

The Fulton Confession of 1900

Fulton Convention Preface

Many of our brethren have desired for years that a general or national meeting be held for the purpose of uniting our people everywhere in doctrine and practice; others have feared that this end could not be attained in this way, and so hesitated to encourage the move.

Every lover of our people has been grieved and deeply distressed to see our dear old Baptists torn into factions in so many places. With an earnest desire to see union and harmony prevail among us everywhere, by request of the Fulton Church, we met on November 14, 1900, and continued four days in session with the Fulton Church in Fulton, Ky.

The prayers for union among us and for God's blessings upon our efforts could be read on the faces of all present, and as the weighty matters mentioned in this Confession of Faith were read and reread tears filled many eyes. There was a feeling among all present that God's blessings would rest on our efforts. Not one present showed any desire to domineer over the rest.

In the committee rooms the brethren showed the utmost possible regard for each other's feelings, and every measure was approved by unanimous vote. The London Confession of Faith was approved by a unanimous vote of the meeting. In view of the fact that this instrument was written more than two hundred years ago and that our language naturally undergoes some change in so long a time, it was deemed prudent to add some explanations to those sections that seemed ambiguous.

The whole Confession, with the explanatory notes, was approved by a unanimous vote, and we now offer the whole in this form to our dear brethren everywhere, with the fervent prayer to Almighty God that it may be received and approved by our suffering Zion with the same unanimity and tender love with which it has been approved in this meeting, and that our feeble efforts may result in establishing union and fellowship among us everywhere, and that we may go to our homes from this place with a renewed energy in laboring for peace and union among all our people, and to this end we beg all our people everywhere to unite with us in prayer to the Lord God Almighty to remember us with a blessing, that our eyes may see days of increased gladness and the sweetest union among our people.

Signed in behalf of the whole assembly.

James H. Oliphant, Moderator

Will M. Strickland, Clerk

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The Fulton General Address

Pursuant to a call of the Primitive Baptist Church of Fulton, Ky., the elders and messengers of the Church of God known as Primitive Baptists, being convened from various places in the United States of America, in the city of Fulton, Ky., from the fourteenth day of November to the eighteenth day of the same month, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred. To all of like precious faith with us, Greeting.

Recognizing with humble gratitude the gracious and divine providence of God in giving us the kingdom and preserving its order and purity through the lapse of many hundred years, fraught with commotions, revolutions, and other Vicissitudes of human life, we do feel under profound obligations to thank God and labor faithfully for the prosperity of his holy cause.

1. The Importance of Fellowship cannot be overestimated. It is the sacred cord that binds together the members of this holy community. Since there is no tribunal higher than the local churches to which they may appeal, their safety and perpetuity depends on the preservation of their fellowship.

2. Bars of Fellowship set up by our local churches have been the most destructive influences against the growth and progress of the Church. Traditions of men and human customs being regarded as authority have often given rise to bars of fellowship and resulted in the destruction of the peace of the churches. Such customs and traditions as have no Bible sanction should never interfere with fellowship. It is painful to note on the pages of history how frequently our people have been divided and their happiness destroyed by foolish and sinful declarations of non-fellowship. We do most solemnly and prayerfully beseech all our churches and people that they raise no bars of fellowship against any Primitive Baptist with whom they are agreed on fundamental principles – such as the eternal salvation of sinners, wholly by grace and entirely unconditional on the sinner's part, and who are sound and orderly in the ordinances of the Church, administering baptism by immersion to penitent believers only by ministers of the gospel clothed with authority by the Gospel Church, and administering the Lord's Supper to such baptized believers only, and who manifest a willingness to labor for the peace, union, and fellowship of the whole body.

The gospel is God's appointed remedy for the correction of errors in his Church, and it is in every way sufficient to correct errors among the children of God, if lovingly and faithfully employed. When bars of fellowship are raised they exclude the erring from the God-appointed remedy for the correction of their errors and render restoration hopeless.

When bars of fellowship are unlawfully raised among our people the bond of union by which our churches are held together is broken and the welfare of the cause exposed to the most uncertain

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results. If the raisers thereof cannot be induced to remove them at once, the only course for those who want to remain in this holy Church union is to discard their actions and have no connection with them until they withdraw such bars of fellowship.

3. Heresy being so positively forbidden by the Scriptures, we deem it important to have a clear, accurate, and concise understanding of what the word implies. We take heresy to mean a departure from the teachings of the Scripture as explained in our acknowledged Confession of Faith, but not mere differences of opinion upon immaterial points of doctrine and practice upon which the Bible makes no positive statements.

The Bible does not state the day nor the hour upon which members shall be received in the Church, nor the Lord's Supper administered. It mentions neither hymnbooks, associations, formal letter correspondence, nor general handshaking. So upon all such matters liberty should be allowed, provided that everything is done in decency and in order, and the books used are sound in sentiment.

No doctrine nor practice that violates neither the Scripture nor acknowledged confession should be construed as heresy. The treatment of heresy requires but little comment. The Bible plainly states that a heretic, after the first and second admonition, shall be rejected (Titus 3:10), but let it be fully known that an action or doctrine is heresy before action is taken against it. We deem it unsafe to deal with a man as a heretic unless he avows the heresy. In cases where divisions have been forced in the Church by bars of fellowship or otherwise we do earnestly and prayerfully beg our brethren not to go to law over Church property. We believe it is better to take what would be paid out in cost of suit and expend it in a house than to gain the house by law, and much more in harmony with the teaching of our dear Saviour.

4. The Right of an Individual Church to discipline her members is clearly taught in the Scriptures. From the decision of an orderly church, in matters of discipline, there is no appeal. The church is the only authority to which complaint may be made. Only when a church has refused or neglected to discipline a member or members whose actions are bringing reproach or distress upon the cause in general, or when a church, in the opinion of sister churches, has so far indulged in disorderly practices as to render her incapable of proper self-government, or when she has departed from the faith, has a council of churches any right to consider her case, unless they are specially called on by her to do so. For instruction of churches in such cases as described above we refer them to the London Confession of Faith, Chapter XXVI., Section 15.

5. Restoration of Disorderly Churches is a subject that has given much concern to our people. Then churches are guilty of only irregularity in doctrine and practice and are willing to disclaim such irregularities and return to primitive order, it is our candid opinion that they should be received

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into the general fellowship of the denomination without being required to perform the impossible task of counteracting every individual irregularity.

6. That Associations may be made an advantage to the churches none would hardly deny. That they have sometimes been abused and made a disadvantage none will dare deny. Associations are useful in keeping the churches in sympathetic touch with each other. They can be made useful by making them a place of worship, a place to obtain news from the different churches in the community, by laboring to cultivate a spirit of love and fellowship and of Christian forbearance by putting in the time in trying to build up the cause of Christ rather than trying to impose our peculiar notions on others. Associations may be abused and rendered injurious by the opposite of the above.

7. The Care and Encouragement and Duties of the Ministry is a subject of too great magnitude to be passed by lightly. It is very thoroughly [covered], however, in the London Confession of Faith, approved by this convention. We most earnestly request a careful study of the subject in that document (read Confession, Chapter XXVI., Section 10. See also Minutes of Black Rock Convention.) It was evidently the belief of our London brethren, supported by the Holy Scriptures, that ministers of the Word should give their entire time, energy, and talent to their ministry, and the brethren should divide with them a sufficient portion of their living to keep them and their families who are not capable of self support above want. It is a positive fact that our appreciation of any object is increased by the amount of care and labor we bestow upon it. It is natural for a mother to love her babe, but as she cares for it from day to day the intensity of her affection increases. A father and mother may take a child not their own to rear, and at first feel a slight indifference, but nights of watchful solicitude and days of toil and care will render that child so dear that they with difficulty distinguish it from their own children. So a church that cares for her pastor loves him better and appreciates his service more than one that does not. There is a holy relation between pastor and evangelist that should not be ignored. The pastor should welcome the evangelist and his labor and show him due courtesy and consideration. In return the evangelist should remember that it is the pastor's duty and privilege to preside over the church and administer its ordinances. No evangelist should assume to administer any ordinance in the church when the pastor is present unless he is specially requested to do so by the church and pastor. The work of an evangelist is indispensable. Without such work the gospel kingdom would be extended no farther, as it is the chief work of an evangelist to introduce the gospel where it is not known. And to organize churches there should be no lack of appreciation of either pastor or evangelist, as both are indispensable in the upbuilding and progress of the church and authorized by the Word of God. (See Ephesians 4:11.) If the claim of Primitive Baptists be true, no one has access to baptism, the elements in the Lord's Supper, or any other gospel privilege where there is no Primitive Baptist church or ministry. In view of the vast territory in our own country that is absolutely ignorant of Primitive Baptist doctrine, and therefore totally destitute of church privileges, and as the redeemed

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of the Lord are among every nation, kindred, tongue, and people under heaven (Rev. 5:9) we behold the great necessity of stirring our people up on this subject.

This clearly demonstrates that we claim too much or do too little. We earnestly solicit our people to encourage the work of an evangelist. Not to spend his time in visiting large and well-organized churches, but to labor with the feeble and destitute churches and in places where there is no church. The churches should lovingly, freely, and faithfully contribute of their carnal means as God has blessed them to the support of brethren engaged in this needful work. We would not be understood to regard that there are degrees in the ministry, but different lines of work in the same office.

It is the special duty of the deacons to superintend the financial interest of the church. They should have control of the church treasury and expend it in serving tables. First, the table of the Lord. Secondly, the table of the poor. Thirdly, the table of elders that labor for them. They should receive the donations from the brethren and keep a correct account of same and report to the church, that it may know who are bearing the burdens of the church. The object of the deacons is to equalize the burdens of the churches. (See Practical Suggestions to Primitive Baptists, by Elder Cash.)

8. The London Confession of Faith, adopted over two hundred years ago by thirty-seven of the ablest ministers of England and Wales, representing over one hundred churches, has served one of the most needful services among our people of any document of faith since the days of the apostles, and has stood unquestioned as an expression of the Primitive Baptist's interpretation of the Bible from then till now. At the present assembly of fifty-one ministers, representing three hundred and thirty-five churches, aggregating fourteen thousand five hundred members in direct correspondence with over one hundred thousand Baptists, the Confession has been carefully read and approved.

Language through the lapse of many years undergoes variations in applications and meanings, whereby certain clauses become more or less obscure in meaning. Wherever, in the opinion of this assembly, the meaning of a section was not apparent, footnotes were added to bring out the meaning. The office of this Confession of Faith is not to be regarded as a standard of faith and practice, but as an expression of our interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, which is the only rule of faith and practice. We recommend the Confession with the notes to careful perusal of all Primitive Baptists, and insist that they make themselves familiar with its teaching. Believing that such a course would obviate many of the difficulties that have so sadly distressed our beloved Zion in the few years passed, we would be glad to see this document, that has stood the test as an expression of our faith for more than two hundred years, become uniformly used in our local churches as their expression of faith and practice.

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Praying God's blessings on his holy cause everywhere and that general prosperity may soon follow, we are your obedient servants and ministers of the gospel in the fear and love of God.

John M. Thompson, Greenfield, Ind.	James H. Oliphant, Crawfordsville, Ind.
J.W. Richardson, Petersburg, Ind.	E.W. Thomas, Danville, Ind.
Will M. Strickland, Fort Branch, Ind.	H.A. Todd, Grayville, Ill.
C.F. Stuckey, Carmi, Ill.	I.J. Fuller, West Salem, Ill.
Simon Reeder, Cottonwood, Ill.	John Williford, Greenville, Ill.
Daniel Lowery, Dalgren, Ill.	W.A. Fish, Benton, Ill.
J.B. Hardy, Calvin, Ill.	J.V. Kirkland, Fulton, Ky.
R.S. Kirkland, Fulton, Ky.	J.J. Kirkland, Fulton, Ky.
J.C. Ross, Crutchfield, Ky.	P.G. Johnson, Rutherford, Tenn.
C.F. Caruthers, Friendship, Tenn.	G.T. Mayo, Dresden, Tenn.
R.C. Taylor, Milan, Tenn.	E.B. Simmons, Mixie, Tenn.
J.N. Wallace, Tumbling, Tenn.	J.L. Butler, West, Tenn.
C.H. Cayce, Martin, Tenn.	J.B. Holbrook, Rutherford, Tenn.
W.T. Jackson, Ruthville, Tenn.	Church Peel, Maury City, Tenn.
J.G. Webb, Bonham, Tex.	J.T. Stewart, Diamond, Ala.
W.J. McCormick, Monroe, Ala.	R.L. Piles, Poteau, Ark.
J.B. Little, Abbott, Ark.	J.K. Stephens, Brinkley, Ark.
Lee Hanks, Boston, Ga.	L.F. Wallace, Elva, Ky.
W.M. Hopper, Pottertown, Ky.	K.M. Myatt, Clinton, Ky.;
A.M. Kirkland, Whitlock, Tenn.	S.L. Pettus, Triune, Tenn.
S.F. Cayce, Martin, Tenn.	W.E. Brush, Clarksburg, Tenn.
John Grist, Covington, Tenn.	B.O. Deering, ---, Tenn.
E.M. Verell, Trebloc, Miss.	W.T. Goddard, Milner, Ga.
T.E. Sikes, Cox, Ga.	E.D. Williams, Taylor, Miss.
J.C. Wilkison, McComb City, Miss.	Ira Turner, Ashland, Mo.
I.N. Newkirk, Dayton, Wash.	

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Preface to the Second London Baptist Confession

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

Hansard Knollys, Pastor, Broken Wharf, London
William Kiffin, Pastor, Devonshiresquare, London
John Harris, Pastor, Joiner's Hall, London
William Collins, Pastor, Petty France, London
Hurcules Collins, Pastor, Wapping, London
Robert Steed, Pastor, Broken Wharf, London
Leonard Harrison, Pastor, Limehouse, London
George Barret, Pastor, Mile End Green, London
Isaac Lamb, Pastor, Pennington-street, London
Richard Adams, Minister, Shad Thames, Southwark
Benjamin Keach, Pastor, Horse-liedown, Southwark
Andrew Gifford, Pastor, Bristol, Frvars, Som. & Glouc.
Thomas Vaux, Pastor, Broadmead, Som. & Glouc.
Daniel Finch, Minister, Kingsworth, Herts
John Ball, Tiverton, Devon
Edmond White, Pastor, Evershall, Bedford
William Prichard, Pastor, Blaenau, Monmouth
Paul Fruin, Minister, Warwick, Warwick
Richard Ring, Pastor, Southampton, Hants
John Tomkins, Minister, Abingdon, Berks
Toby Willes, Pastor, Bridgewater, Somerset
John Carter, Steventon, Bedford
James Webb, Devizes, Wilts
Richard Sutton, Pastor, Tring, Herts
Robert Knight, Pastor, Stukeley, Bucks
Edward Price, Pastor, Hereford City, Hereford
William Phipps, Pastor, Exon, Devon
William Hawkins, Pastor, Dimmock, Gloucester

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Thomas Winnel, Pastor, Taunton, Som. & Glouc.
James Hitt, Preacher, Dalwood, Dorset
Richard Tidmarsh, Minister, Oxford City, Oxon
William Facey, Pastor, Reading, Berks
Samuel Buttall, Minister, Plymouth, Devon
Christopher Price, Minister, Abergayenny, Monmouth
Samuel Ewer, Pastor, Hemstead, Herts
Edward Man, Pastor, Houndsditch, London
Charles Archer, Pastor, Hock-Norton, Oxon

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

To The Judicial and Impartial Reader

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

And forasmuch as that Confession is not now commonly to be had, and also that many others have since embraced the same truth which is owned therein, it was judged necessary by us to join together in giving a testimony to the world of our firm adhering to those wholesome principles by the publication of this which is now in your hand. And forasmuch as our method and manner of expressing our sentiments in this doth vary from the former (although the substance of this matter is the same), we shall freely impart to you the reason and occasion thereof. One thing that greatly prevailed with us to undertake this work was (not only to give a full account of ourselves to those Christians that differ from us about the subject of baptism, but also) the profit that might from

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thence arise unto those that have any account of our labors in their instruction and establishment in the great truths of the Gospel, in the clear understanding and steady belief of which our comfortable walking with God, and fruitfulness before him in all our ways, is most nearly concerned; and therefore we did conclude it necessary to express ourselves the more fully and distinctly; and also to fix on such a method as might be most comprehensive of those things we designed to explain our sense and belief of; and finding no defect in this regard in that fixed on by the Assembly, and, after them by those of the congregational way, we did readily conclude it best to retain the same order in our present Confession; and also when we observed that those last mentioned did in their Confessions (for reasons which seemed of weight both to themselves and others) choose not only to express their mind in words concurrent with the former in sense concerning all those articles wherein they were agreed, but also for the most part without any variation of the terms, we did in like manner conclude it best to follow their example in making use of the very same words with them both in these articles (which are very many) wherein our faith and doctrine are the same with theirs; and this we did the more abundantly to manifest our consent with both in all the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, as also with many others whose orthodox Confessions have been published to the world on the behalf of the Protestant in diverse nations and cities. And also to convince all that we have no itch to clog religion with new words, but do readily acquiesce in that form of sound words which hath been, in consent with the Holy Scriptures, used by others before us; hereby declaring, before God, angels, and men, our hearty agreement with them in that wholesome Protestant doctrine which, with so clear evidence of Scriptures, they have asserted. Some things, indeed, are in some places added, some terms omitted, and some few changed; but these alterations are of that nature as that we need not doubt any charge or suspicion of unsoundness in the faith from any of our brethren upon the account of them.

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

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

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

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

We shall conclude with our earnest prayer that the God of all grace will pour out those measures of his Holy Spirit upon us, that the profession of truth may be accompanied with the sound belief

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and diligent practice of it by us, that his name may in all things be glorified through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Chapter 1 Of the Holy Scriptures

1. The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience,(1) although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary unto salvation.(2) Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His church;(3) 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 Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.(4)

(1) 2 Ti 3:15-17; Isa 8:20; Lk 16:29,31; Eph 2:20.

(2) Ro 1:19-21; 2:14-15; Ps 19:1-3.

(3) Heb 1:1.

(4) Pr 22:19-21; Ro 15:4; 2Pe 1:19-20.

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

Of the Old Testament

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Of the New Testament

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation

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All of which are given by the inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.(5)

(5) 2 Tim. 3:16.

3. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon or rule of the Scripture, and, therefore, are of no authority to the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings.(6)

(6) Lk 24:27,44; Ro 3:2.

4. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God(who is truth itself), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.(7)

(7) 2 Pet. 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Thes. 2:13; 1 Jn. 5:9.

5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church of God to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the 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, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections 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.(8)

(8) Jn 16:13-14; 1Co 2:10-12, 1Jn 2:20,27.

6. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men.(9)

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,(10) 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.(11)

Fulton Footnote: We do not understand this section to teach that eternal life is obtained by the understanding of or obedience to the Scriptures. We understand the last part of this section discourages the practice of making traditions and customs not clearly taught in God's Word

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bars of fellowship - such as handshaking, kneeling or standing in prayer, using certain hymn books, belonging or not belonging to an association, etc.

(9) 2Ti 3:15-17; Gal 1:8-9.

(10) Jn 6:45; 1Co 2:9-12.

(11) 1Co 11:13-14; 14:26,40.

7. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all;(12) yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.(13)

Fulton Footnote: We understand this relates to children of God having spiritual conception.

(12) 2Pe 3:16.

(13) Ps 19:7; 119:130.

8. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old),(14) and the New Testament in Greek(which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them.(15) But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read(16) and search them,(17) therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar[ie. common] language of every nation unto which they come,(18) that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship of Him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.(19)

(14) Ro 3:2.

(15) Isa 8:20.

(16) Ac 15:15.

(17) Jn 5:39.

(18) 1Co 14:6,9,11-12,24,28.

(19) Col 3:16.

9. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly.(20)

(20) 2Pe 1:20-21; Ac 15:15-16.

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10. The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.(21)

Fulton Footnote: We understand from this that those who advocate a principle upon the pretense of having had a revelation from heaven concerning that matter should be rejected.

(21) Mt 22:29,31-32; Eph 2:20; Ac 28:23.

Chapter 2 Of God and of the Holy Trinity

1. The Lord our God is but one only living and true God;(1) whose subsistence is in and of Himself,(2) infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself;(3) a most pure spirit,(4) invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto;(5) who is immutable,(6) immense,(7) eternal,(8) incomprehensible, almighty,(9) every way infinite, most holy,(10) most wise, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will(11) for His own glory;(12) most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him,(13) and withal most just and terrible in His judgements,(14) hating all sin,(15) and who will by no means clear the guilty.(16)

Fulton Footnote: We do not understand by the word "passion" that he is not a God of love, or that he is not angry with sin, but to teach that God is not a fallible, mutable being as man.

(1) 1Co 8:4,6; Dt 6:4.

(2) Jer 10:10; Isa 48:12.

(3) Ex 3:14.

(4) Jn 4:24.

(5) 1Ti 1:17; Dt 4:15-16.

(6) Mal 3:6.

(7) 1Ki 8:27; Jer 23:23.

(8) Ps 90:2.

(9) Ge 17:1.

(10) Isa 6:3.

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(11) Ps 115:3; Isa 46:10.

(12) Pr 16:4; Ro 11:36.

(13) Ex 34:6-7; Heb 11:6.

(14) Ne 9:32-33.

(15) Ps 5:5-6.

(16) Ex 34:7; Na 1:2-3.

2. God, having all life,(17) glory,(18) goodness,(19) blessedness, in and of Himself, is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creature which He hath made, nor deriving any glory from them,(20) 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,(21) and He hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever Himself pleaseth;(22) in His sight all things are open and manifest,(23) His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent or uncertain:(24) He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works,(25) and in all His commands; to Him is due from angels and men, whatsoever worship,(26) service, or obedience, as creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever He is further pleased to require of them.

(17) Jn 5:26.

(18) Ps 148:13.

(19) Ps 119:68.

(20) Job 22:2-3.

(21) Ro 11:34-36.

(22) Da 4:25,34-35.

(23) Heb 4:13.

(24) Eze 11:5; Ac 15:18.

(25) Ps 145:17.

(26) Rev 5:12-14.

3. In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, (27) of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided,(28) the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father;(29) the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son;(30) all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence upon Him.

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Fulton Footnote: We understand the words "of one substance" contradict the idea that God's people existed eternally in seed or substance in Christ, for this would establish a distinction in substance between the Father and the Son.

(27) 1 Jn 5:7; Mt 28:19; 2Co 13:14.

(28) Ex 3:14; Jn 14:11; 1Co 8:6.

(29) Jn 1:14,18.

(30) Jn 15:26; Gal 4:6.

Chapter 3 Of God's Decree

1. God hath decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever come to pass;(1) yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein;(2) nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established;(3) in which appears His wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.(4)

Fulton Footnote: This clearly distinguishes between God's attitude to sin and his attitude and relation to holiness. A failure to make this distinction has been a fruitful source of division and distress of our holy cause, and a failure to so distinguish between God's permissive and overruling decree of sin and his causative decree of holiness will ever cause distress and confusion among our people. This distinction is expressed in the last clause of Section 4, of Chapter V: "Which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth and otherwise ordereth and governeth in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends; yet so as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God." etc. Chapter IV., last part of Section 1: "Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to seduce Eve, then by her seducing Adam, who without any compulsion did willfully transgress the law of their creation and the command given unto them in eating the forbidden fruit, which God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory." We believe that God is perfect in wisdom and knowledge, knowing all things both good and evil from the beginning that would take place in time. That he is a Perfect Sovereign over all things, and that he absolutely and causatively predestinated all his works of creation and eternal salvation of his elect.

(1) Isa 46:10; Eph 1:11; Heb 6:17; Ro 9:15,18.

(2) Jas 1:13; 1Jn 1:5.

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(3) Ac 4:27-28; Jn 19:11.

(4) Nu. 23:19; Eph. 1:3-5.

2. Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions,(5) yet hath He not decreed anything, because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.(6)

(5) Ac 15:18.

(6) Ro 9:11,13,16,18.

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ,(7) to the praise of His glorious grace;(8) others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice.(9)

(7) 1Ti 5:21; Mt 25:34.

(8) Eph 1:5-6.

(9) Ro 9:22-23; Jude 4.

4. These angels and men thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.(10)

(10) 2Ti 2:19; Jn 13:18.

5. Those of mankind that are predestined to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love,(11) without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto.(12)

Fulton Footnote: We understand that the words "without any other thing in the creature as a condition," etc., deny that the cause of election exists in the subject of salvation.

(11) Eph 1:4,9,11; Ro 8:30; 2Ti 1:9; 1Th 5:9.

(12) Ro 9:13,16; Eph 2:5,12.

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so He hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto;(13) wherefore they who are elect, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ,(14) are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified,(15) and kept by His power through faith unto salvation;(16) neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.(17)

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Fulton Footnote: We do not understand the words "all the means thereunto" include other means than those especially set out in this section. "Redeemed by Christ," "effectually called," "by his spirit," etc.

(13) 1Pe 1:2; 2Th 2:13.

(14) 1Th 5:9-10.

(15) Ro 8:30; 2Th 2:13.

(16) 1Pe 1:5.

(17) Jn 10:26; 17:9; 6:64.

7. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; (18) so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise,(19) reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility,(20) diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.(21)

(18) 1Th 1:4-5; 2Pe 1:10.

(19) Eph 1:6; Ro 11:33.

(20) Ro. 11:5-6,20.

(21) Lk 10:20.

Chapter 4 Of Creation

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

(1) Jn 1:2-3; Heb 1:2; Job 26:13.

(2) Ro 1:20.

(3) Col 1:16; Ge 1:31.

2. After God hath made all other creatures, He created man, male and female,(4) with reasonable and immortal souls,(5) rendering them fit unto that life to God for which they were created; being made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness;(6) having the law of God written in their hearts,(7) and power to fulfil it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change.(8)

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- (4) Ge 1:27.
- (5) Ge 2:7.
- (6) Ecc 7:29; Ge 1:26.
- (7) Ro 2:14-15.
- (8) Ge 3:6.

3. Besides the law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil,(9) which whilst they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures. (10)

- (9) Ge 2:17.
- (10) Ge 1:26,28.

Chapter 5 Of Divine Providence

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

Fulton Footnote: Should not be construed to mean that God directs and governs all creatures and things in all they do, so that he brings to pass all their acts, both good and evil.

- (1) Heb 1:3; Job 38:11; Isa 46:10-11; Ps 135:6.
- (2) Mt 10:29-31.
- (3) Eph 1:11.

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly;(4) so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without His providence;(5) yet by the same providence He ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.(6)

- (4) Ac 2:23.
- (5) Pr 16:33.
- (6) Ge 8:22.

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3. God, in His ordinary providence maketh use of means,(7) yet is free to work without,(8) above,(9) and against them (10) at His pleasure.

(7) Ac 27:31,44; Isa 55:10-11.

(8) Hos 1:7.

(9) Ro 4:19-21.

(10) Da 3:27.

4. The Almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in His providence, that His determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men;(11) and that not by a bare permission, which also He most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth,(12) in a manifold dispensation to His most holy ends;(13) yet so, as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.(14)

Fulton Footnote: We understand this section to teach that while God does not cause men to sin, nor is his predestination in its attitude to sin causative, yet that he exercises such a control over all his creatures as that all chance and uncertainty is excluded from the universe.

(11) Ro 11:32-34; 2Sa 24:1; 1Ch 21:1.

(12) 2 Ki 19:28; Ps 76:10.

(13) Ge 1:20; Isa 10:6-7,12.

(14) Ps 50:21; 1Jn 2:16.

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season His own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon Himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends.(15)

So that whatsoever befalls any of His elect is by His appointment, for His glory, and their good.(16)

Fulton Footnote: We understand that the first part of this section teaches that God's government of his children in this world is parental and not judicial. We do not understand the words "whatsoever befalls any of his elect" to teach that it is good for God's people to sin, but that it teaches that the afflictions and trials through which they are called to pass work for their good and his glory.

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(15) 2 Ch 32:25-26,31; 2 Co 12:7-9.

(16) Ro 8:28.

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous judge, for former sin doth blind and harden;(17) from them He not only withholdeth His grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding,and wrought upon their hearts;(18) but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had,(19) and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin;(20) and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan,(21) whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, under those means which God useth for the softening of others.(22)

(17) Ro 1:24-26,28; 11:7-8.

(18) Dt 29:4.

(19) Mt 13:12.

(20) Dt 2:30; 2Kn 8:12-13.

(21) Ps 81:11-12; 2Th 2:10-12.

(22) Ex 8:15,32; Isa 6:9-10; 1Pe 2:7-8.

7. As the providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a more special manner it taketh care of His church, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof. (23)

(23) 1 Ti 4:10; Am 9:8-9; Isa 43:3-5.

Chapter 6 **Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof**

1. Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof,(1) yet he did not long abide in this honour; Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, then by her seducing Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit,(2) which God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.

Fulton Footnote: We understand the word "permit" as here and elsewhere used in this Confession, to mean "to suffer," "not hinder." We are not to understand that obedience unto the law given to Adam would have been unto eternal life, but to a perpetuation of natural life.

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- (1) Ge 2:16-17.
- (2) Ge 3:12-13; 2Co 11:3.

2. Our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them whereby death came upon all;(3) all becoming dead in sin, (4) and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.(5)

- (3) Ro 3:23.
- (4) Ro 5:12-21.
- (5) Tit 1:15; Ge 6:5; Jer 17:9; Ro 3:10-19.

3. They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation,(6) being now conceived in sin,(7) and by nature children of wrath,(8) the servants of sin, the subjects of death,(9) and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, an eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free.(10)

- (6) Ro 5:12-19; 1 Co 15:21-22,45,49.
- (7) Ps 51:5; Job 14:4.
- (8) Eph 2:3.
- (9) Ro 6:20; 5:12.
- (10) Heb 2:14-15; 1Th 1:10.

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil;(11) do proceed all actual transgressions.(12)

- (11) Ro 8:7; Col 1:21.
- (12) Jas 1:14-15; Mt 15:19.

5. The corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated;(13) and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and the first motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.(14)

- (13) Ro 7:18,23; Ecc 7:20; 1Jn 1:8.
- (14) Ro 7:23-25; Gal 5:17.

Chapter 7 Of God's Covenant

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

(1) Lk 17:10; Job 35:7-8.

2. Moreover, man having brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace,(2) wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved;(3) and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life, His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.(4)

Fulton Footnote: By the words "offereth unto sinners life and salvation" etc., we do not understand that the gift of eternal life is offered to alien sinners, but should be understood as meaning the assurance or enjoyment of spiritual or divine life, as is taught in John 20:30,31 and Galatians 6:7,8. The following places in the Confession describe the alien sinners as being unable to accept an offer of life: Chapter XX., Section 4; Chapter IX., Section 3; Chapter III., Section 6; and for further explanation of the doctrine herein set forth and from which said doctrine is deducible, see Confession, Chapter XVII., Section 3; Chapter XVIII., Sections 3 and 4; Chapter X., Section 4; Chapter XX., Sections 1 and 4; 2 Peter 1:10, 11.

(2) Ge 2:17; Gal.3:10; Ro 3:20-21.

(3) Ro 8:3; Mk 16:15-16; Jn 3:16.

(4) Eze 36:26-27; Jn 6:44-45; Ps 110:3.

3. This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, (5) and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament;(6) and it is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect;(7) and it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all of the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality, man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of innocency.(8)

(5) Ge 3:15.

(6) Heb 1:1.

(7) 2Ti 1:9; Tit 1:2.

(8) Heb 11:6,13; Ro 4:1-2; Ac 4:12; Jn 8:56.

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Chapter 8 Of Christ the Mediator

1. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man;(1) the Prophet,(2) Priest(3) and King;(4) head and Saviour of His church,(5) the heir of all things,(6) and judge of the world;(7) 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.(8)

(1) Isa 42:1; 1Pe 1:19-20

(2) Ac 3:22

(3) Heb 5:5-6

(4) Ps 2:6; Lk 1:33

(5) Eph 1:22-23

(6) Heb 1:2

(7) Ac 17:31

(8) Isa 53:10; Jn 17:6; Ro 8:30

2. The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with Him who made the world, who upholdeth and governeth all things He hath made, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof,(9) yet without sin;(10) being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her: and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; and so was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures;(11) so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.(12)

(9) Jn 1:14; Gal 4:4.

(10) Ro 8:3; Heb 2:14,16-17; 4:15.

(11) Mt 1:22-23; Lk 1:27,31,35.

(12) Ro 9:5; 1Ti 2:5.

3. The Lord Jesus, in His human nature thus united to the divine, in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure,(13) having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;(14) in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell,(15) to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled,(16) and full of grace and truth,(17) He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator and surety;(18) which office He took not

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upon Himself, but was thereunto called by His Father;(19) who also put all power and judgement in His hand, and gave Him commandment to execute the same.(20)

(13) Ps 45:7; Ac 10:38; Jn 3:34.

(14) Col 2:3.

(15) Col 1:19.

(16) Heb 7:26.

(17) Jn 1:14.

(18) Heb 7:22.

(19) Heb 5:5.

(20) Jn 5:22,27; Mt 28:18; Ac 2:36.

4. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake,(21) which that He might discharge He was made under the law,(22) and did perfectly fulfil it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered,(23) being made sin and a curse for us;(24) enduring most grievous sorrows in His soul, and most painful sufferings in His body;(25) was crucified, and died, and remaining in the state of the dead, yet saw no corruption:(26) and on the third day He arose from the dead(27) with the same body in which he suffered,(28) with which He also ascended into heaven,(29) and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father making intercession,(30) and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.(31)

(21) Ps 40:7-8; Heb 10:5-10; Jn 10:18.

(22) Gal 4:4; Mt 3:15.

(23) Gal 3:13; Isa 53:6; 1Pe 3:18.

(24) 2Co 5:21.

(25) Mt 26:37-38; Lk 22:44; Mt 27:46.

(26) Ac 13:37.

(27) 1Co 15:3-4.

(28) Jn 20:25,27.

(29) Mk 16:19; Ac 1:9-11.

(30) Ro 8:34; Heb 9:24.

(31) Ac 10:42; Ro 14:9-10; Ac 1:11; 2Pe 2:4.

5. The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God,(32) procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.(33)

(32) Heb 9:14; 10:14; Ro 3:25-26.

(33) Jn 17:2; Heb 9:15.

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6. Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ till after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof were communicated to the elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices wherein He was revealed, and signified to be the seed which should bruise the serpent's head;(34) and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,(35) being the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.(36)

(34) 1Co 4:10; Heb 4:2; 1Pe 1:10-11.

(35) Rev 13:8.

(36) Heb 13:8.

7. Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in scripture, attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.(37)

(37) Jn 3:13; Ac 20:28.

8. To all those for whom Christ hat obtained eternal redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them;(38) uniting them to Himself by His Spirit, revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mystery of salvation, persuading them to believe and obey,(39) governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit,(40) and overcoming all their enemies by His mighty power and wisdom,(41) in such manner and ways as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation; and all of free and absolute grace, without any condition forseen in them to procure it. (42)

(38) Jn 6:37; 10:15-16; 17:9; Ro 5:10.

(39) Jn 17:6; Eph 1:9; 1Jn 5:20.

(40) Ro 8:9,14.

(41) Ps 110:1; 1Co 15:25-26.

(42) Jn 3:8; Eph 1:8.

9. This office of mediator between God and man is proper only to Christ, who is the prophet, priest, and king of the church of God; and may not be either in whole, or any part thereof, transferred from Him to any other.(43)

(43) 1Tim. 2:5.

10. This number and order of offices is necessary; for in respect of our ignorance, we stand in need of His prophetic office;(44) and in respect of our alienation from God, and imperfection of the best of our services, we need His priestly office to reconcile us and present us acceptable unto God;(45) and in respect of our averseness and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue

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and security from our spiritual adversaries, we need His kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us to His heavenly kingdom.(46)

(44) Jn 1:18

(45) Col 1:21; Gal 5:17

(46) Jn 16:8; Ps 110:3; Lk 1:74-75

Chapter 9 Of Free Will

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

Fulton Footnote: This section has reference alone to Adam in a state of innocence.

(1) Mt 17:12; Jas 1:14; Dt 30:19.

2. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God,(2) but yet was unstable, so that he might fall from it.(3)

(2) Ecc 7:29.

(3) Ge 3:6.

3. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; (4) so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin,(5) is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.(6)

(4) Ro 5:6; 8:7.

(5) Eph 2:1,5.

(6) Tit 3:3-5; Jn 6:44.

4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin,(7) and by His grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good;(8) yet so as that by reason of his remaining corruptions, he doth not perfectly, nor only will, that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.(9)

Fulton Footnote: We understand the expression "when God converts" to mean when God regenerates.

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(7) Col 1:13; Jn 8:36.

(8) Php 2:13.

(9) Ro 7:15,18-19,21,23.

5. This will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory only.(10)

(10) Eph 4:13.

Chapter 10 Of Effectual Calling

1. Those whom God hath predestined unto life, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call,(1) 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;(2) enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God;(3) taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh;(4) renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ;(5) yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.(6)

Fulton Footnote: We do not understand that sinners are effectually called by the written word in any sense out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature to grace and salvation but by Christ, the Word of God. The quickening and renewing of the Holy Spirit prepares the sinner to answer the gospel call, as seen in Section 2; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 John 4:6

(1) Ro 8:30; 11:7; Eph 1:10-11, 2Th 2:13-14.

(2) Eph 2:1-6.

(3) Ac 26:18; Eph 1:17-18.

(4) Eze 36:26.

(5) Dt 30:6; Eze 36:27; Eph 1:19.

(6) Ps 110:3; SS 1:4.

2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature,(7) being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit;(8) he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead.(9)

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(7) 2Ti 1:9; Eph 2:8.

(8) 1Co 2:14; Eph 2:5; Jn 5:25.

(9) Eph 1:19-20.

3. Infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit;(10) who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth;(11) so also are all elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

Fulton Footnote: We understand this section to teach that all persons dying in infancy are of the elect, and will therefore be saved. We do not understand from this that infants and insane persons are saved in a manner different from the manner in which all other elect persons are saved. The word "others" in Section 4 has no reference to infants, but adults who are subjects of the ministry of the Word.

(10) Jn 3:3,5-6.

(11) Jn 3:8.

4. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit,(12) yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither will nor can truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved:(13) much less can men that receive not the Christian religion be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess.(14)

Fulton Footnote: We understand for man to be spiritually profited by the gospel he must have been born of God and made partaker of his divine nature, and by the words "common operations of the Spirit" is understood as teaching that the gospel has an enlightening and moral influence upon all rational men.

(12) Mt 22:14; 13:20-21; Heb 6:4-5.

(13) Jn 6:44-45,65; 1 Jn 2:24-25.

(14) Ac 4:12; Jn 4:22; 17:3.

Chapter 11 Of Justification

1. Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth,(1) not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous;(2) not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone;(3)

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not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in His death for their whole and sole righteousness,(4) they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God.(5)

Fulton Footnote: We understand this section to teach that the elect are justified in the sight of the law by the actual work of Christ when he satisfied the law for them, and we believe this is applied to the elect in the work of regeneration, bringing personal righteousness or making their persons righteous in heart.

(1) Ro 3:24; 8:30.

(2) Ro 4:5-8; Eph 1:7.

(3) 1Co 1:30-31; Ro 5:17-19.

(4) Php 3:8-9; Eph 2:8-10.

(5) Jn 1:12; Ro 5:17.

2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification;(6) yet it is not alone in the person justified, but ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.(7)

(6) Ro 3:28.

(7) Gal 5:6; Jas 2:17,22,26.

3. Christ, by His obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of Himself in the blood of His cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf,(8); yet inasmuch as He was given by the Father for them, and His obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them,(9) 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.(10)

(8) Heb 10:14; 1Pe 1:18-19; Isa 53:5-6.

(9) Ro 8:32; 2Co 5:21.

(10) Ro 3:26; Eph 1:6-7; 2:7.

4. God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect,(11) and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification;(12) nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in time due actually apply Christ unto them.(13)

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(11) Gal 3:8; 1Pe 1:2; 1Ti 2:6.

(12) Ro 4:25.

(13) Col 1:21-22; Tit 3:4-7.

5. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified,(14) and although they can never fall from the state of justification,(15) yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure;(16) and in that condition they have not usually the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.(17)

(14) Mt 6:12; 1Jn 1:7,9.

(15) Jn 10:28.

(16) Ps 89:31-33.

(17) Ps 32:5; Ps 51:1-19; Mt 26:75.

6. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.(18)

Fulton Footnote: These sections have relation to God's spiritual and parental government over his children in this world.

(18) Gal 3:9; Ro 4:22-24.

Chapter 12 Of Adoption

1. All those that are justified, God vouchsafed, in and for the sake of His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption,(1) by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of children of God,(2) have His name put on them,(3) receive the spirit of adoption,(4) have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba, Father,(5) are pitied,(6) protected,(7) provided for,(8) and chastened by Him as by a Father,(9) yet never cast off,(10) but sealed to the day of redemption,(11) and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.(12)

(1) Eph 1:5; Gal 4:4-5.

(2) Jn 1:12; Ro 8:17.

(3) 2 Co 6:18; Rev 3:12.

(4) Ro 8:15.

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- (5) Gal 4:6; Eph 2:18.
 - (6) Ps 103:13.
 - (7) Pr 14:26.
 - (8) 1Pe 5:7.
 - (9) Heb 12:6.
 - (10) Isa 54:8-9; La 3:31.
 - (11) Eph 4:30.
 - (12) Heb 1:14; 6:12.
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Chapter 13 Of Sanctification

1. They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also farther sanctified, really and personally(1) through the same virtue, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them;(2) the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed,(3) and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified,(4) and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces,(5) to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.(6)

- (1) Ac 20:32; Ro 6:5-6.
- (2) Jn 17:17; Eph 3:16-19; 1Th 5:21-23.
- (3) Ro 6:14.
- (4) Gal 5:24.
- (5) Col 1:11.
- (6) 2Co 7:1; Heb 12:14.

2. This sanctification is throughout the whole man,(7) yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part,(8) when ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.(9)

- (7) 1 Th 5:23.
- (8) Ro 7:18,23.
- (9) Gal 5:17; 1Pe 2:11.

3. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail,(10) yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth

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overcome;(11) and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in His Word hath prescribed to them.(12)

Fulton Footnote: By the words "regenerate part" we understand the soul to be designated as being born of God. (Confession, Chapter XX., Section 4) By the words "some remnants of corruption in every part" we do not understand that the soul regenerated is not cleansed, but that sin yet dwells in our flesh. (Rom. 7:18; 1 John 3:9)

(10) Ro 7:23.

(11) Ro 6:14.

(12) Eph 4:15-16; 2Co 3:18; 7:1.

Chapter 14 Of Saving Faith

1. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts,(1) and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word;(2) by which also, and by the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, prayer, and other means appointed of God, it is increased and strengthened.(3)

Fulton Footnote: By the words "faith as ordinarily wrought by the Word" we are taught to distinguish between life and the motions or fruits of life, because faith as one of the acts of life may be instrumentally produced by the Word. (Rom. 10:17) While life itself is the immediate gift of the Almighty (Rom. 7:23), and is antecedent to and the foundation of faith.

(1) 2 Co 4:13; Eph 2:8.

(2) Ro 10:14,17.

(3) Lk 17:5; 1 Pe 2:2; Ac 20:32.

2. By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word for the authority of God Himself,(4) and also apprehendeth an excellency therein above all other writings and all things in the world,(5) as it bears forth the glory of God in His attributes, the excellency of Christ in His nature and offices, and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in His workings and operations: and so is enabled to cast his soul upon the truth thus believed;(6) and also acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands,(7) trembling at the threatenings,(8) and embracing the promises of God for this life

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and that which is to come;(9) but the principle acts of saving faith have immediate relation to Christ, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.(10)

(4) Ac 24:14.

(5) Ps 19:7-10; 119:72.

(6) 2 Ti 1:12.

(7) Jn 15:14.

(8) Isa 66:2.

(9) Heb 11:13.

(10) Jn 1:12; Ac 16:31; Gal 2:20; Ac 15:11.

3. This faith, although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or strong,(11) yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it, as is all other saving grace, from the faith and common grace of temporary believers;(12) and therefore, though it may be many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory,(13) growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ,(14) who is both the author and finisher of our faith. (15)

(11) Heb 5:13-14; Mt 6:30; Ro 4:19-20.

(12) 2 Pe 1:1.

(13) Eph 6:16; 1Jn 5:4-5.

(14) Heb 6:11-12; Col 2:2.

(15) Heb 12:2.

Chapter 15 Of Repentance Unto Life and Salvation

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

(1) Tit 3:2-5.

2. Whereas there is none that doth good and sinneth not,(2) and the best of men may, through the power and deceitfulness of their corruption dwelling in them, with the prevalency of temptation, fall in to great sins and provocations; God hath, in the covenant of grace, mercifully provided that believers so sinning and falling be renewed through repentance unto salvation.(3)

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(2) Ecc 7:20.

(3) Lk 22:31-32.

3. This saving repentance is an evangelical grace,(4) whereby a person, being by the Holy Spirit made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth, by faith in Christ, humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-aborrancy,(5) praying for pardon and strength of grace, with a purpose and endeavour, by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things.(6)

(4) Zec 12:10; Ac 11:18.

(5) Eze 36:31; 2 Co 7:11.

(6) Ps 119:6,128.

4. As repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, upon the account of the body of death, and the motions thereof, so it is every man's duty to repent of his particular known sins particularly.(7)

(7) Lk 19:8; 1 Ti 1:13,15.

5. Such is the provision which God hath made through Christ in the covenant of grace for the preservation of believers unto salvation, that although there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation,(8) yet there is no sin so great that it shall bring damnation on them that repent,(9) which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary.

(8) Ro 6:23.

(9) Isa 1:16-18; 55:7.

Chapter 16 Of Good Works

1. Good works are only such as God hath commanded in His Holy Word,(1) and not such as without the warrant thereof are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intentions.(2)

(1) Mic 6:8; Heb 13:21.

(2) Mt 15:9; Isa 29:13.

2. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith;(3) and by them believers manifest their thankfulness,(4) strengthen their

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assurance,(5) edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel,(6) stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God,(7) whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto,(8) that having their fruit unto holiness they may have the end eternal life.(9)

(3) Jas 2:18,22.

(4) Ps 116:12-13.

(5) 1 Jn 2:3,5; 2Pe 1:5-11.

(6) Mt 5:16.

(7) 1 Ti 6:1; 1Pe 2:15; Php 1:11.

(8) Eph 2:10.

(9) Ro 6:22.

3. Their ability to do good works is not all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ;(10) and that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is necessary an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure;(11) yet they are not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.(12)

Fulton Footnote: This section teaches the absolute necessity of the Spirit in all acceptable, gospel obedience. Yet we are not herein taught that obedience doth infallibly attend the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit, but its influence may be quenched, so that disobedience is rendered possible.

(10) Jn 15:4-5.

(11) 2 Co 3:5; Php 2:13.

(12) Php 2:12; Heb 6:11-12; Isa 64:7.

4. They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do. (13)

(13) Job 9:2-3; Gal 5:17; Lk 17:10.

5. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins;(14) 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,(15) and as they are wrought

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by us they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's punishment.(16)

(14) Ro 3:20; Eph 2:8-9; Ro 4:6.

(15) Gal 5:22-23.

(16) Isa 64:6; Ps 143:2.

6. Yet notwithstanding the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in Him;(17) not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreprouvable in God's sight, but that He, looking upon them in His Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.(18)

(17) Eph 1:6; 1Pe 2:5.

(18) Mt 25:21,23; Heb 6:10.

7. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others;(19) yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith,(20) nor are done in a right manner according to the Word,(21) nor to a right end, the glory of God,(22) they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God,(23) and yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God.(24)

(19) 2Ki 10:30; 1Ki 21:27,29.

(20) Ge 4:5; Heb 11:4,6.

(21) 1 Co 13:1.

(22) Mt 6:2,5.

(23) Am 5:21-22; Ro 9:16; Tit 3:5.

(24) Job 21:14-15; Mt 25:41-43.

Chapter 17 Of The Perseverance Of The Saints

1. Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence He still begets and nourisheth in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality;(1) and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that

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foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon; notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them,(2) yet He is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraven upon the palm of His hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity.(3)

(1) Jn 10:28-29; Php 1:6; 2 Ti 2:19; 1Jn 2:19.

(2) Ps 89:31-32; 1 Co 11:32.

(3) Mal 3:6.

2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election,(4) flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with Him,(5) the oath of God,(6) the abiding of His Spirit, and the seed of God within them,(7) and the nature of the covenant of grace;(8) from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

(4) Ro 8:30; 9:11,16.

(5) Ro 5:9-10; Jn 14:19.

(6) Heb 6:17-18.

(7) 1 Jn 3:9.

(8) Jer 32:40.

3. And though they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein,(9) whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve His Holy Spirit,(10) come to have their graces and comforts impaired,(11) have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded,(12) hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgements upon themselves,(13) yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.(14)

(9) Mt 26:70,72,74.

(10) Isa 64:5,9; Eph 4:30.

(11) Ps 51:10,12.

(12) Ps 32:3-4.

(13) 2 Sa 12:14.

(14) Lk 22:32,61-62.

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Chapter 18 Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

1. Although temporary believers, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God and state of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish;(1) yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God,(2) which hope shall never make them ashamed.(3)

(1) Job 8:13-14; Mt 7:22-23.

(2) 1 Jn 2:3; 3:14,18-19,21,24; 5:13.

(3) Ro 5:2,5.

2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith(4) founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel;(5) and also upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit unto which promises are made,(6) and on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God;(7) and, as a fruit thereof, keeping the heart both humble and holy.(8)

(4) Heb 6:11,19.

(5) Heb 6:17-18.

(6) 2 Pe 1:4-5,10-11.

(7) Ro 8:15-16.

(8) 1Jn 3:1-3.

3. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be a partaker of it; (9) yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of means, attain thereunto:(10) and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; (11)- so far is it from inclining men to looseness.(12)

(9) Isa 50:10; Ps 88:1-18; Ps 77:1-12.

(10) 1 Jn 4:13; Heb 6:11-12.

(11) Ro 5:1-2,5; 14:17; Ps 119:32.

(12) Ro 6:1-2; Tit 2:11-12,14.

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4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as by negligence in preserving of it,(13) by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit;(14) by some sudden or vehement temptation,(15) 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,(16) yet are they never destitute of the seed of God(17) and life of faith,(18) 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,(19) and by the which, in the meantime, they are preserved from utter despair.(20)

Fulton Footnote: These chapters do clearly set forth that the happiness, assurance, and comforts in this life in some measure, and even in a large measure, are contingent (Confession, Chapter III., Section 1) or made to depend upon the obedience of the children of God and their faithfulness to him. Also that a neglect of duty will bring to the disobedient distress and great grief.

(13) SS 5:2-3,6.

(14) Ps 51:8,12,14.

(15) Ps 116:11; 77:7-8; 31:22.

(16) Ps 30:7.

(17) 1 Jn 3:9.

(18) Lk 22:32.

(19) Ps 42:5,11.

(20) La 3:26-31.

Chapter 19 Of the Law of God

1. God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil;(1) by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience;(2) promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.(3)

(1) Ge 1:27; Ecc 7:29.

(2) Ro 10:5.

(3) Gal 3:10,12.

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2. The same law that was first written in the heart of man continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall,(4) and was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables, the four first containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man.(5)

(4) Ro 2:14-15.

(5) Dt 10:4.

3. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits;(6) and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties,(7) all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are, by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end abrogated and taken away.(8)

(6) Heb 10:1; Col 2:17.

(7) 1 Co 5:7.

(8) Col 2:14,16-17; Eph 2:14,16.

4. To them also He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any now by virtue of that institution; their general equity only being for modern use.(9)

(9) 1 Co 9:8-10.

5. The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof,(10) 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;(11) neither doth Christ in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.(12)

(10) Ro 13:8-10; Jas 2:8,10-12.

(11) Jas 2:10-11.

(12) Mt 5:17-19; Ro 3:31.

6. Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned, (13) yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, in that as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their natures, hearts, and lives, so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against, sin;(14) together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ and the perfection of His obedience: it is likewise of

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use to the regenerate to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatening of it serve to shew what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse and unallayed rigour thereof. These promises of it likewise shew them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, though not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works; so as man's doing good and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law and not under grace.(15)

(13) Ro 6:14; Gal 2:16; Ro 8:1; 10:4.

(14) Ro 3:20; 7:7-25.

(15) Ro 6:12-14; 1 Pe 3:8-13.

7. Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it,(16) 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.(17)

(16) Gal 3:21.

(17) Eze 36:27.

Chapter 20

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

1. The covenant of works being broken by sin, and made unprofitable unto life, God was pleased to give forth the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling the elect, and begetting in them faith and repentance;(1) in this promise the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and [is] therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.(2)

(1) Ge 3:15.

(2) Rev 13:8.

2. This promise of Christ, and salvation by Him, is revealed only by the Word of God;(3) neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace by Him, so much as in a general or obscure way;(4) much less that men destitute of the revelation of Him by the promise or gospel, should be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance.(5)

Fulton Footnote: We are taught by this section that nature does not reveal the scheme of human redemption to man. Nevertheless, this fact does not render the work of Christ and the

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Spirit impossible in the regeneration and eternal salvation of sinners, even in the absence of the preached Word.

(3) Ro 1:17.

(4) Ro 10:14-15,17.

(5) Pr 29:18; Isa 25:7; 60:2-3.

3. The revelation of the gospel unto sinners, made in divers times and by sundry parts, with the addition of promises and precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the nations and persons to whom it is granted, is merely of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God;(6) not being annexed by virtue of any promise to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received without it, which none ever did make, or can do so;(7) and therefore in all ages, the preaching of the gospel has been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent or straitening of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God.

(6) Ps 147:20; Ac 16:7.

(7) Ro 1:18-32.

4. Although the gospel be the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and is, as such, abundantly sufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in trespasses may be born again, quickened or regenerated, there is moreover necessary an effectual insuperable work of the Holy Spirit upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life;(8) without which no other means will effect their conversion unto God.(9)

(8) Ps 110:3; 1Co 2:14; Eph 1:19-20.

(9) Jn 6:44; 2Co. 4:4,6.

Chapter 21

Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

1. The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel, consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the rigour and curse of the law,(1) and in their being delivered from this present evil world,(2) bondage to Satan,(3) and dominion of sin,(4) from the evil of afflictions,(5) the fear and sting of death, the victory of the grave,(6) and everlasting damnation:(7) as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto Him, not out of slavish fear,(8) but a child-like love and willing mind.(9)

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All which were common also to believers under the law for the substance of them,(10) but under the New Testament the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of a ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.(11)

- (1) Gal 3:13.
- (2) Gal 1:4.
- (3) Ac 26:18.
- (4) Ro 8:3.
- (5) Ro 8:28.
- (6) 1Co 15:54-57.
- (7) 2 Th 1:10.
- (8) Ro 8:15.
- (9) Lk 1:73-75; 1Jn 4:18.
- (10) Gal 3:9,14.
- (11) Jn 7:38-39; Heb 10:19-21.

2. God alone is Lord of the conscience,(12) and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to His Word, or not contained in it.(13) So that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commands out of conscience, it so betray true liberty of conscience,(14) and the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.(15)

- (12) Jas 4:12; Ro 14:4.
- (13) Ac 4:19,29; 1 Co 7:23; Mt 15:9.
- (14) Col 2:20,22-23.
- (15) 1 Co 3:5; 2 Co 1:24.

3. They who upon pretence of Christian liberty do practice any sin, or cherish any sinful lust, as they do thereby pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction,(16) so they wholly destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our lives.(17)

- (16) Ro 6:1-2.
 - (17) Gal 5:13; 2Pe 2:18,21.
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Chapter 22 Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

1. The light of nature shews that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is just, good and doth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might.(1) But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by Himself,(2) and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.(3)

(1) Jer 10:7; Mk 12:33.

(2) Dt 12:32.

(3) Ex 20:4-6.

2. Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to Him alone;(4) not to angels, saints, or any other creatures;(5) and since the fall, not without a mediator,(6) nor in the mediation of any other but Christ alone.(7)

(4) Mt 4:9-10; Jn 6:23; Mt 28:19.

(5) Ro 1:25; Col 2:18; Rev 19:10.

(6) Jn 14:6.

(7) 1 Ti 2:5.

3. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one part of natural worship, is by God required of all men.(8) But that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son,(9) by the help of the Spirit,(10) according to His will;(11) with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, in a known tongue. (12)

(8) Ps 95:1-7; 65:2.

(9) Jn 14:13-14.

(10) Ro 8:26.

(11) 1 Jn 5:14.

(12) 1 Co 14:16-17.

4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter;(13) but not for the dead,(14) not for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.(15)

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(13) 1 Ti 2:1-2; 2Sa 7:29.

(14) 2 Sa 12:21-23.

(15) 1 Jn 5:16.

5. The reading of the Scriptures,(16) preaching, and hearing the Word of God,(17) teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord;(18) as also the administration of baptism,(19) and the Lord's supper,(20) are all parts of religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to Him, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear; moreover, solemn humiliation, with fastings,(21) and thanksgivings, upon special occasions, ought to be used in an holy and religious manner.(22)

(16) 1 Ti 4:13.

(17) 2 Ti 4:2; Lk 8:18.

(18) Col 3:16; Eph 5:19.

(19) Mt 28:19-20.

(20) 1 Co. 11:26.

(21) Est 4:16; Joel 2:12.

(22) Ex 15:1-19; Ps 107:1-43.

6. Neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the gospel, tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed; but God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth;(23) as in private families(24) daily,(25) and in secret each one by himself;(26) so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly nor wilfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God by His word or providence calleth thereto.(27)

(23) Jn 4:21; Mal 1:11; 1Ti 2:8.

(24) Ac 10:2.

(25) Mt 6:11; Ps 55:17.

(26) Mt 6:6.

(27) Heb 10:25; Ac 2:42.

7. As it is the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God, so by His Word, in a positive moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy unto Him,(28) which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's Day: (29) and is to be continued to the end of the world as a Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.

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(28) Ex 20:8.

(29) 1 Co 16:1-2; Ac 20:7; Rev 1:10.

8. The sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations,(30) but are also taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.(31)

(30) Isa 58:13; Ne 13:15-22.

(31) Mt 12:1-13.

Chapter 23 Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

1. A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein the person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgment, solemnly calleth God to witness what he sweareth,(1) and to judge him according to the truth or falseness thereof(2)

(1) Ex 20:7; Dt 10:20; Jer 4:2.

(2) 2 Ch 6:22-23.

2. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear; and therein it is to be used, with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred;(3) yet as in matter of weight and moment, for confirmation of truth, and ending all strife, an oath is warranted by the Word of God;(4) so a lawful oath being imposed by lawful authority in such matters, ought to be taken.(5)

(3) Mt 5:34,37; Jas 5:12.

(4) Heb 6:16; 2 Co 1:23.

(5) Ne 13:25.

3. Whosoever taketh an oath warranted by the Word of God, ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he knoweth to be truth; for that by rash, false, and vain oaths, the Lord is provoked, and for them this land mourns.(6)

(6) Lev 19:12; Jer 23:10.

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4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation.(7)

(7) Ps 24:4.

5. A vow, which is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone, is to be made and performed with all religious care and faithfulness;(8) but popish monastical vows of perpetual single life,(9) professed poverty,(10) 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.(11)

(8) Ps 76:11; Ge 28:20-22.

(9) 1 Co 7:2,9.

(10) Eph 4:28.

(11) Mt 19:11.

Chapter 24 Of the Civil Magistrate

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

(1) Ro 13:1-4.

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

(2) 2 Sa 23:3; Ps 82:3-4.

(3) Lk 3:14.

3. Civil magistrates being set up by God for the ends aforesaid; subjection, in all lawful things commanded by them, ought to be yielded by us in the Lord, not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake;(4) and we ought to make supplications and prayers for kings and all that are in authority, that under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.(5)

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(4) Ro 13:5-7; 1Pe 2:17.

(5) 1 Ti 2:1-2.

Chapter 25 Of Marriage

1. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.(1)

(1) Ge 2:24; Mal 2:15; Mt 19:5-6.

2. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife,(2) for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue,(3) and for preventing uncleanness.(4)

(2) Ge 2:18.

(3) Ge 1:28.

(4) 1Co 7:2,9.

3. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent;(5) yet it is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord;(6) and therefore such as profess the true religion, should not marry with infidels, or idolators; neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresy.(7)

(5) Heb 13:4; 1Ti 4:3.

(6.)1 Co 7:39.

(7) Ne 13:25-27.

4. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity, forbidden in the Word;(8) 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.(9)

(8) Lev 18:1-30.

(9) Mk 6:18; 1 Co 5:1.

Chapter 26 Of the Church

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1. The catholic or universal church, which (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.(1)

(1) Heb 12:23; Col 1:18; Eph 1:10,22-23; 5:23,27,32.

2. All persons throughout the world, professing the faith of the gospel, and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any error everting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation, are and may be called visible saints;(2) and of such ought all particular congregations to be constituted.(3)

(2) 1Co 1:2; Ac 11:26.

(3) Ro 1:7; Eph 1:20-22.

3. The purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error;(4) and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan;(5) nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in Him, and make profession of His name.(6)

(4) 1 Co 5:1-13; Rev 2:1-29; 3:1-22.

(5) Rev 18:2; 2 Th 2:11-12.

(6) Mt 16:18; Ps 72:17; 102:28; Rev 12:17.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father all power for the calling, institution, order, or government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner;(7) neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.(8)

(7) Col 1:18; Mt 28:18-20; Eph 4:11-12.

(8) 2 Th 2:2-9.

5. In the execution of this power wherewith He is so intrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the world unto Himself, through the ministry of His Word, by His Spirit, those that are given unto Him by His Father,(9) that they may walk before Him in all the ways of obedience, which He prescribeth to them in His Word.(10) Those thus called, He commandeth to walk together in particular societies, or churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship, which He requireth of them in the world.(11)

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(9) Jn 10:16; 12:32.

(10) Mt 28:20.

(11) Mt 18:15-20.

6. The members of these churches are saints by calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto that call of Christ;(12) and do willingly consent to walk together, according to the appointment of Christ; giving up themselves to the Lord, and one to another, by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel.(13)

(12) Ro 1:7; 1Co 1:2.

(13) Ac 2:41-42; 5:13-14; 2Co 9:13.

7. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to His mind declared in His Word, He hath given all that power and authority, which is in any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which He hath instituted for them to observe; with commands and rules for the due and right exerting, and executing of that power.(14)

(14) Mt 18:17-18; 1Co 5:4-5; 5:13; 2Co 2:6-8.

8. A particular church, gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members; and the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church (so called and gathered), for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power or duty, which He entrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are bishops or elders, and deacons.(15)

(15) Ac 20:17,28; Php 1:1.

9. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto the office of bishop or elder in a church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the church itself;(16) and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands of the eldership of the church, if there be any before constituted therein;(17) and of a deacon that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by prayer, and the like imposition of hands.(18)

(16) Ac 14:23.

(17) 1Ti 4:14.

(18) Ac 6:3,5-6.

10. The work of pastors being constantly to attend the service of Christ, in His churches, in the ministry of the Word and prayer, with watching for their souls, as they that must give an account to Him;(19) it is incumbent on the churches to whom they minister, not only to give them all due

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respect, but also to communicate to them of all their good things, according to their ability,(20) so as they may have a comfortable supply, without being themselves entangled in secular affairs;(21) and may also be capable of exercising hospitality towards others;(22) and this is required by the law of nature, and by the express order of our Lord Jesus, who hath ordained that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.(23)

Fulton Footnote: We call special attention to this section of the London Confession of Faith, which teaches that it is right and agreeable to the teaching of the Word to communicate of our carnal things freely and cheerfully to those who administer to us in spiritual things and labor for us in word and doctrine, and that it cannot be considered a new and erroneous thing for persons to advocate this, because it is plainly taught in the following passages of Scripture: Acts 6:4; Hebrews 10:13,17; 1 Timothy 5:17,18; Galatians 6:6,7; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Corinthians 9:6,14.

(19) Ac 6:4; Heb 13:17.

(20) 1 Ti 5:17-18; Gal 6:6-7.

(21) 2 Ti 2:4.

(22) 1 Ti 3:2.

(23) 1 Co 9:6-14.

11. Although it be incumbent on the bishops or pastors of the churches, to be instant in preaching the Word, by way of office, yet the work of preaching the Word is not so peculiarly confined to them but that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved and called by the church, may and ought to perform it.(24)

(24) Ac 11:19-21; 1Pe 4:10-11.

12. As all believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do; so all that are admitted unto the privileges of a church, are also under the censures and government thereof, according to the rule of Christ.(25)

(25) 1 Th 5:14; 2 Th 3:6,14-15.

13. No church members, upon any offence taken by them, having performed their duty required of them towards the person they are offended at, ought to disturb any church-order, or absent themselves from the assemblies of the church, or administration of any ordinances, upon the account of such offence at any of their fellow members, but to wait upon Christ, in the further proceedings of the church.(26)

(26) Mt 18:15-17; Eph 4:2-3.

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14. As each church, and all the members of it, are bound to pray continually for the good and prosperity of all the churches of Christ,(27) in all places, and upon all occasions to further every one within the bounds of their places and callings, in the exercise of their gifts and graces, so the churches, when planted by the providence of God, so as they may enjoy opportunity and advantage for it, ought to hold communion among themselves, for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification.(28)

(27) Eph 6:18; Ps 122:6.

(28) Ro 16:1-2; 3 Jn 8-10.

15. In cases of difficulties or differences, either in point of doctrine or administration, wherein either the churches in general are concerned, or any one church, in their peace, union, and edification; or any member or members of any church are injured, in or by any proceedings in censures not agreeable to truth and order: it is according to the mind of Christ, that many churches holding communion together, do, by their messengers, meet to consider, and give their advice in or about that matter in difference, to be reported to all the churches concerned;(29) howbeit these messengers assembled, are not intrusted with any church-power properly so called; or with any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any censures either over any churches or persons; or to impose their determination on the churches or officers.(30)

(29) Ac 15:2,4,6,22-23,25.

(30) 2 Co 1:24; 1 Jn 4:1.

Chapter 27 **Of the Communion of Saints**

1. All saints that are united to Jesus Christ, their head, by His Spirit, and faith, although they are not made thereby one person with Him, have fellowship in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory;(1) and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each others gifts and graces,(2) and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, in an orderly way, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.(3)

(1) 1 Jn 1:3; Jn 1:16; Php 3:10; Ro 6:5-6.

(2) Eph 4:15-16; 1 Co 12:7; 3:21-23.

(3) 1 Th 5:11,14; Ro 1:12; 1 Jn 3:17-18; Gal 6:10.

2. Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification;(4) as

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also in relieving each other in outward things according to their several abilities, and necessities;(5) which communion, according to the rule of the gospel, though especially to be exercised by them, in the relation wherein they stand, whether in families,(6) or churches,(7) yet, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all the household of faith, even all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus; nevertheless their communion one with another as saints, doth not take away or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods and possessions.(8)

(4) Heb 10:24-25; 3:12-13.

(5) Ac 11:29-30.

(6) Eph 6:4.

(7) 1 Co 12:14-27.

(8) Ac 5:4; Eph 4:28.

Chapter 28 Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution, appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver, to be continued in His church to the end of the world.(1)

(1) Mt 28:19-20; 1 Co 11:26.

2. These holy appointments are to be administered by those only who are qualified and thereunto called, according to the commission of Christ.(2)

(2) Mt 28:19; 1 Co 4:1.

Chapter 29 Of Baptism

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with Him, in His death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into Him;(1) of remission of sins;(2) and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.(3)

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(1) Ro 6:3-5; Col 2:12; Gal 3:27.

(2) Mk 1:4; Ac 22:16.

(3) Ro 6:4.

2. Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.(4)

(4) Mk 16:16; Ac 8:36-37; 2:41; 8:12; 18:8.

3. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.(5)

(5) Mt 28:19-20; Ac 8:38.

4. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.(6)

(6) Mt 3:16, Jn 3:23.

Chapter 30 Of the Lord's Supper

1. The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by Him the same night wherein He was betrayed, to be observed in His churches, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth the sacrifice of Himself in His death,(1) confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in Him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to Him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other.(2)

(1) 1 Co 11:23-26.

(2) 1 Co 10:16-17,21.

2. In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to His Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but only a memorial of that one offering up of Himself by Himself upon the cross, once for all;(3) and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same.(4) So that the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable, injurious to Christ's own sacrifice the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

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(3) Heb 9:25-26,28.

(4) 1 Co 11:24; Mt 26:26-27.

3. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use, and to take and break the bread; to take the cup, and, they communicating also themselves, to give both to the communicants.(5)

(5) 1 Co 11:23-26.

4. The denial of the cup to the people, worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this ordinance, and to the institution of Christ.(6)

(6) Mt 26:26-28; 15:9; Ex 20:4-5.

5. The outward elements in this ordinance, duly set apart to the use ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him crucified, as that truly, although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ,(7) albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.(8)

(7) 1 Co 11:27.

(8) 1 Co 11:26-28.

6. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood, commonly called transubstantiation, by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone,(9) but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the ordinance, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries.(10)

(9) Ac 3:21; Lk 24:6,39.

(10) 1 Co 11:24-25.

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

(11) 1 Co 10:16; 11:23-26.

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8. All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against Him, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto;(12) yea, whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themselves.(13)

(12) 2 Co 6:14-15.

(13) 1 Co 11:29; Mt 7:6.

Chapter 31

Of the State of Man After Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead

1. The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption(1) but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them.(2) The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies;(3) and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell; where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day;(4) besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

Fulton Footnote: By the words "immortal subsistence" is not meant that the souls of men are eternal as God is eternal, but that they are eternal in the sense that they possess endless being or shall never cease to exist or die.

(1) Ge 3:19; Ac 13:36.

(2) Ecc 12:7.

(3) Lk 23:43; 2 Co 5:1,6,8; Php 1:23, Heb 12:23.

(4) Jude 6-7; 1 Pe 3:19; Lk 16:23-24.

2. At the last day, such of the saints as are found alive, shall not sleep, but be changed;(5) and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other;(6) although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever.(7)

(5) 1 Co 15:51-52; 1Th 4:17.

(6) Job 19:26-27.

(7) 1 Co 15:42-43.

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3. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just, by His Spirit, unto honour, and be made conformable to His own glorious body.(8)

(8) Ac 24:15; Jn 5:28-29; Php 3:21.

Chapter 32 Of the Last Judgment

1. God hath appointed a day wherein He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ;(1) to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged,(2) but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.(3)

(1) Ac 17:31; Jn 5:22, 27.

(2) 1 Co 6:3; Jude 6.

(3) 2 Co 5:10; Ecc 12:14; Mt 12:36; Ro 14:10,12; Mt 25:32-46.

2. The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of His justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient:(4) for then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards, in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast aside into everlasting torments,(5) and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.(6)

Fulton Footnote: It is through the atoning sacrifice and perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to his people that they shall be acquitted in judgment.

(4) Ro 9:22-23.

(5) Mt 25:21,34; 2 Ti 4:8.

(6) Mt 25:46; Mk 9:48; 2 Th 1:7-10.

3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin,(7) and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity,(8) so will He have the day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come,(9) and may ever be prepared to say, "Come Lord Jesus; come quickly".(10) Amen.

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(7) 2 Co 5:10-11.

(8) 2 Th 1:5-7.

(9) Mk 13:35-37; Lk 12:35-40.

(10) Rev 22:20.

Appendix

We, the undersigned elders and brethren, pursuant to a request made by brethren of Patoka Association of Primitive Baptists, now convened at Oakland City Church, in Oakland City, Ind., on the 27th day of September, 1900. To our brethren of like precious faith everywhere. We sincerely regret the division and strife that have been among us, and earnestly desire that we may be led to see alike, and to unite in our understanding of truth as taught in God's Word. We represent in this meeting about one hundred congregations in Indiana and Illinois.

We recommend the London Confession of Faith as an expression of Bible truth. The articles of faith of our churches are substantially in harmony with the doctrine and practice set forth in that instrument, and we do heartily recommend the London Confession to the household of faith everywhere. Inasmuch as there is some difference of opinion concerning the teaching of some of the articles in the London Confession of Faith, we will submit the following in the way of explaining our understanding of their teaching:

We do not believe that God has unconditionally, unlimitedly, and equally predestinated righteousness and unrighteousness. It is our belief that God has positively and effectually predestinated the eternal salvation of his people which were chosen in Christ before time.

God's purpose concerning sin does not sustain the same relation to sin that it does to holiness. While we think that God's purpose concerning sin is more than barely permissive, it is such as to exclude all chance and uncertainty, yet we hold that God is in no sense the cause of sin.

We do not believe that God requires or forbids anything in his law, and then by a power irresistible moves his creatures to act contrary to his commands. In Chapter III., Section 1, of the London Confession, we read: "God hath decreed in himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass; yet so as thereby God is neither the author of sin, nor hath fellowship with any therein, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away," etc.

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In this they deny that God's attitude to sin is causative, and in the body of this Confession we insist that they maintain that God's attitude to holiness is causative. So they clearly distinguish between God's efficacious decree of holiness and his purpose concerning sin. Section 2: "Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions." Here, they distinguish between the knowledge of God as an attribute of God and the decree of God as an act of God, which we believe to be scriptural.

For God to foresee that man will yield to influences of a secondary nature does not imply that God moves man to sin, but only that he is the Permitter of sin. Webster defines "permit," "to suffer, without giving authority." We use it in the sense of "not hinder." In Section 3 they say: "Others being left to act in their sins to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice." If they had believed that God moves men to sin, they would not have said, "being left to act in their sins," etc. We insist that we should not use language implying that God's attitude to sin is the same as his attitude to holiness, for this tends to destroy the distinction between right and wrong. The expression, "unlimited predestination of all things," seems to convey the idea that God's purpose concerning sin is as unlimited and as unrestricted as it is concerning holiness; and if so, then God's decree concerning sin would be causative, since it is causative concerning holiness, and this view would destroy all distinction between right and wrong. Chapter XVI., Section 2: "These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God," etc.

Section 3: "Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ; and that they may be enabled thereto, besides the graces they have already received, there is necessary an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit," etc. They do neglect, not being forced in duty irresistibly.

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a time salvation received by the heirs of God distinct from eternal salvation, which does depend upon their obedience. The people of God receive their rewards for obedience in this life only. We believe that the ability of the Christian is the unconditional gift of God.

Besides the efficacious grace of God in the heart in regeneration, we need the company of God's Holy Spirit to comfort, lead, and bless us, which he has promised to give to every one that will ask him. (Luke 11:13.) The act of God necessary to our regeneration must in some sense be

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distinguished from his act necessary to our obedience. We are never commanded to be born again, but in hundreds of places we are called on to obey. We are passive in regeneration, but in obedience we are active. Regeneration is neither a vice nor a virtue; obedience is a virtue and disobedience a vice. Regeneration is wholly independent of the will. There could be no such a thing as obedience or disobedience independent of the will. Men do not neglect to be born again, but they do neglect their duty.

In section 5, Chapter XVI., we read: "We cannot by our best of works merit pardon of sin, or eternal life, at the hand of God," etc. They did not place obedience in the place of Christ, or his atonement, and so we believe it would be exceeding sinful to mention good works as essential to these ends, yet we believe there is an important use for good works aside from these ends. In Section 2, same chapter, they say of good works: "By them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries," etc.

We think these uses of good works scriptural. We hold that God's government of his people is moral. We hold, too, that conditionality is an essential element of moral government. We distinguish between God's government of mind and his government of matter.

Section 5, Chapter III.: "God hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as condition or cause moving him thereto." Although the two-seed doctrine was not thought of at the time this Confession was written, yet this article clearly condemns the two-seed doctrine in all its phases.

Chapter XXXI., Section 1: "The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places [heaven and hell] for souls separated from their bodies the Scriptures acknowledge none." Christ will resurrect the wicked by his power, exerted in his office as King through a proceeding of law, and not render the new covenant, as the righteous will be, each to their endless reward. There is a sentiment prevailing in some parts of our beloved Zion that the wicked will be annihilated at death, and we call attention to the sentiment in this quotation on that subject. The annihilation theory is an innovation, and contrary to every Confession of Faith, and also contrary to the Scriptures.

In Chapters III., IV., and IX., the London Confession mentions the freedom of the will. We do not understand them to mean that the will is free in the sense that it is self-determining, as the Arminians hold; nor that man is capable of choosing things of which he has no knowledge, nor things above and beyond his nature; we do not understand the Confession to mean that men dead in sin are, while in that state, capable of choosing holiness, but we understand it to mean that men are capable of choosing things in harmony with their nature – things most agreeable to them. They

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are and must be capable of voluntary action in order to their being accountable. Liberty of will in this sense is essential to moral government, as we believe. Men before regeneration are capable of choosing things agreeable to them, as they are afterwards.

In conclusion, we love the doctrine of grace, and we believe that any view of predestination, or of the will, that will tend in any degree to apologize for sin will also tend to minimize the doctrine of grace. Paul says: "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Paul so preached as to make grace glitter and shine as a star of the first magnitude. He puts word upon word to lift up our ideas of God's grace, so we feel it important to oppose any view of decrees of God that will in the least excuse any sin in man, or point out mitigating circumstances for sin, because just in proportion as we excuse or apologize for sin we also belittle the doctrine of grace, so we oppose the two-seed doctrine because it seeks to find some quality in man that stands as the cause of his election to glory, while Paul speaks of God's people, mere "children of wrath even as others." We were no better in our nature or conduct than others, and this is the lesson of our experience. When low bowed before the Lord in the darkest hour of our lives, we confessed, and we knew there was nothing in us that could merit esteem, or give the Creator delight. So we oppose every feature of Arminianism as opposed to the doctrine of grace. We feel bound to contend for those principles that most exalt the doctrine of grace, and we feel sure that if we stay with those lessons that we learned in our first experience, we will expose everything that tends to minimize the doctrine of grace.

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Unanimously approved by the National Convention of Primitive Baptists at Fulton Ky.