

Bethel Baptist Church Confession of Faith

I. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

(1) We believe “the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.”[1] Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1,2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalm 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Matthew 5:17,18; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25,26; II Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1,2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; II Peter 1:19-21

(2) We believe “the sum total of God’s revelation concerning all things essential to His own glory, and to the salvation and faith and life of men is contained in the Holy Scripture. Nothing, whether a supposed revelation of the Spirit or man’s traditions, is ever to be added to Scripture.”[2] Deuteronomy 4:1,2; Proverbs 5-6; John 6:45; Hebrews 1:1,2; Revelation 22:18,19

(3) We believe the meaning of any Scripture is not multiple, but one. The infallible rule of interpreting Scripture is that Scripture interprets Scripture; “that is to say, one part by another. Hence any dispute as to the true, full and evident meaning of a particular passage must be determined in the light of clearer, comparable passages.”[3] Acts 15:15; II Peter 1:20,21

(4) We believe “the authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God’s words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.”[4] Proverbs 13:13; Matthew 7:21; John 14:15; 15:14

II. GOD AND THE HOLY TRINITY

(1) We believe “there is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.”[5] “Over all His creatures He is sovereign. He uses them as He pleases, and does for them or to them all that He wills.”[6] Exodus 3:14; John 1:14,18; 14:11; 15:26; I Corinthians 8:6; II Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:6

(2) We believe “three divine Persons constitute the Godhead - the Father, the Son (or the Word), and the Holy Spirit. They are one in substance, in power, and in eternity. Each is fully God, and yet the Godhead is one and indivisible. The Father owes His being to none. He is the

Father to the Son who is eternally begotten of Him. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. These Persons, one infinite and eternal God not to be divided in nature or in being, are distinguished in Scripture by their personal relations within the Godhead, and by the variety of works which they undertake. Their tri-unity (that is, the doctrine of the Trinity) is the essential basis of all our fellowship with God, and of the comfort we derive from our dependence upon Him.”[7] Matthew 3:16,17; 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14; I John 5:7

(3) We believe “God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purpose of His grace. He is all powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is the Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.”[8] Psalm 115:3; 135:6; Isaiah 46:10,11; Matthew 10:29-31; Romans 11:34-36; I Corinthians 8:6; I Timothy 1:17

(4) We believe “Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, partaking of the nature of God and of man, and in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and present Lord.”[9] Matthew 3:15; 5:17; 13:40-42; Mark 16:19; Luke 1:27,31,35; John 1:14,18; 20:25-27; Romans 3:25,26; 5:19; 14:9,10; I Corinthians 15:3-5; Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 2:14-17; 4:15; Jude 6

(5) We believe “the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the assurance of God to bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.”[10] John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13,14

III. GOD’S DECREE

(1) We believe “from all eternity God decreed all that should happen in time, and this He did freely and unalterably, consulting only His own wise and holy will. Yet in so doing He does not become in any sense the author of sin, nor does He share responsibility for sin with sinners. Neither, by reason of His decree, is the will of any creature whom He has made violated; nor is

the free working of second causes put aside; rather it is established. In all these matters the divine wisdom appears, as also does God's power and faithfulness in effecting that which He has purposed."**[11]** Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 46:10; John 19:11; Acts 4:27,28; Romans 9:15,18; Ephesians 1:3-5,11; Hebrews 6:17; James 1:13; I John 1:5

(2) We believe "God's decree is not based upon His foreknowledge that, under certain conditions, certain happenings will take place, but is independent of all such foreknowledge."**[12]** Romans 9:11-13,16,18

(3) We believe "by His decree, and for the manifestation of His glory, God has predestinated (or foreordained) certain men to eternal life through Jesus Christ, thus revealing His grace. Others, whom He has left to perish in their sins, show the terrors of His justice."**[13]** Proverbs 16:4; Matthew 25:34; Romans 9:22,23; Ephesians 1:5,6; I Timothy 5:21; Jude 4

(4) We believe "the angels and men who are the subjects of God's predestination are clearly and irreversibly designated, and their number is unalterably fixed."**[14]** John 6:37; 13:18; 17:9; Acts 13:48; II Timothy 2:19

(5) We believe "before the world was made, God's eternal, immutable purpose, which originated in the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, moved Him to choose (or to elect), in Christ, certain of mankind to everlasting glory. Out of His mere free grace and love He predestinated these chosen ones to life, although there was nothing in them to cause Him to choose them."**[15]** Romans 8:30; 9:13,16; Ephesians 1:4,9,11; 2:5,12; I Thessalonians 5:9; II Timothy 1:9

(6) We believe "not only has God appointed the elect to glory in accordance with the eternal and free purpose of His will, but He has also foreordained the means by which His purpose will be effected. Since His elect are children of Adam and therefore among those ruined by Adam's fall into sin, He willed that they should be redeemed by Christ, and effectually called to faith in Christ. Furthermore, by the working of His Spirit in due season they are justified, adopted, sanctified, and 'kept by His power through faith unto salvation'. None but the elect partake of any of these great benefits."**[16]** John 6:64; 10:26; 17:9; Romans 8:30; I Thessalonians 5:9,10; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2,5

(7) We believe "the high mystery of predestination needs to be handled with special prudence and caution, so that men, being directed to the will of God revealed in His Word and obeying the same, may become assured of their eternal election through the certainty of their effectual calling. By this means predestination will promote the praise of God, and reverential awe and wonder. It will encourage humility and diligence, and bring much comfort to all who sincerely obey the gospel."**[17]** Luke 10:20; Romans 11:5,6,20,33; Ephesians 1:6; I Thessalonians 1:4,5; II Peter 1:10

IV. OF CREATION

(1) We believe “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.”[18] Genesis 1:31; Job 26:13; John 1:2,3; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2

(2) We believe “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 fulfill it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change.”[19] Genesis 1:26,27; 2:7; 3:6; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 2:14,15

(3) We believe “besides the law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.”[20] Genesis 1:26,28; 2:17

V. OF THE FALL OF MAN, OF SIN, AND OF THE PUNISHMENT

(1) We believe “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 honor; Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to seduce 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.”[21] Genesis 2:16,17; 3:12,13; II Corinthians 11:3

(2) We believe “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.”[22] Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-19,23; 5:12-21; Titus 1:15

(3) We believe “they being the cause, and by God’s appointment, standing in the place 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.”[23] Job 14:4; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-19; 6:20; I Corinthians 15:21,22,45,49; Ephesians 2:3; I Thessalonians 1:10; Hebrews 2:14,15

(4) We believe “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.”[24]

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

(5) We believe “as the consequence of his fall into a state of sin, man has lost all ability to will the performance of any of those works, spiritually good, that accompany salvation (including faith). As a natural (unspiritual) man he is dead in sin and altogether opposed to that which is good. Hence he is not able, by any strength of his own, to turn himself to God, or even to prepare himself to turn to God.”[25]

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

(6) We believe “this corruption of nature, during this life, does 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.”[26]

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

VI. OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

(1) We believe “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 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.”[27]

Job 38:11; Psalm 135:6; Isaiah 46:10,11; Matthew 10:29-31; Ephesians 1:11

(2) We believe “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.”[28]

Proverbs 16:33; Jeremiah 10:23; Acts 2:23

(3) We believe “God’s almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness are so far-reaching and all-pervading, that both the fall of the first man into sin, and all other sinful actions of angels and men, proceed according to His sovereign purposes. It is not that He gives His bare permission, for in a variety of ways He wisely and powerfully limits, orders and governs sinful actions, so that they effect His holy designs. Yet the sinfulness involved in the actions proceeds only from angels and men and not from God who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.”[29]

Examples: Rahab’s lie and Joseph’s brothers. II Samuel 24:1; II Kings 19:28; I

Chronicles 21:1; Psalm 50:21; 76:10; Isaiah 10:6,7,12; Romans 11:32-34; I John 2:16

(4) We believe “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 heart, 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.”[30]

I Samuel 8:1-22; II Chronicles 32:25,26,31; Luke 22:61; Romans 8:28; II Corinthians 12:7-9

(5) We believe “as for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a 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 in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruptions make 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, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.”[31]

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

(6) We believe “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.”[32]

Isaiah 43:3-5; Amos 9:8,9; I Timothy 4:10

VII. OF GOD’S COVENANT

(1) We believe “the distance between God and the creature is so great, that although mankind does owe obedience unto 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.”[33]

Job 35:7,8; Luke 17:10

(2) We believe “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 offers 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.”[34]

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

(3) We believe “this covenant is revealed in the Old Testament 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 of the offspring of fallen Adam, that ever were saved, did obtain life and a blessed immortality; man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms, on which Adam stood in his state of innocence.”[35]

Genesis 3:15; John 8:56; Acts 4:12; Romans 4:1-5; II Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 1:1,2; 11:6,13

VIII. CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

(1) We believe “to give effect to His eternal purpose God chose and ordained the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, in accordance with the covenant into which they had entered, to be the mediator between God and man; also to be prophet, priest, king, head and saviour of His church; also to be the heir of all things and judge of the world. From all eternity God had given to His Son those who were to be His offspring, and the Son engaged in time (as distinct from eternity) to redeem, call, justify, sanctify, and glorify them.”[36]

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

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

nature with the other; in other words, without confusion. Thus the Son of God is now both true God and true man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.”[37]

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

(3) We believe “by His perfect obedience to God’s law, and by a once-for-all offering up of Himself to God as a sacrifice through the eternal Spirit, the Lord Jesus has fully satisfied all the claims of divine justice. He has brought about reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those given to Him by His Father.”[38]

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

(4) We believe “the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ until after His birth in this world, but the value, efficacy and benefits of His redemptive work availed for His elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world.”[39]

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

IX. GRACE IN REGENERATION

(1) We believe “that in order to be saved, we must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; and is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, [in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel;] and that its proper evidence is found in the holy fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God.”[40]

Ezekiel 36:26; John 1:13; 3:1-8; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:3,23

X. EFFECTUAL CALLING

(1) We believe “at a time appointed by and acceptable to God, those whom God has predestinated to life are effectually called by His Word and Spirit out of the state of death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. Their minds are given spiritual enlightenment and, as those who are being saved, they begin to understand the things of God. God takes away their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh. He renews their will, and by His almighty power He sets them to seek and follow that which is good, at the same time effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ. And to all these changes they come most freely, for they are made willingly by divine grace.”[41]

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

(2) We believe “God’s effectual call is the outcome of His free and special grace alone. Until a man is given life, and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is dead in sins and trespasses, so is entirely passive in this work of salvation, a work that does not proceed from anything good foreseen in him, nor from any power or agency resident in him. The power that enables him to answer God’s call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, is no less than that which effected the resurrection of Christ from the dead.”[42]

John 5:25; Acts 13:48; I Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 1:19,20; 2:5,8; II Timothy 1:9

(3) We believe “men who are not elected, even though they may be called upon to embrace salvation by the preachers of the gospel, and may be the subjects of some common operations of the Spirit, cannot be saved, because they are not effectually drawn to Christ by the Father, for which reason they neither can, nor will, truly come to Him. Much less can men who do not receive the Christian religion be saved, no matter how diligent they are to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the teachings of the religion which they follow.”[43]

Matthew 13:20,21; 22:14; John 4:22; 6:44,45,65; 17:3; Acts 4:12; Hebrews 6:4-6; I John 2:24,25

XI. JUSTIFICATION

(1) We believe “that the great Gospel blessing which Christ of His fulness bestows on such as believe in Him, is Justification; that Justification consists in the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life, on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through His own redemption and righteousness, [by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God;] that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.”[44]

Genesis 15:6; Acts 13:39; Romans 5:1; 8:30; I Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 3:24

(2) We believe “God freely justifies the persons whom He effectually calls. He does this, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins and by accounting them, and accepting them, as righteous. This He does for Christ’s sake alone, and not for anything wrought in them or done by them. The righteousness which is imputed to them, that is, reckoned to their account, is neither their faith nor the act of believing nor any other obedience to the gospel which they have rendered, but Christ’s obedience alone. Christ’s one obedience is twofold--His active obedience rendered to the entire divine law, and His passive obedience rendered in His death. Those thus justified receive

and rest by faith upon Christ's righteousness; and this faith they have, not of themselves, but as the gift of God."**[45]**

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

(3) We believe "from all eternity God decreed to justify all the elect, and in the fulness of time Christ died for their sins and rose again for their justification. Nevertheless they are not justified personally until, in due time, the Holy Spirit actually applies to them the benefits of Christ's Person and work."**[46]**

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

(4) We believe "God continues to forgive the sins of all the justified. They can never lose their justification; but they may, by reason of sin, fall under God's fatherly displeasure; in which case, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg God's pardon, and renew their faith and repentance, God will not usually restore to them 'the light of His countenance.'" **[47]**

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

(5) We believe "believers in Old Testament times were justified in precisely the same way as New Testament believers."**[48]**

Romans 4:22-24; Galatians 3:9

XII. SANCTIFICATION

(1) We believe "sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life."**[49]**

Exodus 3:14; John 1:14,18; 14:11; 15:26; I Corinthians 8:6; II Corinthians 5:17-20; 13:14; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 4:6; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12,13; Colossians 1:9-22

(2) We believe "that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means--especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer."**[50]**

II Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22;

4:11-16; Philippians 2:12,13; Colossians 1:9-22

(3) We believe “those who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, have a new heart and a new spirit created in them; and by His Word and Spirit dwelling within them, this personal work of sanctification is indeed carried further. All these blessings accrue to them by reason of the merits of Christ’s death and resurrection. Sin’s mastery over them is completely broken; the evil desires to which it gives birth are increasingly weakened and dealt their death-blow; and saving graces in them are increasingly enlivened and strengthened. The practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, is thus promoted.”[51]

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

(4) We believe “sanctification, as defined in this way, extends to every part of man, yet remains incomplete in this life. Sin’s corrupt remnants continue to defile all parts of man, causing within him a continual warfare that does not admit of reconciliation; the flesh rises up against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.”[52]

Romans 7:18,23; Galatians 5:17; I Thessalonians 5:23; I Peter 2:11

(5) We believe “in the war of flesh versus Spirit, sin’s corrupt remnants may for a time gain the upper hand, yet the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ enables man as a new creature to gain the victory. And so the saints grow in grace, moving on towards a fullness of holiness in the fear of God. They earnestly endeavor to live according to heaven’s laws, and to render gospel obedience to all the commands which Christ, as their head and king, has laid down for them in His Word.”[53]

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

XIII. REPENTANCE AND FAITH

(1) We believe “that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with genuine contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.”[54]

(2) We believe “salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense

salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification.”[55]

(3) We believe “the repentance that leads on to salvation is a gospel grace by means of which a person who is caused by the Holy Spirit to feel the manifold evils of sin is also caused by faith in Christ to humble himself on account of sin. This humiliation is characterized by godly sorrow, a hatred of the sin, and self-loathing. It is accompanied by prayer for pardon and strength of grace, and also by a purpose and endeavor, in the power supplied by the Spirit, to conduct himself in the sight of God with the consistency of life that pleases Him.”[56]

Psalm 119:6,128; Ezekiel 36:31; Zechariah 12:10; Acts 11:18; II Corinthians 7:11

XIV. GOOD WORKS

(1) We believe “works that are truly good, and which are done in obedience to God’s commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith. By means of them believers make known their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance of salvation, edify their brethren, adorn their Christian witness, and deprive their opponents of arguments against the gospel. In sum, they glorify God who has made them what they are, namely, new creatures in Christ; and as such they yield fruit that evidences holiness, eternal life being the outcome of all.”[57]

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

(2) We believe “the ability of believers to do good works does not spring in any way from themselves, but is derived from the Spirit of Christ alone. But besides the graces which they receive from Him in the first instance, they need His further actual influence to give them the will and ability to perform the works that please Him. Yet this does not mean that, without that special influence, they are at liberty to grow careless of duty, for they must be diligent in stirring into activity the grace of God that is in them.”[58]

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

(3) We believe “we cannot, even by our best works, merit either the pardon of sin or the granting of eternal life at the hand of God. And furthermore, there is infinite distance between us and God, and no works of ours can yield Him profit or act as payment for the debt of our former sins. Indeed, when we have done all that we can, we have done but our duty and remain unprofitable servants. We are also to remember that, so far as our works are good, they are produced by His Spirit. As far as they are our work they are marred, and mixed

with so much weakness and imperfections that they fail utterly to meet the searching requirements of God's standards."**[59]**

Psalm 143:2; Isaiah 64:6; Luke 17:10; Romans 3:20; 4:6; Galatians 5:22,23; Ephesians 2:8,9

(4) We believe "as for works done by unregenerate men, even though God may have commanded them, and they may be highly useful both to themselves and to others, yet they remain sinful works for the following reasons: they do not originate in a heart purified by faith; they are not done in the right manner prescribed in Scripture; and they are not directed to the glory of God as the only right end. Hence they cannot please God, nor can they make a man fit for the reception of grace."**[60]**

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

XV. THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

(1) We believe "all true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."**[61]**

(2) We believe "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 the 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."**[62]**

Psalm 89:31,32; Malachi 3:6; John 10:28,29; I Corinthians 11:32; Philippians 1:6; II Timothy 2:19; I John 2:19

(3) We believe “that real believers endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from mere professors; [that] a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”[63]

(4) We believe “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 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.”[64]

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

(5) We believe “in election from eternity, effectual calling by the Holy Spirit of God, and justification in his sight only by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. And we believe that they who are thus elected, effectually called, and justified, will persevere through grace to the end, that none of them be lost.”[65]

XVI. ETERNAL SECURITY

(1) We believe “all true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace.”[66]

(2) We believe “although temporary professors of faith and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God, and in a state of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavoring 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.”[67]

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

(3) We believe “the certainty of salvation is not a mere assumption 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.”[68]

Romans 8:15,16; Hebrews 6:11,17-19; II Peter 1:4,5,10,11; I John 3:1-3

(4) We believe “the infallible assurance of salvation is not an essential part of salvation, for a true believer may wait for a long time, and struggle with many difficulties, before he attains to it. It is not a matter of extraordinary revelation, for if he makes a right use of the means of grace, and is enabled by the Spirit to know the things that believers receive freely from God, he may well attain to it. It therefore becomes the duty of every one to be as diligent as possible in making his calling and election sure. By doing this he will experience greater peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, greater love and thankfulness to God, and an increased strength and cheerfulness in dutiful obedience. These things are the natural outcome of the assurance of salvation, and they constitute strong evidence that assurance does not lead men into loose living.”[69]

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

(5) We believe “true believers may find that their assurance of salvation fluctuates; sometimes more, sometimes less. They may prove neglectful in preserving it, as for example, if they give way to some particular sin that wounds their conscience and grieves the Spirit; or a strong temptation may suddenly spring upon them; or God may see fit to withdraw ‘the light of His countenance’ and cause darkness to envelop them, a course He sometimes takes even with those who fear His name. Yet, whatever happens, certain things inevitably remain with them--the new nature which is born of God, the life of faith, the love of Christ and the brethren, sincerity of heart and conscience of duty--and by reason of these and through the work carried on by the Spirit within them, the assurance of salvation may in due time be revived. In the meantime the same influences preserve them from utter despair.”[70]

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

XVII. THE HARMONY OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

(1) We believe “that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to genuine obedience to the holy law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church.”[71]

Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 3:31; 7:9-13; 13:8-10; James 2:8-12

XVIII. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

(1) We believe “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 life.”[72]
Romans 14:1-23; I Corinthians 8:1-13

XIX. THE LORD’S DAY

(1) We believe “the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, and by refraining from worldly amusements, and resting from secular employments, work of necessity and mercy only being excepted.”[73]
Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1 ff.; Mark 2:27,28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1,2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Hebrews 10:25; Revelation 1:10

XX. MARRIAGE

(1) We believe “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.”[74]
Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:14,15; Matthew 19:4-6

(2) We believe “marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind, and for the preventing of immorality.”[75]
Genesis 1:28; 2:18; I Corinthians 7:2-9

(3) We believe “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 [only] 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.”[76]
Nehemiah 13:25-27; I Corinthians 7:39; I Timothy 4:3; Hebrews 13:4; II Corinthians 6:14,15

(4) We believe that while God hates divorce, He is not unmerciful to the

innocent party in cases of adultery and abandonment. In the case of physical adultery or fornication after marriage, and when the guilty party refuses to repent and reconcile, the innocent party in such cases is scripturally free to divorce, and after the divorce to remarry as though the guilty party were dead. In addition, in cases when an unbelieving spouse abandons a believing spouse, the believing spouse is scripturally free to divorce, and after the divorce to remarry. In all other cases of divorce and remarriage, both parties in the second marriage are guilty of adultery.
Deuteronomy 22:22; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 5:31,32; 19:3-9; I Corinthians 7:12-17

XXI. THE FAMILY

(1) We believe “God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.”[77]

(2) We believe “marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God’s unique gift to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel for sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.”[78]

(3) We believe “the husband and wife are of equal worth before God. Both bear God’s image but each in differing ways. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being ‘in the image of God’ as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his ‘helper’ in managing their household and nurturing the next generation.”[79]

(4) We believe “children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God’s pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.”[80]

XXII. THE CHURCH

Local Church

(1) We believe “a New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local

body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.”**[81]**
 Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41,42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4,5; 7:17; 9:13,14; 12; Ephesians 1:22,23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; I Timothy 3:1-15; 4:14; I Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2,3
 Universal Church

(2) We believe “the New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.**[82]** 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 fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”**[83]**
 Romans 9:6-8; 11:16-18; Ephesians 1:10,22,23; 5:23,27,32; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 12:23

(3) We believe “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.”**[84]**
 Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 2:20,21; Colossians 1:18

(4) We believe “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 entrusts them with or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are bishops or elders, and deacons.”**[85]**
 Acts 20:17,28; Philippians 1:1

(5) We believe “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 (pastor or layman) in the Church is, that he be chosen by the elders and the common agreement of the Church itself; and set apart by fasting and prayer, with laying on of hands of the eldership of the Church.”**[86]**
 Acts 6:3-6; 14:23; I Timothy 4:14

(6) We believe that deacons should be chosen by the Church with common agreement of the elders, and set apart by prayer, and the laying on of hands.
 Acts 6:1-4

(7) We believe “pastors are required to give constant attention to the service of Christ in His churches; they are to be engaged in the ministry of the Word and in prayer, and to seek the welfare of men’s souls as those that must give account to the Lord. It is therefore imperative that the churches to which they minister should give them, according to the churches’ ability, not only all due honour, but such abundance of this world’s material good as will enable them to live in comfort, without the need to entangle themselves in secular employment, and which will also suffice to enable them to exercise hospitality towards others. Such an arrangement is required by the law of nature itself, and by the express command of our Lord Jesus, who had decreed that ‘they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel.’”**[87]**

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

(8) We believe “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.”**[88]**

I Thessalonians 5:14; II Thessalonians 3:6,14,15; Hebrews 10:24,25

(9) We believe “no church members, upon any offense 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 offense at any of their fellow members, but to wait upon Christ, in the further proceeding of the Church.”**[89]**

Matthew 18:15-17; Ephesians 4:2,3; Hebrews 12:12-15

(10) We believe “all members of each local church are engaged to pray continually for the good and the prosperity of all churches of Christ, wherever located, and upon all occasions to assist all other believers, within the limits of their own areas and callings, in the exercise of their gifts and graces. It follows, therefore, that churches should seek fellowship one with another, so far as the providence of God provides opportunity for the enjoyment of such benefits.”**[90]**

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

XXIII. BAPTISM

(1) We believe “Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to

walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper."**[91]**
 Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19,20; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21,22; John 3:23; Acts 2:41,42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12

(2) We believe "those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance."**[92]**

XXIV. THE LORD'S SUPPER

(1) We believe "the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming."**[93]**
 Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19,20; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29

(2) We believe "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 showing 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 unto Him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him and with each other."**[94]**
 I Corinthians 10:16,17,21; 11:23-26

(3) We believe "all uninformed 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."**[95]**
 Matthew 7:6; I Corinthians 11:27-30; II Corinthians 6:14,15

XXV. THE LAST JUDGMENT

(1) We believe "God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom the Father has given all authority and power to judge. At that day the apostate angels will be judged. So too will all persons who have lived upon the earth; they will appear before Christ's judgment throne to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds, and to receive His award in accordance with what they have done in this earthly life,

whether good or evil.”[96]

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

(2) We believe “God’s purpose in appointing a day of judgment is to make known the glory of His mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and the glory of His justice in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, that is to say, the wicked and disobedient. In that day the righteous will inherit everlasting life, and receive a fullness of joy and glory in the Lord’s presence as their eternal reward. But the wicked, who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be relegated to everlasting torments and ‘punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.’”[97]

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

(3) We believe “to deter all men from sin on the one hand, and to give greater comfort to the godly in their adversity on the other, Christ would have us firmly persuaded that a day of judgment lies ahead. For the same reasons He has kept the day’s date a secret so that men may shake off all confidence in themselves and, in ignorance of the hour in which the Lord will come, may be ever on the watch, and ever prepared to say, ‘Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.’”[98]

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

XXVI. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

(1) We believe “it is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man’s spirit by God’s Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.”[99]

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5,6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37,38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9,10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-8; 24:46-53; John 14:11,12; 15:7,8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2,3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; I Thessalonians 1:8; II Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; I Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17

XXVII. STEWARDSHIP

(1) We believe “God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer’s cause on earth.”**[100]**

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21, 42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24,25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; I Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19,20; 12; 16:1-4; II Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; I Peter 1:18,19

XXVIII. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

(1) We believe that the local church has the responsibility to exercise church discipline toward sinning members in accordance with I Corinthians 5 and Matthew 18:15-18.

(2) We believe “that the local church possesses, the power to exclude from its bosom, after having solemnly warned them, all those of its members whose profession is belied by their conduct, or who without reasonable cause abandon the holy assemblies, and who persistently show that they have no interest in the different needs of the church or who reject the brotherly exhortations which are addressed to them. The member who has been thus excluded and deprived of all his rights in the church may however continue to benefit of the good will and the spiritual solicitude of those who have had the pain of separating themselves from him. He may, moreover, at his own request, be readmitted to the local church, if his testimony and his conduct demonstrate that he has again become pious and faithful.”**[101]**

(3) We believe “in the case of a common sin (against the Church or the Lord) the Word of God teaches that those seeing this should pray for the transgressor and admonish him with the purpose of correcting him; only in the event of his refusal to accept the admonition should the church subject such a person to excommunication, but even then the church should not consider him an enemy, but should teach him as a brother.”**[102]**

I Corinthians 5:3-5; Galatians 6:1; I Thessalonians 5:11; II Thessalonians 3:6-15; I Timothy 1:3-5; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 2:15; Hebrews 10:25; James 5:19,20; I John 5:16

(4) We believe “the purpose of admonition is love from a pure heart; the

purpose of expulsion is not vengeance, but a means to correct the erring brother and to safeguard the Church from the infection of spiritual corruption.”**[103]**
 Matthew 18:7-9; Galatians 6:1; II Timothy 2:16-19

- [1] The 1963 Southern Baptist Faith and Message
- [2] The 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith
- [3] The 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith
- [4] Systematic Theology - Wayne Gruden
- [5] The 1963 Southern Baptist Faith and Message
- [6] The 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith
- [7] The 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith
- [8] The 1963 Southern Baptist Faith and Message
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