
Christ Covenant

Reformed Baptist Church

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Table of Contents

Constitution	5
Preamble	5
Article I: Name	5
Article II: Foundation, Purpose, Objectives, and Priorities of Ministry	5
Article III: Doctrinal Statement	6
Article IV: Church Covenant	6
Article V: Membership	7
Article VI: Leadership – Officers, Organization, and Purpose	7
Article VII: The Church Property	7
Article VIII: Revisions, Additions, or Amendments	8
Bylaws	9
Article I: General Statement	9
Article II: Membership	9
Article III: Church Government	13
Article IV: Church Finances	20
Article V: Organization of The Members for The Ministry	22
Article VI: Discipline	23
Article VII: Associations of Churches	27
Article VIII: Marriage and Sexual Immorality	27
Article IX: Revisions, Additions, or Amendments	28
Appendix 1: Historic Creeds	31
<i>The Apostles' Creed</i>	33
<i>The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed</i>	34
<i>The Definition of Chalcedon</i>	35
<i>The Athanasian Creed</i>	36
Appendix 2: <i>Second London Baptist Confession of Faith</i>	39
Appendix 3: Statement on Full Subscription	65

Constitution

Preamble

We, the members of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church, desiring to faithfully serve the Lord Jesus Christ, to foster the spirit of harmony, to promote good order in the church, and to better set forth our position before the world, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Therefore, be it resolved, that beginning July 9, 2023 we shall be governed by the following Constitution and Bylaws.

Article I: Name

The name of this church shall be Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church.

Article II: Foundation, Purpose, Objectives, and Priorities of Ministry

1. The foundation of this church shall be the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself being its very cornerstone (Ephesians 2:19-22), and its code of guidance in all its affairs, the Word of God; and this church does here affirm its faith that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (John 14:26; 2 Peter 1:20-21, 3:15-16; 2 Timothy 3:16).

2. The purpose of this church is to glorify the God of the Scriptures in promoting His worship, edifying saints, and evangelizing sinners. To this end we are committed to proclaiming God's perfect law and His glorious gospel of grace in Jesus Christ throughout the world and defending "the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3 NAS95).

3. The objectives of this church shall be the following:

- a. To worship God according to the teaching of His Word;
- b. To practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament;
- c. To sustain its ordinances and doctrines as outlined in the *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*;
- d. To preach and propagate among all peoples God's perfect law and His glorious gospel of grace in Jesus Christ;

e. To defend “the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” (Jude 3 NAS95).

4. The ministry priorities of this church flow from the vision of God’s glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (John 4:23), strengthen the vision in nurture and education (1 Corinthians 14:26; 2 Peter 3:18), and spread the vision through evangelism, missions, holy living, and loving deeds (Matthew 28:18-20; 5:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2:9; 3:15).

Article III: Doctrinal Statement

In the spirit of catholicity, it is our intention as a congregation to stand with the historic church in her creedal tradition found in the Apostles’, Niceno-Constantinopolitan, Athanasian Creeds, and the Definition of Chalcedon [See Appendix 1]; likewise, that which is in accordance with them agreed upon by the early fathers of the church. Standing in this historic strain of doctrinal truth we hold as our confession of faith the *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*, as an excellent summary of what we believe [See Appendix 2]. We hold to its content, not as our authoritative rule, for Scripture alone holds this position, but rather as an aid to us in controversy, a confirmation in faith, a means of instruction in righteousness, and a link with faithful brothers who have gone before. All Church Officers and Gifted Brothers fully (strictly) subscribe the *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* as explained in Appendix 3.

Article IV: Church Covenant

1. Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

2. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to diligently and regularly attend the worship of the church and participate in its fellowship; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel to all nations.

3. We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, and unrighteous anger.

4. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, mindful of the guidelines of our Savior, to secure it without delay.

5. We, moreover, engage that if we move from this place, we will, if possible, unite with a church of like faith and order where we can maintain the spirit of this covenant.

Article V: Membership

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who:

1. Confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord;
2. Give evidence of regeneration by living consistently with their profession;
3. Hold the views of faith, doctrine, and practice of Scripture as held and taught by this church;
4. Have been baptized by immersion; and
5. Have been received into its membership according to the Bylaws of this church.

Article VI: Leadership – Officers, Organization, and Purpose

1. The officers of the church shall be Elders and Deacons. The leadership of the church shall be vested in the Elders, who shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.

2. The purpose of the Elders of the church is to focus on the perfecting of the saints, the ministry of the word of God, and the building up of the body of Christ to spiritual maturity. The purpose of the Deacons is to lovingly serve the needs of the membership.

3. Deacons shall assist the Elders by performing services of advice, administration, and implementation of ministry.

Article VII: The Church Property

1. In the event of a division of this church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the church membership, provided such group is loyal to this

Constitution and Bylaws; otherwise, it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this Constitution and Bylaws though it may not be the largest group in such division.

2. If a disagreement arises concerning the interpretation of this Constitution and Bylaws, all parties shall strive for peace and unity in the body of Christ, submitting to one another in love and shall seek and prayerfully consider the advice and counsel of the association(s) of churches of which the church is a member, in accordance with chapter 26, paragraph 15 of the *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*.

3. The Church pledges its assets for use exclusively in performing the Church's charitable, religious, or educational functions. Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the church work cannot continue, the church property shall be sold to retire any debt and the remaining proceeds shall be donated equally between the Confessional Baptist Association, the Texas Area Association of Reformed Baptist Churches, and the International Reformed Baptist Seminary.

4. Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same beliefs be advisable and approved by the church, the Elders (or a committee of men approved by the church if there be no Elders) shall be authorized by the church to oversee the process and terms of such consolidation insofar as the property of this church is concerned, the final terms being approved by the church.

Article VIII: Revisions, Additions, or Amendments

Revisions, additions, or amendments of this Constitution may be made only in accordance with this church's Bylaws.

Bylaws

Article I: General Statement

The Church is an unincorporated nonprofit association organized under Chapter 252 of the Texas Business Organizations Code (“BOC”) and shall have all the powers, duties, authorizations, and responsibilities as provided therein to unincorporated nonprofit associations. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Church shall neither have nor exercise any power, nor engage directly or indirectly in any activity that would invalidate its status as an organization exempt from federal income tax and described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or the corresponding provision or provisions of any subsequent United States Internal Revenue law or laws (the “Code”).

Article II: Membership

1. General Statement:

The Church shall have one or more classes of members but at all times shall have at least three (3) members joined by mutual consent for the common, nonprofit purposes set forth in these Articles. Any person may be admitted as a member of the Church if such person satisfies the criteria and procedures for membership in the Church’s Bylaws. While the Church has members, the members shall have the sole and exclusive right to make the following decisions: (i) adding and removing members; (ii) selecting and removing elders; (iii) amending the Articles of Association; (iv) decisions involving merger, consolidation, or dissolution of the Church; and (v) decisions involving amendment of the Church’s Bylaws.

2. Admissions

a. By Baptism: Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of change of heart, and having accepted the aims and ideals of this church as expressed in the Church Covenant, and having affirmed in general the contents of the church’s confession, may be received into membership by baptism. A valid New Testament baptism is that which is by immersion and follows one’s personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

b. By Letter: For those individuals seeking membership by letter in Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church, a request for a letter will be made to their previous church to ascertain their present standing. Upon confirmation of “good standing” the candidate will be presented for membership.

c. By Experience or Restoration: All applicants for membership, other than by baptism or transfer of letter, that is, by Christian experience if previously baptized, or by restoration of a previously disciplined member, shall be received

into the church in the same way as those by baptism, except the ordinance shall not be administered.

3. Termination of Membership

a. By Transfer:

1) Church members may not remove or depart from the church, and so one from another as they please, nor without just and weighty cause but ought to live and dwell together: forasmuch as they are commanded not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. Such departure tends to the dissolution and ruin of the body, as the pulling of stones and pieces of timber from the building, and members from the natural body, tends to the destruction of the whole.

2) It is therefore the duty of church members, in such times and places when council may be had, to consult with the church whereof they are members, about their removal, that accordingly they have their approbation (by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present and voting), may be encouraged, or otherwise desist. They who are joined with consent, should not depart without consent, except forced thereunto.

3) If a member's departure be manifestly unsafe, and sinful, the church may not consent thereunto, for in so doing, they should not act in faith and should partake with him in his sin. If the case be doubtful and the person not to be persuaded, it seems best to leave the matter unto God and not forcibly to detain him.

4) Just examples for a member's removal of himself from the church are:

a) If a man cannot continue without partaking in sin due to matters of conscience.

b) In case of personal persecution, so Paul, departed from the disciples at Damascus. Also, in case of general persecution when all are scattered.

c) In case of real, and not only pretended, want of competent subsistence, a door being opened for a better supply in another place, together with the means of spiritual edification. In these, or like cases, a member may lawfully remove, and the church cannot lawfully detain him.

5) To separate from a church, either out of contempt of their holy fellowship, or out of covetousness, or due to an erring conscience (which misidentifies the good and is manifestly contrary to the Word of God and

godliness), or for greater enlargements with just grief to the church; or out of schism, or want of love; and out of a spirit of contention in respect of some unkindness, or some evil only conceived, or indeed, in the church, which might and should be tolerated and healed with a spirit of meekness, and of which evil the church is not yet convinced (though perhaps himself be) nor admonished, for these or the like reasons to withdraw from public communion, in Word, or sacraments, or censures, is unlawful and sinful (See 26.13 in the *Confession*).

6) Such members as have orderly removed their habitation ought to join themselves unto the church in order, where they do inhabit if it may be: otherwise, they can neither perform the duties, nor receive the privileges of members; such an example tolerated in some, is apt to corrupt others; which if many should follow, would threaten the dissolution and confusion of churches, contrary to the Scripture.

7) Order requires that a member thus removing have letters of recommendation and dismissal from the church whereof he yet is, unto the church whereunto he desires to be joined, lest the church should be deluded; and so that the church may receive him in faith and not be corrupted by receiving deceivers and false brethren. Until the person dismissed be received into another church, he ceases not by his letters of dismissal to be a member of the church whereof he was. Since the church cannot make a member no member, but only a member of another church, the exception being in cases of excommunication.

8) If a member be called to remove only for a time, where a church is, letters of recommendation are requisite, and sufficient for communion with that church, in the ordinances, and in their watch: as Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea, had letters written for her to the church of Rome, that she might be received, as is becoming of saints.

9) Such letters of recommendation and dismissal were written for Apollos; for Mark to the Colossians; for Phoebe to the Romans; for sundry others to the churches; and the apostle tells us, that some persons, not sufficiently known otherwise, have special need of such letters, though he for his part had no need thereof. The use of them is to be a benefit and help to the party for whom they are written, and for the furthering of his reception amongst the saints in the place whereto he goes; and the due satisfaction of them in their receiving of him.

b. By Discipline: It is right and in harmony with the Scriptures for the congregation to exclude from this fellowship any person who persists in holding false or heretical doctrine; who obviously and persistently lives a life inconsistent with his Christian profession; who lives in violation of the just laws of the land or public morals; who walks disorderly; who persists in disturbing the unity and

peace of this church; or who habitually absents themselves from the stated meetings of this church without just cause, the process of which is further outlined in the Bylaws.

4. Instruction to Membership Candidates: All persons uniting with this church in any of the ways set forth in these Bylaws shall have previously completed the Membership Orientation Course prior to presentation for Membership.

5. Presentation of Membership Candidates. Those seeking membership in Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church will be asked to fill out a membership application form, part of which consists of a description of the applicant's personal testimony. This form will be submitted to the Elders, and the testimony will in turn be made available to the membership at least two weeks prior to their presentation for membership. This will give the congregation sufficient time to evaluate, and if necessary, converse with the applicant prior to their presentation. If any concerns arise during this time of review, the responsibility rests upon the member to bring this to the attention of the Elders. At the time of the public presentation of the candidate for membership in the church, they, along with the congregation, will publicly affirm their support of the church covenant. At that point the member candidate will be received into membership by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present and voting.

6. Church Member Subscription: Although all officers and gifted brothers of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church are required to fully (strictly) subscribe the doctrinal standards of the church, holding every doctrine taught therein, yet full (strict) subscription shall not be a requirement to become a member of the church; rather, it shall be required that a church member be in general agreement with the doctrinal standards of the church, holding fast to those doctrines which are necessary for salvation, the health of the soul, progress in godliness, and the unity of the church.

Individuals applying for church membership are to inform the Elders of any point of disagreement with the doctrinal standards of the church, and it shall be left to the discretion of the Elders to determine whether that individual is in general agreement with the doctrinal standards of the church and may be proposed to the church for membership.

Moreover, while church members who do not fully (strictly) subscribe the doctrinal standards of the church may explain their views to others who ask, they are to avoid undermining the particular doctrine with which they disagree, by openly speaking to the contrary or trying to spread their view to other members, which disturbs the peace of the church.

Article III: Church Government

1. General Statement

- a. The Lord Jesus Christ is alone the head of the church. Yet, he has committed

the keys of the kingdom to his church. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to the mind of Christ 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.

b. And yet, the Lord Jesus Christ has distributed this power and authority variously to the elders and congregation. The elders have power and authority to declare the word of God; to administer the sacraments; to govern, rule, and lead the church as humble, servant-shepherds. By governing, ruling, and leading, it is not intended what is sometimes called “Elder Rule,” in which all power and authority is placed solely in the hands of the elders of the church. And yet, though it is not “Elder Rule,” it is a genuine power and authority to govern, rule, and lead the church of God, to which the congregation ought to submit.

c. The congregation has power and authority to call or remove church officers; and to admit into or to exclude from church membership. As the congregation exercises its power and authority, the elders are to diligently work with the church and take the lead role as overseers in the following ways: to open and shut the doors of God’s house by the admission of members approved by the church; in the excommunication of notorious and obstinate offenders renounced by the church; in the restoration of the penitent who is forgiven by the church; and in the ordination of officers chosen by the church.

d. In this manner, the elders and the congregation are to strive to harmoniously exercise the power and authority which Christ has variously distributed to them for the upbuilding of the body of Christ and the glory of God.

2. Congregational Meetings

a. All congregational meetings shall be called and conducted by the Elders. There will be one scheduled annual business meeting per year. The purpose of this meeting will be to give an accounting for and a review of the previous year. This meeting will address our current financial situation, set goals for the coming year, and will allow for a time of questioning from the congregation. Other congregational meetings necessary for church business will be announced at least two weeks prior to the meeting. However, in the case of unusual circumstances, a church meeting may be called by the Elders without the two-week notice. In such cases, the Elders will make every reasonable attempt to notify all members of such a meeting. All members should regard their presence at a duly-called business meeting with the same seriousness with which they would regard their attendance at a worship service.

b. A congregational meeting may also be called when one-fourth of the voting members in good standing make a written request to the elders for such a meeting. This request along with subject matter must be set forth in writing with the

signatures of the said members; and the Elders shall in turn make the proper announcement of the meeting.

c. Three-fourths of the voting members of the church, qualified to give their ‘for’ or ‘against’ at official church meetings, shall constitute a quorum. This quorum is required in all official church meetings where congregational assent is necessary.

d. Any member of the church eighteen years of age or over, in good standing, shall have the privilege and responsibility to vote on any question properly brought before the congregation. Those members of the church who are not eighteen years of age or over, though they are true members of the body of Christ and ought not to be denied the ordinances of Christ; yet they shall not be allowed to vote in congregational meetings until they reach the age of eighteen.

e. Any matter of business requiring a vote of the congregation shall be put forth to the congregation by a motion. If proposed by the elder(s), this motion does not need a second. Once the matter is put forth by a motion, a due amount of time shall be given for discussion. If sufficient discussion has been had, the matter will then go to a vote.

f. In all matters put forward to the congregation for a vote, the elders and the congregation ought to diligently strive for unanimity, for we read in the Book of Acts that the Primitive church (which is a pattern for succeeding ages) performed all their administrations with one accord (Acts 2:46) as is becoming of the Church of God, which ought to be of one heart and one soul, of one mind and one judgment, and all to speak the same thing (Acts 4:32, 1 Cor. 1:10, Phil. 2:2-3). But if any difference arises (as sometimes happens, through the remaining darkness of our minds, seeing we all know but in part), then, such as do disagree from their brethren are required to set forth and explain the grounds of their dissent, which, if they be weighty and held forth from the light of the Word, all the rest ought to submit and yield thereunto, not as to the voice of their brethren, but as to the voice of Christ, whose voice alone must rule in the church.

g. But if the grounds of such as do dissent do upon due consideration appear to have little or no weight in them, the officers of the Church, or some other of the Brethren, ought to declare and explain unto them the invalidity thereof. If they be satisfied, the matter then proceeds with the common consent of all. If they be not satisfied yet, it is either through want of light, (and so through weakness of judgment) or through strength of pride, and so through stiffness of will.

h. If the former be the case, the elders and congregation ought to take further pains, lovingly to inform them, and patiently to bear with them, until the matter be resolved; so that at length, they come either to consent to go along with their Brethren, or at least to be content to refer the matter to the judgements of their Brethren, and if their conscience permit to abstain from voting on the matter. Or, if they do vote in the negative, they do so in a spirit of love and humility,

resolving to neither let a root of bitterness take hold in their heart, nor to hinder the proceedings or the endeavors of the church.

i. But if the case be the latter, and through partiality or prejudice their dissent appears to spring from stiffness of will and a spirit of pride, in so far as they will not be brought (by loving and brotherly information) to give way to the better judgements of their Brethren, the Church ought then to proceed with common consent to admonish them of their pride and willfulness.

j. But if it appears that the dissent, whether of one or more Brethren, arises from such difficulty and intricacy of the matter in hand, as that the officers and members of the Church do find themselves either unable to clear the matter fully, or at least unfit, in regard of some prejudice which may be conceived against them, in such a case, when the matter is weighty, and the doubt great on both sides, then we call in for light from other Churches; and entreat them to send over to us such of their Elders, or Brethren, as may be fit to judge in such a cause, and upon their coming, the Church meeting together in the Name of Christ, the whole matter is to be laid open to those assisting, who by the help of Christ, studying all things according to the rule of the Word and by God's grace, the matter will be cleared, a right way of peace and concord discovered and advised, and the spirits of the brethren on all parts comfortably satisfied.

k. Moreover, in matters of great weight and importance, which are not elsewhere covered in these bylaws (for example: the purchasing of properties, financial investments, or the move to a new location, etc.), the Elders are not to commit the church without first consulting with the church and gaining their consent (by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present and voting), without which the elders may not proceed any further in the matter but ought rather to either try to better explain their reasons, proving them from the Word of God and demonstrating the benefits of such a change, or to trust in the wisdom of the church and entrust the matter to the Lord, desisting from that particular proposal. This consent of the church in all matters of great weight and importance is necessary because the pattern in Scripture is generally that matters of great weight and importance (such as the receiving and dismissing of members and the election of church officers), involving and impacting all the congregation, require such consent.

l. However, although the church is to be consulted by the elders and its consent sought by them; nevertheless, the church may not proceed in weighty and important decisions without the approval and consent of the elders, since in the right administration of the church, generally speaking, no church act can be consummated, or perfected without the consent of both the congregation and the elders together.

3. Church Officers

a. Officers. The Officers of the Church shall be Elders and Deacons. Officers shall be called to office by affirmation of the membership of the church. All officers of the church shall be members of the church in good standing.

b. The term of service for officers is permanent in nature. Therefore, church officers are not elected for a specific period of time. However, there must be allowances for the termination of service under certain circumstances.

1) Leave of Absence – After consultation with other church officers, an officer may request a leave of absence from the responsibilities of office for a certain period of time. This leave of absence must be approved by the members of the church according to the Bylaws. Extended leaves of absence are at the discretion of the congregation and may require final resignation from office.

2) Resignation – If an officer should request to be released from office, the congregation should receive an explanation and, if so willing, release the officer from office by a three-fourths majority vote of those present and voting. In the case of releasing a supported Elder from office, support will continue for a period not to exceed thirty days from their last day in office. His duties and authority shall cease at the end of his last day in office. Any extension of support beyond the thirty days must be approved by the church by a three-fourths majority vote of those present and voting in a congregational meeting.

3) Termination and Discipline – In the event that an officer either departs from the *Confession*; persists in sin after having been duly admonished according to the first three steps of church discipline as outlined in the Bylaws; or has been found to be disqualified from office due to the nature of his offense and its consequences, that officer's office, duties, and employment shall be terminated. Furthermore, in a case of discipline, his duties shall be suspended while they are being called to repentance before the completion of the fourth and final step of excommunication.

4) Restoration to Office – If, after the third step of the discipline process, the suspended officer repents of his doctrinal error or sin and is restored to fellowship, the congregation (and any other Elders) shall determine if and when the officer can be restored to his office. If the congregation determines that restoration is possible, the Elders shall consider the best course of action for the restoration of that officer to his office. This course of action shall be submitted to the congregation for approval. In the event that there are no remaining Elders, the congregation shall determine the best course of action for the restoration of that officer to his office and duties. In such a circumstance, the members should reach out to the

association(s) of which they are a member for counsel and guidance. Nevertheless, the office and duties of the suspended officer under consideration shall remain under suspension until such a time as the congregation approves.

4. Elders

a. General Statement on Eldership – By way of Biblical teaching, it is to always be the intention and design of the Elders of this church to adhere to Peter’s admonition to “shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Peter 5:2-4 NAS95). We highlight here that the leadership of the Elders within the body is to be carried out voluntarily, not under compulsion. They are not to perform their ministry for sordid gain, rather they are to be eager in service to the flock. Finally, Peter emphatically states that they are not to act as “lords” over the people in their charge but are instead to be examples to the sheep in their care before the watching eye of the “Chief Shepherd” who, when He appeared, would grant them for their faithful service “the unfading crown of glory” (See 1 Peter 5:4 NAS95).

The Scriptures indicate that normally there should be a plurality of Elders in the local church (Acts 20:17; Philippians 1:1). These men are called “overseers” because they have oversight of the assembly (Acts 20:28 NAS95; See also 1 Peter 5:2 and Hebrews 13:17). They are called the “shepherds and teachers” given to the church “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12 NAS95; See also Acts 20:28). There is parity (equality) among the Elders, each bearing equal authority in their deliberations and decisions. Thus, the plurality and parity of the Elders guard the flock from the weakness of rule by one man and use the collective wisdom of several godly men to rule the flock of God.

b. Composition and Calling – It is the goal of this church to have a plurality of Elders; however, the total number of Elders at any time shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the church. Candidates will be carefully examined by the Elders and the congregation as to their qualifications and support of both the doctrine and practice of the church.

c. The following steps will be the process by which an individual will be evaluated:

1) Initiation – The individual responds to God’s working in his life by expressing a desire to serve in a leadership capacity or by being nominated by the membership of the church.

2) Consultation – The Elders and the individual meet to discuss the Biblical qualifications for service, agreement with the doctrine and the Constitution and Bylaws of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church, expectations of the ministry, and/or other areas that may be deemed pertinent and beneficial by either the Elders or the individual.

3) Confirmation – The Elders must seek agreement that the individual has the potential for leadership and thereby assume responsibility to work with the individual toward that end.

4) Period of Demonstration and Training – The Elders will inform the congregation that the man is under consideration for the leadership position and will assign specific responsibilities of ministry within the church for a reasonable period of time for the entire body to observe the individual’s spirit and effectiveness in service. During this period, the candidate may also undergo additional theological study and practical training, if designated by the Elders, so that the candidate be fully equipped for the office.

5) Presentation and Examination – After the period of demonstration and training, if the individual’s life and service is deemed to be appropriate by the Elders, the person will be presented to the entire church for examination as one whom God has qualified for leadership. Following public examination, the entire congregation will be given a reasonable period of time in which to personally express any concerns or needed input to the Elders.

6) Affirmation – After the period for congregational input, and if the Elders are in full agreement that the individual has indeed been qualified by an act of the grace of God for leadership within the church, then the Elders will seek to affirm what God has already done in the man’s life by setting him before the congregation for a vote of the entire body. And upon congregational affirmation, the candidate will be set apart for the Eldership by the laying on of the hands of the Elders.

d. Qualifications – The qualifications for a man chosen to fill the office of Elder are clearly set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Additionally, any man called to the Eldership of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church must fully (strictly) subscribe the church’s *Confession*. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under moral obligation to make this fact known to the Elders and members of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church that they may determine the best course of action.

e. Responsibilities – The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. The responsibilities of the Elders shall include:

1) Oversight of the Flock: the shepherding and accountability roles of the Elders over the flock (1 Peter 5:2-3; Acts 20:28).

2) Management of Church Affairs: decisions regarding finances, administration, and policies affecting the direction of the ministry (1 Timothy 3:5).

3) Issues Regarding Church Discipline: church discipline is to be administered by the Elders, when necessary, as determined by the vote of the church (Titus 1:13; 2:6, 9, 15; 3:10).

4) Doctrinal Decisions Regarding Church Policy and Ministry
Methodology: periodic discussions regarding the ministry and how to be Biblical and effective in the task to which God has called them (1 Timothy 4:6; Titus 2).

f. Organization – The Elders shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the mission of the church.

g. Support – In view of the fact that the responsibilities of the Eldership are numerous and great, scripture makes provision for the financial support of Elders (1 Timothy 5:17-18), which shall be determined by the church.

5. Deacons

a. Composition and Calling. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of individuals in the church. Candidates for the Diaconate will be carefully examined by the Elders as to their qualifications and support of both the doctrine and practice of the church. A potential Deacon must have proven himself as a man of Deacon character and ability within the context of membership in Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church.

The following steps will be the process by which an individual will be screened and evaluated in terms of discerning God’s hand upon that person’s life, in qualifying him for a leadership position within Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church:

1) Initiation – The individual responds to God’s working in his life by expressing a desire to serve in a leadership capacity, or by nomination by the membership of the church.

2) Consultation – The Elders and the individual meet to discuss the Biblical qualifications for service, agreement with the doctrine and Constitution of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church, expectations of

the ministry, and/or other areas that may be deemed pertinent and beneficial by either the Elders or the individual.

3) Confirmation – In order to move forward, the Elders must be in agreement that the individual has the potential for leadership and thereby assume responsibility to work with the individual toward that end.

4) Period of Demonstration and Training – The Elders will inform the congregation that the man is under consideration for the leadership position and will assign specific responsibilities of ministry within the church for a reasonable period of time for the entire body to observe the individual’s spirit and effectiveness in service. During this period, the candidate may also undergo additional theological study and practical training, if designated by the Elders, so that the candidate be fully equipped for the office.

5) Presentation and Examination – After the period of demonstration and training, if this individual’s life and service is deemed to be appropriate by the Elders, the person will be presented to the entire church for examination as one whom God has qualified for leadership. Following public examination, the entire congregation will be given a reasonable period of time in which to personally express any concerns or needed input to the Elders.

6) Affirmation – After the Elders have acted upon the input of the congregation during the above period of time, and if the Elders are in full agreement that the individual has indeed been qualified by an act of the grace of God for leadership within the church, then the Elders will seek to affirm what God has already done in the man’s life by setting him before the congregation for a vote of the entire body. And upon congregational affirmation, the candidate will be set apart for the Diaconate by the laying on of the hands of the Elders and Deacons.

b. Qualifications. Deacons and nominees for the office Deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include 1 Timothy 3:8-12 and Acts 6:3. Additionally, any man called to the Diaconate of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church must fully (strictly) subscribe the church’s *Confession*. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under moral obligation to make this fact known to the Elders and members of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church that they may determine the best course of action.

c. Responsibilities. Though not entrusted with the rule and governance of the church, the Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include:

- 1) Ministering mercy to the needs of the membership of the church;
- 2) Administering a fund to assist the poor and needy, and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress to both members and non-members;
- 3) Assisting in the administration of the ordinances of the Gospel – baptism and the Lord’s Table;
- 4) Administering the business affairs of the church pertaining to its material assets.

d. Limitation of Powers. The Deacons shall not encumber, transfer, sell, or purchase any real estate for the church except by the express authorization conveyed by a three-fourths majority vote of the membership present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting. No obligation shall be incurred to spend over \$2000 on one item without the special vote of the congregation unless that item already appears in the adopted budget.

e. Organization. The Deacons, taking counsel with the Elders, shall be responsible for organizing themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the mission of the church.

Article IV: Church Finances

1. General Statement

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the church. All funds donated shall pass through the Deacons, who shall be responsible for the following:

- a. General oversight of all church funds and accounts;
- b. Ensuring the keeping of an accurate and current record of all financial gifts to the church;
- c. Informing the church through regular reports as to the financial condition of the fellowship;
- d. Preparing the annual budget with the Elders and presenting it to the church for final approval;
- e. And if additional monies are deemed necessary by the Deacons over \$2000, approval should be sought from the congregation prior to any expenditure.

2. Contributions

The Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for charitable, religious, or educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, and to conduct, accomplish, and carry on its objectives, functions, and purposes or any part thereof set forth in the governing documents of the Church as amended from time to time, within or without the State of Texas.

It is understood that membership in this church involves helping to meet financial obligations to support the church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member therefore shall be encouraged to give cheerfully, according to their ability and the measure of their faith.

Special offerings may be sought by the church, with the approval of the Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them. The appropriateness of which, and hence the reception of these special gifts, shall be determined by the Elders.

3. Financial Planning

The financial planning of the church shall be practiced through the medium of annual budgets for the carrying out of various church ministries. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the church upon recommendation of the Elders as presented annually to the church by the Deacons.

4. Accounts

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Deacons according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Deacons shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the church as detailed in the budget.

5. Indebtedness

Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church will operate on a no-debt basis as a general policy. This policy may be altered at the prayerful discretion of the church.

6. Authority to Bind the Church

The Elders and Deacons have authority, in accordance with these Bylaws, the Church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances. The Church may indemnify a person who was, is, or is threatened to be made a named defendant or respondent in litigation or other proceedings because the person is or was an officer or elder

of the Church to the fullest extent provided by the provisions of the BOC governing indemnification.

Article V: Organization of The Members For The Ministry

1. General Statement

Any organization of the membership seeking to be an official ministry of the church must seek sanction of the Elders.

2. Gifted Brothers

Although the preaching of the word belongs to the Elders of the church by way of office, yet it 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. These others, so qualified, are called Gifted Brothers. The position of Gifted Brother is not an office of the church, and they are not considered Elders. Gifted Brothers must be male members of the church in good standing who fully (strictly) subscribe the *Confession* of the church. Should they at any time move from this position, they are under moral obligation to make this fact known to the Elders and members of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church that they may determine the best course of action.

3. Pastoral Interns

Recognizing the importance of preparing men for ministry, Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church may therefore, if an opportunity presents itself, enroll men in an internship program designed to provide them with practical ministry experiences under the supervision and evaluation of the Elders. The goal of this program is the development of skills in the primary areas of pastoral responsibility. Such interns, though neither Elders nor Gifted Brothers, may therefore preach from the pulpit and teach in the church under the direction of the Elders, with the church's consent. Men seeking pastoral internships in Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church must fully (strictly) subscribe the church's *Confession*. Should they at any time move from this position, they are under moral obligation to make this fact known to the Elders and members of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church that they may determine the best course of action.

Article VI: Discipline

1. General Policy

Discipline within the body of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church shall be

guided by a spirit of prayer mingled with Christian kindness, forbearance, and holy firmness under the guidance of the Spirit as directed by the Scriptures. All members of the Body of Christ have an individual responsibility to live righteously and to encourage righteous behavior in other believers. Interpersonal accountability is a Christian obligation that extends beyond the membership of the local church. As Galatians 6:1-5 and Matthew 7:1-5 instruct, this process begins with self-examination and a spirit of humility that is sensitive to one's own faults. Believers are instructed to be aware of their own sins, to be penitent, and to be quick to seek reconciliation with offended individuals (Matthew 5:23-25; 7:1-5). It is recognized that Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church members have a special relationship one to another. Consequently, Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church members have the privilege of experiencing the full expression of love and care for the local body as outlined in Scripture and as detailed below.

Church discipline is regarded as a serious and clear directive in Scripture. It is intended to:

- a. Restore an erring member (2 Corinthians 2:5-8);
- b. Purify the Church (1 Corinthians 5:6-8);
- c. Warn other members about the dangers of sinful behavior or false teaching (Deuteronomy 19:20; Acts 5:11; 2 Corinthians 7:11; 1 Timothy 5:20);
- d. Consequently, to demonstrate the reality of righteous living to the unsaved world leading to the glorification of God (1 Peter 5:1-3).

Discipline is exercised with compassion for the erring member and a sincere desire to seek that person's repentance, reconciliation, and restoration to the fellowship of the local church (Matthew 18:15-20).

Discipline does not entitle the Elders to abuse their authority over the members of the church (1 Peter 5:1-3). Specific guidelines are followed that identify the grounds for church discipline and the process of such discipline.

The members of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church belong to a spiritual body of local believers who identify with a common purpose and mission. There is a mutual accountability that each member has, one to another, to encourage and provoke holy living (Hebrews 10:23-25). Church discipline begins with individual accountability that is a responsibility of every member. Members are encouraged to take this responsibility seriously.

Scripture is clear that the motives of the individual(s) or the Elders dealing with the erring member must be pure before our Savior, His Church, and the world.

- a. They are to seek the restoration of the offending member with a spirit of gentleness, being careful for themselves, so they also will not fall into temptation (Galatians 6:1).
- b. They are to admonish him or her as a brother or sister and not consider them an enemy (2 Thessalonians 3:15).
- c. They are to approach the erring member with heart-felt sorrow and sincere concern (1 Corinthians 5:2; 2 Corinthians 2:4).
- d. They are to be ready to grant restoration to the erring member when repentance occurs (Luke 17:1-10; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8).

2. Offenses Applicable to Church Discipline

Individual accountability is an ongoing commitment of believers and is always the first step in dealing with an erring member. No member is above or immune to accountability (1 Timothy 5:21). Church discipline is not God’s method for making the church sinless. Scripture defines certain deviations from the truth as grounds for formal disciplinary action. Sin that damages the church, weakens its testimony, or promotes disunity constitutes an offense that necessitates formal disciplinary action. These sins can be understood in the following categories:

- a. False Teaching. False Teaching constitutes the deliberate and persistent holding to and/or the propagation of doctrine that intentionally rejects the foundational teachings of Scripture (e.g. the inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the final authority for belief and behavior; the Trinity; the complete humanity and the complete deity of Christ; the sinfulness of all humanity; the virgin conception of Christ and His incarnation as the eternal Son of God; Christ’s substitutionary atonement as the only way of salvation; the bodily resurrection and return of Christ; salvation by God’s grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone; the eternal damnation of the lost and the eternal glorification of the saved). These essential truths are reflected in the church’s *Confession*.
- b. Apostasy. Apostasy constitutes the public denial of Christ by “Those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away” (Hebrews 6:4-6 NAS95).
- c. Divisiveness. Divisiveness constitutes behavior that undermines the unity of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church either between members and/or against the leadership of the church (Philippians 4:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Titus 3:10). There may be times when the sin of divisiveness expressed by a person is of such a nature (as in Titus 3:10) that discipline of such an individual will need to be addressed more

quickly and expediently. In such instances, immediate action following a second warning will need to be taken by the Elders themselves. After a second warning by the Elders, the matter will be brought before the congregation.

d. Immorality. Immorality is constituted scripturally as behavior that breaks the moral law of God and brings shame on the testimony of Christ and the local church (1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:9-11). Such actions are called “the deeds of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19 NAS95), and they include (but are not limited to): “immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these” (Galatians 5:19-21 NAS95).

3. Procedures in Membership Accountability

Church discipline is to be handled prayerfully, carefully, and justly. Below are the steps of accountability and discipline that follow the guidelines given in Matthew 18:15-20. The speed at which these steps proceed will be handled on a case-by-case basis, and may need to be quicker or slower, depending on the circumstances.

a. First Step: Private Confrontation of the Offending Member

Church members are to first arrange a private meeting with the offender and humbly confront the person with the nature of the offense. If the person repents, the matter is closed (Matthew 18:15; Luke 17:3). Scripture does not specify the number of times that an offender should be confronted on an individual basis, though it is clear that believers should be long-suffering and have an unrelenting desire for that person’s repentance (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a; 1 Peter 4:8). If there is no repentance, then there is a responsibility to move to the next step in the process.

b. Second Step: Confrontation of the Offending Member with Witnesses

The confronting church member at this point shall set up another private meeting, this time with one or two other witnesses present (Matthew 18:16). This step should never be completed in haste, but only after there is prayerful conviction that this second step has been to no avail. If repentance occurs, the offender should seek forgiveness from the circle of offense, and no more.

It is important to understand who qualifies as a witness and what their function is in the disciplinary process. Biblically, a witness is a person who bears testimony of another’s wrongdoing based on firsthand knowledge. A person is not constituted a witness who bears testimony based on hearsay, gossip, or second-hand knowledge (Deuteronomy 19:15-19). The Bible condemns false witnesses (Exodus 20:16). It is the function of a witness to ensure that the offense is clearly

and impartially presented and that nothing is left unsaid. Accusations not substantiated by two or three witnesses, or other corroborating evidence (which in itself carries the weight of a witness), must be left to the One who knows all things and judges righteously (Numbers 35:30; Psalm 51:3-4).

If there is no repentance, the circle of knowledge must be broadened at this point to include the Elders (if they are not already included) for their deliberation to determine, after thorough investigation and consideration, if the third step should be taken.

c. Third Step: Confrontation of the Offending Member by the Whole Church

At this point, the matter must be brought by the Elders to the voting members of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church in a closed session (Matthew 18:17). The membership has a responsibility, as opportunity provides, to call the offender to repentance and determine possible levels of church censures (Leviticus 26:14-33), such as: admonition (Romans 15:14), suspension from the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:27-32), or withdrawal from them (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15). An equitable period of time will be established by the Elders in order to optimize the fullest effect of the witness of the membership, to allow for the work of the Lord and to provide more than ample time for repentance.

Should there be repentance, the entire body should be quick to respond with forgiveness, grace, and love (2 Corinthians 2:5-8). While repentance and forgiveness are instantaneous, restoration to service will be monitored by the Elders for the benefit and development of the person.

If there is no repentance, the Elders and members of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church will meet to act on the final step.

d. Fourth Step: Excommunication of an Unrepentant Member

As defined in Matthew 18:17, the unrepentant offender will be considered "a Gentile and a tax collector" (Matthew 18:17 NAS95). This phrase contains two interrelated aspects. First, the offender is likened to a Gentile, which signifies that the person is outside the community of God's blessing and grace. Second, the offender is likened to a tax collector, which signifies that the person is untrustworthy and therefore, is of such character that he is potentially harmful to the body of the church.

By way of application, this constitutes a removal from church membership and fellowship resulting in a recognition that the unrepentant offender is outside the realm of God's blessings (1 Corinthians 5:1-13). Common ground for intimate friendship and social interaction has been removed. The entire congregation has an ongoing responsibility to act in unison, calling the person to repentance with each contact, so as not to undermine the Scriptural process or the severe temporal

consequences of the person's obstinate behavior. It is sincerely hoped there will be repentance and reconciliation because of the consistent and loving application of this heart-wrenching but Biblical action.

The action of the church in matters of discipline carries the highest conceivable authority and is both final and binding as clearly stated in Matthew 18:18-20. There can be no appeal to any higher court because there is no higher court established by Christ above the visible church to which such an appeal might be made (1 Corinthians 6:1-2), and a member may not resign his/her membership in order to avoid church discipline.

3. Integrity of Knowledge

In all matters of church discipline, when members become aware of the offense and the disciplinary action being brought against the unrepentant member, the members are expected, without exception, to hold the knowledge with integrity, avoiding gossip and the defamation of character (Ephesians 4:31-32; James 4:11). Church disciplinary matters are internal affairs and must not be paraded before the world. Nevertheless, this care for integrity of knowledge does not release the church from its legal responsibility to report criminal activity.

Article VII: Associations of Churches

One special type of fellowship and cooperation with other churches is formal membership in an association of churches. When it is thought desirable and upon the recommendation of the Elders, this church may join itself to an association(s) of churches with the expressed consent and approval of the congregation (Acts 15:22; 2 Corinthians 8:19). Withdrawal from such associations may be effected by the same process.

The purposes in joining an association of churches are: mutual edification, cooperative efforts in spreading the gospel, accountability, providing an avenue whereby grievances may be addressed, and reciprocal counsel. No association shall have any authority or power over this church.

Delegates to such associations shall be chosen by the church, with the Elders providing general oversight of all delegates and business matters. All delegates of the church must fully (strictly) subscribe the church's *Confession*.

Article VIII: Marriage and Sexual Immorality

We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, trans-genderism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of the laws of nature and God's good gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery

or appearance or behavior (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one biologically-born man and one biologically-born woman. (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23).

Article IX: Revisions, Additions, or Amendments

Revisions, additions, or amendments of this Constitution may be made only in the accordance with this church's Bylaws.

Appendix 1:

The Historic Creeds

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day he rose from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from there he shall come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father before all worlds;

God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God;
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were
made. Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate
by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried;
and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures;
and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father and He shall come
again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Ghost, The Lord and Giver of life;
who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
who spake by the prophets; and in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

The Definition of Chalcedon

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

The Athanasian Creed

Whosoever wants to be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is all One, the Glory Equal, the Majesty Co-Eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father Uncreated, the Son Uncreated, and the Holy Ghost Uncreated. The Father Incomprehensible, the Son Incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost Incomprehensible. The Father Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Ghost Eternal and yet they are not Three Eternals but One Eternal. As also there are not Three Uncreated, nor Three Incomprehensibles, but One Uncreated, and One Incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not Three Almighty but One Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not Three Gods, but One God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord, and yet not Three Lords but One Lord. For, like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, there be Three Gods or Three Lords. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is One Father, not Three Fathers; one Son, not Three Sons; One Holy Ghost, not Three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore or after Other, None is greater or less than Another, but the whole Three Persons are Co-eternal together, and Co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity is Trinity, and the Trinity is Unity is to be worshiped. He therefore that wants to be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting Salvation, that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man. God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the substance of His mother, born into the world. Perfect God and Perfect Man, of a reasonable Soul and human Flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood. Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but One Christ. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into Flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by Unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one Man, so God and Man is one Christ. Who suffered for our salvation, descended into Hell, rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their

bodies, and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

Appendix 2:

The Second London Baptist Confession of Faith

The Second London Baptist Confession of Faith

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, 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. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

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

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The 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, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, To Titus, To Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second, and third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation

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

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.

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.

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.

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. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

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

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

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.

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.

Chapter 2: Of God and of the Holy Trinity

1. The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of himself, infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but himself; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute;

working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

2. God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself, is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creature which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, and he hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth; in his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain; he is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands; to him is due from angels and men, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, as creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever he is further pleased to require of them.

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

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 comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God 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, but rather established; in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 4: Of Creation

1. In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, 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.

2. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, rendering them fit unto that life to God for which they were created; being made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, 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.

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

NAS Genesis 2:17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die. "

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 creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for the 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.

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without

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

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

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; and that not by a bare permission, which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends; 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.

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. So that whatsoever befalls any of his elect is by his appointment, for his glory, and their good.

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

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.

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, 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, which God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

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: all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

3. They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free.
4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.
5. The corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and the first motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

Chapter 7: Of God's Covenant

1. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to him as their creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.
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, wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.
3. This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament; and it is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect; and it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality, man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of innocency.

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; the prophet, priest, and king; head and saviour of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.
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 fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet

without sin; being conceived by the 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; 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.

3. Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of mediator and surety; which office he took not upon himself, but was thereunto called by his Father; who also put all power and judgement in his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

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

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, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.

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; and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, being the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever.

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.

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

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.

10. This number and order of offices is necessary; for in respect of our ignorance, we stand in need of his prophetic office; 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; and in respect to our averseness and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue and security from our spiritual adversaries, we need his kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom.

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.

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

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

4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; 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.

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

Chapter 10: Of Effectual Calling

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

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

3. Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit; who worketh when, and where, and how he pleases; so also are all elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.
4. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither will nor can truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men that receive not the Christian religion be saved; be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess.

Chapter 11: Of Justification

1. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in his death for their whole and sole righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God.
2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.
3. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of himself in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf; yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.
4. God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in time due actually apply Christ unto them.
5. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified, and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure; and in that condition they have not usually the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.
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.

Chapter 12: Of Adoption

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

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, through the same virtue, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

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

3. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in His Word hath prescribed them.

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, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word; by which also, and by the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, prayer, and other means appointed of God, it is increased and strengthened.

2. By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word for the authority of God himself, and also apprehendeth an excellency therein above all other writings and all things in the world, as it bears forth the glory of God in his attributes, the excellency of Christ in his nature and offices, and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in his workings and operations: and so is enabled to cast his soul upon the truth thus believed; and also acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come; but the principal acts of saving faith have immediate relation to Christ, accepting, receiving, and resting upon him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

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

Chapter 15: Of Repentance Unto Life and Salvation

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

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

3. This saving repentance is an evangelical grace, whereby a person, being by the Holy Spirit made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth, by faith in Christ, humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrence, 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.

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.

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

Chapter 16: Of Good Works

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

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

3. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ; and that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is

necessary an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; yet they are not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

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.

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

6. Yet notwithstanding the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him; not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unprovable 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.

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

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; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon; notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet he is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraven upon the palm of his hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity.

2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with him, the

oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

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

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; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

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

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

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

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; by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.
2. The same law that was first written in the heart of man continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall, and was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables, the four first containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man.
3. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties, all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are, by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end abrogated and taken away.
4. To them also he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any now by virtue of that institution; their general equity only being of moral use.
5. The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof, and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it; neither doth Christ in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.
6. Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned, yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, in that as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their natures, hearts, and lives, so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against, sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ and the perfection of his obedience; it is likewise of use to the regenerate to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to shew what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse and unallayed rigour thereof. The promises of it likewise shew them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, though not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works; so as man's doing good and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law and not under grace.
7. Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it, the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

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; 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. This promise of Christ, and salvation by him, is revealed only by the Word of God; neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace by him, so much as in a general or obscure way; much less that men destitute of the revelation of Him by the promise or gospel, should be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance.
3. The revelation of the gospel unto sinners, made in divers times and by sundry parts, with the addition of promises and precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the nations and persons to whom it is granted, is merely of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God; not being annexed by virtue of any promise to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received without it, which none ever did make, or can do so; and therefore in all ages, the preaching of the gospel has been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent or straitening of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God.
4. Although the gospel be the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and is, as such, abundantly sufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in trespasses may be born again, quickened or regenerated, there is moreover necessary an effectual insuperable work of the Holy Spirit upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life; without which no other means will effect their conversion unto God.

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, and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the fear and sting of death, the victory of the grave, and ever-lasting damnation: as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto Him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love and willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law for the substance of them; but under the New Testament the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of a ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.
2. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or not contained in it. So that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.

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

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. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.

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

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

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

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

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

7. As it is the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God, so by his Word, in a positive moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the

last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's day: and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.

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

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 judgement, solemnly calleth God to witness what he sweareth, and to judge him according to the truth or falseness thereof.
2. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear; and therein it is to be used, with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred; yet as in matter of weight and moment, for confirmation of truth, and ending all strife, an oath is warranted by the word of God; so a lawful oath being imposed by lawful authority in such matters, ought to be taken.
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.
4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation.
5. A vow, which is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone, is to be made and performed with all religious care and faithfulness; but popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

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.
2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate when called there unto; in the management whereof, as they ought especially to maintain justice and peace,

according to the wholesome laws of each kingdom and commonwealth, so for that end they may lawfully now, under the New Testament wage war upon just and necessary occasions.

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

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.

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

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

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

Chapter 26: Of the Church

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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.

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.

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

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

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

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; and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each others gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, in an orderly way, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

2. Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things according to their several abilities, and necessities; which communion, according to the rule of the gospel, though especially to be exercised by them, in the relation wherein they stand, whether in families, or churches, yet, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all the household of faith, even all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus; nevertheless their communion one with another as saints, doth not take away or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods and possessions.

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

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; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.
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.
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.
4. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.

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

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.
5. The outward elements in this ordinance, duly set apart to the use ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ, albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.
6. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood, commonly called transubstantiation, by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the ordinance, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries.
7. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death; the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally, but spiritually present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.

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; but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell; where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day; besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.
2. At the last day, such of the saints as are found alive, shall not sleep, but be changed; and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other; although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever.
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.

Chapter 32: Of the Last Judgment

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

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

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

Appendix 3:

Statement on Full Subscription

Statement on Full Subscription

Adapted from What Is “Full Subscription?”

by Dr. James M. Renihan

Confessional subscription employs three main terms in its nomenclature: absolute, strict/full, and loose. Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church and its Officers, along with its Gifted Brothers and Pastoral Interns, has adopted the middle position. According to Dr. Morton H. Smith, “strict or full subscription takes at face value” the terminology used in adopting a confession of faith.

In an article entitled “The Case for Full Subscription” (in *The Practice of Confessional Subscription*, ed. by David Hall, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995, pages 185-6), Dr. Smith provides some helpful insights. He states:

Note some things that full subscription does not mean. First, it does not insist that all of the teachings of the Confession . . . are of equal importance (just as not all of the teachings in the Bible are of equal importance). The full subscriptionist recognizes that some doctrines are more foundational than others, in accord with the Biblical example. Positively, the full subscriptionist believes that in professing that the Confession . . . [is] his confession, he is subscribing to all of the doctrines in the Confession . . . they are all part of the system of doctrine Second, full subscription does not require the adoption of every word of the Confession . . . but positively believes that we are adopting every doctrine or teaching of the Confession Third, full subscription is not a placing of the subordinate Standards on the same level as the Bible.

We maintain the primacy of the Scriptures and fully receive the *Confession* as a truthful expression of our convictions regarding the details of Scripture. This does not mean that we treat every doctrine in the *Confession* as if it were equally important, but we do commit ourselves to all the doctrines of the Confession. As Dr. Smith has well said: “full subscription does not require the adoption of every word of the Confession . . . but positively believes that we are adopting every doctrine or teaching of the *Confession*.” This is an important distinction and needs to be understood. It is possible to be cautious about the wording used to express a specific doctrine without denying the doctrine that wording seeks to define. Full (strict) subscription honestly and without reservation adopts all the doctrines expressed in the confessional formulation.

In the case of Christ Covenant Reformed Baptist Church and its Officers, along with its Gifted Brothers and Pastoral Interns, this means that in subscribing to the document commonly known as the *Second London Baptist Confession*, we fully receive all the doctrines contained in it as true and founded on the Word of God.