



# Reformation Bible Church

## Book of Church Order and Statement of Faith

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## PROLOGUE

Church life in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century America was torn by a doctrinal battle: the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy. Leaders of the major Protestant denominations assigned diminished importance to historic Christian doctrines, some blatantly denying central truths of Christianity. In the previous century, these denials had become fashionable in seminaries. By the mid-1900s, they were evident in preaching and literature of multiple denominations.

On June 19, 1952, a small group from the farm community of northern Harford County, MD, formalized their convictions by chartering the Evangelical Methodist Church of Dublin. Led by Pastor Donald McKnight (1924–1991), they were motivated by concern for historic, biblical orthodoxy and for the authority of the Bible as God’s inerrant revelation to man—truths that they perceived their Methodist clergy and churches had forsaken. They acted in accordance with Scripture: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (II Cor. 6:17).

Worshipping in an abandoned farmhouse, they prayed for divine guidance and blessing. Soon they became part of a small Fundamentalist denomination, the Evangelical Methodist Churches of America. In due course, they purchased land and constructed their first building. Within a decade, they had undertaken construction of a second building and were a well-recognized, sometimes scorned, entity in the region.

A weekly radio broadcast proclaimed their convictions and progress, as well as the issues that prompted their action. Their testimony attracted families who shared their concerns. From York, Lancaster, Cecil, and Baltimore counties, many came to worship with this growing Harford County assembly. By means of radio and evangelistic crusades, often held in the open air beneath a tent, God blessed, and the congregation continued to grow.

By the mid-1960s, the removal of school-sanctioned Bible reading from state schools compelled this congregation to establish Harford Christian School, which soon became the church’s most visible mission. The church and school continued to attract families from six counties in Maryland and in Pennsylvania, as well as some in Delaware.

In 2013, the congregation found it necessary to terminate denominational affiliation and chose the name Reformation Bible Church (RBC). The name signifies the church’s adherence to Scripture as reaffirmed in the Protestant Reformation. To that end, the historic *London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689* was adopted as the congregation’s Statement of Faith.

Choosing independence, the church also found it to be necessary to define its government and order, ultimately leading to the adoption of the principles and guidelines articulated in this document. In the quest to “let all things be done decently and in order” (I Cor. 14:40), this *Reformation Bible Church Book of Church Order and Statement of Faith* is thus adopted.

*Adopted by unanimous congregational vote on February 27, 2022.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ARTICLES OF CHURCH ORDER</b> .....	3
Article 1: Name .....	3
Article 2: Purpose .....	3
Article 3: Government and Statement of Faith .....	3
Article 4: Membership .....	3
Article 5: Church Discipline .....	5
Article 6: Officers .....	6
Article 7: Meetings .....	12
Article 8: Finances .....	13
Article 9: Harford Christian School .....	13
Article 10: Indemnification .....	14
Article 11: Dispute Resolution .....	14
Article 12: Tax-Exempt Provisions .....	14
Article 13: Amendments .....	15
<b>APPENDIX A: The Apostles Creed</b> .....	16
<b>APPENDIX B: The Statement of Faith</b> .....	17
<b>APPENDIX C: Affirmations and Denials</b> .....	43
<b>APPENDIX D: The Order for Receiving Persons into Church Membership</b> .....	45

# ARTICLES OF CHURCH ORDER

## ARTICLE 1: NAME

This congregation of believers shall be known as Reformation Bible Church. The church is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the state of Maryland.

## ARTICLE 2: PURPOSE

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future U.S. revenue law) for such purposes, including, but not limited to, the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; the establishing and maintaining of religious worship; the teaching of believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture; and the maintaining of missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country.

## ARTICLE 3: GOVERNMENT AND STATEMENT OF FAITH

**3.1.** The government of this church shall be of the congregational type, with authority vested in its members, whose vote shall be final in all matters submitted to them. Christ gives leaders (Elders) to His people and calls His people to submit to these men as they submit to Christ (Heb. 13:17). Therefore, Elders, who are recognized by the members, shall oversee, lead, and shepherd this church as under-shepherds of Jesus Christ, who is the Church's only head.

**3.2.** The Statement of Faith of this church shall be the *London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, with adopted revisions, as stated in the second Appendix to this document.

## ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP

### 4.1 Qualifications for Membership

**4.1.1.** Membership in this church shall be composed of those individuals who profess faith in Jesus Christ, who evidence regeneration, who have been baptized in obedience to Christ, who wholeheartedly believe in the Christian faith as revealed in the Holy Scriptures (summarized in the Apostles' Creed), who agree to submit to this church's Statement of Faith, who are willing to submit to the Elders of the congregation, and who agree to live by the commitments expressed in the member ceremony.

**4.1.2.** Believing that the unity of Christ's church is of higher order than individuals' understandings regarding non-salvific doctrines and practices, we will receive into membership baptized believers, regardless of the mode or age of their baptism, so long as it is Protestant, Trinitarian baptism.

### 4.2 Responsibilities and Privileges of Membership

**4.2.1.** Each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each member has received from God. Only those individuals shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; nonmembers may serve on an ad hoc basis with the approval of the Elders. Notwithstanding, nonmembers may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

**4.2.2.** Members will receive the spiritual care and oversight of the Elders.

**4.2.3.** Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

**4.2.4.** Only members at least 18 years of age are eligible to vote in members' meetings.

**4.2.5.** Any member who vacates himself from Lord's Day attendance for at least six months without legitimate reason shall be considered ineligible for voting in members' meetings. The Elders retain the right to designate inactive members who have thereby forfeited voting rights.

### **4.3 Process for Membership**

**4.3.1.** Any person who desires to become a member may request membership to one of the Elders.

**4.3.2.** Upon receiving the request, the Elders shall interview the candidate regarding basic Christian experience, doctrinal beliefs, and seriousness of intention to wholeheartedly unite with the Church.

**4.3.3.** The candidate shall be recommended to the congregation for membership by a majority vote of the Elders.

**4.3.4.** The Elders shall give notice in at least one corporate worship service that a candidate is to be received into membership. Any member who has a concern about the suitability of a given candidate should voice it privately to an Elder.

**4.3.5.** Applicants shall be welcomed into membership by the current members in a special Membership Ceremony (see Appendix D).

**4.3.6.** When the congregation is without a senior pastor, new members shall not be received until a senior pastor has been installed.

### **4.4 Termination of Membership**

**4.4.1.** The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death.

**4.4.2.** Such termination may also be recognized after a member voluntarily resigns or joins another church.

**4.4.3.** Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

**4.4.4.** For the spiritual well-being of all who enter formally into membership with this assembly, a member who departs amid disciplinary proceedings shall be released from membership to the care of another congregation with a notation to that congregation that such proceedings were under way at the time of the departure.

## ARTICLE 5: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

**5.1.** Any member guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and thus opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the Elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matt. 18:15–17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

**5.2.** Church discipline can include admonition by the Elders or congregation, advisement against participation in the Lord’s Supper for a definite period, removal from office, and termination of membership.<sup>1</sup>

**5.3.** The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined;<sup>2</sup> for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them;<sup>3</sup> for the purity of the church as a whole;<sup>4</sup> for the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians;<sup>5</sup> and supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.<sup>6</sup>

### 5.4 Process of Church Discipline

**5.4.1.** It is the responsibility of the erring member to confess his or her sin to the one(s) sinned against for reconciliation with the offended person(s).<sup>7</sup>

**5.4.2.** It is the responsibility of any member having knowledge of an erring member’s sin to warn and correct him or her in private, in the spirit of meekness, seeking repentance and restoration.<sup>8</sup>

**5.4.3.** If the erring member does not heed these warnings, then the warning member shall request the presence of one or two others and go again to the erring member, repeatedly if necessary, seeking repentance and restoration.<sup>9</sup>

**5.4.4.** If the erring member does not heed these warnings, then the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Elders. The Elders shall take the case into prayerful consideration as to whether the matter should be brought before the congregation. If they deem it necessary, the Elders shall inform the body, for the purpose of publicly and corporately calling the erring member to repentance. No action calling for dismissal shall be taken against any member until the church has first attempted to repeatedly communicate with him or her in writing, citing the offense and providing an opportunity for the member to meet with the Elders.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 18:15–17; II Thess. 3:14–15; I Tim. 5:19–20; I Cor. 5:4–5

<sup>2</sup> Prov. 15:5; 29:15; I Cor. 4:14; Eph. 6:4; I Tim. 3:4–5; Heb. 12:1–11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Prov. 17:10; 25:12; Prov. 27:5; Ecc. 7:5; Matt. 7:26–27; 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; I Cor. 5:5; Gal. 6:1–5; II Thess. 3:6, 14–15; I Tim. 1:20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1:22

<sup>3</sup> Prov. 13:20; Rom. 15:14; I Cor. 5:11; 15:33; Col. 3:16; II Thess. 5:14; I Tim. 5:20; Titus 1:11; Heb. 10:24–25

<sup>4</sup> I Cor. 5:6–7; II Cor. 13:10; Eph. 5:27; II John 10; Jude 24; Rev. 21:2

<sup>5</sup> Prov. 28:7; Matt. 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1–14; Eph. 5:11; II Tim. 3:7; II Pet. 2:2; I John 3:10

<sup>6</sup> Deut. 5:11; I Kings 11:2; II Chron. 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Neh. 9:2; Isa. 52:11; Ezek. 36:20; Matt. 5:16; John 15:8; John 18:17, 25; Rom. 2:24; 15:5–6;

II Cor. 6:14–7:1; Eph. 1:4; 5:27; I Pet. 2:12

<sup>7</sup> Matt. 5:24

<sup>8</sup> Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1

<sup>9</sup> Matt. 18:16

<sup>10</sup> Matt. 18:17a

**5.4.5.** If the erring member does not repent in response to the church, then he or she shall be dismissed from the membership and fellowship of the church.<sup>1</sup>

**5.4.6.** If after dismissal the erring party heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and asks the Elders to be reinstated by the church, then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of membership.<sup>2</sup>

## **ARTICLE 6: OFFICERS**

### **6.1. Elders**

**6.1.1. Definition:** Elders are men above reproach who shepherd the flock of God as Christ shepherds His people. The Elders hold firm to God’s Word, exercise oversight, and exemplify godliness.<sup>3</sup>

#### **6.1.2. Qualifications:**

**6.1.2.1.** The Elders shall be male.<sup>4</sup>

**6.1.2.2.** The Elders must meet the qualifications listed in I Tim. 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9.

**6.1.2.3.** The Elders shall be members.

**6.1.2.4.** The Elders must publicly subscribe to the substance of the Statement of Faith.

**6.1.3. Duties:** The God-given responsibility of the Elders is to bring the Word of God to bear on the life of the congregation, and to that end, they are entrusted with interpreting and applying the Word in submission to the Holy Spirit for the good of the body.<sup>5</sup>

**6.1.3.1. Oversee:** Elders create ministry vision, set ministry philosophy, and care for the flock. Care for the flock includes encouraging members to exercise their gifts and guarding members from false doctrine, within and without the church.<sup>6</sup>

**6.1.3.2. Feed and Shepherd:** Elders are to shepherd or disciple the flock, as the Chief Shepherd has entrusted Elders with His flock.<sup>7</sup>

**6.1.3.3. Reconcile:** Elders shall be responsible for pursuing member reconciliation.<sup>8</sup>

**6.1.3.4. Discipline:** Elders shall be responsible for discipline in accordance with Matt. 18:15–20 (see also I Cor. 5:1–7).

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 18:17b

<sup>2</sup> II Cor. 2:6–8

<sup>3</sup> Acts 6:2–4; 14:23; 15:2, 22; 20:17–35; Phil. 1:1; II Tim. 2:11–12; 3:1–7; 4:14; 5:17, 19; James 5:14; I Pet. 5:1–5

<sup>4</sup> I Cor. 14:34–35; I Tim. 2:8–14

<sup>2</sup> Titus 1:9; I Pet. 5:1–11; Acts 15:2; 20:17–35; I Tim. 4:14

<sup>3</sup> I Cor. 12:4–6; Acts 20:27–31

<sup>4</sup> I Pet. 5:2–4

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 18:15–17; Eph. 4:1–3, 32; I Cor. 6:1–11

**6.1.3.5. Ordain:** Elders shall be responsible for the examination and ordination of men for pastoral ministry.

#### **6.1.4. Roles**

**6.1.4.1. Staff and Lay Elders:** The church may employ an Elder to serve in a full- or part-time pastoral capacity (Staff Elder). Likewise, an Elder may have other employment yet volunteer time to oversee and care for the congregation (Lay Elder).

**6.1.4.2. Teaching and Ruling Elders:** Per the qualifications and duties listed previously, all Elders must be able to give instruction from God's Word and care for souls. However, according to I Tim. 5:17, some Elders may also have a more public ministry of preaching and teaching.

**6.1.4.3.** The Elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The Elders may also propose funding for new paid-staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of Senior and Associate Pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

**6.1.4.4.** The Elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, also be delegated to another staff member.

**6.1.4.5.** The Senior Pastor shall preside as chairman of Elders' meetings.

**6.1.4.6.** Each Elder shall have one vote when motions are made in Elders' meetings.

#### **6.1.5. Nomination, Election, and Dismissal of Elders**

**6.1.5.1.** Appointment of Elders for office within the local church is the responsibility of the existing Eldership under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Divine appointment is recognized both by the inward conviction of the elder candidate and by approval of the congregation having observed in the candidate possession of those gifts and graces required by Scripture. Selection of Elders is of such importance that it should always be undertaken prayerfully and in combination with an honest study of relevant passages of Scripture and a frank evaluation of those under consideration for Eldership.

**6.1.5.2.** The selection of Elders shall be initiated by the existing Elders as they prayerfully recognize those men who are already functioning as leaders within the body according to their gifts.

**6.1.5.3.** The congregation, having carefully reviewed the qualifications and duties of an Elder, may submit names of members for consideration as Elders. The existing Elders shall prayerfully review any submitted names, identifying those men appearing to be already perceived by the congregation as having divine approval on their lives and ministry and having the unreserved affirmation of each Elder.

**6.1.5.4.** The Elders shall require the potential Elder to state the specific instances in which he may differ with the Statement of Faith in any of its statements. The Elders may grant an



exception to any difference of doctrine only if, in their judgment, the candidate's declared difference is not out of accord with a fundamental of the church's system of doctrine and the difference is neither hostile to the system nor strikes at the vitals of religion.

**6.1.5.5.** Any potential Elder shall be urged to engage in self-appraisal and personal evaluation as to whether they should accept his nomination.

**6.1.5.6.** The name of a prospective Elder shall be presented to the congregation three weeks prior to the congregational meeting scheduled for the selection of Elder(s). Prior to the vote, anyone knowing cause for his disqualification should make it known to the Elders. Once affirmed by a congregational vote of two-thirds majority, an installation will be scheduled in which the Elder(s) will be set apart for the office by prayer and the laying on of hands of existing Elders.

**6.1.5.7.** The office of Elder shall be perpetual. An Elder who is unable to fulfill his commitment due to age or debilitating health may assume the role of a nonvoting Elder Emeritus.

**6.1.5.8.** An Elder may be removed from office should he neglect his duty, be guilty of sinful behavior, or hold views contrary to Scripture or to the confession and book of church order of the church. If an accusation is made, the directions of I Tim. 5:19–21 are to be followed. The Elders are to approach the matter with great caution, firmness and impartiality. If the Elders believe dismissal is necessary, they shall call a member's meeting. The Elder shall be dismissed from all responsibilities according to the voting procedure listed in section 7.2. His dismissal must be affirmed by a congregational vote of two-thirds majority.

## **6.2. Stewards<sup>1</sup>**

**6.2.1. Definition:** Stewards serve the congregation by attending to the temporal needs of the church.<sup>2</sup>

### **6.2.2. Qualifications:**

**6.2.2.1.** The Stewards shall be men.

**6.2.2.2.** The Stewards shall meet the qualifications listed in I Tim. 3:8–13.

**6.2.2.3.** The Stewards shall be members.

**6.2.3. Duties:** The God-given responsibility of the Stewards is to serve the congregation, so that Elders might prioritize the spiritual welfare of the flock through the ministry of the Word and prayer.<sup>3</sup>

**6.2.3.1.** The Stewards shall generously minister to the needy and supervise the benevolence funds of the church, aided by the Elders as necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> The office of "Steward" is meant to correspond to the office of "Deacon" in the Authorized Version of I Tim. 3:8–13. Consistent with our Methodist roots, RBC has always referred to these men as "Stewards," and has considered the term essentially a synonym for the deacons.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. 2:6–8; John 13:12–16; Acts 6:1–6; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8, 10, 12–13

<sup>3</sup> Acts 6:1; John 13:12–16; Gal. 2:10; 6:1–2; James 1:27; Matt. 25:31–46

**6.2.3.2.** The Stewards shall be responsible for the preparation of baptisms and the Lord's Supper, the care of widows, and the maintenance of all church property.

**6.2.3.3.** The Stewards shall be called upon to perform whatever legal and business transactions peculiarly designated to them by the laws of Maryland. In the discharge of their duties, the Stewards shall act only at the direction of the Elders and of the congregation.

**6.2.3.3.1.** The Stewards shall designate from among their own number a President and Vice President, which shall serve as officers of the corporation.

#### **6.2.4. Nomination, Election, and Dismissal of Stewards**

**6.2.4.1.** Stewards shall be elected at an annual congregational meeting from a ballot prepared by the Elders and Stewards consisting of nominations submitted by the congregation.

**6.2.4.2.** Any member may nominate men to be considered for the office of Steward.

**6.2.4.3.** Candidates nominated for Steward shall be elected, in accordance with section 7.2.

**6.2.4.4.** Term: The term for Stewards shall be 3 years, with the option of being re-elected to an additional 3-year term. After a Steward has served two consecutive 3-year terms, he may only be elected to the office of Steward after a 1-year absence from the board.

**6.2.4.5.** Resignation: A Steward who resigns voluntarily may be replaced using the normal process for electing a Steward in this section. A replacement candidate may be elected by special election as approved by a vote of eligible members. If a Steward is elected by special election and serves a partial term, then that Steward is eligible to serve for two additional 3-year terms.

**6.2.4.6.** Dismissal: Any accusation against a Steward shall be established before the Elders by at least two witnesses. Upon investigation of the charge, the Elders shall determine an appropriate course of action. If the Elders believe dismissal is necessary, they shall call a member's meeting. The Steward shall be dismissed from all responsibilities according to the voting procedure listed in section 7.2.

#### **6.3. Shared Duties of Elders and Stewards**

**6.3.1.** Elders and Stewards shall be responsible for serving the Lord's Supper.

**6.3.2.** In accordance with I Cor. 6:1–8, Elders and Stewards shall be responsible to help in resolving disputes among members.

**6.3.3.** Elders and Stewards shall be responsible for preparation of the annual budget, as well as the orderly collection and proper disbursement of funds.

**6.3.4.** Elders and Stewards may appoint officers or other members of the congregation to committees to complete various tasks or projects as needed. Each of these committees shall be chaired by an Elder or Steward.

**6.3.5.** Elders and Stewards shall be responsible for the hiring and termination of church staff.

**6.3.6.** Elders and Stewards shall be responsible for the dissolution of the corporation, should the occasion arise, as required under Article 12 of the Book of Church Order.

**6.3.7.** In the event that there are no Elders, Stewards may assume the duties and responsibilities of the Elders and serve in the capacity of Elders until Elders are elected.

#### **6.4. The Senior Pastor**

**6.4.1.** The Senior Pastor shall be an Elder. He shall perform the duties of an Elder described in section 6.1 and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

**6.4.2.** The Senior Pastor shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in this Book of Church Order.

**6.4.3.** In the absence or incapacity of the Senior Pastor, the Elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

**6.4.4.** In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an Elder must be followed. In addition, the congregation must be given adequate opportunity to assess the beliefs, convictions, and preaching gifts of any potential Senior Pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the Elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith, consistent with paragraph 6.1.5.4. Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as Senior Pastor, and the date of the congregational vote on his nomination, must be given on at least two Sunday morning services following the nomination and prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

**6.4.5.** The Senior Pastor's installation shall be deemed his entrance into church membership, provided he is not already a member. This shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married.

#### **6.5. Associate Pastors**

**6.5.1.** The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the Senior Pastor is that of associate.

**6.5.2.** One called as an Associate Pastor who is not currently an Elder shall become an Elder upon his installation. He shall perform the duties of an Elder described in section 6.1 and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

**6.5.3.** The Associate Pastor shall assist the Senior Pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in this Book of Church Order.

**6.5.4.** In the absence or incapacity of the Senior Pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the Associate Pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties.

**6.5.5.** In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an Elder must be followed. In addition, the congregation must be given adequate opportunity to assess the beliefs, convictions, and preaching gifts of any potential Associate Pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the Elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith, consistent with paragraph 6.1.5.4. Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as Associate Pastor, and the date of the congregational vote on his nomination, must be given on at least two Sunday morning services following the nomination and prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

**6.5.6.** The Associate Pastor's installation shall be deemed his entrance into church membership, provided he is not already a member. This shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married.

## **6.6. Clerk**

**6.6.1.** The Clerk, who shall not be an active Elder or paid church staff member, is responsible to record and preserve the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, maintain an accurate roll of the membership, and render reports as requested by the Pastor(s), Elders, Stewards, or the congregation.

**6.6.2.** The aforementioned responsibilities may be delegated to a paid staff member with the approval of the Elders. In such a time as the responsibilities are delegated, the Clerk shall continue to maintain oversight to ensure that matters are handled in a spirit of transparency and accountability.

**6.6.3.** The Clerk shall be nominated by the church Board of Elders and Stewards and elected by the congregation to serve a term of 1 year.

**6.6.4.** In the absence or incapacity of the Clerk, the Elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the Clerk.

**6.6.5.** For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the state of Maryland, the Clerk shall serve as the Secretary of the corporation.

**6.6.6.** The Clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this Book of Church Order shall be available for all church members.

## **6.7. Treasurer**

**6.7.1.** The Treasurer, who shall not be an active elder or paid church staff member, is responsible for the oversight of church funds within the policies established by the church for adequate financial control.

**6.7.2.** The aforementioned responsibilities may be delegated to a paid staff member with the approval of the Elders. In such a time as the responsibilities are delegated, the Treasurer shall continue to maintain oversight of the church finances to ensure that matters are handled in a spirit of transparency and accountability.

**6.7.3.** The Treasurer shall be nominated by the church Board of Elders and Stewards and elected by the congregation to serve a term of 1 year.

## **ARTICLE 7: MEETINGS**

### **7.1. Corporate Worship**

**7.1.1.** The church body will regularly meet for corporate worship on the Lord's Day and for other gatherings for worship, prayer, and fellowship throughout the week, as the Elders determine.

**7.1.2.** Baptisms may take place during the corporate worship on the Lord's Day or at other times, at the discretion of the Elders.

**7.1.3.** The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly during corporate worship to remember the Lord's death till He comes and to celebrate the blessings of the New Covenant in His blood. This body welcomes all who follow Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and who are walking in fellowship with Him and His people to participate in this remembrance.

### **7.2. Members Meetings**

**7.2.1.** Members meetings shall be held as the Elders determine.

**7.2.2.** A members meeting, called the Annual Congregational Meeting, shall be held as soon as possible after the close of each fiscal year.

**7.2.3.** An Elder designated by the Elders, and under the authority of the Elders, shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church.

**7.2.4.** A quorum at a members meeting shall consist of the members present.

**7.2.5.** A simple majority of those in attendance and voting shall be required to pass any measure, except when otherwise stated in this document.

**7.2.6.** The date and purpose of any members meeting shall be announced on at least two consecutive weeks prior to that date.

**7.2.7.** The moderator shall conduct meetings decently and in order. He shall have freedom to conduct the meeting at his discretion based upon his own sense of fairness and what he deems to be in the best interests of the church. The moderator shall give all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter.

**7.2.8.** There shall be no absentee ballots, voting by proxy, nor shall abstentions be counted as votes cast.

**7.2.9.** Should circumstance require, the Elders may choose to hold any annual, regular, or special meeting through virtual means (including, but not limited to, videoconferencing and/or telephonic methods). The chosen means of holding the meeting can vary depending on need and availability but must provide for simultaneous communication of all participants at all times.

### **7.3. Church Board Meetings**

**7.3.1.** Elders meetings and Stewards meetings shall be held as the leadership of those two boards determine.

**7.3.2.** A quorum at any church board meeting shall consist of a simple majority.

**7.3.3.** Should any circumstance require, the leadership of the boards may choose to hold any meeting through virtual means (including but not limited to videoconferencing and/or telephonic methods). The chosen means of holding the meeting can vary depending on need and availability but must provide for simultaneous communication of all participants at all times.

## **ARTICLE 8: FINANCES**

**8.1.** The church is supported by tithes and voluntary contributions.

**8.2.** Other than tithes and offerings, any activity that could produce additional funds for the ministry must be approved by the Elders.

**8.3.** The fiscal year of this corporation shall be from July 1 through June 30.

**8.4.** An annual budget shall be prepared by the Elders and Stewards and shall be submitted to the members for their support.

**8.5.** Congregational approval is necessary for the church to incur long-term indebtedness, to purchase or sell real property, or to construct or remove ministry buildings.

## **ARTICLE 9: HARFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

**9.1.** Harford Christian School is a ministry of Reformation Bible Church.

**9.2.** Harford Christian School shall be governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Directors.

**9.2.1.** The Board of Directors shall be composed of a majority of current Reformation Bible Church officers.

**9.2.2.** The President of the Board of Directors shall be a member of the pastoral staff of Reformation Bible Church.

**9.3.** The Administrator of the school shall be a member in good standing of Reformation Bible Church.

## **ARTICLE 10: INDEMNIFICATION**

**10.1.** The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party to any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit, or proceeding to the full extent allowed under Maryland state law. This indemnification—whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church)—applies if three conditions are met: (1) The action is by reason of the fact that the person is or was an Elder (staff or lay), Steward, officer, employee, or agent of the church; (2) the person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal matters, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful; and (3) the Senior Pastor recommends indemnification and the Elders vote to provide it on behalf of any person. Any determination of good-faith intent shall occur by a majority vote of the Church Board.

## **ARTICLE 11: DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

**11.1.** Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (see, for example, Matt. 18:15–20, I Cor. 6:1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. In addition, the church shall likewise encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or non-Christian and whether individuals or corporate entities.

**11.2.** Legal action brought by any member against the church constitutes termination of membership.

## **ARTICLE 12: TAX-EXEMPT PROVISIONS**

### **12.1. Dissolution**

**12.1.1.** In the event of the dissolution of Reformation Bible Church as a nonprofit corporation, the assets of the corporation shall be given and paid over to a nonprofit corporation of like faith and practice. Said corporations shall be determined according to the voting procedure listed in section 7.2.

**12.1.2.** Notice of dissolution shall be sent in writing to each church member at least 15 days prior to the scheduled meeting, and public notice shall be given at least 45 days prior to the meeting.

**12.1.3.** All recommendations for recipients of the corporation assets shall be made in writing by a member of the corporation to the Elders and Stewards no fewer than 30 days prior to the dissolution meeting. No other recommendations shall be considered.

**12.1.4.** It shall be the duty of the Elders and Stewards to examine all recommendations submitted to them and make their own recommendations to the members concerning the distribution of the church assets.

**12.1.5.** Said recommendation from the Elders and Stewards shall be made available in writing to the members 15 days prior to the dissolution meeting.

**12.1.6.** The decision as to the recipients of the assets of the corporation shall be the mutual consent by secret ballot of the majority of the members present at the dissolution meeting.

**12.1.7.** The Elders and Stewards, in the stead of the members of the corporation, shall assume the responsibility of all dissolution proceedings and shall seek and obtain legal assistance to complete said proceedings.

### **12.2 Private Inurement**

**12.2.1.** No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the tax-exempt purposes of the church.

### **12.3 Political Activities**

**12.3.1.** No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

### **12.4 Exempt Activities Clause**

**12.4.1.** The church shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future U.S. Internal Revenue law) or by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future U.S. Internal Revenue law).

## **ARTICLE 13: AMENDMENTS**

**13.1.** As a working, flexible document, this constitution may be amended, altered, or revised by a two-thirds vote of the eligible members.

**13.2.** Amendments to the constitution shall be presented in writing to the Elders and Stewards and, if accepted, shall be presented to the members for a vote.



## APPENDIX A: THE APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
the Maker of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:  
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried;  
He descended into hell.<sup>1</sup>  
The third day He arose again from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
the holy catholic<sup>2</sup> church;  
the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body;  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> We do not believe that the Scriptures teach that Jesus literally went to hell between His death and resurrection. Rather, we interpret this line as a figure of speech designed to describe the spiritual nature of Christ's sufferings. See *Heidelberg Catechism* Q. 44 or Calvin's *Institutes* 2.16.8–12.

<sup>2</sup> "Catholic" in this sense means "universal."

## **APPENDIX B: REFORMATION BIBLE CHURCH STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Holy Bible in 66 books of the Old and New Testaments is God-breathed, inerrant, infallible, authoritative, and sufficient—the very Word of God. We believe this Word entirely in its historical-grammatical meaning. We believe the *London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689* (LBCF), which is reproduced on the following pages in its original form, to be an accurate exposition of the doctrines of the Holy Bible and subscribe thereunto as a secondary Statement of Faith subordinate to the Word of God.

This Statement of Faith shall be the standard for all public teaching within Reformation Bible Church (RBC). Elders are required to publicly subscribe to the substance of the confession.<sup>1</sup> Subscription is not required of members, but submission to membership includes a willingness to be taught according to the interpretation of Scripture set forward in this confession.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in the spirit of historic Methodism, which is the root of this congregation, all members subscribe to the belief that mutual respect and acceptance be afforded to those who differ. “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.”<sup>3</sup>

That said, we have made the following alterations to the LBCF in accordance with specific doctrinal convictions, practices, and priorities of the RBC. These alterations to the LBCF appear in *italics*.

1. Chapter 7 (Of God’s Covenant) has incorporated the language of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (WCF) in 7.2 and 7.4 (WCF 7.2, 5).
2. Chapter 29 (Of Baptism) has been modified to remove restrictions on the mode of baptism. Furthermore, the language of the WCF has been incorporated in 29.5 (WCF 28.5).
3. A statement has been added to 26.4, clarifying the Confession’s identification of the pope as the Antichrist.
4. A statement has been added to chapters 31 and 32, clarifying our church’s open position regarding the various eschatological viewpoints on the millennium.

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<sup>1</sup> Book of Church Order (BCO) 6.1.2.3 and 6.1.5.4

<sup>2</sup> BCO 4.1.1

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 14:1–5

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Of the Holy Scriptures**

**1.1.** The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence 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. 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 unto 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.<sup>1</sup>

**1.2.** 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, Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude, Revelation.

All which are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.<sup>2</sup>

**1.3.** The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of 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.<sup>3</sup>

**1.4.** 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 upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.<sup>4</sup>

**1.5.** 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 stile, 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 it self to be the Word of

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<sup>1</sup> II Tim. 3:15–17; Isa. 8:20; Luke 16:29,31; Eph. 2:20; Rom. 1:19–21; 2:14–15; Psalm 19:1–3; Heb. 1:1; Prov. 22:19–21; Rom. 15:4; II Pet. 1:19–20

<sup>2</sup> I Tim. 3:16

<sup>3</sup> Luke 24:27, 44; Rom. 3:2

<sup>4</sup> II Pet. 1:19–21; II Tim. 3:16; II Thess. 2:13; I John 5:9

God; yet notwithstanding, our 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, 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 be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.<sup>2</sup>

**1.7.** All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so 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.<sup>3</sup>

**1.8.** The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of 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 therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion the church is finally to appeal unto them. 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 read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.<sup>4</sup>

**1.9.** The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the 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.<sup>5</sup>

**1.10.** The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of counsels, 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 which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.<sup>6</sup>

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Of God and of the Holy Trinity**

**2.1.** 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,

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<sup>1</sup> John 16:13–14; II Cor. 2:10–12; I John 2:20, 27

<sup>2</sup> II Tim. 3:15–17; Gal. 1:8–9; John 6:45; II Cor. 2:9–12; II Cor. 11:13–14; 14:26, 40

<sup>3</sup> II Pet. 3:16; Psalm 19:7; 119:130

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 3:2; Isa. 8:20; Act 15:15; John 5:39; I Cor. 14:6, 9, 11–12, 24, 28; Col. 3:16

<sup>5</sup> II Pet. 1:20–21; Acts 15:15–16

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 22:29, 31–32; Eph. 2:20; Acts 28:23

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 judgements, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.<sup>1</sup>

**2.2.** 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.<sup>2</sup>

**2.3.** 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 dependance on Him.<sup>3</sup>

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Of God's Decree**

**3.1.** 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.<sup>4</sup>

**3.2.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

**3.3.** 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.<sup>6</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> John 5:26; Psalm 148:13; Psalm 119:68; Job 22:2–3; Rom. 11:34–36; Dan. 4:25, 34–35; Heb. 4:13; Ezek. 11:5; Acts 15:18; Psalm 145:17; Rev. 5:12–14

<sup>3</sup> I John 5:7; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; Exod. 3:14; John 14:11; I Cor. 8:6; John 1:14, 18; John 15:26; Gal. 4:6

<sup>4</sup> Isa. 46:10; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:15, 18; James 1:13; I John 1:5; Acts 4:27–28; John 19:11; Num. 23:19; Eph. 1:3–5

<sup>5</sup> Acts 15:18; Rom. 9:11, 13, 16, 18

<sup>6</sup> I Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:34; Eph. 1:5–6; Rom. 9:22–23; Jude 4

**3.4.** 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.<sup>1</sup>

**3.5.** 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.<sup>2</sup>

**3.6.** As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by His spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.<sup>3</sup>

**3.7.** The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.<sup>4</sup>

## **CHAPTER IV Of Creation**

**4.1.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

**4.2.** 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 fulfill it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change.<sup>6</sup>

**4.3.** 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.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> II Tim. 2:19; John 13:18

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; Rom. 8:30; II Tim. 1:9; I Thess. 5:9; Rom. 9:13, 16; Eph. 2:5, 12

<sup>3</sup> I Pet. 1:2; II Thess. 2:13; I Thess. 5:9–10; Rom. 8:30; II Thess. 2:13; I Pet. 1:5; John 10:26; 17:9; 6:64

<sup>4</sup> I Thess. 1:4–5; II Pet. 1:10; Eph. 1:6; Rom. 11:33; Rom. 11:5–6, 20; Luke 10:20

<sup>5</sup> John 1:2–3; Heb. 1:2; Job 26:13; Rom. 1:20; Col. 1:16; Gen. 1:31

<sup>6</sup> Gen. 1:27; Gen. 2:7; Ecc. 7:29; Gen. 1:26; Rom. 2:14–15; Gen. 3:6

<sup>7</sup> Gen. 2:17; Gen. 1:26–28

## CHAPTER V Of Divine Providence

**5.1.** 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.<sup>1</sup>

**5.2.** 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

**5.4.** 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.<sup>4</sup>

**5.5.** 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 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.<sup>5</sup>

**5.6.** 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 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, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.<sup>6</sup>

**5.7.** As the providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a most special manner it taketh care of His church, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. 1:3; Job 38:11; Isa. 46:10–11; Psalm 135:6; Matt. 10:29–31; Eph. 1:11

<sup>2</sup> Acts 2:23; Prov. 16:33; Gen. 8:22

<sup>3</sup> Acts 27:31, 44; Isa. 55:10–11; Hos. 1:7; Rom. 4:19–21; Dan. 3:27

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 11:32–34; II Sam. 24:1; I Chron. 21:1; II Kings 19:28; Psalm 76:10; Gen. 50:20; Isa. 10:6–7, 12; Psalm 50:21; I John 2:16

<sup>5</sup> II Chron. 32:25–26, 31; II Cor. 12:7–9; Rom. 8:28

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 1:24–26, 28; 11:7–8; Deut. 29:4; Matt. 13:12; Deut. 2:30; II Kings 8:12–13; Psalm 81:11–12; II Thess. 2:10–12; Exod. 8:15, 32; Isa. 6:9–10; I Pet. 2:7–8

<sup>7</sup> I Tim. 4:10; Amos 9:8–9; Isa. 43:3–5

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof**

**6.1.** 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 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.<sup>1</sup>

**6.2.** 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.<sup>2</sup>

**6.3.** 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.<sup>3</sup>

**6.4.** 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.<sup>4</sup>

**6.5.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **Of God's Covenant**

**7.1.** The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do 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.<sup>6</sup>

*7.2. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.<sup>7</sup>*

**7.3.** 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.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gen. 2:16–17; Gen. 3:12–13; II Cor. 11:3

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 3:23; Rom. 5:12, etc., Titus 1:15; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10–19

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 5:12–19; I Cor. 15:21–22, 45, 49; Psalm 51:5; Job 14:4; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 6:20, 5:12; Heb. 2:14–15; I Thess. 1:10

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 8:7; Col. 1:21; James 1:14–15; Matt. 15:19

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 7:18, 23; Ecc. 7:20; I John 1:8; Rom. 7:23–25; Gal. 5:17

<sup>6</sup> Luke 17:10; Job 35:7–8

<sup>7</sup> WCF 7.2; Gal. 3:12; Rom. 5:12–20, 10:5; Gen. 2:17; Gal. 3:10

<sup>8</sup> Gen. 2:17; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 3:20–21; Rom. 8:3; Mark 16:15–16; John 3:16; Ezek. 36:26–27; John 6:44–45; Psalm 110:3



**7.4.** 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. *Under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come; which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament.*<sup>1</sup> 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 posterity 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 innocency.<sup>2</sup>

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **Of Christ the Mediator**

**8.1.** 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 savior of His 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.<sup>3</sup>

**8.2.** 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 unto 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.<sup>4</sup>

**8.3.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

**8.4.** This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which that He might discharge He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have born 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

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<sup>1</sup> WCF 7.5

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 3:15; Heb. 1:1; II Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2; Heb. 11:6, 13; Rom. 4:1–2, etc.; Acts 4:12; John 8:56; II Cor. 3:6–9; Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11–12; I Cor. 5:7; Heb. 8–10; John 8:56; I Cor. 10:1–4; Gal. 3:7–9, 14

<sup>3</sup> Isa. 42:1; I Pet. 1:19–20; Acts 3:22; Heb. 5:5–6; Psalm 2:6; Luke 1:33; Eph. 1:22–23; Heb. 1:2; Acts 17:31; Isa. 53:10; John 17:6; Rom. 8:30

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

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

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.<sup>1</sup>

**8.5.** 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.<sup>2</sup>

**8.6.** 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 of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, being the same yesterday, and today, and forever.<sup>3</sup>

**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.<sup>4</sup>

**8.8.** 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 the 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.<sup>5</sup>

**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.<sup>6</sup>

**8.10.** 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.<sup>7</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> Heb. 9:14, 10:14; Rom. 3:25–26; John 17:2; Heb. 9:15

<sup>3</sup> I Cor. 10:4; Heb. 4:2; I Pet. 1:10–11; Rev. 13:8; Heb. 13:8

<sup>4</sup> John 3:13; Acts 20:28

<sup>5</sup> John 6:37; 10:15–16; 17:9; Rom. 5:10; John 17:6; Eph. 1:9; I John 5:20; Rom. 8:9,14; Psalm 110:1; I Cor. 15:25–26; John 3:8; Eph. 1:8

<sup>6</sup> I Tim. 2:5

<sup>7</sup> John 1:18; Col. 1:21; Gal. 5:17; John 16:8; Psalm 110:3; Luke 1:74–75

## **CHAPTER IX**

### **Of Free Will**

**9.1.** God hath indued 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.<sup>1</sup>

**9.2.** 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 mutable, so that He might fall from it.<sup>2</sup>

**9.3.** 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.<sup>3</sup>

**9.4.** 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.<sup>4</sup>

**9.5.** The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory only.<sup>5</sup>

## **CHAPTER X**

### **Of Effectual Calling**

**10.1.** 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.<sup>6</sup>

**10.2.** This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature co-working with His special grace, 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 then that which raised up Christ from the dead.<sup>7</sup>

**10.3.** Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit; who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth; so also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 17:12; James 1:14; Deut. 30:19

<sup>2</sup> Ecc. 7:29; Gen. 3:6

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 5:6; 8:7; Eph. 2:1, 5; Titus 3:3–5; John 6:44

<sup>4</sup> Col. 1:13; John 8:36; Phil. 2:13; Rom. 7:15, 18–19, 21, 23

<sup>5</sup> Eph. 4:13

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 8:30; 11:7; Eph. 1:10–11; II Thess. 2:13–14; Eph. 2:1–6; Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:17–18; Ezek. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27; Eph. 1:19; Psalm 110:3; Song 1:4

<sup>7</sup> I Tim. 1:9; Eph. 2:8; I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:5; John 5:25; Eph. 1:19–20

<sup>8</sup> John 3:3, 5–6, 8

**10.4.** 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.<sup>1</sup>

## **CHAPTER XI Of Justification**

**11.1.** 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, they receiving and resting on Him, and His righteousness, by faith, which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God.<sup>2</sup>

**11.2.** 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.<sup>3</sup>

**11.3.** 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 any thing 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.<sup>4</sup>

**11.4.** God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fulness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them.<sup>5</sup>

**11.5.** 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.<sup>6</sup>

**11.6.** 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.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 22:14; 13:20–21; Heb. 6:4–5; John 6:44–45,65; I John 2:24–25; Acts 4:12; John 4:22; 17:3

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 3:24, 8:30; Rom. 4:5–8; Eph. 1:7; I Cor. 1:30–31; Rom. 5:17–19; Phil. 3:8–9; Eph. 2:8–10; John 1:12; Rom. 5:17

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 3:28; Gal. 5:6; James 2:17, 22, 26

<sup>4</sup> Heb. 10:14; I Pet. 1:18–19; Isa. 53:5–6; Rom. 8:32; II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 3:26; Eph. 1:6–7; 2:7

<sup>5</sup> Gal. 3:8; I Pet. 1:2; I Tim. 2:6; Rom. 4:25; Col. 1:21–22; Titus 3:4–7

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 6:12; I John 1:7, 9; John 10:28; Psalm 89:31–33; Psalm 32:5; Psalm 51; Matt. 26:75

<sup>7</sup> Gal. 3:9; Rom. 4:22–24

## **CHAPTER XII**

### **Of Adoption**

**12.1.** 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 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.<sup>1</sup>

## **CHAPTER XIII**

### **Of Sanctification**

**13.1.** 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.<sup>2</sup>

**13.2.** 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.<sup>3</sup>

**13.3.** 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 to them.<sup>4</sup>

## **CHAPTER XIV**

### **Of Saving Faith**

**14.1.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

**14.2.** 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

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<sup>1</sup> Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:4–5; John 1:12; Rom. 8:17; II Cor. 6:18; Rev. 3:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18; Psalm 103:13; Prov. 14:26; I Pet. 5:7; Heb. 12:6; Isa. 54:8–9; Lam. 3:31; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 1:14; 6:12

<sup>2</sup> Acts 20:32; Rom. 6:5–6; John 17:17; Eph. 3:16–19; I Thess. 5:21–23; Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:24; Col. 1:11; II Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14

<sup>3</sup> I Thess. 5:23; Rom. 7:18, 23; Gal. 5:17; I Pet. 2:11

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 7:23, 6:14; Eph. 4:15–16; II Cor. 3:18, 7:1

<sup>5</sup> II Cor. 4:13; Eph. 2:8; Rom. 10:14, 17; Luke 17:5; I Pet. 2:2; Acts 20:32

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.<sup>1</sup>

**14.3.** 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.<sup>2</sup>

## **CHAPTER XV**

### **Of Repentance unto Life and Salvation**

**15.1.** Such of the elect as are converted at riper years, having sometimes lived in the state of nature, and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, God in their effectual calling giveth them repentance unto life.<sup>3</sup>

**15.2.** 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.<sup>4</sup>

**15.3.** 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 endeavor, by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well pleasing in all things.<sup>5</sup>

**15.4.** 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.<sup>6</sup>

**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.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 24:14; Psalm 19:7–10; 119:72; II Tim. 1:12; John 15:14; Isa. 66:2; Heb. 11:13; John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Acts 15:11

<sup>2</sup> Heb. 5:13–14; Matt. 6:30; Rom. 4:19–20; II Pet. 1:1; Eph. 6:16; I John 5:4–5; Heb. 6:11–12; Col. 2:2; Heb. 12:2

<sup>3</sup> Titus 3:2–5

<sup>4</sup> Ecc. 7:20; Luke 22:31–32

<sup>5</sup> Zech. 12:10; Acts 11:18; Ezek. 36:31; II Cor. 7:11; Psalm 119:6, 128

<sup>6</sup> Luke 19:8; I Tim. 1:13, 15

<sup>7</sup> Rom. 6:23; Isa. 1:16–18, 55:7

## CHAPTER XVI Of Good Works

**16.1.** 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.<sup>1</sup>

**16.2.** 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.<sup>2</sup>

**16.3.** 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 are they 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.<sup>3</sup>

**16.4.** 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.<sup>4</sup>

**16.5.** 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 judgement.<sup>5</sup>

**16.6.** 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 unreprouvable 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.<sup>6</sup>

**16.7.** 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.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Micah 6:8; Heb. 13:21; Matt. 15:9; Isa. 29:13

<sup>2</sup> James 2:18, 22; Psalm 116:12–13; I John 2:3, 5; II Pet. 1:5–11; Matt. 5:16; I Tim. 6:1; I Pet. 2:15; Phil 1:11; Eph. 2:10; Rom. 6:22

<sup>3</sup> John 15:4–5; II Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:12–13; Heb. 6:11–12; Isa. 64:7

<sup>4</sup> Job 9:2–3; Gal. 5:17; Luke 17:10

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:8–9; Rom. 4:6; Gal. 5:22–23; Isa. 64:6; Psalm 143:2

<sup>6</sup> Eph. 1:6; I Pet. 2:5; Matt. 25:21, 23; Heb. 6:10

<sup>7</sup> 2Kings 10:30; 21:27, 29; Gen. 4:5; Heb. 11:4, 6; I Cor. 13:1; Matt. 6:2, 5; Amos 5:21–22; Rom. 9:16; Titus 3:5; Job 21:14–15; Matt. 25:41–43

## **CHAPTER XVII**

### **Of Perseverance of the Saints**

**17.1.** 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.<sup>1</sup>

**17.2.** 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 & the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of Grace from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.<sup>2</sup>

**17.3.** 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 judgements upon themselves, yet they shall renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.<sup>3</sup>

## **CHAPTER XVIII**

### **Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation**

**18.1.** Although temporary believers, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor 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, 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.<sup>4</sup>

**18.2.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John 10:28–29; Phil. 1:6; II Tim. 2:19; I John 2:19; Psalm 89:31–32; I Cor. 11:32; Mal. 3:6

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8:30; 9:11, 16; 5:9–10; John 14:19; Heb. 6:17–18; I John 3:9; Jer. 32:40

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 26:70, 72, 74; Isa. 64:5, 9; Eph. 4:30; Psalm 51:10, 12; Psalm 32:3–4; II Sam. 12:14; Luke 22:32, 61–62

<sup>4</sup> Job 8:13–14; Matt. 7:22–23; I John 2:3; 3:14, 18–19, 21, 24; 5:13; Rom. 5:2, 5

<sup>5</sup> Heb. 6:11, 17–19; II Pet. 1:4–5, 10–11; Rom. 8:15–16; I John 3:1–3



**18.3.** 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 their 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.<sup>1</sup>

**18.4.** 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 mean time they are preserved from utter despair.<sup>2</sup>

## **CHAPTER XIX**

### **Of the Law of God**

**19.1.** 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.<sup>3</sup>

**19.2.** 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.<sup>4</sup>

**19.3.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

**19.4.** 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.<sup>6</sup>

**19.5.** The moral law doth for ever 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.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. 50:10; Psalm 88; 77:1–12; I John 4:13; Heb. 6:11–12; Rom. 5:1–2, 5; 14:17; Psalm 119:32; Rom. 6:1–2; Titus 2:11–12, 14

<sup>2</sup> Song 5:2–3, 6; Psalm 51:8, 12, 14; 116:11; 77:7–8; 31:22; 30:7; I John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Psalm 42:5, 11; Lam. 3:26–31

<sup>3</sup> Gen. 1:27; Ecc. 7:29; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:10, 12

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 2:14–15; Deut. 10:4

<sup>5</sup> Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:17; I Cor. 5:7; Col. 2:14, 16–17; Eph. 2:14, 16

<sup>6</sup> I Cor. 9:8–10

<sup>7</sup> Rom. 13:8–10; James 2:8, 10–12; Matt. 5:17–19; Rom. 3:31

**19.6.** 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 rigor 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.<sup>1</sup>

**19.7.** 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.<sup>2</sup>

## **CHAPTER XX**

### **Of the Gospel, and of the Extent of the Grace Thereof**

**20.1.** 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.<sup>3</sup>

**20.2.** 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.<sup>4</sup>

**20.3.** 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 so do; 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.<sup>5</sup>

**20.4.** 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.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rom. 6:14; Gal. 2:16; Rom. 8:1; 10:4; 3:20; 7:7; 6:12–14; I Pet. 3:8–13

<sup>2</sup> Gal. 3:21; Ezek. 36:27

<sup>3</sup> Gen. 3:15; Rev. 13:8

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 1:17; 10:14–15, 17; Prov. 29:18; Isa. 25:7; 60:2–3

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 147:20; Acts 16:7; Rom. 1:18–32

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 110:3; I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 1:19–20; John 6:44; II Cor. 4:4, 6

## **CHAPTER XXI**

### **Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience**

**21.1.** 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 rigor 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 everlasting damnation: as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto Him not out of a 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 the 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, then believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.<sup>1</sup>

**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, and absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.<sup>2</sup>

**21.3.** 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.<sup>3</sup>

## **CHAPTER XXII**

### **Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day**

**22.1.** The light of nature shows 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 imaginations, and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.<sup>4</sup>

**22.2.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

**22.3.** Prayer with thanksgiving, being one special 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

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<sup>1</sup> Gal. 3:13; 1:4; Acts 26:18; Rom. 8:3, 28; I Cor. 15:54–57; II Thess. 1:10; Rom. 8:15; Luke 1:73–75; I John 4:18; Gal. 3:9, 14; John 7:38–39; Heb. 10:19–21

<sup>2</sup> James 4:12; Rom. 14:4; Acts 4:19; 5:29; I Cor. 7:23; Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:20, 22–23; I Cor. 3:5; II Cor. 1:24

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 6:1–2; Gal. 5:13; II Pet. 2:18, 21

<sup>4</sup> Jer. 10:7; Mark 12:33; Deut. 12:32; Exod. 20:4–6

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 4:9–10; John 4:23; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 1:25; Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10; John 14:6; I Tim. 2:5

His will; with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, in a known tongue.<sup>1</sup>

**22.4.** 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.<sup>2</sup>

**22.5.** 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 thanksgiving, upon special occasions, ought to be used in an holy and religious manner.<sup>3</sup>

**22.6.** 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 every where 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 willfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God by His Word, or providence calleth thereunto.<sup>4</sup>

**22.7.** As it is of the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set a part 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.<sup>5</sup>

**22.8.** The sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations, but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.<sup>6</sup>

## **CHAPTER XXIII**

### **Of Lawful Oaths and Vows**

**23.1.** 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.<sup>7</sup>

**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

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 95:1-7; 65:2; John 14:13-14; Rom. 8:26; I John 5:14; I Cor. 14:16-17

<sup>2</sup> I Tim. 2:1-2; II Sam 7:29, 12:21-23; I John 5:16

<sup>3</sup> I Tim. 4:13; II Tim. 4:2; Luke 8:18; Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; Matt. 28:19-20; I Cor. 11:26; Esther 4:16; Joel 2:12; Exod. 15:1-19; Psalm 107

<sup>4</sup> John 4:21; Mal. 1:11; I Tim. 2:8; Acts 10:2; Matt. 6:11; Psalm 55:17; Matt. 6:6; Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42

<sup>5</sup> Exod. 20:8; I Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10

<sup>6</sup> Isa. 58:13; Neh. 13:15-22; Matt. 12:1-3

<sup>7</sup> Exod. 20:7; Deut. 10:20; Jer. 4:2; II Chron. 6:22-23

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.<sup>1</sup>

**23.3.** 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 the truth; for that by rash, false, and vain oaths the Lord is provoked, and for them this land mourns.<sup>2</sup>

**23.4.** An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation.<sup>3</sup>

**23.5.** 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 popish 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.<sup>4</sup>

## **CHAPTER XXIV**

### **Of the Civil Magistrate**

**24.1.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

**24.2.** It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate when called thereunto; 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.<sup>6</sup>

**24.3.** 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.<sup>7</sup>

## **CHAPTER XXV**

### **Of Marriage**

**25.1.** 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.<sup>8</sup>

**25.2.** Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of man-kind with a legitimate issue, and for preventing of uncleanness.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5:34, 37; James 5:12; Heb. 6:16; II Cor. 1:23; Neh. 13:25

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 19:12; Jer. 23:10

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 24:4

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 76:11; Gen. 28:20–22; I Cor. 7:2, 9; Eph. 4:28; Matt. 19:11

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 13:1–4

<sup>6</sup> II Sam. 23:3; Psalm 82:3–4; Luke 3:14

<sup>7</sup> Rom. 13:5–7; I Pet. 2:17; I Tim. 2:1–2

<sup>8</sup> Gen. 2:14; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:5–6

<sup>9</sup> Gen. 2:18; 1:28; I Cor. 7:2, 9

**25.3.** 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.<sup>1</sup>

**25.4.** Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity, forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous marriage ever be made lawful, by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife.<sup>2</sup>

## **CHAPTER XXVI**

### **Of the Church**

**26.1.** 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.<sup>3</sup>

**26.2.** 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.<sup>4</sup>

**26.3.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

**26.4.** 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, 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.<sup>6\*</sup>

**26.5.** In the execution of this power wherewith He is so entrusted, 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

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. 13:4; I Tim. 4:3; I Cor. 7:39; Neh. 13:25–27

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 18; Mark 6:18; I Cor. 5:1

<sup>3</sup> Heb. 12:23; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:10, 22–23; 5:23, 27, 32

<sup>4</sup> I Cor. 1:2; Acts 11:26; Rom. 1:7; Eph. 1:20–22

<sup>5</sup> I Cor. 5; Rev. 2–3; Rev. 18:2; II Thess. 2:11–12; Matt. 16:18; Psalm 72:17; 102:28; Rev. 12:17

<sup>6</sup> Col. 1:18; Matt. 28:18–20; Eph. 4:11–12; II Thess. 2:2–9

\* **ADDITIONAL STATEMENT TO 26.4:** United in the belief that the Pope of Rome is not “in any sense head [of the church]; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ,” the church leaves open to conscience the question of whether there may be an additional personage who may fulfill the prophecies of II Thess. 2, Rev. 13 and 17, and Dan. 7–9, and 11. The church accepts as within the pale of Christian orthodoxy both those who believe that the Pope or the papacy is the final antichrist and those who believe that while the Pope and the papacy are properly described as antichrist “in the church,” there will be a secular antichrist in the last days immediately prior to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Free Presbyterian Church of North America Additional Statement on WCF 25.6).

mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship, which He requireth of them in the world.<sup>1</sup>

**26.6.** 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.<sup>2</sup>

**26.7.** 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 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.<sup>3</sup>

**26.8.** 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 entrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world are bishops or elders, and deacons.<sup>4</sup>

**26.9.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

**26.10.** 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 toward 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.<sup>6</sup>

**26.11.** 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.<sup>7</sup>

**26.12.** 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.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John 10:16, 12:32; Matt. 28:20; Matt. 18:15–20

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:2; Acts 2:41–42; 5:13–14; II Cor. 9:13

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 18:17–18; I Cor. 5:4–5; 5:13; II Cor. 2:6–8

<sup>4</sup> Acts 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1

<sup>5</sup> Acts 14:23; I Tim. 4:14; Acts 6:3, 5–6

<sup>6</sup> Acts 6:4; Heb. 13:17; I Tim. 5:17–18; Gal. 6:6–7; II Tim. 2:4; I Tim. 3:2; I Cor. 9:6–14

<sup>7</sup> Acts 11:19–21; I Pet. 4:10–11

<sup>8</sup> I Thess. 5:14; II Thess. 3:6, 14–15

**26.13.** 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.<sup>1</sup>

**26.14.** 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 it (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 amongst themselves for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification.<sup>2</sup>

**26.15.** 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 entrusted 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.<sup>3</sup>

## **CHAPTER XXVII**

### **Of the Communion of Saints**

**27.1.** 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.<sup>4</sup>

**27.2.** 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 relations 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.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 18:15–17; Eph. 4:2–3

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 6:18; Psalm 122:6; Rom. 16:1–2; III John 8–10

<sup>3</sup> Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22–23, 25; II Cor. 1:24; I John 4:1

<sup>4</sup> I John 1:3; John 1:16; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 6:5–6; Eph. 4:15–16; I Cor. 12:7; 3:21–23; I Thess. 5:11, 14; Rom. 1:12; I John 3:17–18; Gal. 6:10

<sup>5</sup> Heb. 10:24–25; 3:12–13; Acts 11:29–30; Eph. 6:4; I Cor. 12:14–27; Acts 5:4; Eph. 4:28



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

**28.1.** Baptism and the Lords 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.<sup>1</sup>

**28.2.** These holy appointments are to be administered by those only who are qualified and thereunto called according to the commission of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER XXIX

### Of Baptism

**29.1.** *Baptism is an ordinance of the new testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church; but also, to be unto him a sign of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.*<sup>3</sup>

**29.2.** *Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are proper subjects of this ordinance.*<sup>4</sup>

**29.3.** The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup>

**29.4.** *Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or by immersion.*<sup>6</sup>

**29.5.** *Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated, or saved, without it; or, that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.*<sup>7</sup>

## CHAPTER XXX

### Of the Lord's Supper

**30.1.** 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 unto Him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other.<sup>8</sup>

**30.2.** 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

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 28:19–20; I Cor. 11:26

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 4:1

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:3–5; Gal. 3:27; Titus 3:5; Mark 1:4

<sup>4</sup> Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36–37; 2:41; 8:12; 18:8

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 28:19–20; Acts 8:38

<sup>6</sup> Mark 7:4; Acts 2:41; 16:33

<sup>7</sup> WCF 28.5; Luke 7:30; Acts 10:2, 4, 22, 31, 45, 47; Acts 8:13, 23

<sup>8</sup> I Cor. 11:23–26; 10:16–17, 21

the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable, injurious to Christ's own only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.<sup>1</sup>

**30.3.** 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 an holy use, and to take and break the bread; to take the cup, and, they communicating also themselves, to give both to the communicants.<sup>2</sup>

**30.4.** The denial of the cup to the people, worshiping 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.<sup>3</sup>

**30.5.** The outward elements in this ordinance, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him crucified, as that truly, although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the name 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.<sup>4</sup>

**30.6.** 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.<sup>5</sup>

**30.7.** 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.<sup>6</sup>

**30.8.** 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 judgement to themselves.<sup>7</sup>

## CHAPTER XXXI

### Of the State of Man after Death and of the Resurrection of the Dead

**31.1.** 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.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. 9:25–26, 28; I Cor. 11:24; Matt. 26:26–27

<sup>2</sup> I Cor. 11:23–26, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 26:26–28; 15:9; Exod. 20:4–5

<sup>4</sup> I Cor. 11:26–28

<sup>5</sup> Acts 3:21; Luke 24:6, 39; I Cor. 11:24–25

<sup>6</sup> I Cor. 10:16; 11:23–26

<sup>7</sup> II Cor. 6:14–15; I Cor. 11:29; Matt. 7:6

<sup>8</sup> Gen. 3:19; Acts 13:36; Ecc. 12:7; Luke 23:43; II Cor. 5:1, 6, 8; Phil. 1:23; Heb. 12:3; Jude 1:6–7; I Pet. 3:19; Luke 16:23–24

**31.2.** 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.<sup>1</sup>

**31.3.** The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor; the bodies of the just, by His spirit, unto honor, and be made conformable to His own glorious body.<sup>2</sup>

## **CHAPTER XXXII**

### **Of the Last Judgment**

**32.1.** 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.<sup>3</sup>

**32.2.** 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 reward, in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.<sup>4</sup>

**32.3.** As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgement, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity, so will He have that 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.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Additional Statement on 31.2 and 32.1–3**

We do not interpret these sections of the London Baptist Confession as restricting orthodox views of eschatology. The return of Christ will be actual, physical, and visible, and at a future date known only unto God. We believe that the historic positions regarding Millennialism (Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Premillennialism) each fall within the scope of historic orthodoxy and may therefore be believed and taught within the confessional unity and fellowship of our church. Subscription to our confession does not restrict one's views regarding millennialism.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I Cor. 15:51–52; I Thess. 4:17; Job 19:26–27; I Cor. 15:42–43

<sup>2</sup> Acts 24:15; John 5:28–29; Phil. 3:21

<sup>3</sup> Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27; I Cor. 6:3; Jude 1:6; II Cor. 5:10; Ecc. 12:14; Matt. 12:36; Rom. 14:10, 12; Matt. 25:32–46

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 9:22–23; Matt. 25:21, 34; II Tim. 4:8; Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:48; II Thess. 1:7–10

<sup>5</sup> II Cor. 5:10–11; II Thess. 1:5–7; Mark 13:35–37; Luke 12:25–40; Rev. 22:20

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Free Presbyterian Church of North America, additional statement to WCF 32.2, 33.1–3.

## **APPENDIX C: AFFIRMATIONS AND DENIALS**

The *London Baptist Confession of Faith* is a historic confession and, as such, does not address some of the contemporary issues on which we as a church must be clear. To that end, we declare the following additional Affirmations and Denials.

### **Article 1: Inerrancy**

We AFFIRM that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud or deceit.<sup>1</sup>

We DENY that biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further DENY that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on Creation and the Flood.<sup>2</sup>

### **Article 2: Ecclesiastical Separation**

We AFFIRM that to be faithful to Christ, it is the duty of particular churches to maintain the highest possible standards of purity of doctrine and practice.<sup>3</sup>

We AFFIRM that true Gospel ministers and congregations must not grant Christian recognition or assistance to those who have denied the faith or have adopted the moral relativity of the world in defiance of the ethical standards of Scripture.<sup>4</sup>

We further AFFIRM the biblical responsibility of elders and congregations to be vigilant to guard Christ's flock from those who promote false doctrine, and to repudiate all false ecumenism by not cooperating with brethren who maintain Christian fellowship with those who deny the faith.<sup>5</sup>

We DENY that refusing Christian fellowship to false teachers and false congregations is schismatic. We also DENY that the glory of God and good of the church are properly advanced through theological and ecclesiastical cooperation with those who have denied the Gospel.<sup>6</sup>

### **Article 3: Cessationism**

We AFFIRM that the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church begins with the conviction of sin and regeneration and continues through sanctification and the outworking of personal gifts for the edification of the local church.<sup>7</sup>

We AFFIRM that the supernatural gifts of the apostolic church (prophecy, tongues, healing, and miracles) ceased with the days of the apostles.<sup>8</sup>

We DENY that modern-day claims of these revelatory gifts are valid. We further DENY the continuation of objective revelation in any form, "Those former ways of God's revealing his will to his people now being ceased."<sup>9</sup>

We DENY that the apostolic, miraculous sign gifts are either normative or necessary for the ongoing life of the church.

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<sup>1</sup> II Tim. 3:16–17; II Pet. 1:20–21; John 17:17; I Cor. 2:13; Heb. 6:18; Psalm 18:30; Titus 1:2

<sup>2</sup> Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, Article 12

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 93:5; 96:9

<sup>4</sup> Eph. 5:11; II Cor. 6:14–18; Gal. 1:8–9; I Tim. 1:3, 6:3–5; II Tim. 2:16–18; Titus 3:10–11; Matt. 5:17–20; I Cor. 5:11

<sup>5</sup> II Thess. 3:14–15; II John 10–11

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Free Presbyterian Church of North America, Addendum to WCF 25

<sup>7</sup> John 16:7–11; II Cor. 3:18; I Cor. 12:4–11; Eph. 4:7–13

<sup>8</sup> I Cor. 13:8–13; 2 Cor. 12:12

<sup>9</sup> II Pet. 1:16–21; Heb. 2:3–4; LBCF 1:1

#### **Article 4: Young Earth Creationism**

We AFFIRM that the days in Genesis are 6, consecutive, literal (24 hour) days of creation.<sup>1</sup>

We DENY that the days of creation are symbolic of long ages or that millions of years can be placed between the days or before the 6 days of creation.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Article 5: Gender and Homosexuality**

We AFFIRM the Scriptural position that adultery, heterosexual fornication, homosexuality, incest, bestiality, and pedophilia are violations of God’s will as expressions of human sexuality and that all sexual activity outside of biblical marriage is sin. We further AFFIRM that as homosexual acts are sinful, so homosexual attraction and homosexual orientation are against nature and sinful.<sup>3</sup>

We AFFIRM that man is created in the image of God in two distinct sexes, male and female, and that men and women must accept the God-ordained link between one’s biological sex and one’s self-conception as male or female.<sup>4</sup>

We AFFIRM that persons engaged in homosexuality or transgenderism can know both forgiveness of sin and power over sin.<sup>5</sup>

We DENY that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God’s holy purposes in creation and redemption. We also DENY that the approval of homosexuality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Article 6: Biblical Gender Roles**

We AFFIRM that the Scripture reveals a pattern of complementary order between men and women, and that this order is itself a testimony to the Gospel, even as it is the gift of our Creator and Redeemer. We also AFFIRM that all Christians are called to service within the body of Christ, and that God has given to both men and women important and strategic roles within the home, the church, and the society. We further AFFIRM that the teaching office of the church is assigned to men only, and only to those men who are called of God in fulfillment of the biblical teachings, and that men are to lead in their homes as husbands and fathers who fear and love God. Their leadership within the assembly will be manifest in teaching and preaching, in accordance with the biblical instruction that men are to teach and exercise spiritual stewardship over the assembly.<sup>7</sup>

We DENY that the distinction of roles between men and women revealed in the Bible is evidence of mere cultural conditioning or a manifestation of male oppression or prejudice against women. We also DENY that this biblical distinction of roles excludes women from meaningful ministry in Christ’s kingdom, such as teaching children or other women. We further DENY that any church can confuse these issues without damaging its witness to the Gospel.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gen. 1:1–31; Exod. 20:8–11

<sup>2</sup> Answers in Genesis. “Affirmations and Denials Essential to a Consistent Christian (Biblical) Worldview.” Article 7

<sup>3</sup> Exod. 20:14; Lev. 18:22–23, 20:13; Rom. 1:26–27, 32; I Cor. 6:9–11, 18–20; I Thess. 4:3–8; Heb. 13:4; Jude 7

<sup>4</sup> Gen. 1:26–28; Deut. 22:5; Matt. 19:4–9

<sup>5</sup> Isa. 59:1; I Cor. 6:11; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:20–24; I Tim. 1:15; Titus 2:11–12

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from the Nashville Statement, Articles 7, 10, and 13; and the Free Presbyterian Church of North America Statement on Sexual Ethics

<sup>7</sup> I Cor. 11:3–5; Eph. 5:22–24; I Pet. 3:1–7; I Cor. 14:34–35; I Tim. 2:8–14

<sup>8</sup> Adapted from *Together for the Gospel Affirmations and Denials*, Article 16.

## **APPENDIX D: THE ORDER FOR RECEIVING PERSONS INTO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

On the day appointed, all that are to be received into the church shall be called forward, and the minister, addressing the people, shall say:

*Dearly beloved, the church is of God, and will be preserved to the end of time, for the promotion of His worship and the due administration of His Word and ordinances, the maintenance of Christian fellowship and discipline, the edification of believers, and the conversion of the world. All, of every age and station, stand in need of the means of grace which it alone supplies.*

*Into this holy fellowship, the persons before you, who have received the ordinance of baptism, who have learned the nature of these privileges and duties, and who have also been instructed in the teachings and the aims of Reformation Bible Church, come seeking admission. We now propose in the fear of God to question them as to their faith and purpose, that you may know that they are proper persons to be admitted into this church.*

*Dearly beloved, you profess to have a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from your sins, and to become a faithful servant in the kingdom of God; you seek the fellowship of the people of God, to assist you in working out your salvation; I therefore require you:*

Then shall the minister question each of the persons to be received. Let all the Christians answer the vows together.

### 1. Repentance

*Question: Do you renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that you will not follow or be led by them?*

*Answer: I renounce them all.*

### 2. Faith

*Question: Do you believe that the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments, is inspired, inerrant, infallible, sufficient, and authoritative; the very Word of God?*

*Do you further believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the Virgin Mary; that He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; that the third day He rose again from the dead; that He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand*

*of God the Father Almighty; and that from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead?*

*And do you believe in the Holy Spirit; the blood-bought church; the communion of the saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting?*

*Answer: All this I steadfastly believe.*

### 3. Obedience

*Question: Will you then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life?*

*Answer: I will endeavor so to do, God being my helper.*

### 4. Service.

*Question: Will you be loyal to Reformation Bible Church and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your tithes, your gifts, and your service?*

*Answer: I will.*

The minister shall say to the candidates:

*We rejoice to recognize you as members of the church of Christ and to bid you welcome to all its privileges; and in token of our brotherly love, we give you the right hand of fellowship and pray that you may be numbered with His people here and with His saints in glory everlasting.*

And the minister shall say to the congregation:

*Brethren, I commend to your love and care these persons whom we this day recognize as members of the church of Christ. Will you do all that is in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love?*

*Answer: We will.*

Then shall the minister say:

*The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.*

Then shall members be invited to give the new members the right hand of fellowship at the close of the service.