



Summarium Fidei Christianae Filipinas Anni 2026

Introduction to the *Summarium Fidei Christianae Filipinas 2026*

The *Summarium Fidei Christianae Filipinas 2026* is a modern confession of faith created to provide a theological foundation for contemporary churches, particularly those with Reformed convictions.

While many in the Reformed tradition have historically been paedobaptists (baptizing infants), the *Summarium Fidei Christianae Filipinas 2026* aligns itself with the conviction that only adult believers should be baptized. Consequently, this confession of faith is also a tool for independent Reformed churches that share a similar belief in credobaptism.

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

The *Summarium Fidei Christianae Filipinas 2026* does not seek to introduce novel teachings. Instead, it follows the well-trodden path of faithful formulators of older confessions. It is a work built upon the enduring theological frameworks of foundational documents such as the Savoy Declaration, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith.

However, this confession is more than a simple restatement of past doctrines. It is a living document, with distinct features designed to address pressing issues and challenges facing the Church today.

Addressing Contemporary Challenges

The *Summarium* includes several new or expanded chapters that tackle modern theological and societal concerns head-on. These additions aim to provide clear biblical guidance in an increasingly complex world:

- **Chapter 14:** Seven paragraphs have been added to combat the errors of the Carnal Christian Theory, Easy-Believism, the unbiblical practice of the formulaic Sinner's Prayer, and altar call re-emphasizing the necessity of a truly transformative faith.
- **Chapter 15:** A new paragraph has been included to highlight the inseparable link between repentance and faith as essential components of salvation.
- **Chapter 22:** Eight paragraphs have been added to address the contemporary church's over-reliance on loud and upbeat music to manipulate emotions, distinguishing true worship from mere emotionalism.
- **Chapter 25:** This is an entirely new chapter dedicated to counter the influence of leftism and the social gospel, reaffirming the Church's primary mission of gospel proclamation.
- **Chapter 27:** This is also an entirely new chapter dedicated to provide a clear biblical stance against homosexual and other perverse practices and

the LGBTQ+ agenda, upholding God's design for human sexuality.

- **Chapter 28:** This, too, is a completely new chapter dedicated to outlining the God-ordained roles within the family and society, providing a blueprint for a biblically ordered life.
- **Chapter 29:** This is another completely new chapter that establishes the sanctity of human life and provides a comprehensive theological framework for addressing the tragedy of abortion.
- **Chapter 30:** A new paragraph is added to introduce the concept of connectionalism. Though not explicitly named in the Bible, connectionalism is highly implicit in several passages that describe the unity and interdependence of the early Christian church.

A Feast for the Body of Christ

All in all, the *Summarium Fidei Christianae Filipinas 2026* contains 36 chapters for the Body of Christ to feast on. This comprehensive confession of faith is designed to be a rich and nourishing resource, providing a solid foundation of biblical truth for believers in the Philippines and beyond.

May the Lord, in His sovereign grace, use this *Summarium Fidei Christianae Filipinas 2026* to edify the Church of the Risen Christ, building up believers in sound doctrine and passionate devotion, all for the glory of the Triune Jehovah alone!

Chapter 1 *OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES*

1

The Holy Scripture is the only adequate, reliable, and infallible guide for all knowledge essential to salvation, as well as for faith and obedience. While the natural world and God's work in creation and in governing the world do reveal enough of His goodness, wisdom, and power to leave humanity without excuse, they are not enough to provide the knowledge of God and His will that is necessary for salvation. Therefore, it pleased the Lord at various times and in different ways to reveal Himself and declare His will to His church. Later, to better preserve and spread the truth, and to further strengthen and comfort the church against the corrupting influence of human nature, the malice of Satan, and the world, He committed His complete revelation to writing. This makes the Holy Scriptures absolutely essential, as God's previous methods of revealing His will to His people have now ceased.

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:

The Old Testament		
<i>Genesis</i>	<i>2 Chronicles</i>	<i>Daniel</i>
<i>Exodus</i>	<i>Ezra</i>	<i>Hosea</i>
<i>Leviticus</i>	<i>Nehemiah</i>	<i>Joel</i>
<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Esther</i>	<i>Amos</i>
<i>Deuteronomy</i>	<i>Job</i>	<i>Obadiah</i>
<i>Joshua</i>	<i>Psalms</i>	<i>Jonah</i>
<i>Judges</i>	<i>Proverbs</i>	<i>Micah</i>
<i>Ruth</i>	<i>Ecclesiastes</i>	<i>Nahum</i>
<i>1 Samuel</i>	<i>Song of Solomon</i>	<i>Habakkuk</i>
<i>2 Samuel</i>	<i>Isaiah</i>	<i>Zephaniah</i>
<i>1 Kings</i>	<i>Jeremiah</i>	<i>Haggai</i>
<i>2 Kings</i>	<i>Lamentations</i>	<i>Zechariah</i>
<i>1 Chronicles</i>	<i>Ezekiel</i>	<i>Malachi</i>
The New Testament		
<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Ephesians</i>	<i>Hebrews</i>
<i>Mark</i>	<i>Philippians</i>	<i>James</i>
<i>Luke</i>	<i>Colossians</i>	<i>1 Peter</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>1 Thessalonians</i>	<i>2 Peter</i>
<i>The Acts</i>	<i>2 Thessalonians</i>	<i>1 John</i>
<i>Romans</i>	<i>1 Timothy</i>	<i>2 John</i>
<i>1 Corinthians</i>	<i>2 Timothy</i>	<i>3 John</i>
<i>2 Corinthians</i>	<i>Titus</i>	<i>Jude</i>
<i>Galatians</i>	<i>Philemon</i>	<i>Revelation</i>

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

3

The books often referred to as the Apocrypha are not divinely inspired. This means they are not part of the Bible's official canon or its authoritative guide. Consequently, they hold no authority for the church and should not be treated as anything more than other human writings. If there is any practical value of the Apocrypha, it is strictly limited to non-doctrinal uses. It could be helpful for historical background and cultural understanding, much like any other ancient literature, but never as a source of divine truth or authority

4

The reason the Holy Scripture is authoritative and completely trustworthy isn't due to the endorsement of any individual or religious institution. Its authority stems solely from God, who is the truth Himself and the One who inspired it. For this reason alone, we embrace it as the undeniable Word of God.

5

We can be led by what the church of God says to have a high and reverent esteem for the Bible. The Bible's divine message, the power of its teachings, its majestic style, how all its parts agree, its main purpose (which is to give all glory to God), its complete revelation of the only way for people to be saved, and its many other unique and perfect qualities are all strong proofs that it is truly the Word of God. However, our complete certainty and assurance that the Bible is infallibly true and divinely authoritative comes from the Holy Spirit's inner work, as He bears witness with and through the Word in our hearts.

6

God's complete plan for everything essential to His glory, our salvation, our faith, and our lives is either clearly stated or inherently present in the Holy Scripture. Nothing should ever be added to it, whether through new revelations from the Spirit or human traditions.

However, we recognize that the Holy Spirit's inner work is necessary for us to truly grasp and understand the truths revealed in the Bible. So, God's people should earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit's illuminating grace to grasp the meaning of His Word, and for His enabling grace to put it into practice in their daily lives. We also understand that certain practical matters concerning how we worship God and govern the church — things common to all human actions and societies — should be decided using common sense and Christian wisdom. So, we should never let matters of common sense cause arguments or divisions among members in the church. Decisions on these issues should sometimes rest with church leaders or be made with the agreement of the majority of church members. These decisions must always align with the Bible's general principles, which we are always to follow.

7

Not everything in the Bible is equally easy to understand or clear to everyone. However, the essential truths — those things we must know, believe, and practice for salvation — are presented and explained so plainly in certain parts of

Scripture that, by using the usual methods of study and prayer, both educated and uneducated individuals can grasp them sufficiently. It's profoundly delusional and arrogant for the Magisterium of the Popish religion of Rome, or any self-proclaimed elite group, to assert they are the sole interpreters of Holy Scripture.

8

The Old Testament, originally in Hebrew (the native language of God's people in ancient times), and the New Testament, originally in Greek (the most widely understood language among nations when it was written), were directly inspired by God. Through His unique care and providence, these original texts have been preserved purely throughout all generations, making them authoritative. Consequently, in all religious disputes, the church must ultimately refer to these original Scriptures.

However, since not all of God's people know these original languages—and yet they have a right to and an interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded to read and diligently search them in the fear of God—it is essential that the Bible be translated into the common language of every nation where it arrives. This ensures that God's Word can richly dwell within them, enabling them to worship Him acceptably and to find hope through the patience and comfort the Scriptures provide.

9

The Bible itself is the ultimate rule for understanding Scripture. So, if there's ever a question about the true and complete meaning of a passage — because there's only one correct interpretation, not many — we should look to other parts of the Bible that explain it more clearly.

10

The ultimate authority for resolving all religious disagreements, and for evaluating all pronouncements from councils, views of early Christian writers, human teachings, and individual spiritual impressions, can only be the Holy Scripture. This Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is where our faith ultimately finds its certainty and rest.

Chapter 2 ***OF GOD AND THE HOLY TRINITY***

1

The Lord our God is the one and only true and living God. He exists entirely on His own, endless in His being and perfect in every way. No one can fully grasp His nature except for Him alone. He is a perfectly pure spirit, unseen, without a physical body, individual parts, or human emotions. He alone possesses immortality, living in light that no human can approach. God is unchanging, boundless, eternal, beyond our full understanding, all-powerful, and infinite in every aspect. He is supremely holy, wise, free, and sovereign. He orchestrates everything according to the unwavering and perfectly just plan of

His own will, all for His glory. He is supremely loving, gracious, merciful, patient, overflowing with goodness and truth, and He forgives wickedness, rebellion, and sin. He rewards those who diligently seek Him, yet He is also supremely just and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin and by no means letting the guilty go unpunished.

2

God possesses all life, glory, goodness, and blessedness entirely within Himself. He is completely self-sufficient and doesn't need any of the creatures He made, nor does He gain any glory from them. Instead, He reveals His own glory through, by, to, and upon them. He is the sole source of all existence—everything originates from Him, exists through Him, and is for Him. He has absolute authority over all creation, doing whatever He pleases with them, for them, or to them. Everything is clear and evident to Him; His knowledge is infinite, perfect, and doesn't depend on His creation, so nothing is uncertain or accidental to Him. He is perfectly holy in all His plans, actions, and commands. Therefore, angels and humans owe Him all worship, service, and obedience as creatures to their Creator, along with anything else He chooses to require of them.

3

In this one divine and infinite God, there are three distinct persons: the Father, the Son (also called the Word), and the Holy Spirit. They share the same divine nature, power, and eternal existence, with each person fully possessing the entire divine essence without dividing it. The Father is the source of all, not coming from anyone else, nor is He begotten or sent forth. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father, meaning He has always existed in a unique relationship with the Father. The Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. All three persons are infinite and without beginning, yet they are still one God. This means God's nature and being are not to be separated, but the persons are distinguished by their unique characteristics and relationships to one another. This truth about the Trinity is the bedrock of our relationship with God and the basis for our secure reliance on Him.

Chapter 3 ***OF GOD'S DECREE***

1

From all eternity, by the perfectly wise and holy counsel of His own will, God has freely and unchangeably determined everything that will ever happen. However, this decree does not make God the author of sin, nor does He have any fellowship with those who sin. It also doesn't violate the free will of His creatures or eliminate the genuine freedom and unpredictability of secondary causes; instead, God's decree actually establishes them. In all of this, we see His immense wisdom in orchestrating everything, and His power and faithfulness in bringing His decree to pass.

2

God knows everything that may or can happen under any circumstance. However, He doesn't decree something because He foresees it happening or because it would occur under certain conditions.

3

God, in His sovereign plan and to showcase His magnificent glory, has predestined or predestinated certain individuals and angels for eternal life through Jesus Christ. This is all to the praise of His glorious grace. Conversely, others are left to continue in their sinful ways, leading to their rightful condemnation. This, too, serves to demonstrate the praise of His glorious justice.

4

Those angels and individuals whom God has predestined and foreordained are uniquely and unalterably appointed. Their total number is so precisely determined that it's impossible to add to it or subtract from it.

5

Before the world was even made, God, by His eternal and unchanging plan, and by the secret will and good pleasure of His own heart, chose in Christ those among humanity who are foreordained unto eternal life. He did this purely out of His boundless grace and love, and not because of any condition or cause in humanity that might have moved Him to do so.

6

Since God has chosen the elect for glory, He also, by the eternal and completely free decision of His will, planned all the necessary steps to bring them to that glory. Therefore, those who are chosen, having fallen into sin through Adam, are redeemed by Christ. They are effectively called to faith in Christ through His Spirit working at the right time, are declared righteous, adopted as His children, made holy, and preserved by His power through faith unto salvation. Only the elect are redeemed by Christ, or are effectively called, declared righteous, adopted, made holy, and saved.

7

The doctrine of predestination, a profound and complex truth, requires careful and wise handling. It's crucial that as people study God's will as revealed in the Bible and faithfully obey it, they can, by the certainty of their effectual calling (meaning God's undeniable drawing of them to salvation), be confident in their eternal election. When approached this way, the doctrine of predestination will lead to praise, reverence, and awe for God. It will also cultivate humility, diligence, and rich comfort for all who genuinely follow the gospel.

Chapter 4 ***OF CREATION***

1

In the beginning, it pleased God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—to create the

world and everything in it, both visible and invisible. He did this to reveal the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness. This entire creation was brought into existence in six actual days, and everything He made was perfectly good.

2

After God had created all other living things, He then created humanity, both male and female. He gave them rational and immortal souls, making them fit for a life dedicated to Him, which was their original purpose. They were made in God's image, possessing knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. God's law was written on their hearts, and they had the ability to obey it. However, they also had the possibility to disobey, as they were left to the freedom of their own will, which was subject to change.

3

Beyond the moral law written in their hearts and therefore inherently known to them, God gave Adam and Eve a specific command not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. As long as they obeyed this command, they enjoyed perfect fellowship with God and exercised their God-given dominion over all creation.

Chapter 5 *OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE*

1

God, the good Creator of everything, in His boundless power and perfect wisdom, upholds, directs, arranges, and governs all creatures and things, from the greatest to the least. He does this through His supremely wise and holy providence, ensuring they fulfill the purpose for which they were created. This is all in accordance with His infallible foreknowledge (meaning His perfect and unchangeable knowledge of everything that will happen) and the free and unchanging plan of His own will. Ultimately, all of this serves to praise the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy.

2

God's foreknowledge and decree mean that everything happens exactly as He intends, undeniably and without fail. He is the First Cause of all things, so nothing occurs by chance or outside of His perfect providence. However, through this same providence, God orchestrates events to unfold according to the nature of second causes, meaning things happen in one of three ways:

- ***Necessarily***: This refers to natural laws and the inherent properties God has given to creation (e.g., gravity, or the way plants grow).
- ***Freely***: This applies to beings with genuine will, like humans and angels, who make choices for which they are truly responsible.
- ***Contingently***: This refers to events that seem random or dependent on various factors from our perspective, yet are still perfectly ordained by God.

In essence, God is absolutely sovereign over everything, but He typically works through the created order and the choices of His creatures, rather than bypassing them.

3

In His providence, God typically uses ordinary means to achieve His purposes. However, He is entirely free to act independently of, beyond, or even contrary to these means whenever it pleases Him.

4

In His almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness, God so clearly reveals Himself through His providence that His settled plan extends even to the first fall into sin, and to all other sinful actions of both angels and humans. This is not merely a bare permission on His part. Instead, He most wisely and powerfully limits, directs, and governs these sinful actions through a complex series of events, all to achieve His own most holy ends. However, it is crucial to understand that the sinfulness of these actions comes solely from the creatures themselves, and not from God. As the most holy and righteous God, He neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

5

Sometimes, the wisest, most righteous, and most gracious God allows His own children to face many temptations and the corrupt desires of their hearts for a time. He does this for a number of reasons:

- To discipline them for past sins.
- To reveal the hidden strength of their corrupt nature and the deceitfulness of their hearts so they will be humbled.
- To make them depend more closely and constantly on Him for support.
- To make them more watchful against all future opportunities for sin.
- For other just and holy purposes.

Therefore, everything that happens to any of His chosen people is by His design, for His glory, and for their ultimate good.

6

God, as a righteous judge, sometimes blinds and hardens wicked and ungodly people because of their past sins. He not only withholds the grace that could enlighten their minds and change their hearts, but sometimes also takes away the spiritual gifts they once had. He exposes them to situations where their sinful nature leads them to sin further. At the same time, He gives them over to their own desires, the world's temptations, and the power of Satan. As a result, these individuals harden their hearts using the very same means God uses to soften the hearts of others.

7

God's divine plan extends to all creation, but He takes a special interest in His church. He orchestrates all events and circumstances for the good of His people.

Chapter 6
OF THE FALL OF MAN, OF SIN, AND OF THE
PUNISHMENT THEREOF

1

God created humanity to be upright and perfect, giving them a righteous law that would have led to eternal life if they had obeyed it. He warned them that breaking this law would result in death. However, humanity didn't remain in this state of honor for long. Satan, using the cunning of a serpent, deceived Eve. She, in turn, seduced Adam, who, without any coercion, willingly chose to violate the law and command they were given by eating the forbidden fruit. God, in His infinite wisdom and holy plan, allowed this to happen, having already decided to use it to bring glory to Himself.

2

Because of this sin, our first parents lost their original righteousness and communion with God. We also fell with them, which brought death to everyone. We all became spiritually dead and completely corrupted in every part of our mind, body, and soul.

3

Due to God's plan, Adam and Eve were the origin of humanity and acted on behalf of all people. As a result, the guilt of their sin and a corrupted nature were passed down to all of their descendants. Everyone conceived from that point forward is born into sin, is naturally subject to God's wrath, serves sin, and is subject to death and all other forms of suffering—spiritual, worldly, and eternal—unless Jesus Christ sets them free.

4

This inherited sinful nature, which makes us completely unwilling, unable, and opposed to all that is good while being entirely inclined toward evil, is the source of all our sinful actions.

5

Even after being spiritually reborn, a person's corrupt nature remains. Although this sin and its initial impulses are pardoned and mortified through Christ, they are still, in truth, sin.

Chapter 7
OF GOD'S COVENANT

1

While it's true that all people owe obedience to God as their creator, the distance between humanity and God is so vast that we could never have earned eternal life on our own. Instead, God willingly and graciously chose to offer it to us as a gift, which He made known through a covenant.

2

After humanity's fall, which brought us under the curse of the law, God was pleased to establish a covenant of grace. In this covenant, He freely offers life and salvation to sinners through Jesus Christ. To be saved, people must have faith in Christ. God also promises to give His Holy Spirit to all those chosen for eternal life, making them willing and able to believe.

3

This covenant is revealed in the Gospel, first to Adam in the promise of salvation through the "seed of the woman." It was then progressively revealed in greater detail until it was fully disclosed in the New Testament. This covenant is based on the eternal agreement between the Father and the Son concerning the redemption of the chosen. It is only through the grace of this covenant that all of Adam's descendants who were ever saved received eternal life and blessed immortality, as humanity is now completely unable to be accepted by God on the same terms that Adam was in his innocent state.

Chapter 8 ***OF CHRIST THE MEDIATOR***

1

In his eternal plan, God chose and appointed Jesus, his one and only Son, to be the mediator between God and man. This was done in agreement with a covenant made between them both. He made Jesus the prophet, priest, and king; the head and savior of the church; the heir of all things; and the judge of the world. From the beginning of time, God gave a people to Jesus, who would be his descendants, and in due course, they would be redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified through him.

2

At the right time, the Son of God—who is the second person of the Holy Trinity, eternal and fully God, a perfect reflection of the Father's glory, and equal in substance to the Father who created, sustains, and rules everything—took on a human nature. He became fully human, with all its essential qualities and normal weaknesses, but without sin. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary when the Holy Spirit came upon her and the power of the Most High overshadowed her. He was born of a woman from the tribe of Judah, a descendant of Abraham and David, as the Scriptures foretold. In this one person, two complete and separate natures—divine and human—were joined together forever, without being changed, combined, or confused. This person is both fully God and fully human, yet he remains the single Christ, the one and only mediator between God and humanity.

3

In his human nature thus united to the divine, Jesus, who is the Son, was filled with the Holy Spirit and granted all the treasures wisdom and knowledge. The Father was pleased to have all of his own fullness dwell in him, so that Jesus, being holy and without fault, and full of grace and truth, would be completely

equipped to serve as the mediator and guarantee of a new covenant. Jesus did not take this role upon himself; rather, his Father called him to it, giving him all power and authority, and commanding him to carry it out.

4

Jesus took on this office willingly. To fulfill it, he was born under the law and followed it perfectly. He took on the punishment that we deserved, becoming sin and a curse for us. He endured immense sorrow in his soul and great pain in his body. He was crucified, died, and remained in the state of death without his body decaying. On the third day, he rose from the dead in the same body in which he suffered. He then ascended to heaven, where he now sits at the right hand of his Father, interceding on our behalf. At the end of the world, he will return to judge humanity and angels.

5

The Lord Jesus, through his perfect obedience and sacrifice, fully satisfied God's justice. By offering himself once and for all to God through the Holy Spirit, he reconciled humanity with God and secured a lasting place in heaven for all those whom the Father has given to him.

6

Although Christ didn't pay the price for redemption until after he was born as a human, the power, benefit, and effectiveness of that payment were given to God's chosen people throughout all periods of history. From the very beginning, this was communicated through promises, symbolic figures, and sacrifices that revealed him as the one who would crush the serpent's head, and as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—the same yesterday, today, and forever.

7

In his role as a mediator, Christ uses both his divine and human natures. Each nature performs its own specific function, but because he is a single person, the Bible sometimes credits an action of one nature to the other. For example, a divine act might be attributed to his human nature, or vice versa.

8

Jesus Christ offers eternal salvation to all those he's redeemed. He makes this salvation real and effective for them by: Praying on their behalf; bringing them into a relationship with himself through his Holy Spirit; revealing the mystery of salvation to them through his Word, the Bible; convincing them to believe and obey; guiding their hearts with his Word and Spirit; and using his power and wisdom to defeat all their enemies in ways that are part of his mysterious and wonderful plan. This entire process is an act of God's unconditional grace. It's a free gift and isn't based on anything he foresaw in them that would earn it.

9

The office of mediator between God and man belongs only to Christ. He alone serves as the church's prophet, priest, and king. This role cannot be transferred,

either entirely or in part, from him to anyone else.

10

We need these offices in this specific order for a few reasons. Because of our ignorance, we need Jesus's prophetic role. Due to our separation from God and the imperfection of our best efforts, we need his priestly role to reconcile us and make us acceptable to God. Finally, because of our aversion to God and our total inability to return to him, we need his kingly role to subdue us, draw us to him, sustain us, protect us from our spiritual enemies, and preserve us for his heavenly kingdom.

Chapter 9 ***OF FREE WILL***

1

God has given the human will a natural freedom and the ability to choose, so it is not forced or by any necessity of nature determined to do either good or evil.

2

When man was in a state of innocence, he had the freedom and ability to choose and do what was good and what pleased God. However, he was still unstable and could fall from that state.

3

When man fell into sin, we completely lost the ability to will ourselves toward any spiritual good that would lead to salvation. Therefore, a person in his natural state, who is entirely opposed to that good and is spiritually dead in sin, cannot, by his own power, convert himself or prepare himself to be converted.

4

When God transforms a sinner and brings him into a state of grace, He frees him from his natural slavery to sin. Through His grace alone, He gives him the ability to freely choose and do what is spiritually good. However, because some corruption remains within him, he doesn't perfectly or exclusively desire what is good; he still also has the desire to do what is evil.

5

A person's will becomes completely and unchangeably free to do only good, but this only happens in the state of perfect glory.

Chapter 10 ***OF EFFECTUAL CALLING***

1

God chose certain people for eternal life. At a time that He deems right, He uses His Word and Spirit to effectively call them out of their natural state of sin and death. He brings them to a place of grace and salvation through Jesus Christ. He enlightens their minds so they can understand spiritual things and

the things of God. He replaces their hard, stony hearts with hearts of flesh, making them responsive to Him. He renews their wills and, through His immense power, directs them toward what is good. He draws them to Jesus Christ, and they come willingly because of His grace.

2

This effectual call comes only from God's free and special grace. It is not based on anything God foresaw in a person or on any power or action from the person himself. In this process, a person is completely passive, because he is spiritually dead in his sins. He remains in this state until the Holy Spirit gives him new life and a new heart. Only then is he able to respond to this call and accept the grace that is offered and given in it. This is a work of God's power, and it is no less powerful than the power that raised Christ from the dead.

3

God's chosen infants who die in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit works when, where, and how He chooses. This is also true for all of God's chosen people who, due to incapacities, are unable to be called to salvation through the preaching of the Word.

4

Though all people may hear the gospel message, and some may even experience a temporary work of the Holy Spirit, those who are not chosen by God will never be truly drawn to Christ by the Father. Therefore, they are unable and unwilling to genuinely come to Christ and cannot be saved. Likewise, individuals who do not embrace the Christian faith cannot be saved, regardless of how diligently they try to live morally according to their own conscience or the laws of their professed religion.

Chapter 11 ***OF JUSTIFICATION***

1

When God effectively calls people to himself, he also freely declares them righteous. He doesn't do this by making them inherently righteous, but by pardoning their sins and accepting them as if they were righteous. This isn't because of anything they've done or anything good in them; it's solely for the sake of Christ. God doesn't count their faith or their obedience as the basis for their righteousness. Instead, he credits them with Christ's perfect obedience to God's law and his suffering and death on the cross. This is the sole basis for their righteousness, which they receive through faith—a faith that isn't their own doing but is a gift from God.

2

Faith, which is the sole means by which we receive and rest in Christ and his righteousness, is the only instrument of justification. However, this faith is never alone in the person who is justified. It is always accompanied by all the other graces of salvation and is not a dead faith, but one that actively works

through love.

3

Christ's obedience and death completely paid the debt for all those who are justified. By sacrificing himself on the cross and shedding his blood, he took their place and underwent the penalty they deserved. In doing so, he made a genuine, complete payment to satisfy God's justice on their behalf. However, since Christ was a gift from the Father, and his obedience and payment were accepted in the place of sinners—all as a free gift, not based on anything they did—their justification comes only from God's free grace. This ensures that in the justification of sinners, both God's perfect justice and his abundant grace are fully glorified.

4

From all eternity, God planned to declare His chosen people righteous. Christ, in the right moment in history, died for their sins and was raised to life to secure their justification. However, they are not personally declared righteous until the Holy Spirit, in a specific moment in time, unites them to Christ.

5

Justified believers are continually forgiven of their sins. Although they can never lose their justified status, their sins may cause them to fall under God's fatherly disapproval. In that state, they typically don't have the assurance of His favor restored to them until they humble themselves, confess their sins, ask for forgiveness, and renew their faith and repentance.

6

Believers were justified in the Old Testament in the very same way as believers are justified in the New Testament.

Chapter 12 ***OF ADOPTION***

1

All who are justified by God, through and because of his only Son, Jesus Christ, are made to share in the grace of adoption. By this grace, they are brought into God's family, enjoying the freedom and privileges of his children. God puts his name on them and gives them the Spirit of adoption, which enables them to approach the throne of grace with confidence and call out to him, "Abba, Father." As their Father, God has compassion for them, protects them, provides for them, and disciplines them. Yet, he will never abandon them. Instead, he secures them until the day of redemption and they will inherit the promises of eternal salvation as his heirs.

Chapter 13

OF SANCTIFICATION

1

Those who have been united with Christ through an effectual calling and regeneration have a new heart and spirit created within them. This transformation is made possible by the power of Christ's death and resurrection. These believers are also progressively sanctified, in a real and personal way, through that same power. The Holy Spirit and the Word of God reside in them, destroying the rule of the sinful nature. As a result, the body's sinful desires are increasingly weakened and put to death, while believers are made more and more alive and strengthened in all saving graces. This process enables them to practice all genuine holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.

2

Sanctification, the process of becoming holy, affects every part of a person. However, in this life, it's an incomplete process. There will always be some remaining sin and corruption in every part of our being. This is what leads to a constant and internal conflict, with our sinful nature at war with the Holy Spirit.

3

While our sinful nature may sometimes get the better of us, we can overcome it. This is because the Holy Spirit, who makes us holy, continually gives us strength. As a result, we grow in God's grace and become more holy out of reverence for him. We strive to live a heavenly life, obeying all the commands that Christ, our Head and King, has given us in his Word.

Chapter 14

OF SAVING FAITH

1

Faith, which allows God's chosen people to believe and be saved, is a gift of grace. This faith is a work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and is typically received through the preaching of God's Word. The same Word, along with baptism, the Lord's Supper, prayer, and other God-ordained means, also helps this faith grow stronger.

2

This kind of faith leads a Christian to believe everything in the Bible is true because it comes directly from God. A Christian with this faith also sees a superior value in the Bible over all other writings and things in the world. This is because the Bible reveals God's glorious attributes, the unique excellence of Christ's nature and roles, and the power and completeness of the Holy Spirit's work. As a result, a believer can confidently entrust their soul to these truths. This faith also prompts them to respond appropriately to each specific part of Scripture—obeying its commands, being humbled by its warnings, and holding onto God's promises for both this life and the next. However, the most crucial

actions of saving faith are directed specifically toward Christ. This means accepting, receiving, and depending on him alone for our justification, sanctification, and eternal life, all of which are secured through the covenant of grace.

3

This faith, though it may be in different stages of development and can be weak or strong, is nevertheless fundamentally different from the temporary faith and common grace of non-believers, even in its smallest degree. As is the case with all saving grace, it is distinct in its very nature. Therefore, although this faith may often be attacked and weakened, it ultimately triumphs. Through Christ, who is the author and perfecter of our faith, it grows in many believers until they achieve full assurance.

4

Saving faith, as revealed in Holy Scripture, transcends a mere intellectual assent to theological propositions or historical facts concerning Christ. Such intellectual acknowledgement, often termed "creedalism," is insufficient for salvation. Rather, saving faith is characterized by a profound, wholehearted trust, an unwavering reliance upon, and an unreserved commitment to Jesus Christ alone as the sole ground for salvation. It is not merely believing about Christ, but truly believing in Him, entrusting one's entire being and eternal destiny to His person and atoning work.

5

True saving faith is perpetually and inseparably conjoined with genuine repentance. Repentance is not a meritorious work performed to earn salvation, but rather a divinely-imparted change of mind, heart, and will, culminating in a decisive turning away from sin and a resolute turning toward God. It is an integral and indispensable component of saving faith, evidencing the Holy Spirit's effectual call and the new birth.

6

While salvation is unilaterally by grace through faith alone, apart from any human works (Ephesians 2:8-9), it is imperative to emphasize that true saving faith will invariably and inevitably produce a transformed life marked by good works and the spiritual fruit of the Holy Spirit. These spiritual outworkings serve as compelling evidence of genuine conversion and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, not as a means of meriting salvation. As the Apostle James declares, "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:17). A faith that does not manifest itself in a life of obedience and righteousness is a spurious faith.

7

The notion that one can genuinely profess faith in Christ yet persist in a lifestyle characterized by unrepentant sin—often termed "carnal Christian" theology—is directly contrary to the explicit teachings of Scripture. True conversion effects a profound and comprehensive transformation of the individual. The indwelling Holy Spirit invariably initiates a process of sanctification, leading the believer into increasing conformity to the image of Christ and a genuine

desire to walk in holiness. A persistent and unrepentant embrace of sin indicates a lack of genuine saving faith, regardless of any outward profession.

8

The Holy Scriptures do not prescribe or endorse a mechanical recitation of a specific formulaic prayer as the definitive or sole means by which an individual is declared saved, having "accepted" Christ as Lord and Savior. While it is undeniably true that genuine converts, constrained by the Holy Spirit, will indeed pray and call upon the name of the Lord in repentance and faith, the practice of instructing individuals to parrot a prescribed set of words, often without sufficient understanding or genuine contrition, and subsequently providing them with an immediate and unqualified assurance of salvation, constitutes an act of grave presumption and can lead to profound spiritual deception. Such an approach risks fostering a false assurance rooted in human performance rather than in the sovereign work of God and the evidential fruit of regeneration. True conversion is a work of the Spirit, not a mere verbal exercise.

9

While we earnestly and boldly proclaim the gospel to all humanity, we reject any practice that suggests salvation is a result of human will or a mere public performance. The Holy Scriptures neither prescribe nor model the use of the "altar call" as a means of evangelism. We believe this practice is prone to manipulating emotions, offering a false assurance of salvation based on a physical act rather than a genuine, Spirit-wrought change of heart. True conversion is a supernatural work of God's sovereign grace, which is inwardly confirmed by the Holy Spirit and publicly manifested by repentance, faith, and obedience to Christ's command to be baptized into the fellowship of the church. We therefore exhort all who hear the gospel to respond in the privacy of their hearts with a faith that saves, and to publicly confess that faith through the biblical ordinance of believer's baptism.

10

While salvation is a gratuitous gift of God's grace, freely bestowed upon the believer, the path of discipleship to Christ inherently involves a profound cost. True saving faith embraces not only Christ's role as Savior from the penalty of sin and the wrath of God, but also His absolute Lordship over every facet of one's life. Following Christ necessitates self-denial, a willingness to forsake all for His sake, and a commitment to obediently follow His commands, even when such obedience entails personal sacrifice or suffering. To embrace Christ as Savior yet reject His Lordship is to misunderstand the very nature of saving faith.

Chapter 15

OF REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE AND SALVATION

1

Even some of God's chosen people, who were called to faith later in life, lived for a time in their natural, sinful state, chasing after various worldly pleasures.

In their effectual calling (the moment God draws them to himself), he grants them repentance unto life.

2

Since no one is completely good and everyone sins, even the most devout people can be overcome by temptation and the deceitfulness of their corruption dwelling in them, leading them into serious transgressions. However, through the covenant of grace, God has mercifully ensured that when believers fall into sin, they will be renewed through repentance, leading to their salvation.

3

Saving repentance is a grace given by the gospel. Through this grace, the Holy Spirit awakens a person to the many evils of his sin. Trusting in Christ, he humbles himself with a godly sorrow and a hatred for his sin, even despising himself for it. He prays for forgiveness and for the strength to change, and he makes a sincere effort, relying on the Holy Spirit's help, to live in a way that is pleasing to God in every aspect of his life.

4

We're to keep repenting throughout our lives because of the ongoing struggle with remaining sin dwelling in our body of death. It's also every person's duty to specifically repent of individual sins they know they've committed.

5

God, through Christ, has established a covenant of grace that ensures the preservation of believers until their salvation. This provision means that while even the smallest sin deserves damnation, no sin is so great that it will bring damnation to those who repent. This is why the constant preaching of repentance is essential.

6

Both saving faith and genuine repentance are not products of inherent human ability or autonomous human will, but are sovereign gifts graciously bestowed by God. The Scriptures unequivocally declare that salvation, from its inception to its consummation, is entirely a work of divine grace. Therefore, the church must steadfastly maintain its focus upon God's absolute sovereignty in the process of salvation, acknowledging that He initiates, sustains, and brings to completion the work of conversion in the hearts of His elect. This truth humbles man and glorifies God alone for salvation.

Chapter 16 ***OF GOOD WORKS***

1

Good works are actions that God has commanded in His Holy Word, not those that people invent out of misguided passion or on the pretext of having good intentions.

2

Good works, done in obedience to God's commands, are the natural outcome and proof of a genuine and vibrant faith. Through these works, believers show their thankfulness, grow in their assurance of salvation, build up other Christians, honor the gospel, silence their opponents, and bring glory to God. This is because we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works. As a result, our lives bear the fruit of holiness, and the end result is eternal life.

3

Christians are not able to do good works on their own; their ability comes entirely from the Holy Spirit. In order for believers to be able to do these good works, the Holy Spirit must not only give them grace but also actively influence their hearts to desire and perform God's will. However, this truth shouldn't lead believers to become lazy or neglect their duties, as if they should only act when the Holy Spirit gives them a special feeling or impulse. Instead, they must be diligent in stirring up the grace of God already at work in their lives.

4

No matter how obedient a person is in this life, he can't do more than God requires. In fact, he still falls short of what he is called to do. Therefore, no one is able to supererogate or share his merits to others for their salvation.

5

Our greatest efforts and good works cannot earn forgiveness for our sins or the gift of eternal life from God. This is because there is a vast and infinite gap between our actions and the glory that is to come, and an equally infinite distance between ourselves and God. Our works can't benefit God, nor can they repay the debt of our past sins. In fact, after we have done everything we possibly can, we are simply doing our duty as "unprofitable servants." Our good works are only good because they come from the Holy Spirit. However, because they are performed by us, they are tainted with so much weakness and imperfection that they can't withstand God's severe judgment.

6

While believers are accepted by God through Christ, their good works are also accepted in Him. This is not because their good works are perfect or without fault in this life, but because God, looking at them through His Son, is pleased to accept and reward what is sincere, even though it is accompanied by many weaknesses and imperfections.

7

Even when unregenerate (unbelieving) people do things that God commands, and these actions are good for themselves and others, they are still considered sinful. This is because these actions do not come from a heart made pure by faith. They are not done in the way God's Word directs, nor are they done for the correct purpose of bringing glory to God. Because of this, these actions cannot please God or prepare a person to receive His grace. However, neglecting these duties altogether is even more sinful and displeasing to God.

Chapter 17

OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

1

God accepts those He loves, effectively calls them, and makes them holy through His Spirit. He gives them the precious faith of His chosen people. These individuals cannot lose their state of grace, either completely or permanently. They will certainly continue in this grace until the end and will be eternally saved. This is because God's gifts and His calling are irreversible. Because of this, He continues to create and strengthen their faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the other gifts of the Holy Spirit, which lead to eternal life. Even though they may face many storms and floods, nothing can ever remove them from the foundation and rock to which they are fastened by faith. However, due to a lack of faith and the temptations of Satan, they may temporarily lose their awareness of God's light and love. Even in these moments, God remains unchanged. They can be sure that they will be kept by God's power until they receive salvation. There, they will enjoy what Christ has purchased for them, because they are engraved on the palms of God's hands, and their names have been written in the Book of Life from all eternity.

2

The perseverance of God's people is not based on their own free will. Rather, it comes from the unchangeable nature of God's decision to elect them, which stems from His free and unchanging love. This perseverance is also rooted in the effective work of Jesus Christ's merits and prayers, our union with Him, God's promise, the continuous presence of His Spirit, the divine nature within us, and the very character of the covenant of grace. Because of these things, we can be absolutely certain that our perseverance is guaranteed.

3

Believers may, when tempted by Satan and the world, and overcome by their own remaining sinfulness and a neglect of the ways God has given them to persevere, fall into serious sins. They may continue in these sins for a time, which will displease God, grieve the Holy Spirit, diminish their faith and comfort, harden their hearts, wound their consciences, hurt and scandalize others, and bring about God's temporal judgments upon them. Despite this, they will repent and be preserved in their faith in Christ Jesus until the very end.

Chapter 18

OF THE ASSURANCE OF GRACE AND SALVATION

1

Although people who are not truly born again—including those who temporarily believe or who deceive themselves with false hopes—may have a misguided sense of being in God's favor and destined for salvation, this hope will ultimately prove to be empty. However, those who genuinely believe in Jesus Christ, sincerely love him, and strive to live with a clear conscience before him can be assured in this life that they are in a state of grace. They can rejoice in

the hope of God's glory, a hope that will never lead to disappointment.

2

This is not just a hopeful guess or a shaky feeling. It's a certain, unwavering assurance of faith. This assurance is built on two things: (1) The finished work of Christ: The foundation is the blood and righteousness of Jesus, which are revealed in the Gospel. (2) The inward work of the Holy Spirit: This includes the inner evidence of God's grace in our lives and the testimony of the Holy Spirit confirming that we are God's children. This assurance leads to a humble and holy heart.

3

A Christian's assurance of salvation isn't essential to the nature of faith itself. A genuine believer may have to wait a long time and face many struggles before he experiences this assurance. However, by the Holy Spirit's help, he can understand the blessings God has freely given him. Through the proper use of biblical means—like prayer, reading Scripture, and fellowship—a believer can attain this assurance without needing a special revelation. Therefore, it's the duty of every Christian to be diligent in confirming his calling and election. Doing so will lead to a heart overflowing with peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, love and thankfulness to God, and strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience. These are the proper results of this assurance, and they are far from leading people to a careless or immoral life.

4

Believers can lose their assurance of salvation in various ways, but they never completely lose their faith. This assurance may be shaken, lessened, or interrupted by neglecting their spiritual walk, falling into a specific sin that burdens their conscience and grieves the Holy Spirit, or by a sudden and powerful temptation. God may also withdraw the light of his presence and allow even those who fear him to walk in darkness without light. However, believers are never without the "seed of God" or the "life of faith". This means that the love for Christ and their fellow believers, their sincere heart, and a sense of duty remain. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, this assurance can be restored in due time. In the meantime, these qualities preserve them from complete despair.

Chapter 19 ***OF THE LAW OF GOD***

1

God gave Adam a law of complete obedience, which was both written on his heart and included the specific command not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Through this, God bound Adam and all his descendants to a life of personal, complete, precise, and unending obedience. God promised eternal life for keeping this law and threatened death for breaking it, and he gave Adam the power and ability to obey.

2

The moral law, which God originally inscribed on the human heart, remained a perfect standard of righteousness even after the fall into sin. God later delivered this same law in the form of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, writing them on two stone tablets. The first four commandments outline our duties to God, and the remaining six define our duties to our fellow human beings.

3

God also gave the nation of Israel ceremonial laws in addition to the moral law. These laws included many symbolic rituals, some of which were for worship and foreshadowed Christ, his grace, his work, his suffering, and the benefits he provides. Other parts of the ceremonial law offered moral instruction. However, these laws were only meant to last until the time of reformation. Since Jesus Christ, the true Messiah and only law-giver, was given authority by the Father for this very purpose, he has abolished and removed them.

4

He also gave them various judicial laws, but these laws expired when the nation of Israel ceased to be a functioning state. Therefore, these laws are no longer binding on anyone today because of their original institution. Instead, only the general principles of justice and fairness behind these laws are still applicable for our moral guidance.

5

The moral law remains forever binding on everyone, including those who have been justified by faith. This is not simply because of the law's content, but also because it comes with the authority of God the Creator, who gave it. In the Gospel, Christ does not abolish this obligation; instead, He reinforces it.

6

For true believers, the law doesn't function as a "merit-based framework"—that is, a system by which they can be justified or condemned. However, it's still extremely useful to them and to everyone else. The law serves as a rule for life, showing us God's will and our duties, and it directs and obligates us to live accordingly. It also reveals the sinful corruption in our nature, our hearts, and our actions. By examining ourselves against the law, we gain a deeper conviction of our sin, which leads to humility and a hatred for it. This process also gives us a clearer view of our great need for Christ and the perfect obedience he rendered on our behalf. The law is also useful for Christians because it restrains our corrupt desires by forbidding sin. Its warnings and threats show us what our sins truly deserve and what kind of afflictions we might expect in this life as a result, even though we are freed from the law's ultimate curse and its full, unmitigated severity. Likewise, the law's promises show us that God approves of our obedience and what blessings we can expect when we obey. However, we do not receive these blessings because we have earned them through a "merit-based framework." Therefore, a person's desire to do good and avoid evil because the law encourages one and deters the other is not evidence that they are still under the law and not under grace.

7

These uses of the law are not contrary to the grace of the Gospel; instead, they work together in perfect harmony. The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Christ, empowers and enables the human will to joyfully and willingly obey what God's will, as revealed in the law, requires us to do.

Chapter 20

OF THE GOSPEL AND THE EXTENT OF GRACE THEREOF

1

In response to sin's breaking and rendering the federal creation mandate unfulfilling for life, God, in His pleasure, gave the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman. This promise serves as the means by which God calls the elect and generates in them faith and repentance. The gospel, in its essence, was revealed in this promise, and through it, God's power is effectively at work for the conversion and salvation of sinners.

2

The way to be saved through Christ is something we can only learn from the Bible. You can't figure out who Christ is or what His grace means just by looking at nature or thinking about how the world works. These things don't even give us a vague or unclear idea about Him. It's impossible for people who haven't heard the good news about Christ to find true faith or turn from their sins on their own.

3

The gospel is revealed to sinners in various ways and at different times. This includes the promises and commands that require obedience. The decision of which people and nations receive this revelation is based entirely on God's sovereign will and good pleasure, not on any promise tied to how well people use their natural abilities or common understanding without the gospel. No one has ever been able to do this, and no one ever will. Therefore, throughout history, the preaching of the gospel—its reach and its limitations—has been determined by the wise counsel of God's will.

4

Although the gospel is the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and is fully sufficient for that purpose, it's also true that for people who are spiritually dead in their sins to be born again and made alive, a further, powerful work of the Holy Spirit is necessary. This work must act on their entire soul to create new spiritual life within them, and without it, no other means can bring about their conversion to God.

Chapter 21

OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

1

Christian liberty, which Christ secured for believers through the gospel, means we are free from several things: the guilt of sin, God's condemning wrath, and the law's curse and severity. It also means we are set free from this present evil world, the control of Satan, the dominion of sin, the harm of suffering, the fear and sting of death, the victory of the grave, and eternal damnation. Furthermore, this freedom includes having direct access to God and being able to obey Him not out of a fear like that of a slave, but out of a loving and willing heart like that of a child. Believers in the Old Testament also experienced the core of these freedoms. However, under the New Covenant, the liberty of Christians is expanded. We are free from the burden of the ceremonial law that the Jewish people were required to follow. We have greater boldness when approaching the throne of grace, and we experience a fuller outpouring of God's free Spirit than believers in the Old Testament typically did.

2

God alone has authority over our consciences. He has freed our consciences from any human-made rules or teachings that are either against his Word or not found in it. Therefore, to believe in or obey such rules out of a sense of duty is to abandon our genuine freedom of conscience. To demand unquestioning faith and absolute obedience is to destroy not only our freedom of conscience but also our ability to reason.

3

When people use the excuse of Christian liberty to practice sin or hold onto sinful desires, they're not only twisting the main purpose of the gospel's grace to their own destruction, but they're also completely missing the point of Christian liberty itself. The true purpose of Christian liberty is to be freed from the power of all our spiritual enemies so we can serve the Lord without fear. This freedom enables us to live in holiness and righteousness before him for our entire lives.

Chapter 22

OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND THE SABBATH DAY

1

God's existence, along with His complete authority and sovereignty over all things, is evident through creation itself. We can see that He is just and good, and that He shows goodness to everyone. Because of this, He alone is to be feared, loved, praised, prayed to, trusted in, and served with our entire being—with all our heart, soul, and strength. However, the only way to worship the true God acceptably is the one He Himself has established. This way is so strictly defined by His revealed will in the Bible that we cannot worship Him based on our own ideas, the schemes of men, or the temptations of Satan. We

must not worship Him through physical images or in any other way not specifically commanded in the Holy Scriptures

2

Worship is for God alone—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We should not worship angels, saints, or anything else in creation. After the Fall, we can only approach God through a mediator, and Jesus Christ is the only one who can fill that role.

3

Prayer, which includes giving thanks, is a natural part of worship and is something God requires from everyone. However, for our prayers to be accepted by God, we must pray in the name of Jesus, relying on the Holy Spirit to guide us. Our prayers should align with God's will and be offered with understanding, reverence, humility, earnestness, faith, love, and persistence. When we pray with others, we must use a language that everyone present can understand.

4

We should pray for things that are lawful and for all people who are living now or will live in the future. We should not, however, pray for the dead or for anyone known to have committed the unpardonable sin.

5

Worshiping God involves several key practices. We are to read, preach, and listen to God's Word. We should also teach and encourage one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to the Lord with gratitude in our hearts. Additionally, we must properly administer baptism and the Lord's Supper. All these acts of worship should be done in obedience to God, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear. Furthermore, on special occasions, it is appropriate to observe times of solemn humility and fasting, as well as giving thanks to God in a holy and reverent manner.

6

Prayer and other forms of worship are not made more acceptable to God by being performed in a specific location or direction. Under the new covenant, God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth. This means worship should happen daily in private families and secretly by individuals. It also means we are to worship more solemnly in public gatherings. These gatherings should not be carelessly or deliberately neglected when God's Word or His providence calls us to them.

7

In keeping with the nature of creation, God has decreed that a portion of our time should be dedicated to worshipping Him. He has established in His Word a binding, timeless, and moral command for all people, in all generations, to set aside one day in seven as a Sabbath to be kept holy for Him. Initially, from the beginning of creation until Christ's resurrection, this day was the last day of the week. However, following His resurrection, it was changed to the first day of

the week, now known as the Lord's Day. This day is to be observed as the Christian Sabbath until the end of the world, as the practice of observing the last day of the week has been abolished.

8

For us, keeping the Sabbath holy means preparing our hearts and our households beforehand. On the day itself, we're to rest completely from our regular work, business, and leisure. Instead, we devote the entire day to worshipping God, both in public gatherings and in private devotions, while also attending to duties of necessity and mercy.

9

True religious worship is, in its essence, a reverent response to the living God and His self-revelation. Its fundamental purpose is to render Him the glory due His name, rather than to serve as a means of human entertainment or to primarily elicit subjective emotional responses. Our assemblies are to be ordered by His Word and directed towards His praise, recognizing His absolute sovereignty and holiness.

10

The character of God dictates that His corporate worship be conducted with utmost reverence and order. As the Apostle Paul instructs concerning the church's gatherings, "God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Furthermore, "all things should be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). This principle directly repudiates any chaotic, self-indulgent, or disorderly expressions that detract from the solemnity and sanctity of the divine service.

11

While acknowledging that genuine spiritual fervor can indeed manifest in strong, joyful emotion (cf. Psalm 47:1: "O clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!"), any form of disorderly, unedifying, or manipulative screaming and shouting that disrupts the decorum of the service, distracts from the proclamation of the Word, or stems from mere human emotionalism rather than Spirit-led reverence, is contrary to the scriptural pattern of biblical worship. The Holy Spirit leads to self-control and peace, not pandemonium.

12

The primary focus during corporate worship must remain on intelligibility and the edification of the gathered body of believers. As Paul emphasizes in his instructions to the Corinthian church, "When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up" (1 Corinthians 14:26). All elements of worship, therefore, should be understandable and contribute directly to the spiritual growth and mutual encouragement of the congregation.

13

We affirm that music is a divinely appointed means of worship, praise, and instruction, serving to convey spiritual truth and stir godly affections (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). However, the emphasis in corporate singing must primarily rest upon the theological content of the lyrics, ensuring they are doctrinally sound, biblically rich, and consonant with the Reformed faith. The integrity of the message, rather than the intensity of the musical presentation, is paramount.

14

It is crucial to distinguish clearly between the genuine moving of the Holy Spirit and mere emotional or sensory stimulation generated by loud or repetitive music. The authentic work of the Holy Spirit primarily involves the illumination of God's Word, conviction of sin, application of Christ's truth to the heart, and the production of spiritual fruit consistent with the character of Christ (John 16:8-14; Galatians 5:22-23). Conversely, emotional responses induced solely by external stimuli, devoid of deep biblical truth, are not necessarily indicative of the Spirit's presence or work.

15

We must strongly caution against equating the volume or emotional intensity of music with the discernible presence or power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit operates principally through the ordinary means of grace: the faithful preaching and teaching of the Word, the proper administration of the sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), and fervent, humble prayer (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:42). True spiritual worship is offered "in spirit and truth," flowing from a regenerated heart that apprehends God through His revealed Word, not from mere sensory experience.

16

All musical expressions in worship must contribute to the edification of the congregation and foster an atmosphere of orderly and reverent worship of God. Excessive noise, manipulative musical techniques, or music designed primarily to evoke emotional responses rather than to convey biblical truth, can hinder genuine worship. The aim is to facilitate a corporate experience wherein God is honored, His people are built up in the faith, and unbelievers may perceive the holiness and truth of the gospel (1 Corinthians 14:24-25).

Chapter 23 ***OF LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS***

1

Taking a lawful oath is an act of worship. In doing so, a person truthfully, righteously, and with sound judgment, solemnly calls upon God to witness what they are swearing to and to be their judge based on whether their words are true or false.

2

Only God's name is to be used when taking an oath, and it must be done with complete reverence and holy fear. It is a sin and to be condemned to use God's glorious and awesome name in a trivial or reckless manner, or to swear by anything else. However, when dealing with important matters, an oath is a tool sanctioned by Scripture for confirming the truth and resolving disputes. Therefore, when a lawful authority imposes a lawful oath in such circumstances, it is a duty to take it.

3

Taking an oath is a serious and weighty matter, and it should only be done when it's in line with what the Bible teaches. When you swear an oath, you should be absolutely certain that what you're saying is true. God is angered by oaths that are made rashly, falsely, or for trivial reasons, and such actions bring judgment upon the land.

4

An oath must be taken in the plain and common meaning of the words, without any deception or secret mental reservation.

5

A vow should be made only to God, not to any person or created thing, and it must be kept with the utmost diligence and sincerity. Vows like those in the Roman Catholic tradition for a lifelong single status, poverty, and absolute obedience are not a path to a more perfect spiritual life. Instead, they are misguided and sinful traps that no Christian should get caught in.

Chapter 24 ***OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE***

1

God, the ultimate ruler and king of the entire world, has appointed civil authorities to serve under his authority and rule over the people. He has done this for his own glory and for the benefit of society. To this end, he has given them the power of the sword—meaning the authority to enforce laws—to protect and reward those who do good, and to punish those who do evil.

2

It is right for Christians to accept and serve in the role of a government official when they are called to do so. In this role, they should primarily work to uphold justice and peace, following the sound laws of their nation. To achieve this, they are permitted, even in the New Testament era, to rightfully engage in war when there are just and necessary reasons for it.

3

God establishes civil authorities for the purposes mentioned previously. We, as believers, must obey them in all lawful commands, not just to avoid punishment, but also out of a sincere sense of duty to the Lord. Furthermore, we should offer prayers and supplications for our leaders and all those in authority

so that we may live tranquil and peaceable lives, marked by devotion to God and integrity.

Chapter 25 *OF CHRISTIAN ALLEGIANCE*

1

Consequently, the allegiance of the Church is preeminently and unconditionally rendered to Christ, its Head and King. While respecting and submitting to governing authorities in accordance with biblical mandates (1 Peter 2:13-17), the Church's loyalty is never to be conflated with, nor subservient to, any particular political party, human ideology, or temporal regime. Our primary citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20), and our ultimate standard of obedience is the divine law of God.

2

In an age characterized by a pervasive skepticism regarding objective reality, we unequivocally affirm that truth is not a mutable construct, relative to individual perception or socially engineered consensus. Instead, we uphold biblical truth as the immutable, ultimate, and authoritative standard for all knowledge, morality, and understanding. "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). This divinely revealed truth, apprehended through faith in Christ, serves as the singular plumb line by which all other claims to knowledge and competing ideologies must be rigorously evaluated and, where necessary, corrected. It is the unassailable foundation upon which a right understanding of God, humanity, and the world is built.

3

We steadfastly uphold the biblical doctrine of individual moral responsibility, wherein each person is accountable before God for his thoughts, words, and deeds (Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Concurrently, we acknowledge the pervasive reality of systemic sin and the corporate dimensions of injustice that permeate fallen human societies. While individual culpability remains paramount, the Scriptures also reveal instances of corporate sin and its consequences, demonstrating how sin can become embedded within societal structures and institutions (e.g., the prophetic critiques of Israel's injustice, Amos 5:7-15). Therefore, while we are committed to pursuing justice for the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized, our pursuit is firmly grounded in timeless biblical principles of righteousness and mercy (Micah 6:8; Luke 4:18-19), rather than being uncritically appropriated from secular ideologies that may diverge from or contradict God's revealed will.

4

We tender a gentle yet firm critique of worldviews that aspire to construct a perfected society solely through human ingenuity, effort, or political restructuring, independent of divine grace and redemption. Such utopian aspirations, often characteristic of secular humanism, inherently deny the profound impact

of humanity's fallen nature and the pervasive reality of sin (Romans 3:23). True societal transformation is not achievable through mere legislative reform or socio-political engineering alone. Rather, it necessitates the regenerating and sanctifying work of God's Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals (John 3:3-8) and the subsequent application of biblical principles to all spheres of life, acknowledging that a perfect earthly society will only be fully realized at Christ's return (Revelation 21:1-5). Efforts to establish an earthly paradise apart from God's redemptive plan are ultimately futile and often lead to further disillusionment or oppression.

5

While the Scriptures do not endorse a specific, prescriptive economic system (e.g., capitalism, socialism), they unequivocally establish timeless moral principles that govern all economic activity. We affirm the biblical call to responsible stewardship of God's creation and resources (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 24:1), recognizing that all possessions ultimately belong to Him. We advocate for compassionate care for the poor and vulnerable, emphasizing generosity, hospitality, and just treatment (Deuteronomy 15:7-8; Proverbs 14:31; James 2:15-16). The Scriptures condemn dishonest weights and measures, exploitation, and usury (Leviticus 19:35-36; Proverbs 11:1; Ezekiel 22:12), promoting instead integrity, fairness, and diligence in labor (Colossians 3:23). Furthermore, covetousness and the inordinate love of money are denounced as roots of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10), challenging individuals to prioritize heavenly treasures over earthly accumulation (Matthew 6:19-21).

6

We assert the profound biblical truth that ultimate human identity is found preeminently and irrevocably in Christ Jesus, through faith in His atoning work (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:1-4). This Christ-centered identity transcends and supersedes all other categories, whether racial, ethnic, national, or socio-economic. While acknowledging the reality of God's purposeful design for humanity as distinct male and female genders, as revealed in creation (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4), and recognizing the cultural and societal expressions that flow from these distinctions, our fundamental worth, purpose, and belonging are not derived from these classifications. Rather, they are bestowed by God's grace upon those who are "in Christ," united to Him as adopted sons and daughters of God.

7

It is imperative that the Church's engagement with these vital societal and ethical concerns, however significant, never overshadows or eclipses the core doctrines of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The central message of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone, remains the paramount truth to be proclaimed and upheld (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 1:16-17). These applications of biblical truth to various spheres of life are crucial outworkings of our faith, demonstrating its comprehensive scope and transformative power. However, they are not, in themselves, the entirety of the Christian faith; rather, they flow from and are sustained by the foundational

reality of God's redemptive work in Christ. Our primary mission remains the proclamation of the Good News, leading individuals to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 26 ***OF MARRIAGE***

1

Marriage is to be between one man and one woman. It's not lawful for a man to have more than one wife, nor for a woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.

2

Marriage was established to provide mutual support for a husband and wife, to increase the human population through legitimate offspring, and to prevent sexual immorality.

3

All people who have the maturity to give their consent can lawfully get married. However, it's a Christian's duty to marry another believer. Therefore, those who profess the true faith should not marry unbelievers, idolaters, or anyone who is wicked in life or holds to damnable heresy.

4

Marriage should not occur between people who are closely related by blood (consanguinity) or by marriage (affinity), as these unions are forbidden by the Scriptures. Such incestuous marriages can never be made legitimate by any human law or by the mutual agreement of the parties involved. Therefore, those individuals cannot rightfully live together as husband and wife.

Chapter 27 ***OF HUMAN SEXUALITY***

1

The Holy Scriptures unequivocally declare homosexual acts to be sinful, standing in direct opposition to God's created order and His revealed moral law. Such practices are explicitly prohibited and consistently characterized as contrary to divine will throughout both the Old and New Testaments.

2

We affirm that gender is not a social construct but an intrinsic and divinely ordained extension and function of biological sex, integral to God's sovereign creative design. God purposefully created humanity as male and female, endowing each with distinct, complementary characteristics and roles. Men, or boys, are imbued with God-given masculine traits and are expected to function physically and emotionally in accordance with God's design for masculinity. Conversely, women, or girls, possess God-given feminine traits and are expected to function physically and emotionally according to God's design for

femininity. By natural inclination and divine design, men are typically endowed with greater physical strength, equipping them for tasks requiring robust exertion and leadership, consistent with their headship role (as seen in Ephesians 5:23, where Christ is the head of the church, and the husband is the head of the wife). While women are not expected to undertake strenuous labors typically assigned to men, their inherent physical composition is perfectly suited for their unique and vital roles, particularly in nurturing and homemaking (as seen in Titus 2:3-5, instructing older women to train younger women in household management and love for their families). Any deliberate attempt to alter one's biological sex, appearance, sexual organs, or prescribed physical functions, whether through medical intervention or lifestyle choice, constitutes an act of perversion. Such actions are considered a direct affront and insult to the omniscient God who fearfully and wonderfully created each individual in His image, imbuing them with their unique, God-given identity as male or female.

3

We confess that God, in His infinite wisdom and grace, established marriage as the exclusive context for human sexual intimacy. He designed this institution to provide for both sexual pleasure and purity within the covenant union of one man and one woman (1 Cor. 7:2-5). Consequently, we affirm that all other forms of sexual expression are contrary to the Creator's design and are an expression of fallen human nature. This includes, but is not limited to, bestiality and other perverse practices explicitly condemned in Scripture (Lev. 18:23; Rom. 1:24-27). While God's provision for marriage is for the good of all, we recognize that celibacy is a special and blessed gift granted by the Lord to certain individuals for the purpose of unhindered devotion to His kingdom (Matt. 19:11-12; 1 Cor. 7:7). We therefore condemn any ecclesiastical practice that enforces celibacy on anyone, as it violates both the clear teaching of Scripture and God's design for humanity.

4

While we unequivocally uphold the biblical condemnation of homosexual practice and any other perverse sexual expressions as sin, we simultaneously affirm that all individuals, including those who experience same-sex and other unnatural attractions, are recipients of God's profound love and mercy. Through sincere repentance and genuine faith in Jesus Christ, they can indeed find forgiveness, profound spiritual renewal, and a true identity rooted in Him. It is crucial to distinguish clearly between the experience of temptation, which is not inherently sinful, and the willful engagement in sinful acts. The Church is divinely mandated to extend compassion, engage in fervent prayer, and provide holistic ministry to all people, consistently upholding and proclaiming the uncompromised standards of Holy Scripture.

Chapter 28

OF THE GOD-ORDAINED ROLES IN FAMILY AND SOCIETY

1

From the dawn of creation, God bestowed upon humanity a dominion mandate,

enjoining them to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:28). Crucially, this mandate was initially given to Adam, the man, who was formed first and tasked with the responsibility of "working and keeping" the Garden of Eden before the creation of Eve (Genesis 2:15). This chronological and vocational precedence establishes a foundational pattern of responsible headship, wherein man is entrusted with primary leadership and stewardship under God's ultimate authority.

2

Within the covenant of marriage, God has instituted a divine order wherein the husband is called to exercise loving and self-sacrificial headship over his wife, mirroring the relationship between Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:23). This headship is not to be construed as tyrannical or domineering, but rather as a humble, servant-hearted leadership, characterized by profound love, spiritual direction, diligent provision, and steadfast protection of the family unit (Ephesians 5:25-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:7). The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, even to the point of laying down his life for her.

3

The father bears the profound responsibility of being the spiritual leader within his home, exercising what may be termed the "priesthood of the home." This sacred duty encompasses the consistent practice of family worship, diligent instruction of his household in the tenets of the Christian faith, and fervent prayer for and with his family (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Joshua 24:15; Ephesians 6:4). A father who neglects this divine charge is unequivocally accountable to God and will, by divine principle, experience the adverse consequences of his dereliction of this most vital God-given task.

4

Men are divinely enjoined to be diligent and responsible providers for their households, laboring with integrity and a strong work ethic (1 Timothy 5:8; 2 Thessalonians 3:10). The Apostle Paul unequivocally states, "But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). This underscores the gravity of a man's responsibility to provide materially for his family.

5

Scripture unequivocally condemns the sin of male passivity, notably exemplified by Adam's failure to protect Eve from the deceptive machinations of the Serpent in the Garden of Eden. Adam, being present, did not intervene to shield his wife from the Tempter's lies nor did he confront the Serpent with the authoritative Word of God (Genesis 3:6). Therefore, men are exhorted to courageously and humbly embrace their God-given responsibilities with active love, ensuring the spiritual and physical well-being and protection of their

households from all forms of danger and spiritual compromise (1 Corinthians 16:13; Ephesians 6:10-13).

6

The Holy Scriptures consistently uphold the vital and complementary role of women within the family, the church, and society at large (Proverbs 31:10-31; Titus 2:3-5). Women, as equally created in the image of God, possess inherent dignity and worth (Genesis 1:27). Their contributions are indispensable, encompassing roles such as nurturing and raising children, managing the household, and contributing to the spiritual and social fabric of the community in ways that are distinct yet equally valuable to those of men (Proverbs 31:26-27; 1 Timothy 2:9-10; Titus 2:5). The complementary nature of these roles is essential for the harmonious functioning of God's created order.

7

Children are unequivocally commanded by God to honor their parents "in the Lord" at all times (Ephesians 6:1-3; Exodus 20:12). This divine injunction remains binding despite the inherent imperfections and residual sins that may at times lead to parental shortcomings or perceived injustices in their upbringing. Children are not thereby licensed to respond with argumentative disrespect or dishonorable speech. Rather, they are to present their concerns respectfully and with earnest supplication, recognizing that their parents exercise God-given authority (Colossians 3:20). To harbor resentment towards parental authority is, at its root, to ultimately reject the authority of God Himself, for it is God who has delegated this authority to parents over their children. Under no circumstances are children permitted to reverse the established order of authority by addressing their parents with imperative commands or disrespectful demeanor.

8

All members of the household are called to cultivate and maintain active, consistent, and open communication. This communication, characterized by an attitude of love, mutual respect, and a profound dependence upon the God who established their family unit (Ephesians 4:15, 29; Colossians 4:6), is paramount. Crucially, the gospel must be a frequent topic of family conversations, ensuring that the foundational truths of faith are regularly discussed and understood. Furthermore, transparency with one another is essential to preserve family unity, fostering an environment where gentleness and love guide every interaction. This commitment to healthy, gospel-centered communication is to be pursued with the ultimate aim of nurturing future generations who fear the Lord and know His ways. Failure to do so risks replicating the tragic historical fate of the Israelites, whose successive generation "did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel" after Joshua and his contemporaries had passed away (Judges 2:10). Thus, intentional and godly communication is vital for the spiritual heritage and lasting unity of the family.

Chapter 29

OF THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

1

Human life, in its most nascent and vulnerable stage, commences at the moment of conception, and is imbued with intrinsic value. The Psalmist, under divine inspiration, attests to God's intimate involvement in the formation of each individual from the earliest embryonic development.

2

All human beings, from the moment of conception until natural death, bear the Imago Dei, the very image of God (Genesis 1:27). This divine imprint confers upon humanity an inherent dignity and worth that sets us apart from all other created beings. Consequently, the intentional taking of innocent human life, commonly understood as murder, constitutes a most heinous sin, a direct assault on the Creator's design and a violation of His holy law: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image" (Genesis 9:6). The Decalogue unequivocally states, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13), establishing a foundational moral imperative that safeguards the sanctity of human life.

3

The Scriptural witness consistently underscores God's protective regard for the unborn. The Mosaic Law, in particular, prescribes severe penalties for actions that result in harm to a pregnant woman and her unborn child. Exodus 21:22-25, when interpreted in its original Hebrew context, indicates that if men strive and hit a pregnant woman, and her child comes out prematurely (or if there is a miscarriage with injury), significant compensation or even the principle of lex talionis (life for life) may be applied, depending on the outcome for both mother and child. This legislative framework unequivocally demonstrates that the life of the unborn was considered valuable and worthy of legal protection within ancient Israelite society.

4

It is imperative to acknowledge the biological and ontological distinctiveness of the unborn child's body from that of the mother. Scientific and medical understanding confirms that the unborn child possesses a unique genetic code, distinct from that of either parent, and develops as a separate, albeit dependent, human organism. Therefore, the assertion "My body, my choice," while seemingly advocating for bodily autonomy, constitutes a profound logical fallacy and a moral evasion when applied to the decision to terminate the life of an unborn child. Such a statement, in this context, demonstrates a regrettable intellectual dishonesty and a wilful disregard for the established scientific and theological truth concerning the separate identity of the human being in the womb. This position must be exposed as untenable and morally indefensible.

5

Recognizing the profound complexities and deeply personal anguish that often

attend decisions related to abortion, we extend compassionate pastoral care to all individuals impacted. To those who have experienced abortion, we offer the boundless grace, complete forgiveness, and transformative healing that are found exclusively in Jesus Christ. We affirm the glorious truth that "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7) and that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The power of Christ's atonement is sufficient to forgive every sin, including the sin of abortion, and to bring spiritual restoration and peace to the contrite heart. Our ministry is committed to walking alongside individuals in their journey of repentance and reconciliation, emphasizing the unfathomable depths of God's mercy.

Chapter 30 ***OF THE CHURCH***

1

The church, which is universal and can be called invisible due to the internal work of the Holy Spirit and the grace of truth, is made up of all the elect—past, present, and future—who are united under Christ as their head. This church is the bride, the body, and the fullness of Christ, who fills everything in every way.

2

Individuals worldwide who profess faith in the gospel and obey God through Christ according to that faith are considered visible saints. This is as long as they don't undermine their profession with foundational errors or unholy conduct. All particular churches should be composed of these individuals.

3

Even the purest churches on earth can be affected by a mix of people and false teachings. Some have fallen so far that they've stopped being true churches of Christ and have instead become "synagogues of Satan." Despite this, Christ has always had, and will always have, a kingdom in this world. This kingdom is made up of people who believe in him and openly declare his name, and it will last until the very end of time.

4

The Lord Jesus Christ is the sole and ultimate head of the church. The Father has given him supreme authority over every aspect of the church, including its calling, establishment, order, and governance. The Pope of Rome has no claim to this position. Rather, he is the antichrist, the "man of sin," and "son of perdition" who elevates himself against Christ and everything that is called God. The Lord will ultimately defeat him with the glory of his return.

5

As he exercises the authority entrusted to him, the Lord Jesus, through the ministry of his word and by his Spirit, calls out from the world those given to him by the Father. He calls them to himself so that they might walk before him in

all the ways of obedience that he prescribes for them in his word. Those who are called in this way, he commands to walk together in particular societies or churches. They are to do this for their mutual edification and for the proper performance of the public worship that he requires of them in the world.

6

The members of these churches are called saints, visibly showing their obedience to Christ's call through their public profession of faith and their daily lives. They willingly agree to walk together according to Christ's design, committing themselves to the Lord and to each other by God's will, in heartfelt submission to the commands of the Gospel.

7

To each of these churches, therefore, gathered in accordance with His will as revealed in His Word, He has granted all the necessary power and authority. This power is for them to uphold the order of worship and discipline that He has established for them to follow. He has also provided commands and guidelines for the proper and rightful use and application of that authority.

8

A church that has been fully established and organized according to Christ's will is made up of its officers and members. The officers, appointed by Christ, are to be chosen and set apart by the assembled church to uniquely administer the ordinances and carry out the authority and duties He has entrusted to them. These offices, which are to continue until the end of the world, are those of bishops or elders, and deacons.

9

To appoint someone to the office of bishop or elder, who has been prepared and gifted by the Holy Spirit, Christ has provided a specific method. This method requires that the person is first chosen by a vote from the entire church congregation. After being chosen, the person is then formally set apart through a period of fasting and prayer. If there are already elders in the church, they participate in this ceremony by laying their hands on the person. A deacon is to be chosen and appointed in the same way, by a vote of the church and then set apart with prayer and the laying on of hands.

10

Pastors are constantly at work, serving Christ in His churches through the ministry of the Word and prayer. They are responsible for watching over the souls of their congregants and will one day have to give an account to Him. Therefore, it is the duty of the churches they serve to not only show them proper respect but also to provide for them financially according to their ability. This ensures pastors have a comfortable living and aren't distracted by secular work. This also allows them to be hospitable to others. This is a requirement of both natural law and the direct command of our Lord Jesus, who ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel.

11

While it is the specific duty of bishops or pastors to be diligent in preaching the Word, the task of preaching is not exclusively limited to them. Other individuals, who are gifted and equipped for this work by the Holy Spirit and who are approved and called by the church, may and should also preach.

12

All believers are obligated to join a specific church whenever and wherever they have the opportunity. Furthermore, all who are granted the privileges of membership in a church are also subject to its discipline and government, in accordance with Christ's commands.

13

If a church member has been wronged and has followed the proper biblical steps to address the person who offended him, he should not disrupt the church's order. This includes not skipping church services or refusing to participate in ordinances like communion and baptism because of the offense. Instead, he should trust in Christ and allow the church leadership to handle the matter further.

14

Individual churches and all their members are obligated to pray continuously for the well-being and success of all of Christ's churches everywhere. They should also seize every opportunity to support fellow believers, within their own sphere and God-given roles, as they use their spiritual gifts and graces. Similarly, when God's providence places churches near each other, giving them the chance to do so, they should fellowship with one another. This communion is for the sake of peace, growing in love, and building each other up.

15

Although each local church is an autonomous body directly accountable to God, it is encouraged to actively participate in a network of like-minded congregations and societies. This connectionalism among churches fosters mutual support, accountability, shared mission, and interconnectedness as integral parts of the wider body of believers. To strengthen these bonds, it is recommended that these connected churches convene in regular gatherings for joint prayer, collaborative equipping, and the sharing of ministerial joys and burdens.

16

When churches face difficulties or disagreements, whether concerning doctrine or how they run their affairs, and these issues threaten the peace, unity, and spiritual growth of a single church or the churches in general, it is right and in line with Christ's will for them to seek counsel. Likewise, if a member or members of a church believe he has been wronged by disciplinary actions that do not align with biblical truth and order, other churches that share fellowship with them should get involved. It is appropriate for several of these churches to send messengers to a meeting to discuss the problem and offer advice. This

advice is then to be shared with all the churches involved. However, this assembly of messengers does not hold any ultimate church authority or jurisdiction over the churches. They cannot impose censures on any churches or individuals, nor can they force their decisions upon the churches or their leaders. Their role is to provide counsel, not to govern.

Chapter 31

OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

1

Those who are united with Jesus Christ, their head, by the Holy Spirit and faith, are not made one person with him. However, they do share in his grace, his suffering, his death, his resurrection, and his glory. Being united with one another through love, they share in each other's gifts and grace. This obligates them to perform duties, both public and private, in an orderly way that contributes to their mutual good, for both their inner spiritual life and their physical well-being.

2

Saints or Christians are called to live in a holy fellowship and communion with one another. This means they are to gather for the worship of God and serve each other in ways that build up their faith. They are also to help one another with their material needs, as they are able and as others have needs. This fellowship is to be practiced especially within their own families and churches, but it should also extend to all believers everywhere, as God provides the opportunity. This spiritual fellowship, however, does not mean that believers lose ownership of their personal belongings or property. Each person still has a right to their own possessions.

Chapter 32

OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

1

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are positively and sovereignly commanded acts, instituted by the Lord Jesus, the church's sole authority. He intended for these practices to be observed in his church until the end of time.

2

Only men who meet the qualifications and are called by Christ should administer these holy ordinances.

Chapter 33

OF BAPTISM

1

Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, established by Jesus Christ. For the person being baptized, it serves as a sign of his fellowship with Christ in His death and resurrection, symbolizing his union with Him. It signifies the

forgiveness of sins and his commitment to live and walk in the newness of life through God, by way of Jesus Christ.

2

Only those who genuinely profess repentance toward God, and have faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ, are the appropriate candidates for baptism.

3

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

4

To properly administer the ordinance of baptism, it is necessary to immerse the person completely in water.

Chapter 34 ***OF THE LORD'S SUPPER***

1

The Lord Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on the same night he was betrayed. It's meant to be a permanent observance in his churches until he returns. The purpose of this ordinance is: (1) To perpetually remember and show the world the sacrifice of Jesus's death; (2) To confirm the faith of believers in the benefits of his sacrifice, leading to spiritual nourishment and growth in him; (3) To further commit believers to all the duties they owe to him; (4) To serve as a bond and pledge of their communion with him and with one another.

2

This ordinance does not involve Christ being offered up to God the Father, nor is any literal sacrifice made for the forgiveness of sins, whether for the living or the dead. Instead, it serves only as a memorial of the single, once-for-all offering of himself on the cross. Through this ordinance, we also offer a spiritual sacrifice of all possible praise to God for that work. Therefore, the Roman Catholic sacrifice of the Mass, as they call it, is utterly detestable. It is an insult to Christ's own sacrifice, which alone is the atonement for the sins of the elect.

3

In this ordinance, the Lord Jesus has appointed his ministers to pray and bless the bread and wine. This act sets them apart from common use and dedicates them to a holy purpose. The ministers are to take and break the bread, and take the cup. They are also to partake of these elements themselves, and then give both the bread and the wine to those who are participating in the communion.

4

Refusing to let people drink from the cup, worshiping the bread and wine, elevating them, carrying them around for others to adore, or saving them for some other religious purpose are all practices that go against what the Lord's Supper

is meant to be and what Christ originally established.

5

In the Lord's Supper, the elements of bread and wine, when set apart for the purpose Christ intended, are so closely connected with him and his crucifixion that they are sometimes called "the body and blood of Christ." This is a figurative way of speaking. However, in their actual substance and nature, they remain truly and exclusively bread and wine, just as they were before.

6

The belief that the substance of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper changes into the actual body and blood of Christ (a doctrine commonly known as transubstantiation), whether by a priest's consecration or by any other means, is not only contrary to the Bible but also to common sense and reason. This teaching undermines the true nature of the ordinance and has been, and continues to be, a source of numerous superstitions and blatant idolatry.

7

Worthy receivers of the Lord's Supper, when they outwardly eat the bread and drink the wine, also inwardly, by faith, truly receive and feed on the crucified Christ and all the benefits of his death. The body and blood of Christ are not physically or literally present, but are spiritually present to the believer's faith, just as the elements themselves are present to the physical senses.

8

Those who are ignorant of the Gospel and live ungodly lives are not only unfit to have fellowship with Christ, but they are also unworthy of the Lord's Supper. As long as they remain in that state, they cannot participate in these sacred mysteries without committing a grave sin against Him. Indeed, anyone who receives the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner is guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord, bringing judgment upon themselves as they eat and drink.

Chapter 35

OF THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH, AND OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

1

After death, a person's body returns to dust and decays. However, his soul, which is immortal and doesn't die or sleep, immediately goes back to God, who created it. The souls of those who are made righteous are made perfect in holiness and received into paradise, where they are with Christ. They see God face-to-face in light and glory, waiting for the complete resurrection of their bodies. The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, awaiting the final judgment. The Bible recognizes only these two places for souls separated from their bodies.

2

On the last day, those saints who are still living will not die, but will be transformed. All the dead will be resurrected with the same bodies they had before, though these bodies will have different qualities. These bodies will be reunited with their souls forever.

3

At the end of time, Jesus will raise everyone from the dead. Unbelievers' bodies will be raised to be dishonored and judged, while believers' bodies will be raised to be honored and made like his own glorious, resurrected body.

Chapter 36 ***OF THE LAST JUDGMENT***

1

There will be a day appointed by God when He will righteously judge the world through Jesus Christ, to whom the Father has given all authority and judgment. On that day, not only the fallen angels, but also every person who has ever lived will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. They will give an account of their thoughts, words, and actions and will receive what they deserve based on what they did in their physical bodies, whether good or evil.

2

The ultimate purpose of God's establishment of this day is to showcase the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of those he has chosen, and the glory of his justice in the eternal damnation of the wicked and disobedient who are rejected. On that day, the righteous will enter into eternal life, receiving the fullness of joy, glory, and everlasting rewards in the Lord's presence. However, the wicked, who neither know God nor obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be cast into everlasting torment and punished with eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

3

Christ wants us to be absolutely certain that there will be a day of judgment. This truth serves two purposes: to warn everyone away from sin and to provide great comfort to believers during difficult times. At the same time, Christ keeps the exact date of this day unknown to us. He does this so we will not grow complacent or spiritually lazy. Instead, we are to be watchful and always ready, since we do not know the hour of His return. This preparation allows us to eagerly and continuously pray, "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly. Amen."