various lusts are more and more weakened and killed (Galatians 5:24). Those who are sanctified are more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces (Colossians 1:11) to the practice of true holiness, without which no one will see the Lord (2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14).

2. Sanctification Will Not Finish During Our Lives This sanctification is throughout the whole person (1 Thessalonians 5:23), but is imperfect during this life in that some remnants of corruption will still exist in every part of the believer (Romans 7:18, 23). Because of this, there will be a continual and irreconcilable war—the desires of the flesh against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh (Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11).

3. Believers Will Progress In Sanctification In this war, although the remaining corruption may overpower believers for some time (Romans 7:23), the regenerate part will overcome through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ (Romans 6:14). Therefore, the saints will grow in grace and become more holy in the fear of God. They will pursue a heavenly life in gospel obedience to all the commands that Christ, as Head and King, has given to them in his Word (Ephesians 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 3:18, 7:1).

Chapter 14. Of Saving Faith

1. Faith's Relationship With the Word and Other Means The elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls through the grace of faith. This faith is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts (2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 2:8) and is normally the result of the ministry of the Word (Romans 10:14,17). In addition, it is increased and strengthened through the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, prayer, and other means appointed by God (Luke 17:5; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:32).

2. The Nature of Faith By this faith, Christians believe to be true whatever is revealed in the Word as having the authority of God himself (Acts 24:14). They also recognize an excellency in the Word above all other writings and all thing sin the world (Psalms 19:7-10, 69:72), since it teaches

- the glory of God in his attributes
- the excellency of Christ in his nature and offices
- and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in his workings and operations

Faith enables them to entrust their souls to this truth that they believe (2 Timothy 1:12).

They respond differently to the contents of different passages, obeying the commands (John 15:14), trembling at its threats (Isaiah 66:2), and embracing the promises of God for this life and the life to come (Hebrews 11:13). But, the primary acts of saving faith directly relate to Christ: accepting, receiving, and resting upon him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life. They do this through the covenant of grace (John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Galatians 2:20; Acts 15:11).

3. Believers Will Ultimately Persist in Faith Although this faith may vary in degree and can be weak or strong (Hebrews 5:13-14; Matthew 6:30; Romans 4:19-20), even at its weakest, it is different in nature—like all other saving graces—from the faith and common grace of temporary

believers (2 Peter 1:1). Therefore, although it may often be attacked and weakened, it will ultimately have victory (Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4, 5). In many believers, it will grow into a full assurance through Christ (Hebrews 6:11-12; Colossians 2:2), who is both the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Chapter 15. Of Repentance Unto Life and Salvation

1. Effectual Calling Leads to Repentance Some of the elect are converted later in life and have lived for some time in their natural state, serving various sinful pleasures. As part of their effectual calling, God gives them repentance to life (Titus 3:2-5).

2. Believers Are Renewed Through Repentance There is no person who does good and does not sin (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Even the best may fall into great sins and offenses through the power and deceitfulness of the corruption living in them and the prevalency of temptation. In the covenant of grace, God has mercifully provided to these believers who fall into this sin renewal through repentance to salvation (Luke 22:31-32).

3. The Nature of Repentance This saving repentance is a gospel grace (Zechariah 12:10; Acts 11:18) through which those who are made aware of the many evils of their sin humble themselves with godly sorrow, hatred of their sin, and self-loathing through faith in Christ (Ezekiel 36:31; 2 Corinthians 7:11). They pray for forgiveness and strength of grace with the purpose and goal of—by the power of the Spirit—walking before God in a pleasing way in everything (Psalms 119:6, 128).

4. Believers Should Repent of Known Sins Believers should continue in repentance throughout their entire lives because of the body of death and its activities. Therefore, it is their duty to repent of their specific known sins (Luke 19:8; 1 Timothy 1:13, 15).

5. God Preserves Believers Using the Constant Preaching of Repentance God will preserve believers in their salvation through Christ in the covenant of grace. Therefore, although every sin deserves damnation (Romans 6:23), no sin is so great that it will bring damnation to those who repent (Isaiah 1:16-18, 55:7). This means the constant preaching of repentance necessary.

Chapter 16. Of Good Works

1. Good Works Are Obedience to God's Word The only good works are works commanded by God in the Bible (Micah 6:8; Hebrews 13:21). They do not include works that are not commanded by the Bible, such as those done by humans out of blind zeal or with the appearance of good intentions (Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13).

2. The Results of Good Works, Which Are the Fruit of Faith These good works, which are done in obedience to God's commandments, are fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith (James 2:18, 22). By them:

- believers express their thankfulness (Psalms 116:12-13)
- strengthen their assurance (1 John 2:3, 5; 2 Peter 1:5-11)
- edify fellow believers
- profess the gospel (Matthew 5:16)
- answer people who are against the faith
- and glorify God (1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Peter 2:15; Philemon 1:11)

Believers are God's workmanship and created in Christ Jesus for good works (Ephesians 2:10). These good works bear fruit that lead to holiness, and the result of this is eternal life (Romans 6:22).

3. The Ability to Do Good Works Comes From the Spirit Their ability to do good works is not at all from themselves, but rather completely from the Spirit of Christ (John 15:4-5). To be enabled to do good works, they need—besides the grace they have already received—an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do his good pleasure (2 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 2:13). However, they should not become negligent, as if they were not required to perform any duty unless they receive a special motion of the Spirit. Rather, they should be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them (Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Isaiah 64:7).

4. Even the Greatest Obedience Falls Short Those attain the greatest height of obedience which is possible in this life are still so far from being able to surpass or do what God requires that they still fall short in much of the duty they are required to do (Job 9:2-3; Galatians 5:17; Luke 17:10).

5. Our Good Works Cannot Merit Forgiveness or Eternal Life Even by our best works, we cannot merit forgiveness of sin or eternal life before God because of the great disproportion between our works and the glory to come and the infinite distance between us and God. By our good works, we can neither contribute to nor satisfy God for the debt of our former sins (Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:6). When we have done all that we can, we have merely done our duty and are unprofitable servants. Because our good works are good, they come from his Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). At the same time, since they are done by us, they are defined and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they cannot endure the severity of God's punishment (Isaiah 64:6; Psalms 43:2).

6. God Accepts Our Good Works Nevertheless, believers are accepted through Christ, so their good works are accepted in him (Ephesians 1:5; 1 Peter 1:5). Their good works are not accepted as completely blameless and irreproachable in God's sight. Rather, because God looks upon them in his Son, he is pleased to accept and reward good works that are sincere, even though they are accompanied by many weaknesses and imperfections (Matthew 25:21, 23; Hebrews 6:10).

7. Even the Good Works of Unbelievers Are Sinful Although works done by unregenerate people might be things that God commands and are profitable to both themselves and others (2 Kings 10:30; 1 Kings 21:27, 29), — since they do not come from a heart purified by faith (Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4, 6), are not done in a right manner according to the Bible (1 Corinthians 13:1), and are not done for the right purpose, namely, the glory of God (Matthew 6:2, 5) — they are therefore sinful and cannot please God. These works cannot make a person qualified to receive grace from God (Amos 5:21-22; Romans 9:16; Titus 3:5). At the same time, it is even more sinful and displeasing to God if they neglect those kinds of works (Job 21:14-15; Matthew 25:41-43).

Chapter 17. Of the Perseverance of the Saints

1. The Faith of Believers Will Be Preserved by God Those whom God has accepted in the beloved, 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. Rather, they will definitely persevere to the end and be eternally saved because the gifts and callings of God cannot be taken away. God, through his gifts and callings, continually grants and nourishes in them faith, repentance, love,

joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit that lead to immortality (John 10:28-29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 John 2:19). Although many storms and floods might arise and beat against them, these storms and floods will never be able to remove them from the foundation and rock they are anchored upon by faith. At the same time, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, their experience of the sight of the light and love of God might be clouded and obscured from them for some time (Psalms 89:31-32; 1 Corinthians 11:32). However, God remains the same, and it is certain that they will be preserved by the power of God for salvation, where they will enjoy being the purchased possession of God, who engraved them upon the palm of his hands and wrote their names in the book of life from all eternity (Malachi 3:6).

2. Perseverance Is the Gift of God This perseverance of the saints does not depend upon their own free will, but rather upon

- the unchangeability of the decree of election (Romans 8:30, 9:11, 16)
- which is a decree that flows from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father
- upon the effectiveness of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with him (Romans 5:9-10; John 14:19)
- the oath of God (Hebrews 6:17-18)
- the abiding of his Spirit
- the seed of God within them (1 John 3:9)
- and the nature of the covenant of grace (Jeremiah 32:40)

All these things provide the certainty and infallibility of perseverance

3. Believers Can Fall Into Grievous Sin, but Only Temporarily Believers can — through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation—fall into grievous sins and continue in them for some time (Matthew 26:70, 72, 74). In this state,

- they experience God's displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit (Isaiah 64:5, 9; Ephesians 4:30)
- their graces and comforts are impaired (Psalms 51:10, 12),
- their hearts are hardened and their consciences are wounded (Psalms 32:3-4),
- they hurt and scandalize others
- and they bring temporal judgments upon themselves (2 Samuel 12:14).

Nevertheless, they will renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end (Luke 22:32, 61, 62).

Chapter 18. Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

1. True Believers Can Have Assurance of Salvation Although temporary believers and other unregenerate people might vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and fleshly assumptions that they have the favor of God and are saved, their hope will perish (Job 8:13-14; Matthew 7:22-23). However, those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus and sincerely love him and who seek to walk with a good conscience before him can, in this life, have full assurance that they are in a state of grace and can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (1 John 2:3, 3:14, 18, 19, 21, 24, 5:13). This will never make them be ashamed (Romans 5:2, 5).

2. Assurance of Salvation Is Not Uncertain This certainty is not merely a conjectural or probable persuasion based upon a fallible hope, but is rather an infallible assurance of faith (Hebrews 6:11, 19) that is based upon

- the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel (Hebrews 6:17-18)
- the inward evidence of the graces of the Spirit concerning which promises are made (2 Peter 1:4-5, 10-11)

- and on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, who witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God (Romans 8:15-16)

One fruit of this assurance is that our hearts are kept both humble and holy (1 John 3:1-3).

3. Assurance May Take Time to Obtain This infallible assurance is not such an essential part of faith that believers always fully experience it. True believers might wait long and struggle with many difficulties before they experience full assurance (Isaiah 50:10; Psalms 88; Psalms 77:1-12). However, as they are enabled by the Spirit to know the things that are freely given to them by God, they can obtain full assurance through the right use of means without extraordinary revelation (1 John 4:13; Hebrews 6:11-12). Therefore, it is the duty of all believers to be completely diligent to make their calling and election sure, so that their hearts can grow in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience. These are all the natural fruits of this assurance (Romans 5:1-2, 5, 14:17; Psalms 119:32). Thus, assurance does not lead people to be neglectful (Romans 6:1-2; Titus 2:11-12, 14).

4. Assurance that Is Shaken Can be Regained True believers can have their assurance of salvation shaken, decreased, and temporarily lost in various ways. Some causes of this may be

- negligence in preserving it (Song of Solomon 5:2-3, 6)
- by falling into some specific sin that wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit (Psalms 51:8, 12, 14)
- by some sudden or strong temptation (Psalms 116:11, 77:7-8, 31:22),
- by God withdrawing the light of his face and allowing even those who fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light (Psalms 30:7)

However, they are never completely without

- the seed of God (1 John 3:9)
- life of faith (Luke 22:32)
- the love of Christ and fellow believers
- sincerity of heart
- and conscience of duty

The result of all of this is that, through the working of the Spirit, their assurance can be regained at the proper time (Psalms 42:5, 11). In the meantime, these things keep them from utter despair (Lamentations 3:26-31).

Chapter 19. Of the Law of God

1. The Law Given to Adam God gave Adam a universal law of obedience written in his heart and a specific command to not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 7:29). By giving this law and command to Adam, God required of Adam and all his offspring personal, complete, exact, and eternal obedience (Romans 10:5). God promised life if Adam fulfilled this law, and he threatened death if he broke it. He also gave Adam the power and ability to keep this law (Galatians 3:10, 12).

2. The Universal Law Written on Adam's Heart Was Eventually Written Down as the Ten Commandments The same law that was first written in the human heart continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall (Romans 2:14-15). It was delivered by God on Mount Sinai in ten commandments and written in two tables: 1) the first four contain our duty to God, and 2) the other six contain our duty to people (Deuteronomy 10:4).

3. Ceremonial Laws Besides this law, which is commonly called the moral law, God was pleased to give ceremonial laws to the people of Israel. These laws contained several typological ordinances. Some of them were about worship, which foreshadowed Christ and his graces,

actions, sufferings, and benefits (Hebrews 10:1; Colossians 2:17). They also contained various instructions concerning moral duties (1 Corinthians 5:7). Since all of these ceremonial laws were given only until the time of renewal, they are now abolished and taken away by Jesus Christ, who is the true Messiah and only law-giver and was given power from the Father to do this (Colossians 2:14,16-17; Ephesians 2:14,16).

4. Judicial Laws God also gave the people of Israel various judicial laws, which ceased with the end of their nation. No one is now obligated to keep these laws that were given to them. Today, we should only use the general principles communicated by these laws (1 Corinthians 9:8-10).

5. The Moral Law Is Universal and Eternal The moral law is eternally binding for all, both justified believers and others. All must obey it (Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8, 10-12). It must be obeyed not only because of the content within it, but also because of the authority of God the Creator, who gave the moral law (James 2:10, 11). Christ in the Gospel does not in any way abolish the obligation to keep the moral law, but rather strengthens it (Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 3:31).

6. The Law Does Not Justify, but Is a Rule of Life Although true believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, to be justified or condemned by it (Romans 6:14; Galatians 2:16; Romans 8:1, 10:4), it is still of great use to them and to others as a rule of life. This rule of life teaches them the will of God and their duty. It directs and requires them to live according to its commands. It also exposes the sinful corruptions of their natures, hearts, and lives. As a result, when they examine themselves in light of the moral law, they can end up experiencing further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin (Romans 3:20, 7:7, etc.). In addition, they experience a clearer understanding of the need they have for Christ and the perfection of his obedience. Furthermore, the moral law is also useful to the regenerate to restrain their corruptions, since it forbids sin. The threats of the moral law show what their sins deserve and what sufferings in this life they should expect for their sins, even though they are freed from the curse and the full severity of it. The promises of the moral law also show them God's approval of obedience and the blessings they can expect when they keep it. Believers do not receive these blessings through the law as a covenant of works. When people do good and refrain from evil because the law encourages good and prohibits evil, this does not show that they are under the law and not under grace (Romans 6:12-14; 1 Peter 3:8-13).

7. A Proper View of the Moral Law Harmonizes with the Gospel These uses of the law do not contradict the grace of the Gospel, but rather sweetly harmonizes with it (Galatians 3:21). The Spirit of Christ subdues and enables the will of believers to freely and cheerfully obey the requirements of God's will, which is revealed in the moral law (Ezekiel 36:27).

Chapter 20. Of the Gospel and the Extent of Grace thereof

1. God Gave the Promise of Christ, Which Could Save After the covenant of works was broken by sin and could not give life, God was pleased to give the promise of Christ, who would be born of a woman. This promise was the means of calling the elect and causing faith and repentance in them (Genesis 3:15). In this promise, the substance of the gospel was revealed, which means it had power to convert and save sinners (Revelation 13:8).

2. The Bible's Teachings Are Necessary for Salvation This promise of Christ and salvation by him is only revealed by the Bible (Romans 1:17). The works of creation and providence, seen with the light of nature, do not reveal Christ or grace by him even in a general or obscure way (Romans 10:14-15, 17). It is even more impossible for people without the revelation of Christ by

the promise or gospel to be enabled to obtain saving faith or repentance through these works apart from revelation (Proverbs 29:18; Isaiah 25:7, 60:2-3).

3. The Gospel Spreads In Various Ways According to the Will of God The revelation of the gospel to sinners in different times and places, along with the promises and commands for obedience required by the gospel, is given to nations and people only according to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God (Psalms 147:20; Acts 16:7). God's will is not based upon any promise to people who improve in using their natural abilities through general light apart from revelation. No person has ever done this, and no person can do this (Romans 1:18-32). Therefore, throughout all of history, the preaching of the gospel has been given to people and nations in various amounts and with varying effectiveness according to the counsel of the will of God.

4. Both the Gospel and the Holy Spirit Are Necessary for Salvation The gospel is the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and it is completely sufficient to do this. However, for people who are dead in their trespasses to be born again, quickened, or regenerated, it is also necessary for the Holy Spirit to perform an effectual, irresistible work in every part of their soul to produce new spiritual life in them (Psalms 110:3; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 1:19-20). Without this work of the Holy Spirit, no other means can bring about conversion to God (John 6:44; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6).

Chapter 21. Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

1. New Testament Believers Have Greater Freedom The liberty that Christ purchased for believers under the gospel consists of their freedom from

- the guilt of sin
- the condemning wrath of God
- the severity and curse of the law (Galatians 3:13)

It also includes their deliverance from

- this present evil world (Galatians 1:4)
- bondage to Satan (Acts 26:18)
- the dominion of sin (Romans 8:3)
- the suffering of afflictions (Romans 8:28)
- the fear and sting of death
- the victory of the grave (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)
- and everlasting damnation (2 Thessalonians 1:10)

Furthermore, it includes their free access to God and their submitting to obedience under him, not out of slavish fear (Romans 8:15), but out of child-like love and a willing mind (Luke 1:73-75; 1 John 4:18).

All of these liberties were also essentially experienced by believers under the law (Galatians 3:9, 14).

However, under the New Testament, the liberty of Christians is increased in that they are free from the burden of the ceremonial law, which the Jewish church was obligated to obey. New Testament Christians also have greater boldness to access the throne of grace and a fuller supply of God's free Spirit than believers under the law normally experienced (John 7:38-39; Hebrews 10:19-21).

2. There Is Christian Liberty Concerning Things Not Included in the Bible God alone is the Lord of the conscience (James 4:12; Romans 14:4), and he has left it to be free from human doctrines and commandments which are contradictory to the Bible or not taught by it (Acts 4:19, 5:29; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Matthew 15:9). Therefore, to believe these human doctrines or

obey them out of conscience is to betray true liberty of conscience (Colossians 2:20, 22-23). To require implicit faith or an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy both liberty of conscience and reason (1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 1:24).

3. Christian Liberty Is Not Meant to Be Abused People who use Christian liberty as an excuse to practice any sin or enjoy any sinful desire pervert the main purpose of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction (Romans 6:1-2). They completely destroy the purpose of Christian liberty, which is to allow us to serve the Lord without fear and in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives, as people who have been delivered out of the hands of all of our enemies (Galatians 5:13; 2 Peter 2:18, 21).

Chapter 22. Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

1. Worship Should Be According to What God Has Revealed The light of nature shows that there is a God who has lordship and sovereignty over all. He is just, good, and does good to all. Therefore, he should be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all one's heart, soul, and might (Jeremiah 10:7; Mark 12:33). The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is what he himself has instituted (Deuteronomy 12:32). Worship is limited by his own revealed will. This means that he should not be worshipped

- according to human imagination and inventions
- the suggestions of Satan
- using any visible representations
- or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures (Exodus 20:4-6).

2. Worship Is Only for the Trinity, Through a Mediator Religious worship is to be only given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:9, 10; John 5:23; Matthew 28:19). It should not be given to angels, saints, or any other creatures (Romans 1:25; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10). Since the fall, it cannot be given without a mediator (John 14:6), and the only mediator is Christ (1 Timothy 2:5).

3. Prayer with Thanksgiving Is Required Prayer with thanksgiving is one part of natural worship and is required by God of everyone (Psalms 95:1-7, 65:2). But to be accepted by God, it must be made

- in the name of the Son (John 14:13-14)
- by the help of the Spirit (Romans 8:26)
- according to his will (1 John 5:14)
- with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance
- and when with others, in a known tongue (1 Corinthians 14:16, 17)

4. What We Should Pray For We should pray for things that are lawful and for all kinds of people who are living or will live in the future (1 Timothy 2:1-2; 2 Samuel 7:29). However, we should not pray for the dead (2 Samuel 12:21-23), or for people we know have sinned the sin that leads to death (1 John 5:16).

5. The Parts of Worship The parts of worship include

- the reading of the Scriptures (1 Timothy 4:13)
- preaching and hearing the Word of God (2 Timothy 4:2; Luke 8:18)
- teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19)
- the administration of baptism (Matthew 28:19-20)
- and the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:26)

These should be performed in obedience to God, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear. Furthermore, times of solemn humility with fasting (Esther 4:16; Joel 2:12) and times of thanksgiving should be practiced in a holy and religious manner on special occasions (Exodus 15:1-19, Psalms 107).

6. Prayer Should Be Done Anywhere, by Everyone, and in the Church Under the gospel, neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship is restricted to or made more acceptable by any place it is performed or towards which it is directed. Rather, God should be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth (John 4:21; Malachi 1:11; 1 Timothy 2:8). He should be worshipped in each family (Acts 10:2) daily (Matthew 6:11; Psalms 55:17), and privately by every person (Matthew 6:6). Worship in public assemblies should be more formal. These public assemblies should not carelessly or willfully neglect or forsake the parts of worship that God calls them to do by his word or providence (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42).

7. The Christian Sabbath It is the law of nature that in general, a portion of time that God has determined should be set apart for the worship of God. So, by his Word, in a positive moral and perpetual commandment that binds every person in all times, God has specifically appointed one day in seven to be a sabbath that should be kept holy to him (Exodus 20:8). From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, this was the last day of the week. After the resurrection of Christ, this day was changed to be the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's Day (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10). This change will continue to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath; the observation of the Sabbath on the last day of the week is now abolished.

8. How to Obey the Sabbath The Sabbath is kept holy to the Lord when people first prepare their hearts rightly and manage their everyday activities beforehand. Then, they observe a holy rest all day from their own works, words, and thoughts regarding their worldly employment and recreations (Isaiah 58:13; Nehemiah 13:15-22). In addition, they spend the whole time in public and private acts of worship and in the duties of necessity and mercy (Matthew 12:1-13).

Chapter 23. Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

1. What Is a Lawful Oath? A lawful oath is a part of religious worship where the person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgment solemnly calls God to witness what he swears (Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 10:20; Jeremiah 4:2) and to judge him according to the truth or falseness of what he swears (2 Chronicles 6:22-23).

2. Oaths Should Only Be Sworn by the Name of God, with Holy Fear and Reverence The name of God alone is what people should swear by. It should be used with holy fear and reverence. Therefore, to swear without forethought or rashly by God's glorious and awesome name, or to swear at all by anything else, is sinful and should be abhorred (Matthew 5:34, 37; James 5:12). In situations that are weighty and important, an oath is warranted by the Word of God to confirm truth and end conflict (Hebrews 6:16; 2 Corinthians 1:23). Therefore, in these situations, a lawful oath imposed by lawful authority should be taken (Nehemiah 13:25).

3. Oaths Should Be Taken with Seriousness People who take an oath approved by the Word of God should consider the weightiness of such a serious action. They should not affirm anything except what they know is true because the Lord is provoked by rash, false, and thoughtless oaths, and because of these kinds of oaths this land mourns (Leviticus 19:12; Jeremiah 23:10).

4. Oaths Should Be Clear An oath should be taken using words that have plain and common sense meanings, without ambiguity or mental reservation (Psalms 24:4).

5. Legitimate and Illegitimate Vows A vow should not be made to any creature, but rather to God alone, and it should be made and performed with religious care and faithfulness (Psalms 76:11; Genesis 28:20-22). However, Roman Catholic monastical vows of perpetual singleness (1 Corinthians 7:2, 9), professed poverty (Ephesians 4:28), and monastical obedience do not lead to higher perfection. Rather, they are superstitious and sinful snares in which Christians should not entangle themselves.

Chapter 24. Of the Civil magistrate

1. The Role of Civil Government God, the supreme Lord and King of the whole world, has ordained civil authorities to be under him and over the people for his own glory and the public good. For this purpose, he has armed them with the power of the sword to defend and encourage those who do good and to punish those who do evil (Romans 13:1-4).

2. Christians Can Participate in Government and Wage War Christians can accept and perform the duties of a government official when they are called to do this. In this role, they should seek especially to maintain justice and peace (2 Samuel 23:3; Psalms 82:3-4) according to the wholesome laws of each kingdom and political entity. To accomplish this, they can now lawfully, under the New Testament, wage war in just and necessary situations (Luke 3:14).

3. We Should Submit to and Pray for Civil Authorities Since civil authorities are set up by God for the purposes mentioned, we should submit in the Lord to everything they command that is lawful, not only because we fear punishment, but also because of our conscience (Romans 13:5-7; 1 Peter 2:17). We should also make requests and prayers for kings and all who are in authority, so that we can live a quiet and peaceful life under them in all godliness and honesty (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Chapter 25. Of Marriage

1. Marriage Should Be Between One Man and One Woman Marriage should be between one man and one woman. A man should not have more than one wife at the same time, and a woman should not have more than one husband at the same time (Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:15; Matthew 19:5-6).

2. The Purposes of Marriage Marriage was ordained for the husband and wife to help one another (Genesis 2:18), for increasing the number of the human race with legitimate offspring (Genesis 1:28), and for preventing immorality (1 Corinthians 7:2, 9).

3. Marriage Should Be Between Believers Marriage can be between anyone who is able to give consent with discernment (Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 4:3). However, Christians should marry in the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:39). Those who profess the true religion should not marry non-believers or idolaters, and those who are godly should not be unequally yoked by marrying someone who lives an evil life or believes in damnable heresy (Nehemiah 13:25-27).

4. The Bible Forbids Marriage Between Family Members Marriage should not be between people who are related by blood, which is forbidden in the Bible (Leviticus 18). These incestuous marriages can never be made lawful by any human law or consent of the people involved in such a way that these people can live together as husband and wife (Mark 6:18; 1 Corinthians 5:1).

Chapter 26. Of the Church

1. The Universal, or Invisible, Church The catholic, or universal, church can be called the invisible church in terms of the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace. It consists of all of the elect who have been, are, or will be united into one body under Christ, who is its head. It is the spouse, the body, and the fullness of him who fills all in all (Hebrews 12:23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:10, 22-23, 5:23, 27, 32).

2. The Visible Church All people throughout the world who profess the faith of the gospel and obey God through Christ according to the gospel, who do not destroy their own profession through foundational errors or unholy living, are and may be called visible saints (1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 11:26). All local congregations should consist of these people (Romans 1:7; Ephesians 1:20-22).

3. Churches Vary In Purity and Legitimacy, But God Preserves His Church Even the purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error (1 Corinthians 5; Revelation 2-3), and some have become so bad they they are no longer churches of Christ, but rather are synagogues of Satan (Revelation 18:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12). Nevertheless, Christ has always had, and always will have to the end of this world, a kingdom in this world consisting of those who believe in him and profess his name (Matthew 16:18; Psalms 72:17, 102:28; Revelation 12:17).

4. Christ Is the Head of the Church, Not the Roman Catholic Pope The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church. By the Father's decree, he possesses supreme and sovereign power over the calling, institution, order, and government of the church (Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11-12). The Pope of Roman Catholicism cannot be head of the church, but is rather that antichrist, that man of sin and son of destruction who exalts himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God, whom the Lord will destroy with the brightness of his coming (2 Thessalonians 2:2-9).

5. The Purpose of Local Churches To carry out the authority given to him, the Lord Jesus calls people out of the world who are given to him by his Father through the ministry of his word, by his Spirit (John 10:16; John 12:32). He calls them to walk before him in all the ways of obedience that he prescribes for them in his Word (Matthew 28:20). He commands all who are called to walk together in local congregations, or churches, to edify one another and participate in the elements of public worship that he requires from them while they are in the world (Matthew 18:15-20).

6. The Church Consists of Saints Who Are Committed to One Another The members of these churches are saints by calling. They visibly manifest and show evidence of their obedience to the call of Christ through their profession and way of life (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2). They agree to walk together according to Christ's commands. They give themselves to the Lord and to one another by the will of God in submission to the ordinances of the Gospel (Acts 2:41-42, 5:13-14; 2 Corinthians 9:13).

7. God Empowers His Churches to Worship Him Rightly To every church that gathers in a way that is according to Christ's mind declared in his Word, he has given all power and authority that is needed to carry out proper worship and discipline, which he has instituted for them to observe. He has given them commands and rules to use to execute that power rightly (Matthew 18:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 5:13, 2 Corinthians 2:6-8).

8. Church Officers Are Elders and Deacons A local church that is gathered and organized according to the mind of Christ consists of officers and members. The officers appointed by

Christ are overseers, or elders, and deacons. They should be chosen and set apart by the church that is called and gathered in this way. They should be chosen and set apart for the specific purpose of administering ordinances and carrying out other powers or duties that Christ entrusts them with or calls them to. This will continue to the end of the world (Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1).

9. How Elders and Deacons Are Called The way Christ has appointed for calling a person who is prepared and gifted by the Holy Spirit for the office of overseer or elder in a church is that he should be chosen according to the collective vote of the church itself (Acts 14:23). He should be solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, and the elders, if any already exist, should lay hands on him (1 Timothy 4:14). A deacon should be chosen by a similar vote, set apart by prayer, and also receive the laying of hands (Acts 6:3, 5-6).

10. The Duties of Pastors and Members The duty of pastors is to constantly serve Christ's churches with the ministry of the word and prayer. They must watch over the souls of their church members as people who will give an account to Christ (Acts 6:4; Hebrews 13:17). The churches they minister to have the responsibility not only to give them full respect, but also to share with them all of their good things according to their ability (1 Timothy 5:17-18; Galatians 6:6-7). Churches should do this so pastors can live comfortably and not be entangled in secular affairs (2 Timothy 2:4) and so they can also show hospitality to others (1 Timothy 3:2). This duty of churches is required both by the law of nature and by the explicit command of our Lord Jesus, who has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should earn their living from the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:6-14).

11. Preaching Is Not Exclusive to Pastors Although overseers or pastors of churches should be committed to preaching the word as a function of their office, at the same time, the work of preaching the word is not specifically restricted to them. Other who are also gifted and prepared by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved and called by the church, may and should also preach the word (Acts 11:19-21; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

12. All Believers Should Join and Submit to a Local Church All believers are required to join a local church when and where they are able to. All who receive the privileges of a church are also under its discipline and government, according to the rule of Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15).

13. Dealing with Conflict In the Church Church members who have been offended and have performed their duty towards the person who offended them should not disrupt church activity and should not stop attending church or receiving ordinances because of any of their fellow members offending them. Instead, they should depend upon Christ in the further action of the church (Matthew 18:15-17; Ephesians 4:2-3).

14. Relationships Between Churches Every church and all its members are required to continually pray for the good and prosperity of all the churches of Christ (Ephesians 6:18; Psalms 122:6) in every place. Furthermore, they should, at every opportunity and within the limits of their situation and callings, help every church by exercising their gifts and graces. Therefore, when churches are planted by the providence of God—if they are able to enjoy the opportunity and circumstances are favorable towards it—they should have fellowship among themselves for their peace, growth in love, and mutual edification (Romans 16:1-2; 3 John 8-10).

15. Getting Advice From Other Churches Cases regarding difficulties or differences, either doctrinal or administrative, may occur that affect the peace, union, and edification of either all churches in general or one particular church. Or, one or multiple members of a church may be

injured in or by church discipline that does not follow truth and order. According to the mind of Christ, churches that associate with one another should meet through their messengers to consider and give advice regarding the conflicting issue. These messengers should give their report to all the churches concerned (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23, 25). However, these assembled messengers are not entrusted with any church authority, technically speaking. They also do not have any power over the churches themselves; they cannot impose their decision on the churches or officers (2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 John 4:1).

Chapter 27. Of the Communion of Saints

1. Fellowship Between Believers All saints who are united to Jesus Christ, who is their head, by his Spirit and by faith (although this does not mean they are one person with him) have fellowship in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory (1 John 1:3; John 1:16; Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:5-6). Since they are united to each other in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces (Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Corinthians 12:7, 3:21-23) and are obligated to carry out these duties, both public and private. These duties should be done in an orderly way for the mutual benefit of the saints, both in the inward and outward aspects of their lives (1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; Romans 1:12; 1 John 3:17-18; Galatians 6:10).

2. Believers Have Obligations to Other Believers Saints by profession are obligated to maintain holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God and in performing other spiritual services that promote their mutual edification (Hebrews 10:24-25, 3:12-13). They should also help each other in outward things according to their various abilities and needs (Acts 11:29-30). This communion should be especially shared in family and church relationships (Ephesians 6:4; 1 Corinthians 12:14-27). At the same time, according to the rule of the gospel, as God provides opportunity, this communion should be extended to all believers, to everyone in every place who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus. However, their communion with one another as saints does not take away or infringe on the title or property that people have in their goods and possessions (Acts 5:4; Ephesians 4:28).

Chapter 28. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1. Baptism and the Lord's Supper Are Ordinances Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution. They are appointed by the Lord Jesus, who is the only lawgiver, and they should be continued in his church to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:26).

2. Ordinances Should be Administered by Those Who Are Qualified and Called These holy appointments should only be administered by those who are qualified and called to administer them, according to the commission of Christ (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 4:1).

Chapter 29. Of Baptism

1. What Is Baptism? Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament ordained by Jesus Christ. To those baptized, it is a sign

- of their fellowship with him in his death and resurrection and of their being grafted into him (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27)
- of remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16),
- and of submitting themselves to God through Jesus Christ to live and walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

2. Only Professing Believers Should Be Baptized The only people who should be baptized are people who profess repentance towards God and faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36-37, 2:41, 8:12, 18:8).

3. Baptism Is By Water, In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit The outward element that should be used in baptism is water. People should be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:38).

4. Baptism Should Be By Immersion To properly administer baptism, a person should be immersed, or dipped in water (Matthew 3:16; John 3:23).

Chapter 30. Of the Lord's Supper

1. The Purpose of the Lord's Supper The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by him the same night he was betrayed. It should be observed in his churches to the end of the age as a perpetual remembrance and display to the world of the sacrifice of himself in his death (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The Lord's Supper is also given

- for the confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits of Christ's death
- for their spiritual nourishment and growth in him
- for their further engagement in and to all the duties they owe to him
- and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him and each other (1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 21).

2. The Lord's Supper Is Not a Real Sacrifice, But a Memorial In the Lord's Supper, Christ is not offered up to his Father, and no real sacrifice is made to forgive sin of anyone living or dead. Rather, it is only a memorial of the one offering Christ made of himself on the cross, once for all (Hebrews 9:25-26, 28). It is also a spiritual offering of the highest possible praise to God for that sacrifice (1 Corinthians 11:24; Matthew 26:26-27). Therefore, the Roman Catholic sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is utterly abominable and takes away from Christ's own sacrifice, which is the only propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

3. The Bread and the Cup For the Lord's Supper, the Lord Jesus has appointed his ministers to pray and to bless the elements of bread and wine. In this way, they set the bread and wine apart from a common to a holy use. They are to take and break the bread and to take the cup, giving them both to the partakers and themselves (1 Corinthians 11:23-26, etc.).

4. Wrong Applications of the Lord's Supper It is contrary to the nature of the Lord's supper and to the institution of Christ to deny the cup to the people, worship the elements, lift them up, carry them around for adoration, or reserve them for pretended religious use (Matthew 26:26-28, 15:9; Exodus 20:4-5).

5. The Bread and Wine Represent Jesus' Body and Blood The outward elements of the Lord's supper are set apart for the use ordained by Christ. They have such a relationship to Christ crucified that they are sometimes used figuratively and called by the names of the things they represent, namely, the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:27). However, in substance and nature, they are still only bread and wine, which is also what they were before (1 Corinthians 11:26-28).

6. Transubstantiation Is Unbiblical The doctrine of transubstantiation, which teaches that the bread and wine change in substance to actually become Christ's body and blood through the consecration of a priest, or through any other way, is hostile to not only Scripture (Acts 3:21;

Luke), but also to common sense and reason. This doctrine destroys the nature of the ordinance, and it has been, and is currently, the cause of many superstitions and gross idolatries (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

7. The Lord's Supper Is Spiritual Feeding People who receive the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner, who outwardly partake of the visible elements in this ordinance, do so inwardly by faith, really and truly, not physically and bodily. They spiritually receive and feed upon Christ crucified and all the benefits of his death. The body and blood of Christ are not present bodily or physically, but rather spiritually to the faith of believers in the Lord's Supper. This is how the elements are to their outward senses (1 Corinthians 10:16, 11:23-26).

8. Ignorant and Ungodly People Should Not Participate in the Lord's Supper All ignorant and ungodly people are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ. Because of this, they are unworthy of the Lord's Supper, and they cannot, without great sin against him, partake of these holy mysteries or be admitted to them without committing great sin against Christ (2 Corinthians 6:14-15). Whoever receives the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and they eat and drink judgment on themselves (1 Corinthians 11:29; Matthew 7:6).

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

1. The Fate of the Righteous and Wicked The bodies of people who have died return to dust and undergo decay (Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36). However, their souls, which neither die nor sleep and have an immortal nature, immediately to God, who gave souls (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The souls of the righteous, which are then made perfect in holiness, are received into heaven, where they are with Christ and behold the face of God in light and glory. There, they wait for the full redemption of their bodies (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6, 8; Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 12:23). The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved for the judgment of the great day (Jude 6-7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23-24). The Bible does not teach any other place besides these two places where souls are separated from their bodies.

2. The Last Day At the last day, saints who are still alive will not sleep, but will be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17). Also, all the dead will be raised up with their own bodies, and not any other body (Job 19:26-27), although these bodies will have different qualities. These bodies will be united again to their souls forever (1 Corinthians 15:42-43).

3. The Bodies of the Unjust and Just The bodies of the unjust will be raised to dishonor by the power of Christ. The bodies of the just will be raised to honor by his Spirit and be conformed to Christ's own glorious body (Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29; Philippians 3:21).

Chapter 32. Of the Last Judgment

1. The Day of Judgment God has appointed a day when he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27). Jesus is given all power and judgment by the Father. On this day, not only will the apostate angels be judged (1 Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6), but all all people who have ever lived on the earth will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds. They will receive accordingn to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil (2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:10, 12; Matthew 25:32-46).

2. God Is Glorified by the Day of Judgment The purpose for God appointing this day of judgment is to display the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect and to display the glory of his justice in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient (Romans 9:22-23). On this day, the righteous will enter into everlasting life and receive fullness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards in the presence of the Lord. But, the wicked, who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be thrown into everlasting torments (Matthew 25:21, 34; 2 Timothy 4:8) and punished with everlasting destruction. They will be separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

3. Nobody Knows the Day of Judgment Christ wants us to be confidently persuaded that there will be a day of judgment, both to deter people from sin (2 Corinthians 5:10-11) and to comfort the godly in their adversity (2 Thessalonians 1:5-7). To accomplish this, he keeps the day secret, to help them be rid of fleshly security and to be constantly watchful, since they do not know at what hour the Lord will come (Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40). Thus, they can constantly be prepared to say, "Come Lord Jesus. Come quickly." (Revelation 22:20) Amen.