

***The  
Constitution  
of the  
Bible  
Presbyterian  
Church***



# ***The Constitution of the Bible Presbyterian Church***

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Published by  
THE GENERAL SYNOD  
of the  
BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
© 2019

ISBN 978-0-359-42224-1



***Westminster  
Confession  
of  
Faith***



## ***The Westminster Confession of Faith***

The Westminster Confession of Faith is perhaps the most notable expression in creedal form of the truths of the Bible. It was the work of that assembly of divines which was called together by Parliament and met in London, at Westminster Abbey, during the years 1643 - 1648. It was this assembly which also produced the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. The Confession and the Catechisms are used by many Churches as their doctrinal standards, subordinate to the Word of God. The text of the Confession as given on the following pages is in the form adopted by the Bible Presbyterian Church in 1938, and, except for a few revisions, which are largely concerned with eschatology, as well as with the relation of the civil magistrate to the Church, it agrees with the text of the original manuscript of the Confession. The changes have been stated as endnotes.





# **Westminster Confession of Faith**

## **CHAPTER I Of the Holy Scripture**

I. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation: therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

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

### OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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

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### OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels according to Matthew. Mark. Luke. John.	II. Corinthians Galatians. Ephesians. Philippians. Colossians. I Thessalonians II. Thessalonians I. Timothy. II. Timothy. Titus. Philemon.	The Epistle to the Hebrews. The Epistle of James. The First and Second Epistles of Peter. The First, Second, and Third Epistles of John. The Epistle of Jude. The Revelation of John.
The Acts of the Apostles. Paul's Epistles: Romans. I. Corinthians.		

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

III. The books commonly called the Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.

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

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God,) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work

of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

VI. The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

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

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

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

X. The Supreme Judge, by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

**CHAPTER II**  
***Of God, and of the Holy Trinity***

I. There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

II. God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory, in, by, unto, and upon them: he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due

from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, he is pleased to require of them.

III. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

### **CHAPTER III** ***Of God's Eternal Decree***

I. God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

II. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

III. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

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

V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as

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conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

VI. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

VII. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

VIII. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

### **CHAPTER IV** ***Of Creation***

I. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

II. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image,

having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Besides this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

**CHAPTER V**  
***Of Providence***

I. God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

II. Although, in relation to the foreknowledge, and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

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

IV. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the author or approver of sin.

V. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

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

VII. As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his Church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

**CHAPTER VI**  
***Of the Fall of Man, of Sin,***  
***And of the Punishment Thereof***

I. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.



III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.

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

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

VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### ***Of God's Covenant with Man***

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

II. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

III. Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the Covenant of Grace: wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are

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ordained unto life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.

IV. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ, the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

V. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament.

VI. Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.

### **CHAPTER VIII** ***Of Christ the Mediator***

I. It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest, and King; the Head and Saviour of his Church; the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world; unto whom he did, from all eternity give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

II. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ the only Mediator between God and man.

III. The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure; having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell: to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety. Which office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father; who put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

IV. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake: which, that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered; with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession; and shall return to judge men and angels, at the end of the age.<sup>1</sup>

V. The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.

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VI. Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof, were communicated unto the elect, in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein he was revealed and signified to be the Seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head, and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, being yesterday and today the same, and for ever.

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

VIII. To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them, and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.

### **CHAPTER IX** ***Of Free Will***

I. God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good or evil.

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

III. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not

able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

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

V. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone, in the state of glory only.

## **CHAPTER X** ***Of Effectual Calling***

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

II. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

III. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious, and to be detested.

**CHAPTER XI**  
***Of Justification***

I. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth: not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous: not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone: not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

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

III. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them; and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead; and, both, freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice, and rich grace of God, might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

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

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

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

## **CHAPTER XII**

### ***Of Adoption***

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

## **CHAPTER XIII**

### ***Of Sanctification***

I. They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them: the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and

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more weakened and mortified; and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

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

III. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome: and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

### **CHAPTER XIV** ***Of Saving Faith***

I. The grace of faith, whereby the *elect* are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word: by which also, and by the administration of the Sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.

II. By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true, whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein: and acteth differently, upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

III. This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the Author and Finisher of our faith.



**CHAPTER XV**  
***Of Repentance unto Life***

I. Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ.

II. By it a sinner, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God, and upon the apprehension of his mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God, purposing and endeavoring to walk with him in all the ways of his commandments.

III. Although repentance be not to be rested in as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.

IV. As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.

V. Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins particularly.

VI. As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God praying for the pardon thereof; upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy; so he that scandalizeth his brother, or the Church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended; who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him.

**CHAPTER XVI**  
***Of Good Works***

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I. Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy Word, and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intention.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **CHAPTER XVII**

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

I. They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

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

III. Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of

their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

### **CHAPTER XVIII**

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

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

II. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.

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

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

### **CHAPTER XIX** ***Of the Law of God***

I. God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him, and all his posterity, to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

II. This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.

III. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a Church under age, ceremonial laws containing several typical ordinances; partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.

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IV. To them also, as a body politic, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obligating any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.

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

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

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

**CHAPTER XX**

***Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience***

I. The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel, consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law; and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love, and willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law; but under the New Testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish Church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

II. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

III. They who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

IV. And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such

opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church.<sup>2</sup>

### **CHAPTER XXI**

#### ***Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath-day***

I. The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is good, and doeth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.

II. Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to him alone: not to angels, saints, or any other creature: and, since the fall, not without a Mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.

III. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men: and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue.

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



V. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching, and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, and reverence; singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the Sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God: besides religious oaths and vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions, which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in an holy and religious manner.

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

VII. As it is of the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in his Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.

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

**CHAPTER XXII**  
***Of Lawful Oaths and Vows***

I. A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth.

II. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred. Yet as, in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the Word of God under the New Testament, as well as under the Old; so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters, ought to be taken.

III. Whosoever taketh an oath, ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may any man bind himself by oath to any thing but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform.<sup>3</sup>

IV. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in any thing not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt; nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics or infidels.

V. A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.

VI. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith, and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for the obtaining of what we want; whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.

VII. No man may vow to do any thing forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his own power, and for the performance whereof he hath no promise of ability from God. In which respects, Popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

**CHAPTER XXIII**  
***Of the Civil Magistrate***

I. God, the Supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him over the people, for his own glory, and the public good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers.

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

III. Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and Sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith. Yet, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger. And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his Church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of *any*

denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretence of religion or of infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.<sup>4</sup>

IV. It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience' sake. Infidelity or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; much less hath the Pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.

### **CHAPTER XXIV** ***Of Marriage and Divorce***

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

II. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife; for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness.

III. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgment to give their consent: yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And therefore such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, Papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies.

IV. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife.<sup>5</sup>

V. Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.

VI. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed, and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case.

## **CHAPTER XXV**

### ***Of the Church***

I. The catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

II. The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel, (not confined to one nation, as before under the law,) consists of all those throughout the world, that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

III. Unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own

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presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.

IV. This catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular Churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.

V. The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to his will.

VI. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only head of the Church, and the claim of any man to be the vicar of Christ and the head of the Church, is unscriptural, without warrant in fact, and is a usurpation dishonoring to the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

### **CHAPTER XXVI**

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

I. All saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. And, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces; and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

II. Saints, by profession, are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth

opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

III. This communion which the saints have with Christ doth not make them in any wise partakers of the substance of his Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm is impious and blasphemous. Nor doth their communion one with another, as saints, take away, or infringe the title or property which each man hath in his goods and possessions.

### **CHAPTER XXVII** ***Of the Sacraments***

I. Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him; as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his Word.

II. There is in every Sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

III. The grace which is exhibited in or by the Sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a Sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution; which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

IV. There be only two Sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any but by a minister of the Word, lawfully ordained.

V. The Sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the New.

## **CHAPTER XXVIII**

### ***Of Baptism***

I. Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which Sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his Church until the end of the world.

II. The outward element to be used in this Sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel, lawfully called thereunto.

III. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.

IV. Not only those that do actually profess faith in, and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.

V. Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.

VI. The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age



or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time.

VII. The Sacrament of Baptism is but once to be administered to any person.

**CHAPTER XXIX**  
***Of the Lord's Supper***

I. Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the Sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in his Church unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body.

II. In this Sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sins of the quick or dead; but only a commemoration of that once offering up of himself, by himself, upon the cross, once for all; and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same: so that the Popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominably injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

III. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use: and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants, but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

IV. Private masses, or receiving this Sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise the denial of the cup to the people; worshiping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about

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for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use; are all contrary to the nature of this Sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.

V. The outward elements in this Sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly, and only, bread and wine, as they were before.

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

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

VIII. Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this Sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby; but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation. Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as, they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's Table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto.

**CHAPTER XXX**  
***Of Church Censures***

I. The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.

II. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require.

III. Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring of others from like offences; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

IV. For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season, and by excommunication from the Church, according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person.

**CHAPTER XXXI**  
***Of Synods and Councils***

I. For the better government and further edification of the Church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called Synods or Councils:<sup>7</sup> and it belongeth to the overseers and other rulers of the particular Churches, by virtue of their office, and the power which Christ hath given them for edification and not for destruction, to appoint such assemblies; and to convene together in them, as often as they shall judge it expedient for the good of the Church.

<sup>8</sup>II. It belongeth to synods and councils, ministerially, to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his Church; to receive complaints in cases of mal-administration, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in his Word.

III. All synods or councils since the apostle's time, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help in both.

IV. Synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate.

**CHAPTER XXXII**  
***Of the State of Man after Death,***  
***And of the Resurrection of the Dead***

I. The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies: and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day.

Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

II. At the return of the Lord Jesus Christ such living persons as are found in him shall not die but be changed, and all the dead in Christ shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever.<sup>9</sup>

III. The bodies of the unjust shall, after Christ has reigned on earth a thousand years, be raised by the power of God to dishonor.<sup>10</sup>

**CHAPTER XXXIII**  
***Of the Last Things***<sup>11</sup>

I. God hath appointed a day (which word in Scripture in reference to the last things may represent a period of time including the thousand years following the visible, personal and pre-millennial return of Christ),<sup>12</sup> wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only apostate angels shall be judged; but likewise all persons, that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

II. The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord: but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

III. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the

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greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

**ENDNOTES**

Endnote references have been taken from the Westminster Confession of Faith published by Free Presbyterian Publications of Glasgow, Scotland, 1976.

<sup>1</sup>Page 16: Chapter VIII, section IV: The last phrase reads: “at the end of the world.”

<sup>2</sup>Page 26: Chapter XX, section IV: This section concludes with an additional phrase: “and by the power of the civil magistrate.”

<sup>3</sup>Page 28: Chapter XXII, section III: This section includes the following sentence: “Yet it is a sin to refuse an oath touching any thing that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority.”

<sup>4</sup>Page 29: Chapter XXIII, section III: “ The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and Sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.”

<sup>5</sup>Page 30: Chapter XXIV, section IV: Includes as the last sentence: “The man may not marry any of his wife’s kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband’s kindred nearer in blood than of her own.”

<sup>6</sup>Page 31: Chapter XXV, section VI: “There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God.”

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<sup>7</sup>Page 36: Chapter XXXI, section I: “For the better government, and further edification of the Church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called Synods or Councils.” The remainder of this section has been added.

<sup>8</sup>Page 36: Chapter XXXI, section II: Section II has been omitted. The omitted section reads: “As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with about matters of religion; so if magistrates be open enemies to the Church, the ministers of Christ, of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons upon delegation from their Churches, may meet together in such assemblies.”

<sup>9</sup>Page 37: Chapter XXXII, section II: “At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever.”

<sup>10</sup>Page 37: Chapter XXXII, section III: “The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honor, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.”

<sup>11</sup>Page 37: Chapter XXXIII: The title reads: “Of the Last Judgment.”

<sup>12</sup>Page 37: Chapter XXXIII, section I: The section in parentheses has been added.





***Declaratory  
Statement***



## ***Declaratory Statement***

The first General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church made the following declaratory statement:

“In adopting the Confession of Faith this General Synod declares:

“First: its firm and glad belief in the reality and universality of the offer of the Gospel to mankind. We believe that Christ’s atonement is sufficient for the sins of all, adapted to all, and is freely offered to all men in the Gospel. We believe that no man will be condemned except upon the ground of his sin.

“Second: with regard to the salvation of those dying in infancy we do not regard our Confession as teaching or implying that any who die in infancy are lost.”



***Westminster  
Larger  
Catechism***



# **The Westminster Larger Catechism**

**Q. 1. What is the chief and highest end of man?**

A. Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him for ever.

**Q. 2. How doth it appear that there is a God?**

A. The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God; but his Word and Spirit only, do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation.

**Q. 3. What is the Word of God?**

A. The holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience.

**Q. 4. How doth it appear that the Scriptures are the Word of God?**

A. The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Word of God, by their majesty and purity, by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation; but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able to fully persuade it that they are the very Word of God.

**Q. 5. What do the Scriptures principally teach?**

A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

**WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD.**

**Q. 6. What do the Scriptures make known of God?**

A. The Scriptures make known what God is, the persons in the Godhead, his decrees, and the execution of his decrees.



**Q. 7. What is God?**

A. God is a Spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection; all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, everywhere present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

**Q. 8. Are there more Gods than one?**

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

**Q. 9. How many persons are there in the Godhead?**

A. There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.

**Q. 10. What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead?**

A. It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son, from all eternity.

**Q. 11. How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father?**

A. The Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.

**Q. 12. What are the decrees of God?**

A. God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men.

**Q. 13. What hath God especially decreed concerning angels and men?**

A. God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory; and in Christ hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof; and also, according to his

sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favor as he pleaseth,) hath passed by, and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for the sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.

**Q. 14. How doth God execute his decrees?**

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence; according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will.

**Q. 15. What is the work of creation?**

A. The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of his power, make of nothing the world and all things therein for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.

**Q. 16. How did God create angels?**

A. God created all the angels, spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, yet subject to change.

**Q. 17. How did God create man?**

A. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man; endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls, made them after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, having the law of God written in their hearts and power to fulfill it, with dominion over the creatures; yet subject to fall.

**Q. 18. What are God's works of providence?**

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving, and governing all his creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to his own glory.

**Q. 19. What is God's providence toward the angels?**

A. God by his providence permitted some of the angels, willfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to his own glory; and established the rest in holiness and happiness; employing them all, at his pleasure, in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice.

**Q. 20. What was the providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created?**

A. The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was, the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth, putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help; affording him communion with himself; instituting the Sabbath, entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

**Q. 21. Did man continue in that estate wherein God at first created him?**

A. Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God in eating the forbidden fruit; and thereby fell from the estate of innocency wherein they were created.

**Q. 22. Did all mankind fall in that first transgression?**

A. The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.

**Q. 23. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?**

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

**Q. 24. What is sin?**

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.

**Q. 25. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?**

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is

commonly called *original sin*, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.

**Q. 26. How is original sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity?**

A. Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin.

**Q. 27. What misery did the fall bring upon mankind?**

A. The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse; so as we are by nature children of wrath, bond slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world and that which is to come.

**Q. 28. What are the punishments of sin in this world?**

A. The punishments of sin in this world are either inward, as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments; together with death itself.

**Q. 29. What are the punishments of sin in the world to come?**

A. The punishments of sin in the world to come, are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell fire for ever.

**Q. 30. Doth God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?**

A. God doth not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Works, but of his mere love and mercy delivereth his elect out of it, and bringeth them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Grace.

**Q. 31. *With whom was the Covenant of Grace made?***

A. The Covenant of Grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed.

**Q. 32. *How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant?***

A. The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a mediator, and life and salvation by him; and, requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith, and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath appointed them to salvation.

**Q. 33. *Was the Covenant of Grace always administered after one and the same manner?***

A. The Covenant of Grace was not always administered after the same manner, but the administrations of it under the Old Testament were different from those under the New.

**Q. 34. *How was the Covenant of Grace administered under the Old Testament?***

A. The Covenant of Grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the passover, and other types and ordinances; which did all fore-signify Christ then to come, and were for that time sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they then had full remission of sin and eternal salvation.

**Q. 35. *How is the Covenant of Grace administered under the New Testament?***

A. Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the same Covenant of Grace was and still is to be administered in the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; in which grace

and salvation are held forth in more fullness, evidence, and efficacy to all nations.

**Q. 36. Who is the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace?**

A. The only Mediator of the Covenant of Grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fullness of time became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man, in two entire distinct natures, and one person, for ever.

**Q. 37. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?**

A. Christ the Son of God became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin.

**Q. 38. Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God?**

A. It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death; give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience and intercession; and to satisfy God's justice, procure his favor, purchase a peculiar people, give his Spirit to them, conquer all their enemies, and bring them to everlasting salvation.

**Q. 39. Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be man?**

A. It was requisite that the Mediator should be man, that he might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow-feeling of our infirmities; that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.

**Q. 40. Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God and man in one person?**

A. It was requisite that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should himself be both God and man, and this in one person,

that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us, as the works of the whole person.

**Q. 41. Why was our Mediator called Jesus?**

A. Our Mediator was called Jesus, because he saveth his people from their sins.

**Q. 42. Why was our Mediator called Christ?**

A. Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure; and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the office of prophet, priest, and king of his Church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.

**Q. 43. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?**

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in his revealing to the Church, in all ages, by his Spirit and Word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.

**Q. 44. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?**

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people; and in making continual intercession for them.

**Q. 45. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?**

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people to himself; and giving them officers, laws, and censures, by which he visibly governs them: in bestowing saving grace upon his elect, rewarding their obedience, and correcting them for their sins, preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory, and their good; and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God, and obey not the gospel.

**Q. 46. What was the estate of Christ's humiliation?**

A. The estate of Christ's humiliation was that low condition, wherein he, for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the

form of a servant, in his conception and birth, life, death, and after his death, until his resurrection.

**Q. 47. How did Christ humble himself in his conception and birth?**

A. Christ humbled himself in his conception and birth, in that, being from all eternity the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, he was pleased in the fullness of time to become the son of man, made of a woman of low estate, and to be born of her, with divers circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.

**Q. 48. How did Christ humble himself in his life?**

A. Christ humbled himself in his life, by subjecting himself to the law, which he perfectly fulfilled, and by conflicting with the indignities of the world, temptations of Satan, and infirmities in his flesh, whether common to the nature of man or particularly accompanying that his low condition.

**Q. 49. How did Christ humble himself in his death?**

A. Christ humbled himself in his death, in that having been betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemned by Pilate, and tormented by his persecutors; having also conflicted with the terrors of death and the powers of darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath; he laid down his life an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.

**Q. 50. Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death?**

A. Christ's humiliation after his death, consisted in his being buried; and continuing in the state of the dead and under the power of death till the third day, which hath been otherwise expressed in these words; *He descended into hell.*

**Q. 51. What was the estate of Christ's exaltation?**

A. The estate of Christ's exaltation comprehendeth his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and his coming again to judge the world.



**Q. 52. How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?**

A. Christ was exalted in his resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death (of which it was not possible for him to be held,) and having the very same body in which he suffered, with the essential properties thereof, (but without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life,) really united to his soul, he rose again from the dead the third day by his own power; whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God, to have satisfied divine justice, to have vanquished death and him that had the power of it, and to be Lord of quick and dead. All which he did as a public person, the head of his Church, for their justification, quickening in grace, support against enemies, and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.

**Q. 53. How was Christ exalted in his ascension?**

A. Christ was exalted in his ascension, in that, having after his resurrection often appeared unto and conversed with his apostles, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations, forty days after his resurrection, he, in our nature and as our head, triumphing over enemies, visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men, to raise up our affections thither, and to prepare a place for us, where himself is, and shall continue till his second coming at the end of the world.

**Q. 54. How is Christ exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God?**

A. Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that as God-man he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father, with all fullness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth; and doth gather and defend his Church, and subdue their enemies; furnisheth his ministers and people with gifts and graces. and maketh intercession for them.

**Q. 55. How doth Christ make intercession?**

A. Christ maketh intercession, by his appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven, in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth, declaring his will to have it applied to all

believers; answering all accusations against them; and procuring for them quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings, access with boldness to the throne of grace, and acceptance of their persons and services.

***Q. 56. How is Christ to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world?***

A. Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world, in that he, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, shall come again at the last day in great power, and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, with all his holy angels, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, to judge the world in righteousness.

***Q. 57. What benefits hath Christ procured by his mediation?***

A. Christ, by his mediation, hath procured redemption, with all other benefits of the covenant of grace.

***Q 58. How do we come to be made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured?***

A. We are made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured, by the application of them unto us, which is the work especially of God the Holy Ghost.

***Q. 59. Who are made partakers of redemption through Christ?***

A. Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it; who are in time by the Holy Ghost enabled to believe in Christ, according to the gospel.

***Q. 60. Can they who have never heard the gospel, and so know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in him, be saved by their living according to the light of nature?***

A. They who, having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion which they profess; neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, who is the Saviour only of his body the Church.

**Q. 61. Are all they saved who hear the gospel, and live in the Church?**

A. All that hear the gospel, and live in the visible Church, are not saved; but only they who are true members of the Church invisible.

**Q. 62. What is the visible Church?**

A. The visible Church is a society made up of all such as in all ages and places of the world do profess the true religion, and of their children.

**Q. 63. What are the special privileges of the visible Church?**

A. The visible Church hath the privilege of being under God's special care and government; of being protected and preserved in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies; and of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ to all members of it in the ministry of the gospel, testifying, that whosoever believes in him shall be saved, and excluding none that will come unto him.

**Q. 64. What is the invisible Church?**

A. The invisible Church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head.

**Q. 65. What special benefits do the members of the invisible Church enjoy by Christ?**

A. The members of the invisible Church by Christ, enjoy union and communion with him in grace and glory.

**Q. 66. What is that union which the elect have with Christ?**

A. The union which the elect have with Christ is the work of God's grace, whereby they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband; which is done in their effectual calling.

**Q. 67. What is effectual calling?**

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace, whereby (out of his free and especial love to his elect, and from nothing in them moving him thereunto) he doth, in his accepted time, invite and draw them to Jesus Christ, by his Word and Spirit; savingly enlightening their minds, renewing and powerfully

determining their wills, so as they (although in themselves dead in sin,) are hereby made willing and able freely to answer his call, and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein.

**Q. 68. Are the elect only effectually called?**

A. All the elect, and they only, are effectually called; although others may be, and often are outwardly called by the ministry of the Word, and have some common operations of the Spirit; who, for their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ.

**Q. 69. What is the communion in grace which the members of the invisible Church have with Christ?**

A. The communion in grace which the members of the invisible Church have with Christ, is their partaking of the virtue of his mediation, in their justification, adoption, sanctification, and whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with him.

**Q. 70. What is justification?**

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.

**Q. 71. How is justification an act of God's free grace?**

A. Although Christ, by his obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in the behalf of them that are justified; yet inasmuch as God accepteth the satisfaction from a surety, which he might have demanded of them, and did provide this surety, his only Son, imputing his righteousness to them, and requiring nothing of them for their justification but faith, which also is his gift, their justification is to them of free grace.

**Q. 72. What is justifying faith?**

A. Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner, by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures

to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and his righteousness, therein held forth for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation.

**Q. 73. How doth faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?**

A. Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it; nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for justification; but only as it is an instrument by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his righteousness.

**Q. 74. What is adoption?**

A. Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.

**Q. 75. What is sanctification?**

A. Sanctification is a work of God's grace, whereby, they whom God hath, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy, are in time, through the powerful operation of his Spirit applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole man after the image of God; having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving graces, put into their hearts, and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin and rise unto newness of life.

**Q. 76. What is repentance unto life?**

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, he so grieves for and hates his sins,

as that he turns from them all to God, purposing and endeavoring constantly to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience.

**Q. 77. Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?**

A. Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ, in that God in justification imputeth the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification his Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth to the exercise thereof; in the former, sin is pardoned; in the other, it is subdued: the one doth equally free all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, that they never fall into condemnation; the other is neither equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any, but growing up to perfection.

**Q. 78. Whence ariseth the imperfection of sanctification in believers?**

A. The imperfection of sanctification in believers ariseth from the remnants of sin abiding in every part of them, and the perpetual lustings of the flesh against the spirit; whereby they are often foiled with temptations, and fall into many sins, are hindered in all their spiritual services, and their best works are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God.

**Q. 79. May not true believers, by reason of their imperfections, and the many temptations and sins they are overtaken with, fall away from the state of grace?**

A. True believers, by reason of the unchangeable love of God, and his decree and covenant to give them perseverance, their inseparable union with Christ, his continual intercession for them, and the Spirit and seed of God abiding in them, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

**Q. 80. Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation?**

A. Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit

enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.

**Q. 81. Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in the estate of grace, and that they shall be saved?**

A. Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.

**Q. 82. What is the communion in glory which the members of the invisible Church have with Christ?**

A. The communion in glory which the members of the invisible Church have with Christ, is in this life, immediately after death, and at last perfected in their resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

**Q. 83. What is the communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible Church enjoy in this life?**

A. The members of the invisible Church have communicated to them in this life, the first-fruits of glory with Christ, as they are members of him their head, and so in him are interested in that glory which he is fully possessed of; and, as an earnest thereof, enjoy the sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and hope of glory; as, on the contrary, sense of God's revenging wrath, horror of conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment, are to the wicked the beginning of the torments which they shall endure after death.

**Q. 84. Shall all men die?**

A. Death being threatened as the wages of sin, it is appointed unto all men once to die; for that all have sinned. However, believers in Christ who are alive on the earth at his return will not die, but will be caught up to meet him in the air.

**Q. 85. *Death, being the wages of sin, why are not the righteous delivered from death, seeing all their sins are forgiven in Christ?***

A. The righteous shall be delivered from death itself at the return of Christ, and even in death are delivered from the sting and curse of it; so that, although they die, yet it is out of God's love, to free them perfectly from sin and misery, and to make them capable of further communion with Christ in glory, which they then enter upon.

**Q. 86. *What is the communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible Church enjoy immediately after death?***

A. The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible Church enjoy immediately after death, is, in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory; waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the return of Christ they are again united to their souls and live and reign with him upon the earth a thousand years. Whereas the souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their prisons, until the resurrection and judgment of ungodly men, after the millennial reign of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

**Q. 87. *What are we to believe concerning the resurrection?***

A. We are to believe that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust: when Jesus Christ returns the just that are then found alive shall in a moment be changed; and the self-same bodies of the dead in Christ which are laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls forever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ. The bodies of the just, by the Spirit of Christ, and by virtue of his resurrection as their head shall be raised in power, spiritual, and incorruptible, and made like to his glorious body in the first resurrection. The bodies of the wicked shall, after a thousand years, be raised up in dishonor by him as an offended judge in the second resurrection.<sup>3</sup>



**Q. 88. What shall immediately follow after the resurrection?**

A. Immediately after the second resurrection shall follow the final judgment of men and angels, the destruction of the earth by fire, and the ushering in of the new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.<sup>4</sup>

**Q. 89. What shall be done to the wicked after their resurrection?**

A. After their resurrection, the wicked shall be judged, and, upon clear evidence and full conviction of their own consciences, shall have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them; and thereupon shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all his holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels for ever.<sup>5</sup>

**Q. 90. What shall be done to the righteous after their resurrection?**

A. After the resurrection, the righteous, being caught up to Christ in the clouds; shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted: shall join with him in the millennial reign, and the judging of reprobate men and angels: and shall be received into heaven, where they shall be fully and for ever freed from all sin and misery; filled with inconceivable joys; made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and angels; but especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity And this is the perfect and full communion, which the members of the invisible Church shall enjoy with Christ in glory, at the resurrection and day of judgment.<sup>6</sup>

**HAVING SEEN WHAT THE SCRIPTURES PRINCIPALLY TEACH US  
TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD, IT FOLLOWS TO CONSIDER  
WHAT THEY REQUIRE AS THE DUTY OF MAN.**

**Q. 91. What is the duty which God requireth of man?**

A. The duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to his revealed will.

**Q. 92. What did God at first reveal unto man as the rule of his obedience?**

A. The rule of obedience revealed to Adam in the estate of innocence, and to all mankind in him, besides a special command, not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was the moral law.

**Q. 93. What is the moral law?**

A. The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind directing and binding every one to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he oweth to God and man: promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it.

**Q 94. Is there any use of the moral law to man since the fall?**

A. Although no man, since the fall, can attain to righteousness and life by the moral law; yet there is great use thereof, as well common to all men, as peculiar either to the unregenerate, or the regenerate.

**Q. 95. Of what use is the moral law to all men?**

A. The moral law is of use to all men, to inform them of the holy nature and will of God, and of their duty, binding them to walk accordingly, to convince them of their disability to keep it, and of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives: to humble them in the sense of their sin and misery, and thereby help them to a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and of the perfection of his obedience.

**Q. 96. What particular use is there of the moral law to unregenerate men?**

A. The moral law is of use to unregenerate men, to awaken their consciences to flee from the wrath to come, and to drive them to Christ, or, upon their continuance in the estate and way of sin, to leave them inexcusable, and under the curse thereof.

**Q. 97. What special use is there of the moral law to the regenerate?**

A. Although they that are regenerate and believe in Christ, be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned; yet, beside the general uses thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use to show them how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good; and thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness, and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule of their obedience.

**Q. 98. Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended?**

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God upon Mount Sinai, and written by him on two tables of stone, and are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus: the first four commandments containing our duty to God, and the other six our duty to man.

**Q. 99. What rules are to be observed for the right understanding of the ten commandments?**

A. For the right understanding of the ten commandments, these rules are to be observed:

1. That the law is perfect, and bindeth every one to full conformity in the whole man unto the righteousness thereof, and unto entire obedience for ever; so as to require the utmost perfection of every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin.

2. That it is spiritual, and so teacheth the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul; as well as words, works, and gestures.

3. That one and the same thing, in divers respects, is required or forbidden in several commandments.

4. That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded: so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.

5. That what God forbids, is at no time to be done; what he commands is always our duty; and yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times.

6. That under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto.

7. That what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavor that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places.

8. That in what is commanded to others, we are bound, according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them; and to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.

**Q 100. What special things are we to consider in the ten commandments?**

A. We are to consider, in the ten commandments, the preface, the substance of the commandments themselves, and several reasons annexed to some of them the more to enforce them.

**Q. 101. What is the preface to the ten commandments?**

A. The preface to the ten commandments is contained in these words, *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.* Wherein God manifesteth his sovereignty, as being Jehovah, the eternal, immutable and almighty God; having his being in and of himself, and giving being to all his words and works: and that he is a God in covenant, as with Israel of old, so with all his people; who, as he brought them out of their bondage in Egypt, so he delivered us from our spiritual thralldom; and that therefore we are bound to take him for our God alone, and to keep all his commandments.

**Q. 102. What is the sum of the four commandments which contain our duty to God?**

A. The sum of the four commandments containing our duty to God, is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind.

**Q. 103. Which is the first commandment?**

A. The first commandment is, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

**Q. 104. What are the duties required in the first commandment?**

A. The duties required in the first commandment are, the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly, by thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, fearing of him; believing him; trusting, hoping, delighting, rejoicing in him; being zealous for him; calling upon him, giving all praise and thanks, and yielding all obedience and submission to him with the whole man; being careful in all things to please him, and sorrowful when in any thing he is offended; and walking humbly with him.

**Q. 105. What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?**

A. The sins forbidden in the first commandment, are, atheism, in denying, or not having a God; idolatry, in having or worshiping more gods than one, or any with, or instead of the true God; the not having and vouching him for God, and our God; the omission or neglect of any thing due to him, required in this commandment; ignorance, forgetfulness, misapprehensions, false opinions, unworthy and wicked thoughts of him, bold and curious searching into his secrets; all profaneness, hatred of God; self-love, self seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or in part; vain credulity, unbelief, heresy, misbelief, distrust, despair, incorrigibleness, and insensibleness under judgments, hardness of

heart, pride, presumption, carnal security, tempting of God, using unlawful means, and trusting in unlawful means; carnal delights and joys; corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal; lukewarmness, and deadness in the things of God; estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God; praying, or giving any religious worship, to saints, angels, or any other creatures; all compacts and consulting with the devil, and hearkening to his suggestions; making men the lords of our faith and conscience; slighting and despising God and his commands; resisting and grieving of his Spirit, discontent and impatience at his dispensations, charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us; and ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do, to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature.

**Q. 106. What are we especially taught by these words (before me) in the first commandment?**

A. These words (*before me*) or before my face, in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh special notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other god: that so it may be an argument to dissuade from it, and to aggravate it as a most impudent provocation: as also to persuade us to do as in his sight, whatever we do in his service.

**Q. 107. Which is the second commandment?**

A. The second commandment is, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

**Q. 108. What are the duties required in the second commandment?**

A. The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in his Word; particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ; the

reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word; the administration and receiving of the Sacraments; Church government and discipline; the ministry and maintenance thereof; religious fasting; swearing by the name of God, and vowing unto him: as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.

**Q. 109. What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?**

A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and any wise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; the making any representation of God, of all, or of any of the three Persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever; all worshiping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretence whatsoever; simony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.<sup>7</sup>

**Q. 110. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?**

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it, contained in these words, *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments;* are, besides God's sovereignty over us, and propriety in us, his fervent zeal for his own worship, and his revengeful indignation against all false worship, as being a spiritual whoredom; accounting the breakers of this commandment such as hate him, and threatening to punish them unto divers generations; esteeming the observers of it such as love him and keep his

commandments, and promising mercy to them unto many generations.

**Q. 111. Which is the third commandment?**

A. The third commandment is, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

**Q. 112. What is required in the third commandment?**

A. The third commandment requires, that the name of God, his titles, attributes, ordinances, the word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, his works, and whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing; by an holy profession, and answerable conversation, to the glory of God, and the good of ourselves, and others.

**Q. 113. What are the sins forbidden in the third commandment?**

A. The sins forbidden in the third commandment are, the not using of God's name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning or otherwise using his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works, by blasphemy, perjury; all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots; violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful; and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; murmuring and quarreling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God's decrees and providences; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the Word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or any thing contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or any wise opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways; making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by uncomformable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking, or backsliding from it.

**Q. 114. What reasons are annexed to the third commandment?**



A. The reasons annexed to the third commandment, in these words, “*The Lord thy God,*” and “*For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain,*” are, because he is the Lord and our God, therefore his name is not to be profaned, or any way abused by us; especially because he will be so far from acquitting and sparing the transgressors of this commandment, as that he will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment, albeit many such escape the censures and punishments of men.

**Q. 115. Which is the fourth commandment?**

A. The fourth commandment is, *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

**Q. 116. What is required in the fourth commandment?**

A. The fourth commandment requireth of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his Word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian Sabbath, and in the New Testament called *The Lord’s Day*.

**Q. 117. How is the Sabbath or Lord’s Day to be sanctified?**

A. The Sabbath or Lord’s Day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all that day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy,) in the public and private exercises of God’s worship: and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose, and seasonably to dispatch

our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day.

**Q. 118. Why is the charge of keeping the Sabbath more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors?**

A. The charge of keeping the Sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oftentimes to hinder them by employments of their own.

**Q. 119. What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment?**

A. The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are, all omissions of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them; all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful; and by all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations.

**Q. 120. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, the more to enforce it?**

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, the more to enforce it, are taken from the equity of it, God allowing us six days of seven for our own affairs, and reserving but one for himself, in these words, *Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work*; from God's challenging a special propriety in that day, *The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God*: from the example of God, who *in six days made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day*: and from that blessing which God put upon that day, not only in sanctifying it to be a day for his service, but in ordaining it to be a means of blessing to us in our sanctifying it; *Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it*.

**Q. 121. Why is the word "Remember" set in the beginning of the fourth commandment?**

A. The word *Remember* is set in the beginning of the fourth commandment, partly, because of the great benefit of remembering

it, we being thereby helped in our preparation to keep it, and, in keeping it, better to keep all the rest of the commandments, and to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain a short abridgment of religion; and partly, because we are very ready to forget it, for that there is less light of nature for it, and yet it restraineth our natural liberty in things at other times lawful; that it cometh but once in seven days, and many worldly businesses come between, and too often take off our minds from thinking of it, either to prepare for it, or to sanctify it; and that Satan with his instruments much labor to blot out the glory, and even the memory of it, to bring in all irreligion and impiety.

**Q. 122. What is the sum of the six commandments which contain our duty to man?**

A. The sum of the six commandments which contain our duty to man, is, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to do to others what we would have them to do to us.

**Q. 123. Which is the fifth commandment?**

A. The fifth command is, *Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

**Q. 124. Who are meant by “father” and “mother,” in the fifth commandment?**

A. By *father* and *mother*, in the fifth commandment, are meant not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; especially such as, by God’s ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, Church, or commonwealth.

**Q. 125. Why are superiors styled “father” and “mother”?**

A. Superiors are styled *father* and *mother*, both to teach them in all duties towards their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations; and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents.

**Q. 126. What is the general scope of the fifth commandment?**

A. The general scope of the fifth commandment is, the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.

**Q. 127. What is the honor that inferiors owe to their superiors?**

A. The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior; prayer and thanksgiving for them; imitation of their virtues and graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels; due submission to their corrections; fidelity to, defence, and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honor to them and to their government.

**Q. 128. What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors?**

A. The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.

**Q. 129. What is required of superiors towards their inferiors?**

A. It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors; to instruct, counsel, and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reproving, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body: and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure

glory to God, honor to themselves and so to preserve that authority which God hath put upon them.

**Q. 130. What are the sins of superiors?**

A. The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.

**Q. 131. What are the duties of equals?**

A. The duties of equals are, to regard the dignity and worth of each other, in giving honor to go one before another; and to rejoice in each other's gifts and advancement as their own.

**Q. 132. What are the sins of equals?**

A. The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required, the undervaluing of the worth, envying the gifts, grieving at the advancement or prosperity one of another; and usurping preeminence one over another.

**Q. 133. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment, the more to enforce it?**

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment, in these words, *that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*, is an express promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good, to all such as keep this commandment.

**Q. 134. Which is the sixth commandment?**

A. The sixth commandment is, *Thou shalt not kill*.

**Q. 135. What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?**

A. The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves and others, resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defence thereof against violence; patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor, and recreation; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable; mild and courteous speeches and behavior; forbearing, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.

**Q. 136. What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?**

A. The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defence; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labor, and recreations; provoking words, oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.

**Q. 137. Which is the seventh commandment?**

A. The seventh commandment is, *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

**Q. 138. What are the duties required in the seventh commandment?**

A. The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behavior; and the preservation of it in ourselves and others; watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses; temperance, keeping of chaste company, modesty in apparel; marriage by those that have not the gift of continency,

conjugal love, and cohabitation; diligent labor in our callings; shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.

**Q. 139. What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment?**

A. The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto, wanton looks, impudent or light behaviour, immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.

**Q. 140. Which is the eighth commandment?**

A. The eighth commandment is, *Thou shalt not steal.*

**Q. 141. What are the duties required in the eighth commandment?**

A. The duties required in the eighth commandment are, truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man; rendering to every one his due; restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof; giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others; moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods; a provident care and study to get, keep, use, and dispose of these things which are necessary and convenient for the sustentation of our nature, and suitable to our condition; a lawful calling, and diligence in it; frugality; avoiding unnecessary lawsuits, and suretyship, or other like engagements; and an endeavor, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.

**Q. 142. What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment?**

A. The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, theft, robbery, man-stealing, and receiving any thing that is stolen; fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, removing landmarks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust; oppression, extortion, usury, bribery, vexatious lawsuits, unjust enclosures and depredation; engrossing commodities to enhance the price; unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongeth to him, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness; inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming; and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate, and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God hath given us.<sup>8</sup>

**Q. 143. Which is the ninth commandment?**

A. The ninth commandment is, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

**Q. 144. What are the duties required in the ninth commandment?**

A. The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbors; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging talebearers, flatterers, and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it



when need requireth; keeping of lawful promises; studying and practicing of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.

**Q. 145. What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment?**

A. The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing of the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature; giving false evidence, suborning false witnesses, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, outfacing and overbearing the truth; passing unjust sentence, calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked; forgery, concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others; speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful or equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, talebearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstructing intentions, words, and actions; flattering, vain-glorious boasting, thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others; denying the gifts and graces of God; aggravating smaller faults; hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession; unnecessarily discovering of infirmities; raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defence; evil suspicion; envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any, endeavoring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy; scornful contempt, fond admiration; breach of lawful promises; neglecting such things as are of good report, and practicing, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as procure an ill name.

**Q. 146. Which is the tenth commandment?**

A. The tenth commandment is, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant,*

*nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.*

**Q. 147. What are the duties required in the tenth commandment?**

A. The duties required in the tenth commandment are, such a full contentment with our own condition, and such a charitable frame of the whole soul towards our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto, and further all that good which is his.

**Q. 148. What are the sins forbidden in the tenth commandment?**

A. The sins forbidden in the tenth commandment are, discontentment with our own estate; envying and grieving at the good of our neighbor, together with all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.

**Q. 149. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?**

A. No man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.

**Q. 150. Are all transgressions of the law of God equally heinous in themselves, and in the sight of God?**

A. All transgressions of the law of God are not equally heinous, but some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

**Q. 151. What are those aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others?**

A. Sins receive their aggravations,

1. From the persons offending: if they be of riper age, greater experience or grace, eminent for profession, gifts, place, office, guides to others; and whose example is likely to be followed by others.

2. From the parties offended: if immediately against God, his attributes, and worship; against Christ, and his grace; the Holy Spirit,

his witness, and workings; against superiors, men of eminency, and such as we stand especially related and engaged unto; against any of the saints, particularly weak brethren, the souls of them, or any other, and the common good of all or many.

3. From the nature and quality of the offence: if it be against the express letter of the law, break many commandments, contain in it many sins: if not only conceived in the heart, but breaks forth in words and actions, scandalize others, and admit of no reparation: if against means, mercies, judgments, light of nature, conviction of conscience, public or private admonition, censures of the Church, civil punishments; and our prayers, purposes, promises, vows, covenants, and engagements to God or men: if done deliberately, willfully, presumptuously, impudently, boastingly, maliciously, frequently, obstinately, with delight, continuance, or relapsing after repentance.

4. From circumstances of time and place: if on the Lord's Day, or other times of divine worship; or immediately before or after these, or other helps to prevent or remedy such miscarriages: if in public, or in the presence of others, who are thereby likely to be provoked or defiled.

**Q. 152. What doth every sin deserve at the hands of God?**

A. Every sin, even the least, being against the sovereignty, goodness, and holiness of God, and against his righteous law, deserveth his wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come; and cannot be expiated but by the blood of Christ.

**Q. 153. What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us by reason of the transgression of the law?**

A. That we may escape the wrath and curse of God due to us by reason of the transgression of the law, he requireth of us repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and the diligent use of the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation.

**Q. 154. What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation?**

A. The outward and ordinary means, whereby Christ communicates to his Church the benefits of his mediation, are all his ordinances; especially the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation.

**Q. 155. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?**

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

**Q. 156. Is the Word of God to be read by all?**

A. Although all are not permitted to read the Word publicly to the congregation, yet all sorts of people are bound to read it apart by themselves, and with their families: to which end, the holy Scriptures are to be translated out of the original into vulgar languages.

**Q. 157. How is the Word of God to be read?**

A. The Holy Scriptures are to be read with an high and reverent esteem of them; with a firm persuasion that they are the very Word of God, and that he only can enable us to understand them; with desire to know, believe, and obey the will of God revealed in them; with diligence, and attention to the matter and scope of them; with meditation, application, self-denial, and prayer.

**Q. 158. By whom is the Word of God to be preached?**

A. The Word of God is to be preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office.

**Q. 159. How is the Word of God to be preached by those that are called thereunto?**

A. They that are called to labor in the ministry of the Word, are to preach sound doctrine, diligently, in season and out of season; plainly, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; faithfully, making known the whole counsel of God; wisely, applying themselves to the necessities and capacities of the hearers, zealously, with fervent love

to God and the souls of his people; sincerely, aiming at his glory, and their conversion, edification, and salvation.

**Q. 160. What is required of those that hear the Word preached?**

A. It is required of those that hear the Word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation, and prayer, examine what they hear by the Scriptures; receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God; meditate, and confer of it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.

**Q. 161. How do the Sacraments become effectual means of salvation?**

A. The Sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered, but only by the working of the Holy Ghost, and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted.

**Q. 162. What is a Sacrament?**

A. A Sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his Church to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another; and to distinguish them from those that are without.

**Q. 163. What are the parts of a Sacrament?**

A. The parts of a Sacrament are two: the one an outward and sensible sign, used according to Christ's own appointment; the other an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified.

**Q. 164. How many Sacraments hath Christ instituted in his Church under the New Testament?**

A. Under the New Testament Christ hath instituted in his Church only two Sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

**Q. 165. What is Baptism?**

A. Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life; and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible Church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.

**Q. 166. Unto whom is Baptism to be administered?**

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him, but infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized.

**Q. 167. How is our Baptism to be improved by us?**

A. The needful but much neglected duty of improving our Baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others; by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of Baptism, and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that Sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace; and by endeavoring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body.

**Q. 168. What is the Lord's Supper?**

A. The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament of the New Testament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the

appointment of Jesus Christ, his death is showed forth; and they that worthily communicate feed upon his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; have their union and communion with him confirmed; testify and renew their thankfulness and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.

**Q. 169. How hath Christ appointed bread and wine to be given and received in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?**

A. Christ hath appointed the ministers of his Word, in the administration of this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to set apart the bread and wine from common use, by the word of institution, thanksgiving, and prayer; to take and break the bread, and to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants: who are, by the same appointment, to take and eat the bread, and to drink the wine, in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and his blood shed for them.

**Q. 170. How do they that worthily communicate in the Lord's Supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ therein?**

A. As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses; so they that worthily communicate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal and carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really, while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death.

**Q. 171. How are they that receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?**

A. They that receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God

and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.

**Q. 172. *May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's Supper?***

A. One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity; in which case (because promises are made, and this Sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians,) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened.

**Q. 173. *May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, be kept from it?***

A. Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that Sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in his Church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.

**Q. 174. *What is required of them that receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the time of the administration of it?***

A. It is required of them that receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith,



receiving of his fullness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.

**Q. 175. What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?**

A. The duty of Christians, after they have received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is seriously to consider how they have behaved themselves therein, and with what success; if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it, beg the continuance of it, watch against relapses, fulfill their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance: but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the Sacrament; in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time: but, if they see that they have failed in either, they are to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterwards with more care and diligence.

**Q. 176. Wherein do the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper agree?**

A. The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper agree, in that the author of both is God; the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits; both are seals of the same covenant, are to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel, and by none other; and to be continued in the Church of Christ until his second coming.

**Q. 177. Wherein do the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ?**

A. The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, in that Baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance

and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves.

**Q. 178. What is Prayer?**

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit; with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

**Q. 179. Are we to pray unto God only?**

A. God only being able to search the hearts, hear the requests, pardon the sins, and fulfill the desires of all; and only to be believed in, and worshiped with religious worship; prayer, which is a special part thereof, is to be made by all to him alone, and to none other.

**Q. 180. What is it to pray in the name of Christ?**

A. To pray in the name of Christ, is, in obedience to his command, and in confidence on his promises, to ask mercy for his sake; not by bare mentioning of his name, but by drawing our encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and his mediation.

**Q. 181. Why are we to pray in the name of Christ?**

A. The sinfulness of man, and his distance from God by reason thereof, being so great, as that we can have no access into his presence without a mediator; and there being none in heaven or earth appointed to, or fit for, that glorious work but Christ alone, we are to pray in no other name but his only.

**Q. 182. How doth the Spirit help us to pray?**

A. We not knowing what to pray for as we ought, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, by enabling us to understand both for whom, and what, and how prayer is to be made; and by working and quickening in our hearts (although not in all persons, nor at all times, in the same measure,) those apprehensions, affections, and graces which are requisite for the right performance of that duty.

**Q. 183. For whom are we to pray?**

A. We are to pray for the whole Church of Christ upon earth; for magistrates, and ministers; for ourselves, our brethren, yea, our enemies; and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those that are known to have sinned the sin unto death.

**Q. 184. For what things are we to pray?**

A. We are to pray for all things tending to the glory of God, the welfare of the Church, our own or others' good; but not for any thing that is unlawful.

**Q. 185. How are we to pray?**

A. We are to pray with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God, and deep sense of our own unworthiness, necessities, and sins; with penitent, thankful, and enlarged hearts; with understanding, faith, sincerity, fervency, love, and perseverance, waiting upon him, with humble submission to his will.

**Q. 186. What rule hath God given for our direction in the duty of prayer?**

A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in the duty of prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which our Saviour Christ taught his disciples, commonly called *The Lord's Prayer*.

**Q. 187. How is the Lord's Prayer to be used?**

A. The Lord's Prayer is not only for direction, as a pattern, according to which we are to make other prayers; but may also be used as a prayer, so that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer.

**Q. 188. Of how many parts doth the Lord's Prayer consist?**

A. The Lord's Prayer consists of three parts: a preface, petitions, and a conclusion.

**Q. 189. What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?**

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer (contained in these words, *Our Father which art in heaven,*) teacheth us, when we pray, to draw

near to God with confidence of his fatherly goodness, and our interest therein; with reverence, and all other childlike dispositions, heavenly affections, and due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension: as also, to pray with and for others.

**Q. 190. What do we pray for in the first petition?**

A. In the first petition, (which is, *Hallowed be thy name,*) acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright, we pray, that God would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem him, his titles, attributes, ordinances, word, works, and whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify him in thought, word, and deed: that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and whatsoever is dishonorable to him; and, by his overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to his own glory.

**Q. 191. What do we pray for in the second petition?**

A. In the second petition, (which is, *Thy kingdom come,*) acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in; the Church furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate: that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him for ever: and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.

**Q. 192. What do we pray for in the third petition?**

A. In the third petition, (which is, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,*) acknowledging, that by nature we and all men are not only

utterly unable and unwilling to know and do the will of God, but prone to rebel against his Word, to repine and murmur against his providence, and wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh, and of the devil: we pray, that God would by his Spirit take away from ourselves and others all blindness, weakness, indisposedness, and perverseness of heart; and by his grace make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to his will in all things, with the like humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity, and constancy, as the angels do in heaven.

**Q. 193. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?**

A. In the fourth petition, (which is, *Give us this day our daily bread,*) acknowledging, that in *Adam*, and by our own sin, we have forfeited our right to all the outward blessings of this life, and deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God, and to have them cursed to us in the use of them; and that neither they of themselves are able to sustain us, nor we to merit, or by our own industry to procure them; but prone to desire, get, and use them unlawfully: we pray for ourselves and others, that both they and we, waiting upon the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means, may, of his free gift, and as to his fatherly wisdom shall seem best, enjoy a competent portion of them; and have the same continued and blessed unto us in our holy and comfortable use of them, and contentment in them; and be kept from all things that are contrary to our temporal support and comfort.

**Q. 194. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?**

A. In the fifth petition, (which is, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,*) acknowledging, that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God; and that neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for the debt: we pray for ourselves and others, that God of his free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, accept us in his Beloved; continue his

favor and grace to us, pardon our daily failings, and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness; which we are the rather emboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offences.

**Q. 195. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?**

A. In the sixth petition, (which is, *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,*) acknowledging, that the most wise, righteous, and gracious God, for divers holy and just ends, may so order things, that we may be assaulted, foiled, and for a time led captive by temptations; that Satan, the world, and the flesh, are ready powerfully to draw us aside, and ensnare us; and that we, even after the pardon of our sins, by reason of our corruption, weakness, and want of watchfulness, are not only subject to be tempted, and forward to expose ourselves unto temptations; but also of ourselves unable and unwilling to resist them, to recover out of them, and to improve them; and worthy to be left under the power of them: we pray, that God would so overrule the world and all in it, subdue the flesh and restrain Satan, order all things, bestow and bless all means of grace, and quicken us to watchfulness in the use of them: that we and all his people may by his providence be kept from being tempted to sin; or, if tempted, that by his Spirit we may be powerfully supported and enabled to stand in the hour of temptation; or when fallen, raised again and recovered out of it, and have a sanctified use and improvement thereof: that our sanctification and salvation may be perfected, Satan trodden under our feet, and we fully freed from sin, temptation, and all evil, for ever.

**Q. 196. What doth the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?**

A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, (which is, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen.*) teacheth us to enforce our petitions with arguments, which are to be taken, not from any worthiness in ourselves, or in any other creature, but

from God; and with our prayers to join praises, ascribing to God alone eternal sovereignty, omnipotency, and glorious excellency; in regard whereof, as he is able and willing to help us, so we by faith are emboldened to plead with him that he would, and quietly to rely upon him that he will, fulfill our requests. And, to testify our desire and assurance, we say, *Amen*.

**ENDNOTES**

These endnotes indicate changes that have been made to the original Westminster Larger Catechism, either in the American revisions of 1788, or the Bible Presbyterian revisions of 1938. Endnote references have been taken from the Westminster Confession of Faith published by Free Presbyterian Publications, Glasgow, Scotland, 1976.

<sup>1</sup>Question 82: The last phrase reads: “and at last perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment.” (1938)

<sup>2</sup>Question 86: “The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible Church enjoy immediately after death, is, in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they be again united to their souls. Whereas the souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their prisons, till the resurrection and judgment of the great day.” (1938)

<sup>3</sup>Question 87: “We are to believe, that at the last day there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust: when they that are then found alive shall in a moment be changed; and the selfsame bodies of the dead which were laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls for ever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ. The bodies of the just, by the Spirit of Christ, and by virtue of his resurrection as their head, shall be raised in power, spiritual, incorruptible, and made like to his glorious body; and the bodies of the wicked shall be raised up in dishonor by him, as an offended judge.” (1938)



<sup>4</sup>Question 88: “Immediately after the resurrection shall follow the general and final judgment of angels and men; the day and hour whereof no man knoweth, that all may watch and pray, and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord.” (1938)

<sup>5</sup>Question 89: “At the day of judgment, the wicked shall be set on Christ’s left hand, and, upon clear evidence, and full conviction of their own consciences, shall have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them; and thereupon shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all his holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels for ever.” (1938)

<sup>6</sup>Question 90: “At the day of judgment, the righteous, being caught up to Christ in the clouds, shall be set on his right hand, and there openly acknowledged and acquitted, shall join with him in the judging of reprobate angels and men, and shall be received into heaven, where they shall be fully and for ever freed from all sin and misery; filled with inconceivable joys, made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and holy angels, but especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity. And this is the perfect and full communion, which the members of the invisible Church shall enjoy with Christ in glory, at the resurrection and day of judgment.” (1938)

<sup>7</sup>Question 109: “A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and any wise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; **tolerating a false religion**; the making any representation of God, of all, or of any of the three Persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever; all worshiping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the

worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretence whatsoever; simony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.” (1788)

<sup>8</sup>Question 142: “The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, theft, robbery, man-stealing, and receiving any thing that is stolen; fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, removing landmarks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust; oppression, extortion, usury, bribery, vexatious lawsuits, unjust enclosures and **depopulations**; engrossing commodities to enhance the price; unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongeth to him, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness; inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming; and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate, and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God hath given us.

***Westminster  
Shorter  
Catechism***



# **The Westminster Shorter Catechism**

**Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?**

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

**Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?**

A. The word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

**Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?**

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

**Q. 4. What is God?**

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

**Q. 5. Are there more Gods than one?**

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

**Q. 6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?**

A. There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

**Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?**

A. The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

**Q. 8. How doth God execute his decrees?**

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

**Q. 9. What is the work of creation?**

A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

**Q. 10. How did God create man?**

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

**Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?**

A. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

**Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate wherein he was created?**

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

**Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?**

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

**Q. 14. What is sin?**

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

**Q. 15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?**

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

**Q. 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?**

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

**Q. 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?**

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

**Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?**

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

**Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?**

A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

**Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?**

A. God, having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

**Q. 21. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?**

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.

**Q. 22. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?**

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

**Q. 23. What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?**

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the office of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

**Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?**

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

**Q. 25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?**

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God; and in making continual intercession for us.

**Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?**

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

**Q. 27. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?**

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

**Q. 28. Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?**

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

**Q. 29. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?**

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

**Q. 30. How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?**

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

**Q. 31. What is effectual calling?**

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge



of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

**Q. 32. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?**

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which, in this life, do either accompany or flow from them.

**Q. 33. What is justification?**

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

**Q. 34. What is adoption?**

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

**Q. 35. What is sanctification?**

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

**Q. 36. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?**

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

**Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?**

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

**Q. 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?**

A. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

**Q. 39. What is the duty which God requireth of man?**

A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

**Q. 40. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?**

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

**Q. 41. Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended?**

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

**Q. 42. What is the sum of the ten commandments?**

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

**Q. 43. What is the preface to the ten commandments?**

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

**Q. 44. What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?**

A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, that because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

**Q. 45. Which is the first commandment?**

A. The first commandment is, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

**Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment?**

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

**Q. 47. What is forbidden in the first commandment?**

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshiping and glorifying the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

**Q. 48. What are we especially taught by these words, “before me”, in the first commandment?**

A. These words, *before me*, in the first commandment teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

**Q. 49. Which is the second commandment?**

A. The second commandment is, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

**Q. 50. What is required in the second commandment?**

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his Word.

**Q. 51. What is forbidden in the second commandment?**

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his Word.

**Q. 52. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?**

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

**Q. 53. Which is the third commandment?**

A. The third commandment is, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

**Q. 54. What is required in the third commandment?**

A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.

**Q. 55. What is forbidden in the third commandment?**

A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known.

**Q. 56. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?**

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

**Q. 57. Which is the fourth commandment?**

A. The fourth commandment is, *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

**Q. 58. What is required in the fourth commandment?**

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.

**Q. 59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?**

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week, ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.

**Q. 60. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?**

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

**Q. 61. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?**

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission, or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

**Q. 62. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?**

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath day.

**Q. 63. Which is the fifth commandment?**

A. The fifth commandment is, *Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

**Q. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment?**

A. The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to everyone in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

**Q. 65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?**

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongeth to everyone in their several places and relations.

**Q. 66. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?**

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is, a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good,) to all such as keep this commandment.

**Q. 67. Which is the sixth commandment?**

A. The sixth commandment is, *Thou shalt not kill.*

**Q. 68. What is required in the sixth commandment?**

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

**Q. 69. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?**

A. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

**Q. 70. Which is the seventh commandment?**

A. The seventh commandment is, *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

**Q. 71. What is required in the seventh commandment?**

A. The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.

**Q. 72. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?**

A. The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

**Q. 73. Which is the eighth commandment?**

A. The eighth commandment is, *Thou shalt not steal.*

**Q. 74. What is required in the eighth commandment?**

A. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

**Q. 75. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?**

A. The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth, or may, unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbor's wealth or outward estate.

**Q. 76. Which is the ninth commandment?**

A. The ninth commandment is, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

**Q. 77. What is required in the ninth commandment?**

A. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness-bearing.

**Q. 78. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?**

A. The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbor's good name.

**Q. 79. Which is the tenth commandment?**

A. The tenth commandment is, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.*

**Q. 80. What is required in the tenth commandment?**

A. The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.

**Q. 81. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?**

A. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

**Q. 82. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?**

A. No mere man, since the fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed.

**Q. 83. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?**

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

**Q. 84. What doth every sin deserve?**

A. Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

**Q. 85. What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?**

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

**Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?**

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

**Q. 87. What is repentance unto life?**

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

**Q. 88. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?**

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, especially the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer; all of which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

**Q. 89. How is the word made effectual to salvation?**

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

**Q. 90. How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?**



A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer: receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

**Q. 91. How do the Sacraments become effectual means of salvation?**

A. The Sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

**Q. 92. What is a Sacrament?**

A. A Sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

**Q. 93. Which are the Sacraments of the New Testament?**

A. The Sacraments of the New Testament are, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

**Q. 94. What is Baptism?**

A. Baptism is a Sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

**Q. 95. To whom is Baptism to be administered?**

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.

**Q. 96. What is the Lord's Supper?**

A. The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

**Q. 97. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?**

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

**Q. 98. What is Prayer?**

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies.

**Q. 99. What rule hath God given for our direction in Prayer?**

A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called *The Lord's Prayer*.

**Q. 100. What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?**

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, *Our Father which art in heaven*, teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

**Q. 101. What do we pray for in the first petition?**

A. In the first petition, which is, *Hallowed be thy name*, we pray, that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

**Q. 102. What do we pray for in the second petition?**

A. In the second petition, which is, *Thy kingdom come*, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

**Q. 103. What do we pray for in the third petition?**

A. In the third petition, which is, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*, we pray, that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

**Q. 104. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?**

A. In the fourth petition, which is, *Give us this day our daily bread*, we pray, that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

**Q. 105. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?**

A. In the fifth petition, which is, *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*, we pray, that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

**Q. 106. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?**

A. In the sixth petition, which is, *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*, we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

**Q. 107. What doth the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?**

A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which is, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.* teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him; and, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, *Amen.*

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**  
**EXODUS XX**

God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

- I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
- III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
- IV. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.
- V. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
- VI. Thou shalt not kill.
- VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- VIII. Thou shalt not steal.
- IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER***

***MATTHEW VI***

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

***THE APOSTLES' CREED***

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.



***Form  
of  
Government***





# ***Form of Government***

## OF THE

### BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

#### ***CHAPTER I***

##### ***Preliminary Principles***

The Bible Presbyterian Church in setting forth the Form of Government which it maintains as being founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God, reiterates, by way of introduction, several great principles which are basic to and regulative of our form of Church government:

1. That “God alone is Lord of the conscience”; and “hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship”: Therefore we consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable: we do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and, at the same time, be equal and common to all others.

2. That in perfect consistency with the above principle of common right, every Christian Church, or union, or association of particular Churches is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its *communion*, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed: that, in the exercise of this right it may, notwithstanding, err, in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet, even in this case, it does not infringe upon the liberty, or the rights of others, but only makes an improper use of its own.

3. That our blessed Savior, for the edification of the visible Church, which is his body, hath appointed officers not only to preach the

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*gospel and administer the Sacraments*; but also to exercise discipline for the preservation both of truth and duty; and, that it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous; observing, in *all* cases, the rules contained in the Word of God.

4. That truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness; according to our Saviour's rule, "by their fruits ye shall know them," and that no opinion can be either more pernicious or more absurd, than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level and represents it as of no consequence what a man's opinions are. On the contrary, we are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth, or to embrace it.

5. That while under the conviction of the above principle, we think it necessary to make effectual provision, that all who are admitted as teachers, be sound in the faith; we also believe that there are truths and forms, with respect to which men of good character and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.

6. That though the character, qualifications, and authority of Church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of their investiture and institution; yet the election of the persons to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society.

7. That the Bible Presbyterian Church's Confession of Faith and its Form of Government and Book of Discipline require that ministers, church officers, missionaries, teachers, and all workers do maintain a lifestyle based on biblical standards of moral conduct (Westminster Confession 24.1; Westminster Larger Catechism 139). Moral misconduct, which violates the bona fide qualifications for Christian leaders and their duty to be role models includes, but is not limited to, promiscuity, homosexual behavior, or any other violation of clear

biblical standards. The Bible Presbyterian Church believes that marriage is limited to a covenant relationship between one biological man and one biological woman.

8. That the officers of the Bible Presbyterian Church are expected to maintain a biblically based lifestyle. Failure to do so will be considered behavior unbecoming a Christian and will be grounds for discipline according to the Book of Discipline. Therefore, no one who maintains or approves of such a lifestyle is eligible to serve as a minister, Church officer, missionary, teacher, or employee in any particular Bible Presbyterian Church.

9. That all Church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative; *that is to say*, that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no Church court ought to pretend to make laws, to bind the conscience in virtue of its own authority; and that all its decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God. Now though it will easily be admitted, that all Synods and Councils may err, through the frailty inseparable from humanity; yet there is much greater danger from the usurped claim of making laws, than from the right of judging upon laws already made, and common to all who profess the Gospel; although this right, as necessity requires in the present state, be lodged with fallible men.

10. *Lastly*, that, if the preceding Scriptural and rational principles be steadfastly adhered to, the vigor and strictness of its discipline will contribute to the glory and happiness of any Church. Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church universal.

11. All powers not in this Constitution specifically granted to the courts of the Church are reserved to the congregations respectively, or to the people.

**CHAPTER II**  
***Of the Church***

1. Jesus Christ, who is now exalted far above all principality and power, has erected, in this world, a visible body which is his Church.
2. The catholic visible Church consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children.
3. This catholic visible Church has, in God's providence, become divided into bodies commonly termed denominations or Churches. Such bodies, whether local, national, or international, which in their creed and practice hold fast to the historic Christian faith, which require for admission into their communion what Christ requires for salvation, and which subordinate their authority to that of the Word of God are true Churches of Christ, despite differences in government or in matters not essential to the faith which may have caused their separation from others.
4. The Bible Presbyterian Church declares itself to be a branch of the catholic visible Church of Christ and further declares its willingness to hold Christian fellowship with all other such branches of the Church.
5. It is lawful and agreeable to the Word of God that members of Christ's body on earth should, as local circumstances require, be divided into particular Churches. A particular Church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their offspring, voluntarily associated together, for divine worship and godly living, agreeably to Holy Scripture; and submitting to a certain form of government.
6. It is highly desirable and the teaching of the Word that such particular Churches should be associated together with others of like precious faith for mutual fellowship, encouragement, advancement of the cause of Christ, and testimony to his truth.

**CHAPTER III**  
***Of Particular Churches of the***  
***Bible Presbyterian Church***

1. Particular churches of the Bible Presbyterian Church shall be such churches as are defined in the previous chapter which desire to enter the fellowship of this branch of Christ's body. Entrance into this fellowship is by means of the presbytery.
2. Particular churches need remain in association with the Bible Presbyterian Church only so long as they themselves desire. The relationship is voluntary, based only upon mutual love and confidence, and is in no sense to be maintained by the exercise of any kind of force or coercion whatsoever. A particular church may withdraw at any time for reasons which seem sufficient to itself.
3. The ordinances established in the Bible by Christ, the Head, in a particular church, which is regularly constituted with its proper officers, are prayer, singing praises, reading, expounding and preaching the Word of God; administering Baptism and the Lord's Supper; public solemn thanksgiving, catechizing, making collections for the poor, and other pious purposes; exercising discipline; and blessing the people.

**CHAPTER IV**  
***Of Church Government***

1. Almighty God in his providence has permitted that different portions of his Church should be governed in various ways, and has blessed bodies differently governed as his fruitful branches. Rejoicing in this fact and in no wise casting reflections upon bodies differently governed, we believe that government by presbyters is founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God and the practice of the primitive Christians, and is highly expedient.
2. We believe that government by two kinds of presbyters, ministers and ruling elders, who are to be joined in the oversight of the Church, is founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God, and is highly expedient.

3. Believing that Synods and Councils as set forth in our Confession of Faith are founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God, and believing further that, when Scripturally conducted, such courts are an aid to the faith and life of the flock of Christ, we authorize the spiritual government of this Church by Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods, which are to be composed only of Presbyters.

4. These courts shall not possess any civil jurisdiction, nor may they inflict any civil penalties. Their power is wholly moral and spiritual, and that only ministerial and declarative of the Word of God. They possess the right of requiring obedience to the commands of Christ and of excluding offenders against him from the privileges of the Church, but only in such manner and to such extent as is specifically authorized by the Constitution of this Church.

5. The ordinary and perpetual officers in this Church are Ministers, Ruling Elders, and Deacons.

## **CHAPTER V**

### ***Of Ministers***

The office of the minister is first in the Church, both for dignity and usefulness. The person who fills the office has, in Scripture, obtained different names expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor. As he serves Christ in his Church, he is termed minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. And, as he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God, and in humility he is the servant of Christ, separated unto the Gospel of God.

**CHAPTER VI**  
***Of Ruling Elders***

Ruling elders are the particular representatives of the people, chosen by them from their own number, for the purpose of joining with the pastors or ministers in the government and discipline of the Church. This office is recognized in Holy Scripture.

**CHAPTER VII**  
***Of Deacons***

The Scriptures clearly point out deacons as distinct officers in the Church, whose business it is to take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use.

**CHAPTER VIII**  
***Of the Church Session***

1. The Church session consists of the pastor or pastors and ruling elders, of a particular congregation.
2. If there are more than nine ruling elders, the pastor and at least one third of the elders shall constitute a quorum. If there are three to nine ruling elders, the pastor and two ruling elders shall constitute a quorum. If there are less than three ruling elders, the pastor and one ruling elder shall constitute a quorum. When a Church has no pastor and there are more than nine ruling elders, five shall constitute a quorum; if there are five to nine ruling elders, three shall constitute a quorum; if there are less than five ruling elders, two shall constitute a quorum; if there is only one ruling elder, he does not constitute a Session, but he should take spiritual oversight of the Church, should represent it at Presbytery and Synod, should grant letters of dismission, and should report to the Presbytery any matter needing the action of a Church court. However, any Session, by a majority vote of its members, may fix its own quorum, provided that it is not smaller than the quorums stated in this paragraph.

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3. The pastor of the congregation shall always be the moderator of the Session; except when, for prudential reasons, it may appear advisable that some other minister should be invited to preside; in which case the pastor may, with the concurrence of the Session, invite such other minister of this Church as they may see meet to preside in that case. The same expedient may be adopted in case of the sickness or absence of the pastor.

4. It is expedient, at every meeting of the Session, more especially when constituted for judicial business, that there be a presiding minister. When, therefore, a Church is without a pastor, the moderator of the Session shall be either the minister appointed for that purpose by the Presbytery, or one invited by the Session to preside on a particular occasion. But where it is impracticable, without great inconvenience, to procure the attendance of such a moderator, the Session may proceed informally without it, any action taken at such an informal meeting being subject to ratification at a duly constituted meeting.

5. In congregations where there are two or more co-pastors, they shall, when present, alternately preside in the Session.

6. The Church Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation; for which purpose, they have power to inquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of the members of the Church; to call before them offenders and witnesses, being members of their own congregation, and to introduce other witnesses, where it may be necessary to bring the process to issue, and when they can be procured to attend; to receive members into the Church by confession of faith in Jesus Christ, reaffirmation of faith in Jesus Christ, or Church letter; to admonish, to rebuke, to suspend, or exclude from the sacraments those who are found to deserve censure; to determine all matters concerning the conduct of worship and of other religious services, to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation, including the supervision of the Sunday school and of other organizations within the Church; and to appoint delegates to the higher courts of the Church.



7. The pastor has power to convene the Session when he may judge it requisite; and he shall always convene them when requested to do so by any two of the elders.

8. Every Session shall keep a clear record of its proceedings; which record shall be, at least once in every year, submitted to the inspection of the Presbytery.

9. Every Session shall keep registers or rolls of the members of the Church, both of believers and of their baptized children; of suspensions from the Lord's Table; of the deaths and other removals of Church members but the names of members shall be placed upon or removed from the rolls of the Church only by order of the Session.

### **CHAPTER IX** ***Of the Presbytery***

1. A Presbytery consists of all the ministers, in number not less than three, and regularly elected ruling elders from each congregation, within a certain district.

2. Every congregation shall be represented by at least one elder. Congregations having from three hundred to six hundred communicant members on the rolls shall be represented by two elders; those with six hundred to nine hundred communicant members by three elders; those with nine hundred to twelve hundred communicant members by four elders, and larger congregations in the same ratio thereafter.

3. Any two ministers, and at least one elder belonging to the Presbytery, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business.

4. The Presbytery has power to receive and issue all complaints, and other matters, that are brought before it from Church sessions in a regular manner; to examine and licence candidates for the holy ministry; to ordain, install, remove, and judge ministers; to examine the records of Church Sessions; to resolve questions of doctrine or discipline seriously and reasonably proposed; to condemn opinions

which injure the purity or peace of the Church; to unite or divide congregations, at the request of the people, but not without their consent, or to form or receive new congregations, and, in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the Churches under its care, always respecting the liberties guaranteed to individual congregations and persons under the Constitution.

5. It shall be the duty of the Presbytery to keep a full and clear record of its proceedings, and to report to the General Synod, every year, licensures, ordinations, the receiving or dismissing of members, the removal of members by death, the union or division of congregations, or the formation of new ones, and, in general, all the important changes which may have taken place within their bounds in the course of the year.

6. The Presbytery shall meet on its own adjournment; and when any emergency shall require a meeting sooner than the time to which it stands adjourned, the moderator, or, in the case of his absence, death, or inability to act, the clerk, shall, with the concurrence, or at the request of two ministers and two elders, the elders being of different congregations, call a special meeting. For this purpose he shall send a circular letter, specifying the particular business of the intended meeting, to every minister belonging to the Presbytery, and to the session of every vacant congregation, in due time previous to the meeting; which shall not be less than seven days. And nothing shall be transacted at such special meeting besides the particular business for which the court has thus been convened.

7. Every particular Session shall be opened and closed with prayer.

8. Ministers in good standing in other Presbyteries, or in any sister Churches, who may happen to be present, may be invited to sit with the Presbytery, as corresponding members. Such members shall be entitled to deliberate and advise, but not to vote in any decisions of the Presbytery.

9. At the request of national believers in other countries, the Synod may form Associate Presbyteries in accordance with the following principles: (1) Associate Presbyteries are to be constituted as provided for in this chapter, with national ministers and elders; (2)

Associate Presbyteries are entitled to representation by delegates (one minister and one elder elected for that purpose) at the General Synod with all the rights of speaking on the floor; (3) representatives from an Associate Presbytery may not vote in Synod on domestic (US) non-constitutional or disciplinary matters; (4) US or Canadian missionaries shall remain members of their respective presbyteries, and may only participate in the Associate Presbytery as corresponding members at the pleasure of the Associate Presbytery; (5) The records of the Associate Presbytery's minutes must be kept in English and submitted to the General Synod annually for review; (6) In all other respects, an overseas Associate Presbytery functions as does its counterparts in the United States. (7) The ultimate goal of the Associate Presbytery is independency as a national church in its own right, this transitional relationship being formed to facilitate that goal as quickly as possible.

## **CHAPTER X**

### ***Of the General Synod***

1. The General Synod of this Church shall consist of every minister and of elders from particular Churches, according to the ratio set forth in Chapter IX, section 2.
2. Any fifteen or more of these commissioners, one half of whom shall be ministers, being met on the day, and at the place appointed, shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.
3. The General Synod shall have power to organize and conduct its business in a democratic and Christian manner. It shall receive and issue all appeals and complaints that affect the doctrine or Constitution of the Church, and are regularly brought before it from Presbyteries or Sessions, *provided*, that in administrative or judicial cases the General Synod shall have power to act by commission, subject to the provisions of the Book of Discipline. The General Synod shall review the records of every Presbytery; it shall give its advice and instruction, in all cases submitted to it, in conformity with the Constitution of the Church, and it shall constitute the bond of union, peace, correspondence, and mutual confidence among all our Churches.

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4. To the General Synod also belongs the power of deciding in all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline; of reproof, warning or bearing testimony against error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, in any Church or Presbytery; of erecting new Presbyteries when it may be judged necessary; of corresponding with other Churches, on such terms as may be agreed upon by the Synod and the corresponding body, of recommending and aiding promotion of charity, truth, and holiness, through all the Churches.

5. Although the deliverances, resolutions, overtures, and other actions of the General Synod are to be accorded the weight which is proper in view of the character of the body, yet whenever such deliverances, resolutions, overtures, and other actions are additional to the specific provisions of the Constitution, they shall not be regarded as binding unless they become amendments to the Constitution.

6. The General Synod may, at its own discretion, set up committees to act as its agents in conducting benevolent, missionary and educational enterprises, or it may commend to the churches, for their support, other such Christian enterprises.

7. The General Synod shall meet upon its own adjournment. On the day appointed for that purpose the moderator of the last Synod, if present, shall open the meeting with a sermon, or in the case of his absence, some other minister shall open the meeting with a sermon and preside until a moderator be chosen. No commissioner shall have a right to deliberate or vote in the Synod until his name shall have been enrolled, and his commission examined and filed among the papers of the Synod.

8. Each session of the Synod shall be opened and closed with prayer. And the whole business of the Synod being finished, and the vote taken for dissolving the present Synod, the moderator shall say from the chair — “By virtue of the authority delegated to me, by the Church, let this General Synod be dissolved, and I do hereby dissolve it, and require another General Synod chosen in the same manner, to meet at \_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_ A.D. \_\_\_\_” — after which he shall pray and return thanks, and pronounce on those present the apostolic benediction.

9. *Pro re nata* meetings of the General Synod may be called by the moderator of the preceding Synod, or, in the case of his death, absence, or inability to act, by the clerk, with the concurrence or at the request of at least one-third of the ministers of the Church and an equal number of ruling elders. Calling of such meeting shall be mandatory if it shall be demanded in writing by more than half the ministers of the Church and an equal number of elders. Not less than thirty days' notice shall be given of such meeting.

### **CHAPTER XI**

#### ***Of the Board of Deacons***

1. In order to facilitate the performance of the duties of their office, the deacons of each particular church shall, with the pastor, be constituted a board of deacons.
2. The pastor shall be the moderator of the board, but a member appointed by the pastor may serve when he is not present. The other officers shall be chosen from the membership of the board.
3. The board shall make a quarterly report of its activities, including its disbursements, to the session.

### **CHAPTER XII**

#### ***Of Electing and Ordaining Ruling Elders and Deacons***

1. Every congregation shall elect persons to the office of ruling elder, and in ordinary circumstances to the office of deacon, in whatever manner it may approve. In all cases the persons elected must be members in full communion in the Church in which they are to exercise their office. Candidates for either office must be men.
2. When any person shall have been elected to either of these offices, and shall have declared his willingness to accept thereof, he shall be set apart in the following manner:
3. After the sermon, the minister shall state, in a concise manner, the warrant and nature of the office of ruling elder or deacon, together with the character proper to be sustained, and the duties to be fulfilled by the officer elect; having done this, he shall propose to the

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candidate, in the presence of the congregation, the following questions, viz.:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Bible Presbyterian Church?

(4) Do you accept the office of ruling elder (or deacon, as the case may be,) in this congregation, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof?

(5) Do you promise to study the purity, peace, and unity of the Church?

The elder, or deacon elect, having answered these questions in the affirmative, the minister shall address to the members of the church the following questions, viz.:

“Do you, the members of this Church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a ruling elder (or deacon), and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord, to which his office, according to the Word of God, and the Constitution of this Church, entitles him?”

The members of the Church having answered this question in the affirmative by holding up their right hands, the minister shall proceed to set apart the candidate, by prayer, to the office of ruling elder (or deacon, as the case may be,) and shall give to him and to the congregation, an exhortation suited to the occasion.

4. Where there is an existing Session, it is proper that the members of that body, at the close of the service, and in the face of the congregation, take the newly ordained elder by the hand, saying words to this purpose — “We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part of this office with us.”

5. The offices of ruling elder and deacon are both perpetual, and cannot be laid aside at pleasure. No person can be divested of either office but by deposition. Yet an elder or deacon may become, by age or infirmity, incapable of performing the duties of his office; or he may, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, become unacceptable, in his official character, to a majority of the congregation to which he belongs. In either of these cases, he may, as often happens with respect to a minister, cease to be an acting elder or deacon.

6. Whenever a ruling elder or deacon, from either of these causes, or from any other, not inferring crime, shall be incapable of serving the Church to edification, the Session shall take order on the subject, and state the fact, together with the reasons of it, on their records, *provided always*, that nothing of this kind shall be done without the concurrence of the individual in question, unless by a vote of the congregation.

7. If any particular Church, by a vote of members in full communion, shall prefer to elect ruling elders or deacons for a limited time in the exercise of their functions, this may be done; *provided*, the full time be not less than three years, and the Session or board of deacons be made to consist of three classes, one of which only shall be elected every year; and *provided*, that elders, once ordained, shall not be divested of the office when they are not re-elected, but shall be entitled to represent that particular Church in the higher courts, when appointed by the session or the Presbytery.

**CHAPTER XIII**  
***Of Licensing Candidates or Probationers***  
***To Preach the Gospel***

1. The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously had of those who are to be ordained to the ministry of the Gospel, that this sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak or unworthy men; and that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the talents of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed. For this purpose Presbyteries shall license probationers to preach the Gospel, that, after a competent

trial of their talents, and receiving from the churches a good report, they may, in due time, ordain them to the sacred office.

2. Every candidate looking toward licensure shall ordinarily be taken under care of that Presbytery to which he most naturally belongs.

3. It is proper and requisite that a candidate applying to be taken under care of a Presbytery be a communicant member of a particular church approved by the Presbytery, and come with a written recommendation from the session of the church of which he is a member. It is the duty of the Presbytery, for its satisfaction with regard to the piety of the candidate, to examine him respecting his experimental knowledge of religion, and the motives which influence him to desire the sacred office. And the Presbytery shall continue to show its concern, after such examination, for the progress of all the candidates under its care, and shall advise with them with regard to their preparation for the work of the ministry.

4. Because it is highly reproachful to religion and dangerous to the church to trust the holy ministry to weak and ignorant men, the Presbytery shall admit a candidate to licensure only if he has received a bachelor of arts degree, or its academic equivalent, from an accredited college or university. He must also have completed at least two years of study in a theological seminary.

5. The candidate shall be examined by the Presbytery, or by a committee appointed for that purpose, in the English Bible, theology, ecclesiastical history, and in the original languages of the Scriptures, except that the examination in the languages of Scripture maybe waived upon the presentation of a transcript showing that creditable work has been done in these subjects. Every candidate at the time of his examination in theology shall read a brief, written statement of his belief before the Presbytery and file the same with the stated clerk. If the examination of candidates is referred to a committee, an examination in theology shall also be held before the Presbytery; and if one-fourth of the presbyters are dissatisfied with the examination in theology the candidate shall be required to undergo an examination in the subject again at a future meeting of the Presbytery. If one-fourth of the Presbyters are still dissatisfied they



may demand that a written record of the examination be filed with the Presbytery.

6. And in order to make trial of his talents to explain and vindicate, and practically to enforce the doctrines of the Gospel, the Presbytery shall further require that the candidate prepare (1) a sermon, which the presbytery may ask to be delivered in its presence, (2) an essay on a theological theme, and (3) an exegesis of the original Hebrew or Greek text of a passage of Scripture.

7. That the most effectual measures may be taken to guard against the admission of unqualified men into the sacred office, no exception shall be made to any of the educational or other requirements outlined above unless the Presbytery shall judge, by a three-fourths vote of the members present, that the such exception is warranted by the exceptional qualifications of the candidate in question.

8. If the presbytery be satisfied with the trials of a candidate for licensure, it shall then proceed to license him in the following manner; the moderator shall propose to him the following questions, viz.:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you promise to study the purity, peace, and unity of the Church?

(4) Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this Presbytery, or of any other Presbytery in the bounds of which you may be called?

9. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, and the moderator having offered up a prayer suitable to the occasion, he shall address himself to the candidate in the following purpose: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which he hath given to the Church for its edification, we do

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license you to preach the Gospel, wherever God in his providence may call you; and for this purpose, may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen.” And record shall be made of the licensure in the following or like form, viz.:

At \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ having received testimonials in favor of of his having gone through a regular course of literature; of his good moral character; and of his being in the communion of the Church; proceeded to take the usual parts of trial for his licensure; and he having given satisfaction as to his accomplishments in literature; as to his experimental acquaintance with religion; and as to his proficiency in divinity and other studies; the Presbytery did, and hereby does, express its approbation of all these parts of trial; and he having adopted the Confession of Faith of this Church, and satisfactorily answered the questions appointed to be put to candidates to be licensed; the presbytery did, and hereby does, license him, the said \_\_\_\_\_ to preach the Gospel of Christ as a probationer for the holy ministry, within the bounds of this Presbytery, or wherever else he shall be orderly called.

10. When any candidate for licensure shall have occasion, while his trials are going on, to remove from the bounds of his own Presbytery into those of another, it shall be considered as regular for the latter Presbytery, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, to take up his trials at the point at which they were left, and conduct them to a conclusion, in the same manner as if they had been commenced by themselves.

11. In like manner, when any candidate, after licensure, shall, by the permission of his Presbytery, remove without its limits, an extract of the record of his licensure, accompanied with a Presbyterial recommendation, signed by the clerk, shall be his testimonials to the Presbytery under whose care he shall come.

12. When a licentiate shall have been preaching for a considerable time, and his services do not appear to be edifying to the churches, the presbytery may, if it think proper, recall his license.

**CHAPTER XIV**  
***Of the Election of Pastors and of***  
***Ordination to the Ministry***

1. When any of the people of any congregation appear prepared to elect a pastor, the session shall take measures to convene them for this purpose; and it shall always be a duty of the Session to convene them, when a majority of the persons entitled to vote in the case, shall, by petition, request that a meeting be called.
2. When such a meeting is intended, the Session may solicit the presence and counsel of some neighboring minister to assist them in conducting the election contemplated, but they may proceed without such assistance.
3. On a Lord's Day it shall be intimated from the pulpit, that all the members of that congregation are requested to meet on \_\_\_\_\_ ensuing, at the Church, or usual place for holding public worship, then and there, if it be agreeable to them, to proceed to the election of a pastor for that congregation.
4. On the day appointed, the minister invited to preside, if he be present, shall, if it be deemed expedient, preach a sermon; and after the sermon he shall announce to the people, that he will immediately proceed to take the votes of the electors of that congregation, for a pastor, if such be their desire; and when this desire shall be expressed by a majority of voices, he shall then proceed to take votes accordingly. In this election, no person shall be entitled to vote who is not a communicant member in good standing of the particular Church.
5. When the votes are taken, if it appear that a large minority of the people are averse from the candidate who has a majority of votes, and cannot be induced to concur in the call, the presiding officer shall endeavor to dissuade the congregation from prosecuting it further. But if the people be nearly, or entirely, unanimous; or if the majority shall insist upon their right to call a pastor, the presiding officer, in that case, shall proceed to draw a call, in due form, and to have it subscribed by the electors or their duly authorized representatives; all which proceedings shall be laid before the Presbytery, together with the call.

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6. The call shall be in the following or like form:

The congregation of \_\_\_\_\_ being, on sufficient grounds, well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, \_\_\_\_\_, and having good hopes that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call and desire you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation; promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord. And that you may be free from worldly care and avocations, we promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ in regular \_\_\_\_\_ payments during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this Church, together with free use of a house and \_\_\_\_\_ vacation each year.

The call shall be subscribed to by the members of the church, and shall be certified by the moderator of the meeting.

7. If any congregation shall choose to subscribe its call by its elders and deacons, or by a select committee, it shall be at liberty to do so. But it shall, in each case, be fully certified to the Presbytery, by the minister, or other person who presided, that the persons signing have been appointed for that purpose by a public vote of the congregation; and that the call has been, in all other respects, prepared as above directed.

8. When a call shall be presented to any minister or candidate, it shall always be viewed as a sufficient petition from the people for his installation. The acceptance of a call, by a minister or candidate, shall always be considered as a request, on his part, to be installed at the same time. And when a candidate shall be ordained in consequence of a call from any congregation, the presbytery shall, at the same time, if practicable, install him pastor of that congregation.

9. The call, thus prepared, shall be presented to the Presbytery, under whose care the person called shall be; so that, if the presbytery think it expedient to present the call to him, it may be accordingly presented: and no minister or candidate shall receive a call but through the hands of the Presbytery.

10. If the call be to a licentiate of another Presbytery, in that case the commissioners deputed from the congregation to prosecute the call, shall produce, to that court, a certificate from their own Presbytery, regularly attested by the moderator and clerk, that the call has been laid before them, and that it is in order. If that Presbytery present the call to their licentiate, and he be disposed to accept it, they shall then dismiss him from their jurisdiction, and require him to repair to that presbytery, into the bounds of which he is called; and there to submit himself to the usual trials Preparatory to ordination.

11. A candidate for ordination must have completed a full three-year seminary Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent. This requirement may only be set aside for extraordinary circumstances, and only by a three-fourths vote of the Presbytery members present. Trials for ordination, especially in a different Presbytery from that in which the candidate was licensed, shall consist of a careful examination as to his acquaintance with experimental religion; as to his knowledge of philosophy, theology, ecclesiastical history, the Greek and Hebrew languages, and such other branches of learning as to the Presbytery may appear requisite; and as to his knowledge of the Constitution, the rules and principles of the government and discipline of the Church; together with such written discourse, or discourses, founded on the Word of God, as to the presbytery shall seem proper. The Presbytery, being fully satisfied with his qualifications for the sacred office, shall appoint a day for his ordination, which ought to be, if convenient, in that Church of which he is to be the minister.

12. The day appointed for ordination being come and the Presbytery convened, a minister, previously appointed to that duty, shall preach a sermon adapted to the occasion. A member of the Presbytery appointed to preside, shall afterwards briefly recite from the pulpit, in the audience of the people, the proceedings of the Presbytery preparatory to this transaction; he shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance; and endeavour to impress the audience with a proper sense of the solemnity of the transaction. Then addressing himself to the candidate, he shall propose to him the following questions, viz.:

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(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Bible Presbyterian Church?

(4) Do you promise such subjection to your brethren as is taught in the Word of God?

(5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God, and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the Gospel of his Son?

(6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel, and the purity and peace of the Church; whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(7) Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties, which become you as a Christian and a minister of the Gospel; as well as in all relative duties, and the public duties of your office; endeavoring to adorn the profession of the Gospel by your conversation; and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God shall make you overseer?

(8) Are you now willing to take charge of this congregation, agreeably to your declaration when you accepted their call? And do you promise to discharge the duties of a pastor to them, as God shall give you strength?

13. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the presiding minister shall propose to the people the following questions:

(1) Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive \_\_\_\_\_ whom you have called to be your minister?

(2) Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth, with meekness and love; and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord, to which his office, according to the Word of God, and the Constitution of this Church, entitles him?

(3) Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labor, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?

(4) And do you engage to continue with him, while he is your pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised; and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion, and his comfort among you?

14. The people having answered these questions in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall kneel down in the most convenient part of the Church. Then the presiding minister, shall, by prayer, and with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, according to the apostolic example, solemnly ordain him to the holy office of the Gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise from his knees; and the minister who presides shall first, and afterward all the members of the presbytery in their order, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this purpose, "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part of this ministry with us." After which the minister presiding, or some other appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge in the name of God, to the newly ordained minister, and to the people, to persevere in the discharge of their mutual duties, and shall then, by prayer, recommend them both to the grace of God, and his holy keeping. Finally, at the conclusion of the whole service, he shall dismiss the congregation with the usual blessing. And the Presbytery shall duly record the transaction.

15. As a candidate who has not received a call to be the pastor of a particular congregation may be called to engage in the work of the holy ministry, it is proper that he should be ordained, and, in this case, the last of the preceding questions shall be omitted, and the following used as a substitute, viz.:

“Are you now willing to undertake the work of the Christian ministry, and do you promise to discharge the duties which may be incumbent upon you in this character as God may give you strength?”

16. When an ordained minister of another denomination seeks admission to the Bible Presbyterian Church, the Presbytery to which he applies shall require him to give evidence of possessing the qualifications, in regard to piety, faith, and learning, which are demanded of candidates for ordination as given above; and it shall require him to answer affirmatively the questions appointed for the ordination of candidates in section 12 of this chapter.

## **CHAPTER XV**

### ***Of Removing a Minister from One Charge to Another***

1. No minister shall be removed from one Church to another, nor shall he receive any call for that purpose, but by the permission of the presbytery.

2. Any Church, desiring to call a settled minister from his present charge, shall, by commissioners properly authorized, represent to the Presbytery the ground on which they plead his removal. The Presbytery, having maturely considered their plan, may, according as it appears more or less reasonable, either recommend to them to desist from prosecuting the call, or may order it to be delivered to the minister to whom it is directed.

3. When the congregation calling any settled minister is within the limits of another Presbytery, that congregation shall obtain leave from the presbytery to which it belongs, to apply to the presbytery of which he is a member; and that presbytery, having cited him and his congregation as before directed, shall proceed to hear the cause and bring it to an issue. If it agrees to the translation, it shall release him from his present charge; and having given him proper testimonials, shall require him to repair to that presbytery, within the bounds of which the congregation calling him lies, that the proper steps may be taken for his regular settlement in that congregation; and the presbytery to which the congregation belongs, having received an



authenticated certificate of his release, under the hand of the clerk of that presbytery, shall proceed to install him in the congregation, as soon as convenient. Provided always, that no minister shall be translated without his own consent previously obtained.

4. When any minister is to be settled in a congregation, the installation, which consists in constituting a pastoral relation between him and the people of that particular church, may be performed either by the presbytery, or by a committee appointed for that purpose, as may appear most expedient; and the following order shall be observed therein:

5. A day shall be appointed for the installation at such time as may appear most convenient, and due notice thereof given to the congregation.

6. When the presbytery, or committee, shall be convened and constituted, on the day appointed, a sermon shall be delivered by a minister previously appointed thereto; immediately after which, the minister who is to preside shall state to the congregation the design of the meeting, and briefly recite the proceedings of the presbytery relative thereto. And then, addressing himself to the minister to be installed, shall propose to him the following or similar questions:

(1) Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation, as their pastor, agreeably to your declaration when you accepted its call?

(2) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you this charge, you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God, and the good of his Church?

(3) Do you solemnly promise, that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavour faithfully to discharge all the duties of a pastor to this congregation, and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a minister of the Gospel of Christ, agreeably to your ordination engagements?

Having received satisfactory answers to all these questions, he shall propose to the people the same or like questions as those directed

under the head of ordination; which, having also been satisfactorily answered, by the holding up of the right hand in testimony of assent, he shall solemnly pronounce and declare the said minister to be regularly constituted the pastor of that congregation. A charge shall then be given to both parties, as directed in the case of ordination; and prayer shall be offered. At the conclusion of the whole service, the congregation shall be dismissed with the usual benediction.

7. It is highly becoming, that, after the installation, the heads of families of that congregation who are then present, or at least the elders and deacons, should come forward to their pastor, and give him their right hand in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.

## **CHAPTER XVI**

### ***Of Resigning a Pastoral Charge***

When any minister shall desire leave to resign his pastoral charge, the Presbytery shall cite the congregation to appear, by its commissioners, at its next meeting, to show cause why the Presbytery should not accept the resignation. If the congregation fail to appear, or if its reasons for retaining its pastor be deemed by the Presbytery insufficient, he shall have leave granted to resign his pastoral charge, of which due record shall be made; and that Church shall be held to be vacant, till supplied again, in an orderly manner, with another minister; and if any congregation shall desire to be released from its pastor, a similar process, *mutatis mutandis*, shall be observed.

## **CHAPTER XVII**

### ***Of Moderators***

1. It is equally necessary in the courts of the Church, as in other assemblies, that there should be a moderator; that the business may be conducted with order and dispatch.

2. The moderator is to be considered as possessing, by delegation from the whole body, all authority necessary for the preservation of order; for convening and adjourning the court; and directing its

operations according to the rules of the Church. If the court be equally divided on any question he shall possess the casting vote. If he be not willing to decide, he shall put the question a second time; and if the court be again equally divided, and he decline to give his vote, the question shall be lost.

3. The moderator of the Presbytery shall be chosen from year to year, or for some shorter term, if the Presbytery may think best. The moderator of the General Synod shall be chosen at each meeting of that court: and the moderator of the preceding Synod, or, in the case of his absence, another member appointed for the purpose, shall open the next meeting with a sermon, and shall hold the chair until a new moderator be chosen.

### **CHAPTER XVIII** ***Of Clerks***

Every court shall choose a clerk, to record its transactions, to serve for an indefinite term during the pleasure of the court. It shall be the duty of the clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records carefully; and to grant extracts from them, whenever properly required. Such extracts, under the hand of the clerk, shall be evidence to any ecclesiastical court, and to every part of the Church.

### **CHAPTER XIX** ***Of Vacant Congregations*** ***Assembling for Public Worship***

1. Considering the great importance of weekly assembling the people, for the public worship of God, in order thereby to improve their knowledge; to confirm their habits of worship, and their desire of the public ordinances; to augment their reverence for the most high God; and to promote the charitable affections which unite men most firmly in society; it is recommended, that every vacant congregation meet together, on the Lord's Day, at one or more places, for the purpose of prayer, singing praises, and reading the Holy Scriptures, together with the works of such approved divines,

as the Presbytery within whose bounds they are may recommend, and they may be able to procure; and that the elders be the persons who shall preside, and select the portions of Scripture, and of the other books to be read; and to see that the whole be conducted in a becoming and orderly manner.

2. Presbyteries may supervise vacant Churches within their bounds through a committee or committees appointed for this purpose, or through the moderators who have been appointed for the Sessions. Such supervision includes co-operation with the Session, or with any authorized committee of the particular Church, in the supply of the pulpit, and in the seeking and securing of a pastor.

## **CHAPTER XX**

### ***Of Incorporation and Corporations***

1. The General Synod, the several Presbyteries and the several Churches may maintain corporations to handle affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters, which do not come properly under the jurisdiction of the courts themselves.

2. Only communicant members of a particular Church in good and regular standing who are at least twenty-one years of age shall be entitled to vote at corporation meetings of the particular Church; voting by proxy shall not be permitted, nor shall any one be allowed to vote except when the vote is being taken, subject to the laws of the State of incorporation.

3. The Board of Trustees of a particular Church shall consist of the acting, ruling elders in that church or, if the Church so elect, the acting ruling elders and the acting deacons in that Church. However, an exception to the above is permitted in the case of a church organized and established prior to its reception.

4. All particular Churches shall be entitled to hold, own, and enjoy their own local properties, without any right of reversion whatsoever to the Bible Presbyterian Church, its Presbyteries, Synods, or any other courts hereafter created, its trustees or other officers.

5. The provisions of this chapter are to be construed as a solemn covenant whereby the Church as a whole undertakes never to attempt to secure possession of the property of any congregation against its will, whether or not such congregation remains within or chooses to withdraw from this body. All officers and courts of the Church are hereby prohibited from making any such attempt. The provisions of sections 4 and 5 of this chapter are unamendable and irrevocable.

**CHARTER XXI**  
***Of Amendments***

1. Amendments or alterations to the Form of Government (except as provided in section 2 of this chapter) and Book of Discipline may be made only in the following manner: the General Synod, after due discussion, may propose changes to the presbyteries, but they shall not be regarded as having constitutional validity until they have been approved in writing by a majority of the Presbyteries before the next ensuing Synod; and it shall be the duty of the next ensuing Synod to declare that such changes have been adopted and are in effect. This does not apply to the Form of Government, Chapter XX, sections 4 and 5, which are unamendable. Presbyteries may also overture the General Synod to send down suggested amendments to the Constitution.

2. Amendments or alterations of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and of the forms of subscription required of ministers, licentiates, ruling elders, and deacons, as these forms are found in the Form of Government, shall not be regarded as having constitutional validity unless sent down to the Presbyteries by a two-thirds vote of the General Synod, approved by two-thirds of the Presbyteries in writing, and finally adopted by a two-thirds vote of the General Synod next ensuing. Before any of the changes described in this section are proposed to the Presbyteries, the General Synod shall appoint a committee to consider the proposed changes and to report to the next Synod.

3. None of the provisions of section 2 of this chapter nor of this third section shall be modified except by the process which is set forth in

section 2, with the further exception that those parts of the Constitution declared unamendable, cannot be changed in any lawful manner whatsoever.

**CHAPTER XXII**

***Indemnification of Ministers, Ruling Elders, Deacons,  
Employees, and Trustees of the General Synod of the  
Bible Presbyterian Church***

1. The General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church shall indemnify, to the full extent authorized or permitted by the New York State Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and/or the New York State Religious Corporation Law and as permitted by the law of states in which the Synod shall have jurisdiction over Churches in association with the General Synod, Ministers, Ruling Elders, Deacons, Employees, and Trustees of the General Synod from and against any and all judgments, fines, amounts paid in settlement, and reasonable expenses, including attorney's fees, actually and necessarily incurred or imposed as a result of such action or proceeding, or any appeal therein, imposed upon or asserted against him by reason of being or having been a Minister, Ruling Elder, Deacon, Employee or Trustee of the General Synod and acting within the scope of his official duties, but only when the determination shall have been made judicially or in the manner hereinafter provided that he acted in good faith for a purpose which he reasonably believed to be in the best interests of the General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church and, in the case of a criminal action or proceeding, in addition, had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful. This indemnification shall be made only if the General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church shall be advised by its Trustees acting:
  - (1) by a quorum consisting of Trustees who are not parties to such action or proceeding upon a finding that, or

- (2) if a quorum under (1) is not obtainable with due diligence, upon the opinion in writing of independent legal counsel that the Minister, Ruling Elder, Deacon, Employee or Trustee of the General Synod have met the foregoing applicable standard of conduct.

If the foregoing determination is to be made by the Trustees, such Trustees may rely, as to all questions of law, on the advice of independent legal counsel.

Every reference herein to a Minister, Ruling Elder, Deacon, Employee or Trustee shall include every Minister, Ruling Elder, Deacon, Employee or Trustee hereof or former Minister, Ruling Elder, Deacon, Employee or Trustee thereof. Indemnification shall apply to all the judgments, fines, amounts in settlement, and reasonable expenses described above, whenever arising, allowable as above-stated. The right of indemnification herein provided shall be in addition to any and all rights to which any Minister, Ruling Elder, Deacon, Employee or Trustee of the General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church might otherwise be entitled and the provisions herein shall neither impair, nor adversely affect such rights.

2. Expenses incurred in defending any proceeding may be advanced by the General Synod before the final disposition of the proceeding on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the Minister, Ruling Elder, Deacon, Employee or Trustee to repay the amount of the advance unless it is determined ultimately that the Minister, Ruling Elder, Deacon, Employee or Trustee is entitled to be indemnified as authorized in this chapter.
3. The Trustees may adopt a Resolution authorizing the purchase and maintenance of insurance on behalf of any Minister, Ruling Elder, Deacon, Employee or Trustee of the General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church against any liability asserted against or incurred by said agent of the General Synod in such capacity arising out of the agent's status as such, whether or not the General Synod would have the power to indemnify the agent.

## FORM OF GOVERNMENT

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Amended by the 63<sup>rd</sup>, 69<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup>, 81<sup>st</sup>, and 82<sup>nd</sup> General Synods of the Bible Presbyterian Church.



***Book  
of  
Discipline***



# ***The Book of Discipline***

## OF THE BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

### **CHAPTER I**

#### ***The Nature and Purposes of Discipline***

1. Ecclesiastical discipline is the exercise of that authority which the Lord Jesus Christ has committed to the visible Church for the preservation of its purity and good order. It may be either judicial or administrative.
2. Judicial discipline is concerned with the prevention and correction of offenses. An offense is anything in the doctrine or practice of a communicant member of the Church or of a Church court which is contrary to the Word of God. The purpose of judicial discipline is to vindicate the honor of Christ, to promote the purity of his Church, and to reclaim the offender.
3. Administrative discipline is concerned with the maintenance of good order in the government of the Church in other than judicial cases. The purpose of its exercise is that all rights may be preserved and all obligations faithfully discharged.
4. All communicant members of the Church are under the care of the Church, and subject to its discipline.

### **CHAPTER II**

#### ***Jurisdiction***

1. Original jurisdiction over communicants, ruling elders, and deacons belongs to the session of the Church of which the individual is a member. Original jurisdiction over a minister belongs to the Presbytery of which he is a member.
2. If a Church member has been dismissed to another particular Church, or a minister to another Presbytery, he shall be considered subject to the jurisdiction of the body which dismissed him until the time when he is actually received by the body to which he has been dismissed.

3. All certificates of dismissal shall specify the particular body to which the person is dismissed, and shall be sent directly to that body by the dismissing body. The receiving body shall notify the dismissing body of the fact of reception when accomplished.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### ***Steps in the Institution of Judicial Process***

1. Judicial process shall be deemed to have been instituted only whenever formal charges and specifications, as defined herein, have been filed with the clerk of the body of which the accused is a member, and the body, after having heard the charges read, decides that there is reasonable ground to support the charges.

2. No charge of an offense shall be admitted if it is brought more than two years after the commission of the alleged offense, unless it is agreed by a three-quarters vote of the court to which such a charge has been filed that unavoidable impediments have prevented an earlier filing of the charge; or unless the charge alleges grave heresy and it can be proved that the expression of heretical teaching is still proceeding either orally or in written or printed form. A charge shall be considered filed when it has been delivered to the clerk of the judicatory.

3. A charge of an offense may be brought by an injured party, by a person not an injured party, or by a court of the Church.

4. Every charge of an offense must be presented to the court in writing. Every charge must set forth the alleged offense together with the specifications of the facts relied upon to sustain the charge. Each specification shall declare, as far as possible, the time, place, and circumstances of the alleged offense, and shall be accompanied with the names of any witnesses and the titles of any documents to be produced.

5. Offenses are either private or public. Private offenses are those known to an individual only, or, at most, to a very few persons. Public offenses are those which are notorious and scandalous.

6. No charge of a private offense shall be admitted unless the court has assured itself that the course set forth by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 has been faithfully followed.

7. Every person about to present a charge shall be solemnly warned by the court that he may be censured if the charge is not substantiated by such evidence as will establish reasonable proof of guilt.

8. If allegations of an offense, not framed as formal charges and specifications, are presented to the court of jurisdiction, it shall conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether judicial process shall be begun. If the preliminary investigation is conducted by a committee appointed for that purpose, its findings shall be reviewed by the court. The court or committee, as the case may be, shall consider the respectability and presumptive credibility of the witnesses to be produced, and shall examine the papers submitted to it to determine whether, if charges and specifications were prepared on the basis of such papers, their proof would show the commission of an offense. If, after a consideration of all of the foregoing factors, the court decides that judicial process may be instituted, it shall cause formal charges and specifications to be prepared and shall fix a time for the trial of the case.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### ***The Trial of Judicial Cases***

1. At the beginning of every trial the moderator shall announce that the body is about to sit in a judicial capacity, and shall exhort the members to bear in mind their solemn duty faithfully to minister and declare the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and to subordinate all human judgments to that infallible rule. The announcement and the exhortation shall be made at the opening of each session of the trial court.

2. The courts of the Church shall ordinarily sit with open doors. In every case involving a charge of heresy the court shall be without power to sit with closed doors. In other cases, where the ends of discipline seem to require it, the trial court at any stage of the trial

may determine by a vote of three-fourths of the members present to sit with closed doors.

3. At the first meeting of the trial court only the following things may be done: (a) the charges and specifications shall be read and formally presented to the accused, together with the names of any witnesses and copies of any documents which may be presented against him; (b) the court shall fix the time for the next session of the trial, which shall not be less than ten days later, and shall issue citations directing all persons concerned to appear at that time; (c) the accused shall be granted citations in which he may insert the names of the witnesses whom he wishes the court to summon; and (d) the parties may challenge the right of any member of the court to sit in the case, which challenge shall be decided by a majority of the other members of the court.

4. If it becomes necessary to summon witnesses who are subject to the jurisdiction of another court of the Church, such court at the request of the trial court shall issue citations directing such persons to appear and testify.

5. The testimony of witnesses living at a distance from the place of trial may be taken by a commission appointed by the trial court whenever such course seems advisable, provided, however, that in such case the accused may appear personally before such commission or be represented by counsel. The commissioners must be communicant members of the Church. They shall take such testimony as may be offered and transmit the testimony to the trial court. The court may, at its own discretion, admit sworn statements from persons who by reason of infirmity or distance are unable to appear as witnesses.

6. All citations should be served personally, but in case this is not possible, citations shall be sent by registered mail to the last known address of the person cited.

7. If the accused refuses or fails to appear before the trial court, without satisfactory reason for his absence, at the time appointed for the trial of the case, he shall again be cited, with the warning that, if he does not appear, he may be disciplined for contempt, and the

court will proceed with the trial in his absence. The time allowed for the appearance on a citation shall be determined by the issuing court with due consideration for the circumstances.

8. If a witness who is a member of the Church fails to obey a lawful citation, he shall be cited again with the warning that if he does not appear, or give satisfactory reason for his absence, he may be censured for contempt. The time allowed for appearance on a citation shall be determined by the issuing trial court with due consideration for the circumstances. A communicant member of the Church under the jurisdiction of another judicatory shall, if likewise cited and refusing to appear, or, having appeared, refuses to testify, the trial court shall communicate the facts to the court having jurisdiction over the person concerned. An officer or private member of the Church refusing to testify may be censured for contumacy.

9. The accused shall be entitled to the assistance of counsel. No person shall be eligible to act as counsel who is not a member in good standing of the Bible Presbyterian Church. No person who is counsel in a judicial case may sit in judgment on the same case at any stage thereof.

10. At the second meeting of the trial court the accused may interpose objections concerning (a) the regularity of the proceedings up to this point and (b) the legal sufficiency of the charges and specifications. The court shall decide on the validity of such objections. It may dismiss the case forthwith, or permit such amendments of the charges and specifications as do not alter their essential nature. If the court decides that the trial should proceed, the accused shall be called upon to plead "guilty" or "not guilty" and his plea shall be entered upon the record. If the accused pleads "guilty" the court shall retire to determine the censure. If the accused pleads "not guilty" or refuses to plead, the trial shall proceed. Accused parties may plead in writing when they cannot be personally present. Parties necessarily absent should have counsel assigned to them.

11. No person shall be deprived of the right to set forth, plead, or offer in evidence in any court of the Church the provisions of the Word of God or of the subordinate standards.

12. Witnesses shall testify in the presence of the accused unless the accused has failed to present himself after citation as provided in section 7 of this chapter. When all of the testimony has been taken, the prosecution and the accused may present argument as to the law of the Church and the facts. The court shall then retire, and, after deliberation, shall vote on each charge and specification separately. If the court decides that the accused is guilty, it shall then determine the censure.

13. Only members of the court who have been present during the whole of the trial shall be allowed to vote therein, nor may any member who has been absent be thereafter counted in the computation of a quorum. The clerk shall keep an accurate roll of the members attending each session of the court.

14. When the trial court has concluded its deliberations, the moderator shall announce its judgment on each charge. If the accused has been found guilty, the court shall state what censure it proposes to pronounce upon the accused. The censure shall not be pronounced before the expiration of the time in which the accused may file notice of appeal. If notice of appeal is filed and an appeal is taken within the time prescribed by this Book of Discipline, the court may not execute its judgment unless and until the judgment is affirmed by the highest court to which appeal is taken.

15. The trial court shall preserve a complete stenographic record of the trial including the following: charges and specifications; objections made by the accused at any stage of the trial; the testimony of witnesses; and all rulings and findings of the court as well as the minutes of its private deliberations. This record, together with all relevant papers, shall be certified by the clerk of the trial court and transmitted to the higher court in cases of appeal. This record shall include either a complete stenographic record or a record made by electronic recording devices. If electronic recording devices are used, at least two such devices must be employed under the supervision of the clerk. These recordings must be certified by both the clerk and the moderator of the trial.



16. The accused shall be allowed one copy of the record at the expense of the trial body. Additional copies may be obtained by him at cost.

17. The accused may except to any and all rulings or findings made by the trial court. All such exceptions must be entered on the record.

## **CHAPTER V**

### ***Evidence in Judicial Cases***

1. Evidence must be of a factual nature. It may be direct or circumstantial. Caution should be exercised in giving weight to evidence which is purely circumstantial.

2. Any person may be a witness in a judicial case if the trial court is satisfied that he has sufficient intelligence to understand, and can sincerely take the following oath, or make the following affirmation:

“I solemnly swear (affirm) in the presence of the omniscient and heart-searching God that I will speak the whole truth concerning the matters on which I am called to testify, as I shall answer to Almighty God.”

The moderator shall require each witness before he testifies to take this oath or make this affirmation.

3. The accused may object to the competency and relevancy of any testimony or evidence produced in support of the charges and specifications. The trial court shall decide on all such objections after allowing the accused to be heard in support thereof.

4. Proof of a charge may be attempted by oral testimony or by duly authenticated documents. The testimony of at least two witnesses, or the testimony of one witness accompanied with admissible documentary evidence, shall be necessary in order to establish the truth of any specification.

5. If the accused requests, no witness called to prove facts in support of any one specification shall testify in the presence of another witness who is to testify concerning the same specification.

6. In a case initiated by a court, it shall appoint one of its members as a prosecutor, whose duty it is to secure a fair presentation of known facts to the court. He shall organize, direct, and present the case for the prosecution. He shall have no part in the deliberations or decisions of the trial court. Witnesses named in the specifications shall first be examined by the prosecutor. The accused may then cross-examine. If the prosecutor or members of the court ask further questions, the accused shall be given opportunity for re-cross-examination. Witnesses summoned at the request of the accused shall first be examined by the accused. If the prosecutor cross-examines, the accused shall be given opportunity to conduct a re-direct examination. Leading questions shall be permitted only under cross-examination.

7. Private parties shall have the right to act before any court as prosecutors or be represented by counsel, who shall meet the qualifications set forth in Chapter IV, section 9.

8. Regularly authenticated records of a court may be received in evidence in any other court.

9. All questions concerning the relevancy or competency of evidence taken by a commission at a distance shall be determined by the trial court after the accused has been given an opportunity to be heard.

10. If new evidence is produced after one accused has been found guilty, the trial court shall examine the evidence. If it is satisfied that there was good reason for not producing it at the trial, it shall grant a new trial, or, if an appeal has been lodged, it shall certify these facts to the appellate court, and the record of the case may then be returned to the trial court for the purpose of a new trial, or the higher court may conclude the case after hearing the new evidence as if it were a trial court.

11. New evidence discovered during a trial may be offered, but, if such evidence is produced against the accused, he shall be given at least ten days in which to investigate it and prepare a reply thereto.

**CHAPTER VI*****Cases Without Full Process***

1. When a person comes before a court as his own accuser, it may proceed to judgment without full process, determining, first, what offense, if any, has been committed, and, if it appears that an offense has been committed, what censure should be pronounced.
2. Members may be removed from the membership at their own request by informing the Session of their intention to withdraw and their reasons. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Session may attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal growth. If the Session is unable to resolve those matters, it may offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to his gifts and needs. If allegations or charges of an offense have been presented to the Session, a request for removal of membership shall not be given effect until the prescribed process has been properly concluded. When a member unites with another church without a certificate of dismissal, the Session shall erase his name from the roll and record the reason in its minutes. When a member removes from the bounds of the congregation and cannot be found, the Session may after a time deemed sufficient, but no longer than two years, erase his name from the roll recording the reason in the minutes.
3. When a minister renounces the jurisdiction of the Bible Presbyterian Church by abandoning his ministry and membership therein, or by declaring himself independent, or by joining another body not deemed heretical without a regular dismissal, the Presbytery shall erase his name from its roll and record the reason in its minutes. If a minister joins a body deemed heretical, his name shall be erased from the roll and all particular Churches, all Churches with which this Church is in correspondence, and the public generally so far as possible shall be notified that he has ceased to be a minister of this Church and has abandoned the faith of the Church catholic. When a minister has been absent from the meetings of Presbytery for two years, and the Presbytery after diligent search is unable to find him, his name shall be erased from the roll.

4. When a minister shall ask to be relieved of the office of the holy ministry, the Presbytery shall require him to wait one year, and meanwhile shall labor with him diligently to ascertain whether his proposed action is necessary and proper. If at the end of a year his desire is unchanged and the Presbytery is satisfied as to the sufficiency of his reasons, the Presbytery shall record the facts in its minutes and erase his name from the roll.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### ***Censure and Restoration***

1. In judicial discipline there are five degrees of censure: admonition, rebuke, suspension, deposition, and excommunication. Censures shall be pronounced by the moderator for the trial court in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's only Head and King.

2. If a person, adjudged guilty and remaining under the jurisdiction of this Church, refuses or fails to present himself for censure, the trial court shall again cite the person to appear. If he does not appear after a second citation, the censure shall be imposed in his absence. Wilful refusal to appear may be deemed an aggravation of the original offense.

3. Admonition consists in tenderly and solemnly addressing the offender, placing his sin before him, warning him of his danger, and exhorting him to repentance and greater fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Rebuke is a form of censure more severe than admonition. It consists in setting forth the serious character of the offense, reproving the offender, and exhorting him to repentance and more perfect fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Suspension is a form of censure by which one is deprived of the privileges of communicant membership in the Church, from office, or from both. It may be for a definite or an indefinite time. Suspension of an officer from the communion of the Church shall always be accompanied with suspension from office, but the latter does not necessarily involve the former.

6. An office-bearer or other communicant member of the Church, while under suspension, shall be the object of deep solicitude and earnest dealing to the end that he may be restored. When the trial court which pronounces the censure is satisfied of the penitence of the offender, or when the time of suspension has expired and no new offense has arisen, the censure shall be removed, and the offender shall be restored. This restoration shall be accompanied with solemn admonition. Restoration to the privileges of communion may take place without restoration to office.

7. Deposition of an officer consists in depriving him permanently of the exercise of his office, and may follow upon conviction of heresy or gross immorality.

8. Deposition of a pastor or his suspension for an indefinite time involves the dissolution of the pastoral tie. The sentence of deposition or suspension shall be read before the congregation, and the pulpit shall be declared vacant. In case of suspension for a limited period the Presbytery shall decide whether the pastoral relation shall be dissolved.

9. When a minister has been deposed or has been suspended for an indefinite time, the court shall immediately notify all the presbyteries of the Church.

10. Excommunication is the most severe form of censure and is resorted to only in cases of peculiar aggravation and persistent impenitence. It consists in solemnly excluding the offender from the communion of the visible Church of Jesus Christ.

11. The suspension, deposition, or excommunication of an officer or other member of the Church shall be announced to the Church in which the officer concerned holds office, or in which the member concerned holds membership. Such announcement shall be accompanied with an urgent request for prayer for the offender to the end that he may be restored.

12. When, after the passing of a year, a suspended person has failed to repent, it may be the duty of the court to impose further censure and it may proceed to deposition or excommunication or both, after

investigation of the present status of the person involved and consideration of the effect of the action upon the church.

13. The censures herein set forth shall always be accompanied with prayer to God that He may graciously use the act of discipline for the restoration of the offender, the edification of the Church, and His own glory.

14. An officer deposed because of immoral conduct shall be restored only upon the most evident repentance, and after the court has assured itself that the restoration will not be attended by injury to the cause of the Gospel.

15. A minister, ruling elder, or deacon who has been lawfully deposed cannot resume his former office without again being ordained.

16. Restoration, which may be accomplished even after the extreme penalty of excommunication, shall always be accompanied with a prayer of thanksgiving to God for his redeeming grace.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### ***Appeals***

1. An appeal is the removal of a judicial case to the next higher court by the filing of a petition asking that the judgment of a lower court be reversed or modified. An appeal may be taken by the accused, or by a prosecutor when a judgment of guilty has been reversed or modified by an appellate court.

2. Preliminary decisions made by the trial court during the course of a trial may be excepted to and then may be assigned as grounds of appeal from the final judgment of the court.

3. If an appeal is contemplated, written notice of appeal must, within fifteen days after the judgment has been announced, be filed with the clerk or the moderator of the court from which appeal is taken.

4. In order to perfect an appeal, the appellant must lodge the appeal and the specifications of error with the clerk of the appellate judicatory within forty-five days after the filing of the notice of

appeal. The appellant shall also serve a copy of the appeal upon the clerk of the court from whose judgment the appeal is taken. The clerk of the appellate court shall give the appellant and the court from which the appeal is taken reasonable notice of the time and place fixed for the hearing of the appeal.

5. The clerk of the court from which the appeal is taken shall lodge the entire record of the case with the clerk of the higher court.

6. If the appellate court does not sustain any of the specifications of error, the judgment of the lower court shall be affirmed. If one or more material specifications of error are sustained, the appellate court shall reverse or modify the judgment, or return the case to the lowest court for a new trial.

7. When the judgment of a lower court is before an appellate court, no member of the court from which the appeal is taken shall have any part in the decision of the case.

## **CHAPTER IX**

### ***Removal of Non-judicial Causes From a Lower to a Higher Court***

1. Non-Judicial decisions of all church courts under the General Synod are subject to the review of the next higher court, and may be removed thereto in one of the following ways, namely: (1) General Review or (2) Complaint. When a matter is so removed, the lower court shall become a party, and its members shall not be entitled to deliberate and vote in the higher court.

### **GENERAL REVIEW**

2. The record of every court, except the General Synod, shall be reviewed by the next higher court, at least once a year, and may be called for at any time. If the lower court fail to send up its record, the higher court may order it to be produced immediately, or on a day named.

3. The higher court, after inquiring into: (1) the regularity of the proceedings minuted, (2) the correctness of the record, shall order the record to be attested, if necessary *cum nota*. In connection with such a review the higher court may give special instruction or admonition to the lower, and may order any part of the record that is irregular to be cancelled or deleted; but a judicial sentence may not be reversed.

4. Notwithstanding attestation of the record, if, after such review, it comes to the knowledge of the higher court that a lower court neglects its duty, or has committed grave irregularities, it may take such cognizance thereof as is deemed necessary.

### **COMPLAINTS**

5. A member of a lower court may complain to the higher court. Notice of such complaint must be given to the clerk of the court within ten days. The complaint itself must be lodged with the clerk of the higher court within thirty days after the notice is given.

6. The court may prepare answers to reasons of complaint, and appoint some of its members to defend its action before the higher court.

7. The complainant, having obtained certified extracts of minutes and relative documents as craved, shall bring the cause before the higher court. If, when the case is called, he does not appear, or fails to assign a sufficient reason for his absence, the complaint or appeal shall be held as fallen from.

8. In cases of sickness, unavoidable detention, or inability to be present from other good cause, the complainant may be excused from appearing in person and be permitted to plead by written communication and deputy.

9. A complaint shall bring up all parties concerned, who must be duly cited by the clerk of the lower court.

10. The effect of a complaint shall be, if signed by one-third or more of the members present when the vote was taken, to arrest execution



of the judgment pronounced until the matter be reviewed by the higher court.

11. The higher court, after ascertaining that a complaint has been regularly made, and that all parties have been duly notified, shall call the parties to the bar and the whole of the record of the lower court is read. The parties shall then be heard, the complainant having the right of reply. Questions may then be put by the court relative to any matter affecting the cause in hand, after which parties shall be removed from the bar, and the court shall proceed to deliberate.

12. When a decision or judgment is reached, parties shall be recalled and the decision or judgment of the court shall be announced to them.

13. If a complaint or appeal is dismissed, the decision of the lower court stands affirmed. If it be sustained, the decision is not necessarily reversed but may be altered in part or in whole, and the matter may be remitted to the lower court with instructions. Or the higher court may, if circumstances appear to require it, waive altogether the merits of the complaint or appeal, and give such a decision in the original cause as is consistent with truth and justice.

## **CHAPTER X**

### ***Protests, Petitions, Memorials, and Overtures***

1. Any member of a court who has voted on a question and is not satisfied with the decision, is entitled to have his protest recorded. By so doing he relieves himself from responsibility for the decision, and saves himself from censure on account of it. The protest must be given in when the decision is announced. Reasons of protest given in at the time, or within ten days, if in proper language, shall be entered in the minutes. When deemed necessary, the court shall prepare answers which shall be entered in the minutes.

2. Members who have voted in the minority may signify their adherence to a protest and have their adherence recorded, either at the time, or at the following sederunt, when the minutes are confirmed, but not afterwards.

3. Every member of the Church has the right of access to any Church court by petition or memorial. He has direct access to the Session of the congregation to which he belongs, but a petition or memorial to a higher court must, in the first place, be presented to the Session, with a request for its transmission.

4. A lower court shall transmit a petition or memorial with or without approval or concurrence, as it sees fit. Before transmitting, the court should see that the petition or memorial is in proper form and expressed in respectful language. If transmission is refused, the petitioner or memorialist shall have the right of appeal. These provisions shall apply alike to a petition or memorial from an individual, from any number of persons, from a congregation, or from a lower court.

5. When a court of the Church wishes to propose an amendment to the Constitution, or generally the adoption of any measure appertaining to the functions of the General Synod, an overture on the subject shall be presented.

6. All petitions, memorials, and overtures intended for the General Synod shall be sent by the clerks of the lower courts, or by the parties signing them, to the clerk of the Synod.

## **GLOSSARY**

**APPEAL** is a communication to a higher court of a judicial nature (see Book of Discipline VIII).

**PROTEST** is a dissent from the decision of any court by a member who voted on that matter.

**COMPLAINT** is a communication from a member of a lower court objecting to a non-judicial action of a lower court to a higher court (see Book of Discipline IX:13).

**OVERTURE:** Amendments to the Constitution or calls for the Synod to change the manner in which it functions may be presented by means of an overture. An overture must originate with a court of the church.

PETITION is the means of requesting a court to take administrative (non-judicial) action which does not involve amendments to the Constitution or calls for the Synod to change the manner in which it functions.

MEMORIAL is a non-judicial statement to a court of the church which does not seek action.

For definitions of “judicial” and “non-judicial,” see Book of Discipline Chapter I.

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Amended by the 55<sup>th</sup>, 56<sup>th</sup>, 58<sup>th</sup>, 66<sup>th</sup>, and 69<sup>th</sup> General Synods of the Bible Presbyterian Church.