

1689 SECOND BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH WITH COMMENTARY AND HIGHLIGHTING

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION, 1677

To The Judicial and Impartial Reader

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

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

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

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

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

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

And verily there is one spring and cause of the decay of religion in our day which we cannot but touch upon and earnestly urge a redress of, and that is the neglect of the worship of God in families by those to whom the charge and conduct of them is committed. May not the gross ignorance and instability of many, with the profaneness of others, be justly charged upon their parents and masters, who have not trained them up in the way wherein they ought to walk when they were young, but have neglected those frequent and solemn commands which the Lord hath laid upon them, so to catechise and instruct them that their tender years might be seasoned with the knowledge of the truth of God as revealed in the Scriptures; and also by their own omission of prayer and other duties of religion of their families, together with the ill example of their loose conversation, having, inured them first to a neglect and the contempt of all piety and religion? We know this will not excuse the blindness and wickedness of any, but certainly it will fall heavy upon those that have been thus the occasion thereof; they indeed die in their sins, but will not their blood be required of those under whose care they were, who yet permitted them to go on without warning - yea, led them into the paths of destruction? And will not the diligence of Christians with respect to the discharge of these duties in ages past rise up in judgment against and condemn many of those who would be esteemed such now?

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

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

Hanserd Knollys	Pastor	Broken Wharf	London
William Kiffin	Pastor	Devonshire-square	London
John Harris	Pastor	Joiner's Hall	London
William Collins	Pastor	Petty France	London
Hercules Collins	Pastor	Wapping	London

Robert Steed	Pastor	Broken Wharf	London
Leonard Harrison	Pastor	Limehouse	London
George Barret	Pastor	Mile End Green	London
Isaac Lamb	Pastor	Pennington-street	London
Richard Adams	Minister	Shad Thames	Southwark
Benjamin Keath	Pastor	Horse-lie-down	Southwark
Andrew Gifford	Pastor	Bristol, Fryars	Som. & Glouc.
Thomas Vaux	Pastor	Broadmead	Som. & Glouc.
Thomas Winnel	Pastor	Taunton	Som. & Glouc.
James Hitt	Preacher	Dalwood	Dorset
Richard Tidmarsh	Minister	Oxford City	Osen
William Facey	Pastor	Reading	Berks
Samuel Buttel	Minister	Plymouth	Devon
Christopher Price	Minister	Abergavenny	Monmouth
Daniel Finch	Minister	Kingsworth	Herts
John Ball	Minister	Tiverton	Devon
Edmond White	Pastor	Evershall	Bedford
William Pritchard	Pastor	Blaenau	Monmouth
Paul Fruin	Minister	Warwick	Warwick
Richard Ring	Pastor	Southampton	Hants
John Tompkins	Minister	Abingdon	Berks
Toby Willes	Pastor	Bridewater	Somerset
John Carter		Steventon	Bedford
James Webb		Devizes	Wilts.
Richard Sutton	Pastor	Tring	Herts
Robert Knight	Pastor	Stukeley	Bucks
Edward Price	Pastor	Hereford-City	Hereford
William Phipps	Pastor	Exon	Devon
William Hankins	Pastor	Dimmock	Gloucester
Samuel Ewer	Pastor	Hemstead	Herts
Edward Man	Pastor	Houndsditch	London
Charles Archer	Pastor	Hick-Norton	Oxon

In the name of and on the behalf of the whole assembly.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Put forth by the ELDERS and BRETHREN Of many CONGREGATIONS OF Christians

(baptized upon Profession of their faith) in London and the Country.

**With the Heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the Mouth
Confession is made unto Salvation, Rom. 10:10.
Search the Scriptures, John 5:39.**

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(More) Scriptural references have been added from Sam Waldron's excellent [Modern Exposition of 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith](#).

CHAPTER 1: OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES [[RETURN](#)]

1. The Holy Scripture is the only **sufficient**, **certain**, and **infallible** rule of all **saving knowledge**, **faith**, and **obedience** **1**, 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** **2**; yet are they **not sufficient** to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation **3**. Therefore it pleased the Lord at **sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself**, and to declare that his will unto his church **4**; 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** **5**, those **former ways of God's revealing his will** unto his people being now ceased. **6**
 1. Isa 8:20; Luke 16:29; Eph 2:20; 2 Tim 3:15-17
 2. Ps 19:1-3; Rom 1:19-21, 32; 2:12a, 14-15
 3. Ps 19:1-3 with vv. 7-11; Rom 1:19-21; 2:12a, 14-15 with 1:16-17; and 3:21
 4. Heb 1:1-2a
 5. Prov 22:19-21; Luke 1:1-4; 2 Peter 1:12-15; 3:1; Deut 17:18ff; 31:9ff, 19ff; 1 Cor 15:1; 2 Thess 2:1-2, 15; 3:17; Rom 1:8-15; Gal 4:20; 6:11; 1 Tim 3:14ff; Rev 1:9, 19; 2:1 etc.; Rom 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19-21
 6. Heb 1:1-2a; Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:7-8; Eph 2:20

The confession starts with the authority of the Bible, because the confession is meant to be an interpretation of the Bible and it must start with it's position on the Bible.

The Confession seeks to be faithful to the Bible in what it confirms and thus it is most appropriate to start by its position on the Bible. I think it's appropriate though it may be strange that the confession starts with the Bible rather

than with God. But that is the case because the presentation of God is drawn from the Scriptures and that's why it was necessary for the Confession to declare what it believes about the Bible.

It is sufficient, certain and infallible. It is all that we need in this life for godliness and to know the will of God. We don't need extra revelations from God, we have His pure and sufficient Word in our hands.

We may know and not doubt the truth of the matter which is affirmed in the Scriptures. We know and believe that Adam and Eve existed because the Scripture treats them as historical persons. We know that the Flood and Babel occurred, because they are treated like that in the Scripture. Further, Luke says in the introduction of his Gospel *"followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account" (Lk 1:3), why? "that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught." (Lk 1:4) Certainty? Yes, certainty.*

The word "infallible" mean "incapable of error," when applied to Holy Writ it means "free from error." The doctrine teaches what the Confession says and what 2 Tim 3:16. When the Word of God is followed properly and correctly it would never lead us into error in our obedience and duty toward Him.

The doctrine of the Scripture's infallibility and inerrancy is derived from God's character in the Bible and what the testimony of the Bible is about His Word and His character.

The doctrine of inerrancy teaches that the original manuscripts were also free from all error. Hence the word inerrancy, meaning without error. Only the autographs (the originals) are free from error and are directly inspired by God as "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet 1:21)

Grudem defines infallibility as "The idea that Scripture is not able to lead us astray in matters of faith and practice." And inerrancy as "The idea that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact."

God is described as being "the truth" (Jn 14:6), "God, who never lies" (Tit 1:2; c.f. Num 23:19). His Word is said to be "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph 1:13), "pure words...purified seven times" (Ps 12:6), "Every word of God proves true" (Prov 30:5). The Scriptures, in Paul's time mainly the Old Testament Scripture are said to be "God-breathed." See 2 Pet 3:16 where the epistles of Paul are included under "Scriptures," and see 1 Timothy 5:18 where Paul quotes Jesus from Luke 10:7. 2 Pet 3:16 proves that Christians were already seeing the writings of the Apostles as equal with the Old Testament "Scriptures."

The Scripture is the Word of God which is our ultimate standard and no other standard comes anywhere to it. It contains the self-revelation of God to us. It is to be trusted, cherished, studied and obeyed.

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	OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
Genesis	Matthew
Exodus	Mark
Leviticus	Luke
Numbers	John
Deuteronomy	Paul's Epistle to the Romans
Joshua	I Corinthians & II Corinthians
Judges	Galatians
Ruth	Ephesians
I Samuel & II Samuel	Philippians
I Kings & II Kings	Colossians
I Chronicles, II Chronicles	I Thessalonians & II Thessalonians
Ezra	I Timothy & II Timothy
Nehemiah	To Titus
Esther	To Philemon
Job	The Epistle to the Hebrews
Psalms	Epistle of James
Proverbs	The first and second Epistles of Peter
Ecclesiastes	The first, second, and third Epistles of John
The Song of Solomon	The Epistle of Jude
Isaiah	The Revelation
Jeremiah	
Lamentations	
Ezekiel	
Daniel	
Hosea	

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT	OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
Joel	
Amos	
Obadiah	
Jonah	
Micah	
Nahum	
Habakkuk	
Zephaniah	
Haggai	
Zechariah	
Malachi	

All of which are given by the inspiration of God, to be the **rule of faith and life. 1**

This is the only binding “rule of faith” on every Christian. It is God’s scepter of righteousness on every Christian soul. The consistent testimony of Scripture is what every Christian needs to heed.

In regards to the New Testament canon Christians have not had much disagreement although Greg Allison observes that “James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Hebrews—were on the “fringe” of the early church’s canon.” (Historical Theology chapter 2)

The thing with **James** was the uncertainty of the author, they wondered is James the brother of Jesus the author or the apostle.

2 Peter is interesting as it has a lot of similar material to **Jude** which the church also doubted because of the citation of the apocryphal book of 1 Enoch in Jude 14. 2 Peter was doubted because of the many pseudo-writings in the name of Peter as The Acts of Peter and the Revelation of Peter.

2 and 3 John were doubted because of their volume. 2 John having only 13 verses and 3 John 14 verses. They seemed so insignificant because of the other volumes that were written by John like the Gospel with 21 chapters, the Revelation with 22 chapters and the first epistle of John with 5 chapters. The church seemed to think that 2 and 3 John were not important. Other thing is that John identifies himself as the “elder” (2 Jn 1:1; 3 Jn 1:1), unlike 1 John which has no introduction of the author much like the Gospel (1 Jn 1:1; Jn 1:1).

Hebrews was doubted because of the author thereof does not identify himself. It’s not that anything was wrong with the theology of Hebrews, but the author did not identify himself. It came to be accepted as a letter by Paul, although now not many people know who wrote it. Clement believed that the letter “was written by Paul, to the Hebrews, in the Hebrew tongue; but that it was carefully translated by Luke, and published among the Greeks.” Origen said “But as to who wrote the epistle, only God knows the truth.”

As little time went these books came to be recognized by the church to be authentic and endowed with apostolic authority. Since then there has not been controversy as to the NT canon.

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. **1**

1. Luke 24:27, 44; Rom 3:2

Here are only the 66 authoritative books of the Old and New Testaments included. The Apocrypha is rejected as a “rule of faith and life”. The same did the Jews, for example, this is what Josephus says: (Against Apion, 1:8)

“For we have not an **innumerable multitude of books** among us, **disagreeing from and contradicting one another**, [as the Greeks have,] **but only twenty-two books**, which contain the **records of all the past times**; which are justly **believed to be divine**; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the **time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes** king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in **thirteen books**. The remaining four books contain **hymns to God**, and **precepts for the conduct of human life**. It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but **hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers**, because **there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time**; and how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, **no one has been so bold as either to add**

any thing to them, to **take any thing from them**, or to **make any change in them**; but it is become natural to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to **esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines**, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be willingly to die for them. For it is no new thing for our captives, many of them in number, and frequently in time, to be seen to endure racks and deaths of all kinds upon the theatres, that they may not be obliged to say one word against our laws and the records that contain them; whereas there are none at all among the Greeks who would undergo the least harm on that account, no, nor in case all the writings that are among them were to be destroyed; for they take them to be such discourses as are framed agreeably to the inclinations of those that write them; and they have justly the same opinion of the ancient writers, since they see some of the present generation bold enough to write about such affairs, wherein they were not present, nor had concern enough to inform themselves about them from those that knew them; examples of which may be had in this late war of ours, where some persons have written histories, and published them, without having been in the places concerned, or having been near them when the actions were done; but these men put a few things together by hearsay, and insolently abuse the world, and call these writings by the name of Histories."

The Apocrypha did not come to be acknowledge by the Roman Catholic Church until the Council of Trent (1546 AD). Up to then the RCC has not acknowledged it as authentic along with the standard 66 books, but they were people who believed that they were authentic.

As the Josephus quotation shows, they did not the Apocrypha in their canon. The Jews who were entrusted with the oracles of God (Rom 9:5) did not have the Apocrypha which are not oracles from God.

The New Testament never quotes from the Roman Catholic Apocrypha (there is a quotation in Jude 14 from 1 Enoch, but that's not part of the Apocrypha), but the standard Old Testament canon is alluded to and quoted many times, which gives more credibility to the canon that we have now and the canon in Josephus.

Many of these Apocryphal writings came in the time of the absence of God's prophetic Spirit, the silent years from around 400 BC to the coming of the Lord Jesus in flesh. They contradict teachings which came before in the authentic canon. The Jews did not accept them, neither will we.

The following is said by Dr Roy E. Knuteson [here](#) about some doctrines the Roman Catholic Church gets from the Apocrypha:

Fourth, the books in the Apocrypha endorse many false doctrines that are totally at variance with the clear teaching of the Word of God. Suicide is justified in 2 Maccabees 14:41-46. Prayers to the dead are encouraged in chapter 12, verses 41-45. Almsgiving is considered efficacious for the forgiveness of sins according to Tobit 12:9. The Book of Wisdom teaches the heresy of the pre-existence of souls in 8:19-20. The Book of Judith portrays her as using deception, guile and outright lying with the apparent approval of God (9:10-13). It is in these books that the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory is found along with many other unscriptural concepts. The internal evidence is totally against the acceptance of these so-called "hidden and concealed" books as being a part of God's holy and "breathed-out" Word (see 2 Timothy 3:16). Isaiah 8:20 sums up the proper attitude of all Bible-believing Christians regarding these spurious books. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

4. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, **dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church**, **1** but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God. **2**
 1. 2 Tim 3:15; 1 John 5:9; Rom 1:2; 3:2; Acts 2:16; 4:25; Matt 13:35; Rom 9:17; Gal 3:8; Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11; Matt 22:32; Luke 16:17; Matt 22:41ff; John 10:35; Gal 3:16; Acts 1:16; 2:24ff; 13:34-35; John 19:34-36, 24; Luke 22:37; Matt 26:54; John 13:18; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Matt 5:17-18; 4:1-11
 2. Luke 15:27-31; Gal 1:8-9; Eph 2:2

Preface to the 5th point, that it is God the Spirit who shows us the authority of God's Word.

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; **1** and the heavenliness of the matter, the **efficacy of the doctrine**, and the **majesty of the style**, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to live all glory to God), the **full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation**, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; **2** 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. 3

1. 2 Tim 3:14-15
2. Jer 23:28-29; Luke 16:27-31; John 6:63; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Heb 4:2-13; Deut 31:11-13; John 20:31; Gal 1:8-9; Mark 16:15-16
3. Matt 16:17; 1 Cor 2:14ff; John 3:3; 1 Cor 2:4-5; 1 Thess 1:5-6; 1 John 2:20-21, with v 27

It's the Holy Spirit who can graciously convince Christians that the Bible is the sole authority in our lives. We can't judge the ultimate standard in our lives by another standard, if we do that then it's not in the ultimate standard anymore. The Bible is self-attesting, it attests to itself through the prophecies therein, the consistency of the message and the truth of the matter about man and the world.

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. **1** 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, **2** 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. **3**

1. 2 Tim 3:15-17; Deut 4:2; Acts 20:20, 27; Ps 19:7; 119:6, 9, 104, 128
2. John 6:45; 1 Cor 2:9-14
3. 1 Cor 14:26, 40

Here the Holy Scripture is clearly set as the means of God's authority and Lordship on our lives. Nothing is to be added to them, ever.

The doctrine of salvation is included only in the Scriptures and not in the stars or any other discovery. Only from the Scriptures you can learn that Christ paid the debt of sin in behalf of sinners.

The same goes for the worship that God desires, we can't be like the pagans who invent the worship of their imaginary gods, but our Lord the King has given us in command and principle how He desires to be worshipped, therefore, we should worship Him in the way that He desires, lest we incur His wrath.

7. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, **1 nor alike clear unto all**; **2** 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. **3**

1. 2 Peter 3:16
2. 2 Tim 3:15-17
3. 2 Tim 3:14-17; Ps 19:7-8; 119:105, 130; 2 Peter 1:19; Prov 6:22-23; Deut 30:11-14

Issues like Eschatology are difficult in the Scriptures, perhaps the relationship of Israel and the New Covenant community is also difficult for some, Calvinism and Arminianism, but the most important truths of the Scripture are set forth plainly, the truth of God as Creator (Genesis 1), the sinfulness and salvation of man by grace (Romans 3:21-26, Ephesians 2:8-9), the deity of the Lord Jesus (John 1:1-3, 14-18, 28:20), the deity of the Spirit (Acts 5:3-5), *Monotheism* (Deuteronomy 6:4).

8. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), **1** 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; **2** so as in all controversies of religion, **the church is finally to appeal to them**. **3** 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, **4** therefore **they are to be translated** into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,

5 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. 6

1. Rom 3:2
2. Matt 5:18
3. Isa 8:20; Acts 15:15; 2 Tim 3:16-17; John 10:34-36
4. Deut 17:18-20; Prov 2:1-5; 8:34; John 5:39, 46
5. 1 Cor 14:6, 9, 11, 12, 24, 28
6. Rom 15:4; Col 3:16

The writers of the 1689 were not KJV Onlyists, they believed only the autographs were directly inspired by God, but they also acknowledge that God even preserved the copies and again it is set as the authority of God over the church, our final appeal.

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. 1

1. Isa 8:20; John 10:34-36; Acts 15:15-16

Scripture interprets Scripture. In all of our theology, whatever position we take on, we must examine and see if these things we believe are consistent with all of Scripture, we not only believe in Sola Scripture (Scripture Alone), but in Tota Scriptura (all Scripture). We must not make the Bible contradictory to itself, because it can be understood in a consistent and faithful way. May the Lord Merciful help us in that task by handling His Word with reverence and may His Spirit show us the truth of His Word.

10. The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be **no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit**, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved. 1

1. ?Matt 2:29, 31-32; Acts 28:23-25; Eph 2:20

Directly opposing Rome on it's teaching of the authority of the Church and councils, the Protestant confessions admit only the Holy Scripture to be the rule and guide of everything that is called Christian. It's not that councils and ancient writers are irrelevant, but they are to be judged by the Scripture and not taken as an authority above or equal to Scripture, but as something derived from the Scriptures.

CHAPTER 2: OF GOD AND OF THE HOLY TRINITY [[RETURN](#)]

1. The Lord our God is but **one only living and true God**; 1 whose **subsistence** is in and of himself, infinite in being and perfection; 2 whose **essence** cannot be comprehended by any but himself; 3 a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; 4 who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; 5 **working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will for his own glory**; 6 most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; 7 the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty. 8

1. Deut 6:4; Jer 10:10; 1 Cor 8:4,6; 1 Thess 1:9
2. Isa 48:12
3. Ex 3:14; Job 11:7-8; 26:14; Ps 145:3; Rom 11:33-34
4. John 4:24; 1 Tim 1:17; Duet 4:15-16; Luke 24:39; Acts 14:11, 15; James 5:17
5. Mal 3:6; James 1:17; 1 Kings 8:27; Jer 23:23-24; Ps 90:2; 1 Tim 1:17; Gen 17:1; Rev 4:8;

- Isa 6:3; Rom 16:27; Ps 115:3; Ex 3:14
 6. Eph 1:11; Isa 46:10; Prov 16:4; Rom 11:36
 7. Ex 34:6-7; 1 John 4:8
 8. Heb 11:6; Neh 9:32-33; Ps 5:5-6; Nahum 1:2-3; Ex 34:7

Subsistence denotes an actual, concrete existence, in contrast with abstract categories such as Platonic ideals.

Essense (from [Wiktionary](#)) "From French essence, from Latin essentia ("the being or essence of a thing"), from an artificial formation of esse ("to be"), to translate Ancient Greek οὐσία (ousía, "being"), from εἶναι (eînai), present participle of εἰμί (eimí, "I am, exist")."

This is our God, He's awesome and Sovereign and we are not ashamed to say that we know no characteristics/attributes (as mentioned in the confession) of Him aside from His revelation and condensation in the Holy Writ.

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; **1** 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; **2** 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**; **3** he is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands; **4** 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. **5**

1. John 5:26; Acts 7:2; Ps 148:13; 119:68; 1 Tim 6:15; Job 22:2-3; Acts 17:24-25
2. Rev 4:11; 1 Tim 6:15; Rom 11:34-36; Dan 4:25, 34-35
3. Heb 4:13; Rom 11:33-34; Ps 147:5; Acts 15:18; Ezek 11:5
4. Ps 145:17; Rom 7:12
5. Rev 5:12-14

Our Triune God is sufficient in and of Himself, that's why the idea that God looked down into the corridors of time is foolish and unbiblical, because that would mean that God was depended on something for His decrees, which would not make Him self-sufficient.

All we can give God is "ascribed" glory, we cannot add anything to Him, we can ascribe glory to Him and we can also manifest His glory by obeying Him and also by Him changing us into Christ's likeness.

God's perfect knowledge is stated and thereby the heretical Open Theism and Process Theology denied.

As the Creator all His creatures owe Him honor, worship, service and obedience.

3. In this divine and infinite Being there are **three subsistences**, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, **1 of one substance**, power, and eternity, **each having the whole divine essence**, yet the essence **undivided**; **2** the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the **Son is eternally begotten of the Father**; the **Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son**; **all infinite, without beginning**, therefore but one God, who is **not to be divided in nature and being**, but **distinguished** by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him. **3**

1. Matt 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14
2. Ex 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Cor 8:6

3. Prov 8:22-23; John 1:1-3, 14, 18; 3:16; 10:36; 15:26; 16:28; Heb 1:2; 1 John 4:14; Gal 4:4-6

Subsistence (from [Wikitionary](#)) "From Late Latin subsistentia ("substance, reality, in Medieval Latin also stability"), from Latin subsistens, present participle of subsistere ("to continue, subsist")" and:

1. Real being; existence.
2. Inherency; as, the subsistence of qualities in bodies.
3. Means of support; provisions, or that which produces provisions; livelihood; That which furnishes support to animal life; as, a meager subsistence.
4. (theology) A person, specifically the person of Christ or of another part of the Trinity; hypostasis.

The confession here erroneously uses 1 John 5:7 as a reference (the Father, the **Word** or Son, and Holy Spirit) which was not part of the Greek text of John, but a later addition to the Latin.

The the Persons share the being of God equally, it's not that every Person shares 1/3 of the being, but all Three share the whole being of God.

Son is eternally begotten of the Father – This I find not helpful or confusing or I'm misunderstanding it, probably based on on the translation of **monogenes** in the KJV and the Latin Vulgate as **only begotten** instead of only Son or unique Son.

CHAPTER 3: OF GOD'S DECREE [[RETURN](#)]

1. God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the **most wise and holy counsel of his own will**, freely and **unchangeably**, **1** all things, **whatsoever comes to pass**; **2** yet so as thereby is **God neither the author of sin** nor hath fellowship with any therein; **3 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; **4** in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree. **5**
 1. Prov 19:21; Isa 14:24-27; 46:10-11; Ps 115:3; 135:6; Rom 9:19; Heb 6:17
 2. Dan 4:34-35; Rom 8:28; 11:36; Eph 1:11
 3. Gen 18:25; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5
 4. Gen 50:20; 2 Sam 24:1; Isa 10:5-7; Matt 17:12; John 19:11; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28
 5. Num 23:19; Eph 1:3-5

There is no truth of Scripture more hated and cherished then the doctrine of Divine Providence. The natural man cannot bring himself to accept such a doctrine, yet the child of God rejoices and praises God for it (although many nowadays rebel against it).

The Confession is clearly Calvinistic in it's view of the absolute free irresistible micro-managing sovereignty of God. Every molecule moves the way it does because God from all eternity has willed that it be so. From eternity past to eternity future there will never come to the mind of God anything which He didn't already know. He possess all knowledge of everything (chapter 2:2).

The confession further doesn't go into the Hyper-Calvinistic error of disregarding man's will and responsibility, but rather affirms that the liberty of second cause agents (men) are established because of God's decree. The liberty here discussed is obviously not the mythical libertarian free will. There is no such thing as libertarian free will. Libertarian Free Will says that one can go against all inclination which is impossible and ridiculous. Jonathan Edwards in his The Freedom of the Will shows the absurdity and impossibility of such a will. Rather, moral agency/free will biblical defined would be the **freedom to do whatever one desires**. The Bible places limitations upon what the natural man desires

and wants.

God orders every event in such a way that He is sovereign over every step, yet in the same time the second cause is not being coerced to do anything, but of out his own desires and freedom carries whatever God has from all eternity decreed.

2. Although **God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass**, upon all supposed conditions, **1** yet **hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future**, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions. **2**
(Acts 15:18; Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18)
1. Sam 23:11-12; Matt 11:21, 23; Acts 15:18
 2. Isa 40:13-14; Rom 9:11-18; 11:34; 1 Cor 2:16

Everything God has decreed d He has done so because of his "most wise and holy counsel of his will," not because He saw x do it. God is independent and such a thing would make Him already dependent on something that He has not even yet brought into being.

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**; **1** others being **left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice**. **2**
1. Matt 25:34; 1 Tim 5:21
 2. John 12:37-40; Rom 9:6-24; Eph 1:5-6; 1 Pet 2:8-10; Jude 4

Everything that God does and has done has been for His glory above all things, because He is the only and highest motivation He can have. When we do thing we try to do them for the glory and honor of God, because He is the highest standard and the One worthy to be thanked and blessed. He is the Most High! God has no one higher than Himself, He is the standard, He is the highest, so that's why He swears by His name (Heb 6:13).

Notice that on the basis of 1 Tim 5:21 elect angels, and not only men are included. Which is in my opinion is right. God had absolute control and determination of the fall and rebellion of Satan and it could not have happened unless He decreed, ordained and willed it.

There are some who in 2:6 will be recognized as "fallen in Adam" since God has only decreed the Fall, which would make salvation possible, He would redeem them from their sins through Jesus. Jesus was already the means of salvation even before the Creation. That's why Adam was a type of Christ. Now the question is, did Adam become a type of Christ when Paul wrote Rom 5:14 or was that God's intention when He created Adam? Well I think the answer is that when God created Adam, he consciously made Him as type of Christ. The statement on election is further exposed in the following points.

The statement on reprobation according to my and Waldron's judgment is weak. There could be more said about Reprobation than this, but it is probably also indented to guide against the common misunderstand of Equal Ultimacy. That is, that God equally imputes unbelief into the hearts of the reprobation as He does faith in the hearts of the elect.

The following is the 7th point in the Westminster which was omitted here: "The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice."

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. **1**
1. Matt 2:1-14; John 13:18; Rom 11:5-6; 1 Cor 7:22-22; 2 Tim 2:19

God knows who are His. His call is irreversible. He will lose or add no one.

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, **1 without any other thing in the creature** as a condition or cause moving him thereunto. **2**

1. Rom 8:30; Eph 1:4-6, 9, 11; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 Thess 5:9

2. Rom 9:11-16; 11:5-6; Eph 2:5

There was nothing in man that moved God for the choice of him. It was only his free, immutable, loving, gracious, distinguishing, loving, sovereignty and holy will that decided who would be saved, and who would not.

No foreseen faith or perseverance, but only sovereign pleasure.

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**; **1** wherefore they who are elected, **being fallen in Adam**, are redeemed by Christ, **2** are **effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit** working in due season, are **justified, adopted, sanctified**, **3** and **kept by his power through faith** unto salvation; **4** neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only. **5**

1. Eph 1:4; 2:10; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2

2. 1 Thess 5:9-10; Titus 2:14

3. Rom 8:30; Eph 1:5; 2 Thess 2:13

4. 1 Peter 1:5

5. John 6:64-65; 8:47; 10:26; 17:9; Rom 8:28; 1 John 2:19

As affirmed in 2:1 God is the Sovereign of this world who moves it to His appointed end. It doesn't just go on on it's own. So is it also with election, He doesn't merely elect and leave it at that, He ordains the means by which His elect will know Him.

God has loved us, chosen us, sanctified and sanctifies us and has called us through the proclamation of the glorious Gospel of His beloved Son (2 Th 2:13-14).

Notice the emphasis on justification, adoption and sanctification. This has nothing to do with ideas of "being elect and doing whatever sin you want, because you're elect." In fact, it is the opposite. We are to live holy lives unto the glory and honor of God, our Redeemer.

7. The doctrine of the **high mystery of predestination** is to be handled with special prudence and care, **1** 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**; **2** so shall this doctrine afford matter of **praise, reverence**, and **admiration** of God, **3** and of **humility**, **4 diligence**, **5** and abundant consolation **6** to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

1. Deut 29:29; Rom 9:20; 11:33

2. 1 Thess 1:4-5; 2 Peter 1:10

3. Eph 1:6; Rom 11:33

4. Rom 11:5, 6, 20; Col 3:12

5. 2 Peter 1:10

6. Luke 10:20

This doctrine is rightly called mystery. But this does not mean that we can know nothing about it, rather we don't know everything about it. This often drives people to put it in the background because it's difficult or complicated and it is that, but there is comfort and praise unspeakable when accepting the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty. When accepting God as the Potter and you the clay. When accepting as God and you a mere sinful creature!

CHAPTER 4: OF CREATION [RETURN]

1. In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, **1** for the **manifestation of the glory** of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, **2** to create or make the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, **3** in the space of **six days**, **4** and **all very good**. **5**

1. Heb 1:2; John 1:2-3; Gen 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4

2. Rom 1:20; Jer 10:12; Ps 104:24; 33:5-6; Prov 3:19; Acts 14:15-16

3. Gen 1:1; John 1:2; Col 1:16

4. Gen 2:1-3; Ex 20:8-11

5. Gen 1:31; Ecc 7:29; Rom 5:12

The creation exists, not because God wanted man or was alone, the Triune God was gloriously in communion with each other from all eternity and in need of no one. Creation exists to declare His glory.

There can be no question that most if not all of the people living in the 17th and 16th century believed in a literal young earth creation and this is clearly seen in the fact that they say the creation was made in six days.

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; **1** being made **after the image of God**, in **knowledge**, **righteousness**, and **true holiness**; **2** 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. **3**

1. Gen 1:27; 2:7; James 2:26; Matt 10:28; Ecc 12:7

2. Gen 1:26-27; 5:1-3; 9:6; Ecc 7:29; 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9; Col 3:10; Eph 4:24

3. Rom 1:32; 2:12a, 14-15; Gen 3:6; Ecc 7:29; Rom 5:12

Man is the epitome of creation, he was the goal of creation. Man is the only image of God of everything that God created. Image of God means that man has some resemblance of God in himself. We are to be fruitful and multiply, we are to work, we are to subdue the earth.

Man is the image of God, that is his identity. Sin is a misrepresentation of that image. Man in his fallen state is a corrupt and bad image of God, nonetheless still the image of God.

Adam and Eve were made holy and righteous, able to attain eternal life by works, had they not rebelled. They had the Law of God upon their hearts, but not only that, since every child of Adam has that (Rom 2:15), but they had the power to fulfill it!

After Christ comes we will not be going back to the Garden, we will go to the New Jerusalem. Which is much better than the Garden, we will have no possibility of transgressing (non posse peccare). In the Garden Adam and Eve had the possibility of sinning (posse peccare) and they did sin and ruin us all. Although they also had the possibility not to sin (posse non peccare).

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. **1**

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

Not only was the Law written on their hearts, but they also had the Law delivered to them verbally as to cast away any doubt.

CHAPTER 5: OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE [[RETURN](#)]

1. **God the good Creator** of all things, **1** in his infinite power and wisdom **2** doth **uphold**, **direct**, **dispose**, and **govern** **3** all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, **4** by his **most wise and holy providence**, **5** to **the end for the which they were created**, **6** according unto his infallible foreknowledge, and the **free and immutable counsel of his own will**; **7** to the **praise of the glory of his** wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy. **8**

1. Gen 1:31; 2:18; Ps 119:68

2. Ps 145:11; Prov 3:19; Ps 66:7

3. Heb 1:3; Isa 46:10-11; Dan 4:34-35; Ps 135:6; Acts 17:25-28; Job 38-41

4. Matt 10:29-31

5. Prov 15:3; Ps 104:24; 145:17

It is the GOOD Creator who governs and directs every step in the universe. He is the standard of goodness. He means everything for God, while man means it for evil. Everything He does is most holy and wise, free and immutable. He upholds the universe by the power of His word, He directs history to it's predetermined end, He disposes of good and evil and governs every molecule and atom the way He pleases. Why? To the glorification of His attributes!

Providence: The care, guardianship, and control exercised by a deity; divine direction

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; **1** yet **by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes**, either necessarily, freely, or contingently. **2**

1. Acts 2:23; Prov 16:33

2. Gen 8:22; Jer 31:35; Ex 21:13; Deut 19:5; Isa 10:6-7; Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 27:31; Matt 5:20-21; Phil 1:9; Prov 20:18; Luke 14:25ff; Prov 21:31; 1 Kings 22:28, 34; Ruth 2:3

He is the primary and first cause, even of sin, but not the doer thereof. As affirmed in 3:6 and will be affirmed here bellow God has not decreed what He has willed and left it alone, yet He guides it to it's predetermined end by the means He decrees.

God's decree is His sovereign plan and blueprint. God's providence is the working out of that decree in actual history.

God's sovereignty does not violate man's will or coerces him to do something, but works according to the nature of second causes, that is, the nature of man and his abilities.

3. God, in his ordinary **providence maketh use of means**, **1** yet is free to work without, **2** above, **3** and against them **4** at his pleasure.

1. Acts 27:22, 31, 44; Isa 55:10-11; Hosea 2:21-22

2. Hosea 1:7; Luke 1:34-35

3. Rom 4:19-21

4. Ex 3:2-3; 2 Kings 6:6; Dan 3:27

This seems impossible to non-Calvinists. don't ask me why, but they always seem to think that if God is sovereign then we can't be free or can't make "geniune choices." Or we should just sit and do nothing.

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; **1** 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; **2** 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. **3**
1. Rom 11:32-34; 2 Sam 24:1; 1 Chron 21:1; 1 Kings 22:22-23; 2 Sam 16:10; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28
 2. Acts 14:16; 2 Kings 19:28; Gen 50:20; Isa 10:6, 7, 12
 3. James 1:13. 14. 17; 1 John 2:16; Ps 50:21

Even of the fall of Adam and Satan God had absolute sovereignty and predetermination. It didn't caught God by a suprise, in fact, He was expecting it by creating Adam as a type of Christ (Rom 5:14) and electing a people to be holy and blameless (which would presuppose that they were not holy and blameless) in Christ (Eph 1:3-6).

God is sovereign over every single sin and He has so ordained that they exists, yet He is not to be charged with unrighteousness, but the creature is to be charged with wickedness.

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes **leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions** of their own hearts, to **chastise them for their former sins**, or to **discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts**, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant **dependence for their support upon himself**; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends. **1** So that **whatsoever befalls any of his elect is by his appointment, for his glory**, and their good. **2**
1. 2 Chron 32:25-26, 31; 2 Sam 24:1; Luke 22:34-35; Mark 14:66f; John 21:15-17
 2. Rom 8:28; 2 Cor 12:7-9

So that we would value our salvation and from what we were saved. When we see our wickedness we can truly appreciate and praise the goodness and grace of God.

I truly am thankful that the gracious and most merciful Lord has not exposed my sin to me that deeply that I am left without hope, but has been greatly merciful toward me. Thank you Lord for restraining me from sinning against You as much as my sinful flesh would want. Cleanse me for Your Name's sake.

Nothing comes to our path apart from the sovereign providence of God. There is no comfort when excluding God from the evil things that befall us, rather we acknowledge that He has brought them upon us for His glory and our good. Not because He hates us, because He did not spare His only Son for us all, how will He not give us all things?!

6. As for those **wicked and ungodly men** whom God, as the **righteous judge**, for former sin **doth blind and harden**; **1** from them he not only **withholdeth his grace**, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon their hearts; **2** but sometimes also **withdraweth the gifts** which they had, **3** and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; **4** and withal, **gives them over to their own lusts**, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, **5** whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, under those means which God useth for the softening of others. **6**
1. Rom 1:24-26, 28; 11:7-8

2. Deut 29:4
3. Matt 13:12; 25:29
4. Deut 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12-13
5. Ps 81:11-12; 2 Thess 2:10-12
6. Ex 7:3; 8:15, 32; 2 Cor 2:15-16; Isa 6:9-10; 8:14; 1 Peter 2:7-8; Acts 28:26-27; John 12:39-40

He is the God the Righteous, the Most High, the Most Holy and Pure. He cannot stand in the presence of sin. He hates all sin. But not only the sin, but the sinner himself too (Ps 5:5-6).

To punish the wicked, God gives them more freedom in their sins and does not restrain them as He does the elect. Hell is where all restraint is taken away.

7. As the providence of God doth in general reach to **all creatures**, so after a **more special manner it taketh care of his church**, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof. **1**
 1. Prov 2:7-8; Isa 43:3-5, 14; Amos 9:8-9; Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11, 22; 3:10-11, 21; 1 Tim 4:10

It is only the elect that have received the promise of Romans 8:28. For the reprobate everything works for the bad, and for more condemnation. But for the sake of the righteous, the wicked often are blessed (Gen 39:2-4).

CHAPTER 6: OF THE FALL OF MAN, OF SIN, AND OF THE PUNISHMENT THEREOF [[RETURN](#)]

1. Although God created **man upright and perfect**, and gave him a **righteous law**, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof, yet he did not long abide in this honour; **1 Satan using the subtlety of the serpent** to subdue Eve, then by her seducing **Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress** the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit, **2** which **God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel to permit**, having **purposed to order it to his own glory. 3**
 1. Ecc 7:29; Rom 5:12a, 14-15; Gen 2:17; 4:25-5:3
 2. Gen 3:1-7; 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14
 3. Rom 11:32-34; 2 Sam 24:1; 1 Chron 21:1; 1 Kings 22:22-23; 2 Sam 16:10; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28

Our Confession is in agreement with Ecclesiastes 7:29 where it is said that man was created upright, but "they" (man) sought out many schemes.

Adam and Eve received direct commands from God not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17), which (perhaps) caused the knowledge and experience of a new kind of morality, namely evil morality. There was nothing in the fruit that did that, but it was God's appoint that in this way He will test them. The Confession is clear that Adam out of his own will took of the tree and transgressed.

Most importantly, the fall is recognized not to be outside of God's sovereign decree, but in it. It pleased God to "permit" it, why? Because He had "purposed to order it to his own glory." In what way? By displaying a wider range of His attributes, by putting His wrath on display, by putting His grace on display. By conquering evil and getting glory over it. By saving His elect from the world. By becoming man in the process of saving the world.

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: 1** all becoming dead in sin, and **wholly**

defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. **2**

1. Gen 3:22-24; Rom 5:12ff; 1 Cor 15:22-23; Ps 51:4-5; 58:3; Eph 2:1-3; Gen 8:21; Prov 22:15
2. Gen 2:17; Eph 2:1; Titus 1:15; Gen 6:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:10-18; 1:21; Eph 4:17-19; John 5:40; Rom 8:7

The Confession here begins to define the classic doctrine of Original Sin. We in some mysterious way were present with Adam, or Adam was chosen by God to represent us all in the Garden. If he had passed the probation, all his posterity would have been counted as right, but because he failed, all his natural posterity fell in him and with him. Thereby even the cutest baby is born with a sinful nature and dead in sin.

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. **1**

1. Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21, 22, 45, 49; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Job 14:4; 15:14; Gen 8:21; Prov 22:15; Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 6:20; Hebrews 2:14, 15; 1 Thessalonians 1:10

It was God who appointed Adam as the federal head of the human race. It was His doing, there is no questioning God's decision. None of us would have done otherwise being tempted by the deceiver. Because of Adam and Eve's transgression of God's law the guilt of sin is imputed (attributed) to all his posterity and also the guilt and the punishment therefore, hence why children die. The corrupted nature was carried over, transmitted, transported and imparted to all his descendants coming by "ordinary generation" (excluding the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the seed of the woman, not man).

4. From this **original corruption**, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made **opposite to all good**, and **wholly inclined to all evil**, **1** do proceed all actual transgressions. **2**

1. Matt 7:17-18; 12:33-35; Luke 6:43-45; John 3:3, 5; 6:37, 39-40, 44-45, 65; Rom 3:10-12; 5:6; 7:18; 8:7-8; 1 Cor 2:14
2. Matt 7:17-20; 12:33-35; 15:18-20; James 1:14-15

From the curse of the Fall all the descendants of Adam are born under God's wrath and His judgment. We are not born neutral to God and we also are not neutral to God, we are at enmity. Our desire is wholly opposite to what God commands and desires. We are enslaved to do the will of Satan (2 Tim 2:26, John 8:44), we are unable to obey God (Rom 8:7-8; John 6:44).

5. The **corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated**; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and the first motions thereof, are truly and properly sin. (Romans 7:18,23; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8; Romans 7:23-25; Galatians 5:17)

1. 1 John 1:8-10; 1 Kings 8:46; Ps 130:3; 143:2; Prov 20:9; Ecc 7:20; Rom 7:14-25; James 3:2
2. Ps 51:4-5; Prov 22:15; Eph 2:3; Rom 7:5, 7-8, 17-18, 25; 8:3-13; Gal 5:17-24; Gen 8:21; Prov 15:26; 21:4; Matt 5:27-28

In this life we are not perfected and therefore still sin, if we say that we have no sin we are lying and the truth is not in us (1 Jn 1:8-10). But all our wickedness has been atoned for on the cross by the perfect High Priest who also intercedes with God the Father for us and for our sin!

CHAPTER 7: OF GOD'S COVENANT [[RETURN](#)]

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

1. Job 35:7-8; Ps 113:5-6; Isa 40:13-16; Luke 17:5-10; Acts 17:24-25

Any interaction between God and man is purely of mercy and grace. Even the Covenant of Works with Adam. God did not have to do that or offer man anything, it's pure condescension of His part to commune with us, creatures.

A covenant may be defined as: A commitment with divine sanctions.

2. Moreover, **man having brought himself under the curse of the law** by his fall, it pleased the Lord to **make a covenant of grace**, **1** wherein he freely offereth unto sinners **life and salvation by Jesus Christ**, **requiring of them faith in him**, that they may be saved; **2** and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life, his **Holy Spirit**, **to make them willing and able to believe**. **3**

1. Gen 2:17; 3:15; Ps 110:4 (with Heb 7:18-22; 10:12-18); Eph 2:12 (with Rom 4:13-17 and Gal 3:18-22); Heb 9:15
2. John 3:16; Rom 10:6, 9; Gal 3:10-11
3. Ezek 36:26-27; John 6:44-45

Man is rightly accused and held responsible for the Fall and his misery of sin. Yet the gracious LORD, for His glory, didn't want to leave man in the state that he brought himself under, the state of condemnation and sin. Directly after the Fall, in Genesis 3:15 the gracious and merciful Lord preached the Gospel to Adam and Eve and told them that Eve will bring forth a Son who will crush the serpent who deceived them. That Son is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who was put under a like probation in the wilderness for 40 days and withstood the test and did not fail like Adam and Eve did. He is the second and perfect Adam.

Salvation has always been through faith. It was never of works, even under the Old Covenant. The saints before Christ believed in the promise of the Redeemer, but we now after Christ and after the fact that the Covenant of Grace (The New Covenant) has been established we believe in Christ for our salvation.

3. **This covenant is revealed in the gospel**; first of all to Adam in the **promise of salvation by the seed of the woman**, and afterwards **by farther steps**, until the **full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament**; **1** and it is founded in that **eternal covenant** transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect; **2** and **it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life** and blessed immortality, man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of innocency. **3**

1. Gen 3:15; Rom 16:25-27; Eph 3:5; Titus 1:2; Heb 1:1-2
2. Ps 110:4; Eph 1:3-11; 2 Tim 1:9
3. John 8:56; Acts 4:12; Rom 4:1-25; Gal 3:18-22; Heb 11:6, 13, 39-40

The Covenant of Grace, the eternal covenant in the Trinity to save all the elect is the New Covenant established in Jesus' blood, which was not established any time before the Last Supper (Heb 8:6).

The Presbyterians believe that the Covenant of Grace was established directly after the Fall and also the other covenant in the Bible (Abrahamic, Mosaic) and that the Mosaic Covenant was actually a covenant of grace. Or the way they like to say it is it was an administration of the Covenant of Grace until it was concluded in the New Covenant. There is nothing radical about the New Covenant in comparing it with the past covenants. In this way they can include their children in the New Covenant, since they argue, 1) the Mosaic and Abrahamic Covenants were covenants of grace, 2) the New Covenant is obviously a covenant of grace, 3) we see no place in the New Testament which throws infants away from the covenant, 4) therefore, our infants/children are included in the covenant and therefore should receive the covenant sign, baptism.

On the other hand, the Particular Baptists did not agree with the Westminster way of looking at the Covenant of Works,

they understood the Covenant of Grace as being promised and acting like a shadow of the good things to come in the covenants of the Old Testament. There was a progressive revelation of the Covenant of Grace beginning with Adam and concluding it with the Lord Jesus by the **establishment** of the Covenant.

CHAPTER 8: OF CHRIST THE MEDIATOR [[RETURN](#)]

1. It pleased God, **1** in His eternal purpose, **2** to **choose and ordain the Lord Jesus**, his only begotten Son, according to the **covenant made between** them both, **3 to be the mediator** between God and man; the **prophet, priest, and king**; head and saviour of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; **4** 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. **5**

1. Isa 42:1; John 3:16

2. 1 Peter 1:19-20

3. Ps 110:4; Heb 7:21-22

4. 1 Tim 2:5; Acts 3:22; Heb 5:5-6; Ps 2:6; Luke 1:33; Eph 1:22-23; 5:23; Heb 1:2; Acts 17:31

5. Rom 8:30; John 17:6; Isa 53:10; Ps 22:30; 1 Tim 2:6; Isa 55:4-5; 1 Cor 1:30

The Confession declares Christ as the prime, or first elect of God. He was elected to be the Mediator between man and God in the Eternal Covenant within the Blessed Trinity. The Father giving the elect to the Son, the Son dying to pay their debt and the Spirit effectively applying the work of the Son.

He is the prophet who declares to us the Word of God and teaches us about God.

He is our High Priest who offered himself "once for all" for us to "secure eternal redemption" and "perfect us forever." Not only that but He still intercedes for our shortcomings. He takes our shortcomings and presents His work instead of our sinning to the Father. He doesn't offer Himself repeatedly, even as an unbloody sacrifice as the Roman Catholics suppose.

He is not only the King of kings and Lord of lords, but He is specially the king to His people. He rules over them for their own good and ultimately His own self-glorification.

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, **1** did, when the fullness of time was come, **2 take upon him man's nature**, with all the essential properties **3** and common infirmities thereof, **4** yet **without sin**; **5** 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; **6** 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** **7** and **very man**, **8** yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man. **9**

1. John 8:58; Joel 2:32 with Rom 10:13; Ps 102:25 with Heb 1:10; 1 Peter 2:3 with Ps 34:8; Isa 8:12-13 with 3:15; John 1:1; 5:18; 20:28; Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8-9; Phil 2:5-6; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 5:20

2. Gal 4:4

3. Heb 10:5; Mark 14:8; Matt 26:12, 26; Luke 7:44-46; John 13:23; Matt 9:10-13; 11:19; Luke 22:44; Heb 2:10; 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18; 4:1; John 19:32-35; Matt 26:36-44; James 2:26; John 19:30; Luke 23:46; Matt 26:39; 9:36; Mark 3:5; 10:14; John 11:35; Luke 19:41-44;

- 10:21; Matt 4:1-11; Heb 4:15 with James 1:13; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28; 2:40, 52; Heb 5:8-9
4. Matt 4:2; Mark 11:12; Matt 21:18; John 4:7; 19:28; 4:6; Matt 8:24; Rom 8:3; Heb 5:8; 2:10, 18; Gal 4:4
 5. Isa 53:9; Luke 1:35; John 8:46; 14:30; Rom 8:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5
 6. Rom 1:3-4; 9:5
 7. See point 1 above
 8. Acts 2:22; 13:38; 17:31; 1 Cor 15:21; 1 Tim 2:5
 9. Rom 1:3-4; Gal 4:4-5; Phil 2:5-11

The Confession remains very orthodox in acknowledging that the Son was eternally divine. He didn't cease becoming divine when He was incarnated, but simply added humanity to His divinity, the Hypostatic Union. He is very God and very man. 100% man and 100% God. The divine and human join together in Christ without any conversion (the divine didn't become man and cease to be divine). It is the same one who governs all things that was incarnated!

He has two distinct natures, but yet they're inseparably joined in the person of Jesus. Amazing. This surpasses all human knowledge or wisdom.

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

The Son was prepared by the Father and Spirit to execute the office of mediation between God the Father and mankind, by Him being the go-between.

The office of the mediator was given to the Son by the Father's design, and the Son because of His love submitting to the Father's will.

4. This office the Lord Jesus did most **willingly undertake**, **1** which that he might discharge he was made under the law, **2** and did perfectly fulfill it, and **underwent the punishment due to us**, which we should have borne and suffered, **3** being **made sin and a curse for us**; **4** enduring most grievous sorrows in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; **5** was crucified, and died, and **remained in the state of the dead**, yet saw no corruption: **6 on the third day he arose from the dead with the same body** in which he suffered, **7** with which he also **ascended into heaven**, **8** and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father **making intercession**, **9** and shall **return to judge men and angels** at the end of the world. **10**
 1. Ps 40:7-8 with Heb 10:5-10; John 10:18; Phil 2:8
 2. Gal 4:4
 3. Matt 3:15; 5:17
 4. Matt 26:37-38; Luke 22:44; Matt 27:46
 5. Matt 26-27
 6. Phil 2:8; Acts 13:37
 7. John 20:25, 27

8. Acts 1:9-11
9. Rom 8:34; Heb 9:24
10. Acts 10:42; Rom 14:9-10; Acts 1:11; Matt 13:40-42; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6

Section three contained the phrase “office he took not upon himself, but was thereunto called by his Father;” which may lead some to think that it was not really the will of the Son, but the first phrase in section 4 refutes that and declares that it was the pleasure and will of the Son to please the Father.

In this section we are introduced to the Reformed doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement, which is the Gospel. Christ taking myself and being made sin because of my wickedness, and in return I receive His righteousness! Amazing Grace!

Christ died and “remained in the state of the dead,” it's interesting to notice the removal of the traditional language of the Nicene Creed of Christ descending to hell, which He never did to continue His suffering. Further it is also affirmed it was the same Christ, with the same body who was crucified and raised and ascended.

The Lord Christ makes intercession to the Father because of shortcomings and He shows Him the perfect work of the cross, He presents His sacrifice to the Father which perfects forever!

5. The Lord Jesus, by his **perfect obedience** and **sacrifice of himself**, **1** which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, **2** hath **fully satisfied the justice of God**, **3** procured reconciliation, and **purchased an everlasting inheritance** in the kingdom of heaven, **5** for **all those whom the Father hath given unto Him**. **6**

1. Rom 5:19; Eph 5:2
2. Heb 9:14, 16; 10:10, 14
3. Rom 3:25-26; Heb 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10
4. 2 Cor 5:18-19; Col 1:20-23
5. Heb 9:15; Rev 5:9-10
6. John 17:2

It is very good that our Confession recognizes the essential value of Christ's perfect obedience on our behalf in His perfect life. Technically, it's not only His work on the cross, but His work on the cross and His perfect life, which by God's amazing grace and love is credited to the elect, as if they lived Christ's perfect life of obedience and holiness. Romans 5:18-19.

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, **1** in and by those **promises, types,** and **sacrifices** wherein he was revealed, and signified to be the seed which should bruise the serpent's head; **2** and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, **3** being the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever. **4**

1. Gal 4:4-5; Rom 4:1-9
2. Gen 3:15; 1 Peter 1:10-11
3. Rev 13:8
4. Heb 13:8

The faithful before Christ believed in God for the promised Seed of Genesis 3:15, believed His promises of deliverance, believed in the shadows and types and that was accounted to them as righteousness, according to what Christ was **going** to do. The cross is so fixed in God's decree that He can bestow it's benefits even before it's outworking in history.

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. **1**

1. John 3:13; Acts 20:28

shai linne wisely raps: "See, only a human can substitute for human lives; But only God can take the wrath of God and survive." We need a man to save us from our misery, which also man brought upon us. But what mere man can withstand God's "unmixed" wrath? No man. That's why it was necessary for the Redeemer to also be God, because only God can withstand Himself.

Further, a mediator must be able to relate to both parties in a covenant, Christ as God can relate with the Father and as man He can relate with His elect.

8. To all those for whom Christ hath obtained eternal redemption, **he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same**, **1** making **intercession for them**; **2 uniting them to himself by his Spirit**, **3** revealing unto them, in and by his Word, the mystery of salvation, **4 persuading them to believe** and obey, **5 governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit**, **6** and overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, **7** in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation; **8** and **all of free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them** to procure it. **9**

1. John 6:37, 39; 10:15-16; 17:9

2. 1 John 2:1-2; Rom 8:34

3. Rom 8:1-2

4. John 15:13, 15; 17:6; Eph 1:7-9

5. 1 John 5:20

6. John 14:16; Heb 12:2; Rom 8:9, 14; 2 Cor 4:13; Rom 15:18-19; John 17:17

7. Ps 110:1; 1 Cor 15:25-26; Col 2:15

8. Eph 1:9-11

9. John 3:8; Eph 1:8

The Confession does not teach a hypothetical Arminian atonement, but a very definite one. One which will certainly be applied to all those for whom it was intended.

9. This office of mediator between God and man is **proper only to Christ**, who is the prophet, priest, and king of the church of God; and may not be either in whole, or any part thereof, transferred from him to any other. **1**

1. 1 Tim 2:5

No one may stand between God and man, not a priest, not the Blessed Virgin Mary, no one. He is the only Mediator. He is the only Way and there are no other ways. And He declares that He will NEVER reject anyone who comes to Him (John 6:37).

10. This number and order of offices is necessary; for in respect of **our ignorance**, we stand in need of his **prophetical office**; **1** 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; **2** 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. **3** (John 1:18; Colossians 1:21; Galatians 5:17; John 16:8; Psalms 110:3;

Luke 1:74, 75)

1. John 1:18
2. Col 1:21; Gal 5:17; Heb 10:19-21
3. John 16:8; Ps 110:3; Luke 1:74-75

The threefold offices of Christ are necessary for our daily sanctification and holiness.

CHAPTER 9: OF FREE WILL [**RETURN**]

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

1. Matthew 17:12; James 1:14; Deuteronomy 30:19

Our father Adam and our mother Eve both were endowed by their good Creator with the liberty of choice according to desire.

It is great speculation as to exactly what kind of liberty Adam and Eve did have, we are not told much, but one thing is certain, God didn't coerce them to do anything against their desire. Yet, their disobedience was foreordained by God for His glory. They acted according to their desire to "become like God." They had the freedom if they so willed to remain in the state of innocence and pass the test of probation, but they did not desire to be subjected to God and remain under Him. But they sought autonomy.

But then comes the question from whence did they get this desire? Jonathan Edwards in his Freedom of the Will makes a mockery of the idea of a neutral will, and I agree with him, a neutral will seems impossible according to the Scriptures. But he also cannot adequately answer the question as to how this desire came to Adam and Eve. His answer was that God did not give sustaining grace to withstand the temptation and so they fell. Ultimately, I don't know, but this I know, as John Piper said, we must have a category in our mind where God willing that sin exist does not make Him it's author.

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, **1** but **yet was unstable**, so that he might fall from it. **2**

1. Ecclesiastes 7:29
2. Genesis 3:6

Adam and Eve had the posse peccare (ability to sin) and posse non peccare (ability not to sin) as we have commented on 4:2. The Confession here might give some idea of a neutral will, or a will/desire that was not fully mature.

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. **1**

1. Rom 3:10-12; 5:6; 6:16, 20; 7:18; 8:7; 9:16-18; John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5; 5:40, 6:37, 39, 40, 44, 45, 65; 8:31-34; Eph 2:1, 5, 8-9; Titus 3:3-5; 2 Cor 3:14; 4:3-4; Matt 7:17-18; 12:33-37; Luke 6:43-45; Jer 13:23; Acts 11:18; 7:51; James 1:18; Phil 1:29

Total Inability. Our nature thanks to Adam, our Federal head has been corrupted and we are born sinners by nature, and we also are sinners by choice. As sinners, there is a separation between us and God, we are cut off from the life of God.

As dead sinners, only God by His own sovereign will can decide to give us life if He pleases, simply because of pure grace.

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**; **1** 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**. **2**

1. Col 1:13; John 8:36; Phil 2:13
2. Rom 7:14-25; Gal 5:17

So much for the "God violates man's will," rather the gracious Lord frees a violated will! He frees a wild which is held captive to do Satan's will (2Tim 2:26), which cannot submit itself to Him (Rom 8:7-8) and by His grace frees it to will that which is good.

Freedom does not consist in the power to do everything possible as libertarians dream, but the power to do what our heart, we ourselves desire. The problem is not with our faculty of willing, but with our nature and desires.

5. This will of man is made **perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory only**. **1**

1. Eph 4:13; Heb 12:23

In the intermediate state and the new heavens and earth we will be endowed with the non posse peccare (no ability to sin). We will be truly free. We will truly only desire and do that which is pleasing to God. No more sorrow, no more sin, but endlessly glorifying God.

CHAPTER 10: OF EFFECTUAL CALLING [**RETURN**]

1. Those whom God **1** hath **predestinated unto life**, **2** he is pleased in his appointed, and **accepted time**, **3** effectually to **call**, **4** **by his Word** **5** and **Spirit**, **6** **out of that state of sin and death** in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; **7** enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; **8** taking away their heart of stone, and **giving unto them a heart of flesh**; **9** **renewing their wills**, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; **10** yet so as **they come most freely, being made willing by his grace**. **11**

1. Rom. 8:28-29
2. Rom. 8:29-30; 9:22-24; 1 Cor. 1:26-28; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:9
3. John 3:8; Eph. 1:11
4. Matt. 22:14; 1 Cor. 1:23-24; Rom. 1:6; 8:28; Jude 1; Ps. 29; John 5:25; Rom. 4:17
5. 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Peter 1:23-25; James 1:17-25; 1 John 5:1-5; Rom. 1:16-17; 10:14; Heb. 4:12
6. John 3:3, 5-6, 8; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6 Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 1:9; Eph. 2:1-6; 2 Tim. 1:9-10
7. Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 2:10, 12; Eph. 1:17-18
8. Ezek. 36:26
9. Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27; John 6:44-45; Eph. 1:19; Phil. 2:13
10. Ps. 110: 3; John 6:37; Rom. 6:16-18

By God's sovereign appointment in eternity, where and "when" he elected and chose those upon whom He will bestow the benefits of Christ's death, He also by His sovereign appointment ordained the means thereunto, the work of His Word, the preaching of the Gospel and the work of His Holy Spirit which creates the new heart of flesh, which makes us willing to freely come to God.

2. This effectual call is of **God's free and special grace alone**, not from anything at all **foreseen in man**, nor from any power or agency in the creature, **1** being **wholly passive**

therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit; **2** he is thereby **enabled to answer this call**, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead. **3**

1. 2 Tim. 1:9, Titus 3:4-5; Eph. 2:4-5,8-9; Rom. 9:11

2. 1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:5

3. John 6:37; Ezek. 36:27; John 5:25; Eph 1:19-20

It's not that God "looked through the corridors of time" unbiblical garbage, but it's sovereign grace, the same found in Romans 9:13.

The only active Agent in salvation is the Triune God Himself. Man is wholly passive, thus – monergism. The work of regeneration, the new birth and the new heart, man has no power to do anything therein, it's entirely the work of God.

God must give us new inclinations and remove us from the state of slavery to sin and Satan, for us to have the desire and ability to choose God. We do choose God, but it's only because He first choose to give us new inclinations which will inevitably lead to Him.

3. **(Elect) infants** dying in infancy are **regenerated and saved by Christ** through the Spirit; who worketh when, and where, and how he pleases; **1** so also are **all elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called** by the ministry of the Word.

1. John 3:3, 5, 6, 8

It is interesting that some 1689's do not include the phrase "elect," (Waldron says that the 1689 has removed it, but it is present in some copies thereof) which would lead that all infants go to Heaven, a point that John MacArthur agrees with and a lot of Christians agree with, while some (myself among them) do hope that it is true, but do not see conclusive biblical evidence.

It is good that the Confession recognizes the need for these infants and those incapable (because of mentality or illness) of hearing the Gospel to be saved and regenerated. Meaning, that they were sinners and it is alone by the grace of Jesus Christ that they're saved.

4. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some **common operations of the Spirit**, **1** 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; **2** be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess. **3**

1. Matt. 7:22; 13:20-21; 22:14; Heb 6:4-5

2. John 6:44-45, 64-66; 8:24; 1 John 2:24, 25

3. Acts 4:12; John 4:22; 17:3

They can't come because they have a hard master that hates God, and they are bound to do his will.

"Christians" hypocrites, or professing Christians will receive the greater condemnation because of their wider knowledge of God's will as they heart it in Church and in Christians circles.

CHAPTER 11: OF JUSTIFICATION [**RETURN**]

1. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also **freely justifieth**, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by **pardoning their sins**, and by **accounting and accepting their persons as righteous**; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but **for Christ's sake alone**; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but **by imputing Christ's active obedience** unto the whole law, and **passive obedience in his death** for their whole and sole righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God. (Romans 3:24; Romans 8:30; Romans 4:5-8; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:30, 31; Romans 5:17-19; Philippians 3:8, 9; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Romans 5:17)

Justification as defined by Wayne Grudem is: Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of

our sins as forgiven and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.

The Confession is about God's sovereign freedom and I love it, as I also am jealous for God's sovereign freedom to do anything He pleases, when, where and with whom He pleases.

The Confession rejects the the Roman Catholic idea of Infused Righteousness which would mean hat it is man and God, which would ignore what was clearly said in chapter 10 on Effectual Calling and monergism all through the Confession.

Rather, our justification (which is not ours actually) is imputed (To relate (something, usually something bad) to a particular cause or source; place the fault or responsibility for) to us. It is credited to us, by mere Sovereign Grace! Thank you Lord.

You lived the life that I should have lived, and died the death that I deserved to death in all eternity. Amazing Grace!

2. **Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness**, is the **alone instrument of justification**; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever **accompanied with all other saving graces**, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love. (Romans 3:28; Galatians 5:6; James 2:17, 22, 26)

According to the Confession faith in Christ means: receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification.

We only hope in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb of God.

3. Christ, by his **obedience** and **death**, did **fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified**; and did, by the sacrifice of himself in the blood of his cross, **undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them**, make a proper, real, and **full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf**; yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, **not for anything in them**, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of **God might be glorified in the justification of sinners**. (Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Isaiah 53:5, 6; Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26; Ephesians 1:6,7; Ephesians 2:7)

The perfect life and death of Christ, that us exactly why every believer will be in Heaven, not because anything we did, but because of what He did on the cross and how he lived His perfect life.

It's not that when we come to be justified, all our past sins are forgiven, but now we need to do better, no, no. All was accomplished by Christ, for past and future sins Christ did die and accomplish redemption.

4. **God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect**, and **Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins**, and **rise again for their justification**; nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the **Holy Spirit doth in time due actually apply Christ unto them**. (Galatians 3:8; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Timothy 2:6; Romans 4:25; Colossians 1:21,22; Titus 3:4-7)

The perfect work of the Triune God is described here:

1. The Father elects
 2. The Son dies in the stead of the elect
 3. The Spirit in time applies Christ unto the elect
5. God doth **continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified**, and although they can **never fall from the state of justification**, yet they may, by their sins, fall under **God's fatherly displeasure**; and in that condition they have not usually the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, **confess their sins**, beg pardon, and **renew their faith and repentance**. (Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:7, 9; John 10:28; Psalms 89:31-33; Psalms 32:5; Psalms 51; Matthew 26:75)

God graciously continues to forgive us when we confess our sins and beg for pardon (1 John 1:8-10). All because of the work of Christ, his active and passive obedience.

If we have been truly justified, we cannot fall from that state, but we can through a season of disobedience ome under God's fatherly discipline, in which He lovingly brings us back to Him and shows us our wicked ways.

6. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, **one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.** (Galatians 3:9; Romans 4:22-24)

They too were justified by faith, and not by works. The Mosaic Covenant did not give eternal life. The Mosaic Covenant was a covenant of works. As the usual John Owen saying goes:

"This covenant thus made [the Old Covenant], with these ends and promises, did never save nor condemn any man eternally. All that lived under the administration of it did attain eternal life, or perished for ever, but not by virtue of this covenant as formally such. It did, indeed, revive the commanding power and sanction of the first covenant of works; and in that respect, as the apostle speaks, was "the ministry of condemnation," 2 Cor. 3: 9; for "by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified." And on the other hand, it directed also to the promise, which was the instrument of life and salvation to all that did believe. But as to what it had of its own, it was confined to things temporal. Believers were saved under it, but not by virtue of it. Sinners perished eternally under it, but by the curse of the original law of works."

CHAPTER 12: OF ADOPTION [[RETURN](#)]

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 the children of God,** have **his name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption,** have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a Father, yet **never cast off,** but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation. (Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:4, 5; John 1:12; Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:18; Psalms 103:13; Proverbs 14:26; 1 Peter 5:7; Hebrews 12:6; Isaiah 54:8, 9; Lamentations 3:31; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 1:14; Hebrews 6:12)

Adoption is defined by Grudem: Adoption is an act of God whereby he makes us members of his family. Waldron defines it as: Adoption is a change in legal status from that of slave to that of son of God which takes place by faith at the moment of union with Christ, but will be publicly revealed at the resurrection.

" 'Vouchsafe' means to grant a special privilege or favour and/or to bestow that favour in a gracious and condescending manner."

In adoption God transfers us from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of His beloved Son, we are not merely justified, but we become His children. We are allowed to all Him Father! He is the Father that I missed having, even though I was a rebel yet He still loved and cared for me.

We are not merely slaves, but children and heirs also!

It is mind boggling – 1John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 1John 3:2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Privileges/Blessings of adoptions

- Calling God "Father" (Rom 8:15-16; Matt 6:9)
- Being cared for by God (Matt 6:32; 7:11)
- No longer slaves (Gal 4:7)
- He loves us (1 John 3:1)
- Being joint heirs with Christ (Gal 4:7; Rom 8:17; 1 Pet 1:4)
- Being led by the Spirit (Rom 8:14)
- He disciplines us (Heb 12:5-7, 10)
- We share in His sufferings and glory (Lk 24:26; Rom 8:17)
- We may imitate God (Rom 5:1; 1 Pet 1:14-16)

CHAPTER 13: OF SANCTIFICATION [[RETURN](#)]

1. They who are **united to Christ**, effectually called, and regenerated, having **a new heart and a new spirit** created in them **through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection**, are also farther sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by **His Word** and **Spirit** dwelling in them; the **dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed**, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of **all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord**. (Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5, 6; John 17:17; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23; Romans 6:14; Galatians 5:24; Colossians 1:11; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14)

Grudem defines sanctification as such: Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.

The Confession can't stop magnifying the work of Christ for His elect and tracing all the blessings of the Christian life to it.

The same instrumentality used for the Effectual Calling (10:1) is also used here for sanctification, namely, the Word and the Spirit.

In sanctification, unlike justification, man works together with God for his sanctification. But he can only do so because of the grace of God which is working in him to do God's pleasure (Phil 2:12-13). According to Grudem, this phraseology is used to not lead men to a passive mode in their sanctification. We are commanded to be holy. We are commanded to endure to the end. By the grace of God we will.

Justification is a one time act, while sanctification is an on-going process which will it's completion in heaven (we will stop sinning and be perfected) and in the resurrection (when we will receive a body like His). The following table from Grudem may help us to see the difference between justification and sanctification:

Justification	Sanctification
Legal standing	Internal condition
Once for all time	Continuous throughout life
Entirely God's work	We cooperate
Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life
The same in all Christians	Greater in some than in others

The dominion of sin is destroyed, sin is not wholly taken away. A Christian can't have an "there is no way I can overcome this sin," because the Bible says that sin has no dominion over us (Rom 6:14). Sanctification is a gradual process of ups and downs.

2. This sanctification is **throughout the whole man**, yet **imperfect in this life**; there abideth still some **remnants of corruption** in every part, whence ariseth a continual and **irreconcilable war**; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Romans 7:18, 23; Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11)

We will not reach sinless perfection in this life, that we will do when we go to be with the Lord, if He should tarry or when He comes (then we will also receive glorified bodies and complete our sanctification).

3. In which **war**, although the remaining corruption **for a time may much prevail**, yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the **regenerate part doth overcome**; and so the saints grow in grace, **perfecting holiness in the fear of God**, pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in His Word hath prescribed them. (Romans 7:23; Romans 6:14; Ephesians 4:15, 16; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 7:1)

There is a very real war within regenerate man, the war between the Spirit and the flesh. These desires are opposed to each other. We may at times be attracted to certain sins, but we do not need to be enslaved by them if we use the means that God has given us to battle sin.

CHAPTER 14: OF SAVING FAITH [[RETURN](#)]

1. The **grace of faith**, whereby the **elect are enabled to believe** to the saving of their souls, **is the work of the Spirit of Christ** in their hearts, and is ordinarily **wrought by the ministry of the Word**; by which also, and by the administration of **baptism** and the **Lord's supper**, prayer, and other means appointed of God, it is **increased and strengthened**. (2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 10:14, 17; Luke 17:5; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:32)

Faith was previously defined in 11:2 as: Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification...

Grudem defines faith in the glossary as: Trust or dependence on God based on the fact that we take him at his word and believe what he has said.

Faith is a gift from God (Phil 1:29; Eph 2:8-9). It is what is necessary for our salvation and God provides the conditions for us in this gracious covenant. And it is wrought about ordinarily by the preaching of the Word, now I don't think that necessarily implies the use of Scripture in the process of evangelism, as long as the Gospel of Christ is clear to the rebel sinner.

Our faith grows as we become more and more obedient to our Lord.

The instrumentality of saving faith (Waldron):

- We are saved by faith (Rom 1:16-17; 10:9; Eph 2:8-9)
- We will be saved by faith (1 Pet 1:8-9; Heb 10:38-39)
- We received eternal life by faith (John 20:31)
- We live by faith (Gal 2:20; 3:11)
- Justification and forgiveness are ours by faith (Acts 10:43; 26:18)
- We are adopted by faith (Gal 3:26; Rom 4:14, 16)
- We have received the Spirit by faith (Gal 3:2, 5, 14, 22; Eph 1:13; John 7:39)
- We are preserved by faith (Heb 4:3; 6:12; 10:39; 1 Peter 1:5)

2. By this faith a Christian **believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word** for the authority of God himself, and also **apprehendeth an excellency therein above all other writings** and all things in the world, as it bears forth the glory of God in his attributes, the excellency of Christ in his nature and offices, and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in his workings and operations: and so is enabled to cast his soul upon the truth thus believed; and also acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; **yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings**, and **embracing the promises of God** for this life and that which is to come; but the principal acts of saving faith have immediate relation to Christ, **accepting, receiving, and resting upon him alone for justification**, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace. (Acts 24:14; Psalms 27:7-10; Psalms 119:72; 2 Timothy 1:12; John 14:14; Isaiah 66:2; Hebrews 11:13; John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Galatians 2:20; Acts 15:11)

It is by faith (confidence upon what God has said) that we believe whatsoever is affirmed in the Scriptures. Faith is not wishful thinking it is rather as Heb 11:1 puts it" ...the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

It is trusting in Christ for our lives. Depending on Him, fearing Him, obeying Him, loving Him, cherishing Him above all. Hoping in Himself alone for salvation.

3. This faith, although it be **different in degrees**, and may be weak or strong, yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it, as is all other saving grace, from the **faith and common grace of temporary believers**; and therefore, though it may be **many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory**, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 5:13, 14; Matthew 6:30; Romans 4:19, 20; 2 Peter 1:1; Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4, 5; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Colossians 2:2; Hebrews 12:2)

Those who neglect the use of the regular means of grace to grow their faith will be weak, but will not be lose totally. The Spirit through them will always win and bring them to His Kingdom.

CHAPTER 15: OF REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE AND SALVATION [RETURN]

1. Such of the elect as are converted at riper years, having sometime lived in the state of nature, and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, **God in their effectual calling giveth them repentance unto life.** (Titus 3:2-5)

Grudem defines repentance as: A heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.

The word for repentance in the NT **μετανοῶ** means "to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction)."

Repentance is a continual thing throughout the whole Christian life (15:4).

It is important to note the use of repentance in this chapter, it seems that it is being used particularly in the sense of ordinary means of grace, apart from the first paragraph. And by the other paragraphs as a means of being restored from sin, like in the cause of Peter and David.

In this paragraph the Confession discusses the fact of what Sam Waldron calls "repentance as a crisis experience" as in the case of Paul for example. From radical wickedness to a saint, unlike for example a child living in a Christian household and later in youth being granted repentance by the grace of God.

2. Whereas there is none that doth good and sinneth not, and the best of men may, through the power and deceitfulness of their corruption dwelling in them, with the prevalency of temptation, **fall into great sins** and provocations; God hath, in the **covenant of grace**, mercifully provided that believers so sinning and falling be **renewed through repentance unto salvation.** (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Luke 22:31, 32)

We may and do sometimes fall into gross sins which God hates, but if we really trust in the work of Christ on our behalf and trust His word we should not be hopeless, but run to God in repentance for he will not reject us.

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

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-aborrancy, praying for pardon and strength of grace**, with a purpose and endeavour, by supplies of the Spirit, to **walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things.** (Zechariah 12:10; Acts 11:18; Ezekiel 36:31; 2 Corinthians 7:11; Psalms 119:6; Psalms 119:128)

Thank you God the Spirit for continually showing us our evil ways and granting grace that we may overcome them. Thank You for not showing me all of my sin at once that I may be left hopeless.

Humble me and help me cast away my sinful habits from me and live a life well pleasing to God, in all things. For His glory alone.

4. As **repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives**, upon the account of the body of death, and the motions thereof, so it is **every man's duty to repent of his particular known sins particularly.** (Luke 19:8; 1 Timothy 1:13, 15)

The very first point in of Martin Luther 95 Theses was "1. When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said "Repent", He called for the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." and he further says " 2. The word cannot be properly understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, i.e. confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.

3. Yet its meaning is not restricted to repentance in one's heart; for such repentance is null unless it produces outward

signs in various mortifications of the flesh. 4. As long as hatred of self abides (i.e. true inward repentance) the penalty of sin abides, viz., “ until we enter the kingdom of heaven.

5. Such is the provision which God hath made through Christ in the **covenant of grace** for the **preservation of believers unto salvation**; that although there is **no sin so small but it deserves damnation**; yet there is **no sin so great that it shall bring damnation on them that repent**; which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary. (Romans 6:23; Isaiah 1:16-18 Isaiah 55:7)

God knows that we will not overcome sin fully in this life (13:2-3), yet loves and provides for us a way to cleans ourselves through continual confession of known sins. There is not a sin so great that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!

That's why the Confession deems it necessary for repentance constantly to be preached to believers and unbelievers alike.

CHAPTER 16: OF GOOD WORKS [**RETURN**]

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 pretence of good intentions. (Micah 6:8; Hebrews 13:21; Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13)

God defines what good works are. They are what He commands, which reflects His nature and what He is. It is not pety to add to the Word and command of God things that He has not prescribed in His Holy Word.

2. These good works, done in **obedience to God's commandments**, are the **fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith**; and by them believers **manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries**, and **glorify God**, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that having their fruit unto holiness they may have the end eternal life. (James 2:18, 22; Psalms 116:12, 13; 1 John 2:3, 5; 2 Peter 1:5-11; Matthew 5:16; 1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Peter 2:15; Philippians 1:11; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 6:22)

Good works are not the cause of salvation, but the effect of salvation. James is clear, a true faith is not without works. By good works we also manifest our thankfulness to God (because He is the cause of any good done by us). By good works we bring glory to our God and show love to our neighbors and enemies. Our assurance is strengthen in that when we do good works which glorify God our faith becomes more visible even to us. Good works strengthen the proclamation of the Gospel.

3. Their **ability to do good works is not at all of themselves**, but **wholly from the Spirit of Christ**; and that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is necessary **an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit**, to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; yet **they are not hereupon to grow negligent**, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them. (John 15:4, 5; 2 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 2:13; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Isaiah 64:7)

There is nothing good in my flesh, anything good done by me is actually done by the Spirit living in me. All glory is to the Sovereign. He works His good pleasure in the hearts of His children.

Yet we should not go into a passive mode, but in everything we should strive to do the will of God and obey Him, for His glory and our good. In that way we make manifest our faith to ourselves also.

4. They who in their obedience attain to **the greatest height which is possible in this life**, are so far from being able to **supererogate**, and to do more than God requires, as that **they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do**. (Job 9:2, 3; Galatians 5:17; Luke 17:10

)

All our good works are mixed with sin and thus never truly good, but even the best Christian's good works are not above God's demanded standard. Even when we do what we are obligated to do, we are "unworthy servants."

Supererogate means "To do more than is required, ordered, or expected."

5. **We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin** or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them **we can neither profit nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins**; but **when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty**, and are **unprofitable servants**; and because **as they are good they proceed from his Spirit**, and as they are wrought by us they are **defiled and mixed** with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's punishment. (Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 4:6; Galatians 5:22, 23; Isaiah 64:6; Psalms 143:2)

All our works, they are the effects of salvation, not the cause!

Even our best works are defiled and mixed with sin, because we are still sinners and our motives are not always right, but yet God in His grace rewards them (paragraph 6).

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 unreprovable in God's sight, but that he, **looking upon them in his Son**, is pleased to **accept** and **reward that which is sincere**, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections. (Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5; Matthew 25:21, 23; Hebrews 6:10)

The infinite grace of God that he even accepts our defiled "good works" and not only accepts them, but even rewards them! All because of His beloved Son and what he did on the cross.

God looks on us as He looks upon Jesus, because he imputed Jesus' perfect righteousness to us.

7. **Works done by unregenerate men**, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they **proceed not from a heart purified by faith**, nor are done in a **right manner according to the word**, nor to a **right end, the glory of God**, they are therefore **sinful, and cannot please God**, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God, and yet **their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God**. (2 Kings 10:30; 1 Kings 21:27, 29; Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4, 6; 1 Corinthians 13:1; Matthew 6:2, 5; Amos 5:21, 22; Romans 9:16; Titus 3:5; Job 21:14, 15; Matthew 25:41-43)

The 4 criteria for truly good works:

1. It must have the right **matter** (it must be a thing which God commands)
2. It must have the right **root** (it must proceed from a heart purified by faith)
3. It must have the right **manner** (God's work must be done in God's way)
4. It must have the right **end** (the glory of God must be its ultimate purpose)

Although the "good works" done by unbelievers are sinful, yet their doing that is much better than ignoring them. This may suggest that they who have done "good works" which outwardly conform to the word of God and yet are unregenerate may receive lesser punishment than they which have neglected them.

CHAPTER 17: OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS [[RETURN](#)]

1. Those whom **God hath accepted in the beloved**, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and **given the precious faith of his elect** unto, **can neither totally nor finally fall** from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally

saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence **he still begets and nourisheth in them faith**, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall **never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon**; notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet he is still the same, and **they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation**, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being **engraven upon the palm of his hands**, and **their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity**. (John 10:28, 29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 John 2:19; Psalms 89:31, 32; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Malachi 3:6)

Grudem defines it as: The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again.

This is the precious doctrine and fountain of hope for all the saints. There is no power in heaven or on earth that can separate us from the love of Christ. Those whom He foreknew, He predestined, called, justified and glorified. He didn't miss anyone in the way. His glory is on the line, He will not fail.

Though because of sinfulness we may neglect God sometimes, return to old sins, yet if we are accepted in the beloved (chosen), he will chase us back and grant to us faith, repentance and all the fruits of the Spirit which restore us into right fellowship with Him (15:2).

2. This perseverance of the saints **depends not upon their own free will**, but upon the **immutability of the decree of election**, flowing from the **free and unchangeable love of God the Father**, upon the **efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ** and union with him, the oath of God, the **abiding of his Spirit**, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the **covenant of grace**; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof. (Romans 8:30 Romans 9:11, 16; Romans 5:9, 10; John 14:19; Hebrews 6:17, 18; 1 John 3:9; Jeremiah 32:40)

It's not our free will that keeps us Christians. But it is free will that keeps us Christians and gives us every day repentance and faith - the free will of God that is. His sovereign pleasure and decree is irreversible because it's perfect.

Jesus intercedes for our shortcomings and sins and the Father never rejects His beloved Son. We are kept by the power of God Himself, and for Himself.

3. And though they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the **neglect of means of their preservation**, fall into **grievous sins, and for a time continue therein**, whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their **hearts hardened**, and their **consciences wounded**, hurt and scandalize others, and **bring temporal judgments** upon themselves, yet shall they **renew their repentance** and **be preserved through faith in Christ** Jesus to the end. (Matthew 26:70, 72, 74; Isaiah 64:5, 9; Ephesians 4:30; Psalms 51:10, 12; Psalms 32:3, 4; 2 Samuel 12:14; Luke 22:32, 61, 62)

Even though we may sometimes go back to our wicked ways which the Lord has redeemed us from, because of our sinfulness, yet the love of God will chase us and will bring us back to Him again and renew our repentance and faith in Christ.

Ordinary means of perseverance:

- Prayer (Eph 6:18; Luke 22:46)
- Hearing the Word (John 15:5-7; James 1:21)
- Fellowship with believers (Heb 10:24-27)
- Diligence in one's calling (2 Thess 3:15-16)

CHAPTER 18: OF THE ASSURANCE OF GRACE AND SALVATION [[RETURN](#)]

1. Although **temporary believers, and other unregenerate men**, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God and state of salvation, **which hope of theirs shall perish**; yet such as **truly believe in the Lord Jesus**, and **love him in sincerity**, endeavouring to **walk in all good conscience** before him, may in this life be **certainly assured that they are in the state of grace**, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed. (Job 8:13, 14; Matthew 7:22, 23; 1 John 2:3; 1 John 3:14, 18, 19, 21, 24; 1 John 5:13; Romans 5:2, 5)

The greatest deception in our times comes in the sinner's prayer. People are told if they repeat some words before a preacher they will become children of God. That may certainly be true, if they are sincere and God grants repentance and faith, but most of the time those having prayed that prayer do not bear fruit in keeping with their repentance and therefore have a false assurance of salvation, just because at one time they prayed a prayer and "accepted" Jesus into their hearts.

Yet those who bear fruit in keeping with their repentance (chapter 16-17) may become more and more assured of their salvation and possession of eternal life by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and work of God the Spirit. If we trust in Christ alone for our hope and not ourselves, if we endeavor to please and obey Him and love Him as He has pleased to reveal Himself in the Scriptures.

2. This **certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion** grounded upon a fallible hope, but an **infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ** revealed in the Gospel; and also upon the **inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit** unto which promises are made, and on the **testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God**; and, as a fruit thereof, **keeping the heart both humble and holy**. (Hebrews 6:11, 19; Hebrews 6:17, 18; 2 Peter 1:4, 5, 10, 11; Romans 8:15, 16; 1 John 3:1-3)

This certainty which I and other believers have been granted by the Lord Jesus Christ have is not mere wishful thinking, but a deep trust in the promises of God and the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary for all of God's elect. It's a hope established by the Scriptures which promise eternal life to those who believe in Christ, those who bear fruit in keeping with their repentance. Next to that is the testimony of the Spirit of grace and adoption who along with out spirit confirms to us that we indeed are children of God and may rest in peace knowing that we will be with God forever and He will never cast us out.

Yet this blessed assurance should not make us arrogant or prideful, it's only of grace – His sovereign grace and love. We do not deserve to be saved, let alone have assurance of our salvation.

3. This **infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith**, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet **being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God**, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the **right use of means**, attain thereunto: and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to **make his calling and election sure**, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the **proper fruits of this assurance**; -so far is it from inclining men to looseness. (Isaiah 50:10; Psalms 88; Psalms 77:1-12; 1 John 4:13; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Romans 5:1, 2, 5; Romans 14:17; Psalms 119:32; Romans 6:1,2; Titus 2:11, 12, 14)

This infallible assurance is not directly connecting with believing. That is to say, there is no promise that once we believe we will be assured of our salvation, yet if we use the means established by God to know our salvation we can begin to have an assurance of our salvation. If we keep bearing fruit with our profession of faith, we may become more and more assured of our redemption.

Sometimes true believers may have strong doubts and insecurities about their salvation because of some grievous sins

which the Holy Spirit is thereby grieved, yet it is foolish and faithless to wait and remain in that place, rather we should run to God, confessing and forsake our sins and ask for His forgiveness (1 Jn 1:8-10).

This assurance rather than producing idleness in the true believer, it encourages Him and makes him more thankful for the work of the Triune God in him and He is thereby more thankful to God and willing to do more for God.

4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways **shaken, diminished, and intermitted**; as by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light, **yet are they never destitute of the seed of God** and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty out of which, **by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived**, and by the which, in the meantime, they are preserved from utter despair. (Canticles 5:2, 3, 6; Psalms 51:8, 12, 14; Psalms 116:11; Psalms 77:7, 8; Psalms 31:22; Psalms 30:7; 1 John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Psalms 42:5, 11; Lamentations 3:26-31)

True believers may sometimes fall into great sins whereby they come to the false conclusion that they were never saved in the first place. Rather than realize that we all are sinners and we need to renew our repentance before God and go to Him and beg for cleansing in Christ's blood and forgiveness.

Beg God to cleanse our evil hearts and conscious. Beg God to create a clean heart in us that desires to serve and obey Him and hate sin like God hates it.

CHAPTER 19: OF THE LAW OF GOD [[RETURN](#)]

1. God gave to Adam a **law of universal obedience written in his heart**, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; **by which he bound him and all his posterity** to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; **promised life upon the fulfilling**, and **threatened death upon the breach of it**, and **endued him with power and ability to keep it**. (Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:10, 12)

Adam did not only have the Ten Commandments which we continue to have upon our hearts (par 2), but received a direct and special precept from God to *not* eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (see chapter 6). Adam stood as the Federal head of all the human race, so if he had passed his time of probation all his descendants would have been born perfectly righteous, but he did not, he failed. Thus, all his posterity with him also.

2. The **same law** that was first written in the **heart of man continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness** after the fall, and **was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments**, and written in two tables, the four first containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man. (Romans 2:14, 15; Deuteronomy 10:4)

That's why Paul says that the Gentiles are inexcusable in Romans 1-2 because they know God's demands that are written upon their hearts.

Further, the Confession takes the view that the Law of Moses was a kind of republication or expansion of the Covenant with Adam. The Ten Commandments which are the duty of all men to do are written already upon every single individual, but they can and do get effected by the sin within man, that's why it was necessary that God deliver them in written form where they can't be messed with or diminished by sin.

3. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of **Israel ceremonial laws**, containing several **typical ordinances**, partly of worship, **prefiguring Christ**, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and **partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties**, all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are, by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father **for that end abrogated and taken away**. (Hebrews 10:1; Colossians

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

The purpose for the ceremonial laws was for the people of Israel to look outside themselves and to something much greater that is coming to them. Namely, Christ. Who is the fulfillment of all ceremonial laws and when He fulfilled them, they were abrogated – done away with, because they were a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ (Col 2:17).

4. To them also he gave sundry **judicial laws**, which **expired together with the state of that people**, not obliging any now by virtue of that institution; **their general equity only being of moral use**. (1 Corinthians 9:8-10)

This seems to be strong against any theonomic idea of the government. The judicial laws were given under a theonomy, which does not exist anymore. But that doesn't mean the concepts therein contained are worthless, by no means, rather we should use the general principle thereof still in our governments and personal lives.

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

Since the law was not only written on Adam's heart, but the heart of all his descendants they are obliged, saved or not saved to keep it by virtue of God being their Sovereign Creator. Paul is not against this when he says in Romans 1-2 that people do know what God wants and they hate Him and do not do what He wants, but exactly what He hates.

It was not only given to Israel, since it is written on the hearts of all men and it is the covenant which Israel and Adam broke, namely, the Covenant of Creation which was republished in the Mosaic Covenant (Hos 6:7).

6. Although **true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works**, to be thereby justified or condemned, yet **it is of great use to them** as well as to others, in that as **a rule of life**, **informing them of the will of God and their duty**, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; **discovering also the sinful pollutions** of their natures, hearts, and lives, so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against, sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ and the perfection of his obedience; it is likewise of use to the regenerate to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to shew what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse and unallayed rigour thereof. The promises of it likewise shew them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, though **not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works**; so as man's doing good and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one and deterreth from the other, **is no evidence of his being under the law and not under grace**. (Romans 6:14; Galatians 2:16; Romans 8:1; Romans 10:4; Romans 3:20; Romans 7:7, etc; Romans 6:12-14; 1 Peter 3:8-13)

The law is good and holy (1 Tim 1:8; Rom 7:12). When Christians keep and follow the Law they are not following it to earn any merit, but we follow it because it is pleasing in God's sight. It shows us what God desires and what God wants from men. It shows us our shortcomings and when used lawfully, it directs us to Christ who provides grace for our shortcomings and empowerment to fulfill His will.

The law should not be used in the way legalist do. Often adding to the commands of God, because they think it's piety. Rather it is to be used to show and direct us about what God wants us to be like and what God is like.

It should also not be neglected as the antinomians, which are a lot in our day and age do. They think that the Law in the Old Testament is irrelevant to the New Covenant believer, saying that Christ came to fulfill the Law. Yet, the passage does not say that the Law is therefore useless. Christ did indeed fulfill the ceremonial laws (paragraph 3), those were done away with, but the moral laws remain intact. It is from the Old Testament that we learn to love our neighbor (Lev 19:18), love God (Deut 6:5). The Lord Jesus comes in Matthew 5 and raises the stakes even higher. Not only adultery is sinful, but also adultery in the heart, lust.

When we obey God, we do it because we want Him to get all glory and because thereby our love for God is made

manifest (John 15:14; 1 John 5:3).

3. Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it, the **Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God**, revealed in the law, requireth to be done. (Galatians 3:21; Ezekiel 36:27)

Doing the will of God with love and pleasure shows us that we indeed are children of God (1 John 5:3). It proves to us our genuine faith. It is a real faith, not the dead faith of James 2.

CHAPTER 20: OF THE GOSPEL, AND OF THE EXTENT OF THE GRACE THEREOF [RETURN]

1. The **covenant of works being broken by sin**, and made **unprofitable unto life**, God was pleased to give forth the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman, as **the means of calling the elect**, and **begetting in them faith and repentance**; in this promise the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and [is] therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners. (Genesis 3:15; Revelation 13:8)

Though the covenant made with Adam was gracious, but it's blessings were dependent on Adam's obedience to the commands of God. Then in what way was it gracious? In the fact that God offered blessings to Adam, when He was not obligated to. That God offered Adam a relationship with Him. Any relation of God to man is a huge condescension of God's part (chapter 7).

The Covenant of Works is still in effect, but only in its negative and not positive effect. Death is the wage of sin (Rom 3:23), that was what Adam was threatened with by God (Gen 2:17) and because of Adam all are made sinners who are in him (Rom 5:12).

2. This promise of Christ, and salvation by him, **is revealed only by the Word of God**; neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace by him, so much as in a general or obscure way; much less that men destitute of the revelation of Him by the promise or gospel, should be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance. (Romans 1:17; Romans 10:14,15,17; Proverbs 29:18; Isaiah 25:7; Isaiah 60:2, 3)

The gospel, unlike the existence of God is a special revelation, meaning it is only revealed in the Bible. You cannot look at creation and conclude that God gave His only Son to die in our place!

3. The revelation of the gospel unto sinners, made **in divers times and by sundry parts**, with the addition of promises and precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the nations and persons to whom it is granted, is **merely of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God**; not being annexed by virtue of any promise to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received without it, which none ever did make, or can do so; and therefore in all ages, the preaching of the gospel has been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent or straitening of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God. (Psalms 147:20; Acts 16:7; Romans 1:18-32)

The gospel in the period before the New Covenant was progressively revealed to Israel, until the full consummation came with Christ's establishment of the New Covenant (Heb 8:6).

It comes to everyone and is not because of anything in man, but simply because of God's sovereign pleasure.

4. Although the **gospel be the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace**, and is, as such, abundantly sufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in trespasses may be born again, quickened or regenerated, **there is moreover necessary an effectual insuperable work of the Holy Spirit** upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new

spiritual life; without which no other means will effect their conversion unto God. (Psalms 110:3; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 1:19, 20; John 6:44; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6)

The Gospel is about Christ. It's about His finished work on the cross and perfect life on behalf of everyone who would believe in Him. Yet, when God regenerates the heart, the proclamation of the gospel is necessary and so is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in granting life from death.

CHAPTER 21: OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE [**RETURN**]

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

All which were **common also to believers under the law** for the substance of them; but under the New Testament the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their **freedom from the yoke of a ceremonial law**, to which the Jewish church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of. (Galatians 3:13; Galatians 1:4; Acts 26:18; Romans 8:3; Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 8:15; Luke 1:73-75; 1 John 4:18; Galatians 3:9, 14; John 7:38, 39; Hebrews 10:19-21)

All the blessings we have received, are receiving and will receive are all the results of Christ perfect work on the cross and His perfect life which earned us forgiveness and righteousness.

The blessings we receive did also the saints of the OT receive, yet we have received much more and in much more greater extent.

The liberties we have according to the confession:

1. Freedom from the guilt of sin
 2. Freedom from the condemning wrath of God
 3. Freedom from the rigor and curse of the law
 4. Freedom in being delivered from the present world
 5. Freedom from bondage to Satan
 6. Freedom from the dominion of sin
 7. Freedom from the evil afflictions
 8. Freedom from the fear and sting of death
 9. Freedom from everlasting damnation
 10. Freedom in access to God
 11. Freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law
2. **God alone is Lord of the conscience**, and hath **left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men** which are in any thing **contrary to his word, or not contained in it**. So that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also. (James 4:12; Romans 14:4; Acts 4:19, 29; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:20, 22, 23; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 1:24)

It's a great sin to add to the word of God and greater is it to think that its piety to add to the commandments of God and follow them when the Word of God does not obligate us. An example of this is the legalism of the Pharisees in the days of Christ. We should not bind people to hold to these traditions, like the Pharisees did in their time, when it was

actually right to do good on the Sabbath, but they had forbidden the people to do anything, even not travel much (Matthew 12:1-14).

3. They who **upon pretence of Christian liberty do practice any sin**, or cherish any sinful lust, as they do thereby pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction, so they wholly destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, **we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him**, all the days of our lives. (Romans 6:1, 2; Galatians 5:13; 2 Peter 2:18, 21)

We are under the liberty of Christ, but that doesn't mean it's okay to sin, rather it means that we should use our liberty for the cause of Christ and do good, rather than evil, because we have been set free from the dominion of sin.

Romans 6:15-18 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness."

CHAPTER 22: OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND THE SABBATH DAY **[RETURN]**

1. The light of nature shews that **there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all**; is just, good and doth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might. But **the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself**, and so **limited by his own revealed will**, that **he may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men**, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. (Jeremiah 10:7; Mark 12:33; Deuteronomy 12:32; Exodus 20:4-6)

By virtue of Him being the Creator all creations owes Him worship and all duty, yet most rebel against His sovereign rule.

God Himself establishes the way He wants to be worshipped. It's not for us to decide. He decides the way that He will accept worship. This is what is called the Reformed Principle of the Regulative Worship.

2. Religious worship is to be given to **God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**, and to him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creatures; and since the fall, **not without a mediator, nor in the mediation of any other but Christ alone**. (Matthew 4:9, 10; John 6:23; Matthew 28:19; Romans 1:25; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10; John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5)

Worship is due alone to the Triune God. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit and to all of them. Further, because our relationship with God has been broken through the Fall, we need a mediator between us and God, that mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Who is the only Way to the Father. When we say "in Jesus' name" we mean that we do not come to the throne of grace because of our righteousness or our good standing, but we beg for acceptance as if it was Christ and for Christ's sake.

The Roman Catholic practice of the intercession of the saints is rejected, because Christ is only Mediator between man and God.

3. **Prayer, with thanksgiving**, being one part of natural worship, is by God **required of all men**. But that it may be accepted, **it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, according to his will**; with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, **in a known tongue**. (Psalms 95:1-7; Psalms 65:2; John 14:13, 14; Romans 8:26; 1 John 5:14; 1 Corinthians 14:16, 17)

Prayer is not only our communication with God, it is also a form of worship of God. That's why it's all the more important. God commands us to pray, we have examples of prayers in the Bible. Few things are important for fully biblical prayers:

- The prayer is to be made in the name of the Son
- The prayer is to be made by the help of the Spirit
- The prayer must be according to the will of the Lord
- The prayer is to be made with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance
- When with others it is to be made in a language everyone there understands

Prayer reshapes us to accept and love the will of God. Prayer does not change God, it changes us and our attitudes.

4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and **for all sorts of men living**, or that **shall live hereafter**; but **not for the dead**, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death. (1 Timothy 2:1, 2; 2 Samuel 7:29; 2 Samuel 12:21-23; 1 John 5:16)

Prayer is only to be made to living persons or those who will yet live (unborn children). It is not to be made for the dead as Roman Catholics do. Because we do not have any command or example to do that from the Scripture.

We are to pray for:

- Ourselves (1 Chr 4:10; Ps 50:14-15; 106:4-5; 2 Cor 12:7-8; Heb 5:7; John 17:1;)
- Fellow believers (James 5:16; Rom 1:9-10)
- Ministers of the Word (Eph 6:19-20; Col 4:3; 2 Thess 3:1-2; Acts 13:2-3; Matt 9:38)
- Those converted through our ministry (John 17:9-26; 1 Thess 3:9-13)
- Sick brothers (James 5:14-16)
- Brothers whom we sin commit a sin not leading to death (1 John 5:16-17)
- All saints (Eph 6:18; John 17:9, 20; Ps 36:10)
- Our children (1 Chr 29:19)
- Our rulers (1 Tim 2:2-3)
- The city where we live (Jer 29:7)
- Israel (Rom 10:1; Joel 2:17; Isa 62:6-7; 1 Sam 12:22-23; Ps 122:6-7; 1 Kings 11:13; Zechariah 2:7-8, 10-12)
- Our enemies (Luke 6:28; 23:34; Matt 5:44; Acts 7:60)
- All men (1 Tim 2:1)

5. The **reading of the Scriptures**, **preaching**, and hearing the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in **psalms**, **hymns**, and **spiritual songs**, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; as also the **administration of baptism**, and the **Lord's supper**, are all parts of religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to him, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear; moreover, solemn humiliation, with fastings, and thanksgivings, upon special occasions, ought to be used in an holy and religious manner. (1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2; Luke 8:18; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26; Esther 4:16; Joel 2:12; Exodus 15:1-19, Psalms 107)

A service has to have preaching that is based on the Word of God, where people fellowship with others, administer the Lord's Supper and Baptism believers.

6. Neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the gospel, **tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place** in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed; but **God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth**; as **in private families daily**, and in **secret each one by himself**; so more solemnly in the **public assemblies**, which are not carelessly nor wilfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God by his word or providence calleth thereunto. (John 4:21; Malachi 1:11; 1 Timothy 2:8; Acts 10:2; Matthew 6:11; Psalms 55:17; Matthew 6:6; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42)

In the Old Testament the place for prayer and the proper worship of God was the Temple in Jerusalem, but that is not so any more. God is to be worshipped everywhere in the universe. There is no special place where we must go to for God to receive our worship and prayers. He is everywhere with us. We can worship Him loudly or in silence. Thank You Lord!

7. As it is the law of nature, that in general **a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God**, so by his Word, in **a positive moral, and perpetual commandment**, binding all men, in all ages, he hath particularly **appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy unto him**, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from **the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week**, which is called the Lord's day: and is to be continued to the end of the world as **the Christian Sabbath**, the observation of **the last day of the week being abolished**. (Exodus 20:8; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10)

As it is obvious that if God made us He has demands on us and wants to be worshipped by us so it is more logical to conclude that we should give time for Him. Although in Scripture He demands all of us and our time should be used to further His glory. Yet God appoints such a day where people come together to worship. I like to think of it this way: on Sunday we do what we do every day but this time with other brothers and sisters.

Quickly after the death of Christ and His ascension we begin to see that the Sabbath (the day of worship) for the Christians becomes the first day of the week, the day Christ rose up, the Sunday (Rev 1:10; cf Acts 20:7).

- **Positive Commandment:** Thou **shall** vs. Thou shall not
- **Moral Commandment:** It is not a judicial or ceremonial commandment that has expired.
- **Perpetual Commandment:** It does not expire, but continues.

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 day**, from their own works, words and thoughts, about **their worldly employment and recreations**, but **are also taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship**, and in the duties of necessity and mercy. (Isaiah 58:13; Nehemiah 13:15-22; Matthew 12:1-13)

It's to be a day of worship, where the Christians come together to worship the Lord together.

The Sabbath is to be a day wholly dedicated to the ways of the Lord. That does not necessarily exclude any work done for the good of others, as long as we don't bind ourselves the whole week with our regular work.

CHAPTER 23: OF LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS [**RETURN**]

1. **A lawful oath is a part of religious worship**, wherein the person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgement, solemnly **calleth God to witness** what he sweareth, **and to judge him** according to the truth or falseness thereof. (Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 10:20; Jeremiah 4:2; 2 Chronicles 6:22, 23)

An oath is not good if one knows that he can keep it and is not done in vain, Paul was under an oath/vow (Acts 18:18).

The first definition given for oath on www.thefreedictionary.com is:

- a. A solemn, formal declaration or promise to fulfill a pledge, often calling on God, a god, or a sacred object as witness.
 - b. The words or formula of such a declaration or promise.
 - c. Something declared or promised.
2. **The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear**; and therein it is to be used, **with all holy fear and reverence**; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred; yet as in

matter of weight and moment, **for confirmation of truth, and ending all strife, an oath is warranted by the word of God**; so a **lawful oath being imposed by lawful authority** in such matters, ought to be taken. (Matthew 5:34, 37; James 5:12; Hebrews 6:16; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Nehemiah 13:25)

The name of God is the only all holy object by which men should swear an oath, but they should be very careful as they are calling God to witness and judge. If we are to take an oath from our government we should do it if it doesn't contradict anything the Bible says or we believe in.

3. Whosoever taketh an oath warranted by the Word of God, ought duly to consider the **weightiness of so solemn an act**, and therein to avouch nothing but what he knoweth to be truth; for that by rash, false, and vain oaths, the Lord is provoked, and for them this land mourns. (Leviticus 19:12; Jeremiah 23:10)

An oath is not only some empty words, we should be very careful that's why Jesus and James say that it is better for our yes to be yes and no to be no. When we take an oath we call God to witness and judge us.

4. An oath is to be taken in **the plain and common sense of the words**, without equivocation or mental reservation. (Ps. 24:4)

We should not use cunning to deceive. We should be clear if we are to take any oath. There should not be "I said this..., but I meant..."

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

A vow is: An earnest promise to perform a specified act or behave in a certain manner, especially a solemn promise to live and act in accordance with the rules of a religious order.

This is a promise to God that one will not do or do something. The Roman Catholic and ancient practices of monkery are rejected.

CHAPTER 24: OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE [**RETURN**]

1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath **ordained civil magistrates to be under him**, over the people, **for his own glory** and the **public good**; and to this end hath armed them with the power of the sword, for defence and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil doers. (Romans 13:1-4)

God is the only sovereign and has granted the civil government to maintain peace and good among the people.

God not only ordains good governments, but also evil, the passage cited in support of his makes it evident, it was the government which persecuted the Christians, yet Paul tells them to honor them and know that it is God who placed them there (cf. Rom 9:7; 1Pet 2:17).

2. **It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate** when called there unto; in the management whereof, as they ought especially to **maintain justice and peace**, according to the wholesome **laws of each kingdom** and commonwealth, so for that end they may lawfully now, under the New Testament **wage war upon just and necessary occasions**. (2 Samuel 23:3; Psalms 82:3, 4; Luke 3:14)

Christians are not to reject to be involved in civil matters, but are to accept them. It is not sinful. But they are to seek peace and justice. It is not to be a theonomy, it is to be according to the laws of the land, yet one cannot disconnect his

own convictions of the Law of God. One cannot be neutral at work, and Christian at home.

War is not forbidden, unless it is for unjust causes.

3. Civil magistrates being set up by God for the ends aforesaid; subjection, in all lawful things commanded by them, **ought to be yielded by us in the Lord**, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake; and **we ought to make supplications and prayers** for kings and all that are in authority, that **under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life**, in all godliness and honesty. (Romans 13:5-7; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2)

We ought to pray for our governments that they may more and more conform to the will of God which will bring blessing upon the nation that has the LORD as their God. We ought to pray for wisdom for them, and above all that they may come to know the Lord.

The Confession is careful not to endorse theonomy, and it consistently kept religious and civil matters apart in this chapter.

CHAPTER 25: OF MARRIAGE [[RETURN](#)]

1. Marriage is to be between **one man** and **one woman**; neither is it lawful for **any man to have more than one wife**, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time. (Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:15; Matthew 19:5,6)

Marriage is a holy institution and a covenant between a man and a woman to be together for life. It's not a game and it's not for us to define. It is the first institution that God instituted in the Garden for Adam and Eve. We have no right to change that and expect God's blessing.

Although polygamy is mentioned in the Bible it is never endorsed by God, that was not the original design, but for various purposes people did marry more than one wife and had concubines.

2. Marriage was ordained for the **mutual help of husband and wife**, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and the preventing of uncleanness. (Genesis 2:18; Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9)

Man and woman compliment each other. One cannot wholly exist without the other. They need each other.

3. It is lawful for **all sorts of people to marry**, who are able with judgment to give their consent; yet it is the duty of Christians to **marry in the Lord**; and therefore such as profess the true religion, **should not marry with infidels, or idolaters**; neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresy. (Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 4:3; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Nehemiah 13:25-27)

It's stupid to think it sinful for a white woman to marry a black man, because both are children of Adam. It is absolutely not sinful. Black, white, red, yellow or whatever color of skin a human might have, he still is made in the image of God and it is not wrong to marry each other.

But the Confession and the Bible do command us to marry in the faith. I can't understand Christians who marry those who are not. I'm lead to question their commitment to the Lordship of Christ. Is Christ Lord over every aspect of your life or only some? What if your partner what to do something that is sinful for a Christian? What if your partner wants your children to be raised in a way that is not pleasing in your or God's sight? How dominant is Christ in your life?

4. **Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity**, forbidden in the Word; nor can such **incestuous marriages** ever be made lawful, by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife. (Leviticus 18; Mark 6:18; 1 Corinthians 5:1)

Incest is forbidden, even close family like nieces or cousins.

"Affinity designates a relationship by marriage and consanguinity a blood relationship."

In the case of Adam and Eve's children and Abraham they were not forbidden back then because of the obvious problem

CHAPTER 26: OF THE CHURCH [RETURN]

1. The **catholic** or universal church, which (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) may be called invisible, **consists of the whole number of the elect**, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. (Hebrews 12:23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:10, 22, 23; Ephesians 5:23, 27, 32)

Catholic means universal, and hereby they are agreeing with the last part of the Apostles' Creed: I believe in the Holy Spirit, 9. **the holy catholic Church**, the communion of saints, 10. the forgiveness of sins, 11. the resurrection of the body, 12. and the life everlasting. Amen.

The elect are the church, but in this world we will have wolves among us, but God knows those who are His.

The first four paragraphs of the Confession concern the universal church, while paragraphs 5-15 concern local churches.

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 evverting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation, are and **may be called visible saints**; and of such **ought all particular congregations to be constituted**. (1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 11:26; Romans 1:7; Ephesians 1:20-22)

All Christians are saints, it's not a title special which the Pope places on some people who were "holy."

Saint does not mean perfect, but it means someone who is set apart by God for holy use.

Everyone who professes the true faith of the Gospel may be called a saint and welcomed as a brother or sister. The essence of the Gospel is justification by faith alone through grace alone, by Christ alone. Which would exclude Roman Catholicism.

3. The purest churches under heaven are subject to **mixture and error**; and some have **so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ**, but synagogues of Satan; nevertheless **Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a kingdom in this world**, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name. (1 Corinthians 5; Revelation 2; Revelation 3; Revelation 18:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12; Matthew 16:18; Psalms 72:17; Psalm 102:28; Revelation 12:17)

There are no perfect churches, if you find one, don't go, because you'll cause it to become imperfect. All churches under heaven have some mixture of error in them because our limited knowledge and sinfulness. They are churches who want to change others want to be dogmatic about non-essentials.

The Roman Catholic Church is an example of a degenerated synagogue of Satan. But the Confession assures us that Christ is the sovereign and He will always have His church!

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

The Lord Jesus, not the Pope is the head and cornerstone of the church.

I don't agree that the Pope is **the** antichrist, but surely he is antichrist and his institution, because they have been degenerated from the way of Christ in many ways. By denying the people the peace of the Gospel which comes through faith and grace in Christ, and not by doing things, coming to the blasphemous mass, giving alms, being

baptizes and the list goes on. But the Papacy is not the ultimate manifestation of the antichrist (the beast, the man of sin). It was usual for the Reformers to think of the Roman Papacy as the antichrist and who can question that seeing how Rome persecuted the Reformers and was gone astray from the true gospel of Christ.

5. In the execution of this power wherewith he is so intrusted, the **Lord Jesus calleth out of the world** unto himself, **through the ministry of his word, by his Spirit**, those that are **given unto him by his Father**, that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his word. Those thus called, **he commandeth to walk together in particular societies, or churches**, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship, which he requireth of them in the world. (John 10:16; John 12:32; Matthew 28:20; Matthew 18:15-20)

The work of the Triune God is again and over and over again is exalted in this Confession. The Lord Jesus calls out His elect by His Word and the Spirit applies Christ's benefits which He won for those the Father gave Him from all eternity. The Lord Jesus wants His elect to be gathered together in a church where they are together to worship and learn about God.

6. The members of these churches are **saints by calling**, visibly **manifesting and evidencing** (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto that call of Christ; and do willingly consent to walk together, according to the appointment of Christ; **giving up themselves to the Lord, and one to another**, by the will of God, in **professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel**. (Romans. 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 5:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 9:13)

The saints of God show themselves to be of God in the church, where they do what the Lord Jesus commands them through His Word. Through helping in the church and serving Him through serving others.

7. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind declared in his word, he hath **given all that power and authority**, which is in any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which **he hath instituted for them to observe**; with commands and rules for the due and right exerting, and executing of that power. (Matthew 18:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 5:13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8)

Jesus has granted the church (leaders therein) all the authority necessary to institute His demands and commands of worship which He has revealed in His Word. This is the Regulative Principle of Worship.

8. A particular church, gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of **officers** and **members**; and the officers appointed by Christ to be **chosen and set apart** by the church (so called and gathered), for the **peculiar administration of ordinances**, and execution of power or duty, which he intrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are bishops or elders, and deacons. (Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1)

Any church has got to have officers and members, there is not church of members or officers alone – at least not according to the Word of God.

The officers are not to impose themselves, but are to be chosen according to the criteria revealed in the Word of God. They are the ones who should administer the ordinances given by Christ to the church. These officers are the elders and deacons.

9. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto the **office of bishop or elder** in a church, is, that he be **chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the church** itself; and solemnly set apart by **fasting and prayer**, with **imposition of hands** of the eldership of the church, if there be any before constituted therein; and of a **deacon** that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by prayer, and the like imposition of hands. (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; Acts 6:3, 5, 6)

There needs to be an election of elders and deacons chosen by the common believers in the local church. It must be done with prayers and fasting as we want to get the will of God in this and want to make sure that their election is right and good in the sight of God.

10. The work of **pastors being constantly to attend the service of Christ, in his churches**, in the ministry of the **word and prayer**, with **watching for their souls**, as they that must **give an account to Him**; it is incumbent on the churches to whom they minister, not only to **give them all due respect**, but also to communicate to them of all their good things according to their ability, so as **they may have a comfortable supply, without being themselves entangled in secular affairs**; and may also be **capable of exercising hospitality towards others**; and this is required by the law of nature, and by the express order of our Lord Jesus, who hath ordained that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. (Acts 6:4; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17, 18; Galatians 6:6, 7; 2 Timothy 2:4; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Corinthians 9:6-14)

□ "...the office of elder or presbyter, overseer or bishop or pastor or shepherd are one and the same (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-7; 1Tim 3:2; Eph 4:11)." – Waldron's Exposition page 399.

Pastors are to be those who care for the flock of God. They are to minister the Word to the church, they are to pray for people, they are to watch over them and care about them.

They are accountable to God for the flock that they have been entrusted. They are to be respected by the saints and supplied with things that they need for their life and ministry.

Yet "without being themselves entangled in secular affairs" probably refers to the senior pastor not the other pastors, or all. They are not to be "entangled" in non-Christian affairs. What about working in a Christian school?

Further they are to be doers of good, known to be good to others, even non Christians. They are to be known to be those who are consumed with the Gospel and evangelism.

11. Although it be incumbent on the bishops or pastors of the churches, to be **instant in preaching the word**, by way of office, yet the work of preaching the word is not so peculiarly confined to them but that **others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it**, and **approved and called by the church**, may and ought to perform it. (Acts 11:19-21; 1 Peter 4:10, 11)

The pastor is not the only one who may teach in the church, but anyone who is gifted by the Holy Spirit to preach, yet is not a pastor, who also is approved by the church may indeed preach the Word.

12. As all believers are bound to **join themselves to particular churches**, when and where they have opportunity so to do; so all that are admitted unto the privileges of a church, **are also under the censures and government thereof**, according to the rule of Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15)

By becoming members we put ourselves under the authority that Jesus has given the church. There we are supposed to be fed with the Word of God, to have fellowship with believers, we are to be cared for and serve others and the church. By becoming members we agree to be those who want to be the God ordained authority of the local body.

Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

13. No church members, upon any offence taken by them, having performed their duty required of them towards the person they are offended at, ought to **disturb any church-order**, or absent themselves from the assemblies of the church, or administration of any ordinances, upon the account of such offence at any of their fellow members, but to wait upon Christ, in the further proceeding of the church. (Matthew 18:15-17; Ephesians 4:2, 3)

Even in time of problems between members or cases of disobedience, the church order must not be disturbed as that is not fitting for the name of Christ. Further, they are to normally attend church and the ordinances thereof.

14. As each church, and all the members of it, are bound to **pray continually for the good and prosperity of all the churches of Christ**, in all places, and upon all occasions to further every one within the bounds of their places and callings, in the exercise of their gifts and graces, so the churches, when **planted by the providence of God**, so as they may enjoy opportunity and advantage for it, ought to hold communion among themselves, for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification. (Ephesians 6:18; Psalms 122:6; Romans 16:1, 2; 3 John 8-10)

We should not be like the Hyper Calvinists who believe that they alone are true Christians, but we can acknowledge other churches of Christ with whom we disagree on secondary issues, but that they hold fast to the doctrine of the true Gospel. We should pray for them and for their prosperity, as our fellow brothers in Christ.

15. In cases of difficulties or differences, either in point of doctrine or administration, wherein either the churches in general are concerned, or any one church, in their peace, union, and edification; or any member or members of any church are injured, in or by any proceedings in censures not agreeable to truth and order: it is according to the mind of Christ, that many **churches holding communion together, do, by their messengers, meet to consider**, and give their advice in or about that matter in difference, to be **reported to all the churches concerned**; howbeit these messengers assembled, are not intrusted with any church-power properly so called; or with any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any censures either over any churches or persons; or to impose their determination on the churches or officers. (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23, 25; 2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 John 4:1)

This I think concerns denominations or church coalitions/fellowships.

CHAPTER 27: OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS [[RETURN](#)]

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 others gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, in an orderly way, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man. (1 John 1:3; John 1:16; Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:5, 6; Ephesians 4:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; Romans 1:12; 1 John 3:17, 18; Galatians 6:10)

All the elect are united to Christ, were united in His death (Gal 2:20) and share the undeserved blessings coming from his perfect life, death, resurrection and ascension in glory.

2. Saints by profession are bound to maintain an **holy fellowship** and **communion in the worship of God**, and in performing such other **spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification**; as also in relieving each other in outward things according to their several abilities, and necessities; which communion, according to the rule of the gospel, though especially to be exercised by them, in the relation wherein they stand, whether in families, or churches, yet, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all the household of faith, even **all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus**; nevertheless their communion one with another as saints, doth not take away or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods and possessions. (Hebrews 10:24, 25; Hebrews 3:12, 13; Acts 11:29, 30; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Corinthians 12:14-27; Acts 5:4; Ephesians 4:28)

The saints are to love and serve their Lord and each other.

CHAPTER 28: OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER [[RETURN](#)]

1. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are **ordinances of positive and sovereign institution**, appointed by the **Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver**, to be continued in his church to the end of the world. (Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26)

These are the only "sacraments" that the Lord Jesus Christ directly established. There are no others.

"A positive ordinance or law is something in addition to the law of nature. It is something not demanded by nature. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not a part of the law of nature. They did not exist in the Old Testament, but came into existence with the New Covenant." -- Waldron's Exposition p423.

The Roman Catholic Church is in error to add to the 2 much more which the Bible does not command:

1. The Sacrament of Baptism
 2. The Sacrament of Confirmation
 1. ...it was administered immediately after the Sacrament of Baptism. Confirmation perfects our baptism and brings us the graces of the Holy Spirit that were granted to the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday.
 3. The Sacrament of Holy Communion
 4. The Sacrament of Confession
 5. The Sacrament of Marriage
 6. The Sacrament of Holy Orders
 1. The Sacrament of Holy Orders is the continuation of Christ's priesthood, which He bestowed upon His Apostles. There are three levels to this sacrament: the episcopate, the priesthood, and the diaconate.
 7. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick
 1. Traditionally referred to as Extreme Unction or Last Rites, the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is administered both to the dying and to those who are gravely ill or are about to undergo a serious operation, for the recovery of their health and for spiritual strength.
2. These holy appointments are to be **administered by those only who are qualified** and thereunto called, **according to the commission of Christ**. (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 4:1)

Would this mean all true believers?

Inside the local church it would be the elders who have that charge (chapter 27:8).

Sam Waldron disagrees that any believer may perform baptism, because he believes the Great commission was addressed to the whole church (specifically to the apostles) and not to Christians individually (though it is relevant to every believer), and therefore the elders in the church should administer baptism. He further believes that the Lord's Supper should also happen "only when the church is formally assembled" (p. 428) citing 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 as proof, but I don't see any exclusion from the possibility of celebrating the Lord's Supper outside of the formal assembly of the church.

CHAPTER 29: OF BAPTISM [[RETURN](#)]

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, **a sign of his fellowship with him**, in his **death** and **resurrection**; of his being **engrafted into him**; of **remission of sins**; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to **live and walk in newness of life**. (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:4)

Baptism pictures our dying and rising again with Christ. With baptism we show to the world that we belong to God. With baptism we show God that we have made the conscience choice to bow the knee to Him.

It symbolizes the new life that we have received from God. It formalizes salvation in a covenantal ceremony or transaction of sorts between man and God.

"Baptism...simply expresses the verbal content of the gospel in non-verbal form."

2. Those who do actually **profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ**, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance. (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36, 37; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12; Acts 18:8)

It is only repentant believers who should receive this ordinance as was the case in the book of Acts. That's why I was convinced that my infant baptism was no baptism, and was [baptized on 16-06-2013](#)

3. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the **name of the Father**, and of **the Son**, and of **the Holy Spirit**. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8:38)

We are to use the full formula of baptism as given by Jesus "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."

4. **Immersion**, or **dipping** of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance. (Matthew 3:16; John 3:23)

That is what baptism is. Why would John need to go to rivers? How else would the picture of death and resurrection be seen in any other method than immersion?

The Lord Jesus Himself was immersed: Matt 3:16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately **he went up from the water**, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;

He went up from the water, that means he was down!

Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines βαπτίζω as such:

- Original: βαπτίζω
- Transliteration: Baptizo
- Phonetic: bap-tid'-zo
- Definition:

1. to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk)
2. to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, bathe
3. to overwhelm Not to be confused with 911, baptō. The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (baptō) into boiling water and then 'baptised' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, produces a permanent change. When used in the New Testament, this word more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism. e.g. Mark 16:16. 'He that believes and is baptised shall be saved'. Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle! Bible Study Magazine, James Montgomery Boice, May 1989.

- Origin: from a derivative of G911
- TDNT entry: 09:49,9
- Part(s) of speech:

CHAPTER 30: OF THE LORD'S SUPPER [[RETURN](#)]

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 **showing forth the sacrifice of himself in his death**, **confirmation of the faith** of believers in all the benefits thereof, their **spiritual nourishment**, and **growth in him**, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to him; and to be a bond and pledge of their **communion with him**, and **with each other**. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17, 21)

The Lord's Supper is something that is directly commanded by Christ (Luke 22:19), it's not a deduction from multiple passage, but a direct, positive command of the Sovereign Christ.

It is meant to make us look back to the perfect sacrifice of Christ of Himself by Himself for the perfection of all the elect of God. It is meant to look back to the sacrifice and look forward to the Coming.

It is also our "communion" with Him and our brethren who confess the true faith of Christ.

2. In this ordinance **Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made** at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but **only a memorial of that one offering up of himself by himself** upon the cross, once for all; and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same. So that the **popish sacrifice of the mass**, as they call it, **is most abominable**, injurious to **Christ's own sacrifice the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect**. (Hebrews 9:25, 26, 28; 1 Corinthians 11:24; Matthew 26:26, 27)

This is directly against the wicked doctrine of the Mass. It is believed that in the Mass Christ is offered again for the sins of the people:

"The priest brings Christ down from heaven, and renders him present on our altar as the eternal victim for the sins of man - not once but a thousand times! the priest speaks and lo! Christ the eternal and omnipotent God, bows his head in humble obedience to the priest's command".

Christ does not offer Himself continually - He once for all offered Himself up (Hebrews 10:12). He is not on the cross, His once for all sacrifice is perfect. On the cross "it was finished." He earned all that was necessary for the blessings and salvation of the elect - he saved them, it was not a hypothetical atonement, but an actual one made for everyone who would believe in Him, bearing their sins in their stead and taking their punishment upon Himself.

3. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to **pray, and bless the elements** of bread and wine, and thereby to **set them apart from a common to a holy use**, and to take and break the bread; to take the cup, and, they communicating also themselves, to give both to the communicants. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26, etc.)

Although the elements are "just" bread and wine, but when they are used to remember the Lord's Supper they are to be treated holy and consecrated for holy use.

4. The **denial of the cup to the people, worshipping the elements**, the lifting them up, or **carrying them about for adoration**, and reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all **contrary to the nature of this ordinance**, and to the institution of Christ. (Matthew 26:26-28; Matthew 15:9; Exodus 20:4, 5)

The elements of the Lord's Supper are not to be adored or worship. They are to be offered to all who profess the faith. There is nothing special in the elements because they are a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice, but the Roman Catholics think that Christ miraculously becomes the bread, because He said "this is my body."

5. The **outward elements** in this ordinance, duly set apart to the use ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ, albeit, in **substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine**, as they were before. (1 Corinthians 11:27; 1 Corinthians 11:26-28)

The bread and wine are symbolically called Christ's body and blood, not His literal blood and body.

6. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood, commonly called **transubstantiation**, by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, **is repugnant not to Scripture alone**, but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the ordinance, and hath been, and is, the **cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries**. (Acts 3:21; Luke 14:6, 39; 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25)

The Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation [Grudem: The Roman Catholic teaching that the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper (often referred to as "the eucharist") actually become the body and blood of Christ] is directly rejected on the basis of Scripture and common sense.

7. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance, do then also **inwardly by faith**, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but **spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified**, and **all the benefits of his death**; the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally, but **spiritually present to the faith of believers** in that ordinance, as the **elements themselves are to their outward senses**. (1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

The bread and wine show the deeper reality of their meaning to believers and the benefits that His death has provided for His friends.

8. All **ignorant** and **ungodly** persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they **unworthy of the Lord's table**, and cannot, without great sin against him, while they remain such, partake of these **holy mysteries**, or be admitted thereunto; yea, whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, **eating and drinking judgment to themselves**. (2 Corinthians 6:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 11:29; Matthew 7:6)

The Table of the Lord is only for believers, those who confess the true faith of the Gospel, it's not for those who don't believe it, otherwise they drink judgment upon themselves (1Cor 11:29) and store up more wrath. It is for those who know they're unworthy of the Lord and confess that they are and receive the Lord in His grace and are thankful for the work of the Lord on the cross in their stead.

CHAPTER 31: OF THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH AND OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD [**RETURN**]

1. The **bodies of men after death return to dust**, and see corruption; but their **souls, which neither die nor sleep**, having an **immortal subsistence**, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the **righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise**, where they are with Christ, and **behold the face of God** in light and glory, **waiting for the full redemption of their bodies**; and the **souls of the wicked are cast into hell**; where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day; besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none. (Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6,8; Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 12:23; Jude 6, 7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23, 24)

The body returns to the dust from whence it came, but the souls are immortal from the time that they first came to exist, they cannot just disappear and go out of existence, they will exist without body in heaven or Hades until Christ comes to end the world and bring the New Heavens and New Earth where the elect will receive a glorious body like

that of Jesus. The reprobate will receive physical bodies just to be tormented in the lake of fire. It word Hades was incorrectly translated as "hell" in the KJV. There is no one in "hell" (Gehenna) now, but there are a multitude in Hades. The period between the death and resurrection of a person is called the intermediate state. The doctrine of Purgatory is indirectly rejected, by acknowledging of no place other than heaven and hell.

2. At **the last day**, such of the **saints as are found alive**, shall not sleep, but **be changed**; and **all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies**, and none other; although with **different qualities**, which shall be **united again to their souls forever**. (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Job 19:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 15:42, 43)

There is a continuity between the present and the resurrection body just like in the case of Jesus, they recognizes Him.

3. The **bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour**; the **bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honour**, and be **made conformable to his own glorious body**. (Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; Philippians 3:21)

God's decree of election and reprobation will fully come to pass in the last day. There are vessels of mercy made for honor and good use, and vessels of dishonour.

The unjust shall receive immortal bodies to be tormented for all eternity, while the just shall receive glorified bodies to worship God for all eternity.

Rom 9:22-23 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—

CHAPTER 32: OF THE LAST JUDGMENT [**RETURN**]

1. God hath appointed **a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness**, by Jesus Christ; to whom **all power and judgment is given of the Father**; in which day, not only the **apostate angels** shall be judged, but likewise **all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ**, to **give an account** of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to **receive according to what they have done** in the body, whether good or evil. (Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:10, 12; Matthew 25:32-46)

On the last day when Jesus shall judge the whole world, righteous and unrighteous, also the fallen angels, all will come to His throne. Some will receive His condemnation, others will receive the blessed saying: Well done, good and faithful servant and His commendation.

2. The end of God's appointing this day, is for the **manifestation of the glory of his mercy**, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of **his justice**, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient; for then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards, in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast aside into everlasting torments, and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. (Romans 9:22, 23; Matthew 25:21, 34; 2 Timothy 4:8; Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

God has made everything for His glory, He has ordained all for His glory, damnation as well as salvation.

3. As Christ would have us to **be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment**, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity, so will he have the **day unknown to men**, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be **always watchful**, because **they know not at what hour** the Lord will come, and may ever be prepared to say, **Come Lord Jesus; come quickly**. Amen. (2 Corinthians 5:10, 11; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-7; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; Revelation 22:20)

Christ wants us and talked a lot about the day that was to come of judgment, so did His Apostles also. No one knows when it is, it will come like a thief, without an appointment with man.

We should always anticipate that blessed day when we will stop sinning against our beloved Lord and enjoy eternal fellowship with Him in true freedom to do only that which pleasing in His sight.