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## **Section 1. SCRIPTURE, THE WORD OF GOD WRITTEN**

1.1 The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is the perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all scripture is authoritative, infallible and inerrant.

1.2 All Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It is sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

1.3 God's intentions are revealed through the intentions of inspired human authors, even when the authors' intention was to express divine meaning of which they were not fully aware, as, for example, in the case of some Old Testament prophecies or the numerous instances of typology in the Old Testament. Thus the meaning of Biblical texts is a fixed historical reality, rooted in the historical, unchangeable intentions of its divine and human authors. However, while meaning does not change, the application of that meaning may change in various situations. Nevertheless, it is not legitimate to infer a meaning from a Biblical text that is not demonstrably carried by the words which God inspired.

1.4 Therefore, the process of discovering the intention of God in the Bible is a humble and careful effort to find in the language of Scripture what the human authors intended to communicate. Limited abilities, traditional biases, personal sin, and cultural assumptions often obscure Biblical texts. The work of the Holy Spirit is therefore essential for right understanding of the Bible and prayer for His assistance belongs to a proper effort to understand and apply God's Word.

1.5 The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself. Therefore, when there is a question about the meaning of a particular text, it must be understood in light of other passages that speak more clearly.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11-12, 18, 89, 105, 140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 4:6-7; 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 11:51; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16-36.; 15:5-16; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16; Ephesians 1:18; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:10-11, 25; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 3:16*

## **Section 2. THE TRINITY, ONE GOD AS THREE PERSONS**

2.1 God eternally exists in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in His love and in His holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, He perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about His eternal good purposes to redeem a people for Himself and restore His fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

2.2 God is all-sufficient, and all life, glory, goodness and blessedness are found in Him and in Him alone. He does not stand in need of any of the creatures that He has made, nor does He derive any part of His glory from them. On the contrary, He manifests His own glory in and by them. He is the fountainhead of all being, and the origin, channel and end of all things. Over all His creatures He is sovereign. He uses them as He pleases, and does for them or to them all that He wills. His sight penetrates to the heart of all things. His knowledge is infinite and infallible. No single thing is to Him at risk or uncertain, for He is not dependent upon created things. In all His decisions, doings and demands He is most holy. Angels and men owe to Him as their creator all worship, service, obedience and whatever else He may require at their hands.

*Deuteronomy 6:4; Job 42:2; Psalm 115:3; 138:5; Proverbs 8:27-30; Daniel 4:25, 34-35; Matthew 1:23, 11:27; 16:16; 25:23; 28:19; John 1:1-3, 8, 14, 18; 5:18; 6:46; 10:30, 38; 12:18, 45; 14:7, 26; 15:11, 26; 16:13-14; 17:26; 20:17-31; Acts 2:33; 5:3-4; Romans 1:7; 8:27; 9:5; 15:16; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2:10-11; 8:6; 12:11; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 13:14; Ephesians 1:11; 4:30; Colossians 1:15-16; 2:9; 1 Timothy 1:11; 4:10; 3:12; Titus 2:13; Philemon 1:3; Hebrews 1:3, 5-6, 8; James 4:15; 1 Peter 1:3;*

### **Section 3. GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE AND ELECTION**

3.1 God, from all eternity, in order to display the full extent of His glory for the eternal and ever-increasing enjoyment of all who love Him, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His will, freely and unchangeably ordain and foreknow whatever comes to pass.

3.2 God upholds and governs all things – from galaxies to subatomic particles, from the forces of nature to the movements of nations, and from the public plans of politicians to the secret acts of solitary persons – all in accord with His eternal, all-wise purposes to glorify Himself, yet in such a way that He never sins, nor ever condemns a person unjustly. His ordaining and governing all things, therefore, is compatible with the moral accountability of all persons created in His image.

3.3 God's election is an unconditional act of free grace which was given through His Son before the world began. By this act God chose, before the foundation of the world, those who would be delivered from bondage to sin and brought to repentance and saving faith in His Son Jesus.

3.4 Not only has God appointed the elect to glory in accordance with the eternal and free purpose of His will, but He has also foreordained the means by which His purpose will be effected. Since His elect are children of Adam and therefore among those ruined by Adam's fall into sin, He willed that they should be redeemed by Christ, and effectually called to faith in Christ. Furthermore, by the working of His Spirit, He willed that they would hear the gospel and in due season be justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. None but the elect partake of any of these great benefits.

3.5 The high mystery of predestination needs to be handled with special prudence and caution, so that men, being directed to the will of God revealed in His Word and obeying the same, may become assured of their eternal election through the certainty of their effectual calling. By this means predestination will promote the praise of God, reverential awe and wonder. It will encourage humility and diligence, and bring much comfort to all who sincerely obey the gospel.

*Genesis 50:20; Numbers 23:19; Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 Samuel 15:29; Job 9:7; 37:6-13; Psalm 33:10; 37:4; 104:20; 147:15-18; Proverbs 16:9, 33; 19:21; 20:24; 21:1; Lamentations 3:37-38; Isaiah 40:26; 41:21-23; 42:8-9; 46:9-10; 60:21; Daniel 4:37; Amos 3:6; Matthew 10:29-30; 11:27; 16:17; 25:23; Mark 4:39-41; John 6:37-39, 44, 65; 10:25-29; 12:27-28; 17:1,4,6; Acts 11:18; 16:14; Romans 1:20; 2:11-12; 3:4, 19; 6:17, 27; 8:28-30; 9:11-18; 11:5-8, 36; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 26-31; 2:9; Ephesians 1:4, 6, 11-12, 14; 2:8-9; 3:11; Philippians 1:29; 2:11; 4:4; Colossians 1:16-17; 2 Timothy 1:9, 24-26; 1 Peter 1:20; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; Revelation 13:8; 17:16-17; 21:4*

### **Section 4. GOD'S CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE AND MAN**

4.1 God created the universe, and everything in it, out of nothing, by the Word of His power. Having no deficiency in Himself, nor moved by any incompleteness in His joyful self-sufficiency, God was pleased in creation to display His glory for the everlasting joy of the redeemed, from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

4.2 God created human beings, male and female, in His own image. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God Himself declared to be very good, serving as God's agents to care for, manage, and govern creation, living in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker. Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women, such that marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and His church. In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. God ordains that they assume distinctive roles which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Lord. In the ministry of the church, both men and women are encouraged to serve Christ and to be developed to their full potential in the manifold ministries of the people of God. The

distinctive leadership role within the church given to qualified men is grounded in creation, fall, and redemption and must not be sidelined by appeals to cultural developments.

*Genesis 1:1,27, 31; 2:7, 18, 21-22; 9:6; Exodus 3:13-14; Psalm 24:1-2; 50:9-14; Isaiah 35:10; 43:7; Matthew 25:23; John 1:1-3; Acts 17:25; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45; Romans 5:14; Ephesians 5:22-23; James 3:9; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3; Revelation 5:9, 7:9-10*

## **Section 5. MAN'S SIN AND FALL FROM FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD**

5.1 Although God created Adam and Eve without sin, they were led astray from God's Word and wisdom by the subtlety of Satan's deceit, and chose to take what was forbidden, and thus declare their independence from, distrust for, and disobedience toward their all-good and gracious Creator. Thus, our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original innocence and fellowship with God.

5.2 As the head of the human race, Adam's fall became the fall of all his posterity, in such a way that corruption, guilt, death, and condemnation belong properly to every person. All persons are thus corrupt by nature, enslaved to sin, and morally unable to delight in God and overcome their own proud preference for the fleeting pleasures of self-rule.

5.3 Because of Adam's sin God has subjected the creation to futility, and the entire human family is made justly liable to untold miseries of sickness, decay, calamity, and death. Thus all the adversity and suffering in the world is an echo and a witness of the exceedingly great evil of moral depravity in the heart of mankind.

*Genesis 2:17; 3:1,6-8, 13; Deuteronomy 29:4; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 2:4; 5:12-19; 6:16, 20; 8:7-8, 20, 23, 35-36; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 15:21; 2 Corinthians 4:16; 11:3; Ephesians 2:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13*

## **Section 6. GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION**

6.1 God was not caught off guard by man's fall, but had a plan in place to reconcile His people back to Himself. In the garden, God made a glorious promise that the "seed of the woman" would one day crush the head of the serpent (i.e., Satan) and thus overturn the curse. This plan then unfolds throughout the rest of the Bible as the "seed" is traced through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David and ultimately fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, all of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is about Jesus and He is thus Scripture's hermeneutical center.

6.2 Covenant is a fundamental aspect of God's plan of redemption. The biblical covenants are the backbone to Scripture's entire storyline, moving history forward according to God's design and final plan for humanity and all creation. The Bible presents multiple covenants that reveal our triune God's one redemptive plan for His one people which reach their fulfillment in Christ and the new covenant. Each biblical covenant, then, contributes to God's unified plan, and to comprehend the "whole counsel of God," each covenant must be understood in its own context. Through the progression of covenants, God's plan unfolds and it becomes clear how all of God's promises are fulfilled in Christ, and how God's people now live under the new covenant.

6.3 Throughout the unfolding plan of redemption, God has always had one people. This, however, does not preclude a certain Israel-Church distinction that is seen due to their respective covenants. In redemptive history, the church is new because it is the community of the new covenant. It is distinct from Israel in that Jesus is the fulfillment of Israel and Adam and thus in Him, all of God's promises are fulfilled for His people, including the land promise realized in the new creation. In fulfillment of the new covenant, the church is also not a mixed community of believers and unbelievers like Israel in the Old Covenant. The church then, is God's new creation, comprised of believing Jews and Gentiles, because Jesus is the last Adam and true Israel, the faithful seed of Abraham who inherits the promises through His finished work on the cross. Thus, in union with Christ, the church is God's new covenant people in continuity with the elect in all ages, but different from Israel in its nature and structure.

*Genesis 1-3; 6:18; 8:20-9:17; 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-14; 22:15-18; Exodus 19-24; 34; 2 Samuel 7:8-16; 1 Chronicles 17; Jeremiah 31:31-36; 33; Ezekiel 36:22-37; Hosea 6:7; Matthew 5:5; 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; Romans 4:13; 9:1-15; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 3:16-18; Ephesians 1:1-14; 6:3; Hebrews 7:22; 8:6-13; 9:15-20; 11:10, 16; 12:24; 13:20*

## **Section 7. JESUS CHRIST, THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD**

7.1 The Lord Jesus Christ is the one promised and prophesied of in the Old Testament and who brings fulfillment of all of God's promises in the New Testament. He is the divine second person of the Trinity who made the world and upholds and governs all things He made. In the fullness of time, God the Father, sent forth His eternal Son as Jesus the Messiah, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary.

7.2 When the eternal Son became flesh He took on a fully human nature, so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one Person, without confusion or mixture. Thus the Person, Jesus Christ, was and is truly God and truly man, yet one Christ and the only Mediator between God and man.

7.3 Jesus Christ lived without sin, though He endured the common infirmities and temptations of human life. He preached and taught with truth and authority unparalleled in human history. He worked miracles, demonstrating His divine right and power over all creation: dispatching demons, healing the sick, raising the dead, stilling the storm, walking on water, multiplying loaves, and foreknowing what would befall Him and His disciples, including the betrayal of Judas and the denial, restoration, and eventual martyrdom of Peter.

7.4 Jesus' life was governed by His Father's providence with a view to fulfilling all Old Testament prophecies concerning the One who was to come, such as the Seed of the woman, the Prophet like Moses, the Priest after the order of Melchizedek, the King, Son of David, and the Suffering Servant.

7.5 Jesus Christ suffered voluntarily in fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. He was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He died, was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead to vindicate the saving work of His life and death and to take His place as the invincible, everlasting Lord of glory. During forty days after His resurrection, He gave many compelling evidences of His bodily resurrection and then ascended bodily into heaven, where He is seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding for His people on the basis of His all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, and reigning until He puts all His enemies under His feet.

*Genesis 3:15; Deuteronomy 18:18; Psalm 110:4; Isaiah 9:7; 52:3; 53:3-6; Matthew 1:1, 23; 4:23; 11:4-6; 14:19-20, 25; 16:16; 21:18-19; 22:16, 42; 26:2; 28:6; Mark 1:27; 4:39; 10:45; Luke 1:34-35; 22:31-34, 69; 24:25-26; John 1:1-3, 14; 3:16-17, 19; 6:6; 7:46; 10:18; 19:30, 40-41; 13:21, 26-27; Acts 1:3, 9-11; 2:23; 33; 3:20-23; 4:27-28; 5:31; 17:31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; 16:20; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 25; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:16; 3:1; 1 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 1:13; 2:17; 4:14-15; 5:5-6; 1 John 2:1*

## **Section 8. THE SAVING WORK OF CHRIST**

8.1 By His perfect obedience to God and by His suffering and death as the immaculate Lamb of God, Jesus Christ obtained forgiveness of sins and the gift of perfect righteousness for all who trusted in God's promise prior to the cross and all who would trust in Christ thereafter. Through living a perfect life and dying in our place, the just for the unjust, Christ absorbed our punishment, appeased the wrath of God against us, vindicated the righteousness of God in our justification, and removed the condemnation of the law against us.

8.2 The atonement of Christ for sin warrants and impels a universal offering of the gospel to all persons, so that to every person it may be truly said, "God gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life." All who truly believe will be saved and Jesus shall never cast them out.

8.3 The death of Christ, moreover, secured more than the bona fide offer of the gospel for all; it also secured the New Covenant's promise of repentance and faith for God's elect. Christ died for all, but not for all in the same way. In His death, Christ expressed a special covenant love to His friends, His sheep, His bride. For them, through His death and resurrection, He obtained the infallible and effectual working of the Spirit to triumph over their resistance and bring them to saving faith.

*Matthew 28:19; John 1:29; 3:16; 4:14; 6:37; 10:14-15; 11:51-52; 17:6, 9, 19; Luke 22:20; Acts 1:8; 13:38; Romans 3:21-22, 24-26, 28; 4:3; 5:6, 18-19; 8:1, 3, 32, 34; 14:9; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 21; Galatians 2:16, 21; 3:13; Ephesians 1:7; 2:3-6; 5:25; 15:13; Philippians 3:9; Colossians 1:14, 23; 2:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; Hebrews 8:6; 13:20-21; Revelation 5:9; 22:17*

## **Section 9. THE SAVING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

9.1 The Holy Spirit has always been at work in the world, sharing in the work of creation, awakening faith in the remnant of God's people, performing signs and wonders, giving triumphs in battle, empowering the preaching of prophets and inspiring the writing of Scripture. Yet, when Christ had made atonement for sin, and ascended to the right hand of the Father, He inaugurated a new era of the Spirit by pouring out the promise of the New Covenant on His Church.

9.2 The newness of this era is marked by the unprecedented mission of the Spirit to glorify the crucified and risen Christ. This He does by giving the disciples of Jesus greater power to preach the gospel of the glory of Christ by opening the hearts of hearers that they might see Christ and believe, by revealing the beauty of Christ in His Word and transforming His people from glory to glory, by manifesting Himself in spiritual gifts (being sovereignly free to dispense, as He wills) for the upbuilding of the body of Christ and the confirmation of His Word, by calling all the nations into the sway of the gospel of Christ, and, in all this, thus fulfilling the New Covenant promise to create and preserve a purified people for the everlasting habitation of God.

9.3 Apart from the effectual work of the Spirit, no one would come to faith, because all are dead in trespasses and sins. All people are hostile to God and morally unable to submit to God or please Him because the pleasures of sin appear greater than the pleasures of God. Thus, for God's elect, the Spirit triumphs over all resistance, wakens the dead, removes blindness, and manifests Christ in such a compellingly beautiful way through the Gospel that He becomes irresistibly attractive to the regenerate heart. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ and He Himself is the down payment of the promised inheritance. In this age He indwells, guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

9.4 The Holy Spirit does this saving work in connection with the presentation of the Gospel of the glory of Christ. Thus neither the work of the Father in election, nor the work of the Son in atonement, nor the work of the Spirit in regeneration is a hindrance or discouragement to the proclamation of the gospel to all peoples and persons everywhere. On the contrary, this divine saving work of the Trinity is the warrant and the ground of our hope that our evangelization is not in vain in the Lord. The Spirit binds His saving work to the gospel of Christ, because His aim is to glorify the Christ of the Gospel. Therefore we do not believe that there is salvation through any other means than through receiving the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Genesis 1:2; Judges 3:10; 14:6; 1 Samuel 10:6; Psalm 104:30; Jeremiah 31:33-34; 32:40; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Matthew 11:27; 16:17; 22:43; Mark 4:19; Luke 24:49; John 3:8; 6:44, 65; 7:39; 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 4:31; 11:18; 13:2, 48; 16:14; 17:30-31; Romans 6:17; 8:7-9; 12:3-8; 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-28; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 4:4-6; 6:16; Ephesians 2:4-6, 8-9, 11-16, 21; 3:6; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Hebrews 2:3-4; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 2 Peter 1:2*

## **Section 10. JUSTIFICATION**

10.1 Justification is God's act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while at the same time making a sinner righteous through Christ's atoning sacrifice. God freely justifies the persons whom He effectually calls. He does this, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins and by accounting them, and accepting them, as righteous. This He does for Christ's sake alone, and not for anything wrought in them or done by them. The righteousness which is imputed to them, that is, reckoned to their account, is neither their faith, nor the act of believing, nor any other obedience to the gospel which they have rendered, but Christ's obedience alone. Christ's one obedience is twofold - His active obedience rendered to the entire divine law, and His passive obedience rendered in His death. Those thus justified receive and rest by faith upon Christ's righteousness. This faith they have, not of themselves, but as the gift of God.

10.2 The faith which receives and rests on Christ and His righteousness is the sole means of justification. Yet it is never alone in the person justified, but is invariably accompanied by all other saving graces. Nor is it a dead faith, for it works by love.

10.3 By His obedience and death Christ paid in full the debt for sin that was owed by those who were to believe and be justified. By the sacrifice of Himself in His blood-shedding on Calvary, and His suffering on their behalf of the penalty they had incurred, He fully and absolutely satisfied all the claims which God's justice had upon them.

Yet their justification is altogether of free grace, firstly because Christ was the free gift of the Father to act on their behalf; secondly because Christ's obedience and His satisfying the demands of the law was freely accepted on their behalf; and thirdly because nothing in them merited these mercies. Hence God's exact justice and His rich grace are alike rendered glorious in the justification of sinners.

10.4 From eternity past God decreed the justification of his elect. At just the right time Jesus Christ died for their sins and was resurrected for their justification. The elect are not personally justified until the Holy Spirit, at the appointed time, applies the saving work of Jesus Christ to them, then they believe and are justified.

10.5 God continues to forgive the sins of all the justified. They can never lose their justification; but they may, by reason of sin, fall under God's fatherly displeasure; in which case, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg God's pardon, and renew their faith and repentance, God will not usually restore to them the light of His countenance.

10.6 Believers in the Old Testament were justified in the same way as believers in the New Testament. Old Testament saints were justified by faith in the promise of Christ, while New Testament saints are justified by faith in the promise fulfilled.

*Psalm 32:5; 51; 89:31-33; Isaiah 53; Matthew 6:12; 26:75; John 1:12; 6:44; 10:28; Romans 3:21-31; 4:1-25; 5:6-21; 8:30; 10:3-4, 9-15; Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 1:7; 2:1-10; Philippians 3:8-9; Titus 3:3-7; Hebrews 10:1-14; James 2:17, 22, 26; 1 John 1:7, 9*

## **Section 11. ADOPTION**

11.1 For the sake of His only Son, Jesus Christ, God has been pleased to make all justified persons sharers in the grace of adoption, by means of which they are numbered with and enjoy the liberties and privileges of children of God. Furthermore, God's name is put upon them, they receive the spirit of adoption, and they are enabled to come boldly to the throne of grace and to cry 'Abba, Father'. They are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by God as by a Father. He never casts them off, but, as they remain sealed to the day of redemption, they inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

*Romans 8:15, 17; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Galatians 4:4-6; Ephesians 1:5; 2:18; 4:30; Hebrews 1:14; 6:12; 12:6; 1 Peter 5:7; Revelation 3:12*

## **Section 12. SANCTIFICATION**

12.1 Those who are united to Christ, effectually called and regenerated, have a new heart and a new spirit created in them. By His Word and Spirit dwelling within them, this personal work of sanctification is indeed carried further. All these blessings accrue to them by reason of the merits of Christ's death and resurrection. Sin's mastery over them is completely broken, the evil desires to which it gives birth are increasingly weakened and dealt their death-blow, and saving graces in them are increasingly enlivened and strengthened. The practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, is thus promoted.

12.2 Sanctification, as defined in this way, extends to every part of man, yet remains incomplete in this life. Sin's corrupt remnants continue to defile all parts of man, causing within him a continual warfare that does not admit of reconciliation; the flesh rises up against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.

12.3 In the war of flesh versus Spirit, sin's corrupt remnants may for a time gain the upper hand, yet the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ enables man as a new creature to gain the victory. And so the saints grow in grace, moving on towards a fullness of holiness in the fear of God. They earnestly endeavor to live according to heaven's laws, and to render gospel obedience to all the commands which Christ, as their head and king, has laid down for them in His Word.

*Psalm 103:13; Proverbs 14:26; Isaiah 54:8,9; Lamentations 3:31; John 1:12; 17:17; Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5-6, 14; 7:18, 23; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 7:1; Galatians 5:17, 24; Ephesians 3:16-19; 4:15, 16; Colossians 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 2:11*

## **Section 13. SAVING FAITH**

13.1 The grace of faith by which the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls is the work of the Spirit in their hearts. Normally it is brought into being through the preaching of the Word. By the Word and its ministry, by the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, by prayer, and also by other means appointed by God, faith is increased and strengthened.

13.2 By faith a Christian believes everything to be true that is made known in the Word, in which God speaks authoritatively. He also perceives in the Word a degree of excellence superior to all other writings, indeed to all things that the world contains. The Word shows the glory of God as seen in His various attributes, the excellence of Christ in His nature and in the offices He bears, and the power and perfection of the Holy Spirit in all the works in which He is engaged. In this way the Christian is enabled to trust himself implicitly to the truth thus believed, and to render service according to the different requirements of the various parts of Scripture. To the commands he yields obedience; when he hears threatenings he trembles; as for the divine promises concerning this life and that which is to come, he embraces them. But the principal acts of saving faith relate in the first instance to Christ as the believer accepts, receives and rests upon Him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, and all by virtue of the New Covenant.

*Psalm 19:7-10; 119:72; Isaiah 66:2; Matthew 6:30; Luke 17:5; John 1:12; 15:14; Acts 15:11; 16:31; 20:32; 24:14; Romans 4:19-20; 10:14-17; 2 Corinthians 4:13; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:8; 6:16; Colossians 2:2; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 5:13-14; 6:11-12; 11:13; 12:2; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 5:4-5*

## **Section 14. LIVING GOD'S WORD BY MEDITATION AND PRAYER**

14.1 Faith is awakened and sustained by God's Spirit through His Word and prayer. The good fight of faith is fought mainly by meditating on the Scriptures and praying that God would apply them to our souls.

14.2 The promises of God recorded in the Scriptures are suited to save us from the deception of sin by displaying for us, and holding out to us, superior pleasures in the protection, provision, and presence of God. Therefore, reading, understanding, pondering, memorizing, and savoring the promises of all that God will be for us in Jesus are primary means of the Holy Spirit to break the power of sin's deceitful promises in our lives. It is therefore needful that we give ourselves to such meditation, day and night.

14.3 God has ordained to bless and use His people for His glory through the means of prayer, offered in Jesus' name by faith. All prayer should seek ultimately that God's name be hallowed, that His kingdom come, and that His will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. God's sovereignty over all things is not a hindrance to prayer, but a reason for hope that our prayers will succeed.

14.4 Prayer is the indispensable handmaid of meditation, as we cry out to God for the inclination to turn from the world to the Word, for the spiritual ability to see the glory of God in His testimonies, for a soul-satisfying sight of the love of God, and for strength in the inner man to do the will of God. By prayer God sanctifies His people, sends gospel laborers into the world, and causes the Word of God to spread and triumph over Satan and unbelief.

*Psalm 1:1-3; 34:8; 37:4; 86:11; 90:14; 119:11, 18, 36; Ezekiel 36:37-38; Matthew 6:9-10; 7:7-11; 9:38; Mark 9:24; Luke 22:31-32; John 14:13; 15:16, 30-31; 16:23-24, 26; Romans 10:17; Ephesians 1:18-19; 3:4, 14-16; 5:17; 6:17-19; Philippians 4:6-7; Colossians 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 2:7; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 3:1; Hebrews 4:12; 10:34; 11:24-26; 13:13-14; 2 Peter 1:3-4; James 1:5-8; 1 John 3:21-22; 5:14-15*

## **Section 15. THE KINGDOM**

15.1 Those who have been saved by the grace of God through union with Christ by faith and through regeneration by the Holy Spirit enter the kingdom of God and delight in the blessings of the new covenant: the forgiveness of sins, the inward transformation that awakens a desire to glorify, trust, and obey God, and the prospect of the glory yet to be revealed. Good works constitute indispensable evidence of saving grace. Living as salt in a world that is decaying and light in a world that is dark, believers should neither withdraw into seclusion from the world, nor become indistinguishable from it. Recognizing whose created order this is, and because we are citizens of God's kingdom, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, doing good to all, especially to those who belong to the

household of God. The kingdom of God, already present but not fully realized, is the exercise of God's sovereignty in the world toward the eventual redemption of all creation. The kingdom of God is an invasive power that plunders Satan's dark kingdom and regenerates and renovates through repentance and faith the lives of individuals rescued from that kingdom. It therefore inevitably establishes a new community of human life together under God.

*Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10, 23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10, 16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6, 9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22*

## **Section 16. THE CHURCH**

16.1 The universal church is composed of all those, in every time and place, who are chosen in Christ and united to Him through faith by the Spirit into one body, with Christ Himself as the Head. The mission of the church is to make disciples of all the nations through the verbal proclamation of the gospel. This mission is driven by the purpose of the church, which is to glorify God.

16.2 Christians are to associate themselves into particular local churches where they seek to fulfill their purpose and mission according to Christ's commandment. A local church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, bound together by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, and exercising the various gifts given them by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church. Its primary duties are the reading and preaching of God's Word, the right administration of Christ's ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper), and the faithful exercise of discipline over its members.

16.3 The only scriptural officers of the local church are Elders or Pastors and Deacons, whose qualifications and duties are defined in the New Testament. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of elder is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

*Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42, 47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11, 21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3*

## **Section 17. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

17.1 Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus Himself. The former is connected with entrance into the new covenant community, the latter with ongoing covenant renewal. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipation of his return and of the consummation of all things.

17.2 Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is baptized in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is to be done by immersion to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Its only proper subjects are those who do profess repentance towards God and live faith and obedience to the Lord Jesus. It is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

17.3 The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be observed by his churches until the end of the world. It is to be observed by the eating of bread and the drinking of the cup. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to promote believers' spiritual nourishment and growth in Christ, and to strengthen the ties that bind them to all the duties they owe to Him. The Lord's Supper is, therefore, a bond and pledge of the fellowship which believers have with Christ and with one another.

*Matthew 26:17-29; 28:18-20; Acts 2:37-41; 8:36-40; Romans 6:1-4; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; 1 Peter 3:18-22*

## **Section 18. THE LORD'S DAY**

18.1 The first day of the week is the Lord's Day and is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual

devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

*Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1-10; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3, 33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1, 19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10*

## **Section 19. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE**

19.1. Christ has purchased for all believers a liberty inherent in the gospel. It comprises freedom from the guilt of sin, from the condemnation that follows upon guilt, from the wrath of God, and from the severity and curse of God's law. It also includes deliverance from this present evil world, and from all such things as bondage to Satan, sin's domination, the hurtfulness of afflictions, the fear and sting of death, and eternal damnation. Furthermore, it includes free access to God and the yielding of obedience to Him, not with the fear of a slave for his master, but with a childlike love and readiness.

19.2. All these blessings were more or less enjoyed by believers in Old Testament days, but under New Testament conditions Christian liberty becomes more extensive. It includes freedom from the burdens imposed by the ceremonial law to which the Jewish church was subjected, greater boldness in approaching to the throne of grace, and a larger measure of the free Spirit of God than was normally granted to saints in the pre-Christian era.

19.3. God alone is Lord of the conscience. He has set it free from all obligation to receive or obey the teachings of men that are either in opposition to God's Word or not contained in it. Indeed, to believe and obey such teachings is tantamount to a betrayal of true liberty of conscience. It is against all reason, and nothing less than the destruction of liberty of conscience, when men demand of their brothers and sisters an implicit faith - in other words, an absolute and blind obedience.

19.4. To practice any sin, or harbor sin's evil desires, on a pretense of enjoying Christian liberty, perverts the main purpose of gospel grace. Those guilty of such an offense fall into sin and destroy the very purpose of Christian liberty, which is to enjoy freedom from condemnation.

*Matthew 15:9; Luke 1:73-75; John 7:38,39; Acts 14:19, 26; 26:18; Romans 6:1, 8:3, 15; 14:4; 28; 2; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 7:23; 15:54- 57; 2 Corinthians 1:24; Galatians 1:4;3:9; 13-14; 5:13; Colossians 2:20-23; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Hebrews 10:19- 21; 2 Peter 2:18, 21; James 4:12; 1 John 4:18*

## **Section 20. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY**

20.1 Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

20.2 The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

20.3 Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28;*

*Psalm 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7*

## **Section 21. DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND THE COMING OF THE LORD**

21.1 When Christians die they are made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, and are taken consciously into the presence of Christ, which is more glorious and more satisfying than any experience on earth.

21.2 At the end of this age the Lord Jesus Christ will return personally, gloriously and bodily with His holy angels. He will exercise his role as final Judge and his kingdom will be consummated. Both the just and the unjust will be raised bodily—the unjust to judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell (as our Lord himself taught), and the just to eternal blessedness in the presence of Him, the spotless Lamb, who sits on the throne. On that day the church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all, His people will be enthralled by the immediacy of His ineffable holiness, and everything will be to the praise of his glorious grace in the new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness.

*Psalm 16:11; Daniel 12:2; Matthew 13:12; 9:29; 24:31; 25:23, 46; Mark 14:61-62; Luke 21:27; 22:28-30; 23:43; 24:39-43; John 3:16; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 1:18; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:9; 13:12; 15:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:1-9; 12:2-3; Ephesians 2:6-7; Philippians 1:23; 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 5:2-3; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 12:22-23; Jude 24-25; Revelation 6:9-11; 14:11*