



South Baptist Church

{A Reformed Baptist Church}

Constitution & By-Laws

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for the
Constitution and By-Laws of
South Baptist Church

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Explanation of the Documents

The term Constitution is defined as the document in which the fundamental principles of this organization are written down. In our case, the general term "Constitution" refers to both the Constitution and the By-Laws as written on the following pages.

1. The Constitution is the set of governing principles upon which the church is organized. The Preamble and Articles of the Constitution contain those items that are basic to our church's existence and its relationships external to the church. These fundamental principles are not subject to frequent revision.
2. The By-Laws are secondary principles that govern those areas that are subject to change more often than the basic Articles of the Constitution. They contain the necessary requirements for the smooth functioning of the church. They explain how the church carries out the basic Articles of the Constitution and address the relationships internal to the church.
3. The Revision History will track all changes to these documents so that succeeding members will know what changes were made and why.

The Biblical principle that is used in having these two (2) documents is the Mosaic Law. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments (the Constitution). Then God gave Moses chapter after chapter of how these Ten Commandments are to be carried out in the lives of the people (the By-Laws).

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

In order to affirm and preserve the principles of our faith, to guarantee that this body may be governed in an orderly and efficient manner, consistent with the Holy Scriptures and the applicable federal, state and local laws, and for the purpose of preserving the unity of this church, the liberties inherent in each individual member and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other like-minded, biblical, evangelical, Christian individuals, ministries and churches, we do declare and establish this Constitution.

ARTICLE I - NAME, ORGANIZATION AND INCORPORATION

Section 1 Name

This organization shall be known as “South Baptist Church” (SBC) of Laconia, New Hampshire.

Section 2 Organization

This church is a union [March 21, 1918] of the First Free Baptist Church, organized March 17, 1838, and the First Baptist Church, organized May 30, 1888.

Section 3 Incorporation

South Baptist Church was incorporated September 6, 1919. SBC is a nonprofit religious corporation in compliance with the statutes of the State of New Hampshire [New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSAs) - Title XXVII, Corporations, Associations and Proprietors of Common Lands, Chapter 292, Voluntary Corporations and Associations] governing religious bodies and has obtained 501(c)(3) designation from the United States Internal Revenue Service.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of SBC is to glorify God by obeying the Great Commandments and fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (as delineated in Mark 12:28-34 and Matthew 28:18-20).

SBC, as a part of the Body of Christ, which is His universal/invisible Church, purposes to do the work of the Church as revealed in Scripture. SBC embraces the six-fold purposes of the New Testament Church (Acts 2):

- Develop a deep and continually growing knowledge of God, through our lifelong study of the Holy Scriptures
- Offer our lives, as living sacrifices, to the worship of God in spirit and in truth
- Engage in the discipleship of believers in Jesus Christ
- Fellowship with true and like-minded believers in Jesus Christ

- Be active in the work of evangelism and missions to those separated from God
- Minister to the spiritual and material needs of brothers and sisters in Christ and to those separated from God

ARTICLE III - DECLARATION OF FAITH

SBC's supreme authority is its Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as He is revealed in and as He has commanded His Church in the whole of the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, including all 66 books of both the Old and New Testaments.

The Second London Baptist Confession of 1689 has been deemed by this church to be a faithful general summary of what the Bible teaches. This document is included as Appendix B. As a summary of the Bible, it remains subordinate to the Bible.

The Board of Elders, in their biblical office, act as the final court of appeals for judging the correct understanding and application of all that God requires of this particular church. They are to draw their understanding and authority from the Bible. (See By-Laws Article IV, Section 1.)

ARTICLE IV - CHURCH MEMBER'S STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND DESIRE

Having been led by the Spirit of God, I have received Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord (John 1:12). I have been born again through the Holy Spirit (John 3:6-7; 1:13) and have publicly confessed my faith by word (Rom. 10:8-10). I subscribe to the Declaration of Faith of South Baptist Church and do now, with other members of the church as one body in Christ, state my purpose and desire to enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ:

- To walk lovingly (John 13:34-35) and humbly with my brethren (1 Pet. 5:6; Rom. 12:3), to pray for them (James 1:15), to separate myself from worldly and unchristian practices (Titus 2:12), and to prayerfully study God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15) and to follow His Word as my rule of faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- To pray for the advancement of my church in knowledge, spiritual growth and fruitfulness (John 15:8, 16); to uphold it through faithful attendance at worship, training and teaching; to observe its ordinances (Matt. 29:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:24-27; Heb. 10:25) and affirm its teaching (1 Pet. 3:15; Jude 3).
- To give regularly and cheerfully to my church as God prospers for the support of the evangelistic, teaching and training ministry among us (2 Cor. 9:6-7; 1 Cor. 16:2), for the relief of the needy (Prov. 19:17), and for the spreading of the Gospel both here in the Lakes Region and all over the earth (Matt. 28:19-20).
- To serve faithfully in some activity in the church body according to God's leading and according to my spiritual gifts and abilities (Rom. 12:4-8; James 1:22-24; 2:18), taking care to assume only such duties as can be effectively performed (1 Cor. 4:2).

- To encourage family worship, training and discipline in my home. To encourage daily prayer, Bible study and spiritual growth for any under my care (Eph. 6:1-4; Prov. 22:6).
- To endeavor by my example (Matt 5:16), witness (1 Pet. 3:15), and effort, to point people to Christ, and to do my part in building them up in the faith (Matt. 28:19-20; Eph. 4:11-16; Col 1:28).
- To endeavor to understand and appreciate my fellow members in the church, especially those who may have personalities, ministries, and backgrounds quite different from mine (Rom. 14:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:4-7, 18-28; Gal. 3:26-28).
- To endeavor to apply the Scriptures as they relate to the whole Body of Christ (Rom. 12:6-16; 1 Cor. 12:11-27; Eph. 4:11-16).

ARTICLE V - FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Lord of His Church and its only Head. He governs His Church by the Word of God. His government is exercised in individual churches through the leadership of Elders who have been set apart by the church to teach the Word of God and to lead the flock (1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 6:4).

The government of SBC shall be Elder rule with authority invested in the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders is biblically called to oversee and govern all aspects of the spiritual life of SBC and, in accordance with the Bible, is the final court of appeals for such matters.

The body of believers who comprise the Membership of SBC will govern all aspects of the business of this church in accordance with federal, state, and local laws. The Membership governs the business aspects of the church through the executive functions of its Senior Pastor, its Corporate Officers, and the Church Board of Trustees. In its delegation of authority to the Church Board of Trustees, it instructs them to execute the vision and ministry direction set by the Church Board of Elders for SBC, taking initiative and action which is informed, supportive, and considerate of legal and business concerns.

ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP

Any person who receives Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord, shows evidence of the new life in Christ, has expressed suitable agreement with the Declaration of Faith [Article III] and the Church Member's Statement of Purpose and Desire [Article IV], and accepts the Constitution and the By-Laws of this church is eligible for membership.

ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

The meetings for worship, prayer, praise, fellowship, business and special purposes shall be set forth in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE VIII - AFFILIATION

SBC is a totally autonomous and self-governing church, free from any legal authority by any denomination or other entity. However, recognizing the biblical pattern of interdependence and the need for fellowship, we are free to fellowship with churches of like-mindedness.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended by an annual or special meeting provided that a quorum of 66% (sixty-six percent, or two-thirds) of the active membership is present. The notice for the proposed amendment(s) shall be given at least four (4) weeks prior to the annual meeting or the special meeting. The notice shall include the language of the proposed amendment(s). To amend the Constitution, a 75% (seventy-five percent) majority of those present and voting is required. The amended Constitution goes into effect when adopted by the Church.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Qualifications

To be received into and remain in this Church as a member, any person must have:

1. Confessed Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior and followed the command to be baptized by immersion.
2. Expressed agreement with the Declaration of Faith, the Constitution, the By-Laws, and the Member's Statement of Purpose and Desire of South Baptist Church.
3. Reached his eighteenth birthday.

Applicants for membership of the church shall be recommended to the church by the Board of Elders after having given satisfactory testimony as to conversion and views of Christian faith and practice. Upon recommendation of the Board of Elders, they shall be received by a majority of those church members present in one of the following ways:

1. By profession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; or
2. By letter of transfer from other churches or groups holding the same faith and practice; or
3. By reaffirmation of faith when the prospective member cannot obtain a letter of transfer from his respective church or group; or
4. By restoration, if having been disfellowshipped from membership of this church, and upon giving satisfactory evidence for restoration or explanation of lapse of membership.

Section 2 Associate Members

All persons qualified for Active Membership with the exception of the qualification of age may apply for, be received, and be recognized as Associate Members. Associate Members do not possess any voting privileges within the church. Providing they maintain their Membership status as Associate Members, they will become Active Members by virtue of attaining their eighteenth birthday.

Section 3 Recognition

Members shall extend to all new members the Right Hand of Fellowship in recognition of their admission to all rights and privileges of this church.

Section 4 Duties

1. The duties of members to themselves are the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, progress in spirituality, consistency of conduct, and the control and eradication of everything unholy.
2. It is the duty of members to honor, esteem and love their Elders and to pray for them fervently. Members are to follow the Elders in the Scriptural exercise of their official capacity, to offer their service in ministry, and to show a tender regard for the Elders' reputations (1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17-19; Heb. 13:17).

Section 5 Dismissal

1. The following dismissals shall be made upon the recommendation of the Board of Elders and will not require a vote by the church membership:
 - a. Any member in good and regular standing, who so desires, may obtain a letter of transfer to a church of like faith.
 - b. Any member in good and regular standing, who so desires, may obtain a letter of fact for transfer to other than a Baptist Church.
 - c. Any member who shall unite with any other church without such letter of transfer shall be dropped automatically from the church roll.
 - d. Any member who moves outside a reasonable distance for continuing church membership will be encouraged to seek fellowship in a local church in their new home area. After one year, they will be taken off the church roll.
 - e. Any member who becomes deceased.
 - f. Any member who is subject to dismissal by church discipline (see Article II of the By-Laws).
 - g. Since it is the desire and purpose of the Church to maintain an active membership, the Board of Elders and the Church Clerk shall constitute a committee for revising the roll. This committee shall meet before the Annual Meeting and take into full consideration the member's compliance with the requirements of the Constitution, Article IV [Church Member's Statement of Purpose and Desire]. The committee shall remove from the roll the names of existing members not in compliance with the above.
2. Exceptions to 1.g above may be placed on an inactive membership list by the committee revising the roll for the following reasons:
 - a. Shut-in and disabled
 - b. Those at college or in the military

- c. Those in Christian service outside the community, who choose to keep their membership at SBC (missionaries, chaplains, etc.).

ARTICLE II - DISCIPLINE

The following Scripture references have been used in formulating this Article:

- Matthew 18:15-17
- Titus 3:10
- 2 Peter 2:1
- Ephesians 5:11
- 1 Timothy 5:19-21
- 1 Corinthians 5:1-13
- Romans 16:17

Section 1 Definitions

1. **Discipline:** The term discipline as used in this Article and throughout these By-Laws refers to the method of correction for problems in the church body. It is a procedure including Christian teaching, training, admonition and/or rebuke (both public and private), with a view to helping the individual Christian to grow spiritually in the faith and to throw off unchristian attitudes and practices.
2. **Sin:** Sin is disobedience to God (Gen. 3; 4; 11). Sin is not limited to, although it includes, the breaking of the literal Ten Commandments. Any act that is in disobedience to the will of God as declared in His Word, or which is detrimental to the honor and glory of God because of disobedience, is sin.
3. **Attitude for Discipline:** An attitude of prayer, love, patience, calmness, and understanding shall be the undergirding factors in all matters of church discipline, regardless of the nature of the difficulty or violation.

Section 2 Matters Requiring Discipline

A member of this church shall be subject to church discipline for:

1. Differences between individuals. The order given in Matthew 18:16 shall be followed to resolve disharmony between members.
2. Heresy. Members who hold and/or persistently propagate false doctrine shall be subject to church discipline.
3. Public sin. Members found walking disorderly in a manner unbecoming to disciples of Christ shall be subject to disciplinary action after careful consideration by the Board of Elders.

4. Attitude toward the Local Church. For treating the acts and decisions of the church contemptuously or pursuing such a course which produces division.

Section 3 Procedure for Discipline

The Board of Elders is responsible to see that discipline is administered in true love, patience and understanding with a calm spirit. The principles and steps laid down in Matthew 18:15-17 will be followed as a guide in all matters requiring church discipline.

Disciplinary Actions:

1. A member under discipline may not:
 - a. Hold office in the church
 - b. Vote in church meetings
 - c. Otherwise hold positions of leadership or teaching within the church's activities or ministries.
 - d. Other disciplinary measures may be taken at the discretion of the Board of Elders according to the Scriptures.

2. Disfellowship

If a member in question neglects to hear the church (Matt 18:17) and refuses to repent (turn from their sin) and a proper solution in line with the Scriptures and the church's faith and practice still cannot be worked out, the Board of Elders must agree by a unanimous vote that the member who is found guilty of the violation will be dismissed. If the member in question is also an Elder, the vote must be unanimous excepting the subject Elder. The member in question shall be provided with notice of the meeting of the Board of Elders at which the vote will be held at least 10 days in advance of the same, and shall have the opportunity to be present and heard at the meeting.

3. Restoration

Disfellowshipped members may be restored to membership upon recommendation of the Board of Elders if there is satisfactory evidence of a genuine repentance.

ARTICLE III - CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1 Introduction

All duly elected officers of SBC must be members of the church. They are to remain within the boundaries of authority placed upon them by the Holy Scriptures, this Constitution and By-Laws, and the church body. Each Officer and Board shall submit a report to be available at each regularly scheduled business meeting.

Section 2 Pastors

1. Qualifications

The Senior Pastor is both an “at will employee” and “leader” of the church. He is an Elder, Deacon and Member of the church. He is to be an appropriately educated, ordained and experienced professional prepared by God for the successful execution of his significant and complex responsibilities. As such, he is expected to be capable of taking initiative. He is expected, at all times, to exercise wise judgment while having the best interests and spiritual well-being of the church at heart, as reflected in all his decisions and actions.

He is required to be a “Believer” as defined in the Bible and hold to the Doctrinal Statement of the SBC Constitution and By-laws, as well as its Covenants, and to maintain the church in full compliance with the requirements of the Bible as well as federal, state and local laws. He is to be the official representative of the church in a manner that brings glory to God, consistent with the simple majority of the Elders’ interpretation, understanding and application of Holy Scripture.

He is expected and required to devote necessary time and resource to the maintenance and further development of his personal spiritual life (study/prayer), responsibilities and relationships with his immediate family, and his own health and rest.

He is accountable to the SBC Board of Elders (see Article IV, Section 1 of these By-Laws). His tenure with the church is indefinite upon his acceptance of a call to ministry.

2. Duties

The Senior Pastor, along with the other Elders, will monitor all preaching, teaching and group activities at SBC, ensuring their faithfulness to the Word of God, consistent with the simple majority of the Elders’ interpretation, understanding and application of Holy Scripture.

The Senior Pastor will set an exemplary standard of excellence in ministry, integrity and commitment to God and to the local church body, serving and offering beyond “minimum requirements.” He is to give offerings of not less than 10% of his gross compensation toward the SBC general fund.

The Senior Pastor, along with the other Elders, will facilitate the development of a church Vision and Ministry Direction, including the planning for and the execution thereof. He will lead and assist the church in preparing a responsible plan for ministry and the associated budget for its execution. He will assist the Board of Trustees in the supervision of the budget and expense control.

The Senior Pastor, along with the other Elders, will evaluate and encourage his own spiritual growth and development, as well as that of the congregation, and will participate in regular discipleship, both being discipled and discipling others.

The Senior Pastor will exercise oversight and management of all ministries of the church and its employees.

3. Public Worship Services

The Senior Pastor will conduct the primary worship services for the congregation, which should include expository verse-by-verse preaching, teaching and exhortation. His preaching should include the full counsel of the Holy Scriptures.

The Senior Pastor will conduct special services, as he is led by the Holy Spirit, that he believes are required (communion, baptisms, marriages, dedications, memorials/funerals, ordinations, holiday services, etc.).

The Senior Pastor will conduct or provide for additional regular services, as he is led by the Holy Spirit, that he believes are necessary (evening, mid-week, etc.).

The Senior Pastor will conduct or provide for Bible studies, seminars, and/or retreats, as he is led by the Holy Spirit, that he believes are beneficial.

4. Pastoral

The Senior Pastor is responsible for promoting an environment conducive to biblical fellowship, constructive feedback and safety with the staff, the Church Boards, existing members, the congregation as a whole and visitors.

The Senior Pastor is responsible for communicating with the congregation and the Church Boards regarding issues pertinent to each.

The Senior Pastor will provide spiritual counseling as able, when needed, upon request, and/or to assure adherence to membership standards. He will provide visitation as necessary.

The Senior Pastor, along with the other Elders, has the responsibility for teaching, counseling and encouraging others toward the standards of the Membership Covenant.

The Senior Pastor will maintain office hours convenient to the church body and availability for meetings convenient to meeting participants. He will actively participate in/lead evangelism efforts of the church.

The Senior Pastor is a member of the Church Board of Elders with voting privileges. He is a non-presiding, ex-officio member, of all Church Boards and committees.

5. Call, Compensation, and Termination

The Senior Pastor shall be called upon a unanimous recommendation of the current Board of Elders and by 3/4 (three-fourths) majority vote of members present and voting at a legally called meeting, provided that a quorum of 66% (sixty-six percent, or two-thirds) of the active membership is present at the meeting.

A compensation plan will be presented to the Senior Pastor at his call. The terms of employment, including compensation, shall be subject to annual review on or around each anniversary of his employment. It shall be the duty of the Church Board of Elders to review the financial needs of the Senior Pastor and to make appropriate recommendations for the Senior Pastor's salary to the Board of Trustees when creating the annual budget.

Employment may be terminated by either party upon three months prior written notice with or without cause, and may be terminated at any time by a unanimous decision by the SBC Board of Elders (not including the Senior Pastor) for cause without notice.

Section 3 Elders

1. Qualifications

An Elder shall be a man in full communion with the church, of mature judgment, unquestioned Christian character, and loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ, striving to fulfill the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:2-13 and Acts 6:1-7. He is expected, at all times, to exercise wise judgment while having the best interests and spiritual well-being of the church at heart, as reflected in all of his decisions and actions.

He is required to be a "Believer" as defined in the Bible and to hold to the Declaration of Faith of this Constitution and By-laws, and to maintain the church in full compliance with the requirements of the Bible as well as federal, state and local laws, to the best of his knowledge and ability.

He is directly accountable to God and is mutually accountable to the Church Board of Elders.

2. Duties

- The Elder will be capable of and is responsible for establishing, preserving and/or correcting the doctrine of the church in accordance with the Holy Bible, both Old and New Testaments.
- He will be capable of and may serve as a teacher and discipler in the congregation, encouraging the spiritual growth of members.
- He will be capable of and is required to protect the church from apostasy and apathy, and acts as an under-shepherd of Jesus Christ.
- He is to provide both spiritual counsel and discipline, as requested or required, to the members of the church.
- He is responsible for promoting an environment conducive to intimacy, constructive feedback, and safety with the Pastor, staff, Church Boards, congregation, and visitors, while holding a high respect for confidentiality. This applies to all age groups.
- He is to communicate with the congregation and the Church Boards respective to issues pertinent to each.
- He, along with the other Elders, is to use the qualifications for the Pastor as set forth in Article III, Section 2 to provide an annual review for the Pastor.

- He, along with the other Elders, is to examine all applicants for membership as set forth in Article I, Section 1.
- He is to provide visitation as necessary.
- He is to maintain reasonable availability and accessibility to the church body.
- He is to maintain reasonable availability for meetings.
- He is to serve the church in an area(s) of specialty, according to his call by God.
- He serves as a voting member of the Church Board of Elders. His term of office is indefinite.

3. Nomination, Confirmation, and Tenure

The current Board of Elders shall, after reaching unanimous agreement, submit nominations for all new Elders to the congregation. The Board of Elders must first approach the potential candidate and give him sufficient time to make a prayerful decision. Upon receiving the candidate's assent, the Board of Elders shall then present his nomination to the congregation for their evaluation at least three weeks prior to the formal vote in writing, which writing may be satisfied by electronic communication. At the appointed time of the congregational meeting, the candidate must be confirmed by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. Confirmation or denial of Elders shall be by secret ballot.

Provided the Elder meets all biblical requirements for service in that capacity, there are no required, or defined, limits on an Elder's term of office. Any Elder may resign effective upon giving written notice to the Board of Elders. Any Elder may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Elders if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture, including 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9), after thorough corroborating investigation by the Elders in accord with the procedures prescribed by Scripture, including Matthew 18:15–18 and 1 Timothy 5:19. The vote for removal must be unanimous among the Board of Elders, excepting the subject Elder.

Section 4 Deacons and Deaconesses

1. Qualifications

The Deacons and Deaconesses (together, the "Diaconate Board") are "servants" of the church. They will be spiritually mature men and women in full communion with the church, of unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Lord Jesus, and holding the highest degree of scriptural admonition to men and women (1 Tim. 3:8-13; Eph. 5:22-33; Titus 2:2-5).

They are expected, at all times, to exercise wise judgment while having the best interests of and spiritual well-being of the church at heart, as reflected in all of their decisions and actions. They are required to be a "Believer" as defined in the Bible and to hold to the Doctrinal Statement of this Constitution and By-laws, as well as its Covenants.

2. Election

The members of the Diaconate Board shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church

for a three-year term so arranged that as nearly as possible, a third of the number shall be chosen each year.

3. Duties

The members of the Diaconate Board shall serve under the supervision of the Elder Board, supporting the ministry goals they have established. The Diaconate Board shall serve the local church body through visitation, prayers, and comfort and encouragement from God's Word. They shall see that the sick, the sorrowing, the aged, the impaired, widows, and orphans receive spiritual and physical comfort. They shall be on the lookout for opportunities to minister and serve, especially to those who are of the body of Christ. When the Diaconate Board becomes aware of special concerns or needs in the church body, these must be reported to the Board of Elders. The ministry of the Deaconesses shall primarily be to the women of the church.

The Deacons and the Deaconesses shall each choose a chairman from among their members. The chairman shall be appointed through simple majority vote by the Deacons or Deaconesses respectively. The Diaconate Board, under the supervision of the Board of Elders, will be responsible for the Diaconate Fund. This fund shall be used primarily for the relief of the needy in the church family. The fund may also be utilized for special projects. The Pastor and Pastor's wife are ex officio members of their respective Boards.

Section 5 Moderator

The Moderator shall be elected annually. In the Moderator's absence, the Clerk shall call the body to order and a Moderator Pro-Tem shall be elected (from the Church Board of Elders if possible). It is the Moderator's responsibility to call for prayer if unity is not evident in a meeting. It is also the Moderator's duty to see that the meeting be opened in prayer. He should be familiar with *Robert's Rules of Order*. The Moderator shall be the President of the Corporation.

Section 6 Clerk and Assistant Clerk

The Clerk, elected at the annual meeting of the church to serve one (1) year, shall keep a suitable record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The Clerk shall keep a record of the names of members with dates of admission, dismissal or death, together with a record of baptisms. He or she shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the Church Board of Elders, preserve on file all communications and written official reports and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary as indicated by these By-Laws. He or she, along with the Church Board of Elders, shall review the church roll annually before the annual church business meeting. He or she shall notify all officers, members of boards, and members of committees of their election or appointment. The Clerk shall consider that a part of his or her responsibility is to promote loyalty and efficiency in church life. In the absence of the Clerk, an Assistant Clerk, appointed by the Church Board of Elders, shall fulfill these duties.

Section 7 Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

The Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church to serve one (1) year. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to pay all orders drawn by order of the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall keep a true and fair book of accounts, and at the said meeting for business in January, shall report to the church a statement of the monies so received and accounts paid. An auditor(s) shall examine the records with the necessary vouchers prior to said meeting. A financial statement shall be presented by the Treasurer to the Board of Trustees monthly. He or she shall deliver immediately to his or her successor all books and records pertaining to the office. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer shall fulfill these duties.

Section 8 Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church to serve one (1) year. The Financial Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all church offerings and credit each contribution to each giver by name. He or she shall render annual statements to each giver. He or she shall not disclose the giving record of any member or attendee, except to the Church Board of Elders, at their discretion, and to the annual auditor(s). He or she shall deliver immediately to his or her successor all books and records in his or her possession. In the absence of the Financial Secretary, the Assistant Financial Secretary shall fulfill his or her duties.

ARTICLE IV – BOARDS/COMMITTEES OF THE CHURCH

Section 1 Board of Elders

The Church Board of Elders shall consist of all the duly confirmed elders of SBC. The Church Board of Elders governs all Spiritual matters regarding the life of the church. The Church Board of Elders will consist of not less than three Elders including the Senior Pastor.

A simple majority of the Elders are the highest and final court of appeals for all issues of faith and life and the authoritative source for the interpretation, understanding, and application of Holy Scripture. When the Elders arrive at binding decisions regarding faith and life, especially in the areas of the exercise of discipline within the church, they are to do so in plurality and parity.

The Church Board of Elders will facilitate the development of a church Vision and Ministry Direction, as well as the planning for and the execution thereof. The Church Board of Elders will review, approve, and appoint all ministries and their respective leaders.

The Church Board of Elders will serve as the Nominating/Election Committee, the Membership Committee, and the Licensing/Ordination Committee.

The Church Board of Elders may utilize any resources it deems appropriate (internal to the

membership of the church or external) in assisting it in the execution of its responsibilities; however, it must retain oversight of the activities of the resource and cannot grant to the resource the ultimate authority/power with which it has been entrusted.

Section 2 Board of Trustees

The Church Board of Trustees shall consist of all the duly elected Trustees of SBC. The Church Board of Trustees governs all Business matters of the church. The Church Board of Trustees shall not consist of fewer than three members. The Trustees shall be elected at the annual business meeting for a three-year term of office, so arranged that as nearly as possible, a third of the number shall be chosen each year, without limit to the number of successive terms they may serve. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary will have the privilege of attending Trustee meetings.

The Board of Trustees will develop, update and administer the Annual Church Budget. The Board of Trustees shall hold in trust all properties belonging to the church, and shall take all necessary measures for its protection, management, and upkeep. It will have no power to buy, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without specific vote of the church. Any unbudgeted expenditure greater than 1% of the annual church budget shall require prior church approval except in the case of an emergency where such approval would be impracticable. The Board of Trustees is empowered to exchange budgeted funds between categories not greater than 5% of the annual church budget per occurrence. Notification will be provided to the congregation for significant changes.

All bills authorized by the church budget shall be paid by the Treasurer with Board oversight. The Board of Trustees shall designate the bank where the funds of the church shall be deposited. It shall, when so instructed by the church, secure secretarial services, custodial services, and an organist at such salaries as are authorized by the church, and secure from them acceptable service. It shall perform other duties as are imposed upon it by the church and the local/state/federal governments.

Meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held regularly. The Board shall elect its own chairman and secretary at the first Trustee meeting following the Annual Meeting of the church. A quorum of the Church Board of Trustees is required to conduct official church business. A majority shall constitute a quorum. Decisions of the Board of Trustees are rendered by a two-thirds majority.

The Board shall annually appoint an auditor(s) of accounts. It shall be the duty of the auditor(s) to examine carefully the accounts and records of the church at the close of the church year prior to the annual meeting, and they shall certify the same.

Trustees are prohibited from voting on any issue with which they have a conflict of interest.

The Board of Trustees may utilize any resources it deems appropriate (internal to the membership of the church or external) in assisting it in the execution of its responsibilities; however, it must retain oversight of the activities of the resource and cannot grant to the resource

the ultimate authority/power with which it has been entrusted.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

Section 1 Worship

1. Public worship services shall be held on the Lord's Day.
2. Mid-week services may be held for the purpose of prayer, praise and Bible Study.
3. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at regular intervals as the Church Board of Elders may designate.
4. Due to special circumstances the Church Board of Elders may alter temporarily any of the above meetings.

Section 2 Business Meetings

1. The church fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31; the annual budget will run from January 1 through December 31. All committees and officers shall remain in office until their successors are duly elected. The church shall continue to operate on the previous year's budget until the Annual Meeting.
2. The Annual Meeting of this church shall be held each year in the month of January or as early as reasonable as directed by the Board of Trustees. At this meeting, annual reports shall be received, annual budgets shall be voted upon, the officers of the church shall be elected, and other business transactions as may be specified in the notice or authorized in the By-Laws may be conducted.
3. Special Meetings may be called by the Church Board of Elders or by written request of ten (10) members of eighteen years of age or over, and of good standing. Only such business as is specified in the notice can be transacted during that Special Meeting.
4. Notice of meetings: All regular and special meetings shall be communicated to the membership of the Church at least two (2) weeks preceding the meeting and such communication must state the purpose of the meeting. The notice shall also be posted in a conspicuous place on church property at least fourteen (14) days prior.
5. Quorum. Twenty-five percent of the active membership of the church shall constitute a quorum.
6. All elections and decisions shall be determined by simple majority vote unless otherwise specified.
7. Qualifications for voting: all active members of the church, in good and regular

standing, eighteen years of age and over, shall be eligible to vote at all regular business meetings. Absentee ballots will be permitted when authorized by the Church Board of Elders.

ARTICLE VI - FINANCES

Section 1 Policy

The Scriptures are the sole authority of the financial policy of this church. Only Scriptural methods of raising monies are allowed. Inasmuch as tithes and offerings are commanded of every believer, all members are encouraged to bring them into this church, God's storehouse (Mal. 3:10; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8, 9; Acts 4:34-35).

ARTICLE VII - GENERAL

Section 1 Will of the Church

In order to maintain biblical unity, when the church by a vote has expressed itself and is not in conflict with the Bible, this Constitution and By-Laws, nor with the Religious Corporation Laws of the State of New Hampshire, the will of the church shall be carried out in full by all officers, committees, organizations and members.

Section 2 Ordination

SBC shall have the authority to ordain duly qualified men to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When there is a prospective candidate for ordination to the ministry, the Church Board of Elders shall guide that person in his studies and preparation. It shall then call a council of elders and brethren to examine the qualifications of the candidate. It shall look into the soundness of his conversion, the godliness of his walk, the degree of his gifts, the extent of his training, and the blessing of God upon his labors for Christ. If the council heartily recommends that the candidate be ordained, the Church Board of Elders will give the recommended commissioning at a congregational meeting.

Section 3 Fiscal Year

SBC shall operate on a fiscal year at the discretion of the Board of Elders, which may be changed from time to time for any legitimate purpose.

Section 4 Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended by any annual or special meeting provided that a quorum of 50% (fifty percent) of the active membership is present. The notice for the proposed amendment(s) shall be given at least four (4) weeks prior to the annual meeting or the special meeting. The notice shall include the language of the proposed amendment(s). To amend the By-Laws, a simple majority of those present and voting is required. The amended By-Laws go into effect when adopted by the Church.

Section 5 Dissolution of the Corporation

If the issue of the dissolution of SBC arises, the Elders must call a special meeting for all church members, for discussion and the sharing of information. This meeting must be held a minimum of 45 days before a vote for dissolution is taken by the Board of Elders. SBC may be dissolved only by a unanimous affirmative vote by the Board of Elders.

Upon dissolution, after provision is made for payment of debts, the assets will be distributed only to other charitable and religious corporations which enjoy an exempt status for tax purposes under the then current provision of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States and state as their belief the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.

Section 6 Indemnification

SBC shall, to the extent legally permissible, indemnify each person who may serve or who has served at any time as a Trustee, Elder, Officer, Director or employee of the church against all expenses, liabilities, claims or judgments reasonably incurred by or imposed upon such person in connection with any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding in which he or she shall become involved by reason of his or her service in such capacity; provided that no indemnification shall be provided for any such person with respect to any matter as to which he or she shall have been finally adjudicated in any proceeding not to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that such action was in the best interests of the church; and further provided that any compromise or settlement payment shall be approved by a majority vote of a quorum of Trustees who are not at that time parties to the proceeding.

[CERTIFICATION AND SIGNATURE PAGE TO FOLLOW]

CERTIFICATION

The within Constitution, By-Laws and Appendices, together supersede any prior Constitution and By-Laws of the SBC and any church action heretofore conducted.

Amended by vote of the church on _____ A.D.

Courtney Timmins
Church Clerk (Corporate Secretary)

Appendix A

Revision History

<u>Date</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
August 2022	<p>New Declaration of Faith to indicate the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689 is used in its entirety as our statement of faith (re: amendment passed in February 2011):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Constitution Article III – Declaration of Faith</p> <p>Rewriting of all pertinent sections regarding Elder rule of SBC (re: amendment passed in February 2011):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Constitution Article V – Form of Government</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">By-Laws Article III – Church Officers, Section 2 – Pastors</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">By-Laws Article III – Church Officers, Section 3 – Elders</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">By-Laws Article III – Church Officers, Section 4 – Deacons and Deaconesses</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">By-Laws Article IV – Boards/Committees of the Church, Section 1 – Board of Elders</p> <p>Clarify language, improve consistency, and revise as indicated:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Constitution Article II – Purpose: new purpose statement to give a comprehensive explanation of the goals and purposes of SBC</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Constitution Preamble and Constitution Article I – Name, Organization and Incorporation, Section 3 - Incorporation: clarification of SBC’s status as a nonprofit religious organization</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Constitution Article IX and By-Laws Article VII, Section 4: revised quorum and process for amending the Constitution and By-Laws</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">By-Laws Article V – Meetings, Section 1 – Worship and Section 2 – Business Meetings: revision to update sections to account for current church practices</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">By-Laws Article VII – General, Section 3 – Fiscal Year and Section 5 – Dissolution of the Corporation: clarification regarding legal procedures and protection for the church</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">By-Laws Article I – Membership, Section 1 – Qualifications: clarify active members must be eighteen years of age</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">By-Laws Article I – Membership, Section 5 – Dismissal: clarification of the role of the Board of Elders in the dismissal process</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">By-Laws Article II – Discipline, Section 2 – Matters Requiring Discipline and Section 3 – Procedure for Discipline: clarification of the role of the Board of Elders in the discipline process</p>

By-Laws Article IV – Boards/Committees of the Church, Section 2 – Board of Trustees: revision to update section to account for current church practices

By-Laws Article III – Church Officers, Section 5 – Moderator: revision to update section to account for current church practices

By-Laws Article III – Church Officers, Section 6 – Clerk and Assistant Clerk: revision to update section to account for current church practices

By-Laws Article III – Church Officers, Section 7 – Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer: revision to update section to account for current church practices

By-Laws Article III – Church Officers, Section 8 – Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary: revision to update section to account for current church practices

By-Laws Article VII – General, Section 2 – Ordination: removal of reference to licensing ministers; revision to update section to account for current church practices

Add sections:

By-Laws Article VII – General, Section 6 – Indemnification

By-Laws Article I – Membership, Section 2 – Associate Members

Remove sections:

Constitution Article VI - Officers

By-Laws Article VI - Finances, Section 2 – System

By-Laws Article II – Church Officers, Section 10 – Board of Christian Education

By-Laws Article II – Church Officers, Section 11 – Board of Missions

By-Laws Article IV – Committees, Section 1 – Nominating Committee

By-Laws Article IV – Committees, Section 2 – Church Budget Committee

By-Laws Article IV – Committees, Section 3 – Pulpit Committee

By-Laws Article IV – Committees, Section 4 – Social Committee

By-Laws Article VII – General, Section 1 – Organizations

By-Laws Article VII – General, Section 2 – Pastor’s Salary, Benefits and Vacation Policies

January 2010

Clarify language, improve consistency, and revise as indicated:

By-Laws Article III – Church Officers, Section 11 – Board of Missions: eliminate self-determined designated giving to support specific ministry areas of the church

By-Laws Article 1 – Membership, Section 4 – Dismissal: revised the established committee for revising the membership roll

By-Laws Article V – Meetings, Section 2 – Business Meetings: correct required quorum and make provision for absentee ballots

By-Laws Article III – Church Officers, Sections 3, 4, 9, 10, and 11: elimination of the requirement for a maximum number of terms for leadership

By-Laws Article III – Church Officers, Sections 3 and 4: Deacons and Deaconesses to be responsible for the disbursement of the Deacons' Fund

By-Laws Article III – Church Officers, Section 9 – Board of Trustees: new maximum limits for budget items; Board of Trustees required to have approval for exceeding these limits

By-Laws Article IV – Committees, Section 4 – Social Committee: new minimum required number of individuals on the Social Committee

By-Laws Article VII – General, Section 2: deleted to indicate removal of affiliation with Faith Christian Academy

November 1998

Constitution Article IX – Affiliation: affiliation change from American Baptist Church of the USA to an autonomous and self-governing church

By-Laws Article VII – General, Section 7: elimination of the need to appoint delegates to the ABC convention and meetings

Appendix B
Second London Baptist Confession of 1689

To The Judicial and Impartial Reader

Courteous Reader: It is now many years since divers of us (with other sober Christians then living, and walking in the way of the Lord, that we profess) did conceive ourselves to be under a necessity of publishing a Confession, of our Faith, for the information and satisfaction of those that did not thoroughly understand what our principles were, or had entertained prejudices against our profession, by reason of the strange representation of them by some men of note who had taken very wrong measures, and accordingly led others into misapprehension of us and them. And this was first put forth about the year 1643, in the name of seven congregations then gathered in London; since which time divers impressions thereof have been dispersed abroad, and our end proposed in good measure answered, inasmuch as many (and some of those men eminent both for piety and learning) were thereby satisfied that we were no way guilty of those heterodoxies and fundamental errors which had too frequently been charged upon us without ground or occasion given on our part.

And forasmuch as that Confession is not now commonly to be had, and also that many others have since embraced the same truth which is owned therein, it was judged necessary by us to join together in giving a testimony to the world of our firm adhering to those wholesome principles by the publication of this which is now in your hand. And forasmuch as our method and manner of expressing our sentiments in this doth vary from the former (although the substance of this matter is the same), we shall freely impart to you the reason and occasion thereof. One thing that greatly prevailed with us to undertake this work was (not only to give a full account of ourselves to those Christians that differ from us about the subject of baptism, but also) the profit that might from thence arise unto those that have any account of our labors in their instruction and establishment in the great truths of the Gospel, in the clear understanding and steady belief of which our comfortable walking with God, and fruitfulness before Him in all our ways, is most nearly concerned; and therefore we did conclude it necessary to express ourselves the more fully and distinctly; and also to fix on such a method as might be most comprehensive of those things we designed to explain our sense and belief of; and finding no defect in this regard in that fixed on by the Assembly, and, after them by those of the congregational way, we did readily conclude it best to retain the same order in our present Confession; and also when we observed that those last mentioned did in their Confessions (for reasons which seemed of weight both to themselves and others) choose not only to express their mind in words concurrent with the former in sense concerning all those articles wherein they were agreed, but also for the most part without any variation of the terms, we did in like manner conclude it best to follow their example in making use of the very same words with them both in these articles (which are very many) wherein our faith and doctrine are the same with theirs; and this we did the more abundantly to manifest our consent with both in all the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, as also with many others whose orthodox Confessions have been published to the world on the behalf of the Protestant in diverse nations and cities. And also to convince all that we have no itch to clog religion with new words, but do readily acquiesce in that form of sound words which hath been, in consent with the Holy Scriptures, used by others before us; hereby declaring, before God,

angels, and men, our hearty agreement with them in that wholesome Protestant doctrine which, with so clear evidence of Scriptures, they have asserted. Some things, indeed, are in some places added, some terms omitted, and some few changed; but these alterations are of that nature as that we need not doubt any charge or suspicion of unsoundness in the faith from any of our brethren upon the account of them.

In those things wherein we differ from others we have expressed ourselves with all candor and plainness, that none might entertain jealousy of aught secretly lodged in our breasts that we would not the world should be acquainted with; yet we hope we have also observed those rules of modesty and humility as will render our freedom in this respect inoffensive, even to those whose sentiments are different from ours.

We have also taken care to affix texts of Scripture at the bottom, for the confirmation of each article in our Confession; in which work we have studiously endeavored to select such as are most clear and pertinent for the proof of what is asserted by us; and our earnest desire is that all into whose hands this may come would follow that (never enough commended) example of the noble Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily that they might find out whether the things preached to them were so or not.

There is one thing more which we sincerely profess and earnestly desire credence in - viz., that contention is most remote from our design in all that we have done in this matter; and we hope that the liberty of an ingenuous unfolding our principles and opening our hearts unto our brethren, with the Scripture grounds of our faith and practice will by none of them be either denied to us, or taken ill from us. Our whole design is accomplished if we may have attained that justice as to be measured in our principles and practice, and the judgment of both by others, according to what we have now published, which the Lord (whose eyes are as a flame of fire) knoweth to be the doctrine which with our hearts we most firmly believe and sincerely endeavor to conform our lives to. And O that, other contentions being laid asleep, the only care and contention of all upon whom the name of our blessed Redeemer is called might for the future be to walk humbly with their God in the exercise of all love and meekness toward each other, to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, each one endeavoring to have his conversation such as becometh the gospel; and also, suitable to his place and capacity, vigorously to promote in others the practice of true religion and undefiled in the sight of God our Father! And that in this backsliding day we might not spend our breath in fruitless complaints of the evils of others, but may every one begin at home, to reform in the first place our own hearts and ways, and then to quicken all that we may have influence upon to the same work, that if the will of God were so, none might deceive themselves by resting in and trusting to a form of godliness without the power of it, and inward experience of the efficacy of those truths that are professed by them.

And verily there is one spring and cause of the decay of religion in our day which we cannot but touch upon and earnestly urge a redress of, and that is the neglect of the worship of God in families by those to whom the charge and conduct of them is committed. May not the gross ignorance and instability of many, with the profaneness of others, be justly charged upon their parents and masters, who have not trained them up in the way wherein they ought to walk when they were young, but have neglected those frequent and solemn commands which the Lord hath laid upon them, so to catechise and instruct them that their tender years might be seasoned with the knowledge of the truth of God as revealed in the Scriptures; and also by their own omission

of prayer and other duties of religion of their families, together with the ill example of their loose conversation, having, inured them first to a neglect and the contempt of all piety and religion? We know this will not excuse the blindness and wickedness of any, but certainly it will fall heavy upon those that have been thus the occasion thereof; they indeed die in their sins, but will not their blood be required of those under whose care they were, who yet permitted them to go on without warning - yea, led them into the paths of destruction? And will not the diligence of Christians with respect to the discharge of these duties in ages past rise up in judgment against and condemn many of those who would be esteemed such now?

We shall conclude with our earnest prayer that the God of all grace will pour out those measures of His Holy Spirit upon us, that the profession of truth may be accompanied with the sound belief and diligent practice of it by us, that His name may in all things be glorified through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WE the MINISTERS and MESSENGERS of and concerned for upwards of one hundred baptized congregations in England and Wales (denying Arminianism), being met together in London, from the third of the seventh month to the eleventh of the same, 1689, to consider of some things that might be for the glory of God, and the good of these congregations, have thought meet (for the satisfaction of all other Christians that differ from us in the point of Baptism) to recommend to their perusal the confession of our faith, which confession we own, as containing the doctrine of our faith and practice, and do desire that the members of our churches respectively do furnish themselves therewith,

<i>Hanserd Knollys</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Broken Wharf</i>	<i>London</i>
<i>William Kiffin</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Devonshire-square</i>	<i>London</i>
<i>John Harris</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Joiner's Hall</i>	<i>London</i>
<i>William Collins</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Petty France</i>	<i>London</i>
<i>Hercules Collins</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Wapping</i>	<i>London</i>
<i>Robert Steed</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Broken Wharf</i>	<i>London</i>
<i>Leonard Harrison</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Limehouse</i>	<i>London</i>
<i>George Barret</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Mile End Green</i>	<i>London</i>
<i>Isaac Lamb</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Pennington-street</i>	<i>London</i>
<i>Richard Adams</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Shad Thames</i>	<i>Southwark</i>
<i>Benjamin Keath</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Horse-lie-down</i>	<i>Southwark</i>
<i>Andrew Gifford</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Bristol, Fryars</i>	<i>Som. & Glouc.</i>
<i>Thomas Vaux</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Broadmead</i>	<i>Som. & Glouc.</i>
<i>Thomas Winnel</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Taunton</i>	<i>Som. & Glouc.</i>
<i>James Hitt</i>	<i>Preacher</i>	<i>Dalwood</i>	<i>Dorset</i>
<i>Richard Tidmarsh</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Oxford City</i>	<i>Osen</i>
<i>William Facey</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Berks</i>
<i>Samuel Buttel</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>	<i>Devon</i>
<i>Christopher Price</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Abergavenny</i>	<i>Monmouth</i>
<i>Daniel Finch</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Kingsworth</i>	<i>Herts</i>
<i>John Ball</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Tiverton</i>	<i>Devon</i>

<i>Edmond White</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Evershall</i>	<i>Bedford</i>
<i>William Pritchard</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Blaenau</i>	<i>Monmouth</i>
<i>Paul Fruin</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Warwick</i>	<i>Warwick</i>
<i>Richard Ring</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Southampton</i>	<i>Hants</i>
<i>John Tompkins</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Abingdon</i>	<i>Berks</i>
<i>Toby Willes</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Bridewater</i>	<i>Somerset</i>
<i>John Carter</i>		<i>Steventon</i>	<i>Bedford</i>
<i>James Webb</i>		<i>Devizes</i>	<i>Wilts.</i>
<i>Richard Sutton</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Tring</i>	<i>Herts</i>
<i>Robert Knight</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Stukeley</i>	<i>Bucks</i>
<i>Edward Price</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Hereford-City</i>	<i>Hereford</i>
<i>William Phipps</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Exon</i>	<i>Devon</i>
<i>William Hankins</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Dimmock</i>	<i>Gloucester</i>
<i>Samuel Ewer</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Hemstead</i>	<i>Herts</i>
<i>Edward Man</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Houndsditch</i>	<i>London</i>
<i>Charles Archer</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Hick-Norton</i>	<i>Oxon</i>

CONFESSION

of

FAITH

Put forth by the

ELDERS and BRETHREN

of many

CONGREGATIONS

of

Christians

(baptized upon Profession of their faith)

in London and the Country.

With the Heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto
Salvation, Rom. 10:10.

Search the Scriptures, John 5:39.

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Chapter 1: Of the Holy Scriptures

1. The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible¹ rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, although the ²light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary unto salvation.³ Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto⁴ writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.

(¹2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29, 31; Ephesians 2:20; ²Romans 1:19-21; Romans 2:14, 15; Psalms 19:1-3; ³Hebrews 1:1; ⁴Proverbs 22:19-21; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19, 20)

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

Of the Old Testament.

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

Of the New Testament.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, To Titus, To Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second, and third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation. All of which are given by the⁵ inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.

(⁵2 Timothy 3:16)

3. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of⁶ divine inspiration, are no part of the canon (or rule) of the Scripture, and, therefore, are of no authority to the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings.

(⁶Luke 24:27, 44; Romans 3:2)

4. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon⁷ God who is truth itself, the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

(⁷2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:9)

5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church of God to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole which is to give all glory to God, the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet not withstanding, our⁸ full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

(⁸John 16:13, 14; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20, 27)

6. The whole counsel of God concerning all things⁹ necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge the¹¹ inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be¹² ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

(⁹2 Timothy 3:15-17; Galatians 1:8, 9; ¹¹John 6:45; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12; ¹²1 Corinthians 11:13, 14; 1 Corinthians 14:26, 40)

7. All things in Scripture are not alike¹³ plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so¹⁴ clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.

(¹³2 Peter 3:16; ¹⁴Psalms 19:7; Psalms 119:130)

8. The Old Testament in¹⁵ Hebrew which was the native language of the people of God of old, and the New Testament in Greek which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations, being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore¹⁶ authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them¹⁷. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read¹⁸ and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they¹⁹ come, that the Word of God dwelling²⁰ plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

(¹⁵Romans 3:2; ¹⁶Isaiah 8:20; ¹⁷Acts 15:15; ¹⁸John 5:39; ¹⁹1 Corinthians 14:6, 9, 11, 12, 24, 28; ²⁰Colossians 3:16)

9. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the²¹ Scripture itself; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture which is not manifold, but one, it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly.

(²¹2 Peter 1:20, 21; Acts 15:15, 16)

10. The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which²¹ Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.

(²¹Matthew 22:29, 31, 32; Ephesians 2:20; Acts 28:23)

Chapter 2: Of God and of the Holy Trinity

1. The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of Himself, infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, and withal most just and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

(1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 48:12; Exodus 3:14; John 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 4:15, 16; Malachi 3:6; 1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23; Psalms 90:2; Genesis 17:1; Isaiah 6:3; Psalms 115:3; Isaiah 46:10; Proverbs 16:4; Romans 11:36; Exodus 34:6, 7; Hebrews 11:6; Nehemiah 9:32, 33; Psalms 5:5, 6; Exodus 34:7; Nahum 1:2, 3)

2. God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself, is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creature which He hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, and He hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever Himself pleaseth; in His sight all things are open and manifest, His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent or uncertain; He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands; to Him is due from angels and men, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, as creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever He is further pleased to require of them.

(John 5:26; Psalms 148:13; Psalms 119:68; Job 22:2, 3; Romans 11:34-36; Daniel 4:25, 34, 35; Hebrews 4:13; Ezekiel 11:5; Acts 15:18; Psalms 145:17; Revelation 5:12-14)

3. In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on Him.

(1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Exodus 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:14, 18; John 15:26; Galatians 4:6)

Chapter 3: Of God's Decree

1. God hath decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established; in which appears His wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.

(Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9:15, 18; James 1:13; John 1:5; Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11; Numbers 23:19; Ephesians 1:3-5)

2. Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet hath He not decreed anything, because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

(Acts 15:18; Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18)

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice.

(1 Timothy 5:21; Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:5, 6; Romans 9:22, 23; Jude 4)

4. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

(2 Timothy 2:19; John 13:18)

5. Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and

good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto.

(Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11; Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Romans 9:13, 16; Ephesians 2:5, 12)

Chapter 4: Of Creation

1. In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

(John 1:2, 3; Hebrews 1:2; Job 26:13; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:31)

2. After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, rendering them fit unto that life to God for which they were created; being made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change.

(Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 1:26; Romans 2:14, 15; Genesis 3:6)

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

(Genesis 2:17; Genesis 1:26, 28)

Chapter 5: Of Divine Providence

1. God the good Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will; to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy.

(Hebrews 1:3; Job 38:11; Isaiah 46:10, 11; Psalms 135:6; Matthew 10:29-31; Ephesians 1:11)

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without His providence; yet by the same providence He ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

(Acts 2:23; Proverbs 16:33; Genesis 8:22)

3. God, in His ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at His pleasure.

(Acts 27:31, 44; Isaiah 55:10, 11; Hosea 1:7; Romans 4:19-21; Daniel 3:27)

4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in His providence, that His determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, which also He most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to His most holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

(Romans 11:32-34; 2 Samuel 24:1, 1 Chronicles 21:1; 2 Kings 19:28; Psalms 76:10; Genesis 1:20; Isaiah 10:6, 7, 12; Psalms 1:21; 1 John 2:16)

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season His own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon Himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends. So that whatsoever befalls any of His elect is by His appointment, for His glory, and their good.

(2 Chronicles 32:25, 26, 31; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Romans 8:28)

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as the righteous judge, for former sin doth blind and harden; from them He not only withholdeth His grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, under those means which God useth for the softening of others.

(Romans 1:24-26, 28; Romans 11:7, 8; Deuteronomy 29:4; Matthew 13:12; Deuteronomy 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12, 13; Psalms 81:11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Exodus 8:15, 32; Isaiah 6:9, 10; 1 Peter 2:7, 8)

7. As the providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a more special manner it taketh care of His church, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof.

(1 Timothy 4:10; Amos 9:8, 9; Isaiah 43:3-5)

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

1. Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof, yet he did not long abide in this honour; Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, then by

her seducing Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit, which God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.

(Genesis 2:16, 17; Genesis 3:12,13; 2 Corinthians 11:3)

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

(Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12, etc.; Titus 1:15; Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-19)

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

(Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45, 49; Psalms 51:5; Job 14:4; Ephesians 2:3; Romans 6:20 Romans 5:12; Hebrews 2:14, 15; 1 Thessalonians 1:10)

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

(Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21; James 1:14, 15; Matthew 15:19)

5. The corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and the first motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

(Romans 7:18, 23; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8; Romans 7:23-25; Galatians 5:17)

Chapter 7: Of God's Covenant

1. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to Him as their creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

(Luke 17:10; Job 35:7,8)

2. Moreover, man having brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace, wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life, His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.

(Genesis 2:17; Galatians 3:10; Romans 3:20, 21; Romans 8:3; Mark 16:15, 16; John 3:16; Ezekiel 36:26, 27; John 6:44, 45; Psalms 110:3)

3. This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament; and it is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect; and it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality, man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of innocency.

(Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 11:6, 13; Romans 4:1, 2, &c.; Acts 4:12; John 8:56)

Chapter 8: Of Christ the Mediator

1. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man; the prophet, priest, and king; head and saviour of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom He did from all eternity give a people to be His seed and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

(Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 1:19, 20; Acts 3:22; Hebrews 5:5, 6; Psalms 2:6; Luke 1:33; Ephesians 1:22, 23; Hebrews 1:2; Acts 17:31; Isaiah 53:10; John 17:6; Romans 8:30)

2. The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with Him who made the world, who upholdeth and governeth all things He hath made, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her: and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; and so was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures; so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

(John 1:14; Galatians 4:4; Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14, 16, 17; Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 1:22, 23; Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Romans 9:5; 1 Timothy 2:5)

3. The Lord Jesus, in His human nature thus united to the divine, in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of mediator and surety; which

office He took not upon Himself, but was thereunto called by His Father; who also put all power and judgement in His hand, and gave Him commandment to execute the same.

(Psalms 45:7; Acts 10:38; John 3:34; Colossians 2:3; Colossians 1:19; Hebrews 7:26; John 1:14; Hebrews 7:22; Hebrews 5:5; John 5:22, 27; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36)

4. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which that He might discharge He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us; enduring most grievous sorrows in His soul, and most painful sufferings in His body; was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, yet saw no corruption: on the third day He arose from the dead with the same body in which He suffered, with which He also ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.

(Psalms 40:7, 8; Hebrews 10:5-10; John 10:18; Gal 4:4; Matthew 3:15; Galatians 3:13; Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 26:37, 38; Luke 22:44; Matthew 27:46; Acts 13:37; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; John 20:25, 27; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24; Acts 10:42; Romans 14:9, 10; Acts 1:11; 2 Peter 2:4)

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

(Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:14; Romans 3:25, 26; John 17:2; Hebrews 9:15)

6. Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ till after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof were communicated to the elect in all ages, successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices wherein He was revealed, and signified to be the seed which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, being the same yesterday, and to-day and forever.

(1 Corinthians 4:10; Hebrews 4:2; 1 Peter 1:10, 11; Revelation 13:8; Hebrews 13:8)

7. Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture, attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

(John 3:13; Acts 20:28)

8. To all those for whom Christ hath obtained eternal redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them; uniting them to Himself by His Spirit, revealing unto them, in and by His Word, the mystery of salvation, persuading them to believe and obey, governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit, and overcoming all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom, in such

manner and ways as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation; and all of free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them to procure it.

(John 6:37; John 10:15, 16; John 17:9; Romans 5:10; John 17:6; Ephesians 1:9; 1 John 5:20; Romans 8:9, 14; Psalms 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26; John 3:8; Ephesians 1:8)

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

(1 Timothy 2:5)

10. This number and order of offices is necessary; for in respect of our ignorance, we stand in need of His prophetic office; and in respect of our alienation from God, and imperfection of the best of our services, we need His priestly office to reconcile us and present us acceptable unto God; and in respect to our averseness and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue and security from our spiritual adversaries, we need His kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us to His heavenly kingdom.

(John 1:18; Colossians 1:21; Galatians 5:17; John 16:8; Psalms 110:3; Luke 1:74, 75)

Chapter 9: Of Free Will

1. God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any necessity of nature determined to do good or evil.

(Matthew 17:12; James 1:14; Deuteronomy 30:19)

2. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God, but yet was unstable, so that he might fall from it.

(Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 3:6)

3. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

(Romans 5:6; Romans 8:7; Ephesians 2:1, 5; Titus 3:3-5; John 6:44)

4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by His grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that by reason of his remaining corruptions, he doth not perfectly, nor only will, that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

(Colossians 1:13; John 8:36; Philippians 2:13; Romans 7:15, 18, 19, 21, 23)

5. This will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory only.

(Ephesians 4:13)

Chapter 10: Of Effectual Calling

1. Those whom God hath predestinated unto life, He is pleased in His appointed, and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.

(Romans 8:30; Romans 11:7; Ephesians 1:10, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; Ephesians 2:1-6; Acts 26:18; Ephesians 1:17, 18; Ezekiel 36:26; Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:27; Ephesians 1:19; Psalm 110:3; Canticles 1:4)

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

(2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:5; John 5:25; Ephesians 1:19, 20)

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

(John 3:3, 5, 6; John 3:8)

4. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither will nor can truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men that receive not the Christian religion be saved; be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess.

(Matthew 22:14; Matthew 13:20, 21; Hebrews 6:4, 5; John 6:44, 45, 65; 1 John 2:24, 25; Acts 4:12; John 4:22; John 17:3)

Chapter 11: Of Justification

1. Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting

their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in His death for their whole and sole righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God.

(Romans 3:24; Romans 8:30; Romans 4:5-8; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:30, 31; Romans 5:17-19; Philippians 3:8, 9; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Romans 5:17)

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

(Romans 3:28; Galatians 5:6; James 2:17, 22, 26)

3. Christ, by His obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of Himself in the blood of His cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf; yet, inasmuch as He was given by the Father for them, and His obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

(Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Isaiah 53:5, 6; Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26; Ephesians 1:6,7; Ephesians 2:7)

4. God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in time due actually apply Christ unto them.

(Galatians 3:8; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Timothy 2:6; Romans 4:25; Colossians 1:21,22; Titus 3:4-7)

5. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified, and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure; and in that condition they have not usually the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

(Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:7, 9; John 10:28; Psalms 89:31-33; Psalms 32:5; Psalms 51; Matthew 26:75)

6. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.

(Galatians 3:9; Romans 4:22-24)

Chapter 12: Of Adoption

All those that are justified, God vouchsafed, in and for the sake of His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have His name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by Him as by a Father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

(Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:4, 5; John 1:12; Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:18; Psalms 103:13; Proverbs 14:26; 1 Peter 5:7; Hebrews 12:6; Isaiah 54:8, 9; Lamentations 3:31; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 1:14; Hebrews 6:12)

Chapter 13: Of Sanctification

1. They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also farther sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

(Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5, 6; John 17:17; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23; Romans 6:14; Galatians 5:24; Colossians 1:11; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14)

2. This sanctification is throughout the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

(1 Thessalonians 5:23; Romans 7:18, 23; Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11)

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

(Romans 7:23; Romans 6:14; Ephesians 4:15, 16; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 7:1)

Chapter 14: Of Saving Faith

1. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word; by which also, and by the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, prayer, and other means appointed of God, it is increased and strengthened.

(2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 10:14, 17; Luke 17:5; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts

20:32)

2. By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word for the authority of God Himself, and also apprehendeth an excellency therein above all other writings and all things in the world, as it bears forth the glory of God in His attributes, the excellency of Christ in His nature and offices, and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in His workings and operations: and so is enabled to cast his soul upon the truth thus believed; and also acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come; but the principal acts of saving faith have immediate relation to Christ, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

(Acts 24:14; Psalms 27:7-10; Psalms 119:72; 2 Timothy 1:12; John 14:14; Isaiah 66:2; Hebrews 11:13; John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Galatians 2:20; Acts 15:11)

3. This faith, although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or strong, yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it, as is all other saving grace, from the faith and common grace of temporary believers; and therefore, though it may be many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.

(Hebrews 5:13, 14; Matthew 6:30; Romans 4:19, 20; 2 Peter 1:1; Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4, 5; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Colossians 2:2; Hebrews 12:2)

Chapter 15: Of Repentance Unto Life and Salvation

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

(Titus 3:2-5)

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

(Ecclesiastes 7:20; Luke 22:31, 32)

3. This saving repentance is an evangelical grace, whereby a person, being by the Holy Spirit made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth, by faith in Christ, humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrency, praying for pardon

and strength of grace, with a purpose and endeavour, by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things.

(Zechariah 12:10; Acts 11:18; Ezekiel 36:31; 2 Corinthians 7:11; Psalms 119:6; Psalms 119:128)

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

(Luke 19:8; 1 Timothy 1:13, 15)

5. Such is the provision which God hath made through Christ in the covenant of grace for the preservation of believers unto salvation; that although there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; yet there is no sin so great that it shall bring damnation on them that repent; which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary.

(Romans 6:23; Isaiah 1:16-18 Isaiah 55:7)

Chapter 16: Of Good Works

1. Good works are only such as God hath commanded in His Holy Word, and not such as without the warrant thereof are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretense of good intentions.

(Micah 6:8; Hebrews 13:21; Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13)

2. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that having their fruit unto holiness they may have the end eternal life.

(James 2:18, 22; Psalms 116:12, 13; 1 John 2:3, 5; 2 Peter 1:5-11; Matthew 5:16; 1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Peter 2:15; Philippians 1:11; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 6:22)

3. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ; and that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is necessary an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure; yet they are not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

(John 15:4, 5; 2 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 2:13; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Isaiah 64:7)

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

(Job 9:2, 3; Galatians 5:17; Luke 17:10)

5. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants; and because as they are good they proceed from His Spirit, and as they are wrought by us they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's punishment.

(Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 4:6; Galatians 5:22, 23; Isaiah 64:6; Psalms 143:2)

6. Yet notwithstanding the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in Him; not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unproveable in God's sight, but that He, looking upon them in His Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

(Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5; Matthew 25:21, 23; Hebrews 6:10)

7. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God, and yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God.

(2 Kings 10:30; 1 Kings 21:27, 29; Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4, 6; 1 Corinthians 13:1; Matthew 6:2, 5; Amos 5:21, 22; Romans 9:16; Titus 3:5; Job 21:14, 15; Matthew 25:41-43)

Chapter 17: Of The Perseverance of the Saints

1. Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence He still begets and nourisheth in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon; notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from

them, yet He is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraven upon the palm of His hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity.

(John 10:28, 29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 John 2:19; Psalms 89:31, 32; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Malachi 3:6)

2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with Him, the oath of God, the abiding of His Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

(Romans 8:30 Romans 9:11, 16; Romans 5:9, 10; John 14:19; Hebrews 6:17, 18; 1 John 3:9; Jeremiah 32:40)

3. And though they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves, yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.

(Matthew 26:70, 72, 74; Isaiah 64:5, 9; Ephesians 4:30; Psalms 51:10, 12; Psalms 32:3, 4; 2 Samuel 12:14; Luke 22:32, 61, 62)

Chapter 18: Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

1. Although temporary believers, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God and state of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

(Job 8:13, 14; Matthew 7:22, 23; 1 John 2:3; 1 John 3:14, 18, 19, 21, 24; 1 John 5:13; Romans 5:2, 5)

2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel; and also upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit unto which promises are made, and on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God; and, as a fruit thereof, keeping the heart both humble and holy.

(Hebrews 6:11, 19; Hebrews 6:17, 18; 2 Peter 1:4, 5, 10, 11; Romans 8:15, 16; 1 John 3:1-3)

3. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of means, attain thereunto: and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; -so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

(Isaiah 50:10; Psalms 88; Psalms 77:1-12; 1 John 4:13; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Romans 5:1, 2, 5; Romans 14:17; Psalms 119:32; Romans 6:1,2; Titus 2:11, 12, 14)

4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light, yet are they never destitute of the seed of God and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which, in the meantime, they are preserved from utter despair.

(Song of Solomon 5:2, 3, 6; Psalms 51:8, 12, 14; Psalms 116:11; Psalms 77:7, 8; Psalms 31:22; Psalms 30:7; 1 John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Psalms 42:5, 11; Lamentations 3:26-31)

Chapter 19: Of the Law of God

1. God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

(Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:10, 12)

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

(Romans 2:14, 15; Deuteronomy 10:4)

3. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring

Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties, all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are, by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end abrogated and taken away.

(Hebrews 10:1; Colossians 2:17; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Colossians 2:14, 16, 17; Ephesians 2:14, 16)

4. To them also He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any now by virtue of that institution; their general equity only being of moral use.

(1 Corinthians 9:8-10)

5. The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof, and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it; neither doth Christ in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.

(Romans 13:8- 10; James 2:8, 10-12; James 2:10, 11; Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 3:31)

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

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

7. Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it, the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

(Galatians 3:21; Ezekiel 36:27)

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

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

(Genesis 3:15; Revelation 13:8)

2. This promise of Christ, and salvation by Him, is revealed only by the Word of God; neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace by Him, so much as in a general or obscure way; much less that men destitute of the revelation of Him by the promise or gospel, should be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance.

(Romans 1:17; Romans 10:14,15,17; Proverbs 29:18; Isaiah 25:7; Isaiah 60:2, 3)

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

(Psalms 147:20; Acts 16:7; Romans 1:18-32)

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

(Psalms 110:3; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 1:19, 20; John 6:44; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6)

Chapter 21: Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

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

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

Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

(Galatians 3:13; Galatians 1:4; Acts 26:18; Romans 8:3; Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 8:15; Luke 1:73-75; 1 John 4:18; Galatians 3:9, 14; John 7:38, 39; Hebrews 10:19-21)

2. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to His word, or not contained in it. So that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.

(James 4:12; Romans 14:4; Acts 4:19, 29; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:20, 22, 23; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 1:24)

3. They who upon pretense of Christian liberty do practice any sin, or cherish any sinful lust, as they do thereby pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction, so they wholly destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our lives.

(Romans 6:1, 2; Galatians 5:13; 2 Peter 2:18, 21)

Chapter 22: Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

1. The light of nature shews that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is just, good and doth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.

(Jeremiah 10:7; Mark 12:33; Deuteronomy 12:32; Exodus 20:4-6)

2. Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to Him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creatures; and since the fall, not without a mediator, nor in the mediation of any other but Christ alone.

(Matthew 4:9, 10; John 6:23; Matthew 28:19; Romans 1:25; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10; John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5)

3. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one part of natural worship, is by God required of all men. But that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, according to His will; with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, in a known tongue.

(Psalms 95:1-7; Psalms 65:2; John 14:13, 14; Romans 8:26; 1 John 5:14; 1 Corinthians 14:16, 17)

4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.

(1 Timothy 2:1, 2; 2 Samuel 7:29; 2 Samuel 12:21-23; 1 John 5:16)

5. The reading of the Scriptures, preaching, and hearing the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; as also the administration of baptism, and the Lord's supper, are all parts of religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to Him, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear; moreover, solemn humiliation, with fastings, and thanksgivings, upon special occasions, ought to be used in an holy and religious manner.

(1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2; Luke 8:18; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26; Esther 4:16; Joel 2:12; Exodus 15:1-19, Psalms 107)

6. Neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the gospel, tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed; but God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself; so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly nor wilfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God by His word or providence calleth thereunto.

(John 4:21; Malachi 1:11; 1 Timothy 2:8; Acts 10:2; Matthew 6:11; Psalms 55:17; Matthew 6:6; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42)

7. As it is the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God, so by His Word, in a positive moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy unto Him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's day: and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.

(Exodus 20:8; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10)

8. The sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations, but are also taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

(Isaiah 58:13; Nehemiah 13:15-22; Matthew 12:1-13)

Chapter 23: Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

1. A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein the person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgement, solemnly calleth God to witness what he sweareth, and to judge him according to the truth or falseness thereof.

(Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 10:20; Jeremiah 4:2; 2 Chronicles 6:22, 23)

2. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear; and therein it is to be used, with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred; yet as in matter of weight and moment, for confirmation of truth, and ending all strife, an oath is warranted by the word of God; so a lawful oath being imposed by lawful authority in such matters, ought to be taken.

(Matthew 5:34, 37; James 5:12; Hebrews 6:16; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Nehemiah 13:25)

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

(Leviticus 19:12; Jeremiah 23:10)

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

(Psalms 24:4)

5. A vow, which is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone, is to be made and performed with all religious care and faithfulness; but popish¹ monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

(Psalms 76:11; Genesis 28:20-22; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9; Ephesians 4:28; Matthew 19:11)²

Chapter 24: Of the Civil Magistrate

1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under Him, over the people, for His own glory and the public good; and to this end hath armed them with the power of the sword, for defence and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil doers.

(Romans 13:1-4)

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

(2 Samuel 23:3; Psalms 82:3, 4; Luke 3:14)

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

(Romans 13:5-7; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2)

Chapter 25: Of Marriage

1. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.

(Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:15; Matthew 19:5,6)

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

(Genesis 2:18; Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9)

3. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent; yet it is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord; and therefore such as profess the true religion, should not marry with infidels, or idolaters; neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresy.

(Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 4:3; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Nehemiah 13:25-27)

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

(Leviticus 18; Mark 6:18; 1 Corinthians 5:1)

Chapter 26: Of the Church

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

(Hebrews 12:23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:10, 22, 23; Ephesians 5:23, 27, 32)

2. All persons throughout the world, professing the faith of the gospel, and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any errors

everting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation, are and may be called visible saints; and of such ought all particular congregations to be constituted.

(1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 11:26; Romans 1:7; Ephesians 1:20-22)

3. The purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan; nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in Him, and make profession of His name.

(1 Corinthians 5; Revelation 2; Revelation 3; Revelation 18:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12; Matthew 16:18; Psalms 72:17; Psalm 102:28; Revelation 12:17)

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, order or government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner; neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that antichrist 3, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

(Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 2:2-9)

5. In the execution of this power wherewith He is so intrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the world unto Himself, through the ministry of His word, by His Spirit, those that are given unto Him by His Father, that they may walk before Him in all the ways of obedience, which He prescribeth to them in His word. Those thus called, He commandeth to walk together in particular societies, or churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship, which He requireth of them in the world.

(John 10:16; John 12:32; Matthew 28:20; Matthew 18:15-20)

6. The members of these churches are saints by calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto that call of Christ; and do willingly consent to walk together, according to the appointment of Christ; giving up themselves to the Lord, and one to another, by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel.

(Romans. 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 5:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 9:13)

7. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to His mind declared in His word, He hath given all that power and authority, which is in any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which He hath instituted for them to observe; with commands and rules for the due and right exerting, and executing of that power.

(Matthew 18:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 5:13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8)

8. A particular church, gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members; and the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and

set apart by the church (so called and gathered), for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power or duty, which He intrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are bishops or elders, and deacons.

(Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1)

9. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto the office of bishop or elder in a church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the church itself; and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands of the eldership of the church, if there be any before constituted therein; and of a deacon that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by prayer, and the like imposition of hands.

(Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; Acts 6:3, 5, 6)

10. The work of pastors being constantly to attend the service of Christ, in His churches, in the ministry of the word and prayer, with watching for their souls, as they that must give an account to Him; it is incumbent on the churches to whom they minister, not only to give them all due respect, but also to communicate to them of all their good things according to their ability, so as they may have a comfortable supply, without being themselves entangled in secular affairs; and may also be capable of exercising hospitality towards others; and this is required by the law of nature, and by the express order of our Lord Jesus, who hath ordained that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

(Acts 6:4; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17, 18; Galatians 6:6, 7; 2 Timothy 2:4; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Corinthians 9:6-14)

11. Although it be incumbent on the bishops or pastors of the churches, to be instant in preaching the word, by way of office, yet the work of preaching the word is not so peculiarly confined to them but that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved and called by the church, may and ought to perform it.

(Acts 11:19-21; 1 Peter 4:10, 11)

12. As all believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do; so all that are admitted unto the privileges of a church, are also under the censures and government thereof, according to the rule of Christ.

(1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15)

13. No church members, upon any offence taken by them, having performed their duty required of them towards the person they are offended at, ought to disturb any church-order, or absent themselves from the assemblies of the church, or administration of any ordinances, upon the account of such offence at any of their fellow members, but to wait upon Christ, in the further proceeding of the church.

(Matthew 18:15-17; Ephesians 4:2, 3)

14. As each church, and all the members of it, are bound to pray continually for the good and prosperity of all the churches of Christ, in all places, and upon all occasions to further every one within the bounds of their places and callings, in the exercise of their gifts and graces, so the churches, when planted by the providence of God, so as they may enjoy opportunity and advantage for it, ought to hold communion among themselves, for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification.

(Ephesians 6:18; Psalms 122:6; Romans 16:1, 2; 3 John 8-10)

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

(Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23, 25; 2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 John 4:1)

Chapter 27: Of the Communion of Saints

1. All saints that are united to Jesus Christ, their head, by His Spirit, and faith, although they are not made thereby one person with Him, have fellowship in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory; and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, in an orderly way, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

(1 John 1:3; John 1:16; Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:5, 6; Ephesians 4:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; Romans 1:12; 1 John 3:17, 18; Galatians 6:10)

2. Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things according to their several abilities, and necessities; which communion, according to the rule of the gospel, though especially to be exercised by them, in the relation wherein they stand, whether in families, or churches, yet, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all the household of faith, even all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus; nevertheless their communion one with another as saints, doth not take away or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods and possessions.

(Hebrews 10:24, 25; Hebrews 3:12, 13; Acts 11:29, 30; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Corinthians 12:14-27; Acts 5:4; Ephesians 4:28)

Chapter 28: Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution, appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver, to be continued in His church to the end of the world.

(Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26)

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

(Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 4:1)

Chapter 29: Of Baptism

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of His fellowship with him, in His death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into Him; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.

(Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:4)

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

(Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36, 37; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12; Acts 18:8)

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

(Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8:38)

4. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.

(Matthew 3:16; John 3:23)

Chapter 30: Of the Lord's Supper

1. The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by Him the same night wherein He was betrayed, to be observed in His churches, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth the sacrifice of Himself in His death, confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in Him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to Him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other.

(1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17, 21)

2. In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to His Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but only a memorial of that one offering up of

Himself by Himself upon the cross, once for all; and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same. So that the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable, injurious to Christ's own sacrifice the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

(Hebrews 9:25, 26, 28; 1 Corinthians 11:24; Matthew 26:26, 27) 4

3. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use, and to take and break the bread; to take the cup, and, they communicating also themselves, to give both to the communicants.

(1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

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

(Matthew 26:26-28; Matthew 15:9; Exodus 20:4, 5)

5. The outward elements in this ordinance, duly set apart to the use ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him crucified, as that truly, although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ, albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.

(1 Corinthians 11:27; 1 Corinthians 11:26-28)

6. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood, commonly called transubstantiation, by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the ordinance, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries.

(Acts 3:21; Luke 14:6, 39; 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25)

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

(1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

8. All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against Him, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto; yea,

whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themselves.

(2 Corinthians 6:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 11:29; Matthew 7:6)

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

1. The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell; where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day; besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

(Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6,8; Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 12:23; Jude 6, 7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23, 24)

2. At the last day, such of the saints as are found alive, shall not sleep, but be changed; and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other; although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever.

(1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Job 19:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 15:42, 43)

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

(Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; Philippians 3:21)

Chapter 32: Of the Last Judgment

1. God hath appointed a day wherein He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ; to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

(Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:10, 12; Matthew 25:32-46)

2. The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of His justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient; for then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards, in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of

Jesus Christ, shall be cast aside into everlasting torments, and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

(Romans 9:22, 23; Matthew 25:21, 34; 2 Timothy 4:8; Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity, so will He have the day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may ever be prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus; come quickly. Amen.

(2 Corinthians 5:10, 11; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-7; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; Revelation 22:20)

¹ This term has historically been associated with the Roman Catholic Church, its doctrines, or its practices. South Baptist Church of Laconia, NH does not intend to import or project any of the pejorative inferences that may have been associated with its use by others, from time to time, toward the Roman Catholic Church.

² South Baptist Church of Laconia, NH understands the Bible to teach that God is ultimately the provider of all good things (including, but not limited to, marriage, prosperity and obedience/faithfulness). God established marriage as a blessed institution whereby a man and a woman live together in a holy state of intimate and committed covenantal relationship with each other and God. This relationship was and is designed for their and their offspring's mutual good, it expresses God's relationship with His people (when it is lived out biblically) and glorifies God. God, also in His sovereign good pleasure, determined that He would bless some with material wealth and prosperity, with the intention that those resources He entrusts to them will be used to bless others and thereby express thanksgiving and glory to God. He also provides the grace that is required to bring about and sustain obedience, resulting in a believer's faithfulness to God. While there is never any obligation on God's part to provide these or any other blessings, if and whenever He chooses to do so it is good and if and whenever He chooses not to provide them it is also good. In this, the Bible teaches that the determination of these things resides in God's sovereign domain. Our obligation and responsibility is to seek to know God's will for our lives, obey it fully and faithfully and to be thankful for it. God also chooses suffering, including such things as celibacy, childlessness, poverty, poor health, martyrdom and other naturally less desirable states for His use as instruments and conditions for His glory. These too the believer is to receive with great joy from God, along with the special graces He bestows which enable and bring about the believer's right thinking and response to these situations. To make vows that in any way imply that life's blessings and/or hardships come at our determination and are responded to in our strength is both false and presumptuous. The believer is required to depend on God, acknowledge that dependence and be thankful for it as well as any provision God gives. Improper vows have been encouraged and/or taken by men or institutions and are no part of the holy living required by Scripture.

³South Baptist Church of Laconia, NH understands this term in the sense used in the Bible especially 1 John and 2 John (see particularly 2 John 1:4-11 and 1 John 2:18-24). Many men have historically sought and presently seek to usurp God's rightful place as the only Sovereign of the Community of Faith, His Holy Assembly, the Church of Jesus Christ. No human or spirit creature from any time or place may occupy such a seat of authority which belongs exclusively to Christ as the Head of the Church, i.e. the Body of Christ, which He alone bought with His own blood, nor teach such doctrine that is against the teaching of Christ as delineated in the entirety of Scripture, OT and NT, nor exercise authority over Scripture itself through any form of alleged revelation from God (dreams, prophecies, words of knowledge, words of wisdom, tongues, interpretations, special anointings and etc.) nor desire and receive/permit any worship and veneration besides that worship of God Himself. Those who do so may individually be referred to as an antichrist or collectively as antichrists.

⁴South Baptist Church of Laconia, NH believes Scripture is clear in attributing Christ's atoning suffering and death

on the cross as the only efficacious act for the remission of sin. The Church is instructed in Scripture to celebrate the Lord's Supper often and perpetually in remembrance of and in thanksgiving for that singular once and for all act of Jesus Christ.