

Baptist Catechism



A Baptist Catechism
For Personal and Family Devotion

Including the *Declaration of Reformation*, the *London Baptist Confession of Faith*, a Baptist Catechism, the Baptist Church Covenant, and *A Modern Day Downgrade* – a short treatise on why catechism is necessary for Reformation in our modern times.

With Meditative Words from Some of *Our Greatest Leaders both Past and Present*

Acknowledgements:

This catechism book is dedicated to the Saints that gather by the name Fellowship Baptist Church in Sidney, Montana. You are my greatest friends, truest family, and together you comprise my greatest earthly treasure. May we send many of our children into the mission field, and train the rest to hold the rope –all for the glory of God and the fame of our King, Jesus.

Other Acknowledgements:

Thank you to @REALJDowney for the beautiful cover and seal that grace the front of this book.

Also, thank you to the man who has taught me much about the importance of sound doctrine. Thanks to Dr. James White for reviewing this manual for its publication to ensure I'm not a heretic and for leaving another (tongue-in-cheek) endorsement, "A catechism so simple, even mountain men can figure it out...with study and effort." My prayer is that many Montana "mountain men" (and even those in the prairie and beyond) can use this book.

Thank you to Brother Paul Washer, who emphatically told me to "Read as much Spurgeon as you can find." I have. It's been the blessing of a lifetime. I, and thousands more like me, have been eternally blessed by Paul's ministry.

Finally, thanks to CrossBooks for publishing this book, in spite of some harsh, but true, words.

ENDORSEMENTS

"Revivalism many be driven by emotion, fanaticism, and every other work of the flesh. But genuine revival and reformation is founded upon and driven by a rediscovery of the great truths of Christianity. Catechisms, such as the one found in these pages, serve to both promote and sustain genuine reformation."

Paul Washer

Director of HeartCry Missionary Society and 2012 RefMT Conference Speaker

"Western culture today seeks to cut itself free from burdensome things like truth, consistency, and commitment. The Baptist Catechism reminds us that there are truths worth living for, and dying for, that give life transcendent meaning and purpose."

Dr. James White, Director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, host of The Dividing Line and 2013 RefMT Conference Speaker.

"The Bride of Christ needs the book A Baptist Catechism. Jordan has provided a great benefit and asset to the church by compiling valuable resources that will aid and strengthen both the church and her members. The essay, "A Modern Day Downgrade," is revealing and convicting in its content. This is a book that will not disappoint."

Ricky Le'Mons

Executive Director of Reformation Montana and pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Billings, MT

[This book] is profoundly fitting in this day and age of spiritual confusion and uncertainty with regard to GOD's Holy Word. The content of this book can be a helpful aid in bringing clarity to Biblical doctrine with application to your life and others.

Rev. M. Anthony Harper, Ph.D.

Editor, InterMountain Christian News

"Although this catechism is intended for Baptists of all varieties, as a Southern Baptist I find my Convention in the paradoxical position of affirming biblical inerrancy while many of its churches are doctrinally deficient. To assist the church in extricating herself from this less than God-honoring predicament, I highly recommend Pastor J.D. Hall's book A Baptist Catechism for Personal and Family Devotion. Along with an open Bible, it will be a refreshment to your soul and serve as a vehicle to foster restoration in our churches."

Ken Fryer

2nd Vice President of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, serving at Heritage Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana

“Many Christian fathers have abandoned their God given responsibility to lead their families and teach their children the truths of God, often because their pastors have been derelict in teaching the whole counsel of God. This does not negate a father’s responsibility before God. This book, being built upon the solid confessions of faith from the past, gives Christian parents, single or married, the tools necessary to train their children by using easy to follow questions and answers.”

Tim Killillay

Reformation Montana missionary serving in Peru.

PREFACE

The Fellowship Baptist Church in Sidney, Montana has been using the catechism provided in this manual since 2010. Because finding affordable copies of this catechism has proven so difficult, we began to print our own. After the development of Reformation Montana – a network and mission society consisting of Reformed Baptist churches throughout Montana and the surrounding region – I thought it would be practical to print our own edition of this catechism along with other helpful material for personal and family devotion for use and distribution among Reformation Montana churches. After some thought, I've decided to make this book available to anyone who would like to find this material in a short, precise, and affordable fashion.

My hope is that many might discover this little book and read the contents that were put together by our Baptist forebears (chiefly the London Baptist Confession and the Baptist Catechism) and that it might help to bring the contemporary Baptist faith back to its founding principles and values. As a whole, regardless of Baptist denomination, affiliation or lack of affiliation, we are in dire need of revival and reformation.

Many might say, "I am not a Baptist" who are and simply don't know it. The problem isn't that we have become afraid of labels, but that we've become afraid of doctrinal commitments. Typically, those who hold to (1) Credo-Baptism for believers and by immersion only and (2) the autonomy of the local church hold to the doctrinal distinctives that would historically categorize one as a Baptist (along with other non-distinctive orthodox doctrines such as a belief in the Trinity, a grace-based salvation by faith, the inerrancy of Scripture, etc...). If your doctrine conforms to these distinctives, you will find the material within this book to be helpful in understanding your own faith and from where in the Scripture it comes. If your doctrine does not conform to these distinctives, please read this book anyway that you might gain an accurate understanding of the Baptist faith and that your heart might be opened to orthodoxy.

In my corner of Montana, which happens to lie in the Bakken oilfield, countless thousands move in and out of the prairie monthly because of our oilfield economy. Many Bible-Belt Baptists have passed through my doctrinally-Reformed Baptist Church (SBC) and have stated alarm that they don't perceive us to be very "Baptist." We don't have pews, a drum set and guitar grace the auditorium, and our older hymns are often put to contemporary musical styling (although the words typically remain the same). We have elders, spend way more time reading the Scripture during the worship service that some have said "comes across as liturgical" and we take the Lord's Supper more frequently than to what they are accustomed. In essence, what they consider to be "Baptist" has more to do with style and image than with doctrinal substance. For this reason, Fellowship Baptist Church has had to be proactive in catechizing our people to understand what it means to be a "Baptist" and why we feel that it aligns with the Word of God.

There is another reason that catechism had to become a priority for us. In Montana, Baptists are as rare as a Sasquatch in the city. We are a novelty. Lutheran and Catholic churches dot the landscape here like Baptist churches do in the Bible-Belt. Of the hundreds of new members added to our rolls in the last five

years, few have a Baptist heritage. Whereas we have found that distancing ourselves from the Baptist moniker in advertising has been helpful (images of snake-handling fundamentalists and Westboro Baptist come to the minds of many), we cannot distance ourselves from Baptist doctrine lest we become guilty of not teaching what accords to sound doctrine (Titus 2:1). We have had to be diligent, therefore, to start from the beginning and to explain what this strange title means. A weekly look at the catechism during times of Sunday School and assigning the catechism for home devotion has been pivotal in this task.

How then, should this catechism be used? Sunday School classes or small groups should address one question per week and progress through this book one question at a time. The verses given with each answer should also be reviewed as a constant reminder that our doctrine does not come from a catechism manual, but from the Scripture. Ours is a modified "Family Integrated" church (wherein we still have age-segregated Sunday School but integrate youth into the adult classes after the sixth grade and the entire family is together during corporate worship) and so the adult classes are taught the catechism question that parents are to be teaching their children that coming week to ensure they understand the material themselves and are therefore able to teach it to their children. Meanwhile, children's Sunday School classes review the catechism question their parents taught them the week before to ensure that the children are first taught the material by their primary spiritual teachers, their parents.

While utilizing the catechism as a part of home devotion, it is best for parents to handle one question per week with their children and use the Scripture references provided as a supplement to the family's Bible reading plan. Both parents and children should be memorizing the answers.

Finally, what about the other material in this book? Included is the *London Baptist Confession*, which is perhaps the best known Baptist confession and favored by many of our predecessors. Although I am a Southern Baptist, I have chosen not to include the Southern Baptist *Faith and Message* in this manual (even though I can fully affirm the confession) because the designers of the *Faith and Message* designed it to provide a certain ambiguity concerning the Doctrine of Election, which I believe to be foundational to both the Scripture and to our Baptist heritage. I have also chosen not to include it because many who would find this book helpful would be unfamiliar with that doctrinal confession. Also included is a short essay on why catechism is important for true spiritual Reformation, entitled *Modern Day Downgrade*.

I use this opportunity in the preface to beg the reader not to over-indulge on the doctrinal material found herein, without putting it into practical application. Baptists are not and never have been stuffy doctrinarians. We are a passionate people of worship and doxology, as well as theological depth. Use the information provided in both the confession and the catechism as a means to deepen your worship for the One and True God who is searching for those who will worship in Spirit *and* in Truth (John 4:23-24). No family devotion is complete without worship, so make sure you have a hymnal or song book accompany this manual into your family devotion time.

Finally, as with any good thing, do not keep it to yourself. Tell your friends about these wonderful tools passed down to us by our forebears. Tell your pastor about this wonderful Baptist confession and Baptist catechism (do not assume he knows about them) and ask him to implement it into corporate study and worship. Pass it along and pray that God might conform us to his Son.

Semper Reformanda,

JD Hall

THE DECLARATION OF REFORMATION

In the Spring of 2011, Pastor JD Hall of the Fellowship Baptist Church of Sidney, Montana authored the Declaration of Reformation with the assistance of Pastor Mike Bartelson of First Baptist Church of Circle, Montana. The Declaration was designed to call Montana Southern Baptists to repentance and to return to a belief in the sufficiency of Scripture. The Declaration of Reformation became the covenant statement of Reformation Montana – a network of Baptist churches in Montana and the surrounding regions that operate according to founding principles and cooperate together to send missionaries from local churches to unreached parts of the world. The Declaration of Reformation is now used in churches and organizations throughout the United States as a call to return to our Biblical foundations.

A CALL FOR REPENTANCE AND A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO GOD-CENTERED THEOLOGY AND SOUND PREACHING AMONG BAPTIST PASTORS

Baptists are the heirs of a rich tradition of renewal and reformation among Christ's Church. Written in part by the blood of Baptist martyrs, history gives witness of the devotedness of Baptists to particular doctrines that are today long forgotten among our brethren in contemporary times. As with our Baptist forebears of four centuries past, Baptists of this age who defend God's sovereign nature find ourselves calling for repentance that we may turn our eyes to God and His Scripture and away from the irreverent religious myths of our day.

Foundational convictions of faith that have for ages past marked the unique and peculiar group of Baptists have been abandoned by many of those claiming our heritage. Proving the Gospel effectually preached remains an offense, those still holding to these Biblical, God-centered, and precious doctrines are often ostracized, ridiculed, and marginalized into denominational obscurity. It is the paramount ambition of those holding to the traditional Baptist emphasis on the Doctrines of Grace to not exculpate our own mortal pride, but rather to proclaim the Glory of God over all things.

Trading the sovereignty of God for the sufficiency of man, many of our Baptist brethren in this age find an accurate portrayal of the Gospel as offensive as do the demonstrably lost. Genuine repentance has been replaced by manufactured revivalism. Expository preaching has been replaced by impertinent babbling talks that have more to do with the vain imaginations of man than the sufficiency of Scripture. Reliance upon God to bring down His effectual Spirit during fervent prayer and solemn pleading has been replaced with the latest strategies of marketing from the work of human hands. Regeneration has been replaced with Decisionism. Sanctification has been replaced by the Sinner's Prayer. The Doctrine of Election has been ignored as though unfit for spiritual consumption by either Christian or heathen. Church discipline has been replaced with willful sin, as pastors demonstrate that they often fear mortal man more than Almighty God. Sound doctrine has been replaced with sound systems. A God

who victoriously saves all those whom He intends is replaced with a failing deity who can only try his best, hoping the efforts of man can redeem what Christ's blood could not.

Baptists in agreement with this Declaration of Reformation do not believe these symptoms of man-centered theology are unique to Baptists; Western Christianity as a whole has succumbed to profane notions of man at the center of salvation. Baptists in agreement with this Declaration of Reformation also do not believe that our denominational ties should be strained by our convictions. Just as our first forebears widely accepted the Doctrines of Grace in such documents as The Abstract of Principles and yet led their fledgling denomination in unity and toward a more-evangelistic future, we desire to do the same. Finally, Baptists in agreement with this Declaration of Reformation, who earnestly desire the Gospel be properly proclaimed regardless of the sensitivities of sinful man, do not believe that they are themselves above reproach or lacking the need for genuine repentance. May we all be subject to the authority of God's Holy Word, and may His Spirit equally impress upon us all the need for His grace and convict us of our sin.

The London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)
Slight Revisions by Charles Spurgeon

1. The Holy Scriptures

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 manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God so much that man is left without any excuse, they are not sufficient to provide that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary for salvation.

Therefore, it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal Himself, and to declare His will to His church;

- and afterward, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church, protecting it against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and the world,

- it pleased the Lord to commit His revealed Truth wholly to writing. Therefore the Holy Scriptures are most necessary, those former ways by which God revealed His will unto His people having now ceased.

Under the title of Holy Scripture (or the written Word of God) are now contained all the following books of the Old and New Testament:-

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:

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

OF THE NEW TESTAMENT:

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

All these books are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

The books commonly called 'The Apocrypha' not being of divine inspiration, are not part of the canon or rule of Scripture and are therefore of no authority to the church of God, nor are they to be approved of or made use of any differently from other human writings.

The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, depends not on the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God its Author (Who is Truth itself). Therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the people of God to gain a high and reverent estimation of the Holy Scriptures. We may be similarly affected by the nature of the Scriptures—the heavenliness of the contents, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God, the full disclosure it makes of the only way of man's salvation, together with many other incomparable excellencies and entire perfections. By all the evidence the Scripture more than proves itself to be the Word of God.

Yet, notwithstanding this, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth of Scripture and its divine authority, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

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, to which nothing is to be added at any time, either by new revelation of the Spirit, or by the 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.

There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and church government which are 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.

All things in scripture are not equally plain in themselves, nor equally clear to everyone, yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and revealed in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the educated but also the uneducated may attain a sufficient understanding of them by the due use of ordinary means.

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 its writing was most generally known to the nations) were immediately inspired by God, and were kept pure through subsequent ages by His singular care and providence. They are therefore authentic, so that in all controversies of religion, the church must appeal to them as final.

But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God who have a right to, and an interest in the Scriptures, and who are commanded to read and search them in the fear of God, the Scriptures are therefore to be translated into the ordinary language of every nation into which they come, so that, with the Word of God living richly in all, people may worship God in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

The infallible rule for the interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself, and therefore whenever 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 passages which speak more clearly.

The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and by which must be examined all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, and doctrines of men and private spirits can be no other than the Holy Scripture, delivered by the Spirit. And in the sentence of Scripture we are to rest, for it is in Scripture, delivered by the Spirit, that our faith is finally resolved.

2. God and the Holy Trinity

The Lord our God is the one and only living and true God; Whose subsistence is in and of Himself

- Who is infinite in being and perfection; Whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself;

- Who is a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions

- Who only has immortality

- Who dwells in the light which no man can approach, Who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, in every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute;

- Who works all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory;

- Who is most loving, gracious, merciful, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth;

- Who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin;

- Who rewards those who diligently seek Him;

- and Who, at the same time, is most just and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin and Who will by no means clear the guilty.

God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and from Himself, is unique in being all-sufficient, both in Himself and to Himself, not standing in need of any creature which He has made, nor deriving any glory from such.

- On the contrary, it is God Who manifests His own glory in them, through them, to them and upon them. He is the only fountain of all being; from Whom, through Whom, and to Whom all things exist and move.

- He has completely sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do through them, for them, or to them whatever He pleases.

- In His sight all things are open and manifest; His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and not dependent on the creature.

- Therefore, nothing is for 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 whatever worship, service, or obedience, they owe as creatures to the Creator, and whatever else He is pleased to require from them.

In this divine and infinite Being there are three persons, the Father, the Word or Son, and the Holy Spirit. All are one in substance, power, and eternity; each having the whole divine essence, yet this essence being undivided.

The Father was not derived from any other being; He was neither brought into being by, nor did He issue from any other being.

- The Son is eternally begotten of the Father.

- The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

- All three are infinite, without beginning, and are therefore only one God, Who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties, and also their personal relations.

- This doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of our entire communion with God, and our comfortable dependence on Him.

3. God's Decree

God has decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things which shall ever come to pass.

- Yet in such a way that God is neither the author of sin nor does He have fellowship with any in the committing of sins, 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 all this God's wisdom is displayed, disposing all things, and also His power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.

Although God knows everything which may or can come to pass under all imaginable conditions, yet He has not decreed anything because He foresaw it in the future, or because it would come to pass under certain conditions.

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 are left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice.

Those angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and the number of them is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

Those of mankind who are predestinated to life, God chose before the foundation of the world was laid, in accordance with His eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will. God chose them in Christ for everlasting glory, solely out of His free grace and love, without anything in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him to choose.

As God has appointed the elect unto glory, so, by the eternal and completely free intention of His will, He has foreordained all the means. Accordingly, those who are elected, being fallen in Adam:

- are redeemed by Christ,
- are effectually called to faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season,
- are justified, adopted, sanctified,
- and are kept by His power through faith unto salvation;
- neither are any but the elect redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved.

The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, in order that men who are heeding the will of God revealed in His Word, and who are yielding obedience to it, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine provide cause for praise, reverence, admiration of God, and also provide cause for humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all who sincerely obey the Gospel.

4. Creation

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 in it both visible and invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasoning and immortal souls, rendering them fit to live that life for Him for which they were created;

- being made in the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and having the power to fulfill it;

- and yet living under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will which was subject to change.

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

5. Divine Providence

God, the good Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom, upholds, directs, disposes and governs all creatures and things, from the greatest to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, to the end for which they were created.

- God governs according to His infallible foreknowledge and the free and unchanging counsel of His own will;

- for the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, boundless goodness, and mercy.

Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, Who is the First Cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that nothing happens to anyone by chance, or outside His providence, yet by His providence He orders events to occur according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

God, in His ordinary providence makes use of means, yet He is free to work outside, above, and against them at His pleasure.

The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that His determinate counsel extends even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions of both angels and men.

- This is not merely by a bare permission, but by a form of permission in which He included the most wise and powerful limitations, and other means of restricting and controlling sin. These various limitations have been designed by God to bring about his most holy purposes.

- Yet, in all these affairs, the sinfulness of both angels and men comes only from them and not from God, Who is altogether holy and righteous, and can never be the author or approver of sin.

The most wise, righteous, and gracious God often leaves, for a time, His own children to various temptations, and to the corruptions of their own hearts, in order to chastise them for the sins which they have committed, or to show them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness still in their hearts, so that they may be humbled and aroused to a more close and constant dependence upon Himself for their support, and that they may be made more watchful against future occasions of sin. Other just and holy objectives are also served by such action by God.

Therefore whatever happens to any of His select is by His appointment, for His glory, and for their good.

As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God as a righteous judge, blinds and hardens for former sin, from them He not only withholds His grace, by which they might have been enlightened in their understanding and affected in their hearts, but sometimes He also withdraws the gifts which they had and exposes them to certain objects which their corrupt state will make the occasion of sin.

- God gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, so that eventually they harden themselves under the same influences which God uses for the softening of others.

As the providence of God in general reaches to all creatures, so, in a more special manner, it takes care of His church, and governs all things to the good of His church.

6. The Fall of Man, Sin and Punishment

Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which secured life for him while he kept it, and although God warned him that he would die if he broke it, yet man did not live long in this honor.

- Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, seduced Adam by her, and he, without any compulsion, willfully transgressed the law of their creation and the command given to them by eating the forbidden fruit.

- And this act God, according to His wise and holy counsel, was pleased to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.

Our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them. For from this, death came upon all: all becoming dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and their corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation. Their descendants are therefore conceived in sin, and are by nature the children of wrath, the servants of sin, and the subjects of death and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus sets them free.

All actual transgressions proceed from this original corruption, by which we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil.

During this life the corruption of nature remains in those who are regenerated, and although it is pardoned and mortified through Christ, yet this corrupt nature and all its motions are truly and properly sinful.

7. God's Covenant

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 except by some voluntary condescension on God's part, and this He has been pleased to express in the form of a covenant.

Moreover, as man had brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace. In this covenant He freely offers to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring from them faith in Him that they may be saved, and promising to give to all who are appointed to eternal life His Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe.

This covenant is revealed through the Gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by further steps until the full revelation of it became complete in the New Testament. The covenant of salvation rests upon an eternal covenant transaction between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect. It is solely by the grace of this covenant that all the descendants of fallen Adam who have ever been saved have obtained life and blessed immortality,

because man is now utterly incapable of gaining acceptance with God on the terms by which Adam stood in his state of innocence.

8. Christ the Mediator

It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, in accordance with the covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and man; to be Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Savior of His Church, the Heir of all things, and the Judge of all the world. To the Lord Jesus He gave, from all eternity, a people to be His seed. These, in time, would be redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified by the Lord Jesus.

The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being true and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of the same substance and equal with Him;

- Who made the world, and Who upholds and governs all things which He has made,
- did, when the fullness of time had come, take upon Himself man's nature, with all its essential properties and common infirmities, with the exception of sin.
- He was 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, so that He was born to a woman from the tribe of Judah, a descendant of Abraham and David, in accordance with the Scriptures.
- Thus two whole, perfect and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion;
- So that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, yet He is one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

The Lord Jesus, His human nature thus united to the divine, once in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, having in Himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. It pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell in Him so that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety, a position and duty which He did not take upon Himself, but was called to perform by His Father. And the Father also put all power and judgment in His hand, and gave Him commandment to exercise the same.

This office and duty of Mediator and Surety the Lord Jesus undertook most willingly. To discharge it, He was made under the law, and perfectly fulfilled it, and He underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered. He was made sin and was made a curse for us; enduring the most grievous sorrows in His Soul with the most painful sufferings in His duty. He was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, but His body did not undergo any decomposition. On the third day,

He rose from the dead with the same body in which He had suffered, with which He also ascended into Heaven, and there sits at the right hand of His Father making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.

The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself which He, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up to God, has fully satisfied the justice of God, has procured reconciliation, and has purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven for all those whom the Father has given to Him.

Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ until after His incarnation yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit arising from His payment were communicated to the elect in all ages from the beginning of the world through those promises, types, and sacrifices in which He was revealed and signified as the seed which should bruise the serpent's head, and also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, for He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Christ, in His work of Mediator, acts according to both natures, each nature doing that which is proper to itself. Yet, because of the unity of His person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

To all those for whom Christ has obtained eternal redemption, He certainly and effectually applies and communicates this redemption, making intercession for them, uniting them to Himself by His Spirit, revealing to them in the Word and by the Word the mystery of salvation. He persuades them to believe and obey, governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit, and overcome all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom. This is achieved in such a manner and by such ways as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation, and it is all by free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them to procure it.

This office of Mediator between God and man is proper only to Christ, Who is the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church. Free Will of God, and this office may not be transferred from Him to any other, either in whole or in part.

This number and order of offices is essential. Because of our ignorance we need His prophetic office. Because of our alienation from God and the imperfection of the best of our service, we need His priestly office to reconcile us and present us to God as acceptable. Because of our aversion to, and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue and keeping from spiritual enemies, we need His kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us until we reach His heavenly kingdom.

9. Free Will

God has endowed the will of man, by nature, with liberty and the power to choose and to act upon his choice. This free will is neither forced, nor destined by any necessity of nature to do good or evil.

Man, in his state of innocence, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God, but he was unstable, so that he might fall from this condition.

Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has completely lost all ability of will to perform any of the spiritual good which accompanies salvation. As a natural man, he is altogether averse to spiritual good, and dead in sin. He is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself for conversion.

When God converts a sinner, and translates him into a state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage to sin, and by grace alone He enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good. But because of his remaining corruptions he does not only (or perfectly) will that which is good, but also wills that which is evil.

The will of man will only be made perfectly and immutably free to will good alone in the state of glory.

10. Effectual Calling

Those whom God has predestinated to life, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time to effectually call by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death which they are in by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. He enlightens their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God. He takes away their heart of stone and gives to them a heart of flesh. He renews their wills, and by His almighty power, causes them to desire and pursue that which is good. He effectually draws them to Jesus Christ, yet in such a way that they come absolutely freely, being made willing by His grace.

This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not on account of anything at all foreseen in man. It is not made because of any power or agency in the creature who is wholly passive in the matter. Man is dead in sins and trespasses until quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit. By this he is enabled to answer the call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed by it. This enabling power is no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead.

Infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, Who works when, where, and how He pleases. So also are all elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

Others are not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may experience some common operations of the Spirit, yet because they are not effectually drawn by the Father, they will not and cannot truly come to Christ and therefore cannot be saved. Much less can men who do not embrace the Christian religion be saved, however diligent they may be to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the requirements of the religion they profess.

11. Justification

Those whom God effectually calls He also freely justifies, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting them as righteous, not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone. They are not justified because God reckons as their righteousness either their faith, their believing, or any other act of evangelical obedience. They are justified wholly and solely because God imputes to them Christ's righteousness. He imputes to them Christ's active obedience to the whole law and His passive obedience in death. They receive Christ's righteousness by faith, and rest on Him. They do not possess or produce this faith themselves; it is the gift of God.

Faith which receives Christ's righteousness and depends on Him is the sole instrument of justification, yet this faith is not alone in the person justified, but is always accompanied by all the other saving graces. And it is not a dead faith, but works by love.

Christ, by His obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified, and by the sacrifice of himself through the blood of His cross, underwent instead of them the penalty due to them, so making a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on their behalf. Yet because He was given by the Father for them, and because His obedience and satisfaction was accepted instead of theirs (and both freely, not because of anything in them), therefore they are justified entirely and solely by free grace, so that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

From all eternity God decreed to justify all the elect, and Christ, in the fullness of time, died for their sins, and rose again for their justification. Nevertheless, they are not personally justified until the Holy Spirit, in due time, actually applies Christ to them.

God continues to forgive the sins of those who are justified, and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may because of their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure. In that condition they will not usually have the light of God's countenance restored to them until they humble themselves, confess their sins, ask for pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

The justification of believers during the Old Testament period was in all these respects exactly the same as the justification of New Testament believers.

12. Adoption

God has vouchsafed, that in Christ, His only Son, and for His sake, all those who are justified shall be made partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number of the children of God and enjoy their liberties and privileges. They have His name put upon them, and receive the Spirit of adoption. They have access to the throne of grace with boldness, and are enabled to cry, 'Abba, Father!' They are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by Him as by a father, yet they are never cast off, but are sealed to the day of redemption, when they inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

13. Sanctification

Those who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having had a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are then further sanctified in a very real and personal way. Because of the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, and by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them, the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed. The different lusts of the body of sin are increasingly weakened and mortified, and Christ's people are increasingly quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to practice all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

This sanctification extends throughout the whole person, yet it remains imperfect in this life. Some remnants of corruption live on in every part, and from this arises a continuous war between irreconcilable parties - the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

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

14. Saving Faith

The grace of faith by which the elect are enabled to believe, so that their souls are saved, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily brought into being by the ministry of the Word. It is also increased and strengthened by the work of the Spirit through the ministry of the Word, and also by the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, prayer, and other means appointed by God.

By this faith a Christian believes to be true whatever is revealed in the Word because this Word has the authority of God Himself. Also, by this saving faith, a Christian apprehends an excellency in the Word which is higher than in all other writings and everything else in the world, because the Word shows forth the glory of God, revealing His attributes, showing the excellency of Christ's nature and offices, and also the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in His workings and operations. - So the Christian is enabled to cast his soul upon the Truth he has believed, and to see and respond to the different kinds of teaching which different passages of Scripture contain. Saving faith equips him to perceive and obey the commands, hear the threatening with fear and respect, and to embrace the promises of God for this life and the life to come. - But the first and most important acts of saving faith are those directly to do with Christ, when the soul accepts, receives, and rests upon Him alone for justification, sanctification and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

This faith, although it differs in degree, and may be weak or strong, even at its very weakest is in an entirely different class and has a different nature (like other aspects of saving grace) from the kind of faith and common grace which is possessed by temporary believers. Therefore, though it may be

frequently assailed and weakened, 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.

15. Repentance and Salvation

Those of the elect who are converted in riper years, having lived sometime in the state of nature, and in this state served various lusts and pleasures, God gives repentance which leads to life, through an effectual call.

Because there is not one person who does good and commits no sin, and because the best of men may fall into great sins and provocations through the power and deceitfulness of their own indwelling corruption and the prevalence of temptation, God has mercifully provided in the covenant of grace that when believers sin and fall they shall be renewed through repentance to salvation.

Saving repentance is an evangelical grace by which a person who is made to feel, by the Holy Spirit, the manifold evils of his sin, and being given faith in Christ, humbles himself over his sin with godly sorrow, detestation of his sin and self-abhorrence. In such repentance the person also prays for pardon and strength of grace, and has a purpose and endeavor, by supplies of the Spirit's power, to walk before God and to totally please Him in all things.

As repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, on account of the body of death, and the motions of it, it is therefore every man's duty to repent of his particular known sins particularly.

Such is the provision which God has made through Christ in the covenant of grace for the preservation of believers in the way of salvation, which although even the smallest sin deserves damnation, yet there is no sin great enough to bring damnation on those who repent. This makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary.

16. Good Works

Good works are only those works which God has commanded in His Holy Word. Works which do not have the warrant of Scripture, and are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretense of good intentions are not good works.

Good works, performed in obedience to God's commandments, are these: the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith. By these believers express and show 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 to perform good works, and to have fruits of holiness which lead to eternal life.

Their ability to do these good works does not in any way come from themselves, but comes wholly from the Spirit of Christ. To enable them to do good works, alongside the graces which they have already received, it is necessary for there to be a further real influence of the same Holy Spirit to cause them to will and to do of His good pleasure. But believers are not, on these grounds, to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless given a special motion by the Spirit, but they must be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

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

We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin or eternal life from the hand of God because of the great disproportion between our best works and the glory to come, and because of the infinite distance which is between us and God. With our works we cannot profit or satisfy God concerning the debt we owe on account of our sins. When we have done all we can, we have only done our duty, and are still unprofitable servants. And in any case, in so far as our works are good they originate from the work of the Holy Spirit. Even then, the good works are so defiled by us, and so mixed with weakness and imperfection, that they could not survive the severity of God's judgment.

Yet, quite apart from the fact that believers are accepted through Christ as individual souls, their good works are also accepted through Christ. It is not as though the believers are (in this life) wholly without blame in God's sight, but because He looks upon them in His Son, and is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although it is accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

Works performed by unregenerate men, although they may in essence be things which God commands, and they may be good and beneficial both to themselves and others, yet because they do not proceed from a heart purified by faith, and are not done in a right manner according to the Word, and because it is not their underlying purpose to bring glory to God, therefore they are sinful, and cannot please God, nor can they make a man fit to receive grace from God. And yet, for unregenerate men to neglect such works is even more sinful and displeasing to God.

17. The Perseverance of the Saints

Those whom God has accepted in the beloved, and has effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but they will certainly persevere in that state to the end and be eternally saved. This is because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and therefore He continues to beget and nourish in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the spirit which lead to immortality. And though many storms and floods arise and beat against the saints, yet these things shall never be able to sweep them off the foundation and rock which they are fastened upon by faith. Even though, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sight and feeling of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet God is still the same, and they are sure to be kept by His power until their

salvation is complete, when they shall enjoy the purchased possession which is theirs, for they are engraved upon the palm of His hands, and their names have been written in His Book of Life from all eternity.

This perseverance of the saints does not depend on them - that is, on their own free will. It rests upon the immutability of the decree of election, which flows from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father. It also rests upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, and upon the union which true saints have with Him. - It rests upon the oath of God, and upon the abiding of His Spirit.

- It depends upon the seed of God being within them and upon the very nature of the covenant of grace.

- All these factors give rise to the certainty and infallibility of the security and perseverance of the saints.

The saints may, through the temptation of Satan and the world, and because their remaining sinful tendencies prevail over them, and through their neglect of the means which God has provided to keep them, fall into grievous sins. They may continue in this state for some time, so that they incur God's displeasure, grieve His Holy Spirit, suffer the impairment of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened and their conscience wounded, and hurt and scandalize others. By this they will bring temporal judgments upon themselves. Yet they shall renew their repentance and be preserved, through faith in Christ Jesus, to the end.

18. Assurance of Salvation

Although temporary believers (and other unregenerate men) may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions that they are in the favor of God and in a state of salvation, such a hope on their part will perish. Yet those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, and who endeavor to walk in all good conscience before Him, may be certainly assured in this life that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And such a hope shall never make them ashamed.

This assurance is not merely a conjectural persuasion nor even a probable persuasion based upon a fallible hope. It is an infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel. It is also founded upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit in connection with definite promises made in the Scriptures, and also on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption who witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God, and who uses the experience of assurance to keep our hearts both humble and holy.

This infallible assurance is not so joined to the essence of faith that it is an automatic and inevitable experience. A true believer may wait long and fight with many difficulties before he becomes a partaker of it. Yet, being enabled by the spirit to know the things which are freely given to him by God, he may,

without any extraordinary revelation attain this assurance by using the means of grace in the right way. Therefore it is the duty of every one to give the utmost diligence to make his calling and election sure, so that his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness for carrying out the duties of obedience. These duties are the natural fruits of assurance, for they are far from inclining men to slackness.

True believers may have the assurance of their salvation in various ways shaken, diminished, or intermitted. This may be because of their negligence in preserving it, or by their falling into some special sin which wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit, or by some sudden or forceful temptation, or by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and causing even those who fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light. Yet, believers are never left without the seed of God and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren that sincerity of heart and that conscience about their spiritual duty. Out of these things, by the operation of the Spirit, their assurance can in due time be revived, and in the meantime the presence of these graces preserves them from utter despair.

19. The Law of God

God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience which was written in his heart, and He gave him very specific instruction about not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. By this Adam and all his descendants were bound to personal, total, exact, and perpetual obedience, being promised life upon the fulfilling of the law, and threatened with death upon the breach of it. At the same time Adam was endued with power and ability to keep the law.

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 the ten commandments, and written in two tables, the first four containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man.

Besides this law, commonly called the moral law, God was pleased do give the people of Israel ceremonial laws containing several typical ordinances. These ordinances were partly about their worship, and in them Christ was prefigured along with His attributes and qualities, His actions, His sufferings and His benefits. These ordinances also gave instructions about different moral duties. All of these ceremonial laws were appointed only until the time of reformation, when Jesus Christ the true Messiah and the only lawgiver, Who was furnished with power from the Father for this end, cancelled them and took them away.

To the people of Israel He also gave sundry judicial laws which expired when they ceased to be a nation. These are not binding on anyone now by virtue of their being part of the laws of that nation, but their general equity, continue to be applicable in modern times.

The moral law ever binds to obedience everyone, justified people as well as others, and not only out of regard for the matter contained in it, but also out of respect for the authority of God the Creator, Who

gave the law. Nor does Christ in the Gospel dissolve this law in any way, but He considerably strengthens our obligation to obey it.

Although true believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, to be justified or condemned by it, yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, because as a rule of life it informs them of the will of God and their duty and directs and binds them to walk accordingly. It also reveals and exposes the sinful pollutions of their natures, hearts and lives, and using it for self-examination they may come to greater conviction of sin, greater humility and greater hatred of their sin. They will also gain a clearer sight of their need of Christ and the perfection of His own obedience. It is of further use to regenerate people to restrain their corruptions, because of the way in which it forbids sin. The threatening of the law serve to show what their sins actually deserve, and what troubles may be expected in this life because of these sins even by regenerate people who are freed from the curse and undiminished rigors of the law. The promises connected with the law also show believers God's approval of obedience, and what blessings they may expect when the law is kept and obeyed, though blessing will not come to them because they have satisfied the law as a covenant of works. If a man does good and refrains from evil simply because the law encourages him to the good and deters him from the evil, this is no evidence that he is under the law rather than under grace.

The aforementioned uses of the law are not contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but they sweetly comply with it, as the Spirit of Christ subdues and enables the will of man to do freely and cheerfully those things which the will of God, which is revealed in the law, requires to be done.

20. The Gospel and Its Influence

The covenant of works being broken by sin, and made unprofitable for life, God was pleased to promise Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling the elect and bringing to life within them faith and repentance. In this promise the substance of the Gospel was revealed and shown to be the effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.

This promise of Christ and the salvation which comes by Him, is revealed only by the Word of God. The works of creation and providence with the light of nature do not reveal Christ or His grace even in a general or obscure way. How much less, therefore, can those who are devoid of the revelation of Christ by the promise (or the Gospel) be enabled by the light of nature to arrive at saving faith or repentance?

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.

Although the Gospel is the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and as such is totally sufficient to accomplish this, yet more is necessary if men who are dead in trespasses are to be born again, brought to life or regenerated. It is necessary for there to be an effectual, insuperable work of the Holy Spirit upon the whole soul to produce in them a new spiritual life. Without this no other means will bring about their conversion to God.

21. Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

The liberty which Christ has purchased for believers under the Gospel, lies in their freedom from the guilt of sin and the condemning wrath of God, from the rigors and curse of the law, and in their deliverance from this present evil world, from bondage to Satan, from dominion of sin, from the harm of afflictions, from the fear and sting of death, from the victory of the grave, and from everlasting damnation. - This liberty is also seen in their free access to God, and their ability to yield obedience to Him not out of slavish fear, but with childlike love and willing minds. All these freedoms were also experienced in substance by true believers under the Old Testament law, but for New Testament Christians this liberty is further enlarged, for they have freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law to which the Jewish church was subjected. They also have greater boldness of access to the throne of grace and fuller communications of the free Spirit of God than believers under the law normally experienced.

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from all doctrines and commandments of men which are in any respect contrary to His Word, or not contained in it. Thus to believe such doctrines or to obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience. The requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.

They who on pretense of Christian liberty practice any sin, or cherish any sinful lust, pervert the main purpose of the grace of the Gospel to their own destruction. They completely destroy the object of Christian liberty, which is that we, being delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our lives.

22. Worship and the Sabbath Day

The light of nature shows that there is a God Who has lordship and sovereignty over all, is just and good, and Who does good to all. Therefore He is 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 has been instituted by Himself, and therefore our method of worship is limited by His own revealed will. He may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan. He may not be worshipped by way of visible representations, or by any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.

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, worship is not to be given without a mediator, nor by any other mediation than that of Christ.

Prayer, with thanksgiving, is one part of natural worship, and this God requires of all men. But to be accepted it must be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, and according to His will. It must be made with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and corporate prayer must be made in a known language.

Prayer is to be made for lawful things, and for all kinds of people who are alive now or who shall live in the future, but not for the dead, nor for those who are known to have sinned the 'sin leading to death'.

The reading of the Scriptures, preaching and hearing the Word of God, the teaching and admonishing of one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; as well as the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, are all parts of the worship of God. These are to be performed in obedience to Him, with understanding, faith, reverence and godly fear. Also to be used in a holy and reverent manner on special occasions, are times of solemn humiliation, fasting, and thanksgivings.

Under the Gospel neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship is tied to, or made more acceptable by, any place in which it is performed or towards which it is directed. God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth, whether in private families daily, in secret by each individual, or solemnly in the public assemblies. These are not to be carelessly or willfully neglected or forsaken, when God by His Word and providence calls us to them.

As it is the law of nature that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, should be set apart for the worship of God, so He has given in His Word a positive, moral and perpetual commandment, binding upon all men, in all ages to this effect. He has particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy for Him. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ this was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ it was changed to the first day of the week and called the Lord's Day. This is to be continued until the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week having been abolished.

The Sabbath is kept holy to the Lord by those who, after the necessary preparation of their hearts and prior arranging of their common affairs, observe all day a holy rest from their own works, words and thoughts about their worldly employment and recreations, and give themselves over to the public and private acts of worship for the whole time, and to carrying out duties of necessity and mercy.

23. Lawful Oaths and Vows

A lawful oath is an act of religious worship, in which the person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgment, solemnly calls God to witness what he swears, and to judge him according to the truth or falsity of it.

Only by the name of God can a righteous oath be sworn, and only if it is used with the utmost fear of God and reverence. Therefore, to swear vainly or rashly by the glorious and awesome name of God, or to swear by any other name or thing, is sinful, and to be regarded with disgust and detestation. But in matters of weight and moment, for the confirmation of truth, and for the ending of strife, an oath is sanctioned by the Word of God. Therefore a lawful oath being imposed by a lawful authority can rightly be taken in such circumstances.

Whoever takes an oath sanctioned by the Word of God is bound to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and affirm or confess to nothing except that which he knows to be true. For by rash, false, and vain oaths, the Lord is provoked and because of them this land mourns.

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

A vow, which is not to be made to any creature but to God alone, is to be made and performed with all the utmost care and faithfulness. But monastic vows (as in the Church of Rome) of a perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, so far from being degrees of higher perfection, are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

24. The Civil Magistrate

God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil magistrates to be under Him, over the people, for His own glory and the public good. For this purpose He has armed them with the power of the sword, blessing of those that do good, and for the punishment of evil-doers.

It is lawful for Christians to accept and carry out the duties of a magistrate when called upon. In the performance of such office they are particularly responsible for maintaining justice and peace by application of the right and beneficial laws of the nation. Also, to maintain justice and peace, they may lawfully (under the New Testament) engage in war if it is just and essential.

Because civil magistrates are established by God for the purposes previously defined, we ought to be subject to all their lawful commands as part of our obedience to God, not only to avoid punishment, but for conscience sake. We ought also to make supplications and prayers for rulers and all that are in authority, that under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

25. Marriage

Marriage is to be between one man and one woman. It is not lawful for any man to have more than one wife, or for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.

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

It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry if they are able with judgment to give their consent. But it is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord, and therefore those who profess the true religion should not marry with infidels or idolaters. Nor should those who are godly be unequally yoked by marrying with those who are wicked in their life or who maintain heretical teaching condemned to judgment.

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 that such persons may live together as man and wife.

26. The Church

The universal Church, which may be called invisible (in respect of the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) consists of the entire number of the elect, all those who have been, who are, or who shall be gathered into one under Christ, Who is the Head. This universal Church is the wife, the body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all.

All people throughout the world who profess the faith of the Gospel and obedience to Christ on its terms, and who do not destroy their profession by any errors which contradict or overthrow Gospel fundamentals, or by unholy behavior, are visible saints and may be regarded as such. All individual congregations ought to be constituted of such people.

The purest churches under Heaven are subject to mixture and error, and some have degenerated so much that they have ceased to be churches of Christ and have become synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless Christ always has had, and always will (to the end of time) have a kingdom in this world, made up of those who believe in Him, and make profession of His name.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. In Him, by the appointment of the Father, is vested in a supreme and sovereign manner all power for the calling, institution, order, or government of the Church. The Pope of Rome cannot in any sense be head of the Church, but he is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, who exalts himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God, who the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

In the exercise of the authority which has been entrusted to Him, the Lord Jesus calls to Himself from out of the world, through the ministry of His Word, by His Spirit, those who are given to Him by His Father, so that they may walk before Him in all the ways of obedience which He prescribes to them in His Word. Those who are thus called, He commands to walk together in particular societies or churches, for their mutual edification, and for the due performance of that public worship, which He requires of them in the world.

The members of these churches are saints because they have been called by Christ, and because they visibly manifest and give evidence of their obedience to that call by their profession and walk. Such

saints willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving themselves up to the Lord and to one another, according to God's will, in avowed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel.

To each of these churches thus gathered, according to the Lord's mind as declared in His Word, He has given all the power and authority which is in any way required for them to carry on the order of worship and discipline which He has instituted for them to observe. He has also given all the commands and rules for the due and right exercise of this power.

A particular church gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members. The officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church are bishops or elders and deacons. These are to be appointed for the peculiar administration of ordinances and the execution of power or duty with which the Lord has entrusted them and to which He has called them. This pattern of church order is to be continued to the end of the world.

The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit for the office of bishop or elder in a church, is that he is to be chosen by the common consent and vote of the church itself. Such a person should be solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with the laying on of hands of the eldership of the church (if there be any previously appointed elder or elders). The way of Christ for the calling of a deacon is that he is also to be chosen by the common consent and vote of the church and set apart by prayer, with the laying on of hands.

Because the work of pastors is to apply themselves constantly to the service of Christ in His churches by the ministry of the Word and prayer, and by watching for their souls as they that must give an account to Him, the churches to which they minister have a pressing obligation to give them not only all due respect, but also to impart to them a share of all their good things, according to their ability. This must be so done that the pastors may have a comfortable supply and that they may not have to be entangled in secular affairs, and may also be able to exercise hospitality towards others. All this is required by the law of nature and by the express command of our Lord Jesus, Who has ordained that they that preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel.

Although an obligation lies on the elders or pastors of the churches to be urgently preaching the Word by virtue of their office, yet the work of preaching the Word is not exclusively confined to them. Therefore others who are also gifted and qualified by the Holy Spirit for the task, and who are approved and called by the church, may and ought to perform it.

All believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches when and where they have opportunity so to do, and all who are admitted into the privileges of a church, are also under the censures and government of that church, in accordance with the rule of Christ.

No church members, because of any offence which has been given them by a fellow member, once they have performed their prescribed duty towards the person who has caused the offence, may disturb

church order in anyway, or be absent from the meetings of the church or the administration of any ordinances on account of any such offence. On the contrary, they are to wait upon Christ in the further proceedings of the church.

Each church and all its members are obligated to pray constantly for the good and prosperity of all Christ's churches everywhere, and to help forward everyone who comes into their district or calling, by the exercise of their gifts and graces. It clearly follows that when churches are planted by the goodness of God they ought also to hold fellowship among themselves to promote peace, increasing love and mutual edification as and when they enjoy an opportunity to do so to their advantage.

In cases of difficulties or differences, either in matters of doctrine or administration, which concern the churches in general or any single church, and which affects their peace, union, and edification, or when any members of a church are injured because of any disciplinary proceedings not consistent with the Word and correct order, it is according to the mind of Christ, that many churches holding communion together do, through their appointed messengers meet to consider, and give their advice about the matter in dispute, and to report to all the churches concerned. However, when these messengers are assembled, they are not entrusted with any real church power or with any jurisdiction over the churches involved in the problem. They cannot exercise any censure over any churches or persons, or impose their determination on the churches or their officers.

27. The Communion of Saints

All saints who are united to Jesus Christ, their Head, by His Spirit, and by faith, although they are not by this made one person with Him, have fellowship in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. Also, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obligated to the orderly performance of such public and private duties as lead to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

Saints, by their profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God and in performing such other spiritual services as advance their mutual edification. They are also to give relief to each other in outward things according to their different needs and abilities to meet them. This communion or fellowship, though chiefly exercised by saints in their immediate circle of fellow believers such as families, and churches, is also to be extended (according to the rule of the Gospel) to all the household of faith, as God gives the opportunity. However, their communion with one another as saints does not take away or infringe the personal ownership which each man has of his goods and possessions.

28. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

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.

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

29. Baptism

Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be to the person who is baptized - a sign of his fellowship with Christ in His death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into Christ; of remission of sins; and of that person's giving up of himself to God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.

Those who actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects for this ordinance.

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

Immersion - the dipping of the person in water - is necessary for the due administration of this ordinance.

30. The Lord's Supper

The Supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by Him the same night on which He was betrayed to be observed in His churches until the end of the world for the perpetual remembrance, and showing forth of the sacrifice of Himself in His death. It was also instituted by Christ to confirm believers in all the benefits of His death; - for their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him; - for their further engagement in and commitment to all the duties which they owe to Him; - and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him and with their fellow believers.

In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to His Father, nor is there any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin (of the living or the dead). There is only a memorial of that one offering up of Christ by Himself upon the cross once for all, the memorial being accompanied by a spiritual oblation of all possible praise to God for Calvary. Therefore, the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable, being injurious to Christ's own sacrifice, which is the only propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

The Lord Jesus has, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to pray and bless the elements of bread and wine (so setting them apart from a common to a holy use) and to take and break the bread, then to take the cup, and to give both to the communicants, also communicating themselves.

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

The outward elements in this ordinance which are correctly set apart and used as Christ ordained, so closely portray Him as crucified, that they are sometimes truly (but figuratively) referred to in terms of the things they represent, such as the body and blood of Christ. However in substance and nature they still remain truly and only bread and wine as they were before.

The doctrine commonly called transubstantiation, which maintains that a change occurs in the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of Christ's body and blood, when consecrated by a priest or by any other way, is repugnant not only to Scripture but even to common sense and reason. It overthrows the nature of the ordinance, and both have been and are the cause of a host of superstitions and of gross idolatries.

Worthy receivers, outwardly taking the visible elements in this ordinance, also receive them inwardly and spiritually by faith, truly and in fact, but not carnally and corporally, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of His death. The body and blood of Christ is not present corporally or carnally but it is spiritually present to the faith of believers in the ordinance, just as the elements are present to their outward senses.

All ignorant and ungodly persons who are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ are equally unworthy of the Lord's Table, and therefore cannot without great sin against Him, take a share in these holy mysteries or be admitted to the Supper while they remain in that condition. Indeed those who receive (the elements) unworthily are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themselves.

31. Man's State After Death and the Resurrection

The bodies of men after death return to dust, and undergo 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 are then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise where they are with Christ, and look upon the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and under darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. The Scripture acknowledges no other place than these two for souls separated from their bodies.

At the last day, those of the saints who are still alive shall not sleep but shall be changed. And all the dead shall be raised up with their own, same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, and these bodies shall be united again to their souls forever.

The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor. The bodies of the just shall, by His Spirit be raised to honor, and made conformable to His own glorious body.

32. The Last Judgment

God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to Whom all power and judgment is given by the Father. In this day not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but also all people who have lived upon the earth. They 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 when in the body, whether good or evil.

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 also His justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. Then shall the righteous go into everlasting life and receive that fullness of joy and glory with everlasting reward 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.

As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there will be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin and to give greater consolation to the godly in their adversity, so also He will have the date of that day kept unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and always be watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come. Also, so that men may be affected in such a way that they ever say, 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!' Amen.

“It is also a book pure in the sense of truth, being without mixture of error. I do not hesitate to say that I believe that there is no mistake whatever in the original Holy Scriptures from beginning to end.”

– Charles Spurgeon, in a sermon entitled *The Bible Tried and True*

“As to Southern Baptists: They hold to the doctrines as first delivered to the Saints. They do not tinker with the old Bible. They believe it is inspired of God...They prefer the guidance of the Holy Spirit to blind human guides.” Edwin William Stephens, in a sermon given to the Baptist World Alliance, 1905

“Each doctrine within the Christian faith must be held in balance. We are in great danger of error whenever we overemphasize the importance of one truth to the demise or neglect of others.” – Paul

Washer, *The Gospel’s Power and Message*

“Scripture is powerful because, unlike man-made programs and solutions which never really get below the surface, the Bible is empowered by God himself. That’s why it is able to transform people in the deepest reaches of their heart.” – John MacArthur, *Preaching the Cross*

“When essential doctrine is at stake, the pastor must stand. Peace at all costs is the banner of the coward...Nevertheless, many of our professing churches are so doctrinally deficient and spiritually dark that they cannot stand the light of truth.” – Jeff Noblit, *The Rise of Calvinism in the Southern*

Baptist Convention: Reason for Rejoicing

“When a denomination begins to consider doctrine divisive, theology troublesome, and convictions inconvenient, consider that denomination on its way to a well-deserved death.” – Al Mohler, to the

Southern Baptist Convention, 1995.

Preface to the Catechism

The Baptist Catechism (as presented by the Charleston Association, 1813)

In the year 1751, various churches united to form the first association in what would become the Southern Baptist Convention. Adopting the London Baptist Confession of faith, the churches in this association produced The Charleston Manual (1813) that included this catechism. It has been used since to describe the historic positions of our faith and as an accurate rendering of the teachings of Holy Scripture.¹ Most of the questions contained in this catechism came from the Baptist Catechism as presented by the Charleston Association in 1813. If marked differently, the questions came from *Instruction for the Ignorant* (John Bunyan, marked IFI), *A Catechism for Bible Teaching* (John Broadus, marked CBT) or *A Brief Catechism of Bible Doctrine* (James P Boyce, marked BCBD) – all of which are historic Baptist catechisms.

How to Use this Catechism

The word ‘catechism’ comes from the Greek, meaning “to teach by word of mouth.” Essentially, a catechism is a means ‘to teach,’ in this case, to teach Biblical doctrine. Catechism is most effective in the question-and-answer method. Memorize – and train your family to memorize – the answers to these catechism questions. Memorize one question and answer per week. Also, utilize the accompanying Scripture references as a guide for the defense of those answers. When you have gone through the catechism book, start over at the beginning. It will become a treasured resource for your understanding of Scripture and spiritual growth.

Is this Catechism an Infallible Rule of Faith and Practice?

We believe that the “Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, Having Been Given By Inspiration of God, Are the All-Sufficient and Only Rule of Faith and Practice.”² As J.M. Frost – the founder of the Baptist Sunday School Board – has said, “Baptists at different times in their history, and to meet impending claims and conflicts, have issued their confession of faith, and have always given this primal and decisive place to the Word of God as their one authority. This is the bedrock of their faith, the one rule of their practice.”³

Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone) is a bedrock belief of the Baptist tradition. This catechism is not inerrant or inspired by God, but is to be used as a trusted resource to help us understand the teachings contained in God’s Word.

¹ Wood Furman, A.M., comp. *A History of the Charleston Association of Baptist Churches: In the State of South Carolina with an Appendix Containing the Principle Circular Letter to the Churches*. Charleston, South Carolina: The Press of John Huff, 1811.

² *The Rule of Faith and Practice*, by Archibald Alexander Hodge

³ As quoted by Donna Ascol in her work included in *Why I Am A Baptist*, edited by Tom Nettles and Russ Moore.

Abridged and Edited

Where necessary, this catechism has been abridged and edited to conform to the teaching of Fellowship Baptist Church of Sidney (minimally altered) and to conform to modern grammatical styling.

“True worship must worship God as He exists, not as we wish Him to be. The essence of idolatry is the making of images of God. An image is a shadow, a false representation. We may not bow before a statue or figure, but if we make an image of God in our mind that is not in accord with God's revelation of himself, then we are not worshipping in truth.”- James White

“To teach or even suggest that God made man because He was lonely or incomplete is absurd and even blasphemous. Creation is not the result of some lack in God, but the result of His fullness or the overflow of His abundance.” – Paul Washer

“If you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because you have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Your soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great.” — John Piper

“An ineffably holy God, who has the utmost abhorrence of sin, was never invented by any of Adam's descendants.” – A.W. Pink

“How do we know that God exists? The answer can be given in two parts: First, all people have an inner sense of god. Second, we believe the evidence that is found in Scripture and in nature.” – Wayne Grudem

“Is it our task to force the biblical doctrine of God to answer to modern culture, or (is it our task) to address modern culture with the biblical doctrine of God? If modern culture-or any culture-establishes the baseline for the doctrine of God, such a doctrine will certainly bear little resemblance to the God of the Bible.” - Al Mohler

The Catechism

The Doctrine of God

1. Q. Who is the first and greatest being?

A. God is the first and greatest being (Is. 44:6; 48:12; Ps. 97:9).

2. Q. Should everyone believe there is a God?

A. Everyone should believe there is a God (Heb. 11:6); and it is their great sin and folly who do not (Ps. 14:1).

3. Q. How may we know there is a God?

A. The light of nature in man and the works of God plainly declare there is a God (Rom. 1:19,20; Ps. 19:1, 2, 3; Acts 17:24); but his word and Spirit only do it fully and effectually for the salvation of sinners (1 Cor. 2:10; 2 Tim. 3:15,16).

4. Q. What is the word of God?

A. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only certain rule of faith and obedience (2 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 2:20).

5. Q. May all men make use of the Holy Scriptures?

A. All men are not only permitted, but commanded and exhorted to read, hear, and understand the Holy Scriptures (John 5:38; Rev. 17:18, 19; 1:3; Acts 8:30).

6. Q. What things are chiefly contained in the Holy Scriptures?

A. The Holy Scriptures chiefly contain what man ought to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man (2 Tim. 1:13; 3:15,16).

7. Q. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit (John 4:24), infinite (Job 11:7, 8, 9), eternal (Ps. 110:2), and unchangeable (Jas. 1:17) in his being (Ex. 33:14), wisdom (Ps. 147:5), power (Rev. 4:8), holiness (Rev. 15:4), justice, goodness, and truth (Ex. 34:6).

8. Q. Are there more gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God (Deut. 6:4, 7; Jer 10:10).

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

A. There are three persons in the godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory (1 John 5:7; Mt. 28:19).

10. Q. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass (Eph. 1:4, 11; Rom. 9:22-23; Is. 46:10; Lam. 3:37).

11. Q. How doth God execute his decrees?

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

12. Q. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good (Gen. 1 throughout; Heb. 11:3).

13. Q. How did God create man?

A. God created man, male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures (Gen. 1:26, 27, 28; Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:24).

14. Q. What are God's works of providence?

A. Gods works of providence are his most holy, (Ps. 145:17; 104:24) wise (Is. 28:29), and powerful preserving (Heb. 1:3) and governing all his creatures, and all their actions (Ps. 103:19; Mt. 10:29, 30, 31).

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

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him upon condition of perfect obedience: forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death (Gal. 3:12; Gen. 2:17).

"One of the reasons that God makes human babies small is so they won't kill their parents in their sleep. They're evil. Yes, this is true of children. 'None is righteous; no, not one.'...Yes, that little, precious one—you better believe it. If you don't, you miss the big picture and you don't realize your desperate need to get the gospel to your child again and again and again and again." - Voddie Baucham

"Human depravity is 'total' in the same sense death is total. You can't be partly dead. You can be really, really sick or critically injured and on life support, but you're either dead or alive. There are no degrees of death." – Phil Johnson

"There is enough sin in my best prayer to damn the whole world to hell." – John Bunyan

"The fact is, that man is a reeking mass of corruption. His whole soul is by nature so debased and so depraved, that no description which can be given of him even by inspired tongues can fully tell how base and vile a thing he is." – Charles Spurgeon

"And you need to know this, if it weren't for the common Grace of God, restraining you in your unconverted state, you would make Hitler look like a choir boy... The first thing you must embrace is this...all men are born in sin and given over to sin and all men are born hating God." – Paul Washer

The Doctrine of Man

16. Q. Did our first parents continue in the state wherein they were created?
- A. Our first parents engaging in the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God (Gen. 3:6, 7, 8, 13; Ecc. 7:29).
17. Q. What is sin?
- A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God (1 John 3:4).
18. Q. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?
- A. The sin whereby our parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:12, 16, 17).
19. Q. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?
- A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his offspring, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression (Gen. 2:16, 17; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22).
20. Q. Into what condition did the fall bring mankind?
- A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery (Rom. 5:12).
21. Q. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate upon which man fell?
- A. The sinfulness of that condition upon which man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it (Rom. 5:12, to the end; Eph. 2:1, 2, 3; James 1:14, 15; Mt. 15:19).
22. Q. What is the misery of that condition upon which man fell?

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God (Gen. 3:8, 10, 24), are under his wrath and curse (Eph. 2:2, 3; Gal. 3:10), and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever (Lam. 3:39; Rom. 6:23; Mt. 25:41, 46).

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

A. God having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life (Eph. 1:4, 5), did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer (Rom. 3:20-22; Gal. 3:21, 22).

“When we had miserably defaced the Law of nature originally written in our hearts, so that many of its commandments were no longer legible, it seemed good to the Lord to transcribe that Law into the Scriptures, and in the Ten Commandments we have a summary of the same.” – A.W. Pink

“A time is coming when every responsible person, on the basis of his or her actions and attitudes, will meet the final judgment of God either as eternal life or as wrath and fury.” – John Piper, Sermon

“The world's theology is easy to define. It is the view that human beings are basically good, that no one is really lost, that belief in Jesus Christ is not necessary for salvation. ‘Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.’ – James P. Boyce

“So the moral standard set by the law does not change under grace. Indeed, it could not; it is a reflection of God's character. But divine grace actually empowers us to fulfill the moral demands of the law in a way that the law alone could never do.” – John MacArthur

“We look with surprise at some of the things in the Old Testament because our own ideas of sin are lax and loose.” Basil Manly, Jr.

“[Some people ask], ‘God’s so powerful and so good, how come bad stuff happens?’ Here’s how you ask that question properly. You look in my eyes and you ask me this, ‘How on earth can a holy and righteous God know what I did and thought and said on yesterday and not kill me in my sleep last night?’ – Voddie Baucham

The Doctrine of Law and Judgment

24. Q. But what shall be done to the wicked at their death?
- A. The souls of the wicked shall, at their death, be cast into the torments of hell, and their bodies lie in their graves, till the resurrection and judgment of the great day (Luke 16:23, 24; Acts 1:24; Jude 5, 7; 1 Pet. 3:19; Ps. 49:14).
25. Q. What shall be done to the wicked, at the Day of Judgment?
- A. At the Day of Judgment the bodies of the wicked, being raised out of their graves, shall be sentenced, together with their souls, to unspeakable torments with the devil and his angels forever (John 5:28, 29; Mt. 25:41, 46; 2 Thes. 1:8, 9).
26. Q. What is the duty which God requires of man?
- A. The duty which God requires of man is, obedience to his revealed will (Mic 6:8; 1 Sam. 15:22).
27. Q. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?
- A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law (Rom. 2; 14, 15, and 10:5).
28. Q. Where is the moral law given and explained?
- A. The moral law is given and explained in the Ten Commandments (Deut. 10:4; Mt. 19:17).
29. Q. What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?
- A. The sum of the Ten Commandments is, to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all of our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22:37-40).
30. Q. What is the preface to the Ten Commandments?

A. The preface to the Ten Commandments is in these words; I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (Ex. 20:2).

31. Q. What doth the preface to the Ten Commandments teach us?

A. The preface to the Ten Commandments teach us that because God is the Lord, and our God and redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments (Luke 1:74, 75; 1 Pet. 1:15-19).

32. Q. Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is: Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Ex. 20:3).

33. Q. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God and our God (1 Chron. 28:9; Deut. 26:17), and to worship and glorify him accordingly (Mt. 4:10; Ps. 29:2).

34. Q. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment forbids the denying (Ps. 14: 1), or not worshipping and glorifying the true God (Rom. 1:21), as God and our God (Ps. 81:10, 11), and the giving that worship and glory to any other, which is due unto him alone (Rom. 1:25, 26).

35. Q. What are we especially taught by these words before me, in the first commandment?

A. These words before me, in the first commandment teach us, that God, who sees all things, takes notice of and is much displeased with the sin of having any other god (Ex. 8:5, to the end).

36. Q. Which is the second commandment?

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

and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments (Ex. 20:4, 5, 6).

37. Q. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requires the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances, as God hath appointed in his word (Deut. 32:46; Mt. 23:20; Acts 2:42).

38. Q. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment forbids the worshipping of God by images (Deut. 4:15-19; Ex. 32:5, 8), or any other way not appointed in his word (Deut. 7:31, 32).

39. Q. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us (Ps. 45:2, 3, 6), his propriety in us (Ps. 45:11), and the zeal he hath to his own worship (Ex. 34:13, 14).

40. Q. Which is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain (Ex. 20:7).

41. Q. What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's names (Mt. 6:9; Deut. 23:58), titles (Ps. 68:4), attributes (Rev. 15:3, 4), ordinances, (Mal. 1: 11, 14), word (Ps. 136: 1, 2) and works (Job 36:24).

42. Q. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment forbids all profaning and abusing of anything whereby God makes himself known (Mal. 1:6, 7, 12; 2:2; 3:14).

43. Q. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment (1 Sam. 2:12, 17, 22, 29; 3:13; Deut. 28:58, 59).

44. Q. What is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy: six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it (Ex. 20:8-11).

45. Q. What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requires the keeping holy to God one whole day in seven to be a Sabbath to himself (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-14).

46. Q. Which day of the seven has God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

A. Before the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-14); and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath (Ps. 118:24; Mt. 28:1; Mk. 2:27, 28; Rev. 1:10; 16:2; Lk. 24:1, 30-36; Jn. 20:1; Acts 1:3; 2:1, 2; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2).

47. Q. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day (Ex. 20:8, 10), even from such worldly employments as are lawful on other days (Ex. 16:25-28; Neh. 13:15-22); and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship (Lk. 4:16; Acts 20:7; Ps. 92:title; Is. 66:23) and in rest and activities conducive to the restoration of one's mind and body, except labor that must be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy (Mt. 12:1-13).⁴

⁴ Edited from the original, which forbade all forms of recreational activities

48. Q. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment forbids the omission or careless performance of the duties required (Ez. 22:26; Amos 8:5; Mal. 1:13), and the profaning the day by idleness (Acts 20:7, 9), or doing that which is in itself sinful (Ez. 23:38), or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about worldly employments or recreations (Jer. 17:24-27; Is. 58:13).

49. Q. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, are God's allowing us six days of the week for our own lawful employments (Ex. 20:9), his challenging a special propriety in a seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath day (Ex. 20:11).

50. Q. Which is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is: Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God gives thee (Ex. 20:12).

51. Q. What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honor and performing the duties belonging to everyone in their several places and relations, as superiors (Eph. 5:21), inferiors (1 Pet. 2:17), or equals (Rom. 12:10).

52. Q. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbids the neglect of, or doing anything against the honor and duty which belongs to everyone in authority (Mt. 15:4-6; Ez. 34:24; Rom. 13:8).

53. Q. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment (Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:2, 3).

52. Q. What is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is: Thou shalt not kill (Ex. 20:13).

53. Q. What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment requires all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life (Eph. 5:28,29) and the lives of others (1 Kings 18:4).

54. Q. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment absolutely forbids the taking away of our own life, or the life of others unjustly, or whatsoever causes the unjust death of ourselves or others (Acts 26:28; Gen. 9:9).

55. Q. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is: Thou shalt not commit adultery (Ex. 20:14).

56. Q. What is required in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbors chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior (1 Cor. 7:2, 3, 5, 34, 36; Col. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:2).

57. Q. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions (Mt. 15:19, 5:28; Eph. 5:3, 4).

58. Q. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is: Thou shalt not steal (Ex. 20:15).

59. Q. What is required in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment requires the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others (Gen. 30:30; 1 Tim. 5:8; Lev. 25:35; Deut. 22:1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Ex. 23:4, 5; Gen. 47:14, 20).

60. Q. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment forbids anything that unjustly hinders our own (1 Tim. 5:8; Pr. 28:19) or our neighbor's wealth or outward estate (Pr. 21:17, and 23:20, 21; Eph. 4:28).

61. Q. Which is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor (Ex. 20:16).

62. Q. What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man (Zech. 8:16), and of our own neighbor's good name (Jn. 5:12), especially in witness bearing (Pr. 14:5, 25).

63. Q. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to the truth, or might bring harm to our own or our neighbor's good name (1 Sam. 17:28; Lev. 19:16; Ps. 15:2, 3).

64. Q. Which is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's (Ex. 20:17).

65. Q. What is required in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment requires full contentment with our own condition (Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:6), with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his (Job 31:29; Rom. 7:15; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Cor. 8:4, 7).

66. Q. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate (1 Kings 21:4; Esther 5:13; 1 Cor. 10:10), envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor (Gal. 5:26; James 3:14, 16), and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his (Rom. 7:7, 8, 13:9; Deut. 5:21).

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

A. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God (Ecc. 7:20; 1 John 1:8, 10; Gal. 5:17), but doth daily break them in thought, word, or deed (Gn 4:5, and 7:21; Rom. 3:9-21; James 3:2-13).

68. Q. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others (Ez. 8:6, 13, 15; 1 Jn. 5:16; Ps. 78:17, 32, 56).

69. Q. What does every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come (Eph. 5:6; Gal. 3:10; Lam. 3:39; Mt. 25:41; Rom. 6:23).

70. Q. What does God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life (Acts 20:21), with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ gives to us the benefits of redemption (Pr. 2:1-6, 8:33 to the end; Is. 55:2, 3).

“By Christ’s purchasing redemption, two things are intended: his satisfaction and his merit; the one pays our debt, and so satisfies; the other procures our title, and so merits.” – Jonathan Edwards

“How can the life of one man satisfy the justice due the many? One of the most beautiful and precious doctrines of Scripture encases the answer to these questions: the infinite worth and perfect obedience of the Son of God.” – Paul Washer

“It seemed as if Hell were put into His cup; He seized it, and, At one tremendous draught of love, He drank damnation dry.” – Charles Spurgeon

“The all-seeing eye of God beheld our deplorable state; infinite pity touched the heart of the Father of mercies; and infinite wisdom laid the plan of our recovery.” – David Brainerd

“At best we are but clay, animated dust; but viewed as sinners, we are monsters indeed. Let it be published in heaven as a miracle that the Lord Jesus should set His heart’s love upon people like us.” – Alistair Begg

“Because a God who is ultimately most focused on his own glory will be about the business of restoring us, who are all broken images of him. His glory demands it. So we should be thankful for a self-sufficient God whose self-regard is glorious.” – Matt Chandler

“That Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, and completed the great work for which he assumed our nature, is a truth that lies at the foundation of Christianity.” – John L. Dagg

The Doctrine of Redemption

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

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5, 6); who, being the eternal Son of God, became man (John 1:14; Gal. 4:4), and so was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures, and one person for ever (Rom. 9:5; Lk. 1:35; Col. 2:9; Heb. 7:24, 25).

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

A. Christ the Son of God became man by taking to himself a true body (Heb. 2:14, 16; 10:5), and a reasonable soul (Mt. 26:38); being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her (Luke 1:27, 31, 34, 35, 42; Gal. 4:4), yet without sin (Heb. 4:15; 7:26).

73. Q. What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ as our Redeemer executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of king, both in his state of humiliation and exaltation (Acts 3:22; Heb. 7:25; 2 Cor. 13:3; Heb. 5:5, 6, 7; Ps. 3:6; Is. 9:6, 7; Mt. 21:5; Ps. 2:6, 8, 10, 11).

74. Q. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executes the office of prophet in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation (John 1:18; 2 Pet. 1:10, 11, 12; John 15:15; and 20:31).

75. Q. How does Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executes the office of priest in his once offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice (Heb. 9:14, 28) and reconcile us to God (Heb. 2:17), and in making continual intercession for us (Heb. 6:24, 25).

76. Q. How does Christ execute the office of king?

A. Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to himself (Acts 15:14, 15, 16), in ruling (Is. 33:22), and defending us (Is. 32:1, 2), and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies (1 Cor. 15:25; Ps. 110 throughout).

77. Q. Of what did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consists in his being born, and that in a low condition (Luke 2:7), made under the law (Gal. 4:4), undergoing the miseries of this life (Heb. 7:2, 3; Is. 53:2, 3), the wrath of God (Luke 22:44; Mt. 27:46), and the cursed death of the cross (Phil. 2:8); in being buried (1 Cor. 15:4), and continuing under the power of death for a time (Acts 2:24, 25, 26, 27, 31; Mt. 12:40).

78. Q. Wherein consists Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4), in ascending up into heaven (Mark 16:19), in sitting at the right hand of God the Father (Eph. 1:20), and in coming to judge the world at the last day (Acts 1: 11; 17:31).

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

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us (John 1:11,12) by his Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5,6).

80. Q. How does the spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us (Eph. 1:13, 14; John 6:37, 39; Eph. 2:8), and thereby uniting us to Christ, in our effectual calling (Eph. 3:17; 1 Cor. 1:9).

81. Q. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit (2 Tim. 1:9; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14), whereby convincing us of our sin and misery (Acts 2:37), enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ (Acts 2:18), and renewing our wills (Ez. 36:26, 27), he does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel (John 6:44, 45; Phil. 2:13).

81. Q. What benefits do they who are effectually called partake of in this life?
- A. They who are effectually called do in this life partake of justification (Rom. 8:30), adoption (Eph. 1:5), sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them (1 Cor. 1:30).
82. Q. What is justification?
- A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins (Rom. 3:24, 25; and 4:6, 7, 8), and accepts us as righteous in his sight (2 Cor. 5:19, 21), only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us (Rom. 5:17-19), and received by faith alone (Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).
83. Q. What is adoption?
- A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace (1 John 3:1), whereby we are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God (John 1:12; Rom. 8:14).
84. Q. What is sanctification?
- A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace (2 Thess. 2:13), whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God (Eph. 4:23, 24), and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness (Rom. 6:4, 6).
85. Q. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?
- A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are assurance of God's love, peace of conscience (Rom. 5:1, 2, 5), joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5, 17), increase of grace (Pr. 4:18), and perseverance therein to the end (1 John 5:13; 1 Pet. 1:5).
86. Q. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death?
- A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness (Heb. 12:23), and do immediately pass into glory (2 Cor. 5:1, 6, 8; Phil. 1:23; Luke 23:43); and their bodies being still united to Christ (1 Thess. 4:14), do rest in their grave (Is. 57:2) till the resurrection (Job 19:26, 27).

87. Q. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?
- A. At the resurrection believers, being raised up in glory (1 Cor. 15:43), shall be openly acknowledged, and acquitted in the Day of Judgment (Mt. 25:23; Mt. 10:32), and made perfectly blessed, both in soul and body, in the full enjoyment of God (1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 13:12) to all eternity (1 Thess. 4:17, 18).
88. Q. What is faith in Jesus Christ?
- A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace (Heb. 10:39), whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel (Jn. 1:12; Is. 26:3, 4; Ph. 3:9; Gal. 2:16).
89. Q. What is repentance unto life?
- A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace (Acts 11:28), whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin (Acts 2:37, 38), and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ (Joel 2:12; Jer 3:22), does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God (Jer 31:18, 19; Ez. 36:3 1), with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience (2 Cor. 7: 1 1; Is. 1: 16, 17).
90. Q. What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?
- A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the word, baptism, the Lord's supper, and prayer; all which means are made effectual to the elect for salvation (Mt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:42, 46, 47).
91. Q. How is the word made effectual to salvation?
- A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation (Neh. 8:8; Acts 26:18; Ps. 19:8; Acts 20:32; Rom. 1: 15, 16, 10: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; 15:4; 1 Cor. 14:24, 25; 1 Tim. 3:15, 16, 17;).
92. Q. How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend to with diligence (Pr. 8:34), preparation (1 Pet. 2:1, 2), and prayer (Ps. 119:18); receive it with faith and love (Heb. 4:2; 2 Thes. 2:10), lay it up in our hearts (Ps. 119:18), and practice it in our lives (Luke 8:15; James 1:25).

“When discipline leaves the church, Christ goes with it.” - John L. Dagg

“The church is not perfect, but woe to the man who finds pleasure in pointing out her imperfections.” – Charles Spurgeon

“You can’t join with unbelievers in worship, you can’t join with unbelievers in ministry, you can’t join with unbelievers in any enterprise that involves God’s name. That’s blasphemy, that’s sacrilegious.” – John MacArthur

“I believe that as God prepared a befitting ministry, even so does he prepare a feeding ministry in the church, who are a people called out of the world by the Word and Spirit of the Lord, assembling themselves together in a holy brotherhood, continuing in the Apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, breaking bread and prayer.” – Obadiah Holmes

“I believe preaching is central to the grand scheme of church life. Preaching/teaching sets the tone and the parameters for all other functions of the church. Our understanding of fellowship, evangelism, discipline, worship, etc., all arise out of our understanding of God’s word. Without sound preaching and teaching, all else will falter. Hence, preaching is of seminal importance in the grand scheme of church life.” – Voddie Baucham

“The association of believers in church relations, is another means ordained by God for the increase of individual spiritual life and consequently of sanctification. This is attained not only through social prayer, and the preaching of the word, but also by Christian watchcare and discipline, and by the mutual sympathy and aid of believers in matters both temporal and spiritual.” – James P. Boyce

Doctrine of the Church

93. Q. How do baptism and the Lords supper become effectual means of salvation?

A. Baptism and the Lords supper become effectual means of salvation, not for any virtue in them, or in him that does administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ (1 Pet. 3:21; Mt. 3:11; 1 Cor. 3:6, 7), and the working of the Spirit in those that by faith receive them (1 Cor. 12:3; Mt. 28:19).

94. Q. What is baptism?

A. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament instituted by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death, burial, and resurrection; of his being grafted into him (Rom. 6:3, 4, 5; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:27); of remission of sins (Mk. 1:4; Acts 2:38, and 22:16); and of his giving up himself unto God through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3, 4).

95. Q. To whom is baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is to be administered to all those who actually profess repentance towards God (Acts 2:38; Mt. 3:6), faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to none other (Acts 8:12, 36, 37, 38; 10:47, 48).

96. Q. Are the infants of such as are professing believers to be baptized?

A. The infants of such as are professing believers are not to be baptized, because there is neither command or example in the holy scriptures, or certain consequence from them to baptize such (Ex. 23:13; Pr. 30:6; Lk. 3:7, 8).

97. Q. How is Baptism rightly administered?

A. Baptism is rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body of the party in water, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's institution, and the practice of the apostles (Mt. 3:16; Jn. 3:23; 4:1, 2; Mt. 28:19, 20; Acts 8:38; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12), and not by sprinkling or pouring of water, or dipping some part of the body, after the tradition of men.

98. Q. What is the duty of such who are rightly baptized?

A. It is the duty of such who are rightly baptized to give up themselves to some particular and orderly church of Jesus Christ, that they may walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Acts 2:41, 42; 5:13, 14; 9:26; 1 Pet. 2:5; Lk. 1:6).

99. Q. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lords supper is an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ; wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to his appointment, his death is shown forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace (Mt. 26:26, 27, 28; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 10:16).

100. Q. Who are the proper subjects of this ordinance?

A. They who have been baptized upon a personal profession of their faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance from dead works (Acts 2:41, 42).

101. Q. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:28, 29), of their faith to feed upon him (2 Cor. 13:5), of their repentance (1 Cor. 11:31), love (1 Cor. 10:16, 17), and new obedience (1 Cor. 5:7, 8), lest coming unworthily they eat and drink judgment to themselves (1 Cor. 11:28, 29).

"In personal relationships, if we attempt to fake emotional intensity and put on an outward show of emotion that is not consistent with the feelings of our hearts, others involved will usually sense our hypocrisy at once and be put off by it. How much more is this true of God, who fully knows our hearts? Therefore, intensity and depth of emotional involvement in prayer should never be faked: we cannot fool God." – Wayne Grudem

"Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan." – John Bunyan

"A prayerless church member is a hindrance. He is in the body like a rotting bone or a decayed tooth. Before long, since he does not contribute to the benefit of his brethren, he will become a danger and a sorrow to them. Neglect of private prayer is the locust which devours the strength of the church." – Charles Spurgeon

"Prayer is the open admission that without Christ we can do nothing. And prayer is the turning away from ourselves to God in the confidence that He will provide the help we need. Prayer humbles us as needy, and exalts God as wealthy." – John Piper

"Prayer is not appointed for the furnishing of God with the knowledge of what we need, but it is designed as a confession to Him of our sense of the need. In this, as in everything, God's thoughts are not as ours. God requires that His gifts should be sought for. He designs to be honoured by our asking, just as He is to be thanked by us after He has bestowed His blessing." – A.W. Pink

"Prayer – secret, fervent, believing prayer – lies at the root of all personal godliness." – William Carey

The Doctrine of Prayer

102. Q. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up our desires to God (Ps. 62:8), by the assistance of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26), for things agreeable to his will (1 Jn. 5:14; Rom. 8:27), in the name of Christ (Jn. 16:23), believing (Mt. 21:22; James 1:6), with confession of our sins (Ps. 32:5, 6; Dan. 9:4), and thankful acknowledgments of his mercies (Ph. 4:6).

103. Q. What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?

A. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer (1 Jn. 5:14); but the special rule of direction is that prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer (Mt. 6:9-13; with Lk. 11:2-4).

104. Q. What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is: Our Father which art in heaven (Mt. 6:9), teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us (Rom. 8:15; Lk. 11:13; Is. 24:8); and that we should pray with and for others (Acts 12:5; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2).

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

A. In the first petition, which is: Hallowed be thy name (Mt. 6:9), we pray that God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he makes himself known (Ps. 67:2, 3), and that he would dispose all things to his own glory (Ps. 83 throughout; Rom. 11:36).

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

A. In the second petition, which is: Thy kingdom come (Mt. 6:10), we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed (Ps. 68:1, 18), and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced (Rev. 12:10, 11), ourselves and others brought into it and kept in it (2 Thes. 3: 1; Rom. 10: 1; Jn. 17:19, 20), and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened (Rev. 22:10).

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

A. In the third petition, which is: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10), we pray that God by his grace would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things (Ps. 67: throughout; Ps. 119:36; 2 Sam. 15:25; Job 1:21), as the angels do in heaven (Ps. 103:20, 21).

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

A. In the fourth petition, which is: Give us this day our daily bread (Mt. 6:11), we pray that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them (Pr. 30:8; Gn 28:20; 1 Tim. 4:4, 5).

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

A. In the fifth petition, which is: And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors (Mt. 6:12), we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins (Ps. 51:1, 2, 7, 9; Dan. 9:17-19); which we are rather encouraged to ask because of his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others (Lk. 11:4; Mt. 18:35).

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

A. In the sixth petition, which is: And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil (Mt. 6:13), we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin (Mt. 26:31), or support and deliver us when we are tempted (2 Cor. 12:8).

111. Q. What doth the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach?

A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which is: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen (Mt. 6:13), teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only (Dan. 9:4, 7-9, 16-19), and in our prayers to praise Him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory, to Him (1 Chron. 29:10-13). And in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen (1 Cor. 4:16; Rev. 11:20; 22:20, 21).

CHURCH COVENANT

It is highly recommended that Baptist churches utilize a church covenant for their faith and practice. Consider the one to follow, an abridged version taken from *A Declaration of Faith* by J. Newton Brown (1853) and common in many Baptist churches. But first, a forward concerning the purpose and nature of a church covenant:

WHAT IS A CHURCH COVENANT?⁵

A church covenant can be described in five different ways.

1. A church covenant is a promise – a promise made to God, to a local church, and to one’s self.
2. A church covenant is a summary of how we agree to live. While our statement of faith is a good summary of what we believe, our church covenant is a summary of how we agree to live – more importantly, it is a summary of how God would have us live. It does not include every explicit command regarding obedience, but it does give a general summary of what it means to live as a disciple of Christ.
3. A church covenant is a sign of commitment – a commitment to God, to His church, and to personal holiness.
4. A church covenant is an ethical statement. Historian Charles W. DeWeese writes, “A church covenant is a series of written pledges based on the Bible which church members voluntarily make to God and to one another regarding their basic moral and spiritual commitments and the practice of their faith” (Baptist Church Covenants, p. viii). One theologian calls church covenants the “ethical counterpart to confessions of faith.” A church covenant can be an important part of applying a Christian worldview to every aspect of our lives. Inherent in the purpose of a church covenant is the understanding that church membership involves being held accountable to live in a manner consistent with a common understanding of Scripture.
5. A church covenant is a biblical standard. A church covenant is helpful in a church that is practicing Biblical church discipline. As members of a church, we exhort one another to live holy lives, and we challenge brothers and sisters persisting in sin.

BAPTIST CHURCH COVENANT, 1853

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in The name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, 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.

⁵ By Matt Schmucker in an article posted by the title of “Membership Matters: What is Our Church Covenant?” on 9 Marks Blog (<http://www.9marks.org/journal/membership-matters-what-our-church-covenant>) accessed March 6, 2013.

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 give it a place in our affections; prayers and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the services we promise others, endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will toward all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others, to participate in each joy, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

Closing Words

A Modern Day Downgrade

"Earnest attention is requested for this [work]. . . . We are going down-hill at breakneck speed."

The quotation above is from a footnote by Charles Spurgeon, placed within an article in his monthly magazine entitled *The Down Grade*. Two articles of this name were written by Spurgeon's close friend, and alleged that a significant period of doctrinal drift and theological shallowness occurs after each period of reform and revival, and if not checked, would lead to apostasy.

Spurgeon's friend and the article's author, Robert Schindler, had the following to say in the first article:

"These facts furnish a lesson for the present times, when, as in some cases, it is all too plainly apparent men are willing to forego the old for the sake of the new. But commonly it is found in theology that that which is true is not new, and that which is new is not true."

Schindler outlined the history of this evangelical downward slope away from doctrinal depth and toward newer fads and ecclesiological emphases that were less than profound (hence the title, *Down Grade*). Indeed, Mr. Schindler's observations have proven to be astute and founded well within the realm of reality. Schindler's words should haunt modern evangelicalism from his grave.

The consequences of these first two articles brought great controversy and many unkind words said and written in the direction of our beloved Spurgeon. Instead of backing away from this controversy, Spurgeon continued to express these sentiments in his monthly magazine. Spurgeon was ostracized from the fidelity and fellowship he had previously enjoyed in the Baptist Union. Eventually, Spurgeon withdrew from the Baptist Union under much duress and with much emotional pain and internal agony. Spurgeon had said, "Fellowship with known and vital error is participation in sin" and followed through his conviction in a letter of withdraw. Some credit the pressure and personal suffering the Downgrade controversy with Spurgeon's early death. In the end, only God knows.

Any Christian in contemporary times cannot help but see the similarities between Spurgeon's controversy and our own. Some discerning souls will be able to tell by the quotations I've given in the catechism section of this book that I am either a Southern Baptist or have been by the number of Southern Baptists I've quoted. It is with great hope that many Southern Baptists – and also many others of Baptist heritage – will find their way back to our founders and back to our catechism and the fetters binding their hearts might be tightened. I pray that God brings us back to the lost doctrines – and especially that of the sufficiency of Scripture.

Today there is a theological famine that has raped the green pastures of God and parched the soil of His meadows. The ground upon which his sheep graze is not only dry, it is barren. Shepherds have derelicted their duty and allowed the congregation to overgraze on arid ground and made them drink from shallow wells and stagnate ponds. We feed the sheep on quantities of food that would make the

smallest of lambs starve from lack of sustenance. The Word of God being preached in the typical Baptist church is being rationed out in such paltry sums that most sheep could not survive unless they go out to graze on their own - and yet we wonder why so many have left our churches. We give them nothing to eat and before we know it, they've lost the taste for nourishing food and begin to devour one another.

The level of Bible teaching and preaching is so shallow and vain in much of the contemporary Baptist church that many have no idea what it means to feast on the Word of God. The reason sheep have to be tended is because if the grass is not adequate, they'll resort to eating weeds and dandelions, thorns and thistles and although their bellies will be full, they will starve from malnutrition. We look around and see the lack of understanding of the Scripture while the church is focusing on myths and legends and pop-psychology and self-help and think our stomachs are full, yet we perish for lack of knowledge. The only reason a Rick Warren can exist is because the sheep have been starved for so long they find nothing alarming about the taste of poison because it's been so long since they've tasted decent food. I see people flock to hear a false teacher preach and I'm not indignant at them – but at the one in their own home church that ought to be feeding them that they might not take up company with wolves.

It's when the sheep go hungry that they start to stray from the pasture. We've substituted Bible study with books on living, replaced preaching with self-esteem workshops, replaced true worship with shallow songs with catchy lyrics and replaced fervent prayer with playing games. Reverence has been replaced with recreation, living water replaced by life coaches and we have replaced true accountability with mere amusement. This is what has become of the church of Jesus Christ in our modern age.

Members of our Baptist churches are not Christ's momentary investment, but His eternal inheritance. He has bought and paid for us with His blood. They are his precious inheritance, a gift from His father, given to His care and entrusted – to the church. He came to purchase them, and left them to our charge. And one day, He will return and gather them home. May God help us should he come to find his sheep have been neglected, malnourished and picked apart by wolves.

My own denomination waged the Conservative Resurgence against those challenging the inerrancy of Scripture just a generation ago. A few decades later and many Southern Baptist churches cannot articulate how the sufficiency of Scripture affects their modes or methods of ministry. We won the battle, but are losing the war. We have become experts at providing scorecards, but failures at providing substance. Today, the Southern Baptist Convention has become no more theologically sound or doctrinally-invested than any other mainstream evangelical denomination. Long gone are the days that one could accept into membership of the local church a person from another Southern Baptist Church by letter – and assume that they believe or even have heard a Biblical gospel. Long gone are the days that Southern Baptists can operate in our holy huddle and look at others as watered down, compromised, or shallow. Today, we have become what twenty years ago we detested. Our doctrinal statements are solid, but they remain locked in the church safe along with our Calvinistic history and our sense of conviction.

Believing in the inerrancy of Scripture, without adhering to the sufficiency of Scripture, is a lesson in missing the point. We have rushed so headlong into reaching people that our hands are empty when we

get to them. We're reaching them with effectively very little Biblical sustenance. We operate our churches under a practical denial of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit and throw our efforts into man-centered strategies of manipulation to convince a sinner to say a supposedly salvific prayer, pronounce them saved, baptize them and call them a member of the church.

I have chosen to not fellowship with the Montana Southern Baptist Convention because of the unrepentant theological shallowness of its leadership. My church's membership in the national convention is also annually questioned. It's out of a great affinity and respect for the Southern Baptist Convention that we remain, but it is a respect for our past and certainly not for the present. There is a limit that present affections for past glory can give hope for the future. But I am not alone – there are millions with us in this motley crew of heart-broken Southern Baptists who feel the Convention sinking ever deeper into a sea of post-modernism. We are also not alone because there are countless millions more in independent Baptist churches, nondenominational churches, and orthodox believers of other affiliations who feel the same about the evangelical world as a whole.

What will get us out of this downgrading slope of spiritual shallowness is not a new conference or evangelism strategy out of the Christian bookstore. Revival tarries because we have affirmed the inerrancy of the Word of God and then have squarely left it behind. A return to unashamed Monergism, a return to true Biblical doctrine, and a return to catechism are all needed to help stem this flood.

We must begin to prioritize the catechizing of children within the home and believers in general within the church body. Many contemporary Baptists would not know what a catechism is, let alone what purpose it serves. Most would be surprised to discover that Baptists have utilized the catechism learning model since our founding. Good works are a result of good teaching. Authentic evangelism is a result of understanding the Gospel. Missions are a result of understanding God's glory and his purpose in salvation. The so-called "results" that most Baptists claim they want will not be found outside an adequate understanding of Scripture. Let us then, catechize our children and be diligent to teach solid doctrine to the church.

Modern Baptists are not approaching the possibility of a modern day *Downgrade* controversy. We have been sailing down the slopes for some time. Unless our anchor is firmly held in the word of God, we too shall fall into the depths of doctrinal obscurity and cultural irrelevancy with the rest of mainstream evangelicalism at our side.

About the Author



JD Hall is lead pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Sidney, Montana. JD holds a BA in Religious Education from Williams Baptist College and M.A. from Arkansas State University. JD has been married for eleven years to Mandy, who teaches their three children at home. He is a columnist for the Intermountain Christian News, Weekend Worldview, and other publications. He's also the author of children's book "Help, Mom! Arminians are Giving Me Nightmares Again!" JD's sermon at the 2013 Reformation Montana Conference, "Modern Day Downgrade: A Call for Repentance to Southern Baptists and Other Evangelicals" is perhaps his most listened to message, heard around the world. JD is a co-founder of Reformation Montana and currently serves on its executive board.