

Book of Church Order
of The Free Presbyterian Church
of North America

**Being the Constitution of the Church, Containing
The Westminster Confession of Faith
The Larger and Shorter Catechisms
Form of Government
Code of Practice and Discipline
Directory of Public Worship
(Suggested Forms of Special Services)**

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INTRODUCTION

Historical Summary

The Free Presbyterian Church of North America is the fruit of the vision and ministry of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster (Northern Ireland). That church was formed in 1951 as a testimony to the historic faith of Presbyterians, a faith that emphasized the inspiration and authority of Scripture against the liberal, rationalist infidelity that had made serious inroads into Presbyterianism in Ireland and most other places.

From its inception, the Free Presbyterian Church has been Protestant in its convictions, Presbyterian in its government, Reformed in its theology, separatist (that is, anti-ecumenical) in its stand, and fervently evangelistic in its outreach. Its distinctive stand has been marked by its opposition to the work of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the WCC's national arms, and its international agencies.

The WCC exists to reunite Christendom, especially Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, in a visible union. Its progress toward this goal has been marked by either a repudiation of the historic Protestant faith or such a restatement of that faith as eviscerates it in order to render more acceptable to Protestants Roman Catholic dogmas that once were anathema to them. In this way, the Roman Catholic Church's views on the primacy of the Pope; on the Lord's Supper as a true, expiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead; on ministers as sacrificing priests; on the equal authority of tradition with Scripture as the Word of God; and on justification as taught by the Council of Trent (rejecting justification by grace through faith alone) are seen not as dangerous heresies but as mere differences of emphasis. Against all such unscriptural ecumenism, the Free Presbyterian Church has taken a determined stand, maintaining the distinctive *solas* of the Reformation: *sola Scriptura*, the Bible as our sole authority in all matters of faith and practice; *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *solo Christo*, justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone; and *solī Deo gloria*, all to the glory of God alone.

While maintaining strict separation from false ecumenism and all who support it—and therefore opposing the inclusivist policies of those who under the guise of evangelism enter into fellowship or cooperation with Roman Catholics, liberals, and other Bible deniers—the Free Presbyterian Church has sought to stand together with all who stand for the historic Protestant faith. It has recognized that Bible-believing men whose theological positions would prevent them from becoming Free Presbyterian ministers yet exercise a ministry that is faithful to the cardinal essentials of the gospel. To the extent that cooperation and fellowship do not weaken its adherence to its own doctrinal standards or testimony, the Free Presbyterian Church has sought to strengthen the hands of those who stand for Christ and His gospel.

In its evangelism, the Free Presbyterian Church has always taken its stand for the free offer of the gospel and has never seen the doctrines of election and particular redemption as taught in Scripture and as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith as any barrier to this position. It has sought to keep its Calvinistic theology Christ-centered.

Throughout its history, the Free Presbyterian Church has given itself to prayer and has made its progress on its knees. The presbytery has held frequent days of prayer, has called on all the churches under its care to observe days of prayer and fasting, has inquired into the prayer life of each congregation, and has sought to encourage a fervent commitment to the place of prayer among all its people. While repudiating man-made and man-centered revivalism, the Free Presbyterian Church has sought for and received a measure of genuine revival blessing. It recognizes that true revival is a sovereign act of God, whose Spirit moves when, where, and as He wills, but it also believes that God has promised to visit His people and to attend to their cry. Thus, it earnestly gives itself to prayer for a spiritual awakening both in its congregations and much farther afield.

The Free Presbyterian Church has always had some distinctive characteristics that make its fellowship unusual. Called to raise a testimony in Northern Ireland at a time when modernism, or liberalism as it is also called, seemed to have gained a stranglehold on Irish Presbyterianism, it recognized that many who should be standing together in the battle for truth were needlessly separated because of doctrinal differences that did not affect the heart of the gospel message. One such issue was baptism, and another was eschatology; on both it adopted an innovative policy.

On baptism, the Free Presbyterian Church admitted that four centuries of debate and discussion since the Reformation had not brought us any nearer a resolution of the questions that divided baptists from paedobaptists. Therefore, to provide for a continuing discussion of their differences within the fellowship of the gospel, the Free Presbyterian Church adopted a position similar to that taken by the Calvinistic Methodists in 1874 whereby it embraced both paedobaptists and believers'-baptists in its communion. In other words, the Free Presbyterian Church did not see paedo-baptism, as many presbyterians do, as essential to the system of covenant theology set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Repudiating the theory of baptismal regeneration, it allowed brethren to worship and serve together in mutual respect even though they differed on the mode of baptism and on the relation of believers' children to baptism.

The same attitude has prevailed on the controversial issue of eschatology, the doctrine of last things. In the Free Presbyterian Church belief in the orthodox statements of what may be termed personal or individual eschatology (death, the state of the soul after death, a bodily resurrection, heaven, and hell) is unwavering and united. But on the issues as to whether the second coming of Christ will be pre-, post-, or a-millennial and whether, if it is premillennial, it will be pre-, mid-, or post-tribulational, there is liberty of opinion. This liberty does not extend to peculiar views of prophecy that weaken or contradict the exposition of the plan of salvation set forth in our confession and catechisms.

The Free Presbyterian Church has from its inception maintained the use of the Authorized Version of the Bible for all its public worship. It recognized the unique place of the autographs of Scripture and refused to countenance the error of the Church of Rome in elevating a translation to the authority of the original manuscripts. It also recognized that though other translations might faithfully reflect the original text, there were many that were untrustworthy. Avoiding the confusion that it saw in other churches where people frequently found it difficult to follow a preacher using another translation, it uniformly employed the Authorized Version as the standard version for its worship and service.

The Free Presbyterian Church has always been a singing church. Being presbyterian, it has always afforded the Psalter a special place in its worship. However, it has never restricted its praise and worship to the use of Psalms but has used the great hymns of the church. In its ministry of praise it has employed suitable instrumental music.

After its formation in 1951 the Free Presbyterian Church grew steadily. Today it comprises about one hundred congregations in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales. In 1976 it commenced its witness in North America, first in Toronto, Canada, then in Greenville, South Carolina, and in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. In each of these places, a congregation of believers who wished to be associated with the Free Presbyterian Church's stand for Christ petitioned the presbytery to be taken under its care.

In 1982 the presbytery established a branch of its theological seminary in Greenville for the training of young men from the United States who felt called to the Free Presbyterian ministry. It also formed the ministers and elders of the North American churches into a standing commission, charged with the oversight and development of the work in Canada and the United States but answerable to the presbytery. The Presbytery of Ulster looked

on this arrangement as temporary and frequently exhorted the North American brethren to move toward the formation of an autonomous presbytery for the better government of the churches under its care.

In May 2000 the North American Commission made the decision to begin steps toward the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America, and in May 2004 it formally presented a unanimous petition to the presbytery for the formation of its North American churches into a new presbytery. The following month, a delegation of ministers from the North American churches met with a special commission of presbytery in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The special commission made the following recommendations:

That a presbytery be set up in North America as a distinct new entity and that we seek ways to foster and maintain fraternal relations between the two churches.

That those ministers who have already been sent out by the General Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster to works in North America should hold dual membership in both presbyteries.

That a consultative committee be established to consider what implications the formation of a separate presbytery would hold for missionary work and to consider possible ways of cooperation in missionary work so as not to needlessly duplicate the work of our brethren.

Relations with the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster

Following careful consideration, at meetings in Dungannon on December 3, 2004, and in Comber on January 7, 2005, the presbytery unanimously adopted the following motion:

That we adopt the recommendations of the presbytery commission, with particular emphasis on the fact that those ministers who have been sent from Northern Ireland under our authority to minister in Canada and the United States will enjoy membership in both presbyteries and will thus retain their full rights as members of this presbytery;

That we set a time for the committee that is to consult with the North American brethren on possible areas of missionary co-operation between the two presbyteries to report to us;

That to promote a unity of witness and stand we establish an International Congress of Free Presbyterians, to convene every other year, commencing with a congress in Ulster in 2006 and one in North America in 2008; and that to facilitate this we set up a liaison committee to work out the details of the congress meetings.

That we adopt the following statement of the special relations that the two churches, regarding themselves as self-governing parts of the single Free Presbyterian family, separated by distance but united in faith, stand and vision, will maintain:

- a. The two presbyteries shall seek to maintain the closest possible fellowship by means of pulpit exchanges, by visits to presbytery weeks of prayer, by cooperation in important aspects of ministry (see f and g below), and especially by sending delegates at least annually to the meetings of the other.
- b. Each presbytery shall recognize the ministerial training and ordination of the other and allow ministers and licentiates of one to be considered for a call, and to be called, to a congregation of the other, always subject to the right of the one presbytery to permit the removal of one under its care and the right of the receiving presbytery to sustain or to refuse to sustain a call issued by a church under its care.

- c. Each presbytery will seat visiting members of the other presbytery at any of its regular meetings and accord them the right of participating but not of voting in its proceedings.
- d. In the event that either presbytery considers amending its constitution, it will inform the other of the changes under consideration and invite it to make representations and/or to send delegates to contribute to, but not to vote in, the debate.
- e. The disciplinary actions of either presbytery with regard to a local church or minister under its care will be reported to, accepted by, and acted upon by the other. Disciplinary proceedings against a minister ordained by one presbytery but serving under the auspices of the other shall be conducted by a judicial commission composed of equal numbers of commissioners from each presbytery, unless one presbytery requests the other to assume sole responsibility for determining the case and binds itself to accept its findings without further review.
- f. To maintain the unity of their stand for Christ and to ensure that in all their deliberations and actions they will jealously guard the welfare of both parts of the Free Presbyterian family, each presbytery shall be able to make representations to the other on any matter that it considers of particular importance to its members or testimony.
- g. The two presbyteries may appoint special joint committees to study and report on issues of doctrinal, procedural, or ecclesiastical interest of importance to them. Approval of such reports will be the sole rights of the presbyteries.

These paragraphs describe the special relationship between two branches of the Free Presbyterian family. They express the unity of two churches that share a common heritage and hope, and they map a course of cooperation and communion that both our churches will seek to prize and protect.

In pursuance of these decisions, officers of the Presbytery of Ulster met the North American Commission in Toronto on May 17, 2005. The deputy moderator, Dr. Stanley Barnes, read the presbytery's decision to the commission and put the following questions to the representatives of each Free Presbyterian church in North America: "Have you conducted a properly called congregational meeting of your church members to allow them to vote on the proposal to leave the care of the Presbytery of Ulster and to join in the formation of an autonomous North American presbytery? Has your congregation, by a vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at that meeting, voted to join in the formation of the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America?"

The deputy moderator then polled all the ordained ministers and licentiates, requiring each to answer the question: "Do you now consent to join in the formation of the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America and to come under its care?"

Having given affirmative answers, the elders and ministers present unanimously adopted the following charter:

With a view to maintaining the theological heritage and stand that we have received from our parent church in Ulster, we, ministers and elders representing all the North American congregations formerly under the care of the Ulster Presbytery and with the authorization of those congregations, join together to form the Free Presbyterian Church of North America as a self-governing denomination, on this seventeenth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand and five. As we take this step, we express our indebtedness to the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster and gladly endorse the special relationships with our mother church that the Presbytery of Ulster has adopted.

In forming the Free Presbyterian Church of North America, we confess our adherence to the historic Christian faith as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and place on record our trust in God to bless and endue the church with the power of His Spirit on the merits of Christ our sole King and only Head, to whom we commit ourselves to remain faithful in doctrine and practice.

The Adoption of the Substandards

At its inaugural meeting in Toronto on May 18, 2005, the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America unanimously decided to take the following actions:

1. It provisionally adopted the *Book of Church Order (B.C.O.)* (“Substandards and Form of Government”) (F.G.), and formed a Constitutional Documents Committee as an ad interim committee of the presbytery to prepare the remainder of the *B.C.O.* (“Code of Practice,” “Principles of Public Worship,” and “Suggested Forms of Special Services”). The presbytery then voted to suspend the procedure for amending the *B.C.O.* (“F.G.,” 10.19) until the final report of the Constitutional Documents Committee and the formal adoption of the remaining parts of the *B.C.O.*
2. It adopted a resolution as to members that “nothing in the provisions of the *B.C.O.* shall be retroactive; that is, they shall not furnish a basis for revoking or challenging the membership of those who applied and were received in good faith as members of local Free Presbyterian churches—*except* that all members shall be subject to the standards enacted herein for church discipline and for election to office.”
3. In adopting the Substandards, emphasis was given to the amendments of the Westminster Confession of Faith (the American Confession of 1788) and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms that express consonance with the distinctive positions of its parent body, the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster.
 - a. To reflect the church’s position on ecclesiastical and personal separation, the presbytery adopted an addendum to chapter 25. To establish the church’s acceptance of the historic orthodox doctrine of the person and work of the Holy Spirit and to guard its testimony against perversions of the doctrine, the presbytery adopted a new chapter at the end of the Confession, chapter 34, “Of the Holy Spirit.”
 - b. To 25.6 on the antichrist, 28.3–4 on baptism, 30.4 on church censures, and 32.2 with 33.1–3 on matters of eschatology, the presbytery included additional statements to set forth the church’s understanding of the scope of the sections involved.
 - c. Consonant with the additional statements at 28.3–4 and 32.2 with 33.1–3, the presbytery adopted alternative acceptable answers to question 95 of the Shorter Catechism and to questions 87, 88, and 166 of the Larger Catechism.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America is

- a. To glorify God in the Trinity of His sacred persons, according to the Scriptures;
- b. To declare the whole counsel of God and remain faithful to His inspired and infallible Word, the Bible, with particular emphasis on the following truths: the total depravity of man as fallen in Adam; the three-fold function of the law as a mirror to expose and condemn sin, thus shutting men up to Christ as their only hope of gaining acceptance with God, as a curb to deter and restrain the unconverted, and as a rule of life for the regenerate; the limitations of the law, in that it can neither effect justification in an unsaved person nor sanctification in a saved person; the sole mediation and saving merits of the Lord

Jesus Christ; and His atoning death, bodily resurrection and ascension into heaven to be the advocate and great high priest of His people;

- c. To labor for the salvation of the lost by the preaching of the gospel of Christ and calling them to repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;
- d. To seek the edification of Christians by teaching them the Scriptures and by pointing them continually to the all-sufficient Christ, the author and finisher of their faith;
- e. To oppose all expressions of human self-righteousness and to give prominence to the glorious truth of justification by faith in the merits of Christ's righteousness, which God freely imputes to His people through faith alone;
- f. To promote and participate in worldwide evangelism through biblically sound and separated mission activity.
- g. To promote scriptural and godly worship, with special emphasis on prayer, sound biblical preaching, the right administration of the sacraments, and a proper keeping of the Sabbath.
- h. To contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), opposing the enemies of the gospel, especially the antichristian system of Roman Catholicism and the unscriptural Ecumenical and Charismatic movements, thus rejecting the compromising policy of neo-evangelicalism in favor of biblical separation;
- i. To stimulate fellowship with Bible-believing men and churches who are separated unto the gospel of God.
- j. To surrender the entire work of the ministry to God for the work of the gospel, looking to Him to revive His work in this age of apostasy and to maintain the witness of this church until the glorious personal return of the Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

With a sense of history and hope, the Free Presbyterian Church of North America launches into the work that God has given it to do with the prayer that the Lord will place the stamp of His approval and blessing on its labors. In publishing its *B.C.O.*, it rejoices in its clearly Presbyterian form of government but is mindful that in the final analysis, the structures we have adopted will be spiritually beneficial only as the Lord imparts to us the power of His Spirit.

PART ONE
SUBSTANDARDS
The Westminster Confession of Faith

CHAPTER 1
Of the Holy Scripture

- 1.1** Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable;¹ yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation.² Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His church;³ and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing;⁴ which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary;⁵ those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.⁶

1. Rom. 2:14–15; 1:19–20; Ps. 19:1–3; Rom. 1:32; 2:1
2. 1 Cor. 1:21; 2:13–14
3. Heb. 1:1

4. Prov. 22:19–21; Luke 1:3–4; Rom. 15:4; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Isa. 8:19–20
5. 2 Tim. 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:19
6. Heb. 1:1–2

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

Of the Old Testament:

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

Of the New Testament:

Matthew	Philippians	Epistle of James
Mark	Colossians	1 Peter
Luke	1 Thessalonians	2 Peter
John	2 Thessalonians	1 John
Acts of the Apostles	1 Timothy	2 John
Epistle to the Romans	2 Timothy	3 John
1 Corinthians	Titus	Jude
2 Corinthians	Philemon	The Revelation
Galatians	Epistle to the Hebrews	
Ephesians		

All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.¹

1. Luke 16:29, 31; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 22:18–19; 2 Tim. 3:16

- 1.3** The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.¹

1. Luke 24:27, 44; Rom. 3:2; 2 Pet. 1:21

- 1.4** The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.¹

1. 2 Pet. 1:19, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 John 5:9; 1 Thess. 2:13

- 1.5** We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church to an high and reverend esteem of the Holy Scripture.¹ And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellences, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.²

1. 1 Tim. 3:15

2. 1 John 2:20, 27; John 16:13–14; 1 Cor. 2:10–12; Isa. 59:21

- 1.6** The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.¹ 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;² and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.³

1. 2 Tim. 3:15–17; Gal. 1:8–9; 2 Thess. 2:2

2. John 6:45; 1 Cor. 2:9–12

3. 1 Cor. 11:13–14; 14:26, 40

- 1.7** All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all;¹ yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.²

1. 2 Pet. 3:16

2. Ps. 119:105, 130

- 1.8** The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical;¹ so as, in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal unto them.² But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them,³ therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,⁴ that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner;⁵ and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.⁶

1. Matt. 5:18

2. Isa. 8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39, 46

3. John 5:39

4. 1 Cor. 14:6, 9, 11–12, 24, 27–28

5. Col. 3:16

6. Rom. 15:4

- 1.9** The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.¹

1. 2 Pet. 1:20–21; Acts 15:15–16

- 1.10** The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.¹

1. Matt. 22:29, 31; Eph. 2:20; Acts 28:25

CHAPTER 2

Of God and of the Holy Trinity

- 2.1** There is but one only,¹ living, and true God,² who is infinite in being and perfection,³ a most pure spirit,⁴ invisible,⁵ without body, parts,⁶ or passions;⁷ immutable,⁸ immense,⁹ eternal,¹⁰ incomprehensible,¹¹ almighty,¹² most wise,¹³ most holy,¹⁴ most free,¹⁵ most absolute;¹⁶ working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will,¹⁷ for His own glory;¹⁸ most loving,¹⁹ gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;²⁰ the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him;²¹ and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments,²² hating all sin,²³ and who will by no means clear the guilty.²⁴

1. Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6

2. 1 Thess. 1:9; Jer. 10:10

3. Job 11:7–9; 26:14

4. John 4:24

5. 1 Tim. 1:17

6. Deut. 4:15–16; John 4:24; Luke 24:39

7. Acts 14:11, 15

8. James 1:17; Mal. 3:6

9. 1 Kings 8:27; Jer. 23:23–24

10. Ps. 90:2; 1 Tim. 1:17

11. Ps. 145:3

12. Gen. 17:1; Rev. 4:8

13. Rom. 16:27

14. Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8

15. Ps. 115:3

16. Ex. 3:14

17. Eph. 1:11

18. Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11:36

19. 1 John 4:8, 16

20. Ex. 34:6–7

21. Heb. 11:6

22. Neh. 9:32–33

23. Ps. 5:5–6

24. Nah. 1:2–3; Ex. 34:7

- 2.2** God hath all life,¹ glory,² goodness,³ blessedness,⁴ in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He hath made,⁵ not deriving any glory from them,⁶ but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things;⁷ and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleaseth.⁸ In His sight all things are open and manifest,⁹ His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature,¹⁰ so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain.¹¹ He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands.¹² To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them.¹³

1. John 5:26

2. Acts 7:2

3. Ps. 119:68

4. 1 Tim. 6:15; Rom. 9:5

5. Acts 17:24–25

6. Job 22:2–3

7. Rom. 11:36

8. Rev. 4:11; 1 Tim. 6:15; Dan. 4:25, 35

9. Heb. 4:13

10. Rom. 11:33–34; Ps. 147:5

11. Acts 15:18; Ezek. 11:5

12. Ps. 145:17; Rom. 7:12

13. Rev. 5:12–14

- 2.3** In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.¹ The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father;² the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.³

1. 1 John 5:7; Matt. 3:16–17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14
2. John 1:14, 18

3. John 15:26; Gal. 4:6

CHAPTER 3

Of God's Eternal Decree

- 3.1** God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass:¹ yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin,² nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.³

1. Eph. 1:11; Rom. 11:33; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:15, 18
2. James 1:13, 17; 1 John 1:5

3. Acts 2:23; Matt. 17:12; Acts 4:27–28;
John 19:11; Prov. 16:33

- 3.2** Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions,¹ yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.²

1. Acts 15:18; 1 Sam. 23:11–12; Matt. 11:21, 23

2. Rom. 9:11, 13, 16, 18

- 3.3** By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels¹ are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.²

1. 1 Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:41

2. Rom. 9:22–23; Eph. 1:5–6; Prov. 16:4

- 3.4** These angels and men, thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.¹

1. 2 Tim. 2:19; John 13:18

- 3.5** Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory,¹ out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto;² and all to the praise of His glorious grace.³

1. Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; Rom. 8:30; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:9
2. Rom. 9:11, 13, 16; Eph. 1:4, 9

3. 1 Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:4–5; 2:10; 2 Thess. 2:13

- 3.6** As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ,¹ are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified,² and kept by His power, through faith, unto salvation.³ Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.⁴

1. 1 Thess. 5:9–10; Titus 2:14
2. Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:5; 2 Thess. 2:13

3. 1 Pet. 1:5
4. John 17:9; Rom. 8:28; John 6:64–65; 10:26; 8:47; 1 John 2:19

- 3.7** The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.¹

1. Matt. 11:25–26; Rom. 9:17–18, 21–22; 2 Tim. 2:19–20; Jude 4; 1 Pet. 2:8

- 3.8** The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care,¹ that men, attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election.² So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God;³ and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.⁴

1. Rom. 9:20; 11:33; Deut. 29:29
2. 2 Pet. 1:10

3. Eph. 1:6; Rom. 11:33
4. Rom. 11:5–6, 20; 2 Pet. 1:10; Rom. 8:33; Luke 10:20

CHAPTER 4

Of Creation

- 4.1** It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,¹ for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness,² in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.³

1. Heb. 1:2; John 1:2–3; Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:
2. Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:12; Ps. 104:24; 33:5–6

3. Gen. 1; Heb. 11:3; Col. 1:16; Acts 17:24

- 4.2** After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female,¹ with reasonable and immortal souls,² endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image;³ having the law of God written in their hearts,⁴ and power to fulfill it;⁵ and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change.⁶ Besides this law written in their hearts, they received a command, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil;⁷ which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.⁸

1. Gen. 1:27
2. Gen. 2:7; Eccl. 12:7; Luke 23:43; Matt. 10:28
3. Gen. 1:26; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24
4. Rom. 2:14–15

5. Eccl. 7:29
6. Gen. 3:6; Eccl. 7:29
7. Gen. 2:17; 3:8–11; 23
8. Gen. 1:26, 28

CHAPTER 5

Of Providence

- 5.1** God the great Creator of all things doth uphold,¹ direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things,² from the greatest even to the least,³ by His most wise and holy providence,⁴ according to His infallible foreknowledge,⁵ and the free and immutable counsel of His own will,⁶ to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.⁷

1. Heb. 1:3
2. Dan. 4:34–35; Ps. 135:6; Acts 17:25–28; Job 38–41
3. Matt. 10:29–31
4. Prov. 15:3; Ps. 104:24; 145:17

5. Acts 15:18; Ps. 94:8–11
6. Eph. 1:11; Ps. 33:10–11
7. Isa. 63:14; Eph. 3:10; Rom. 9:17; Gen. 45:7; Ps. 145:7

5.2 Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly;¹ yet, by the same providence, He ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.²

1. Acts 2:23

2. Gen. 8:22; Jer. 31:35; Ex. 21:13; Deut. 19:5;
1 Kings 22:28, 34; Isa. 10:6–7

5.3 God, in His ordinary providence, maketh use of means,¹ yet is free to work without,² above,³ and against them,⁴ at His pleasure.

1. Acts 27:31, 44; Isa. 55:10–11; Hos. 2:21–22
2. Hos. 1:7; Matt. 4:4; Job 34:10

3. Rom. 4:19–21
4. 2 Kings 6:6; Dan. 3:27

5.4 The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves and that not by a bare permission,² but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding,³ and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends;⁴ yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.⁵

1. Rom. 11:32–34; 2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chron. 21:1;
1 Kings 22:22–23; 1 Chron. 10:4, 13–14;
2 Sam. 16:10; Acts 2:23; 4:27–28
2. Acts 14:16

3. Ps. 76:10; 2 Kings 19:28
4. Gen. 50:20; Isa. 10:6–7, 12
5. James 1:13–14, 17; 1 John 2:16; Ps. 50:21

5.5 The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave, for a season, His own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled;¹ and, to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon Himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.²

1. 2 Chron. 32:25–26, 31; 2 Sam. 24:1

2. 2 Cor. 12:7–9; Ps. 77:1, 10, 12;
Mark 14:66–72; John 21:15–17

5.6 As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden,¹ from them He not only withholdeth His grace whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts;² but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had,³ and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin;⁴ and, withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan,⁵ whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.⁶

1. Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; 11:7–8
2. Deut. 29:4
3. Matt. 13:12; 25:29
4. Deut. 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12–13

5. Ps. 81:11–12; 2 Thess. 2:10–12
6. Ex. 7:3; 8:15, 32; 2 Cor. 2:15–16;
Isa. 8:14; 1 Pet. 2:7–8; Isa. 6:9–10;
Acts 28:26–27

5.7 As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of His church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.¹

1. 1 Tim. 4:10; Amos 9:8–9; Rom. 8:28; Isa. 43:3–5, 14

CHAPTER 6

Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof

- 6.1** Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit.¹ This their sin, God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.²

1. Gen. 3:13; 2 Cor. 11:3

2. Rom. 11:32

- 6.2** By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God,¹ and so became dead in sin,² and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.³

1. Gen. 3:6–8; Eccl. 7:29; Rom. 3:23

2. Gen. 2:17; Eph. 2:1

3. Titus 1:15; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9;

Rom. 3:10–18

- 6.3** They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed;¹ and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.²

1. Gen. 1:27–28; 2:16–17; Acts 17:26;

Rom. 5:12, 15–19; 1 Cor. 15:21–22, 45, 49

2. Ps. 51:5; Gen. 5:3; Job 14:4; 15:14

- 6.4** From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good,¹ and wholly inclined to all evil,² do proceed all actual transgressions.³

1. Rom. 5:6; 8:7; 7:18; Col. 1:21

2. Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Rom. 3:10–12

3. James 1:14–15; Eph. 2:2–3; Matt. 15:19

- 6.5** This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated;¹ and although it be, through Christ, pardoned, and mortified; yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.²

1. 1 John 1:8, 10; Rom. 7:14, 17–18, 23; James 3:2;
Prov. 20:9; Eccl. 7:20

2. Rom. 7:5, 7–8, 25; Gal. 5:17

- 6.6** Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto,¹ doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner,² whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God,³ and curse of the law,⁴ and so made subject to death,⁵ with all miseries spiritual,⁶ temporal,⁷ and eternal.⁸

1. 1 John 3:4

2. Rom. 2:15; 3:9, 19

3. Eph. 2:3

4. Gal. 3:10

5. Rom. 6:23

6. Eph. 4:18

7. Rom. 8:20; Lam. 3:39

8. Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:9

CHAPTER 7

Of God's Covenant with Man

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

1. Isa. 40:13–17; Job 9:32–33; 1 Sam. 2:25; Ps. 113:5–6; 100:2–3; Job 22:2–3; 35:7–8; Luke 17:10; Acts 17:24–25

7.2 The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works,¹ wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity,² upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.³

1. Gal. 3:12

3. Gen. 2:17; Gal. 3:10

2. Rom. 10:5; 5:12–20

7.3 Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second,¹ commonly called the covenant of grace; whereby He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved,² and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.³

1. Gal. 3:21; Rom. 8:3; 3:20–21; Gen. 3:15; Isa. 42:6

3. Ezek. 36:26–27; John 6:44–45

2. Mark 16:15–16; John 3:16; Rom. 10:6, 9; Gal. 3:11

7.4 This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.¹

1. Heb. 9:15–17; 7:22; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25

7.5 This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel:¹ under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come;² which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah,³ by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament.⁴

1. 2 Cor. 3:6–9

3. 1 Cor. 10:1–4; Heb. 11:13; John 8:56

2. Heb. 8–10; Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11–12; 1 Cor. 5:7

4. Gal. 3:7–9, 14

7.6 Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance,¹ was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper;² which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory, yet, in them, it is held forth in more fullness, evidence and spiritual efficacy,³ to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles;⁴ and is called the New Testament.⁵ There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.⁶

1. Col. 2:17

5. Luke 22:20

2. Matt. 28:19–20; 1 Cor. 11:23–25

6. Gal. 3:14, 16; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:21–23, 30;

3. Heb. 12:22–27; Jer. 31:33–34

Ps. 32:1; Rom. 4:3, 6, 16–17, 23–24; Heb. 13:8

4. Matt. 28:19; Eph. 2:15–19

CHAPTER 8

Of Christ the Mediator

8.1 It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the mediator between God and man,¹ the prophet,² priest,³ and king,⁴ the head and Savior of His church,⁵ the heir of all things,⁶ and judge of the world:⁷ unto whom He did from all eternity give a people, to be His seed,⁸ and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.⁹

1. Isa. 42:1; 1 Pet. 1:19–20; John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:5

5. Eph. 5:23

2. Acts 3:22

6. Heb. 1:2

3. Heb. 5:5–6

7. Acts 17:31

4. Ps. 2:6; Luke 1:33

8. John 17:6; Ps. 22:30; Isa. 53:10

9. 1 Tim. 2:6; Isa. 55:4–5; 1 Cor. 1:30

8.2 The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature,¹ with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin;² being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance.³ So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion.⁴ Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.⁵

1. John 1:1, 14; 1 John 5:20; Phil. 2:6; Gal. 4:4
2. Heb. 2:14, 16–17; 4:15
3. Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Gal. 4:4

4. Luke 1:35; Col. 2:9; Rom. 9:5; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Tim. 3:16
5. Rom. 1:3–4; 1 Tim. 2:5

8.3 The Lord Jesus, in His human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, above measure,¹ having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;² in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell;³ to the end that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth,⁴ He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator, and surety.⁵ Which office He took not unto Himself, but was thereunto called by His Father,⁶ who put all power and judgment into His hand, and gave Him commandment to execute the same.⁷

1. Ps. 45:7; John 3:34
2. Col. 2:3
3. Col. 1:19
4. Heb. 7:26; John 1:14

5. Acts 10:38; Heb. 12:24; 7:22
6. Heb. 5:4–5
7. John 5:22, 27; Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36

8.4 This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake;¹ which that He might discharge, He was made under the law,² and did perfectly fulfill it;³ endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul,⁴ and most painful sufferings in His body;⁵ was crucified, and died,⁶ was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption.⁷ On the third day He arose from the dead,⁸ with the same body in which He suffered,⁹ with which also He ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father,¹⁰ making intercession,¹¹ and shall return, to judge men and angels, at the end of the world.¹²

1. Ps. 40:7–8; Heb. 10:5–10; John 10:18; Phil. 2:8
2. Gal. 4:4
3. Matt. 3:15; 5:17
4. Matt. 26:37–38; Luke 22:44; Matt. 27:46
5. Matt. 26–27
6. Phil. 2:8
7. Acts 2:23–24, 27; 13:37; Rom. 6:9

8. 1 Cor. 15:3–5
9. John 20:25, 27
10. Mark 16:19
11. Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24–25
12. Rom. 14:9–10; Acts 1:11; 10:42;
Matt. 13:40–42; Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4

8.5 The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father;¹ and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.²

1. Rom. 5:19; Heb. 9:14, 16; 10:14; Eph. 5:2;
Rom. 3:25–26

2. Dan. 9:24, 26; Col. 1:19–20; Eph. 1:11, 14; John 17:2; Heb. 9:12, 15

8.6 Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof were communicated unto the elect, in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein He was revealed, and signified to be the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world; being yesterday and today the same, and forever.¹

1. Gal. 4:4–5; Gen. 3:15; Rev. 13:8; Heb. 13:8

- 8.7** Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself;¹ yet, by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.²

1. Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 3:18

2. Acts 20:28; John 3:13; 1 John 3:16

- 8.8** To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same;¹ making intercession for them,² and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation;³ effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit;⁴ overcoming all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom, in such manner, and ways, as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.⁵

1. John 6:37, 39; 10:15–16

2. 1 John 2:1–2; Rom. 8:34

3. John 15:13, 15; Eph. 1:7–9; John 17:6

4. John 14:16; Heb. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:13;

Rom. 8:9, 14; 15:18–19; John 17:17

5. Ps. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25–26; Mal. 4:2–3; Col. 2:15

CHAPTER 9

Of Free Will

- 9.1** God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good, or evil.¹

1. Matt. 17:12; James 1:14; Deut. 30:19

- 9.2** Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom, and power to will and to do that which is good and well pleasing to God;¹ but yet, mutably, so that he might fall from it.²

1. Eccl. 7:29; Gen. 1:26

2. Gen. 2:16–17; 3:6

- 9.3** Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation;¹ so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good,² and dead in sin,³ is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.⁴

1. Rom. 5:6; 8:7; John 15:5

2. Rom. 3:10, 12

3. Eph. 2:1, 5 Col. 2:13

4. John 6:44, 65; Eph. 2:2–5; 1 Cor. 2:14; Titus 3:3–5

- 9.4** When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin;¹ and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good;² yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.³

1. Col. 1:13; John 8:34, 36

2. Phil. 2:13; Rom. 6:18, 22

3. Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:15, 18–19, 21, 23

- 9.5** The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only.¹

1. Eph. 4:13; Heb. 12:23; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24

CHAPTER 10

Of Effectual Calling

10.1 All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call,¹ by His Word and Spirit,² out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ;³ enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God,⁴ taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh;⁵ renewing their wills, and, by His almighty power, determining them to that which is good,⁶ and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ:⁷ yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.⁸

1. Rom. 8:30; 11:7; Eph. 1:10–11
2. 2 Thess. 2:13–14; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6
3. Rom. 8:2; Eph. 2:1–5; 2 Tim. 1:9–10
4. Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 2:10, 12; Eph. 1:17–18
5. Ezek. 36:26

6. Ezek. 11:19; Phil. 2:13; Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27
7. Eph. 1:19; John 6:44–45
8. Song 1:4; Ps. 110:3; John 6:37; Rom. 6:16–18

10.2 This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man,¹ who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit,² he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.³

1. 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:4–5; Eph. 2:4–5, 8–9; Rom. 9:11
2. 1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:5

3. John 6:37; Ezek. 36:37; John 5:25

10.3 Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ, through the Spirit,¹ who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth.² So also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.³

1. Luke 18:15–16 Acts 2:38–39; John 3:3, 5;
1 John 5:12; Rom. 8:9

2. John 3:8
3. 1 John 5:12; Acts 4:12

10.4 Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word,¹ and may have some common operations of the Spirit,² yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved:³ much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess.⁴ And, to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested.⁵

1. Matt. 22:14
2. Matt. 7:22; 13:20–21; Heb. 6:4–5
3. John 6:64–66; 8:24

4. Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Eph. 2:12; John 4:22; 17:3
5. 2 John 9–11; 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:6–8

CHAPTER 11

Of Justification

11.1 Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth;¹ not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them,² they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness, by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.³

1. Rom. 8:30; 3:24
2. Rom. 4:5–8; 2 Cor. 5:19, 21; Rom. 3:22, 24–25, 27–28;
Titus 3:5, 7; Eph. 1:7; Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30–31; Rom. 5:17–19

3. Acts 10:44; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9; Acts 13:38–39; Eph. 2:7–8

11.2 Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification;¹ yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.²

1. John 1:12; Rom. 3:28; 5:1

2. James 2:17, 22, 26; Gal. 5:6

11.3 Christ, by His obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to His Father's justice in their behalf.¹ Yet, inasmuch as He was given by the Father for them;² and His obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead;³ and both, freely, not for anything in them; their justification is only of free grace;⁴ that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.⁵

1. Rom. 5:8–10, 19; 1 Tim. 2:5–6;
Heb. 10:10, 14; Dan. 9:24, 26;
2. Rom. 8:32

3. 2 Cor. 5:21; Matt. 3:17; Eph. 5:2
4. Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; Isa. 53:4–6, 10–12
5. Rom. 3:26; Eph. 2:7

11.4 God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect;¹ and Christ did, in the fullness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification.² Nevertheless, they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them.³

1. Gal. 3:8; 1 Pet. 1:2, 19–20; Rom. 8:30
2. Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:6; Rom. 4:25

3. Col. 1:21–22; Gal. 2:16; Titus 3:4–7

11.5 God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified;¹ and, although they can never fall from the state of justification,² yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.³

1. Matt. 6:12; 1 John 1:7, 9; 1 John 2:1–2
2. Luke 22:32; John 10:28; Heb. 10:14

3. Ps. 89:31–33; Ps. 51:7–12; Ps. 32:5;
Matt. 26:75; 1 Cor. 11:30, 32; Luke 1:20

11.6 The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.¹

1. Gal. 3:9, 13–14; Rom. 4:22–24; Heb. 13:8

CHAPTER 12

Of Adoption

12.1 All those that are justified, God vouch safeth, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption;¹ by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God,² have His name put upon them,³ receive the Spirit of adoption,⁴ have access to the throne of grace with boldness,⁵ are enabled to cry, Abba, Father,⁶ are pitied,⁷ protected,⁸ provided for,⁹ and chastened by Him, as by a father;¹⁰ yet never cast off,¹¹ but sealed to the day of redemption;¹² and inherit the promises,¹³ as heirs of everlasting salvation.¹⁴

1. Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:4–5
2. Rom. 8:17; John 1:12
3. Jer. 14:9; 2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 3:12
4. Rom. 8:15
5. Eph. 3:12; Rom. 5:2
6. Gal. 4:6
7. Ps. 103:13

8. Prov. 14:26
9. Matt. 6:30, 32; 1 Pet. 5:7
10. Heb. 12:6
11. Lam. 3:31
12. Eph. 4:30
13. Heb. 6:12
14. 1 Pet. 1:3–4; Heb. 1:14

CHAPTER 13

Of Sanctification

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

1. 1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 20:32; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 6:5–6
2. John 17:17; Eph. 5:26; 2 Thess. 2:13
3. Rom. 6:6, 14

4. Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13
5. Col. 1:11; Eph. 3:16–19
6. 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14

13.2 This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man;¹ yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part;² whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.³

1. 1 Thess. 5:23
2. 1 John 1:10; Rom. 7:18, 23; Phil. 3:12

3. Gal. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:11

13.3 In which war, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail;¹ yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome;² and so, the saints grow in grace,³ perfecting holiness in the fear of God.⁴

1. Rom. 7:23
2. Rom. 6:14; 1 John 5:4; Eph. 4:15–16

3. 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:18
4. 2 Cor. 7:1

CHAPTER 14

Of Saving Faith

14.1 The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls,¹ is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts,² and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word,³ by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.⁴

1. Heb. 10:39
2. 2 Cor. 4:13; Eph. 1:17–19; 2:8

3. Rom. 10:14, 17
4. 1 Pet. 2:2; Acts 20:32; Rom. 4:11; Luke 17:5; Rom. 1:16–17

14.2 By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein;¹ and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands,² trembling at the threatenings,³ and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come.⁴ But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.⁵

1. John 4:42; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 John 5:10; Acts 24:14
2. Rom. 16:26
3. Isa. 66:2

4. Heb. 11:13; 1 Tim. 4:8
5. John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Acts 15:11

14.3 This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong;¹ may be often and many ways assailed, and weakened, but gets the victory;² growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance, through Christ,³ who is both the author and finisher of our faith.⁴

1. Heb. 5:13–14; Rom. 4:19–20; Matt. 6:30; Matt. 8:10
2. Luke 22:31–32; Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:4–5

3. Heb. 6:11–12; Heb. 10:22; Col. 2:2
4. Heb. 12:2

CHAPTER 15

Of Repentance unto Life

15.1 Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace,¹ the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ.²

1. Zech. 12:10; Acts 11:18

2. Luke 24:47; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21

15.2 By it, a sinner, out of the sight and sense not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature, and righteous law of God; and upon the apprehension of His mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for, and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God,¹ purposing and endeavoring to walk with Him in all the ways of His commandments.²

1. Ezek. 18:30–31; 36:31; Isa. 30:22; Ps. 51:4;
Jer. 31:18–19; Joel 2:12–13; Amos 5:15;
Ps. 119:128; 2 Cor. 7:11

2. Ps. 119:6, 59, 106; Luke 1:6; 2 Kings 23:25

15.3 Although repentance be not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof,¹ which is the act of God's free grace in Christ;² yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.³

1. Ezek. 36:31–32; Ezek. 16:61–63
2. Hos. 14:2, 4; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7

3. Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30–31

15.4 As there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation;¹ so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.²

1. Rom. 6:23; Rom. 5:12; Matt. 12:36

2. Isa. 55:7; Rom. 8:1; Isa. 1:16, 18

15.5 Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins, particularly.¹

1. Ps. 19:13; Luke 19:8; 1 Tim. 1:13, 15

15.6 As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof;¹ upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy;² so, he that scandalizeth his brother, or the church of Christ, ought to be willing, by private or public confession, and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended,³ who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him.⁴

1. Ps. 51:4–5, 7, 9, 14; Ps. 32:5–6
2. Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9

3. James 5:16; Luke 17:3–4; Josh. 7:19; Ps. 51
4. 2 Cor. 2:8

CHAPTER 16

Of Good Works

16.1 Good works are only such as God hath commanded in His holy Word,¹ and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or upon any pretense of good intention.²

1. Mic. 6:8; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 13:21

2. Matt. 15:9; Isa. 29:13; 1 Pet. 1:18; Rom. 10:2; John 16:2;
1 Sam. 15:21–23

16.2 These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith:¹ and by them believers manifest their thankfulness,² strengthen their assurance,³ edify their brethren,⁴ adorn the profession of the gospel,⁵ stop the mouths of the adversaries,⁶ and glorify God,⁷ whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto,⁸ that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.⁹

1. James 2:18, 22
2. Ps. 116:12–13; 1 Pet. 2:9
3. 1 John 2:3, 5; 2 Pet. 1:5–10
4. 2 Cor. 9:2; Matt. 5:16
5. Titus 2:5, 9–12; 1 Tim. 6:1

6. 1 Pet. 2:15
7. 1 Pet. 2:12; Phil. 1:11; John 15:8
8. Eph. 2:10
9. Rom. 6:22

16.3 Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ.¹ And that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will, and to do, of His good pleasure:² yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.³

1. John 15:4–6; Ezek. 36:26–27
2. Phil. 2:13; 4:13; 2 Cor. 3:5

3. Phil. 2:12; Heb. 6:11–12; 2 Pet. 1:3, 5, 10–11;
Isa. 64:7; 2 Tim. 1:6; Acts 26:6–7; Jude 20

16.4 They who, in their obedience, attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do.¹

1. Luke 17:10; Neh. 13:22; Job 9:2–3; Gal. 5:17

16.5 We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin, or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come; and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom, by them, we can neither profit, nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins,¹ but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants;² and because, as they are good, they proceed from the Spirit;³ and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled, and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment.⁴

1. Rom. 3:20; Rom. 4:2, 4, 6; Eph. 2:8–9; Titus 3:5–7;
Rom. 8:18; Ps. 16:2; Job 22:2–3; 35:7–8
2. Luke 17:10

3. Gal. 5:22
4. Isa. 64:6; Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:15, 18; Ps. 143:2; Ps. 130:3

16.6 Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in Him;¹ not as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unreprovable in God's sight;² but that He, looking upon them in His Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.³

1. Eph. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:5; Ex. 28:38; Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4
2. Job 9:20; Ps. 143:2

3. Heb. 13:20–21; 2 Cor. 8:12; Heb. 6:10; Matt. 25:21, 23

16.7 Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands; and of good use both to themselves and others;¹ yet, because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith;² nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word;³ nor to a right end, the glory of God,⁴ they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God.⁵ And yet, their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God.⁶

1. 2 Kings 10:30–31; 1 Kings 21:27, 29; Phil. 1:15–16, 18
2. Gen. 4:5; Heb. 11:4, 6
3. 1 Cor. 13:3; Isa. 1:12

4. Matt. 6:2, 5, 16
5. Hag. 2:14; Titus 1:15; Amos 5:21–22; Hos. 1:4; Rom. 9:16; Titus 3:15
6. Ps. 14:4; 36:3; Job 21:14–15; Matt. 25:41–43, 45; Matt. 23:23

CHAPTER 17

Of the Perseverance of the Saints

17.1 They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.¹

1. Phil. 1:6; 2 Pet. 1:10; John 10:28–29; 1 John 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:5, 9

17.2 This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father;¹ upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ,² the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them,³ and the nature of the covenant of grace;⁴ from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.⁵

1. 2 Tim. 2:18–19; Jer. 31:3

2. Heb. 10:10, 14, 20–21; Heb. 9:12–15; Rom. 8:33–39;
John 17:11, 24; Luke 22:32; Heb. 7:25

3. John 14:16–17; 1 John 2:27; 1 John 3:9

4. Jer. 32:40

5. John 10:28; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 John 2:19

17.3 Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins;¹ and, for a time, continue therein;² whereby they incur God's displeasure,³ and grieve His Holy Spirit,⁴ come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts,⁵ have their hearts hardened,⁶ and their consciences wounded;⁷ hurt and scandalize others,⁸ and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.⁹

1. Matt. 26:70, 72, 74

2. Ps. 51 (the title); 51:14

3. Isa. 64:5, 7, 9; 2 Sam. 11:27

4. Eph. 4:3–9. Ps. 8

5. Ps. 51:8, 10, 12; Rev. 2:4; Song 5:2–4, 6

6. Isa. 63:17; Mark 6:52; 16:14

7. Ps. 32:3–4; 51:8

8. 2 Sam. 12:14

9. Ps. 89:31–32; 1 Cor. 11:32

CHAPTER 18

Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

18.1 Although hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God, and estate of salvation;¹ which hope of theirs shall perish;² yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace,³ and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.⁴

1. Job 8:13–14; Mic. 3:11; Deut. 29:19; John 8:41

2. Matt. 7:22–23

3. 1 John 2:3; 3:14, 18–19, 21, 24; 1 John 5:13

4. Rom. 5:2, 5

18.2 This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope;¹ but an infallible assurance of faith founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation,² the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made,³ the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God,⁴ which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.⁵

1. Heb. 6:11, 19

2. Heb. 6:17–18

3. 2 Pet. 1:4–5, 10–11; 1 John 2:3; 3:14; 2 Cor. 1:12

4. Rom. 8:15–16

5. Eph. 1:13–14; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:21–22

18.3 This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it;¹ yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto.² And therefore it is the duty of everyone to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure,³ that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience,⁴ the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness.⁵

1. 1 John 5:13; Isa. 1:10; Mark 9:24; Ps. 88; 77:1–12
2. 1 Cor. 2:12; 1 John 4:13; Heb. 6:11–12; Eph. 3:17–19
3. 2 Pet. 1:10

4. Rom. 5:1–2, 5; 14:17; 15:13; Eph. 1:3–4; Ps. 4:6–7; 119:32
5. 1 John 2:1–2; Rom. 6:1–2; Titus 2:11–12, 14; 2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 8:1, 12;
1 John 3:2–3; Ps. 130:4; 1 John 1:6–7

18.4 True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light:¹ yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart, and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may, in due time, be revived;² and by the which, in the meantime, they are supported from utter despair.³

1. Song 5:2–3, 6; Ps. 51:8, 12, 14;
Eph. 4:30–31; Ps. 77:1–10; Matt. 26:69–72;
Ps. 31:22; Ps. 88; Isa. 50:10

2. 1 John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Job 13:15;
Ps. 73:15; Ps. 51:8, 12; Isa. 50:10
3. Mic. 7:7–9; Jer. 32:40; Isa. 54:7–10; Ps. 22:1; Ps. 88

CHAPTER 19

Of the Law of God

19.1 God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.¹

1. Gen. 1:26–27; 2:17; Rom. 2:14–15; 10:5; 5:12, 19; Gal. 3:10, 12; Eccl. 7:29; Job 28:28

19.2 This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables:¹ the first four commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six, our duty to man.²

1. James 1:25; 2:8, 10–12; Rom. 13:8–9; Deut. 5:32; 10:4; Ex. 24:1 2. Matt. 22:37–40

19.3 Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits;¹ and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties.² All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the New Testament.³

1. Heb. 9; 10:1; Gal. 4:1–3; Col. 2:17
2. 1 Cor. 5:7; 2 Cor. 6:17; Jude 23

3. Col. 2:14, 16–17; Dan. 9:27; Eph. 2:15

19.4 To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.¹

1. Ex. 21–22; Gen. 49:10; 1 Pet. 2:13, 14; Matt. 5:17, 38–39; 1 Cor. 9:8–10

19.5 The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof;¹ and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it.² Neither doth Christ, in the gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.³

1. Rom. 13:8–10; Eph. 6:2; 1 John 2:3–4, 7–8
2. James 2:10–11

3. Matt. 5:17–19; James 2:8; Rom. 3:31

19.6 Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned;¹ yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly;² discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives;³ so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin,⁴ together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of His obedience.⁵ It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin;⁶ and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve; and what afflictions, in this life, they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law.⁷ The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof,⁸ although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works.⁹ So as, a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law; and, not under grace.¹⁰

1. Rom. 6:14; Gal. 2:16; 3:13; 4:4–5;
Acts 13:39; Rom. 8:1
2. Rom. 7:12, 22, 25; Ps. 119:4–6;
1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:14, 16, 18–23
3. Rom. 7:7; Rom. 3:20
4. James 1:23–25; Rom. 7:9, 14, 24

5. Gal. 3:24; Rom. 7:24–25; 8:3–4
6. James 2:11; Ps. 119:101, 104, 128
7. Ezra 9:13–14; Ps. 89:30–34
8. Lev. 26; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 6:2–3; Ps. 37:11; Matt. 5:5; Ps. 19:11
9. Gal. 2:16; Luke 17:10
10. Rom. 6:12, 14; 1 Pet. 3:8–12; Ps. 34:12–16; Heb. 12:28

19.7 Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it;¹ the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.²

1. Gal. 3:21

2. Ezek. 36:27; Heb. 8:10; Jer. 31:33

CHAPTER 20

Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

20.1 The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law;¹ and, in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin;² from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation;³ as also, in their free access to God,⁴ and their yielding obedience unto Him, not out of slavish fear, but a childlike love and willing mind.⁵ All which were common also to believers under the law.⁶ But, under the New Testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected;⁷ and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace,⁸ and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.⁹

1. Titus 2:14; 1 Thess. 1:10; Gal. 3:13
2. Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18; Rom. 6:14
3. Rom. 8:28; Ps. 119:71; 1 Cor. 15:54–57; Rom. 8:1
4. Rom. 5:1–2 9. John 7:38–3
5. Rom. 8:14–15; 1 John 4:18

6. Gal. 3:9, 14
7. Gal. 4:1–3, 6–7; 5:1; Acts 15:10–11
8. Heb. 4:14, 16; 10:19–22
9. 2 Cor. 3:13, 17–18

20.2 God alone is Lord of the conscience,¹ and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to His Word; or beside it, in matters of faith, or worship.² So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience;³ and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.⁴

1. James 4:12; Rom. 14:4

2. Acts 4:19; 5:29; 1 Cor. 7:23; Matt. 23:8–10;
2 Cor. 1:24; Matt. 15:9

3. Col. 2:20, 22–23; Gal. 1:10; 2:4–5; 5:1

4. Rom. 10:17; 14:23; Isa. 8:20; Acts 17:11; John 4:22; Hos. 5:11;
Rev. 13:12, 16–17; Jer. 8:9

20.3 They who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.¹

1. Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:16; 2 Pet. 2:19; John 8:34; Luke 1:74–75

20.4 And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another, they who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God.¹ And, for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity (whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation), or to the power of godliness; or, such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church, they may lawfully be called to account,² and proceeded against, by the censures of the church.³

1. Matt. 12:25; 1 Pet. 2:13–14, 16; Rom. 13:1–8;
Heb. 13:17

2. Rom. 1:32; 1 Cor. 5:1, 5, 11, 13; 2 John 10–11;
2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Tim. 6:3–5; Titus 1:10–11, 13;
Titus 3:10; Matt. 18:15–17; 1 Tim. 1:19–20;
Rev. 2:2, 14–15, 20; 3:9

3. Deut. 13:6–11; Rom. 13:3–4; 2 John 10–11; Ezra 7:23, 25–28;

Rev. 17:12, 16–17; Neh. 13:15, 17, 21–22, 25, 30;
2 Kings 23:5–6, 9, 20–21; 2 Chron. 34:33; 15:12–13, 16; Dan. 3:29;
1 Tim. 2:2; Isa. 49:23; Zech. 13:2–3

CHAPTER 21

Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

21.1 The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doeth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might.¹ But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.²

1. Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:24; Ps. 119:68;
Jer. 10:7; Ps. 31:23; 18:3; Rom. 10:12; Ps. 62:8;
Josh. 24:14; Mark 12:33

2. Deut. 12:32; Matt. 15:9; Acts 17:25;
Matt. 4:9–10; Deut. 15:19; Ex. 20:4–6

21.2 Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to Him alone;¹ not to angels, saints, or any other creature;² and, since the fall, not without a mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.³

1. Matt. 4:10; John 5:23; 2 Cor. 13:14
2. Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10; Rom. 1:25; Col. 3:17

3. John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 2:18;

21.3 Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship,¹ is by God required of all men;² and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son,³ by the help of His Spirit,⁴ according to His will,⁵ with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance,⁶ and, if vocal, in a known tongue.⁷

1. Phil. 4:6

2. Ps. 65:2

3. John 14:13–14; 1 Pet. 2:5

4. Rom. 8:26

5. 1 John 5:14

6. Ps. 47:7; Eccl. 5:1–2; Heb. 12:28; Gen. 18:27;

James 5:16; 1:6–7; Mark 11:24; Matt. 6:12, 14–15;

Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18

7. 1 Cor. 14:14

21.4 Prayer is to be made for things lawful;¹ and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter;² but not for the dead,³ nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.⁴

1. 1 John 5:14

2. 1 Tim. 2:1–2; John 17:20; 2 Sam. 7:29; Ruth 4:12

3. 2 Sam. 12:21–23; Luke 16:25–26; Rev. 14:13

4. 1 John 5:16

21.5 The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear,¹ the sound preaching² and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, and reverence,³ singing of psalms with grace in the heart;⁴ as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ, are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God:⁵ besides religious oaths⁶ and vows,⁷ solemn fastings,⁸ and thanksgivings upon special occasions,⁹ which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner.¹⁰

1. Acts 15:21; Rev. 1:3

2. 2 Tim. 4:2

3. James 1:22; Acts 10:33; Matt. 13:19; Heb. 4:2; Isa. 66:2

4. Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; James 5:13

5. Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23–28; Acts 2:42

6. Deut. 6:13; Neh. 10:29

7. Isa. 19:21; Eccl. 5:4–5

8. Joel 2:12; Est. 4:16; Matt. 9:15; 1 Cor. 7:5

9. Ps. 107; Est. 9:22

10. Heb. 12:28

21.6 Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now, under the gospel, either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed;¹ but God is to be worshiped everywhere,² in spirit and in truth;³ as, in private families⁴ daily,⁵ and in secret, each one by himself;⁶ so, more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by His Word or providence, calleth thereunto.⁷

1. John 4:21

2. Mal. 1:11; 1 Tim. 2:8

3. John 4:23–24

4. Jer. 10:25; Deut. 6:6–7; Job 1:5;

2 Sam. 6:18, 20; 1 Pet. 3:7; Acts 10:2

5. Matt. 6:11

6. Matt. 6:6; Eph. 6:18

7. Isa. 56:6–7; Heb. 10:25; Prov. 1:20–21, 24; 8:34; Acts 13:42;

Luke 4:16; Acts 2:42

21.7 As it is of the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him;¹ which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week;² and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day,³ and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.⁴

1. Ex. 20:8, 10–11; Isa. 56:2, 4, 6–7

2. Gen. 2:2–3; 1 Cor. 16:1–2; Acts 20:7

3. Rev. 1:10

4. Ex. 20:8, 10; Matt. 5:17–18

21.8 This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations,¹ but also are taken up, the whole time, in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.²

1. Ex. 20:8; Ex. 16:23, 25–26, 29–30; 31:15–17;
Isa. 58:13; Neh. 13:15–19, 21–22

2. Isa. 58:13

CHAPTER 22

Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

22.1 A lawful oath is a part of religious worship,¹ wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth, or promiseth, and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth.²

1. Deut. 10:20

2. Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; 2 Cor. 1:23; 2 Chron. 6:22–23

22.2 The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence.¹ Therefore, to swear vainly, or rashly, by that glorious and dreadful name; or, to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred.² Yet, as in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the Word of God, under the New Testament as well as under the Old;³ so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters, ought to be taken.⁴

1. Deut. 6:13

3. Heb. 6:16; 2 Cor. 1:2; Isa. 65:16

2. Ex. 20:7; Jer. 5:7; Matt. 5:34, 37; James 5:12

4. 1 Kings 8:31; Neh. 13:25; Ezra 10:5

22.3 Whosoever taketh an oath ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth.¹ Neither may any man bind himself by oath to anything but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform.² Yet it is a sin to refuse an oath touching anything that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority.³

1. Ex. 20:7; Jer. 4:2

3. Num. 5:19, 21; Neh. 5:12; Ex. 22:7–11

2. Gen. 24:2–3, 5–6, 8–9

22.4 An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation, or mental reservation.¹ It cannot oblige to sin; but in anything not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt.² Nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics, or infidels.³

1. Jer. 4:2; Ps. 24:4

3. Ezek. 17:16, 18–19; Josh. 9:18–19; 2 Sam. 21:1

2. 1 Sam. 25:22, 32–34; Ps. 15:4

22.5 A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.¹

1. Isa. 19:21; Eccl. 5:4–6; Ps. 61:8; 66:13–14

22.6 It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone;¹ and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith, and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for the obtaining of what we want, whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties; or, to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.²

1. Ps. 76:11; Jer. 44:25–26

2. Deut. 23:21–23; Ps. 50:14; Gen. 28:20–22; 1 Sam. 1:11;

Ps. 66:13–14; 132:2–5

22.7 No man may vow to do anything forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his own power, and for the performance whereof he hath no promise of ability from God.¹ In which respects, popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.²

1. Acts 23:12, 14; Mark 6:26; Num. 30:5, 8, 12–13

2. Matt. 19:11–12; 1 Cor. 7:2, 9; Eph. 4:28; 1 Pet. 4:2; 1 Cor. 7:23

CHAPTER 23

Of the Civil Magistrate

23.1 God, the supreme Lord and king of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates, to be, under Him, over the people, for His own glory, and the public good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evildoers.¹

1. Rom. 13:1–4; 1 Pet. 2:13–14

23.2 It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto:¹ in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth;² so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasions.³

1. Prov. 8:15–16; Rom. 13:1–2, 4

2. Ps. 2:10, 12; 1 Tim. 2:2; Ps. 82:3–4;
2 Sam. 23:3; 1 Pet. 2:13

3. Luke 3:14; Rom. 13:4; Matt. 8:9–10;
Acts 10:1–2; Rev. 17:14, 16

23.3 Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments;¹ or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven;² or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith.³ As Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in His church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief.⁴

1. 2 Chron. 26:18
2. Matt. 16:19

3. John 18:36
4. Ps. 105:15

23.4 It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates,¹ to honor their persons,² to pay them tribute and other dues,³ to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience's sake.⁴ Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him:⁵ from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted,⁶ much less hath the pope any power and jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and, least of all, to deprive them of their dominions, or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretense whatsoever.⁷

1. 1 Tim. 2:1–2

2. 1 Pet. 2:17

3. Rom. 13:6–7

4. Rom. 13:5; Titus 3:1

5. 1 Pet. 2:13–14, 16

6. Rom. 13:1; 1 Kings 2:35; Acts 25:9–11; 2 Pet. 2:1, 10–11; Jude 8–11

7. 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:15–17

CHAPTER 24

Of Marriage and Divorce

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

1. Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5–6; Prov. 2:17

Additional Statement on 24.1

The Free Presbyterian Church of North America reaffirms its adherence to the biblical definition of

marriage expressed in WCF 24.1, and opposes any alternative definition of marriage¹. The FPCNA further asserts marriage to be an institution of God and beyond redefinition by any civil authority in keeping with separation of church and state.

1. Gen. 1:27-28; Gen. 2:24; Prov. 2:17; Matt. 19:5-6; Rom. 1:26-27

24.2 Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife,¹ for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed;² and for preventing of uncleanness.³

1. Gen. 2:18
2. Mal. 2:15

3. 1 Cor. 7:2, 9

24.3 It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent.¹ Yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord.² And therefore such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies.³

1. Heb. 13:4; 1 Tim. 4:3; 1 Cor. 7:36-38; Gen. 24:57
2. 1 Cor. 7:39

3. Gen. 34:14; Ex. 34:16; Deut. 7:3-4;
1 Kings 11:4; Neh. 13:25-27; Mal. 2:11-12; 2 Cor. 6:14

24.4 Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden by the Word.¹ Nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife.² The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own.³

1. Lev. 18; 1 Cor. 5:1; Amos 2:7
2. Mark 6:18; Lev. 18:24-28

3. Lev. 20:19-21

24.5 Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract.¹ In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce,² and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.³

1. Matt. 1:18-20
2. Matt. 5:31-32

3. Matt. 19:9; Rom. 7:2-3

24.6 Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet, nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the church, or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage:¹ wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills, and discretion, in their own case.²

1. Matt. 19:8-9; 1 Cor. 7:15; Matt. 19:6

2. Deut. 24:1-4

CHAPTER 25

Of the Church

25.1 The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.¹

1. Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 5:23, 27, 32; Col. 1:18

25.2 The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion;¹ together with their children;² and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ,³ the house and family of God,⁴ out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.⁵

1. 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Cor. 12:12–13; Ps. 2:8;

Rev. 7:9; Rom. 15:9–12

2. 1 Cor. 7:14; Acts 2:39; Ezek. 16:20–21; Rom. 11:16;

Gen. 3:15; 17:7

3. Matt. 13:47; Isa. 9:7

4. Eph. 2:19; 3:15

5. Acts 2:47

25.3 Unto this catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world; and doth, by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.¹

1. 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11–13; Matt. 28:19–20; Isa. 59:21

25.4 This catholic church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible.¹ And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.²

1. Rom. 11:3–4; Rev. 12:6, 14

2. Rev. 2–3; 1 Cor. 5:6–7

25.5 The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error;¹ and some have so degenerated, as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan.² Nevertheless, there shall be always a church on earth, to worship God according to His will.³

1. 1 Cor. 13:12; Matt. 13:24–30, 47

2. Rev. 18:2; Rom. 11:18–22

3. Matt. 16:18; Ps. 72:17; 102:28; Matt. 28:19–20

25.6 There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ.¹ Nor can the pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God.²

1. Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22

2. Matt. 23:8–10; 2 Thess. 2:3–4, 8–9; Rev. 13:6

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT ON 25.6

United in the belief that the pope of Rome is not “in any sense head [of the church]; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ,” the church leaves open to conscience the question of whether there may be an additional personage who may fulfill the prophecies of 2 Thessalonians 2, Revelation 13 and 17, and Daniel 7, 8, 9, and 11. The church accepts as within the pale of Christian orthodoxy both those who believe that the pope or the papacy is the final antichrist and those who believe that while the pope and the papacy are properly described as antichrist “in the church,” there will be a secular antichrist in the last days immediately prior to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER 25

It is the duty of particular churches to maintain the highest possible standards of purity of doctrine and practice.¹ To be faithful to Christ, they are called to separate themselves unto Him from all fellowship or cooperation in worship or service with churches or other organizations or individuals that have degenerated into apostasy by denying or by maintaining fellowship with those who deny any of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith;² or by adopting the moral relativity of the world in defiance of the ethical standards of the Scriptures of truth.³ They are further called to separate from brethren who maintain fellowship with those who deny the faith⁴ to repudiate all false ecumenism, and to refuse to compromise any essential truth of the gospel in an effort to achieve visible church union with degenerate

churches.⁵ They must also humbly maintain Scriptural standards of holiness among their members and officers, not being conformed to the standards of the world but purposing to live by the faith of the gospel in obedience to God's holy law.⁶

Because the Lord Jesus Christ saves His people from their sins and commands them to adorn the doctrine of God by holy living,⁷ the church believes that its members should embrace standards of personal separation from the worldliness of the present evil age.⁸ Particularly, in light of the scourge that the use of drugs and consumption of alcoholic beverages causes to individuals, families, and society, the church requires its members to express part of their separation unto God by their total abstinence from all social, recreational, or non-medicinal use of drugs and beverage alcohol.⁹

See also Westminster Confession of Faith, 20.3

1. Ps. 93:5; 96:9

2. Eph. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14–18; 1 Tim. 6:3–5

3. Matt. 5:17–20; Heb. 10:16

4. 2 Thess. 3:6, 14–15; Rom. 16:17

5. Prov. 23:23; Amos 3:3; 2 John 9–11

6. Rom. 12:1–3; 1 Pet. 1:15–16; Eph. 4:22–24; 5:1–11; 1 John 2:15–16

7. Matt. 1:21; Titus 2:10

8. Rom. 12:2; 1 John 2:15

9. 1 Cor. 6:19–20; Rom. 14:7, 15–17, 21; 1 Cor. 8:11–13; 10:31–33

CHAPTER 26

Of the Communion of Saints

26.1 All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their head, by His Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with Him in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory.¹ And, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces,² and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.³

1. 1 John 1:3; Eph. 3:16–19; John 1:16; Eph. 2:5–6;

Phil. 3:10; Rom. 6:5–6;

2. Eph. 4:15–16; 1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Cor. 3:21–23; Col. 2:19

3. 1 Thess. 5:11, 14; Rom. 1:11–12, 14;

1 John 3:16–18; Gal. 6:10 2 Tim. 2:12

26.2 Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification;¹ as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.²

1. Heb. 10:24–25; Acts 2:42, 46; Isa. 2:3; 1 Cor. 11:20

2. Acts 2:44–45; 1 John 3:17; 2 Cor. 8–9; Acts 11:29–30

26.3 This communion which the saints have with Christ, doth not make them in anywise partakers of the substance of His Godhead; or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm is impious and blasphemous.¹ Nor doth their communion one with another, as saints, take away, or infringe the title or property which each man hath in his goods and possessions.²

1. Col. 1:18–19; 1 Cor. 8:6; Isa. 42:8;

1 Tim. 6:15–16; Ps. 45:7; Heb. 1:8–9

2. Ex. 20:15; Eph. 4:28; Acts 5:4

CHAPTER 27

Of the Sacraments

27.1 Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace,¹ immediately instituted by God,² to represent Christ, and His benefits; and to confirm our interest in Him;³ as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world;⁴ and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word.⁵

1. Rom. 4:11; Gen. 17:7, 10

2. Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23

3. 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:25–26; Gal. 3:27; 3:17

4. Rom. 15:8; Ex. 12:48; Gen. 34:14

5. Rom. 6:3–4; 1 Cor. 10:16, 21

27.2 There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.¹

1. Gen. 17:10; Matt. 26:27–28; Titus 3:5

27.3 The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it:¹ but upon the work of the Spirit,² and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.³

1. Rom. 2:28–29; 1 Pet. 3:21

2. Matt. 3:11; 1 Cor. 12:13

3. Matt. 26:27–28; Matt. 28:19–20

27.4 There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel; that is to say, baptism, and the Supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any, but by a minister of the Word lawfully ordained.¹

1. Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:20, 23; 1 Cor. 4:1; Heb. 5:4

27.5 The sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the new.¹

1. 1 Cor. 10:1–4

CHAPTER 28

Of Baptism

28.1 Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ,¹ not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church;² but also, to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace,³ of his ingrafting into Christ,⁴ of regeneration,⁵ of remission of sins,⁶ and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.⁷ Which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in His church until the end of the world.⁸

1. Matt. 28:19

2. 1 Cor. 12:13

3. Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11–12

4. Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:5

5. Titus 3:5

6. Mark 1:4

7. Rom. 6:3–4

8. Matt. 28:19–20

28.2 The outward element to be used in this sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel, lawfully called thereunto.¹

1. Matt. 3:11; John 1:33; Matt. 28:19–20

28.3 Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person.¹

1. Heb. 9:10, 19–22; Acts 2:41; 16:33; Mark 7:4

28.4 Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ,¹ but also the infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.²

1. Mark 16:15–16; Acts 8:37–38

2. Gen. 17:7, 9; Gal. 3:9, 14; Col. 2:11–12; Acts 2:38–39; Rom. 4:11–12; 1 Cor. 7:14; Matt. 28:19; Mark 10:13–16; Luke 18:15–16

28.5 Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance,¹ yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated,² or saved, without it; or, that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.³

1. Luke 7:30; Ex. 4:24–26

3. Acts 8:13, 23

2. Rom. 4:11; Acts 10:2, 4, 22, 31, 45, 47

28.6 The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered;¹ yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited, and conferred, by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in His appointed time.²

1. John 3:5, 8

2. Gal. 3:27; Titus 3:5; Eph. 5:25–26; Acts 2:38, 41

28.7 The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person.¹

1. Titus 3:5

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT ON 28.3–4

We recognize that “the visible church...consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children” (WCF 25.2) and that therefore the children of believing parents stand in a special covenant relationship to God. This recognition gives us confidence in our ministry of the Word to these children and in our intercession on their behalf, for we expect God to fulfill His promise to bring them to saving faith in Christ.

However, though the children of believers are thus identified with the visible church, we do not receive them into communicant membership of the local church until they make a personal credible profession of saving faith in Christ. This policy accords with two distinct views on whether the children of believers are proper subjects of Christian baptism, and we embrace both views within our fellowship.

We admit into our fellowship those who believe that covenant infants should receive baptism, the sign and seal of God's covenant with His people—defining an infant as a person who has not matured to the point of being able to respond to the obligations of the gospel call in repentance and faith.

We equally admit into our fellowship those who believe that the sacrament of baptism, no less than the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, should be administered only to those who have come to a personal credible profession of saving faith in Christ. And while “dipping the person into the water is not necessary” (WCF 28.3) to a valid administration of the sacrament, we recognize that it is a legitimate mode of baptism.

In dealing with this subject that has long caused bitter divisions among God's people, we pledge ourselves to hold our views with a loving tolerance and respect for differing brethren, all of us being united in repudiating the error of baptismal regeneration.

We hold that the baptism of professedly Christian bodies that have so degenerated from the gospel as to be no longer true churches of Christ (WCF 25.5) is not Christian baptism and is therefore not valid. Included in such bodies are the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and all cults and sects that fail to hold to the central truths of the Christian revelation. By “the central truths of the Christian revelation” we mean the doctrines of the Trinity, the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, and justification by grace alone through faith alone in the merits of Christ alone.

We will seek to instruct converts formerly baptized in bodies that are not true churches of Christ regarding the message and importance of biblical baptism and baptize them according to the commandment of Christ (Matthew 28:19–20). Such baptism is not rebaptism but an initial valid Christian baptism.

CHAPTER 29

Of the Lord's Supper

29.1 Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein He was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of His body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in His church, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death; the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him; and, to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His mystical body.¹

1. 1 Cor. 11:23–26; 10:16–17, 21; 12:13

29.2 In this sacrament, Christ is not offered up to His Father; nor any real sacrifice made at all, for remission of sins of the quick or dead;¹ but only a commemoration of that one offering up of Himself, by Himself, upon the cross, once for all: and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God, for the same:² so that the popish sacrifice of the mass (as they call it) is most abominably injurious to Christ's one, only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.³

1. Heb. 9:22, 25–26, 28

2. 1 Cor. 11:24–26; Matt. 26:26–27

3. Heb. 7:23–24, 27; 10:11–12, 14, 18

29.3 The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to declare His word of institution to the people; to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants;¹ but to none who are not then present in the congregation.²

1. Matt. 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24;
Luke 22:19–20; 1 Cor. 11:23–26

2. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20

29.4 Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone;¹ as likewise, the denial of the cup to the people,² worshiping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about, for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use; are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.³

1. 1 Cor. 10:6

2. Mark 14:23; 1 Cor. 11:25–29

3. Matt. 15:9

29.5 The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him crucified, as that, truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ;¹ albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.²

1. Matt. 26:26–28

2. 1 Cor. 11:26–28; Matt. 26:29

29.6 That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense, and reason; overthroweth the nature of the sacrament, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions; yea, of gross idolatries.¹

1. Acts 3:21; 1 Cor. 11:24–26; Luke 24:6, 39

29.7 Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements, in this sacrament,¹ do then also, inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally but spiritually, receive, and feed upon, Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then, not corporally or carnally, in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet, as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.²

1. 1 Cor. 11:28

2. 1 Cor. 10:16

29.8 Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament; yet, they receive not the thing signified thereby; but, by their unworthy coming thereunto, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation. Wherefore, all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's Table; and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries,¹ or be admitted thereunto.²

1. 1 Cor. 11:27–29; 2 Cor. 6:14–16

2. 1 Cor. 5:6–7, 13; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14–15; Matt. 7:6

CHAPTER 30

Of Church Censures

30.1 The Lord Jesus, as king and head of His church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.¹

1. Isa. 9:6–7; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12; Acts 20:17–18; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; 1 Cor. 12:28; Matt. 28:18–20

30.2 To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed; by virtue whereof, they have power, respectively, to retain, and remit sins; to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the Word, and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel; and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require.¹

1. Matt. 16:19; 18:17–18; John 20:21–23; 2 Cor. 2:6–8

30.3 Church censures are necessary, for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from the like offenses, for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump, for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel, and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer His covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.¹

1. 1 Cor. 5; 1 Tim. 5:20; Matt. 7:6; 1 Tim. 1:20; 1 Cor. 11:27–34; Jude 23

30.4 For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the church are to proceed by admonition; suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season; and by excommunication from the church; according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person.¹

1. 1 Thess. 5:12; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14–15; 1 Cor. 5:4–5, 13; Matt. 18:17

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT ON 30.4

In seeking to maintain church discipline “according to the nature of the crime, and the demerit of the person,” the church believes that certain attitudes or actions may necessitate a session's permanent removal of a person from church membership without attaching to him the judgment of excommunication. It views excommunication as the solemn judgment of a church court that a person who has professed faith in Christ and has gained membership in the church is no longer to be regarded as a member of the body of Christ on earth. It believes that under certain circumstances a person may be removed from a church's membership without incurring such a judgment. It therefore extends the list of possible church censures to include dismissal and erasure.

CHAPTER 31

Of Synods and Councils

31.1 For the better government, and further edification of the church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called synods or councils;¹ and it belongeth to the overseers and other rulers of the particular churches, by virtue of their office, and the power which Christ hath given them for edification and not for destruction, to appoint such assemblies;² and to convene together in them, as often as they shall judge it expedient for the good of the church.³

1. Acts 15:2, 4, 6
2. Acts 15

3. Acts 15:22–23, 25

31.2 It belongeth to synods and councils, ministerially to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of His church; to receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in His Word.¹

1. Acts 15:13, 19, 24, 27–31; 16:4; Matt. 18:17–20

31.3 All synods or councils, since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err; and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith, or practice; but to be used as a help in both.¹

1. Eph. 2:20; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 2:5; 2 Cor. 1:24

31.4 Synods and councils are to handle, or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or, by way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto requested by the civil magistrate.¹

1. Luke 12:13–14; John 18:36

CHAPTER 32

Of the State of Men after Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead

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

1. Gen. 3:19; Acts 13:36
2. Luke 23:43; Eccl. 12:7

3. Heb. 12:23; 2 Cor. 5:1, 6, 8; Phil. 1:23; Acts 3:21; Eph. 4:10
4. Luke 16:23–24; Acts 1:25; Jude 6–7; 1 Pet. 3:19

32.2 At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed:¹ and all the dead shall be raised up, with the selfsame bodies, and none other (although with different qualities), which shall be united again to their souls forever.²

1. 1 Thess. 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:51–52

2. Job 19:26–27; 1 Cor. 15:42–44

32.3 The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor: the bodies of the just, by His Spirit, unto honor; and be made conformable to His own glorious body.¹

1. Acts 24:15; John 5:28–29; 1 Cor. 15:43; Phil. 3:21

CHAPTER 33

Of the Last Judgment

33.1 God hath appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world, in righteousness, by Jesus Christ,¹ to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father.² In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged,³ but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.⁴

1. Acts 17:31
2. John 5:27

3. 1 Cor. 6:3; Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4
4. 2 Cor. 5:10; Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 2:16; 14:10, 12; Matt. 12:36–37

33.2 The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of His justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord; but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.¹

1. Matt. 25:31–46; Rom. 2:5–6; 9:22–23; Matt. 5:21; Acts 3:19; 2 Thess. 1:7–10

33.3 As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin; and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity:¹ so will He have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen.²

1. 2 Pet. 3:11, 14; 2 Cor. 5:10–11;
2 Thess. 1:5–7; Luke 21:7, 28; Rom. 8:23–25

2. Matt. 24:36, 42–44; Mark 13:35–37;
Luke 12:35–36; Rev. 22:20

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT ON 32.2 AND 33.1–3

We do not interpret these sections of the Confession as restricting orthodox views of eschatology to amillennial or historic post-or pre-millennial interpretations of Scripture. We hold that each of these schools of interpretation falls within the scope of historic orthodoxy and may therefore be believed and taught within the confessional unity and fellowship of the church.

CHAPTER 34

Of the Holy Spirit

34.1 The Holy Spirit is the third person in the holy Trinity¹ eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son,² of the same substance and eternity with them, equal in perfection, power, and glory.³

1. Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14
2. John 15:26

3. 2 Cor. 3:17; Acts 5:3, 4; Heb. 9:14;
Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Matt. 12:31, 32

34.2 He is therefore truly and essentially God, uncreated and self-existent, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His possession of all the attributes of deity.¹

1. Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

34.3 He is a divine person, not a mere influence or emanation, and is hypostatically distinct from the Father and the Son and that by eternal necessity.¹

1. John 15:26–27; 16:7; Acts 13:2 (“speaks”); 1 Cor. 2:10–11 (“searches” and “knows”); Matt. 28:19 (God’s “name” is the revelation of His nature)

34.4 He is the efficient agent in the following spheres: creation;¹ the inspiration of Scripture;² redemption, with special emphasis on His working in the birth,³ infilling,⁴ ministry, miracles,⁵ death,⁶ and resurrection of Christ;⁷ the application of redemption including conviction of sin,⁸ regeneration or the new birth,⁹ the incorporation of believers into Christ,¹⁰ the indwelling of believers,¹¹ the assurance of believers of their adoption as God’s children¹² and of their entrance into heaven,¹³ and the sanctification of believers,¹⁴ comforting them¹⁵ and enabling them to pray to their heavenly Father.¹⁶

1. Gen. 1:2
2. 2 Tim. 3:16 with 2 Pet. 1:10–12, 21
3. Luke 1:35
4. Luke 4:1; John 3:34
5. Luke 4:14, 18–21
6. Heb. 9:14
7. Rom. 8:11; 1 Pet. 3:18
8. John 16:8–11
9. John 6:63

10. 1 Cor. 12:13
11. John 14:17; Rom. 8:9
12. Rom. 8:16
13. Eph. 1:13–14
14. Rom. 8:10–15; Gal. 5:22–23
15. John 14:16
16. Rom. 8:15, 26

34.5 The Holy Spirit’s supreme work on earth is to reveal and to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ;¹ His peculiar and perpetual ministry is to lead believers to see what God has graciously provided for them in Christ, expounding to them the glories of the gospel.²

1. John 16:14

2. 1 Cor. 2:12

34.6 The Holy Spirit is the sole fountain of truth in the earth and therefore is the author of those works of divine kindness usually designated as “common grace,” that is, all the goodness of God to a sin-cursed and undeserving world, falling short of salvation.¹ He is the source of all the relative virtues of unregenerate men that benefit human society;² He restrains the bursting forth of human depravity in all the viciousness and violence naturally inherent in it;³ He holds back the wrath of God against an ungodly world⁴ and mitigates the calamitous evils that have come upon the world as the result of Adam’s fall.⁵

1. Heb. 6:4–9; 10:26–29; 2 Pet. 2:1

2. Isa. 63:10–14 with Heb. 4:2

3. 2 Thess. 2:6–7 with Gen. 20:6

4. Gen. 6:3; 1 Pet. 3:18–20

5. Neh. 9:30–31

34.7 He provides the spiritual power that is necessary for believers to live the Christian life. This power is freely available to God’s people, for the Scripture commands them to “be filled with the Spirit,”¹ and the Father is ever willing to give the gift of the Spirit to all who ask Him and obey Him.²

1. Eph. 5:18

2. Luke 11:13; Acts 5:3

34.8 He is the sovereign author of true revival, of seasons of spiritual power and of effectiveness in the preaching of the gospel as most powerfully evidenced at Pentecost, which power although manifested occasionally in the old dispensation is the constant prospect for the church in the new dispensation. Although Pentecost may not be repeated, the power of Pentecost has not been withdrawn from the church.¹

1. Isa. 44:3; Joel 2:28–32; Acts 1:8; 2:4, 16–21

34.9 The miraculous sign-gifts of the Holy Spirit associated with the personal ministry of Christ’s apostles are not essential to the Spirit’s powerful operation in the church;¹ nor are they to be confused with the ecstatic counterfeits of them practised by various charismatic sects throughout church history.²

1. Heb. 2:1–4; 1 Cor. 13:8–13

2. 1 Cor. 12:1–3; 14

34.10 The absence of the sign-gifts associated with the personal ministry of Christ’s apostles does not indicate the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit’s ministry of equipping and empowering God’s people for the work of serving Christ, for the Holy Spirit has not withdrawn from the church the gifts needful for its life and witness but continues to supply them according to His sovereign will and the faith of His people.¹

1. Rom. 12:6–8; 1 Cor. 12:13–21; Eph. 4:7–12

The Larger Catechism

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

A. 1: Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God,¹ and fully to enjoy Him forever.²

1. Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 10:31

2. Ps. 73:24–28

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

A. 2: The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God;¹ but His Word and Spirit only do sufficiently and effectually reveal Him unto men for their salvation.²

1. Rom. 1:19–20; Ps. 19:1–3; Acts 17:28

2. 1 Cor. 2:9–10; 2 Tim. 3:15–17; Isa. 59:21

Q. 3: What is the Word of God?

A. 3: The holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God,¹ the only rule of faith and obedience.²

1. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19–21

2. Eph. 2:20; Rev. 22:18–19; Isa. 8:20; Luke 16:29, 31; Gal. 1:8–9;
2 Tim. 3:15–16

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

A. 4: The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Word of God, by their majesty¹ and purity;² by the consent of all the parts,³ and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God;⁴ by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation;⁵ but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very Word of God.⁶

1. Hos. 8:12; 1 Cor. 2:6–7, 13; Ps. 119:18, 129

2. Ps. 12:6; 119:140

3. Acts 10:43; 26:22

4. Rom. 3:19, 27

5. Acts 18:28; Heb. 4:12; James 1:18; Ps. 19:7–9; Rom. 15:4; Acts 20:32

6. John 16:13–14; 20:31; 1 John 2:20, 27

Q. 5: What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. 5: The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.¹

1. 2 Tim. 1:13

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

A. 6: The Scriptures make known what God is,¹ the persons in the Godhead,² His decrees,³ and the execution of His decrees.⁴

1. Heb. 11:6

2. 1 John 5:7

3. Acts 15:14–15, 18

4. Acts 4:27–28

Q. 7: What is God?

A. 7: God is a Spirit,¹ in and of Himself infinite in being,² glory,³ blessedness,⁴ and perfection;⁵ all-sufficient,⁶ eternal,⁷ unchangeable,⁸ incomprehensible,⁹ everywhere present,¹⁰ almighty,¹¹ knowing all things,¹² most wise,¹³ most holy,¹⁴ most just,¹⁵ most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.¹⁶

1. John 4:24

2. Ex. 3:14; Job 11:7–9

3. Acts 7:2

4. 1 Tim. 6:15

5. Matt. 5:48

6. Gen. 17:1

7. Ps. 90:2

8. Mal. 3:6; James 1:17

9. 1 Kings 8:27

10. Ps. 139:1–13

11. Rev. 4:8

12. Heb. 4:13; Psa. 147:5

13. Rom. 16:27

14. Isa. 6:3; Rev. 15:4

15. Deut. 32:4

16. Ex. 34:6

Q. 8: Are there more Gods than one?

A. 8: There is but one only, the living and true God.¹

1. Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6; Jer. 10:10

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

A. 9: There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.¹

1. 1 John 5:7; Matt. 3:16–17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 10:30

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

A. 10: It is proper to the Father to beget the Son,¹ and to the Son to be begotten of the Father,² and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.³

1. Heb. 1:5–6, 8
2. John 1:14, 18

3. John 15:26; Gal. 4:6

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

A. 11: The Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names,¹ attributes,² works,³ and worship,⁴ as are proper to God only.

1. Isa. 6:3, 5, 8; John 12:41; Acts 5:3–4; 28:25; 1 John 5:20
2. John 1:1; 2:24–25; Isa. 9:6; 1 Cor. 2:10–11

3. Col. 1:16; Gen. 1:2
4. Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14

Q. 12: What are the decrees of God?

A. 12: God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of His will,¹ whereby, from all eternity, He hath, for His own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time,² especially concerning angels and men.

1. Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:14–15, 18; 11:33

2. Eph. 1:4, 11; Rom. 9:22–23; Ps. 33:11

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

A. 13: God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of His mere love, for the praise of His glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory;¹ and in Christ hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof;² and also, according to His sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of His own will (whereby He extendeth or withholdeth favor as He pleases), hath passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of His justice.³

1. 1 Tim. 5:21
2. Eph. 1:4–6; 2 Thess. 2:13–14

3. Rom. 9:17–18, 21–22; Matt. 11:25–26;
2 Tim. 2:20; Jude 4; 1 Pet. 2:8

Q.14: How doth God execute His decrees?

A.14: God executeth His decrees in the works of creation and providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will.¹

1. Eph. 1:11

Q. 15: What is the work of creation?

A. 15: The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of His power, make of nothing the world, and all things therein, for Himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.¹

1. Gen. 1; Heb. 11:3; Prov. 16:4

Q. 16: How did God create angels?

A. 16: God created all the angels¹ spirits,² immortal,³ holy,⁴ excelling in knowledge,⁵ mighty in power,⁶ to execute His commandments, and to praise His name,⁷ yet subject to change.⁸

1. Col. 1:16
2. Ps. 104:4
3. Matt. 22:30
4. Matt. 25:31

5. 2 Sam. 14:17; Matt. 24:36
6. 2 Thess. 1:7
7. Ps. 103:20–21
8. 2 Pet. 2:4

Q. 17: How did God create man?

A. 17: After God had made all other creatures, He created man male and female;¹ formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground,² and the woman of the rib of the man,³ endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls;⁴ made them after His own image,⁵ in knowledge,⁶ righteousness, and holiness;⁷ having the law of God written in their hearts,⁸ and power to fulfill it,⁹ and dominion over the creatures;¹⁰ yet subject to fall.¹¹

1. Gen. 1:27
2. Gen. 2:7
3. Gen. 2:22
4. Gen. 2:7; Job 35:11; Eccl. 12:7; Matt. 10:28; Luke 23:43
5. Gen. 1:27

6. Col. 3:10
7. Eph. 4:24
8. Rom. 2:14–15
9. Eccl. 7:29
10. Gen. 1:28
11. Gen. 3:6; Eccl. 7:29

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

A. 18: God's works of providence are His most holy,¹ wise,² and powerful preserving³ and governing⁴ all His creatures; ordering them, and all their actions,⁵ to His own glory.⁶

1. Ps. 145:17
2. Ps. 104:24; Isa. 28:29
3. Heb. 1:8

4. Ps. 103:19
5. Matt. 10:29–31; Gen. 45:7
6. Rom. 11:36; Isa. 63:14

Q. 19: What is God's providence towards the angels?

A. 19: God by His providence permitted some of the angels, willfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation,¹ limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to His own glory;² and established the rest in holiness and happiness;³ employing them all,⁴ at His pleasure, in the administrations of His power, mercy, and justice.⁵

1. Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4; Heb. 2:16; John 8:44
2. Job 1:12; Matt. 8:31
3. 1 Tim. 5:21; Mark 8:38; Heb. 12:22

4. Ps. 104:4
5. 2 Kings 19:35; Heb. 1:14

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

A. 20: The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth;¹ putting the creatures under His dominion,² and ordaining marriage for His help;³ affording him communion with Himself;⁴ instituting the Sabbath;⁵ entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience,⁶ of which the tree of life was a pledge;⁷ and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.⁸

1. Gen. 2:8, 15–16
2. Gen. 1:28
3. Gen. 2:18
4. Gen. 1:26–29; 3:8

5. Gen. 2:3
6. Gal. 3:12; Rom. 10:5
7. Gen. 2:9
8. Gen. 2:17

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

A. 21: Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God in eating the forbidden fruit; and thereby fell from the estate of innocence wherein they were created.¹

1. Gen. 3:6–8, 13; Eccl. 7:29; 2 Cor. 11:3

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

A. 22: The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation,¹ sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.²

1. Acts 17:26

2. Gen. 2:16–17; Rom. 5:12–20; 1 Cor. 15:21–22

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

A. 23: The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.¹

1. Rom. 5:12; 3:23

Q. 24: What is sin?

A. 24: Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.¹

1. 1 John 3:4; Gal. 3:10, 12

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

A. 25: The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin,¹ the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually;² which is commonly called original sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.³

1. Rom. 5:12, 19

3. James 1:14–15; Matt. 15:19

2. Rom. 3:10–19; Eph. 2:1–3; Rom. 5:6; 8:7–8; Gen. 6:5

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

A. 26: Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin.¹

1. Ps. 51:5; Job 14:4; 15:14; John 3:6

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

A. 27: The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God,¹ His displeasure and curse; so as we are by nature children of wrath,² bond slaves to Satan,³ and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.⁴

1. Gen. 3:8, 10, 24

4. Gen. 2:17; Lam. 3:39; Rom. 6:23;

2. Eph. 2:2–3

Matt. 25:41, 46, Jude 7

3. 2 Tim. 2:26

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

A. 28: The punishments of sin in this world are either inward, as blindness of mind,¹ a reprobate sense,² strong delusions,³ hardness of heart,⁴ horror of conscience,⁵ and vile affections;⁶ or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes,⁷ and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments;⁸ together with death itself.⁹

1. Eph. 4:18

6. Rom. 1:26

2. Rom. 1:28

7. Gen. 3:17

3. 2 Thess. 2:11

8. Deut. 28:15–18

4. Rom. 2:5

9. Rom. 6:21, 23

5. Isa. 33:14; Gen. 4:13; Matt. 27:4

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

A. 29: The punishments of sin in the world to come, are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell fire forever.¹

1. 2 Thess. 1:9; Mark 9:43–44, 46, 48; Luke 16:24

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

A. 30: God doth not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery,¹ into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the covenant of works;² but of His mere love and mercy delivereth His elect out of it, and bringeth them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace.³

1. 1 Thess. 5:9

2. Gal. 3:10, 12

3. Titus 3:4–7; Gal. 3:21; Rom. 3:20–22

Q. 31: With whom was the covenant of grace made?

A. 31: The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in Him with all the elect as His seed.¹

1. Gal. 3:16; Rom. 5:15–21; Isa. 53:10–11

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

A. 32: The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that He freely provideth and offereth to sinners a mediator,¹ and life and salvation by Him;² and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in Him,³ promiseth and giveth His Holy Spirit⁴ to all His elect, to work in them that faith,⁵ with all other saving graces,⁶ and to enable them unto all holy obedience,⁷ as the evidence of the truth of their faith⁸ and thankfulness to God,⁹ and as the way which He hath appointed them to salvation.¹⁰

1. Gen. 3:15; Isa. 42:6; John 6:27

2. 1 John 5:11–12

3. John 3:16; 1:12

4. Prov. 1:23

5. 2 Cor. 4:13

6. Gal. 5:22–23

7. Ezek. 36:27

8. James 2:18, 22

9. 2 Cor. 5:14–15

10. Eph. 2:18

Q. 33: Was the covenant of grace always administered after one and the same manner?

A. 33: The covenant of grace was not always administered after the same manner, but the administrations of it under the Old Testament were different from those under the New.¹

1. 2 Cor. 3:6–9

Q. 34: How was the covenant of grace administered under the Old Testament?

A. 34: The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises,¹ prophecies,² sacrifices,³ circumcision,⁴ the passover,⁵ and other types and ordinances, which did all fore signify Christ then to come, and were for that time sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah,⁶ by whom they then had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation.⁷

1. Rom. 15:8

2. Acts 3:20, 24

3. Heb. 10:1

4. Rom. 4:11

5. 1 Cor. 5:7

6. Heb. 8–10; 11:13

7. Gal. 3:7–9, 14

Q. 35: How is the covenant of grace administered under the New Testament?

A. 35: Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the same covenant of grace was and still is to be administered in the preaching of the Word,¹ and the administration of the sacraments of baptism² and the Lord's Supper;³ in which grace and salvation are held forth in more fulness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations.⁴

1. Mark 16:15

2. Matt. 28:19–20

3. 1 Cor. 11:23–25

4. 2 Cor. 3:6–9; Heb. 8:6, 10–11; Matt. 28:19

Q. 36: Who is the mediator of the covenant of grace?

A. 36: The only mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ,¹ who, being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father,² in the fulness of time became man,³ and so was and continues to be God and man, in two entire distinct natures, and one person, forever.⁴

1. 1 Tim. 2:5

2. John 1:1, 14; 10:30; Phil. 2:6

3. Gal. 4:4

4. Luke 1:35; Rom. 9:5; Col. 2:9; Heb. 7:24–25

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

A. 37: Christ the Son of God became man, by taking to Himself a true body, and a reasonable soul,¹ being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her,² yet without sin.³

1. John 1:14; Matt. 26:38

2. Luke 1:27, 31, 35, 42; Gal. 4:4

3. Heb. 4:15; 7:26

Q. 38: Why was it requisite that the mediator should be God?

A. 38: It was requisite that the mediator should be God, that He might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death;¹ give worth and efficacy to His sufferings, obedience, and intercession;² and to satisfy God's justice,³ procure His favor,⁴ purchase a peculiar people,⁵ give His Spirit to them,⁶ conquer all their enemies,⁷ and bring them to everlasting salvation.⁸

1. Acts. 2:24–25; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; Heb. 9:14

2. Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:14; 7:25–28

3. Rom. 3:24–26

4. Eph. 1:6; Matt. 3:17

5. Titus. 2:13–14

6. Gal. 4:6

7. Luke 1:68–69, 71, 74

8. Heb. 5:8–9; 9:11–15

Q. 39: Why was it requisite that the mediator should be man?

A. 39: It was requisite that the mediator should be man, that He might advance our nature,¹ perform obedience to the law,² suffer and make intercession for us in our nature,³ have a fellow feeling of our infirmities;⁴ that we might receive the adoption of sons,⁵ and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.⁶

1. Heb. 2:16

2. Gal. 4:4

3. Heb. 2:14; 7:24–25

4. Heb. 4:15

5. Gal. 4:5

6. Heb. 4:16

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

A. 40: It was requisite that the mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should Himself be both God and man, and this in one person, that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us,¹ as the works of the whole person.²

1. Matt. 1:21, 23; 3:17; Heb. 9:14

2. 1 Pet. 2:6

Q. 41: Why was our mediator called Jesus?

A. 41: Our mediator was called Jesus, because He saveth His people from their sins.¹

1. Matt. 1:21

Q. 42: Why was our mediator called Christ?

A. 42: Our mediator was called Christ, because He was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure;¹ and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability,² to execute the offices of prophet,³ priest,⁴ and king of His church,⁵ in the estate both of His humiliation and exaltation.

1. John 3:34; Ps. 45:7

2. John 6:27; Matt. 28:18–20

3. Acts 3:21–22; Luke 4:18, 21

4. Heb. 5:5–7; 4:14–15

5. Ps. 2:6; Matt. 21:5; Isa. 9:6–7; Phil. 2:8–11

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

A. 43: Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in His revealing to the church,¹ in all ages, by His Spirit and Word,² in divers ways of administration,³ the whole will of God,⁴ in all things concerning their edification and salvation.⁵

1. John 1:18
2. 1 Pet. 1:10–12
3. Heb. 1:1–2

4. John 15:15
5. Acts 20:32; Eph. 4:11–13; John 20:31

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

A. 44: Christ executeth the office of a priest, in His once offering Himself a sacrifice without spot to God,¹ to be a reconciliation for the sins of His people;² and in making continual intercession for them.³

1. Heb. 9:14, 28
2. Heb. 2:17

3. Heb. 7:25

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

A. 45: Christ executeth the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people to Himself,¹ and giving them officers,² laws,³ and censures, by which He visibly governs them;⁴ in bestowing saving grace upon His elect,⁵ rewarding their obedience,⁶ and correcting them for their sins,⁷ preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings,⁸ restraining and overcoming all their enemies,⁹ and powerfully ordering all things for His own glory,¹⁰ and their good;¹¹ and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God, and obey not the gospel.¹²

1. Acts 15; 14–16; Isa. 55:4–5; Gen. 49:10; Ps. 110:3
2. Eph. 4:11–12; 1 Cor. 12:28
3. Isa. 33:22
4. Matt. 18:17–18; 1 Cor. 5:4–5
5. Acts 5:31
6. Rev. 22:12; 2:10

7. Rev. 3:19
8. Isa. 63:9
9. 1 Cor. 15:25; Ps. 110:1–2
10. Rom. 14:10–11
11. Rom. 8:28
12. 2 Thess. 1:8–9; Ps. 2:8–9

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

A. 46: The estate of Christ's humiliation was that low condition, wherein He for our sakes, emptying Himself of His glory, took upon Him the form of a servant, in His conception and birth, life, death, and after His death, until His resurrection.¹

1. Phil. 2:6–8; Luke 1:31; 2 Cor. 8:9; Acts 2:24

Q. 47: How did Christ humble Himself in His conception and birth?

A. 47: Christ humbled Himself in His conception and birth, in that, being from all eternity the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, He was pleased in the fulness of time to become the son of man, made of a woman of low estate, and to be born of her; with divers circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.¹

1. John 1:14, 18; Gal. 4:4; Luke 2:7

Q. 48: How did Christ humble Himself in His life?

A. 48: Christ humbled Himself in His life, by subjecting Himself to the law,¹ which He perfectly fulfilled;² and by conflicting with the indignities of the world,³ temptations of Satan,⁴ and infirmities in His flesh, whether common to the nature of man, or particularly accompanying that His low condition.⁵

1. Gal. 4:4
2. Matt. 5:17; Rom. 5:19
3. Ps. 22:6; Heb. 12:2–3

4. Matt. 4:1–12; Luke 4:13
5. Heb. 2:17–18; 4:15; Isa. 52:13–14

Q. 49: How did Christ humble Himself in His death?

A. 49: Christ humbled Himself in His death, in that having been betrayed by Judas,¹ forsaken by His disciples,² scorned and rejected by the world,³ condemned by Pilate, and tormented by His persecutors;⁴ having also conflicted with the terrors of death, and the powers of darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath,⁵ He laid down His life an offering for sin,⁶ enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.⁷

1. Matt. 27:4

2. Matt. 26:56

3. Isa. 53:2–3

4. Matt. 27:26–50; John 19:34

5. Luke 22:44; Matt. 27:46

6. Isa. 53:10

7. Phil. 2:8; Heb. 12:2; Gal. 3:13

Q. 50: Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after His death?

A. 50: Christ's humiliation after His death consisted in His being buried,¹ and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day;² which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, He descended into hell.

1. 1 Cor. 15:3–4

2. Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:24–27, 31; Rom. 6:9; Matt. 12:40

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

A. 51: The estate of Christ's exaltation comprehendeth His resurrection,¹ ascension,² sitting at the right hand of the Father,³ and His coming again to judge the world.⁴

1. 1 Cor. 15:4

2. Mark 16:19

3. Eph. 1:20

4. Acts 1:11; 17:31

Q. 52: How was Christ exalted in His resurrection?

A. 52: Christ was exalted in His resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death (of which it was not possible for Him to be held),¹ and having the very same body in which He suffered, with the essential properties thereof² (but without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life), really united to His soul,³ He rose again from the dead the third day by His own power;⁴ whereby He declared Himself to be the Son of God,⁵ to have satisfied divine justice,⁶ to have vanquished death, and him that had the power of it,⁷ and to be Lord of quick and dead;⁸ all which He did as a public person,⁹ the head of His church,¹⁰ for their justification,¹¹ quickening in grace,¹² support against enemies,¹³ and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.¹⁴

1. Acts 2:24, 27

2. Luke 24:39

3. Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:18

4. John 10:18

5. Rom. 1:4

6. Rom. 8:34

7. Heb. 2:14

8. Rom. 14:9

9. 1 Cor. 15:21–22

10. Eph. 1:20, 22–23; Col. 1:18

11. Rom. 4:25

12. Eph. 2:1, 5–6; Col. 2:12

13. 1 Cor. 15:25–27

14. 1 Cor. 15:20

Q. 53: How was Christ exalted in His ascension?

A. 53: Christ was exalted in His ascension, in that having after His resurrection often appeared unto and conversed with His apostles, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,¹ and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations,² forty days after His resurrection, He, in our nature, and as our head,³ triumphing over enemies,⁴ visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men,⁵ to raise up our affections thither,⁶ and to prepare a place for us,⁷ where Himself is, and shall continue till His second coming at the end of the world.⁸

1. Acts 1:2–3

2. Matt. 28:19–20

3. Heb. 6:20

4. Eph. 4:8

5. Acts 1:9–11; Eph. 4:10; Ps. 68:18

6. Col. 3:1–2

7. John 14:3

8. Acts 3:21

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

A. 54: Christ is exalted in His sitting at the right hand of God, in that as God-man He is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father,¹ with all fulness of joy,² glory,³ and power over all things in heaven and earth;⁴ and doth gather and defend His church, and subdue their enemies; furnisheth His ministers and people with gifts and graces,⁵ and maketh intercession for them.⁶

1. Phil. 2:9

2. Acts 2:28; Ps. 16:11

3. John 17:5

4. Eph. 1:22; 1 Pet. 3:22

5. Eph. 4:10–12; Ps. 110:1

6. Rom. 8:34

Q. 55: How doth Christ make intercession?

A. 55: Christ maketh intercession, by His appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven,¹ in the merit of His obedience and sacrifice on earth,² declaring His will to have it applied to all believers;³ answering all accusations against them,⁴ and procuring for them quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings,⁵ access with boldness to the throne of grace,⁶ and acceptance of their persons⁷ and services.⁸

1. Heb. 9:12, 24

2. Heb. 1:3

3. John 3:16; 17:9, 20, 24

4. Rom. 8:33–34

5. Rom. 5:1–2; 1 John 2:1–2

6. Heb. 4:16

7. Eph. 1:6

8. 1 Pet. 2:5

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

A. 56: Christ is to be exalted in His coming again to judge the world, in that He, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men,¹ shall come again at the last day in great power,² and in the full manifestation of His own glory, and of His Father's, with all His holy angels,³ with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God,⁴ to judge the world in righteousness.⁵

1. Acts 3:14–15

2. Matt. 24:30

3. Luke 9:26; Matt. 25:31

4. 1 Thess. 4:16

5. Acts 17:31

Q. 57: What benefits hath Christ procured by His mediation?

A. 57: Christ, by His mediation, hath procured redemption,¹ with all other benefits of the covenant of grace.²

1. Heb. 9:12

2. 2 Cor. 1:20

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

A. 58: We are made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured,¹ by the application of them unto us, which is the work especially of God the Holy Ghost.²

1. John 1:11–12

2. Titus 3:5–6

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

A. 59: Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it;¹ who are in time by the Holy Ghost enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel.²

1. Eph. 1:13–14; John 6:37, 39; 10:15–16

2. Eph. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:13

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

A. 60: They who, having never heard the gospel,¹ know not Jesus Christ,² and believe not in Him, cannot be saved,³ be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature,⁴ or the laws of that religion which they profess;⁵ neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone,⁶ who is the Savior only of His body the church.⁷

1. Rom. 10:14

2. 2 Thess. 1:8–9; Eph. 2:12; John 1:10–12

3. John 8:24; Mark 16:16

4. 1 Cor. 1:20–24

5. John 4:22; Rom. 9:31–32; Phil. 3:4–9

6. Acts 4:12

7. Eph. 5:23

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

A. 61: All that hear the gospel, and live in the visible church, are not saved; but they only who are true members of the church invisible.¹

1. John 12:38–40; Rom. 9:6; 11:7; Matt. 7:21; 22:14

Q. 62: What is the visible church?

A. 62: The visible church is a society made up of all such as in all ages and places of the world do profess the true religion,¹ and of their children.²

1. 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:13; Rom. 15:9–12; Rev. 7:9;

2. 1 Cor. 7:14; Acts 2:39; Rom. 11:16; Gen. 17:7

Ps. 2:8; 22:27–31; 45:17; Matt. 28:19–20; Isa. 59:21

Q. 63: What are the special privileges of the visible church?

A. 63: The visible church hath the privilege of being under God's special care and government;¹ of being protected and preserved in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies;² and of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation,³ and offers of grace by Christ to all the members of it in the ministry of the gospel, testifying, that whosoever believes in Him shall be saved,⁴ and excluding none that will come unto Him.⁵

1. Isa. 4:5–6; 1 Tim. 4:10

4. Ps. 147:19–20; Rom. 9:4; Eph. 4:11–12; Mark 16:15–16

2. Ps. 115:1–2, 9; Isa. 31:4–5; Zech. 12:2–4, 8–9

5. John 6:37

3. Acts 2:39, 42

Q. 64: What is the invisible church?

A. 64: The invisible church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head.¹

1. Eph. 1:20, 22–23; John 10:16, 11:52

Q. 65: What special benefits do the members of the invisible church enjoy by Christ?

A. 65: The members of the invisible church by Christ enjoy union and communion with Him in grace and glory.¹

1. John 17:21, 24; Eph. 2:5–6

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

A. 66: The union which the elect have with Christ is the work of God's grace,¹ whereby they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband;² which is done in their effectual calling.³

1. Eph. 1:22; 2:6–8

3. 1 Pet. 5:10; 1 Cor. 1:9

2. 1 Cor. 6:17; John 10:28; Eph. 5:23, 30

Q. 67: What is effectual calling?

A. 67: Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace,¹ whereby (out of His free and special love to His elect, and from nothing in them moving Him thereunto)² He doth, in His accepted time, invite and draw them to Jesus Christ, by His Word and Spirit;³ savingly enlightening their minds,⁴ renewing and powerfully determining their wills,⁵ so as they (although in themselves dead in sin) are hereby made willing and able freely to answer His call, and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein.⁶

1. John 5:25; Eph. 1:18–20; 2 Tim. 1:8–9

4. Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 2:10, 12

2. Titus 3:4–5; Eph. 2:4–5, 7–9; Rom. 9:11

5. Ezek. 11:19; 36:26–27; John 6:45

3. 2 Cor. 5:20; 6:1–2; John 6:44; 2 Thess. 2:13–14

6. Eph. 2:5; Phil. 2:13; Deut. 30:6

Q. 68: Are the elect only effectually called?

A. 68: All the elect, and they only, are effectually called;¹ although others may be, and often are, outwardly called by the ministry of the Word,² and have some common operations of the Spirit;³ who, for their willful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ.⁴

1. Acts 13:48

2. Matt. 22:14

3. Matt. 7:22; 13:20–21; Heb. 6:4–6

4. John 6:64–65; 12:38–40; Acts 18:25–27; Ps. 81:11–12

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

A. 69: The communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is their partaking of the virtue of His mediation, in their justification,¹ adoption,² sanctification, and whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with Him.³

1. Rom. 8:30

2. Eph. 1:5

3. 1 Cor. 1:30

Q. 70: What is justification?

A. 70: Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners,¹ in which He pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in His sight;² not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them,³ but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them,⁴ and received by faith alone.⁵

1. Rom. 3:22, 24–25; 4:5

2. 2 Cor. 5:19, 21; Rom. 3:22–25, 27–28

3. Titus 3:5, 7; Eph. 1:7

4. Rom. 4:6–8; 5:17–19

5. Acts 10:43; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9

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

A. 71: Although Christ, by His obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in the behalf of them that are justified;¹ yet inasmuch as God accepteth the satisfaction from a surety, which He might have demanded of them, and did provide this surety, His own only Son,² imputing His righteousness to them,³ and requiring nothing of them for their justification but faith,⁴ which also is His gift,⁵ their justification is to them of free grace.⁶

1. Rom. 5:8–10, 19

2. 1 Tim. 2:5–6; Heb. 7:22; 10:10; Matt. 20:28;
Dan. 9:24, 26; Isa. 53:4–6, 10–12; Rom. 8:32;
1 Pet. 1:18–19

3. 2 Cor. 5:21

4. Rom. 3:24–25

5. Eph. 2:8

6. Eph. 1:7

Q. 72: What is justifying faith?

A. 72: Justifying faith is a saving grace,¹ wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit² and Word of God,³ whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition,⁴ not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the gospel,⁵ but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and His righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin,⁶ and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation.⁷

1. Heb. 10:39

2. 2 Cor. 4:13; Eph. 1:17–19

3. Rom. 10:14, 17

4. Acts 2:37; 4:12; 16:30; John 16:8–9; Rom. 5:6; Eph. 2:1

5. Eph. 1:13

6. John 1:12; Acts 10:43; 16:31

7. Phil. 3:9; Acts 15:11

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

A. 73: Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it,¹ nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification;² but only as it is an instrument by which he receiveth and applies Christ and His righteousness.³

1. Gal. 3:11; Rom. 3:28

2. Rom. 4:5; 10:10

3. John 1:12; Phil. 3:9; Gal. 2:16

Q. 74: What is adoption?

A. 74: Adoption is an act of the free grace of God,¹ in and for His only Son Jesus Christ,² whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of His children,³ have His name put upon them,⁴ the Spirit of His Son given to them,⁵ are under His fatherly care and dispensations,⁶ admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow heirs with Christ in glory.⁷

1. 1 John 3:1

2. Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:4–5

3. John 1:12

4. 2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 3:12

5. Gal. 4:6

6. Ps. 103:13; Prov. 14:26; Matt. 6:32

7. Heb. 6:12; Rom. 8:17

Q. 75: What is sanctification?

A. 75: Sanctification is a work of God's grace, whereby they whom God hath, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy, are in time, through the powerful operation of His Spirit¹ applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them,² renewed in their whole man after the image of God;³ having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving graces, put into their hearts,⁴ and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened,⁵ as that they more and more die unto sin, and rise unto newness of life.⁶

1. Eph. 1:4; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13

2. Rom. 6:4–6

3. Eph. 4:23–24

4. Acts 11:18; 1 John 3:9

5. Jude 20; Heb. 6:11–12; Eph. 3:16–19; Col. 1:10–11

6. Rom. 6:4, 6, 14; Gal. 5:24

Q. 76: What is repentance unto life?

A. 76: Repentance unto life is a saving grace,¹ wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit² and Word of God,³ whereby, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger,⁴ but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins,⁵ and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such as are penitent,⁶ he so grieves for⁷ and hates his sins,⁸ as that he turns from them all to God,⁹ purposing and endeavoring constantly to walk with Him in all the ways of new obedience.¹⁰

1. 2 Tim. 2:25

2. Zech. 12:10

3. Acts 11:18, 20–21

4. Ezek. 18:28, 30, 32; Luke 15:17–18; Hos. 2:6–7

5. Ezek. 36:31; Isa. 30:22

6. Joel 2:12–13

7. Jer. 31:18–19

8. 2 Cor. 7:11

9. Acts 26:18; Ezek. 14:6; 1 Kings 8:47–48

10. Ps. 119:6, 59, 128; Luke 1:6; 2 Kings 23:25

Q. 77: Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?

A. 77: Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification,¹ yet they differ, in that God in justification imputeth the righteousness of Christ;² in sanctification His Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth to the exercise thereof;³ in the former, sin is pardoned;⁴ in the other, it is subdued:⁵ the one doth equally free all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, that they never fall into condemnation;⁶ the other is neither equal in all,⁷ nor in this life perfect in any,⁸ but growing up to perfection.⁹

1. 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11

2. Rom. 4:6, 8

3. Ezek. 36:27

4. Rom. 3:24–25

5. Rom. 6:6, 14

6. Rom. 8:33–34

7. 1 John 2:12–14; Heb. 5:12–14

8. 1 John 1:8, 10

9. 2 Cor. 7:1; Phil 3:12–14

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

A. 78: The imperfection of sanctification in believers ariseth from the remnants of sin abiding in every part of them, and the perpetual lustings of the flesh against the spirit; whereby they are often foiled with temptations, and fall into many sins,¹ are hindered in all their spiritual services,² and their best works are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God.³

1. Rom. 7:18, 23; Mark 14:66–72; Gal. 2:11–12

3. Isa. 64:6; Ex. 28:38

2. Heb. 12:1

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

A. 79: True believers, by reason of the unchangeable love of God,¹ and His decree and covenant to give them perseverance,² their inseparable union with Christ,³ His continual intercession for them,⁴ and the Spirit and seed of God abiding in them,⁵ can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace,⁶ but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.⁷

1. Jer. 31:3

5. 1 John 2:27; 3:9

2. 2 Tim. 2:19–21; 2 Sam. 23:5

6. Jer. 32:40; John 10:28

3. 1 Cor. 1:8–9

7. 1 Pet. 1:5

4. Heb. 7:25; Luke 22:32

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

A. 80: Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before Him,¹ may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made,² and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God,³ be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.⁴

1. 1 John 2:3

3. Rom. 8:16

2. 1 Cor. 2:12; 1 John 3:14, 18–19, 21, 24; 4:13, 16;
Heb. 6:11–12

4. 1 John 5:13

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

A. 81: Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith,¹ true believers may wait long before they obtain it;² and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions;³ yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.⁴

1. Eph. 1:13

3. Ps. 22:1; 31:22; 51:8, 12; 77:1–12; Song 5:2–3, 6

2. Isa. 1:10; Ps. 88:1–3, 6–7, 9–10, 13–15

4. 1 John 3:9; Job 13:15; Ps. 73:15, 23; Isa. 54:7–10

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

A. 82: The communion in glory which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is in this life,¹ immediately after death,² and at last perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment.³

1. 2 Cor. 3:18

3. 1 Thess. 4:17

2. Luke 23:43

Q. 83: What is the communion in glory with Christ which the members of the invisible church enjoy in this life?

A. 83: The members of the invisible church have communicated to them in this life the first fruits of glory with Christ, as they are members of Him their head, and so in Him are interested in that glory which He is fully possessed of;¹ and, as an earnest thereof, enjoy the sense of God's love,² peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and hope of glory;³ as, on the contrary, sense of God's revenging wrath, horror

of conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment, are to the wicked the beginning of their torments which they shall endure after death.⁴

1. Eph. 2:5–6
2. Rom. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:22

3. Rom. 5:1–2; 14:17
4. Gen. 4:13; Matt. 27:4; Heb. 10:27; Rom. 2:9; Mark 9:44

Q. 84: Shall all men die?

A. 84: Death being threatened as the wages of sin,¹ it is appointed unto all men once to die;² for that all have sinned.³

1. Rom. 6:23
2. Heb. 9:27

3. Rom. 5:12

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

A. 85: The righteous shall be delivered from death itself at the last day, and even in death are delivered from the sting and curse of it;¹ so that, although they die, yet it is out of God's love,² to free them perfectly from sin and misery,³ and to make them capable of further communion with Christ in glory, which they then enter upon.⁴

1. 1 Cor. 15:26, 55–57; Heb. 2:15
2. Isa. 57:1–2; 2 Kings 22:20

3. Rev. 14:13; Eph. 5:27
4. Luke 23:43; Phil 1:23

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

A. 86: The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is, in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness,¹ and received into the highest heavens,² where they behold the face of God in light and glory,³ waiting for the full redemption of their bodies,⁴ which even in death continue united to Christ,⁵ and rest in their graves as in their beds,⁶ till at the last day they be again united to their souls.⁷ Whereas the souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their prisons, till the resurrection and judgment of the great day.⁸

1. Heb. 12:23
2. 2 Cor. 5:1, 6, 8; Phil. 1:23; Acts 3:21; Eph. 4:10
3. 1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 13:12
4. Rom. 8:23; Ps. 16:9

5. 1 Thess. 4:14
6. Isa. 57:2
7. Job 19:26–27
8. Luke 16:23–24; Acts 1:25; Jude 6–7

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

A. 87 (original response): We are to believe, that at the last day there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust:¹ when they that are then found alive shall in a moment be changed; and the selfsame bodies of the dead which were laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls forever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ.² The bodies of the just, by the Spirit of Christ, and by virtue of His resurrection as their head, shall be raised in power, spiritual, incorruptible, and made like to His glorious body;³ and the bodies of the wicked shall be raised up in dishonor by Him, as an offended judge.⁴

A. 87 (premillennial response): We are to believe, that at the last day there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust:¹ when they that are then found alive shall in a moment be changed; and the selfsame bodies of the dead which were laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls forever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ.² The bodies of the just, by the Spirit of Christ, and by virtue of His resurrection as their head, shall be raised in power, spiritual, incorruptible, and made like to His glorious body.³

1. Acts 24:15
2. 1 Cor. 15:51–53; 1 Thess. 4:15–17; John 5:28–29

3. 1 Cor. 15:21–23, 42–44; Phil. 3:21
4. John 5:27–29; Matt. 25:33

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

- A. 88 (original response): Immediately after the resurrection shall follow the general and final judgment of angels and men;¹ the day and hour whereof no man knows, that all may watch and pray, and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord.²
- A. 88 (premillennial response): Immediately after the resurrection shall follow the final judgment of angels and men;¹ the day and hour whereof no man knoweth, that all may watch and pray, and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord.²

1. 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6–7, 14–15; Matt. 25:46

2. Matt. 24:36, 42, 44; Luke 21:35–36

Q. 89: What shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgment?

- A. 89: At the day of judgment, the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand,¹ and, upon clear evidence, and full conviction of their own consciences,² shall have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them;³ and thereupon shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, His saints, and all His holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, with the devil and His angels forever.⁴

1. Matt. 25:33
2. Rom. 2:15–16

3. Matt. 25:41–43
4. Luke 16:26; 2 Thess. 1:8–9

Q. 90: What shall be done to the righteous at the day of judgment?

- A. 90: At the day of judgment, the righteous, being caught up to Christ in the clouds,¹ shall be set on His right hand, and there openly acknowledged and acquitted,² shall join with Him in the judging of reprobate angels and men,³ and shall be received into heaven,⁴ where they shall be fully and forever freed from all sin and misery;⁵ filled with inconceivable joys,⁶ made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and holy angels,⁷ but especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity.⁸ And this is the perfect and full communion, which the members of the invisible church shall enjoy with Christ in glory, at the resurrection and day of judgment.

1. 1 Thess. 4:17
2. Matt. 10:32, 25:33
3. 1 Cor. 6:2–3
4. Matt. 25:34, 46

5. Eph. 5:27; Rev. 14:13
6. Ps. 16:11
7. Heb. 12:22–23
8. 1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 4:17–18

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

- A. 91: The duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to His revealed will.¹

1. Rom. 12:1–2; Mic. 6:8; 1 Sam. 15:22

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

- A. 92: The rule of obedience revealed to Adam in the estate of innocence, and to all mankind in him, besides a special command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was the moral law.¹

1. Gen. 1:26–27; 2:17; Rom. 2:14–15; 10:5

Q. 93: What is the moral law?

- A. 93: The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding everyone to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body,¹ and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which He oweth to God and man;² promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it.³

1. Deut. 5:1–3, 31, 33; Luke 10:26–27; Gal. 3:10;
1 Thess. 5:23

2. Luke 1:75; Acts 14:16
3. Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:10, 12

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

A. 94: Although no man, since the fall, can attain to righteousness and life by the moral law;¹ yet there is great use thereof, as well common to all men, as peculiar either to the unregenerate, or the regenerate.²

1. Rom. 8:3; Gal. 2:16

2. 1 Tim. 1:8

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

A. 95: The moral law is of use to all men, to inform them of the holy nature and will of God,¹ and of their duty, binding them to walk accordingly;² to convince them of their disability to keep it, and of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives;³ to humble them in the sense of their sin and misery,⁴ and thereby help them to a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ,⁵ and of the perfection of His obedience.⁶

1. Lev. 11:44–45; 20:7–8; Rom. 7:12

2. Mic. 6:8; James 2:10–11

3. Ps. 19:11–12; Rom. 3:20; 7:7

4. Rom. 3:9, 23

5. Gal. 3:21–22

6. Rom. 10:4

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

A. 96: The moral law is of use to unregenerate men, to awaken their consciences to flee from wrath to come,¹ and to drive them to Christ;² or, upon their continuance in the estate and way of sin, to leave them inexcusable,³ and under the curse thereof.⁴

1. 1 Tim. 1:9–10

2. Gal. 3:24

3. Rom. 1:20; 2:15

4. Gal. 3:10

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

A. 97: Although they that are regenerate, and believe in Christ, be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works,¹ so as thereby they are neither justified² nor condemned;³ yet, besides the general uses thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use, to show them how much they are bound to Christ for His fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good;⁴ and thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness,⁵ and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule of their obedience.⁶

1. Rom. 6:14; 7:4, 6; Gal. 4:4–5

2. Rom. 3:20

3. Gal. 5:23; Rom. 8:1

4. Rom. 7:24–25; 8:3–4; Gal. 3:13–14

5. Luke 1:68–69, 74–75; Col. 1:12–14

6. Rom. 7:22; 12:2; Titus 2:11–14

Q. 98: Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. 98: The moral law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God upon Mount Sinai, and written by Him in two tables of stone;¹ and are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. The four first commandments containing our duty to God, and the other six our duty to man.²

1. Deut. 10:4; Ex. 34:1–4

2. Matt. 22:37–38, 40

Q. 99: What rules are to be observed for the right understanding of the Ten Commandments?

A. 99: For the right understanding of the Ten Commandments, these rules are to be observed:

1. That the law is perfect, and bindeth everyone to full conformity in the whole man unto the righteousness thereof, and unto entire obedience forever; so as to require the utmost perfection of every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin.¹
2. That it is spiritual, and so reaches the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul; as well as words, works, and gestures.²
3. That one and the same thing, in divers respects, is required or forbidden in several commandments.³
4. That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden;⁴ and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded;⁵ so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included;⁶ and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.⁷

5. That what God forbids, is at no time to be done;⁸ What He commands, is always our duty;⁹ and yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times.¹⁰
6. That under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto.¹¹
7. That what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavor that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places.¹²
8. That in what is commanded to others, we are bound, according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them;¹³ and to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.¹⁴

1. Ps. 19:7; James 2:10; Matt. 5:21–22
2. Rom. 7:14; Deut. 6:5; Matt. 5:21–22, 27–28, 33–34, 37–39, 43–44; 22:37–39
3. Col. 3:5; Amos 8:5; Prov. 1:19; 1 Tim. 6:10
4. Isa. 58:13; Deut. 6:13; Matt. 4:9–10; 15:4–6
5. Matt. 5:21–25; Eph. 4:28
6. Ex. 20:12; Prov. 30:17
7. Jer. 18:7–8; Ex. 20:7; Ps. 15:1, 4–5; 24:4–5

8. Job. 13:7; 36:21; Rom. 3:8; Heb. 11:25
9. Deut. 4:8–9
10. Matt. 12:7
11. Matt. 5:21–22, 27–28; 15:4–6; Heb. 10:24–25; 1 Thess. 5:22–23; Gal. 5:26; Col. 3:21
12. Ex. 20:10; Lev. 19:17; Gen. 18:19; Josh. 24:15; Deut. 6:6–7
13. 2 Cor. 1:24
14. 1 Tim. 5:22

Q. 100: What special things are we to consider in the Ten Commandments?

A. 100: We are to consider, in the Ten Commandments, the preface, the substance of the commandments themselves, and several reasons annexed to some of them, the more to enforce them.

Q. 101: What is the preface to the Ten Commandments?

A. 101: The preface to the Ten Commandments is contained in these words, “I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”¹ Wherein God manifesteth His sovereignty, as being JEHOVAH, the eternal, immutable, and almighty God;² having His being in and of Himself,³ and giving being to all His words⁴ and works;⁵ and that He is a God in covenant, as with Israel of old, so with all His people;⁶ who, as He brought them out of their bondage in Egypt, so He delivers us from our spiritual thralldom;⁷ and that therefore we are bound to take Him for our God alone, and to keep all His commandments.⁸

1. Ex. 20:2
2. Isa. 44:6
3. Ex. 3:14
4. Ex. 6:3

5. Acts 17:24, 28
6. Gen. 17:7; Rom. 3:29
7. Luke 1:74–75
8. 1 Pet. 1:15–18; Lev. 18:30, 19:37

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

A. 102: The sum of the four commandments containing our duty to God is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind.¹

1. Luke 10:27

Q. 103: Which is the first commandment?

A. 103: The first commandment is, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”¹

1. Ex. 20:3

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

A. 104: The duties required in the first commandment are, the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God;¹ and to worship and glorify Him accordingly,² by thinking,³ meditating,⁴ remembering,⁵ highly esteeming,⁶ honoring,⁷ adoring,⁸ choosing,⁹ loving,¹⁰ desiring,¹¹ fearing of Him;¹² believing Him;¹³ trusting,¹⁴ hoping,¹⁵ delighting,¹⁶ rejoicing in Him;¹⁷ being zealous for Him;¹⁸ calling upon Him, giving all praise and thanks,¹⁹ and yielding all obedience and submission to Him with the whole man;²⁰ being careful in all things to please Him,²¹ and sorrowful when in anything He is offended;²² and walking humbly with Him.²³

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| 1. 1 Chron. 28:9; Deut. 26:17; Isa. 43:10; Jer. 14:22 | 9. Josh. 24:15, 22 | 18. Rom. 12:11; Num. 25:11 |
| 2. Ps. 29:2; 95:6–7; Matt. 4:10 | 10. Deut. 6:5 | 19. Phil. 4:6 |
| 3. Mal. 3:16 | 11. Ps. 73:25 | 20. Jer. 7:28; James 4:7 |
| 4. Ps. 63:6 | 12. Isa. 8:13 | 21. 1 John 3:22 |
| 5. Eccl. 12:1 | 13. Ex. 14:31 | 22. Jer. 31:18; Ps. 119:136 |
| 6. Ps. 71:19 | 14. Isa. 26:4 | 23. Mic. 6:8 |
| 7. Mal. 1:6 | 15. Ps. 130:7 | |
| 8. Isa. 45:23 | 16. Ps. 37:4 | |
| | 17. Ps. 32:11 | |

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

A. 105: The sins forbidden in the first commandment are, atheism, in denying or not having a God;¹ idolatry, in having or worshiping more gods than one, or any with or instead of the true God;² the not having and avouching Him for God, and our God;³ the omission or neglect of anything due to Him, required in this commandment;⁴ ignorance,⁵ forgetfulness,⁶ misapprehensions,⁷ false opinions,⁸ unworthy and wicked thoughts of Him;⁹ bold and curious searching into His secrets;¹⁰ all profaneness,¹¹ hatred of God;¹² self-love,¹³ self-seeking,¹⁴ and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from Him in whole or in part;¹⁵ vain credulity,¹⁶ unbelief,¹⁷ heresy,¹⁸ misbelief,¹⁹ distrust,²⁰ despair,²¹ incorrigibleness,²² and insensibleness under judgments,²³ hardness of heart,²⁴ pride,²⁵ presumption,²⁶ carnal security,²⁷ tempting of God;²⁸ using unlawful means,²⁹ and trusting in unlawful means;³⁰ carnal delights and joys;³¹ corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal;³² lukewarmness,³³ and deadness in the things of God;³⁴ estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God;³⁵ praying, or giving any religious worship, to saints, angels, or any other creatures;³⁶ all compacts and consulting with the devil,³⁷ and hearkening to his suggestions;³⁸ making men the lords of our faith and conscience;³⁹ slighting and despising God and His commands;⁴⁰ resisting and grieving of His Spirit,⁴¹ discontent and impatience at His dispensations, charging Him foolishly for the evils He inflicts on us;⁴² and ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do, to fortune,⁴³ idols,⁴⁴ ourselves,⁴⁵ or any other creature.⁴⁶

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| 1. Ps. 14:1; Eph. 2:12 | 26. Ps. 19:13 |
| 2. Jer. 2:27–28; 1 Thess. 1:9 | 27. Zeph. 1:12 |
| 3. Ps. 81:11 | 28. Matt. 4:7 |
| 4. Isa. 43:22–24 | 29. Rom. 3:8 |
| 5. Jer. 4:22; Hos. 4:1, 6 | 30. Jer. 17:5 |
| 6. Jer. 2:32 | 31. 2 Tim. 3:4 |
| 7. Acts 17:23, 29 | 32. Gal. 4:17; John 16:2; Rom. 10:2; Luke 9:54–55 |
| 8. Isa. 40:18 | 33. Rev. 3:16 |
| 9. Ps. 50:21 | 34. Rev. 3:1 |
| 10. Deut. 29:29 | 35. Ezek. 14:5; Isa. 1:4–5 |
| 11. Titus 1:16; Heb. 12:16 | 36. Rom. 1:25, 10:13–14; Hos. 4:12; Acts 10:25–26;
Rev. 19:10; Matt. 4:10; Col. 2:18 |
| 12. Rom. 1:30 | 37. Lev. 20:6; 1 Sam. 28:7, 11; 1 Chron. 10:13–14 |
| 13. 2 Tim. 3:2 | 38. Acts 5:3 |
| 14. Phil. 2:21 | 39. 2 Cor. 1:24; Matt. 23:9 |
| 15. 1 John 2:15–16; 1 Sam. 2:29; Col. 3:2, 5 | 40. Deut. 32:15; 2 Sam. 12:9; Prov. 13:13 |
| 16. 1 John 4:1 | 41. Acts 7:51; Eph. 4:30 |
| 17. Heb. 3:12 | 42. Ps. 73:2–3, 13–15, 22; Job 1:22 |
| 18. Gal. 5:20; Titus 3:10 | 43. 1 Sam. 6:7–9 |
| 19. Acts 26:9 | 44. Dan. 5:23 |
| 20. Ps. 78:22 | 45. Deut. 8:17; Dan. 4:30 |
| 21. Gen. 4:13 | 46. Hab. 1:16 |
| 22. Jer. 5:3 | |
| 23. Isa. 42:25 | |
| 24. Rom. 2:5 | |
| 25. Jer. 13:15 | |

Q. 106: What are we specially taught by these words before me in the first commandment?

A. 106: These words before me, or before my face, in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh special notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God: that so it may be an argument to dissuade from it, and to aggravate it as a most impudent provocation:¹ as also to persuade us to do as in His sight, whatever we do in His service.²

1. Ezek. 8:5–18; Ps. 44:20–21

2. 1 Chron. 28:9

Q. 107: Which is the second commandment?

A. 107: The second commandment is, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”¹

1. Ex. 20:4–6

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

A. 108: The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in His Word;¹ particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ;² the reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word;³ the administration and receiving of the sacraments;⁴ church government and discipline;⁵ the ministry and maintenance thereof;⁶ religious fasting;⁷ swearing by the name of God,⁸ and vowing unto Him;⁹ as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship;¹⁰ and, according to each one’s place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.¹¹

1. Deut. 32:46–47; Matt. 28:20; Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 6:13–14

2. Phil. 4:6; Eph. 5:20

3. Deut. 17:18–19; Acts 10:33; 15:21;

2 Tim. 4:2; James 1:21–22

4. Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23–30

5. Matt. 16:19; 18:15–17; 1 Cor. 5; 12:28

6. Eph. 4:11–12; 1 Tim. 5:17–18; 1 Cor. 9:1–15

7. Joel 2:12–13; 1 Cor. 7:5

8. Deut. 6:13

9. Isa. 19:21; Ps. 76:11

10. Acts 17:16–17; Ps. 16:4

11. Deut. 7:5; Isa. 30:22

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

A. 109: The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising,¹ counseling,² commanding,³ using,⁴ and anywise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God Himself;⁵ tolerating a false religion;⁶ the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever;⁷ all worshiping of it,⁸ or God in it or by it;⁹ the making of any representation of feigned deities,¹⁰ and all worship of them, or service belonging to them;¹¹ all superstitious devices,¹² corrupting the worship of God,¹³ adding to it, or taking from it,¹⁴ whether invented and taken up of ourselves,¹⁵ or received by tradition from others,¹⁶ though under the title of antiquity,¹⁷ custom,¹⁸ devotion,¹⁹ good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever;²⁰ simony;²¹ sacrilege;²² all neglect,²³ contempt,²⁴ hindering,²⁵ and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.²⁶

1. Num. 15:39

2. Deut. 13:6–8

3. Hos. 5:11; Mic. 6:16

4. 1 Kings 11:33; 12:33

5. Deut. 12:30–32

6. Deut. 13:6–11; Zech. 13:2–3; Rev. 2:2, 14–15, 20, Rev. 17:12, 16–17

7. Deut. 4:15–19; Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:21–23, 25

8. Dan. 3:18; Gal. 4:8

9. Ex. 32:5

10. Ex. 32:8

11. 1 Kings 18:26, 28; Isa. 65:11

12. Acts 17:22; Col. 2:21–23

13. Mal. 1:7–8, 14

14. Deut. 4:2

15. Ps. 106:39

16. Matt. 15:9

17. 1 Pet. 1:18

18. Jer. 44:17

19. Isa. 65:3–5; Gal. 1:13–14

20. 1 Sam. 13:11–12; 15:21

21. Acts 8:18

22. Rom. 2:22; Mal. 3:8

23. Ex. 4:24–26

24. Matt. 22:5; Mal. 1:7, 13

25. Matt. 23:13

26. Acts 13:44–45; 1 Thess. 2:15–16

Q. 110: What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it?

A. 110: The reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it, contained in these words, “For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments”;¹ are, besides God’s sovereignty over us, and propriety in us,² His fervent zeal for His own worship,³ and His revengeful indignation against all false worship, as

being a spiritual whoredom;⁴ accounting the breakers of this commandment such as hate Him, and threatening to punish them unto divers generations;⁵ and esteeming the observers of it such as love Him and keep His commandments, and promising mercy to them unto many generations.⁶

1. Ex. 20:5–6
2. Ps. 45:11; Rev. 15:3–4
3. Ex. 34:13–14

4. 1 Cor. 10:20–22; Jer. 7:18–20; Ezek. 16:26–27; Deut. 32:16–20
5. Hos. 2:2–4
6. Deut. 5:29

Q. 111: Which is the third commandment?

A. 111: The third commandment is, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold Him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.”¹

1. Ex. 20:7

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

A. 112: The third commandment requires that the name of God, His titles, attributes,¹ ordinances,² the Word,³ sacraments,⁴ prayer,⁵ oaths,⁶ vows,⁷ lots,⁸ His works,⁹ and whatsoever else there is whereby He makes Himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought,¹⁰ meditation,¹¹ Word,¹² and writing;¹³ by an holy profession,¹⁴ and answerable conversation,¹⁵ to the glory of God,¹⁶ and the good of ourselves,¹⁷ and others.¹⁸

1. Matt. 6:9; Deut. 28:58; Ps. 29:2; 68:4; Rev. 15:3–4
2. Mal. 1:14; Eccl. 5:1
3. Ps. 138:2
4. 1 Cor. 11:24–25, 28–29
5. 1 Tim. 2:8
6. Jer. 4:2
7. Eccl. 5:2, 4–6
8. Acts 1:24, 26
9. Job 36:24

10. Mal. 3:16
11. Ps. 8:1, 3–4, 9
12. Col. 3:17; Ps. 105:2, 5
13. Ps. 102:18
14. 1 Pet. 3:15; Mic. 4:5
15. Phil. 1:27
16. 1 Cor. 10:31
17. Jer. 32:39
18. 1 Pet. 2:12

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

A. 113: The sins forbidden in the third commandment are, the not using of God’s name as is required;¹ and the abuse of it in an ignorant,² vain,³ irreverent, profane,⁴ superstitious,⁵ or wicked mentioning, or otherwise using His titles, attributes,⁶ ordinances,⁷ or works,⁸ by blasphemy,⁹ perjury;¹⁰ all sinful cursings,¹¹ oaths,¹² vows,¹³ and lots;¹⁴ violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful;¹⁵ and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful;¹⁶ murmuring and quarreling at,¹⁷ curious prying into,¹⁸ and misapplying of God’s decrees¹⁹ and providences;²⁰ misinterpreting,²¹ misapplying,²² or any way perverting the Word, or any part of it,²³ to profane jests,²⁴ curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines;²⁵ abusing it, the creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, to charms,²⁶ or sinful lusts and practices;²⁷ the maligning,²⁸ scorning,²⁹ reviling,³⁰ or any wise opposing of God’s truth, grace, and ways;³¹ making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends;³² being ashamed of it,³³ or a shame to it, by unconformable,³⁴ unwise,³⁵ unfruitful,³⁶ and offensive walking,³⁷ or backsliding from it.³⁸

1. Mal. 2:2
2. Acts 17:23
3. Prov. 30:9
4. Mal. 1:6–7, 12; 3:14
5. 1 Sam. 4:3–5; Jer. 7:4, 9–10, 14, 31; Col. 2:20–22
6. 2 Kings 18:30, 35; Ex. 5:2; Ps. 139:20
7. Ps. 50:16–17
8. Isa. 5:12
9. 2 Kings 19:22; Lev. 24:11
10. Zech. 5:4; 8:17
11. 1 Sam. 17:43; 2 Sam. 16:5
12. Jer. 5:7; 23:10
13. Deut. 23:18; Acts 23:12, 14
14. Est. 3:7; 9:24; Ps. 22:18
15. Ps. 24:4; Ezek. 17:16, 18–19
16. Mark 6:26; 1 Sam. 25:22, 32–34
17. Rom. 9:14, 19–20
18. Deut. 29:29
19. Rom. 3:5, 7; 6:1–2
20. Eccl. 8:11; 9:3; Ps. 39

21. Matt. 5:21–48
22. Ezek. 13:22
23. 2 Pet. 3:16; Matt. 22:24–31
24. Isa. 22:13; Jer. 23:34, 36, 38
25. 1 Tim. 1:4, 6–7; 6:4–5, 20; 2 Tim. 2:14; Titus. 3:9
26. Deut. 18:10–14; Acts 19:13
27. 2 Tim. 4:3–4; Rom. 13:13–14; 1 Kings 21:9–10; Jude 4
28. Acts 13:45; 1 John 3:12
29. Ps. 1:1; 2 Pet. 3:3
30. 1 Pet. 4:4
31. Acts 4:18; 13:45–46, 50; 19:9; 1 Thess 2:16; Heb. 10:29
32. 2 Tim. 3:5; Matt. 6:1–2, 5, 16; 23:14
33. Mark 8:38
34. Ps. 73:14–15
35. 1 Cor. 6:5–6; Eph. 5:15–17
36. Isa. 5:4; 2 Pet. 1:8–9
37. Rom. 2:23–24
38. Gal. 3:1, 3; Heb. 6:6

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

A. 114: The reasons annexed to the third commandment, in these words, “The Lord thy God,” and, “For the Lord will not hold Him guiltless that taketh His name in vain,”¹ are, because He is the Lord and our God, therefore His name is not to be profaned, or any way abused by us;² especially because He will be so far from acquitting and sparing the transgressors of this commandment, as that He will not suffer them to escape His righteous judgment,³ albeit many such escape the censures and punishments of men.⁴

1. Ex. 20:7
2. Lev. 19:12

3. Ezek. 36:21–23; Deut. 28:58–59; Zech. 5:2–4
4. 1 Sam. 2:12, 17, 22, 24; 3:18

Q. 115: Which is the fourth commandment?

A. 115: The fourth commandment is, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”¹

1. Ex. 20:8–11

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

A. 116: The fourth commandment requires of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as He hath appointed in His Word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian Sabbath,¹ and in the New Testament called the Lord’s Day.²

1. Deut. 5:12, 14, 18; Gen. 2:2–3; 1 Cor. 16:1–2;
Acts 20:7; Matt. 5:17–18; Isa. 56:2, 4, 6–7

2. Rev. 1:10

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

A. 117: The Sabbath or Lord’s Day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all the day,¹ not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful;² and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy)³ in the public and private exercises of God’s worship;⁴ and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose and seasonably dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day.⁵

1. Ex. 20:8, 10
2. Ex. 16:25–28; Neh. 13:15–22; Jer. 17:21–22
3. Matt. 12:1–13

4. Isa. 58:13; 66:23; Luke 4:16; Acts 20:7;
1 Cor. 16:1–2; Ps. 92; Lev. 23:3
5. Ex. 16:22, 25–26, 29; 20:8; Luke 23:54, 56; Neh. 13:19

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

A. 118: The charge of keeping the Sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oftentimes to hinder them by employments of their own.¹

1. Ex. 20:10; 23:12; Josh. 24:15; Neh. 13:15, 17; Jer. 17:20–22

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

A. 119: The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are, all omissions of the duties required,¹ all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them;² all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful;³ and by all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations.⁴

1. Ezek. 22:26

2. Acts 20:7, 9; Ezek. 33:30–32; Amos 8:5;

3. Ezek. 23:38

4. Jer. 17:24, 27; Isa. 58:13 Mal. 1:13

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

A. 120: The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, the more to enforce it, are taken from the equity of it, God allowing us six days of seven for our own affairs, and reserving but one for Himself, in these words, “Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work”;¹ from God’s challenging a special propriety in that day, “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God”;² from the example of God, who in six days “made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day”; and from that blessing which God put upon that day, not only in sanctifying it to be a day for His service, but in ordaining it to be a means of blessing to us in our sanctifying it: “Wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”³

1. Ex. 20:9

2. Ex. 20:10

3. Ex. 20:11

Q. 121: Why is the word remember set in the beginning of the fourth commandment?

A. 121: The word remember is set in the beginning of the fourth commandment¹ partly, because of the great benefit of remembering it, we being thereby helped in our preparation to keep it,² and, in keeping it, better to keep all the rest of the commandments,³ and to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain a short abridgment of religion;⁴ and partly, because we are very ready to forget it,⁵ for that there is less light of nature for it,⁶ and yet it restraineth our natural liberty in things at other times lawful;⁷ that it cometh but once in seven days, and many worldly businesses come between, and too often take off our minds from thinking of it, either to prepare for it, or to sanctify it;⁸ and that Satan with his instruments much labor to blot out the glory, and even the memory of it, to bring in all irreligion and impiety.⁹

1. Ex. 20:8

2. Ex. 16:23; Luke 23:54, 56; Mark 15:42; Neh. 13:19

3. Ps. 92 (title) and vv. 13–14; Ezek. 20:12, 19–20

4. Gen. 2:2–3; Ps. 118:22, 24; Acts 4:10, 11; Rev. 1:10

5. Ezek. 22:26

6. Neh. 9:14

7. Ex. 34:21

8. Deut. 5:14–15; Amos 8:5

9. Lam. 1:7; Jer. 17:21–23; Neh. 13:15–23

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

A. 122: The sum of the six commandments which contain our duty to man is, to love our neighbor as ourselves,¹ and to do to others what we would have them to do to us.²

1. Matt. 22:39

2. Matt. 7:12

Q. 123: Which is the fifth commandment?

A. 123: The fifth commandment is, “Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”¹

1. Ex. 20:12

Q. 124: Who are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment?

A. 124: By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents¹ but all superiors in age² and gifts;³ and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family,⁴ church,⁵ or commonwealth.⁶

1. Prov. 23:22–25; Eph. 6:1–2

2. 1 Tim. 5:1–2

3. Gen. 4:20–22; 45:8

4. 2 Kings 5:13

5. 2 Kings 2:12; 13:14; Gal. 4:19

6. Isa. 49:23

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

A. 125: Superiors are styled “father” and “mother,” both to teach them in all duties toward their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations;¹ and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents.²

1. Eph. 6:4; 2 Cor. 12:14;

1 Thess. 2:7–8, 11; Num. 11:11–12

2. 1 Cor. 4:14–16; 2 Kings 5:13

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

A. 126: The general scope of the fifth commandment is, the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.¹

1. Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:17; Rom. 12:10

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

A. 127: The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart,¹ word,² and behavior;³ prayer and thanksgiving for them;⁴ imitation of their virtues and graces;⁵ willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels;⁶ due submission to their corrections;⁷ fidelity to,⁸ defense⁹ and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places;¹⁰ bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they maybe an honor to them and to their government.¹¹

1. Mal. 1:6; Lev. 19:3

2. Prov. 31:28; 1 Pet. 3:6

3. Lev. 19:32; 1 Kings 2:19

4. 1 Tim. 2:1–2

5. Heb. 13:7; Phil. 3:17

6. Eph. 6:1–2, 5–7; 1 Pet. 2:13–14; Rom. 13:1–5;

Heb. 13:17; Prov. 4:3–4; 23:22; Ex. 18:19, 24

7. Heb. 12:9; 1 Pet. 2:18–20

8. Titus 2:9–10

9. 1 Sam. 26:15–16; 2 Sam. 18:3; Est. 6:2

10. Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:6–7; 1 Tim. 5:17–18;

Gal. 6:6; Gen. 45:11; 47:12

11. Ps. 127:3–5; Prov. 31:23

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

A. 128: The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them;¹ envying at,² contempt of,³ and rebellion⁴ against, their persons⁵ and places,⁶ in their lawful counsels,⁷ commands, and corrections;⁸ cursing, mocking,⁹ and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.¹⁰

1. Matt. 15:4–6

2. Num. 11:28–29

3. 1 Sam. 8:7; Isa. 3:5

4. 2 Sam. 15:1–12

5. Ex. 21:15

6. 1 Sam. 10:27

7. 1 Sam. 2:25

8. Deut. 21:18–21

9. Prov. 30:11, 17

10. Prov. 19:26

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

A. 129: It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love,¹ pray for,² and bless their inferiors;³ to instruct,⁴ counsel, and admonish them;⁵ countenancing,⁶ commending,⁷ and rewarding such as do well;⁸ and discountenancing,⁹ reproof,

and chastising such as do ill;¹⁰ protecting,¹¹ and providing for them all things necessary for soul¹² and body;¹³ and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God,¹⁴ honor to themselves,¹⁵ and so to preserve that authority which God hath put upon them.¹⁶

1. Col. 3:19; Titus 2:4
2. 1 Sam. 12:23; Job 1:5
3. 1 Kings 8:55–56; Heb. 7:7; Gen. 49:28
4. Deut. 6:6–7
5. Eph. 6:4
6. 1 Pet. 3:7
7. 1 Pet. 2:14; Rom. 13:3
8. Est. 6:3

9. Rom. 13:3–4
10. Prov. 29:15; 1 Pet. 2:14
11. Job 29:12–17; Isa. 1:10, 17
12. Eph. 6:4
13. 1 Tim. 5:8
14. 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:3–5
15. 1 Kings 3:28
16. Titus 2:15

Q. 130: What are the sins of superiors?

A. 130: The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them,¹ an inordinate seeking of themselves,² their own glory,³ ease, profit, or pleasure;⁴ commanding things unlawful,⁵ or not in the power of inferiors to perform;⁶ counseling,⁷ encouraging,⁸ or favoring them in that which is evil;⁹ dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good;¹⁰ correcting them unduly;¹¹ careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger;¹² provoking them to wrath;¹³ or any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.¹⁴

1. Ezek. 34:2–4
2. Phil. 2:21
3. John 5:44; 7:18
4. Isa. 56:10–11; Deut. 17:17
5. Dan. 3:4–6; Acts 4:17–18
6. Ex. 5:10–18; Matt. 23:2, 4
7. Matt. 14:8; Mark 6:24
8. 2 Sam. 13:28

9. 1 Sam. 3:13
10. John 7:46–49; Col. 3:21; Ex. 5:17
11. 1 Pet. 2:18–20; Heb. 12:10; Deut. 25:3
12. Gen. 38:11, 26; Acts 18:17
13. Eph. 6:4
14. Gen. 9:21; 1 Kings 1:6; 12:13–16; 1 Sam. 2:29–31

Q. 131: What are the duties of equals?

A. 131: The duties of equals are, to regard the dignity and worth of each other,¹ in giving honor to go one before another;² and to rejoice in each other's gifts and advancement, as their own.³

1. 1 Pet. 2:17
2. Rom. 12:10

3. Rom. 12:15–16; Phil. 2:3–4

Q. 132: What are the sins of equals?

A. 132: The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required,¹ the undervaluing of the worth,² envying the gifts,³ grieving at the advancement or prosperity one of another;⁴ and usurping preeminence one over another.⁵

1. Rom. 13:8
2. 2 Tim. 3:3
3. Acts 7:9; Gal. 5:26

4. Num. 12:2; Est. 6:12–13
5. 3 John 9; Luke 22:24

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

A. 133: The reason annexed to the fifth commandment, in these words, “That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,”¹ is an express promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good, to all such as keep this commandment.²

1. Ex. 20:12

2. Deut. 5:16; 1 Kings 8:25; Eph. 6:2–3

Q. 134: Which is the sixth commandment?

A. 134: The sixth commandment is, “Thou shalt not kill.”¹

1. Ex. 20:13

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

A. 135: The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves¹ and others² by resisting all thoughts and purposes,³ subduing all passions,⁴ and avoiding all occasions,⁵ temptations,⁶ and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any;⁷ by just defense thereof against violence,⁸ patient bearing of the hand of God,⁹ quietness of mind,¹⁰ cheerfulness of spirit;¹¹ a sober use of meat,¹² drink,¹³ physic,¹⁴ sleep,¹⁵ labor,¹⁶ and recreations;¹⁷ by charitable thoughts,¹⁸ love,¹⁹ compassion,²⁰ meekness, gentleness, kindness;²¹ peaceable,²² mild and courteous speeches and behavior;²³ forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil;²⁴ comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.²⁵

1. Eph. 5:28–29
2. 1 Kings 18:4
3. Jer. 26:15–16; Acts 23:12, 16–17, 21, 27
4. Eph. 4:26–27
5. 2 Sam. 2:22; Deut. 22:8
6. Matt. 4:6–7; Prov. 1:10–11, 15–16
7. 1 Sam. 24:2; 26:9–11; Gen. 37:21–22
8. Ps. 82:4; Prov. 24:11–12; 1 Sam. 14:45
9. James 5:7–11; Heb. 12:9
10. 1 Thess. 4:11; 1 Pet. 3:3–4; Ps. 37:8–11
11. Prov. 17:22
12. Prov. 25:16, 27
13. 1 Tim. 5:23

14. Isa. 38:21 21
15. Ps. 127:2
16. Eccl. 5:12; 2 Thess. 3:10, 12; Prov. 16:26
17. Eccl. 3:4, 11
18. 1 Sam. 19:4–5; 22:13–14
19. Rom. 13:10
20. Luke 10:33–34
21. Col. 3:12–13
22. James 3:17
23. 1 Pet. 3:8–11; Prov. 15:1; Judg. 8:1–3
24. Matt. 5:24; Eph. 4:2, 32; Rom. 12:17, 20–21
25. 1 Thess. 5:14; Job 31:19–20; Matt. 25:35–36; Prov. 31:8–9

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

A. 136: The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves,¹ or of others,² except in case of public justice,³ lawful war,⁴ or necessary defense;⁵ the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life;⁶ sinful anger,⁷ hatred,⁸ envy,⁹ desire of revenge;¹⁰ all excessive passions,¹¹ distracting cares;¹² immoderate use of meat, drink,¹³ labor,¹⁴ and recreations;¹⁵ provoking words,¹⁶ oppression,¹⁷ quarreling,¹⁸ striking, wounding,¹⁹ and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.²⁰

1. Acts 16:28
2. Gen. 9:6
3. Num. 35:31, 33
4. Jer. 48:10; Deut. 20
5. Ex. 22:2–3
6. Matt. 25:42–43; James 2:15–16; Eccl. 6:1–2
7. Matt. 5:22
8. 1 John 3:15; Lev. 19:17
9. Prov. 14:30
10. Rom. 12:19

11. Eph. 4:31
12. Matt. 6:31, 34
13. Luke 21:34; Rom. 13:13
14. Eccl. 2:22–23; 12:12
15. Isa. 5:12
16. Prov. 12:18; 15:1
17. Ezek. 18:18; Ex. 1:14
18. Gal. 5:15; Prov. 23:29
19. Num. 35:16–18, 21
20. Ex. 21:18–36

Q. 137: Which is the seventh commandment?

A. 137: The seventh commandment is, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”¹

1. Ex. 20:14

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

A. 138: The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity in body, mind, affections,¹ words,² and behavior;³ and the preservation of it in ourselves and others;⁴ watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses;⁵ temperance,⁶ keeping of chaste company,⁷ modesty in apparel;⁸ marriage by those that have not the gift of continency,⁹ conjugal love,¹⁰ and cohabitation;¹¹ diligent labor in our callings;¹² shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.¹³

1. 1 Thess. 4:4; Job 31:1; 1 Cor. 7:34
2. Col. 4:6
3. 1 Pet. 3:2
4. 1 Cor. 7:2, 35–36
5. Job 31:1
6. Acts 24:24–25
7. Prov. 2:16–20

8. 1 Tim. 2:9
9. 1 Cor. 7:2, 9
10. Prov. 5:19–20
11. 1 Pet. 3:7
12. Prov. 31:11, 27–28
13. Prov. 5:8; Gen. 39:8–10

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

A. 139: The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required,¹ are, adultery, fornication,² rape, incest,³ sodomy, and all unnatural lusts;⁴ all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections;⁵ all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto;⁶ wanton looks,⁷ impudent or light behavior, immodest apparel;⁸ prohibiting of lawful,⁹ and dispensing with unlawful marriages;¹⁰ allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews,* and resorting to them;¹¹ entangling vows of single life,¹² undue delay of marriage;¹³ having more wives or husbands than one at the same time;¹⁴ unjust divorce,¹⁵ or desertion;¹⁶ idleness, gluttony, drunkenness,¹⁷ unchaste company;¹⁸ lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays;¹⁹ and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.²⁰ [* brothels]

1. Prov. 5:7
2. Heb. 13:4; Gal. 5:19
3. 2 Sam. 13:14; 1 Cor. 5:1
4. Rom. 1:24, 26–27; Lev. 20:15–16
5. Matt. 5:28; 15:19; Col. 3:5
6. Eph. 5:3–4; Prov. 7:5, 21–22
7. Isa. 3:16; 2 Pet. 2:14
8. Prov. 7:10, 13
9. 1 Tim. 4:3
10. Lev. 18:1–20; Mark 6:18; Mal. 2:11–12
11. 1 Kings 15:12; 2 Kings 23:7; Deut. 23:17–18; Lev. 19:29; Jer. 5:7; Prov. 7:24–27

12. Matt. 19:10–11
13. 1 Cor. 7:7–9; Gen. 38:26
14. Mal. 2:14–15; Matt. 19:5
15. Mal. 2:16; Matt. 5:32
16. 1 Cor. 7:12–13
17. Ezek. 16:49; Prov. 23:30–33
18. Gen. 39:10; Prov. 5:8
19. Eph. 5:4; Ezek. 23:14–16; Isa. 3:16; 23:15–17; Mark 6:22; Rom. 13:13; 1 Pet. 4:3
20. 2 Kings 9:30; Jer. 4:30; Ezek. 23:40

Q. 140: Which is the eighth commandment?

A. 140: The eighth commandment is, “Thou shalt not steal.”¹

1. Ex. 20:15

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

A. 141: The duties required in the eighth commandment are, truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man;¹ rendering to everyone his due;² restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof;³ giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others;⁴ moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods;⁵ a provident care and study to get,⁶ keep, use, and dispose these things which are necessary and convenient for the sustentation of our nature, and suitable to our condition;⁷ a lawful calling,⁸ and diligence in it;⁹ frugality;¹⁰ avoiding unnecessary lawsuits¹¹ and suretyship, or other like engagements;¹² and an endeavor, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.¹³

1. Ps. 15:2, 4; Zech. 7:4, 10; 8:16–17
2. Rom. 13:7
3. Lev. 6:2–5; Luke 19:8
4. Luke 6:30, 38; 1 John 3:17; Eph. 4:28; Gal. 6:10
5. 1 Tim. 6:6–9; Gal. 6:14
6. 1 Tim. 5:8
7. Prov. 27:23–27; Eccl. 2:24; 3:12–13; 1 Tim. 6:17–18; Isa. 38:1; Matt. 11:8

8. 1 Cor. 7:20; Gen. 2:15, 3:19
9. Eph. 4:28; Prov. 10:4
10. John 6:12; Prov. 21:20
11. 1 Cor. 6:1–9
12. Prov. 6:1–6; 11:15
13. Lev. 25:35; Deut. 22:1–4; Ex. 23:4–5; Gen. 47:14, 20; Phil. 2:4; Matt. 22:39

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

A. 142: The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required,¹ are, theft,² robbery,³ man-stealing,⁴ and receiving anything that is stolen;⁵ fraudulent dealing,⁶ false weights and measures,⁷ removing land marks,⁸ injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man,⁹ or in matters of trust;¹⁰ oppression,¹¹ extortion,¹² usury,¹³ bribery,¹⁴ vexatious lawsuits,¹⁵ unjust enclosures and depopulations;¹⁶ engrossing commodities to enhance the price;¹⁷ unlawful callings,¹⁸ and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves;¹⁹ covetousness;²⁰ inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods;²¹ distrustful and distract-ing cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them;²² envying at the prosperity of others;²³ as

likewise idleness,²⁴ prodigality, wasteful gaming; and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate,²⁵ and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God hath given us.²⁶

1. James 2:15–16; 1 John 3:17
2. Eph. 4:28; Ps. 62:10
3. Ps. 62:10
4. 1 Tim. 1:10
5. Prov. 29:24; Ps. 50:18
6. 1 Thess. 4:6
7. Prov. 11:1; 20:10
8. Deut. 19:14; Prov. 23:10
9. Amos 8:5; Ps. 37:21
10. Luke 16:10–12
11. Ezek. 22:29; Lev. 25:17
12. Matt. 23:25; Ezek. 22:12
13. Ps. 15:5

14. Job 15:34
15. 1 Cor. 6:6–8; Prov. 3:29–30
16. Isa. 5:8; Mic. 2:2
17. Prov. 11:26
18. Acts 19:19, 24–25
19. Job 20:19; James 5:4; Prov. 21:6
20. Luke 12:15
21. 1 Tim. 6:5; Col. 3:2; Prov. 23:5; Ps. 62:10
22. Matt. 6:25, 31, 34; Eccl. 5:12
23. Ps. 37:1, 7; 73:3
24. 2 Thess. 3:11; Prov. 18:9
25. Prov. 21:17; 23:20–21; 28:19
26. Eccl. 4:8; 6:2; 1 Tim. 5:8

Q. 143: Which is the ninth commandment?

A. 143: The ninth commandment is, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”¹

1. Ex. 20:16

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

A. 144: The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man,¹ and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own;² appearing and standing for the truth;³ and from the heart,⁴ sincerely,⁵ freely,⁶ clearly,⁷ and fully,⁸ speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice,⁹ and in all other things whatsoever;¹⁰ a charitable esteem of our neighbors;¹¹ loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name;¹² sorrowing for,¹³ and covering of their infirmities;¹⁴ freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces,¹⁵ defending their innocency;¹⁶ a ready receiving of a good report,¹⁷ and unwillingness to admit of an evil report,¹⁸ concerning them; discouraging talebearers,¹⁹ flatterers,²⁰ and slanderers;²¹ love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth;²² keeping of lawful promises;²³ studying and practicing of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.²⁴

1. Zech. 8:16
2. 3 John 12
3. Prov. 31:8–9
4. Ps. 15:2
5. 2 Chron. 19:9
6. 1 Sam. 19:4–5
7. Josh. 7:19
8. 2 Sam. 14:18–20
9. Lev. 19:15; Prov. 14:5, 25
10. 2 Cor. 1:17–18; Eph. 4:25
11. Heb. 6:9; 1 Cor. 13:7
12. Rom. 1:8; 2 John 4; 3 John 3–4

13. 2 Cor. 2:4; 12:21
14. Prov. 17:9; 1 Pet. 4:8
15. 1 Cor. 1:4–5, 7; 2 Tim. 1:4–5
16. 1 Sam. 22:14
17. 1 Cor. 13:6–7
18. Ps. 15:3
19. Prov. 25:23
20. Prov. 26:24–25
21. Ps. 101:5
22. Prov. 22:1; John 8:49
23. Ps. 15:4
24. Phil. 4:8

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

A. 145: The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own,¹ especially in public judicature;² giving false evidence,³ suborning false witnesses,⁴ wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, outfacing and overbearing the truth;⁵ passing unjust sentence,⁶ calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked;⁷ forgery,⁸ concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause,⁹ and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves,¹⁰ or complaint to others;¹¹ speaking the truth unseasonably,¹² or maliciously to a wrong end,¹³ or perverting it to a wrong meaning,¹⁴ or in doubtful and equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice;¹⁵ speaking untruth,¹⁶ lying,¹⁷ slandering,¹⁸ backbiting,¹⁹ detracting,²⁰ tale bearing,²¹ whispering,²² scoffing,²³ reviling,²⁴ rash,²⁵ harsh,²⁶ and partial censuring;²⁷ misconstruing intentions,

words, and actions;²⁸ flattering,²⁹ vainglorious boasting,³⁰ thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others;³¹ denying the gifts and graces of God;³² aggravating smaller faults;³³ hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession;³⁴ unnecessary discovering of infirmities;³⁵ raising false rumors,³⁶ receiving and countenancing evil reports,³⁷ and stopping our ears against just defense;³⁸ evil suspicion;³⁹ envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any,⁴⁰ endeavoring or desiring to impair it,⁴¹ rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy;⁴² scornful contempt,⁴³ fond admiration;⁴⁴ breach of lawful promises;⁴⁵ neglecting such things as are of good report,⁴⁶ and practicing, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as procure an ill name.⁴⁷

1. 1 Sam. 17:28; 2 Sam. 1:9–10, 15–16; 16:3
2. Lev. 19:15; Hab. 1:4
3. Prov. 6:16, 19; 19:5
4. Acts 6:13
5. Jer. 9:3, 5; Acts 24:2, 5; Ps. 3:1–4; 12:3–4
6. Prov. 17:15; 1 Kings 21:9–14
7. Isa. 5:23
8. Ps. 119:69; Luke 16:5–7; 19:8
9. Lev. 5:1; Acts 5:3, 8–9; 2 Tim. 4:16
10. 1 Kings 1:6; Lev. 19:17
11. Isa. 59:4
12. Prov. 29:11
13. 1 Sam. 22:9–10; Ps. 52:1
14. Ps. 56:5; John 2:19; Matt. 26:60–61
15. Gen. 3:5; 26:7, 9
16. Isa. 59:13
17. Lev. 19:11; Col. 3:9
18. Ps. 50:20
19. Ps. 15:3
20. James 4:11; Jer. 38:4
21. Lev. 19:16
22. Rom. 1:29–30
23. Gen. 21:9; Gal. 4:29
24. 1 Cor. 6:10
25. Matt. 7:1

26. Acts 28:4
27. Gen. 38:24; Rom. 2:1
28. Neh. 6:6–8; Rom. 3:8; Ps. 69:10; 1 Sam. 1:13–15; 2 Sam. 10:3
29. Ps. 12:2–3
30. 2 Tim. 3:2
31. Luke 18:9, 11; Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 4:6; Acts 12:22; Ex. 4:10–14
32. Job 4:6; 27:5–6
33. Matt. 7:3–5
34. Prov. 28:13; 30:20; Gen. 3:12–13; 4:9; Jer. 2:35; 2 Kings 5:25
35. Gen. 9:22; Prov. 25:9–10
36. Ex. 23:1
37. Prov. 29:12
38. Acts 7:56–57; Job 31:13–14
39. 1 Cor. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:4
40. Num. 11:29; Matt. 21:15
41. Ezra 4:12–13
42. Jer. 48:27
43. Ps. 35:15–16, 21; Matt. 27:28–29
44. Jude 16; Acts 12:22
45. Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3
46. 1 Sam. 2:24
47. 2 Sam. 13:12–13; Prov. 5:8–9; 6:33

Q. 146: Which is the tenth commandment?

A. 146: The tenth commandment is, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s.”¹

1. Ex. 20:17

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

A. 147: The duties required in the tenth commandment are, such a full contentment with our own condition,¹ and such a charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto, and further all that good which is his.²

1. Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:6

2. Job 31:29; Ps. 122:7; 1 Tim. 1:5; Est. 10:3; 1 Cor. 13:4–7

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

A. 148: The sins forbidden in the tenth commandment are, discontentment with our own estate;¹ envying² and grieving at the good of our neighbor,³ together with all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.⁴

1. 1 Kings 21:4; Est. 5:13; 1 Cor. 10:10
2. Gal. 5:26; James 3:14, 16

3. Ps. 112:9–10; Neh. 2:10
4. Rom. 7:7–8; Rom. 13:9; Col. 3:5; Deut. 5:21

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

A. 149: No man is able, either of himself,¹ or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God;² but doth daily break them in thought,³ word, and deed.⁴

1. James 3:2; John 15:5; Rom. 8:3

2. Eccl. 7:20; 1 John 1:8, 10; Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:18–19

3. Gen. 6:5; 8:21

4. Rom. 3:9–19; James 3:2–13

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

A. 150: All transgressions of the law of God are not equally heinous; but some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.¹

1. John 19:11; Ezek. 8:6, 13, 15; 1 John 5:16; Ps. 78:17, 32, 56

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

A. 151: Sins receive their aggravations,

1. From the persons offending:¹ if they be of riper age,² greater experience or grace,³ eminent for profession,⁴ gifts,⁵ place,⁶ office,⁷ guides to others,⁸ and whose example is likely to be followed by others.⁹
2. From the parties offended:¹⁰ if immediately against God,¹¹ His attributes,¹² and worship;¹³ against Christ, and His grace;¹⁴ the Holy Spirit,¹⁵ His witness,¹⁶ and workings;¹⁷ against superiors, men of eminency,¹⁸ and such as we stand especially related and engaged unto;¹⁹ against any of the saints,²⁰ particularly weak brethren,²¹ the souls of them, or any other,²² and the common good of all or many.²³
3. From the nature and quality of the offense:²⁴ if it be against the express letter of the law,²⁵ break many commandments, contain in it many sins;²⁶ if not only conceived in the heart, but breaks forth in words and actions,²⁷ scandalize others,²⁸ and admit of no reparation;²⁹ if against means,³⁰ mercies,³¹ judgments,³² light of nature,³³ conviction of conscience,³⁴ public or private admonition,³⁵ censures of the church,³⁶ civil punishments;³⁷ and our prayers, purposes, promises,³⁸ vows,³⁹ covenants,⁴⁰ and engagements to God or men:⁴¹ if done deliberately,⁴² wilfully,⁴³ presumptuously,⁴⁴ impudently,⁴⁵ boastingly,⁴⁶ maliciously,⁴⁷ frequently,⁴⁸ obstinately,⁴⁹ with delight,⁵⁰ continuance,⁵¹ or relapsing after repentance.⁵²
4. From circumstances of time⁵³ and place:⁵⁴ if on the Lord's Day,⁵⁵ or other times of divine worship;⁵⁶ or immediately before⁵⁷ or after these,⁵⁸ or other helps to prevent or remedy such miscarriages;⁵⁹ if in public, or in the presence of others, who are thereby likely to be provoked or defiled.⁶⁰

1. Jer. 2:8

2. Job 32:7, 9; Eccl. 4:13

3. 1 Kings 11:4, 9

4. 2 Sam. 12:14; 1 Cor. 5:1

5. James 4:17; Luke 12:47–48

6. Jer. 5:4–5

7. 2 Sam. 12:7–9; Ezek. 8:11–12

8. Rom. 2:17–24

9. Gal. 2:11–14

10. Matt. 21:38–39

11. 1 Sam. 2:25; Acts 5:4; Ps. 51:4

12. Rom. 2:4

13. Mal. 1:8, 14

14. Heb. 2:2–3; 12:25

15. Heb. 10:29; Matt. 12:31–32

16. Eph. 4:30

17. Heb. 6:4–6

18. Jude 8; Num. 12:8–9; Isa. 3:5

19. Prov. 30:17; 2 Cor. 12:15; Ps. 55:12–15

20. Zeph. 2:8, 10–11; Matt. 18:6; 1 Cor. 6:8; Rev. 17:6

21. 1 Cor. 8:11–12; Rom. 14:13, 15, 21

22. Ezek. 13:19; 1 Cor. 8:12; Rev. 18:12–13;

Matt. 23:15

31. Isa. 1:3; Deut. 32:6

32. Amos 4:8–11; Jer. 5:3

33. Rom. 1:26–27

34. Rom. 1:32; Dan. 5:22; Titus 3:10–11

35. Prov. 29:1

36. Titus 3:10; Matt. 18:17

37. Prov. 23:35; 27:22

38. Ps. 78:34–37; Jer. 2:20; 42:5–6, 20–21

39. Eccl. 5:4–6; Prov. 20:25

40. Lev. 26:25

41. Prov. 2:17; Ezek. 17:18–19

42. Ps. 36:4

43. Jer. 6:16

44. Num. 15:30; Ex. 21:14

45. Jer. 3:3; Prov. 7:13

46. Ps. 52:1

47. 3 John 10

48. Num. 14:22

49. Zech. 7:11–12

50. Prov. 2:14

51. Isa. 57:17

52. Jer. 34:8–11; 2 Pet. 2:20–22

53. 2 Kings 5:26

23. 1 Thess. 2:15–16; Josh. 22:20
24. Prov. 6:30–35
25. Ezra 9:10–12; 1 Kings 11:9–10
26. Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:10; Prov. 5:8–12; 6:32–33;
Josh. 7:21
27. James 1:14–15; Matt. 5:22; Mic. 2:1
28. Matt. 18:7; Rom. 2:23–24
29. Deut. 22:22, 28–29; Prov. 6:32–35
30. Matt. 11:21–24; John 15:22

54. Jer. 7:10; Isa. 26:10
55. Ezek. 23:37–39
56. Isa. 58:3–5; Num. 25:6–7
57. 1 Cor. 11:20–21
58. Jer. 7:8–10, Prov. 7:14–15; John 13:27, 30
59. Ezra 9:13–14
60. 2 Sam. 16:22; 1 Sam. 2:22–24

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

A. 152: Every sin, even the least, being against the sovereignty,¹ goodness,² and holiness of God,³ and against His righteous law,⁴ deserveth His wrath and curse,⁵ both in this life,⁶ and that which is to come;⁷ and cannot be expiated but by the blood of Christ.⁸

1. James 2:10–11
2. Ex. 20:1–2
3. Hab. 1:13; Lev. 10:3; 11:44–45
4. 1 John 3:4; Rom. 7:12

5. Eph. 5:6; Gal. 3:10
6. Lam. 3:39; Deut. 28:15–68
7. Matt. 25:41
8. Heb. 9:22; 1 Pet. 1:18–19

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

A. 153: That we may escape the wrath and curse of God due to us by reason of the transgression of the law, He requireth of us repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,¹ and the diligent use of the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of His mediation.²

1. Acts 16:30–31; 20:21; Matt. 3:7–8;
Luke 13:3, 5; John 3:16, 18

2. Prov. 2:1–5; 8:33–36

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

A. 154: The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to His church the benefits of His mediation, are all His ordinances; especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation.¹

1. Matt. 28:19–20; Acts 2:42, 46–47

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

A. 155: The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening,¹ convincing, and humbling sinners;² of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ;³ of conforming them to His image,⁴ and subduing them to His will;⁵ of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions;⁶ of building them up in grace,⁷ and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.⁸

1. Neh. 8:8; Acts 26:18; Ps. 19:8
2. 1 Cor. 14:24–25; 2 Chron. 34:18–19, 26–28
3. Acts 2:37, 41; 8:27–39
4. 2 Cor. 3:18

5. 2 Cor. 10:4–6; Rom. 6:17
6. Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Eph. 6:16–17; Ps. 19:11; 1 Cor. 10:11
7. Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:15–17
8. Rom. 1:16; 10:13–17; 15:4; 16:25; 1 Thess. 3:2, 10–11, 13

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

A. 156: Although all are not to be permitted to read the Word publicly to the congregation,¹ yet all sorts of people are bound to read it apart by themselves,² and with their families;³ to which end, the holy Scriptures are to be translated out of the original into vulgar languages.⁴

1. Deut. 31:9, 11–13; Neh. 8:2–3; 9:3–5
2. Deut. 17:19; Rev. 1:3; John 5:39; Isa. 34:16

3. Deut. 6:6–9; Gen. 18:17, 19; Ps. 78:5–7
4. 1 Cor. 14:6, 9, 11–12, 15–16, 24, 27–28

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

A. 157: The holy Scriptures are to be read with an high and reverent esteem of them;¹ with a firm persuasion that they are the very Word of God,² and that He only can enable us to understand them;³ with desire to know, believe, and obey the will of God revealed in them;⁴ with diligence,⁵ and attention to the matter and scope of them;⁶ with meditation,⁷ application,⁸ self-denial,⁹ and prayer.¹⁰

1. Ps. 19:10; Neh. 8:3–10; Ex. 24:7;
2 Chron. 34:27; Isa. 66:2
2. 2 Pet. 1:19–21
3. Luke 24:45; 2 Cor. 3:13–16
4. Deut. 17:19–20
5. Acts 17:11

6. Acts 8:30, 34; Luke 10:26–28
7. Ps. 1:2, 119:97
8. 2 Chron. 34:21
9. Prov. 3:5; Deut. 33:3
10. Prov. 2:1–6; Ps. 119:18; Neh. 8:6, 8

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

A. 158: The Word of God is to be preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted,¹ and also duly approved and called to that office.²

1. 1 Tim. 3:2, 6; Eph. 4:8–11;
Hos. 4:6; Mal. 2:7; 2 Cor. 3:6

2. Jer. 14:15; Rom. 10:15; Heb. 5:4;
1 Cor. 12:28–29; 1 Tim. 3:10; 4:14; 5:22

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

A. 159: They that are called to labor in the ministry of the Word, are to preach sound doctrine,¹ diligently,² in season and out of season;³ plainly,⁴ not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power;⁵ faithfully,⁶ making known the whole counsel of God;⁷ wisely,⁸ applying themselves to the necessities and capacities of the hearers;⁹ zealously,¹⁰ with fervent love to God¹¹ and the souls of His people;¹² sincerely,¹³ aiming at His glory,¹⁴ and their conversion,¹⁵ edification,¹⁶ and salvation.¹⁷

1. Titus 2:1, 8
2. Acts 18:25
3. 2 Tim. 4:2
4. 1 Cor. 14:19
5. 1 Cor. 2:4
6. Jer. 23:28; 1 Cor. 4:1–2
7. Acts 20:27
8. Col. 1:28; 2 Tim. 2:15
9. 1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12–14; Luke 12:42

10. Acts 18:25
11. 2 Cor. 5:13–14; Phil. 1:15–17
12. Col. 4:12; 2 Cor. 12:15
13. 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2
14. 1 Thess. 2:4–6; John 7:18
15. 1 Cor. 9:19–22
16. 2 Cor. 12:19; Eph. 4:12
17. 1 Tim. 4:16; Acts 26:16–18

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

A. 160: It is required of those that hear the Word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence,¹ preparation,² and prayer;³ examine what they hear by the Scriptures;⁴ receive the truth with faith,⁵ love,⁶ meekness,⁷ and readiness of mind,⁸ as the Word of God;⁹ meditate,¹⁰ and confer of it;¹¹ hide it in their hearts,¹² and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.¹³

1. Prov. 8:34
2. 1 Pet. 2:1–2; Luke 8:18
3. Ps. 119:18; Eph. 6:18–19
4. Acts 17:11
5. Heb. 4:2
6. 2 Thess. 2:10

7. James 1:21
8. Acts 17:11
9. 1 Thess. 2:13
10. Luke 9:44; Heb. 2:1
11. Luke 24:14; Deut. 6:6–7
12. Prov. 2:1; Ps. 119:11
13. Luke 8:15; James 1:25

Q. 161: How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. 161: The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered, but only by the working of the Holy Ghost, and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted.¹

1. 1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 8:13, 23; 1 Cor. 3:6–7; 12:13

Q. 162: What is a sacrament?

A. 162: A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in His church,¹ to signify, seal, and exhibit² unto those that are within the covenant of grace,³ the benefits of His mediation;⁴ to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces;⁵ to oblige them to obedience;⁶ to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another;⁷ and to distinguish them from those that are without.⁸

1. Gen. 17:7, 10; Ex. 12; Matt. 26:26–28; 28:19

2. Rom. 4:11; 1 Cor. 11:24–25

3. Rom. 15:8; Ex. 12:48

4. Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 10:16

5. Rom. 4:11; Gal. 3:27

6. Rom. 6:3–4; 1 Cor. 10:21

7. Eph. 4:2–5; 1 Cor. 12:13

8. Eph. 2:11–12; Gen. 34:14

Q. 163: What are the parts of a sacrament?

A. 163: The parts of a sacrament are two; the one an outward and sensible sign, used according to Christ's own appointment; the other an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified.¹

1. Matt. 3:11; 1 Pet. 3:21; Rom. 2:28–29

Q. 164: How many sacraments hath Christ instituted in His church under the New Testament?

A. 164: Under the New Testament Christ hath instituted in His church only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper.¹

1. Matt. 26:26–28; 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:20, 23

Q. 165: What is baptism?

A. 165: Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,¹ to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into Himself,² of remission of sins by His blood,³ and regeneration by His Spirit;⁴ of adoption,⁵ and resurrection unto everlasting life;⁶ and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church,⁷ and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.⁸

1. Matt. 28:19

2. Gal. 3:27

3. Mark 1:4; Rev. 1:5

4. Titus 3:5; Eph. 5:26

5. Gal. 3:26–27

6. 1 Cor. 15:29; Rom. 6:5

7. 1 Cor. 12:13

8. Rom. 6:4

Q. 166: Unto whom is baptism to be administered?

A. 166 (paedobaptist response): Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him,¹ but infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, are in that respect within the covenant, and to be baptized.²

A. 166 (credobaptist response): Baptism is to be administered to those who profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him.¹

1. Acts 2:38; 8:36–37

2. Gen. 17:7, 9; Gal. 3:9, 14; Col. 2:11–12; Acts 2:38–39;

Rom. 4:11–12; 11:16; 1 Cor. 7:14; Matt 28:19; Luke 18:15–16

Q. 167: How is our baptism to be improved by us?

A. 167: The needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others;¹ by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein;² by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism, and our engagements;³ by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other bless-

ings sealed to us in that sacrament;⁴ by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace;⁵ and by endeavoring to live by faith,⁶ to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness,⁷ as those that have therein given up their names to Christ;⁸ and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body.⁹

1. Col. 2:11–12; Rom. 6:4, 6, 11
2. Rom. 6:3–5
3. 1 Cor. 1:11–13; Rom. 6:2–3
4. Rom. 4:11–12; 1 Pet. 3:21

5. Rom. 6:3–5
6. Gal. 3:26–27
7. Rom. 6:22
8. Acts 2:38
9. 1 Cor. 12:13, 25–27

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

A. 168: The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament,¹ wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, His death is showed forth; and they that worthily communicate feed upon His body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace;² have their union and communion with Him confirmed;³ testify and renew their thankfulness,⁴ and engagement to God,⁵ and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.⁶

1. Luke 22:20
2. Matt. 26:26–28; 1 Cor. 11:23–26
3. 1 Cor. 10:16

4. 1 Cor. 11:24
5. 1 Cor. 10:14–16, 21
6. 1 Cor. 10:17

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

A. 169: Christ hath appointed the ministers of His Word, in the administration of this sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to set apart the bread and wine from common use, by the word of institution, thanksgiving, and prayer; to take and break the bread, and to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants: who are, by the same appointment, to take and eat the bread, and to drink the wine, in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and His blood shed, for them.¹

1. 1 Cor. 11:23–24; Matt. 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20

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

A. 170: As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper,¹ and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses;² so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal and carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really,³ while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of His death.⁴

1. Acts 3:21
2. Matt. 26:26, 28

3. 1 Cor. 11:24–29
4. 1 Cor. 10:16

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

A. 171: They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves¹ of their being in Christ,² of their sins and wants;³ of the truth and measure of their knowledge,⁴ faith,⁵ repentance;⁶ love to God and the brethren,⁷ charity to all men,⁸

forgiving those that have done them wrong;⁹ of their desires after Christ,¹⁰ and of their new obedience;¹¹ and by renewing the exercise of these graces,¹² by serious meditation,¹³ and fervent prayer.¹⁴

1. 1 Cor. 11:28

2. 2 Cor. 13:5

3. 1 Cor. 5:7; Ex. 12:15

4. 1 Cor. 11:29

5. 2 Cor. 13:5; Matt. 26:28

6. Zech. 12:10; 1 Cor. 11:31

7. 1 Cor. 10:16–17; Acts 2:46–47

8. 1 Cor. 5:8; 11:18, 20

9. Matt. 5:23–24

10. Isa. 55:1; John 7:37

11. 1 Cor. 5:7–8

12. 1 Cor. 11:25–26, 28; Heb. 10:21–22, 24; Ps. 26:6

13. 1 Cor. 11:24–25

14. 2 Chron. 30:18–19; Matt. 26:26

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

A. 172: One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof;¹ and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it,² and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ,³ and to depart from iniquity;⁴ in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians)⁵ he is to bewail his unbelief,⁶ and labor to have his doubts resolved;⁷ and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened.⁸

1. Isa. 50:10; 1 John 5:13; Ps. 77:1–12; 88; Jonah 2:4,7

2. Isa. 54:7–10; Matt. 5:3–4; Ps. 31:22; 73:13, 22–23

3. Phil 3:8–9; Ps. 10:17; 42:1–2, 5, 11

4. 2 Tim. 2:19; Isa. 50:10; Ps. 66:18–20

5. Isa. 40:11, 29, 31; Matt. 11:28; 12:20; 26:28

6. Mark 9:24

7. Acts 2:37, 16:30

8. Rom. 4:11; 1 Cor. 11:28

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

A. 173: Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in His church,¹ until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.²

1. 1 Cor. 5; 11:27–31; Matt. 7:6; Jude 23;
1 Tim. 5:22

2. 2 Cor. 2:7

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

A. 174: It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance,¹ diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions,² heedfully discern the Lord's body,³ and affectionately meditate on His death and sufferings,⁴ and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces;⁵ in judging themselves,⁶ and sorrowing for sin;⁷ in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ,⁸ feeding on Him by faith,⁹ receiving of His fulness,¹⁰ trusting in His merits,¹¹ rejoicing in His love,¹² giving thanks for His grace;¹³ in renewing of their covenant with God,¹⁴ and love to all the saints.¹⁵

1. Lev. 10:3; Heb. 12:28; Ps. 5:7;
1 Cor. 11:17, 26–27

2. Ex. 24:8; Matt. 26:28

3. 1 Cor. 11:29

4. Luke 22:19

5. 1 Cor. 10:3–5, 11, 14; 11:26

6. 1 Cor. 11:31

8. Rev. 22:17

9. John 6:35

10. John 1:16

11. Phil. 3:9

12. Ps. 63:4–5; 2 Chron. 30:21

13. Ps. 22:26

14. Jer. 50:5; Ps. 50:57. Zech. 12:10

15. Acts 2:42

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

A. 175: The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is seriously to consider how they have behaved themselves therein, and with what success;¹ if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it,² beg the continuance of it,³ watch against relapses,⁴ fulfill their vows,⁵

and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance:⁶ but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the sacrament;⁷ in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time:⁸ but, if they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled,⁹ and to attend upon it afterwards with more care and diligence.¹⁰

1. Ps. 28:7, 85:8; 1 Cor. 11:17, 30–31
2. 2 Chron. 30:21–26; Acts 2:42, 46–47
3. Ps. 36:10; Song 3:4; 1 Chron. 29:18
4. 1 Cor. 10:3–5, 12
5. Ps. 50:14

6. 1 Cor. 11:25–26; Acts 2:42, 46
7. Song 5:1–6; Eccl. 5:1–6
8. Ps. 42:5, 8; 43:3–5; 123:1–2
9. 2 Chron. 30:18–19; Isa. 1:16, 18
10. 2 Cor. 7:11; 1 Chron. 15:12–14

Q. 176: Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper agree?

A. 176: The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper agree, in that the author of both is God;¹ the spiritual part of both is Christ and His benefits;² both are seals of the same covenant,³ are to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel, and by none other;⁴ and to be continued in the church of Christ until His second coming.⁵

1. Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23
2. Rom. 6:3–4; 1 Cor. 10:16
3. Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:12; Matt. 26:27–28

4. John 1:33; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 4:1; 11:23; Heb. 5:4
5. Matt. 28:19–20; 1 Cor. 11:26

Q. 177: Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ?

A. 177: The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, in that baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ,¹ and that even to infants;² whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul,³ and to confirm our continuance and growth in Him,⁴ and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves.⁵

1. Matt. 3:11; Titus 3:5; Gal. 3:27
2. Gen. 17:7, 9; Acts 2:38–39;
1 Cor. 7:14

3. 1 Cor. 11:23–26
4. 1 Cor. 10:16
5. 1 Cor. 11:28–29

Q. 178: What is prayer?

A. 178: Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God,¹ in the name of Christ,² by the help of His Spirit;³ with confession of our sins,⁴ and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies.⁵

1. Ps. 62:8
2. John 16:23
3. Rom. 8:26

4. Ps. 32:5–6; Dan. 9:4
5. Phil. 4:6

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

A. 179: God only being able to search the hearts,¹ hear the requests,² pardon the sins,³ and fulfill the desires of all;⁴ and only to be believed in,⁵ and worshiped with religious worship;⁶ prayer, which is a special part thereof,⁷ is to be made by all to Him alone,⁸ and to none other.⁹

1. 1 Kings 8:39; Acts 1:24; Rom. 8:27
2. Ps. 65:2
3. Mic. 7:18
4. Ps. 145:18–19
5. Rom. 10:14

6. Matt. 4:10
7. 1 Cor. 1:2
8. Ps. 50:15
9. Rom. 10:14

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

A. 180: To pray in the name of Christ is, in obedience to His command, and in confidence on His promises, to ask mercy for His sake;¹ not by bare mentioning of His name,² but by drawing our encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and His mediation.³

1. John 14:13–14, 16:24; Dan. 9:17
2. Matt. 7:21

3. Heb. 4:14–16; 1 John 5:13–15

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

A. 181: The sinfulness of man, and his distance from God by reason thereof, being so great, as that we can have no access into His presence without a mediator;¹ and there being none in heaven or earth appointed to, or fit for, that glorious work but Christ alone,² we are to pray in no other name but His only.³

1. John 14:6; Isa. 59:2; Eph. 3:12

2. John 6:27; Heb. 7:25–27; 1 Tim. 2:5

3. Col. 3:17; Heb. 13:15

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

A. 182: We not knowing what to pray for as we ought, the Spirit helps our infirmities, by enabling us to understand both for whom, and what, and how prayer is to be made; and by working and quickening in our hearts (although not in all persons, nor at all times, in the same measure) those apprehensions, affections, and graces which are requisite for the right performance of that duty.¹

1. Rom. 8:26–27; Ps. 10:17; Zech. 12:10

Q. 183: For whom are we to pray?

A. 183: We are to pray for the whole church of Christ upon earth;¹ for magistrates,² and ministers;³ for ourselves,⁴ our brethren,⁵ yea, our enemies;⁶ and for all sorts of men living,⁷ or that shall live hereafter;⁸ but not for the dead,⁹ nor for those that are known to have sinned the sin unto death.¹⁰

1. Eph. 6:18; Ps. 28:9

2. 1 Tim. 2:1–2

3. Col. 4:3

4. Gen. 32:11

5. James 5:16

6. Matt. 5:44

7. 1 Tim. 2:1–2

8. John 17:20; 2 Sam. 7:29

9. 2 Sam. 12:21–23

10. 1 John 5:16

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

A. 184: We are to pray for all things tending to the glory of God,¹ the welfare of the church,² our own³ or others good;⁴ but not for anything that is unlawful.⁵

1. Matt. 6:9

2. Ps. 51:18, 122:6

3. Matt. 7:11

4. Ps. 125:4

5. 1 John 5:14

Q. 185: How are we to pray?

A. 185: We are to pray with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God,¹ and deep sense of our own unworthiness,² necessities,³ and sins;⁴ with penitent,⁵ thankful,⁶ and enlarged hearts;⁷ with understanding,⁸ faith,⁹ sincerity,¹⁰ fervency,¹¹ love,¹² and perseverance,¹³ waiting upon Him,¹⁴ with humble submission to His will.¹⁵

1. Eccl. 5:1

2. Gen. 18:27; 32:10

3. Luke 15:17–19

4. Luke 18:13–14

5. Ps. 51:17

6. Phil. 4:6

7. 1 Sam. 1:15, 2:1

8. 1 Cor. 14:15

9. Mark 11:24; James 1:6

10. Ps. 17:1; 145:18

11. James 5:16

12. 1 Tim. 2:8

13. Eph. 6:18

14. Mic. 7:7

15. Matt. 26:39

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

A. 186: The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in the duty of prayer;¹ but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which our Savior Christ taught His disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.²

1. 1 John 5:14

2. Matt. 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4

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

A. 187: The Lord's Prayer is not only for direction, as a pattern, according to which we are to make other prayers; but may also be used as a prayer, so that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer.¹

1. Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2

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

A. 188: The Lord's Prayer consists of three parts: a preface, petitions, and a conclusion.

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

A. 189: The preface of the Lord's Prayer (contained in these words, "Our Father which art in heaven,")¹ teacheth us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of His fatherly goodness, and our interest therein;² with reverence, and all other childlike dispositions,³ heavenly affections,⁴ and due apprehensions of His sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension:⁵ as also, to pray with and for others.⁶

1. Matt. 6:9

2. Luke 11:13; Rom. 8:15

3. Isa. 64:9

4. Ps. 123:1; Lam. 3:41

5. Isa. 63:15–16; Neh. 1:4–6

6. Acts 12:5

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

A. 190: In the first petition (which is, "Hallowed be thy name,")¹ acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright,² we pray, that God would by His grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem Him,³ His titles,⁴ attributes,⁵ ordinances, Word,⁶ works, and whatsoever He is pleased to make Himself known by;⁷ and to glorify Him in thought, word,⁸ and deed:⁹ that He would prevent and remove atheism,¹⁰ ignorance,¹¹ idolatry,¹² profaneness,¹³ and: whatsoever is dishonorable to Him;¹⁴ and, by His overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to His own glory.¹⁵

1. Matt. 6:9

2. 2 Cor. 3:5; Ps. 51:15

3. Ps. 67:2–3

4. Ps. 83:18

5. Ps. 86:10–13, 15

6. 2 Thess. 3:1; Ps. 138:1–3; 147:19–20;

2 Cor. 2:14–15

7. Ps. 8; 145

8. Ps. 19:14; 103:1

9. Phil. 1:9, 11

10. Ps. 67:1–4

11. Eph. 1:17–18

12. Ps. 97:7

13. Ps. 74:18, 22–23

14. 2 Kings 19:15–16

15. 2 Chron. 20:6, 10–12; Ps. 83; 140:4, 8

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

A. 191: In the second petition (which is, "Thy kingdom come,")¹ acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan,² we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed,³ the gospel propagated throughout the world,⁴ the Jews called,⁵ the fulness of the Gentiles brought in;⁶ the church furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances,⁷ purged from corruption,⁸ countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate:⁹ that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted:¹⁰ that Christ would rule in our hearts here,¹¹ and hasten the time of His second coming, and our reigning with Him forever:¹² and that He would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of His power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.¹³

1. Matt. 6:10

2. Eph. 2:2–3

3. Ps. 68:1, 18; Rev. 12:10–11

4. 2 Thess. 3:1

5. Rom. 10:1

6. John 17:9, 20; Rom. 11:25–26; Ps. 67

7. Matt. 9:38; 2 Thess. 3:1

8. Mal. 1:11; Zeph. 3:9

9. 1 Tim. 2:1–2

10. Acts 4:29–30; Eph. 6:18–20; Rom. 15:29–30, 32;

2 Thess. 1:11; 2:16–17

11. Eph. 3:14–20

12. Rev. 22:20

13. Isa. 64:1–2; Rev. 4:8–11

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

A. 192: In the third petition (which is, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,”)¹ acknowledging, that by nature we and all men are not only utterly unable and unwilling to know and do the will of God,² but prone to rebel against His Word,³ to repine and murmur against His providence,⁴ and wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh, and of the devil:⁵ we pray, that God would by His Spirit take away from ourselves and others all blindness,⁶ weakness,⁷ indisposedness,⁸ and perverseness of heart;⁹ and by His grace make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to His will in all things,¹⁰ with the like humility,¹¹ cheerfulness,¹² faithfulness,¹³ diligence,¹⁴ zeal,¹⁵ sincerity,¹⁶ and constancy,¹⁷ as the angels do in heaven.¹⁸

1. Matt. 6:10
2. Rom. 7:18; Job 21:14; 1 Cor. 2:14
3. Rom. 8:7
4. Ex. 17:7; Num. 14:2
5. Eph. 2:2
6. Eph. 1:17–18
7. Eph. 3:16
8. Matt. 26:40–41
9. Jer. 31:18–19

10. Ps. 119:1, 8, 35–36; Acts 21:14
11. Mic. 6:8
12. Ps. 100:2; Job 1:21; 2 Sam. 15:25–26
13. Isa. 38:3
14. Ps. 119:4–5
15. Rom. 12:11
16. Ps. 119:80
17. Ps. 119:112
18. Isa. 6:2–3; Ps. 103:20–21; Matt. 18:10

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

A. 193: In the fourth petition (which is, “Give us this day our daily bread,”)¹ acknowledging, that in Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited our right to all the outward blessings of this life, and deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God, and to have them cursed to us in the use of them;² and that neither they of themselves are able to sustain us,³ nor we to merit,⁴ or by our own industry to procure them;⁵ but prone to desire,⁶ get,⁷ and use them unlawfully:⁸ we pray for ourselves and others, that both they and we, waiting upon the providence of God from day today in the use of lawful means, may, of His free gift, and as to His fatherly wisdom shall seem best, enjoy a competent portion of them;⁹ and have the same continued and blessed unto us in our holy and comfortable use of them,¹⁰ and contentment in them;¹¹ and be kept from all things that are contrary to our temporal support and comfort.¹²

1. Matt. 6:11
2. Gen. 2:17, 3:17; Rom. 8:20–22; Jer. 5:25;
Deut. 28:15–68
3. Deut. 8:3
4. Gen. 32:10
5. Deut. 8:17–18
6. Jer. 6:13; Mark 7:21–22

7. Hos. 12:7
8. James 4:3
9. Gen. 28:20; 43:12–14; Eph. 4:28;
2 Thess. 3:11–12; Phil. 4:6
10. 1 Tim. 4:3–5
11. 1 Tim. 6:6–8
12. Prov. 30:8–9

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

A. 194: In the fifth petition (which is, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,”)¹ acknowledging, that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God; and that neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt:² we pray for ourselves and others, that God of His free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin,³ accept us in His Beloved;⁴ continue His favor and grace to us,⁵ pardon our daily failings,⁶ and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness;⁷ which we are the rather emboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offenses.⁸

1. Matt. 6:12
2. Rom. 3:9–22; Matt. 18:24–25; Ps. 130:3–4
3. Rom. 3:24–26; Heb. 9:22
4. Eph. 1:6–7

5. 2 Pet. 1:2
6. Hos. 14:2; Jer. 14:7
7. Rom. 15:13; Ps. 51:7–10, 12
8. Luke 11:4; Matt. 6:14–15; 18:35

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

A. 195: In the sixth petition (which is, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,”)¹ acknowledging, that the most wise, righteous, and gracious God, for divers holy and just ends, may so order things, that we may be assaulted, foiled, and for a time led captive by temptations;² that Satan,³ the

world,⁴ and the flesh, are ready powerfully to draw us aside, and ensnare us;⁵ and that we, even after the pardon of our sins, by reason of our corruption,⁶ weakness, and want of watchfulness,⁷ are not only subject to be tempted, and forward to expose ourselves unto temptations,⁸ but also of ourselves unable and unwilling to resist them, to recover out of them, and to improve them;⁹ and worthy to be left under the power of them:¹⁰ we pray, that God would so overrule the world and all in it,¹¹ subdue the flesh,¹² and restrain Satan,¹³ order all things,¹⁴ bestow and bless all means of grace,¹⁵ and quicken us to watchfulness in the use of them, that we and all His people may by His providence be kept from being tempted to sin;¹⁶ or, if tempted, that by His Spirit we maybe powerfully supported and enabled to stand in the hour of temptation;¹⁷ or when fallen, raised again and recovered out of it,¹⁸ and have a sanctified use and improvement thereof:¹⁹ that our sanctification and salvation may be perfected,²⁰ Satan trodden under our feet,²¹ and we fully freed from sin, temptation, and all evil, forever.²²

1. Matt. 6:13

2. 2 Chron. 32:31

3. 1 Chron. 21:1

4. Luke 21:34; Mark 4:19

5. James 1:14

6. Gal. 5:17

7. Matt. 26:41

8. Matt. 26:69–72; Gal. 2:11–14; 2 Chron. 18:3; 19:2

9. Rom. 7:23–24; 1 Chron. 21:1–4; 2 Chron. 16:7–10

10. Ps. 81:11–12

11. John 17:15

12. Ps. 51:10; 119:133

13. 2 Cor. 12:7–8

14. 1 Cor. 10:12–13

15. Heb. 13:20–21

16. Matt. 26:41; Ps. 19:13

17. Eph. 3:14–17; 1 Thess. 3:13; Jude 24

18. Ps. 51:12

19. 1 Pet. 5:8–10

20. 2 Cor. 13:7, 9

21. Rom. 16:20; Zech. 3:2; Luke 22:31–32

22. John 17:15; 1 Thess. 5:23

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

A. 196: The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer (which is, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.")¹ teaches us to enforce our petitions with arguments,² which are to be taken, not from any worthiness in ourselves, or in any other creature, but from God;³ and with our prayers to join praises,⁴ ascribing to God alone eternal sovereignty, omnipotency, and glorious excellency;⁵ in regard whereof, as He is able and willing to help us,⁶ so we by faith are emboldened to plead with Him that He would,⁷ and quietly to rely upon Him, that He will fulfill our requests.⁸ And, to testify this our desire and assurance, we say, Amen.⁹

1. Matt. 6:13

2. Rom. 15:30

3. Dan. 9:4, 7–9, 16–19

4. Phil. 4:6

5. 1 Chron. 29:10–13

6. Eph. 3:20–21; Luke 11:13

7. 2 Chron. 20:6, 11

8. 2 Chron. 14:11

9. 1 Cor. 14:16; Rev. 22:20–21

The Shorter Catechism

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

A. 1: Man's chief end is to glorify God,¹ and to enjoy Him forever.²

1. 1 Cor. 10:31

2. Ps. 73: 25–28

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

A. 2: The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,¹ is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.²

1. Eph. 2:20; 2 Tim. 3:16

2. 1 John 1:3

Q. 3: What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. 3: The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.¹

1. 2 Tim. 1:13

Q. 4: What is God?

A. 4: God is a Spirit,¹ infinite,² eternal,³ and unchangeable,⁴ in His being,⁵ wisdom,⁶ power,⁷ holiness,⁸ justice, goodness, and truth.⁹

1. John 4:24

2. Job 11:7

3. Ps. 90:2

4. James 1:17

5. Ex. 3:14

6. Ps. 147:5

7. Rev. 4:8

8. Rev. 15:4

9. Ex. 34:6–7

Q. 5: Are there more God's than one?

A. 5: There is but one only,¹ the living and true God.²

1. Deut. 6:4

2. Jer. 10:10

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

A. 6: There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,¹ and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.²

1. Matt. 28:19

2. 1 John 5:7

Q. 7: What are the decrees of God?

A. 7: 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.¹

1. Eph. 1:11–12

Q. 8: How doth God execute His decrees?

A. 8: God executeth His decrees in the works of creation¹ and providence.²

1. Rev. 4:11

2. Dan. 4:35

Q. 9: What is the work of creation?

A. 9: The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing,¹ by the word of His power,² in the space of six days, and all very good.³

1. Gen. 1:1
2. Heb. 11:3

3. Gen. 1:31

Q. 10: How did God create man?

A. 10: God created man male and female, after His own image,¹ in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness,² with dominion over the creatures.³

1. Gen. 1:27
2. Col. 3:10

3. Gen. 1:28

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

A. 11: God's works of providence are, His most holy,¹ wise,² and powerful preserving,³ and governing all His creatures, and all their actions.⁴

1. Ps. 145:17
2. Isa. 28:29

3. Heb. 1:3
4. Ps. 103:19

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

A. 12: When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience;¹ forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.²

1. Gal. 3:12

2. Gen. 2:17

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

A. 13: Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.¹

1. Eccl. 7:29

Q. 14: What is sin?

A. 14: Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.¹

1. 1 John 3:4

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

A. 15: The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.¹

1. Gen. 3:6–8

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

A. 16: The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity;¹ all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.²

1. Gen. 1:28; Gen. 2:16–17

2. Rom. 5:18

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

A. 17: The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.¹

1. Rom. 5:12

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

A. 18: The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin,¹ the want of original righteousness,² and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin;³ together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.⁴

1. Rom. 5:19
2. Rom. 3:10

3. Eph. 2:1
4. Matt. 15:19–20

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

A. 19: All mankind by their fall lost communion with God,¹ are under His wrath and curse,² and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.³

1. Gen. 3:8, 24
2. Eph. 2:3; Gal. 3:10

3. Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41

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

A. 20: God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life,¹ 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.²

1. Eph. 1:4

2. Rom. 3:21–22

Q. 21: Who is the redeemer of God's elect?

A. 21: The only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ,¹ who, being the eternal Son of God, became man,² and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person,³ for ever.⁴

1. 1 Tim. 2:5
2. John 1:14

3. Rom. 9:5
4. Heb. 7:24

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

A. 22: Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to Himself a true body,¹ and a reasonable soul,² being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her,³ yet without sin.⁴

1. Heb. 2:14
2. Matt. 26:38

3. Luke 1:31, 35
4. Heb. 7:26

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

A. 23: Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet,¹ of a priest,² and of a king,³ both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation.

1. Acts 3:22
2. Heb. 5:6

3. Ps. 2:6

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

A. 24: Christ executeth the office of a prophet in revealing to us,¹ by His Word² and Spirit,³ the will of God for our salvation.

1. John 1:18
2. John 20:31

3. John 14:26

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

A. 25: Christ executeth the office of a priest, in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice,¹ and reconcile us to God;² and in making continual intercession for us.³

1. Heb. 9:28
2. Heb. 2:17

3. Heb. 7:25

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

A. 26: Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to Himself,¹ in ruling and defending us,² and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies.³

1. Ps. 110:3
2. Isa. 33:22

3. 1 Cor. 15:25

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

A. 27: Christ's humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a low condition,¹ made under the law,² undergoing the miseries of this life,³ the wrath of God,⁴ and the cursed death of the cross;⁵ in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.⁶

1. Luke 2:7
2. Gal. 4:4
3. Isa. 53:3

4. Matt. 27:46
5. Phil. 2:8
6. Matt. 12:40

Q. 28: Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

A. 28: Christ's exaltation consisteth in His rising again from the dead on the third day,¹ in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father,² and in coming to judge the world at the last day.³

1. 1 Cor. 15:4
2. Mark 16:19

3. Acts 17:31

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

A. 29: We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us,¹ by His Holy Spirit.²

1. John 1:12

2. Titus 3:5–6

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

A. 30: The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us,¹ and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.²

1. Eph. 2:8

2. Eph. 3:17

Q. 31: What is effectual calling?

A. 31: Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit,¹ whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery,² enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ,³ and renewing our wills,⁴ He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.⁵

1. 2 Tim. 1:9
2. Acts 2:37
3. Acts 26:18

4. Ezek. 36:26
5. John 6:44–45

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

A. 32: They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification,¹ adoption,² and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.³

1. Rom. 8:30
2. Eph. 1:5

3. 1 Cor. 1:30

Q. 33: What is justification?

A. 33: Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins,¹ and accepteth us as righteous in His sight,² only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us,³ and received by faith alone.⁴

1. Eph. 1:7
2. 2 Cor. 5:21

3. Rom. 5:19
4. Gal. 2:16

Q. 34: What is adoption?

A. 34: Adoption is an act of God's free grace,¹ whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.²

1. 1 John 3:1

2. John 1:12

Q. 35: What is sanctification?

A. 35: Sanctification is the work of God's free grace,¹ whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God,² and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.³

1. 2 Thess. 2:13

2. Eph. 4:24

3. Rom. 8:1

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

A. 36: The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost,¹ increase of grace,² and perseverance therein to the end.³

1. Rom. 5:1–2, 5

2. Prov. 4:18

3. 1 John 5:13

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

A. 37: The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness,¹ and do immediately pass into glory;² and their bodies, being still united to Christ,³ do rest in their graves,⁴ till the resurrection.⁵

1. Heb. 12:23

2. Phil. 1:23

3. 1 Thess. 4:14

4. Isa. 57:2

5. Job 19:26

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

A. 38: At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory,¹ shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment,² and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God³ to all eternity.⁴

1. 1 Cor. 15:43

2. Matt. 10:32

3. 1 John 3:2

4. 1 Thess. 4:17b

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

A. 39: The duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to His revealed will.¹

1. Mic. 6:8

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

A. 40: The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.¹

1. Rom. 2:14–15

Q. 41: Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. 41: The moral law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments.¹

1. Deut. 10:4; Matt. 19:17b

Q. 42: What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?

A. 42: The sum of the Ten Commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.¹

1. Matt. 22:37–40

Q. 43: What is the preface to the Ten Commandments?

A. 43: 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.”¹

1. Ex. 20:2

Q. 44: What doth the preface to the Ten Commandments teach us?

A. 44: The preface to the Ten Commandments teacheth us, that because God is the Lord, and our God, and redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all His commandments.¹

1. Deut. 11:1; Luke 1:74–75

Q. 45: Which is the first commandment?

A. 45: The first commandment is, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”¹

1. Ex. 20:3

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

A. 46: The first commandment requireth us to know,¹ and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God;² and to worship and glorify Him accordingly.³

1. 1 Chron. 28:9a
2. Deut. 26:17

3. Matt. 4:10

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

A. 47: The first commandment forbiddeth the denying,¹ or not worshipping and glorifying the true God as God,² and our God;³ and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to Him alone.⁴

1. Ps. 14:1
2. Rom. 1:20b–21a

3. Ps. 81:11
4. Rom. 1:25

Q. 48: What are we specially taught by these words, before me, in the first commandment?

A. 48: These words, before me, in the first commandment teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.¹

1. Ps. 44:20–21

Q. 49: Which is the second commandment?

A. 49: The second commandment is, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”¹

1. Ex. 20:4–7

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

A. 50: The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing,¹ and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in His Word.²

1. Deut. 32:46; Matt. 28:20

2. Deut. 12:32

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

A. 51: The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images,¹ or any way not appointed in His Word.²

1. Deut. 4:15–16

2. Col. 2:18

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

A. 52: The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us,¹ His propriety in us,² and the zeal He hath to His own worship.³

1. Ps. 95:2–3
2. Ps. 45:11

3. Ex. 34:14

Q. 53: Which is the third commandment?

A. 53: The third commandment is, “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.”¹

1. Ex. 20:7

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

A. 54: The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names,¹ titles, attributes,² ordinances,³ Word,⁴ and works.⁵

1. Ps. 29:2
2. Rev. 15:3b, 4a
3. Eccl. 5:1

4. Ps. 138:2
5. Job 36:24

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

A. 55: The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning and abusing of any thing whereby God maketh Himself known.¹

1. Mal. 2:2

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

A. 56: 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

1. Deut. 28:58–59

Q. 57: Which is the fourth commandment?

A. 57: The fourth commandment is, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”¹

1. Ex. 20:8–11

Q. 58: What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. 58: The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as He hath appointed in His Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to Himself.¹

1. Lev. 19:30

Q. 59: Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

A. 59: From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath;¹ and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.²

1. Gen. 2:3

2. Acts 20:7a; Rev. 1:10a

Q. 60: How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?

A. 60: The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days;¹ and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship,² except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.³

1. Lev. 23:3a

3. Matt. 12:11–12

2. Ps. 92:1–2

Q. 61: What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

A. 61: The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required,¹ and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful,² or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.³

1. Mal. 1:13

3. Isa. 58:13

2. Ezek. 23:38b

Q. 62: What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?

A. 62: The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments,¹ His challenging a special propriety in the seventh,² His own example,³ and His blessing the Sabbath Day.⁴

1. Ex. 31:15–16a

3. Ex. 31:17

2. Lev. 23:3b

4. Gen. 2:3a

Q. 63: Which is the fifth commandment?

A. 63: The fifth commandment is, "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."¹

1. Ex. 20:12

Q. 64: What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. 64: The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors,¹ inferiors,² or equals.³

1. Eph. 5:21–22; Eph. 6:1, 5; Rom. 13:1a

3. Rom. 12:10

2. Eph. 6:9a

Q. 65: What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. 65: The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing any thing against, the honour and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.¹

1. Rom. 13:7–8a

Q. 66: What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. 66: 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.¹

1. Eph. 6:2–3

Q. 67: Which is the sixth commandment?

A. 67: The sixth commandment is, "Thou shalt not kill."¹

1. Ex. 20:13

Q. 68: What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. 68: The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life,¹ and the life of others.²

1. Eph. 5:28a, 29a

2. Ps. 82:3a, 4a

Q. 69: What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. 69: The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life,¹ or the life of our neighbor unjustly,² or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.³

1. Acts 16:28a

2. Gen. 9:6a

3. Prov. 24:11–12a

Q. 70: Which is the seventh commandment?

A. 70: The seventh commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."¹

1. Ex. 20:14

Q. 71: What is required in the seventh commandment?

A. 71: The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own¹ and our neighbor's chastity,² in heart,³ speech,⁴ and behavior.⁵

1. 1 Thess. 4:4

2. Eph. 5:11–12

3. 2 Tim. 2:22

4. Col. 4:6

5. 1 Pet. 3:2

Q. 72: What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. 72: The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts,¹ words,² and actions.³

1. Matt. 5:28

2. Eph. 5:4

3. Eph. 5:3

Q. 73: What is the eighth commandment?

A. 73: The eighth commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal."¹

1. Ex. 20:15

Q. 74: What is required in the eighth commandment?

A. 74: The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves¹ and others.²

1. Rom. 12:17; Prov. 27:23

2. Lev. 25:35a; Phil. 2:4

Q. 75: What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. 75: The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own¹ or our neighbor's wealth or outward estate.²

1. 1 Tim. 5:8

2. Prov. 28:19b; Job 20:19–20a

Q. 76: Which is the ninth commandment?

A. 76: The ninth commandment is, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”¹

1. Ex. 20:16

Q. 77: What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. 77: The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man,¹ and of our own² and our neighbor's good name,³ especially in witness-bearing.⁴

1. Zech. 8:16b 3.

3 John 12a

2. 1 Pet. 3:16; Acts 25:10a

4. Prov. 14:5a; Prov. 14:25a

Q. 78: What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. 78: The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth,¹ or injurious to our own² or our neighbor's good name.³

1. Rom. 3:13a

3. Ps. 15:3

2. Job 27:5

Q. 79: What is the tenth commandment?

A. 79: The tenth commandment is, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.”¹

1. Ex. 20:17

Q. 80: What is required in the tenth commandment?

A. 80: The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition,¹ with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.²

1. Heb. 13:5a

2. Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 13:4–6

Q. 81: What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. 81: The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate,¹ envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor,² and all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.³

1. 1 Cor. 10:10

3. Col. 3:5

2. Gal. 5:26

Q. 82: Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. 82: No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God,¹ but doth daily break them in thought,² word,³ and deed.⁴

1. Eccl. 7:20

3. James 3:8

2. Gen. 8:21b

4. James 3:2a

Q. 83: Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A. 83: Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.¹

1. John 19:11b

Q. 84: What doth every sin deserve?

A. 84: Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.¹

1. Gal. 3:10b; Matt. 25:41

Q. 85: What doth God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse due to us for sin?

A. 85: To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life,¹ with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.²

1. Acts 20:21

2. Prov. 2:1–5

Q. 86: What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. 86: Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace,¹ whereby we receive² and rest upon Him alone for salvation,³ as He is offered to us in the gospel.⁴

1. Heb. 10:39

2. John 1:12

3. Phil. 3:9

4. Isa. 33:22

Q. 87: What is repentance unto life?

A. 87: Repentance unto life is a saving grace,¹ whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin,² and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ,³ doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God,⁴ with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.⁵

1. Acts 11:18b

2. Acts 2:37

3. Joel 2:13

4. Jer. 31:18b–19

5. Ps. 119:59

Q. 88: What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

A. 88: The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are His ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer;¹ all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

1. Acts 2:41a, 42

Q. 89: How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

A. 89: The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners,¹ and of building them up in holiness and comfort,² through faith, unto salvation.³

1. Ps. 19:7

2. 1 Thess. 1:6

3. Rom. 1:16

Q. 90: How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. 90: That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence,¹ preparation,² and prayer;³ receive it with faith⁴ and love,⁵ lay it up in our hearts,⁶ and practice it in our lives.⁷

1. Prov. 8:34

2. 1 Pet. 2:1–2

3. Ps. 119:18

4. Heb. 4:2b

5. 2 Thess. 2:10b

6. Ps. 119:11

7. James 1:25

Q. 91: How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. 91: The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them;¹ but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive them.²

1. 1 Cor. 3:7

2. 1 Pet. 3:21

Q. 92: What is a sacrament?

A. 92: A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented,¹ sealed, and applied to believers.²

1. Gen. 17:10

2. Rom. 4:11a

Q. 93: Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?

A. 93: The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism¹ and the Lord's Supper.²

1. Mark 16:16a

2. 1 Cor. 11:23

Q. 94: What is baptism?

A. 94: Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,¹ doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace,² and our engagement to be the Lord's.³

1. Matt. 28:19

2. Rom. 6:3

3. Rom. 6:4

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

A. 95 (paedobaptist response): Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him;¹ but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.²

1. Acts 2:41a

2. Gen. 17:7, 10; Acts 2:38–39

A. 95 (credobaptist response): Baptism is to be administered to those who profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him.¹

1. Acts 2:41a

Q. 96: What is the Lord's Supper?

A. 96: The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, His death is showed forth;¹ 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.²

1. Luke 22:19–20

2. 1 Cor. 10:16

Q. 97: What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

A. 97: 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 of their faith to feed upon Him,² of their repentance,³ love,⁴ and new obedience;⁵ lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.⁶

1. 1 Cor. 11:28–29

2. 2 Cor. 13:5a

3. 1 Cor. 11:31

4. 1 Cor. 11:18, 20

5. 1 Cor. 5:8

6. 1 Cor. 11:27

Q. 98: What is prayer?

A. 98: Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God¹ for things agreeable to His will,² in the name of Christ,³ with confession of our sins,⁴ and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies.⁵

1. Ps. 62:8
2. Rom. 8:27
3. John 16:23b

4. Dan. 9:4a
5. Phil. 4:6

Q. 99: What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?

A. 99: The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer;¹ but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught His disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.²

1. 1 John 5:14

2. Matt. 6:9

Q. 100: What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. 100: The preface of the Lord's Prayer (which is, "Our Father which art in heaven") teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence,¹ as children to a father,² able and ready to help us;³ and that we should pray with and for others.⁴

1. Isa. 64:9
2. Luke 11:13

3. Rom. 8:15
4. Eph. 6:18

Q. 101: What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. 101: In the first petition, (which is, "Hallowed be thy name") we pray, that God would enable us and others to glorify Him in all that whereby he maketh Himself known;¹ and that He would dispose all things to His own glory.²

1. Ps. 67:1–3

2. Rom. 11:36

Q. 102: What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. 102: In the second petition, (which is, "Thy kingdom come") we pray, that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed;¹ and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced,² ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it;³ and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.⁴

1. Ps. 68:1 3.
2. Ps. 51:18

2 Thess. 3:1; Rom. 10:1
4. Rev. 22:20

Q. 103: What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. 103: In the third petition, (which is, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven") we pray, that God, by His grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey,¹ and submit to His will in all things,² as the angels do in heaven.³

1. Ps. 119:34–36a
2. Acts 21:14

3. Ps. 103:20, 22

Q. 104: What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. 104: In the fourth petition, (which is, "Give us this day our daily bread") we pray, that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life,¹ and enjoy His blessing with them.²

1. Prov. 30:8

2. Ps. 90:17

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

A. 105: In the fifth petition, (which is, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”) we pray, that God, for Christ’s sake, would freely pardon all our sins;¹ which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by His grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.²

1. Ps. 51:1

2. Matt. 6:14

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

A. 106: In the sixth petition, (which is, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”) we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin,¹ or support and deliver us when we are tempted.²

1. Matt. 26:41a

2. Ps. 51:10, 12

Q. 107: What doth the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer teach us?

A. 107: The conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer, (which is, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen.”) teacheth us, to take our encouragement in prayer from God only,¹ and in our prayers to praise Him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to Him.² And in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.³

1. Dan. 9:18b–19a

2. 1 Chron. 29:11a, 13

3. Rev. 22:20b

PART TWO

FORM OF GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER 1

PRELIMINARY PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE *BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER***1.1 Christ the sole king and head of the church**

Jesus Christ is the sole King and Head of the church, having all power given to Him in heaven and in earth by His Father. In this capacity He has been raised from the dead by His Father, and set down on the right hand of the majesty on high, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. The Father has put all things under His feet, and has given Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that fills all in all (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20–23; Hebrews 1:3). Being ascended up on high, He gave gifts to His people, especially the officers necessary for the edifying of His body, the church, with a view to the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:8–12).

As head of His church, the Lord Jesus Christ is its sole Mediator with the Father, fulfilling the offices of prophet, priest, and king (Acts 3:22; Hebrews 5:10; Revelation 19:16). Thus, He contains in Himself in the most eminent way all the offices exercised in His church. The Scriptures call Him the Apostle, Minister, Teacher, Bishop, Pastor or Shepherd, Lawgiver, and Judge (Hebrews 3:1; 8:2; John 13:13–14; 1 Peter 2:25; Isaiah 33:22). In the light of such statements, it is clear that it belongs to Christ to rule His church by His Word and Spirit and that He does so by the ministry of men (Ephesians 4:8–12). As our king He has given us the necessary oracles, ordinances, and officers for the welfare, worship, and witness of His church.

Thus, the church of Christ is not a hierarchy or a system of sacerdotalism. It is His body to which He has communicated the fullness of His gifts and graces, the society of His believing people, called to worship and work for Him in humble submission to the ministerial government that He has established in His Word. This being so, the church has no place for men who usurp the place of ministers and seek to lord it over the consciences of God's people. While the church, both the people and their officers, diligently holds to Christ the head in all things (Colossians 1:19), He will fulfill His promise to be in the midst of the gatherings of His people and will by His Spirit effectually apply the benefits of all His mediatorial offices to them (Matthew 18:20; Luke 11:13).

1.2 The sufficiency and authority of Holy Scripture

The written Word of God contains all that is necessary for the faith and practice of the people of God. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16–17). As our Confession of Faith says: "The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge ... that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed" (WCF, 1.6).

1.3 The freedom of Christian conscience

Every Christian is a priest of God and as such has the right to exercise private judgment and not to have his conscience bound by the rules or traditions of men. "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word,

or beside it, in matters of faith or worship” (WCF, 20.2). Thus, the decision to seek membership and fellowship in any Christian communion is the free choice of those who accept its standards of faith and practice as scriptural. It is the exercise of their conscience in a way that they believe is guided by God’s Word and will. In joining themselves with a body whose doctrine and practice are established and made known to them, they do not surrender their conscience to the rules of men but profess to share such a degree of agreement of conscience with that body as to lead them to a voluntary acceptance of its creed and rules of conduct.

1.4 The right of a Christian church to set the terms of admission to and participation in its fellowship

It is perfectly consistent with the principle of the freedom of Christian conscience for any Christian church to declare the terms of admission to its fellowship, according to its understanding of the will of God set forth in His Word. We acknowledge that in interpreting the biblical standards for admission to their communion, fallible men may err either in being too lax or too strict. Yet, even in such cases, they do not infringe the liberty of others but either curtail or misuse their own.

1.5 The exercise of discipline in the church

The work of the church is not only to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments, but to shepherd the flock of God. Shepherding includes discipline, which God has instituted in His church for the maintenance of biblical standards of truth and practice. To this end He has appointed elders whose duty it is to take “the oversight” of the flock (1 Peter 5:2) and to “rule well” (1 Timothy 5:17), watching out for the souls of God’s people as men who must soon give account to God for their ministry (Hebrews 13:17).

Discipline is to be exercised according to the Word of God and the laws enacted by the church. It is to be exercised by a proper judicatory of the church, that is, in the case of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America, by a local session or by the presbytery, acting according to its understanding of the rules of the Word of God as set forth in the *B.C.O.* In exercising scriptural discipline, elders act by the power and authority of Christ and in the name of the whole church. Therefore, it is incumbent on the members of the church to support and uphold the disciplinary actions of their elders or to challenge them by constitutional means, as provided for in this *B.C.O.*

1.6 The right of a church to establish standards for ministers and elders

Every church has the right and duty to take the greatest care to ensure that its ministers and ruling elders meet the New Testament criteria for occupying their offices. Thus, all Free Presbyterian teaching and ruling elders must be elected and installed in accordance with the provisions of the *B.C.O.* and, as to doctrine, must be able and willing to subscribe the substandards of the church in good conscience. In the case of teaching elders (ministers) the presbytery shall satisfy itself of a man’s gifts and calling and of his competence in the branches of human learning that it deems essential to the gospel ministry.

1.7 The acceptance by all church members of the final authority of the courts of the church to adjudicate all matters that properly fall within their purview

In seeking and receiving membership in the church, believers confess the right and authority of church courts to legislate, to adjudicate, to exercise discipline, to impose moral and spiritual censure on those whom they judge worthy of it, and to publish such decisions either in the local congregation or more widely, as each case merits. Since receiving membership in the church is a privilege, church members shall pledge themselves to seek relief of grievances or to appeal decisions in the courts of the church only. For conscience sake they specifically reject any reference of church matters to civil courts, content in the assurance that the Lord has promised wisdom and ultimate vindication of any who suffer wrong for His sake.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHURCH AND ITS GOVERNMENT

General Principles of Free Presbyterian Church Government

- 2.1 The church is the creation of God, not an institution of man. It is, therefore, to be governed by laws and principles set forth in divine revelation. What has no basis in Scripture can have no authority in the church.**
- 2.2 The Presbyterian form of church government is founded on the Word of God and is agreeable to the model set forth in the New Testament. Presbyterianism works on the principles of representative government, which are, we believe, clearly set forth in Scripture. These include:**
 - a. The visible catholic—that is, universal—church “consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children” (WCF, 25.2). It is distributed under many particular churches. A particular church may be defined as a congregation of members of the visible church who are associated under a common form of government for divine worship and the observance of the sacraments and discipline, as they understand them from Holy Scripture. Or a particular church may consist of a number of such congregations associated under a common and freely accepted form of government.
 - b. A particular church in the FPCNA is composed of its communicant members together with its adherents. A communicant member is a believer in Jesus Christ who gives credible evidence of regeneration by a life of obedience to the Scriptures and who is in agreement with the stated doctrines and practices of the FPCNA, and has been accepted into membership by the session of the particular church according to its established procedures. Communicant members enjoy the privileges of membership so long as they remain in good standing. Only communicant members have a vote in congregational business meetings. Adherents of the congregation are regular attenders of the congregation who have not applied for membership.
 - c. The unity and purity of the church are better expressed and maintained in the interdependency of a number of congregations freely associated under a scriptural form of government than in the isolated workings of independent congregations accountable to no ecclesiastical body outside each congregation.
 - d. Properly constituted courts are the biblical way of maintaining good government and discipline in the church. Private opinion or personal action cannot replace the God-ordained functions of the elders of a local church or of a presbytery. Nor does independency, which vests ultimate ecclesiastical authority in each local congregation, reflect the New Testament model given in Acts 15, where we read of the deliberations and enactments of the Council of Jerusalem, setting forth the standards for all the congregations within its jurisdiction.
 - e. The distribution of elders falls under two categories: those who rule and those who rule and teach (1 Timothy 5:17). Thus ruling elders and teaching elders(ministers) are offices defined and distinguished in Scripture.
 - f. All elders, both ruling and teaching, are equal as to their rights and powers in all ecclesiastical courts.

- g. Each congregation has the right to elect its office bearers, to call its ministers, and to be represented by its elected elders at every level of church government.
- h. Ministers and elders who have been legitimately elected and installed into their office have the authority to exercise the spiritual oversight of the congregation.
- i. A presbytery made up of ministers and representative elders from the constituent congregations has the authority to oversee the actions of each session under its jurisdiction and to adjudicate cases properly brought before it.
- j. The nature of the power exercised by a session or presbytery, both in teaching and in governing, is strictly ministerial or declarative. That is, no session or presbytery may establish a doctrine or practice and make it binding on the consciences of God's people merely on its own authority but must at all times be careful to submit to the guidance of Holy Scripture, the sole rule of faith and practice.

2.3 The officers of a local congregation are its elders and deacons. In the Free Presbyterian Church of North America, in accordance with the teaching and practice of the apostles of Christ, these offices are restricted to men.

- a. To the elders, both teaching and ruling (collectively called the session), belongs the spiritual oversight of the church. They are called to keep diligent watch, both severally and jointly, over the flock committed to their care so that no corruption of doctrine or morals be suffered to infect it. They must exercise government and discipline and take the oversight of the spiritual interests not only of the local church but of the church generally when called upon to do so. Elders should instruct and comfort God's people, nourish the children and youth under their care, visit the sick and the aged, and evangelize the lost and seek to make disciples. They should set an example to the flock entrusted to their care, discharging all the duties that are common to all Christians as well as those relative to their office.
- b. To the deacons (collectively called the committee) belongs the work of being helpers of the elders in all the business matters of the church. Their office is one of service, especially in ministering to those in need or distress in the church. They shall have the care of the congregation's property, both real and personal, and have the responsibility of keeping its buildings in good repair. The spiritual oversight exercised by the elders includes oversight of the deacons and their work. Thus, the elders of the church are authorized to attend, participate, and vote in all meetings of the deacons. In Free Presbyterian churches that have both elders and deacons, a meeting of the deacons will always be understood to be a meeting of the session and the committee. In churches in which it is not possible for any reason to secure deacons, the duties of the office will devolve upon the elders. However, in churches that have deacons but no ruling elders, the deacons may not assume the duties or powers of elders. The presbytery will ensure that no church shall be left without the ministry of a session (see 5.5).

Teaching Elders (ministers, pastors)

2.4 A minister is a man called of God to the office of highest dignity and usefulness in the service of Christ in His church (1 Timothy 5:17). In accordance with the principles and practice of the apostles of Christ, the Free Presbyterian Church of North America restricts entrance into this office to men who it believes meet the criteria set forth in God's Word. The Scripture designates the ministerial office under various titles, each casting a peculiar light on the duties of every man who holds the office. A minister is so called because he is a servant of God and of His people. He is an elder, a man of sufficient maturity and wisdom to rule in the church of Christ. He is a bishop, an overseer of the flock of God, and a pastor or shepherd called of God to lead and feed Christ's sheep. He is an angel or messenger, one charged with presenting the message of God to men, a teacher charged with faithfully expounding and applying the Word of God to the consciences of his hearers. He is an ambassador, one sent on a mission to preach the word of reconciliation with God to sinners. He is also a steward of the mysteries of God, charged with the solemn task of dispensing the ordinances instituted by Christ for the growth in grace of His people.

2.5 A minister usually serves in one of the following areas:

- a. In a pastoral and teaching capacity in a local church.
- b. In a similar capacity in an affiliated mission work at home or abroad.
- c. As a professor in the denominational seminary. A call to serve as a professor in the seminary shall be sufficient ground for the presbytery to permit a man to become a candidate for ordination in accordance with the same standards and conditions laid down for other candidates (see 2.6, 2.8–10).

(Amended May 2025.)

- d. As an associate minister in a local church. An associate minister is an ordained minister who satisfies the criteria for entrance into the office set out in paragraph 2.6. He may be called to fulfill a designated role or function in support of the ministry of the senior minister, or he may be called to fulfill a general support role. He is a voting member of the presbytery and also has the right to participate in session and committee meetings in the church in which he ministers, and to vote in them, except when acting as moderator pro tempore (see 5.9.a, c; 5.12). On the removal of the senior minister, an associate minister may not assume the pastorate of the church without receiving a call from the congregation to that post, in accordance with paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8.
- e. The presbytery may, at its discretion, approve the call of a minister to an organization outside its jurisdiction, provided that he be engaged in preaching and teaching the Word, that he will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our church, and that he submit a report of his work to every statutory meeting of the presbytery.

- 2.6 The qualifications of a minister are established by the presbytery, and no man may be called to or assume the ministry of a local church without the permission of the presbytery. No man is eligible to be elected a minister:**
- a. Who does not evince the Christian character and reputation required by the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9);
 - b. Who is a divorced person or who is married to a divorced person;
 - c. Who does not practice total abstinence from the recreational, social, or non-medicinal use of drugs and from the consumption of beverage alcohol, both in public and in private; or who otherwise rejects the church's standards of personal separation (see 2.10.c; WCF, 25, Addendum);
 - d. Who has not been at least one year in membership in a local Free Presbyterian church and has completed the prescribed seminary course. The presbytery has the power to suspend all or part of this rule in cases in which it would clearly hinder the recognized will of God with regard to certain applicants;
- 2.7 A call to a minister requires that (1) there be a properly called meeting of the congregation for the purpose of issuing a call; (2) there be a quorum, namely one-third of the eligible voting members present at the meeting; and (3) he receives at least two-thirds of the total votes cast. "Total" votes include those cast at the meeting and the absentee ballots. Such a call must be sustained by a vote of the presbytery, which alone has the power to ordain or install a minister into his office.**
- 2.8 Before being ordained or installed into his sphere of ministry, every minister is required to subscribe publicly the Westminster Confession of Faith, as it appears in this *B.C.O.*, as a confession of his own faith, and to avow his acceptance of and commitment to the principles, practices, and procedures set forth in this *B.C.O.***
- 2.9 Every minister is accountable to the presbytery, labors under its jurisdiction, and assumes his ministry on the basis of his avowed submission to its decisions. This does not preclude him from dissenting from those decisions or from seeking to move the presbytery to alter or rescind them, as long as:**
- a. He acts in accordance with the presbytery's decisions until they are altered or rescinded;
 - b. He acts to have such decisions altered or rescinded according to the provisions laid down in the *B.C.O.*
- 2.10 A minister may not be tried or disciplined by his session or by a meeting of the members of his congregation but only by the presbytery according to the provisions of the *B.C.O.* However, certain matters shall cause a minister's automatic suspension or removal from office prior to and apart from any necessary disciplinary hearings:**
- a. If for any reason a minister or his wife institutes divorce proceedings, the minister shall immediately submit to the clerk of presbytery a letter of resignation from office, and with his resignation, shall surrender his ordination certificate. Failure to resign or to surrender his ordination certificate shall be cause for removal from office under discipline.

- b. If a minister proposes to marry a divorced person, he shall immediately submit to the clerk of presbytery a letter of resignation from office, and with his resignation, shall surrender his ordination certificate. He may not continue to exercise his office while pursuing marriage to a divorcée or enter such a marriage while still acting as a minister of the Free Presbyterian Church. Failure to resign or to surrender his ordination certificate shall be cause for removal from office under discipline.
- c. The practice of glossalalia according to the principles of the modern Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, in private devotions or in public meetings, shall require a minister to submit to the clerk of presbytery an immediate letter of resignation from office, and with his resignation, to surrender his ordination certificate. Failure to resign or to surrender his ordination certificate shall be cause for removal from office under discipline.
- d. Any public scandal concerning a minister, or any scripturally legitimate charge of a criminal or serious moral nature against him, shall require that he be suspended from the privileges and functions of his office, pending a judicial hearing of his case and without prejudice to the result of such proceedings. The question of continuing to pay all or part the salary of a man under suspension, and for how long, rests with the session of his church. If it considers that a delay in removing the scandal is proving detrimental to the church's testimony, the session may petition the presbytery to conduct a congregational meeting with a view to dissolving the congregation's pastoral relationship with the suspended minister. In this case, at least two-thirds of the votes cast at a properly called congregational meeting are necessary to dissolve the pastoral relationship.

- 2.11 A minister, once installed in the pastorate of a local church, will serve there until his ministry is terminated by retirement, by death, by his own action, or by the action of the presbytery, either in the execution of its powers of oversight or discipline, or pursuant to a vote of the congregation to have the ministerial relation dissolved. In those cases where a minister resigns or is removed under discipline, not only from a particular charge but from the pastoral office, he shall surrender his ordination certificate to the clerk of presbytery—except that the presbytery may at its own discretion, in response to his written request, permit a minister to retain his ordination certificate. However, if this exception is granted it must be reviewed by the presbytery not later than two years from the date the exemption is granted. If upon review the exemption is extended the review process will continue as determined by the presbytery.**
- 2.12 The usual age for retirement for a minister is the age established in each country in which member congregations of the presbytery exist at which a retiree may collect federal retirement benefits without penalty. Retirement, however, is not mandatory. If a congregation wishes to have its minister continue his ministry and retain his pastoral oversight beyond the usual retirement age, it must renew its call to him, observing the requirements of paragraph 2.7 above. Five years after the usual age for retirement, and every two years thereafter, the congregation must repeat this procedure if it desires him to continue his ministry. A renewed call to a minister who has reached retirement age must, like all other calls, be sustained by a vote of the presbytery.**
- 2.13 By a vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at a properly called congregational meeting, a local church may request a minister who has reached retirement age, to whom a renewed call is not being extended, to remain active in its work according to the terms set by the session. The congregation's decision must be sustained by the presbytery before the proposed action may be taken. A retired minister so employed remains a voting member of session but does not ordinarily act as its moderator or chair meetings of the session and committee, these being the prerogatives of the minister. However, when the minister is unable to attend, he may request the retired minister to act as moderator pro tempore.**

- 2.14** By a vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at a properly convened congregational meeting, a local church may honor with the title *minister emeritus* a retired minister who has served the congregation with particular distinction. A church's decision to confer this honor must be sustained by the presbytery. Unless removed from the ministry by the disciplinary action of the presbytery, a minister emeritus shall retain this honor for life but will forfeit it if he accepts a call to another congregation. While no duties ordinarily attach to the position of minister emeritus, a session is free to request and employ his services as it may do in the case of any other minister of the church.
- 2.15** A retired minister remains a voting member of the presbytery and may be advanced to any office in the presbytery by the vote of its members.

Ruling Elders

- 2.16** Ruling elders are men in whom the members of a local congregation have found the qualifications for eldership set forth in Scripture and whom they have elected to the office at a properly convened congregational meeting. Ruling elders are the representatives of the people, authorized by Scripture to exercise government and discipline, in conjunction with their ministers.
- 2.17** The Scripture warrant for the office of ruling elder is clear. In addition to Paul's plain distinction between elders who rule and labor in the Word and doctrine and elders who simply rule (1 Timothy 5:17), the Scripture speaks of "governments" (1 Corinthians 12:28), a designation that the churches that are Protestant and Reformed have understood to apply to ruling elders. The normal composition of a New Testament church is given in Philippians 1:1 as saints, bishops (elders), and deacons, with a plurality of elders exercising the oversight of the flock (1 Peter 5:1–3; Hebrews 13:7, 17).
- 2.18** Ruling elders, to be elected, must receive a total vote of not less than a majority (50% + 1) of the number present at a properly convened congregational meeting. "A properly convened congregational meeting" requires a quorum of one-third of the eligible voting members. "Total" votes include those cast at the meeting and the absentee ballots. A congregation may elect only the number of elders for which it has been granted moderation. If more than the permitted number receive the minimum requirement of majority vote, the election will be determined by plurality.
- 2.19** No man is eligible to be elected a ruling elder who:
- Does not evince the Christian character and reputation required by the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9);
 - Is a divorced person or married to a divorced person;
 - Does not practice total abstinence from the recreational, social, or non-medicinal use of drugs and from the consumption of beverage alcohol, both in public and in private; or who otherwise rejects the church's standards of personal separation (see 2.10.c; WCF 25, Addendum);
 - Has not been at least one year in membership in the local church in which he is standing for election—except that an elder in good standing who has transferred his membership from another Free Presbyterian church may be elected after a period of three months in membership.

- 2.20** No elected elder can take up his office until his election has been sustained by a vote of the presbytery and he has been ordained and installed by the presbytery. All ruling elders are required to subscribe publicly the Westminster Confession of Faith as it appears in this *B.C.O.* as a statement of their own faith and to indicate their acceptance of and commitment to the principles, practices, and procedures set forth in this *B.C.O.*
- 2.21** Ruling elders are accountable to the presbytery, serve under its jurisdiction, and assume their ministry on the basis of their avowed submission to its decisions. This does not preclude elders from dissenting from those decisions or from seeking to move the presbytery to alter or rescind them, as long as they act in accordance with the same provisions set forth for ministers in paragraph 2.9.a and b above.
- 2.22** Ruling elders are called to exercise a spiritual office within the local church that elected them. As the chosen representatives of the people, they hold their office in the congregation that elected them. The office does not follow them to any other congregation to which they may transfer their membership.
- 2.23** The office of ruling elder is important not only because of its divine appointment, scriptural warrant, representative character, and spiritual ministry, but also because of its fundamental significance to the presbyterian form of church government. Presbyterianism cannot operate successfully without the full participation of ruling elders in the courts of the church. Thus, ruling elders form an integral part of the presbytery in accordance with the provisions laid down in this *B.C.O.*
- 2.24** Ruling elders are subject to the oversight and discipline of their local sessions, having the same rights and responsibilities as other members in regard to session disciplinary procedures. No elder may be deposed from his office without due process, except as set forth in 2.25. An elder deprived of his office by the disciplinary action of his session may lodge an appeal with the presbytery in accordance with the provisions of this *B.C.O.*
- 2.25** Certain matters shall cause an elder's automatic suspension or removal from office, that is, without the necessity of the session's convening a disciplinary hearing:
- a. Divorce or marriage to a divorced person shall necessitate immediate resignation from office. Failure to resign shall cause the session to place the elder under discipline and to inform the presbytery of its action. There can be no appeal of this action of the session.
 - b. The practice of glossalalia according to the principles of the modern Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, in private devotions or in public meetings, shall require immediate resignation from office. Failure to resign shall be cause for the session to remove the offending elder from office under discipline and to inform the presbytery of its action. If the elder denies the practice of glossalalia, he cannot be deprived of his office without a trial before the session, but he may be suspended from exercising his office pending such a hearing, without prejudice to the result of such proceedings.
 - c. Absence from the stated services of the church for a period of six months, frequent non-attendance at the stated services of the church, or frequent attendance at the services of another church, without the permission of the session, shall be cause for immediate suspension from office and for permanent removal from office unless the fault is repudiated and corrected, the session reporting such disciplinary action to the presbytery.

- d. Any public scandal concerning a ruling elder, or any scripturally legitimate charge of a crime or of any matter of a serious moral nature against him, shall require that he be suspended from the privileges and exercise of his office, pending the disposition of his case and without prejudice to the result of such proceedings.

2.26 Except as provided in sections a, b, or c, below, the office of ruling elder is perpetual and cannot be laid aside at pleasure.

a. Resignation.

A ruling elder may resign his office by placing a written statement of his desire to do so before the session. His resignation must be accepted or rejected by the session, which must report its action to presbytery. An elder who resigns cannot resume his office except with the consent of the session to place his name again before the congregation for election, in which case the provisions of F.G. 2.18–20 and 5.14.f shall apply.

b. Retirement.

When a ruling elder reaches the legally defined age of retirement in the country in which the elder serves, he may resign as in paragraph a above. Failing to do so, he must be reelected by the congregation, or upon failure to be re-elected, cease to serve. The election shall take place upon the earlier of:

- i. the next scheduled election of elders by the congregation; or
- ii. not later than four years from the date of reaching the legally defined age of retirement in the country in which the elder serves. After the first reelection, this procedure must be repeated not less than every three years.

This paragraph *b* shall not apply to any elder who has been given the designated office of elder emeritus as defined in 2.27.

A vote for reelection shall not result in re-ordination or installation. An affirmative vote shall be viewed as a continuation of the original election and installation of the elder.

c. Sabbatical.

A local session may grant to a ruling elder, upon his written request, a sabbatical from his duties as set forth in the *B.C.O.*. The length and frequency of a sabbatical shall be determined by the local session. Sabbaticals must be reported in the Annual Questionnaire submitted by the local session to the presbytery. A ruling elder while on sabbatical shall have no rights to vote at session or presbytery level.

2.27 Elder Emeritus

a. The office of elder emeritus may be bestowed as follows:

- i. By designation of the local session, or
- ii. By vote of the congregation in a meeting directed by the local session. The procedures for such a meeting need not conform to the provisions of the *B.C.O.* but may be determined by the session. This vote requires no moderation from the presbytery.

b. Any person designated as elder emeritus shall be entitled to attend and participate in presbytery meetings but, shall have no voting rights. In addition, the elder emeritus may have such rights and

responsibilities relative to the local church as determined by the local session. However, the elder emeritus shall have no vote in session meetings.

c. Except as provided in this section for the office of elder emeritus, an elder ceasing to serve for any other reason (except as provided in 2.26.c) shall relinquish all rights and responsibilities of a ruling elder and shall only occupy the status as a member of the local church.

Deacons

- 2.28** Deacons (for whose work, compare 2.3), to be elected, must receive a total vote of not less than a majority (50% +1) of the number present at a properly convened meeting of the communicant members. “A properly convened congregational meeting” requires a quorum of one-third of the eligible voting members. “Total” votes include those cast at the meeting and the absentee ballots. If more than the desired number receive the minimum requirement of majority vote, the election will be determined by plurality. The usual period of deacon service is three years; at any time after the expiration of that period the session may call for an election of deacons. There is no limitation placed on the number of terms a deacon may serve.
- 2.29** To be eligible for election as a deacon a man must in the estimation of the session satisfy the criteria for the office set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8–13, must not be a divorced person or be married to a divorced person, and must be a communicant member of at least one year’s standing in the congregation in which he is to serve.
- 2.30** Deacons are subject to the discipline of the session of the church and may be removed from office by the vote of the session if the session believes the deacons have become unfit or unable to fulfill their office. As in the case of an elder (2.25 above), a deacon shall be required to resign if during his period of service he becomes divorced or marries a divorced person, is frequently absent from the stated services of the congregation without the permission of the session, or adopts the Pentecostalist or charismatic practice of glossolalia. If he is the subject of a public scandal or faces a scripturally legitimate charge of a crime or of a matter of a serious moral nature, he will be suspended from office by the session or by the presbytery pending the disposition of his case, without prejudice to the result of such proceedings.
- 2.31** The deacons of a local church shall be organized as the church committee.
- a. Acting as helps to the session in the temporal affairs of the church and serving under session oversight, this committee shall hold all its meetings jointly with the session (see 2.3.b). The session may, at its discretion, grant authority to the committee to meet and act in emergency situations (as determined by the session). The results of all such meetings and/or actions must be reported at the next regular meeting of the committee. In the case of constituted churches under the oversight of an interim session, the session may, at its discretion, grant authority to any local committee to meet in its absence but not without its approval. The results of all such meetings must be reported to the interim session not less than quarterly.
 - b. The committee shall meet monthly and may establish its own procedure for establishing an agenda for its meetings and for calling special or emergency meetings.
 - c. It shall determine the numbers necessary to form a quorum for the transaction of business.
 - d. The minister shall be its moderator. If he must be absent from a meeting, a ministerial colleague

who serves with him in the congregation, if there is one, shall act as moderator pro tempore. Otherwise, the committee shall elect a moderator pro tempore from among its members. In either case it shall be competent to transact the business on its agenda. If the minister cannot fulfill his duties as moderator for a prolonged period, for example through illness, the committee shall avail itself of the services of the person appointed in accordance with 5.9.c to conduct session business during the period of the minister's incapacity.

- e. The committee shall elect a secretary who shall preserve its records, keep minutes of all its proceedings, and present them for ratification at the next meeting.
- f. It shall elect a treasurer who shall have the duty of executing the committee's financial policy and decisions, keeping the church's accounts, making lodgments and payments authorized by the committee, and presenting a detailed statement of church funds at every statutory meeting and when otherwise required by the committee.
- g. The committee shall have power to appoint from among its members a subcommittee to act either on a standing or an interim basis in specialized matters. A subcommittee's terms of reference shall be clearly established by the committee, which retains to itself the responsibility and authority to expend church funds or to transact business in the name of the church. A subcommittee's recommendations, together with the documentation upon which it relied to arrive at them, shall be set before the committee and shall become part of its permanent record.
- h. On matters requiring specialized knowledge, the committee shall have the authority to enlist the assistance of experts outside its membership and may allow them to participate in its discussions but, not to vote.

CHAPTER 3

RELATIONSHIP OF LOCAL CHURCHES TO THE PRESBYTERY

- 3.1 A denominational connection exists between each local Free Presbyterian church and the Free Presbyterian Church of North America.**
- 3.2 Each local church commits itself to embrace fully and heartily the system of doctrine and practice set forth in this *B.C.O.***
- 3.3 Each local church is a full voting member of the presbytery, having the right to have its elders attend presbytery meetings and to commission two of them as voting representatives.**
- 3.4 The presbytery has full ministerial and ecclesiastical authority over every local church under its care, and its decisions are binding on each church and its members.**
- 3.5 The presbytery shall have no claim whatever to the real and personal property owned or acquired by a local Free Presbyterian church, with the exception of properties acquired for or in the name of the presbytery or with funds temporarily provided by the presbytery and not repaid, and with the further exception of properties on which the presbytery may have a lien against an outstanding loan owed to it by the local church.**

- 3.6 Every local Free Presbyterian church shall irrevocably have the right to sever its denominational connection with the Free Presbyterian Church of North America and to retain and keep unto itself all real and personal properties owned by it, subject to the exceptions noted in 3.5—provided that:**
- a. A congregational meeting is properly called at which a quorum will be two-thirds of the eligible voting members. It is the intention of this stipulation to set aside in these special circumstances the provision of 2.7 regarding a quorum. The action of severance will be accomplished by a vote of two-thirds plus one of the total number of communicant members of the church. The vote total includes those cast at the meeting and the absentee ballots;
 - b. Prior to the congregational meeting at which the proposal to sever the denominational connection is to be considered, the presbytery is accorded adequate time and opportunity to address and reason with the members at a properly convened meeting, or more than one meeting if necessary, or to send delegates to do so;
 - c. The meeting to consider the proposal to sever the denominational connection is chaired and overseen by a commission of the presbytery, unless the presbytery declines to appoint such a commission.
- 3.7 Failure by a local church to comply with any of the above conditions shall cause the proposal to sever the denominational connection to fail, in which case those members of the church who opposed the proposal shall be the legal possessors of all the rights and privileges of the local church, including the ownership of all its real and personal properties, and shall be so recognized by the presbytery.**
- 3.8 In the event a proposal to sever the denominational connection fails, those who have advocated severance may be subject to removal from the church roll at the presbytery's discretion. Seeking the peace and stability of the church within the denomination, the presbytery may decide to permit only those who give credible evidence that they are sincerely prepared to work toward this goal to remain as voting members.**
- 3.9 In the event that a proposal to sever the denominational connection succeeds:**
- a. the presbytery commission overseeing the vote shall report the result of the meeting to the presbytery and seek ratification of its report. In addition, if possible, the commission should make provision for any members who did not support the motion for withdrawal/severance and who desire to continue as Free Presbyterians;
 - b. In the case that the congregation is in debt to the presbytery, a date will be determined to repay all loans according to the agreements under which financial assistance was given;
 - c. If expenses are incurred in the process, the withdrawing congregation will assume its share of the expenses;
 - d. The withdrawing congregation, in accordance with the provision of F.G. 10.5.n, shall cease all public use of the denominational name within 30 days after the vote to withdraw. In addition, it shall advise the clerk of presbytery as soon as all legal uses of the denominational name are terminated.

CHAPTER 4

CHURCH COURTS AND THEIR PLACE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

4.1 The term *church* has various senses in Scripture.

- a. In places it denotes the entire body of God's people, whether in heaven or in earth, who have believed or will believe in Christ (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:25–27). The Scriptures describe the church in ways which cannot be limited to any particular society of Christians on earth, for example, the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:31–32); the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:23; 4:12, 13); the building of the Lord (Ephesians 2:21). The description in Hebrews 12:23 of “the general assembly and church of the firstborn” refers clearly to “the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof” (WCF, 25.1).
- b. It also denotes the whole body of those throughout the world who profess the faith of Christ (Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11–12).
- c. In places it signifies the believers in a particular place, associated for worship and service (Acts 14:23; Romans 16:3–5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1, etc.).
- d. It is also used to signify a number of congregations, associated together. From the texts noted under (b) above, church is employed in the singular to denote all the congregations or churches of God's people. Furthermore, in Acts 15:4 and 22 it is also used to denote all the Christians in the city of Jerusalem. Considering that there were “many thousands” of believing Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 21:20; see 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14 for how this vast group was formed), it is certain that there were numerous congregations of Christians associated together under a unified leadership and government.
- e. It sometimes denotes a body of believers as represented by their spiritual rulers (Matthew 18:17, which follows the long-established procedures of the synagogue court system; cf. Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24).

4.2 In the light of the fact that Scripture describes a church in such terms, it warrants the formation of both congregational and presbyterial church bodies, namely, sessions (chapter 5) and presbyteries (chapter 6). These bodies fulfill the following basic functions:

- a. They are bodies for Christian fellowship. Their members should conduct themselves with courtesy and kindness toward each other, ever seeking to maintain the spirit of unity in the bond of peace. Remembering that they act as fellowships for their members serves to keep sessions and presbyteries from becoming so engrossed in the juridical aspects of their work that they forget or fail to exercise their duty of providing the church with an example of Christian love and unity.
- b. They are deliberative bodies. As such, they maintain a watchful oversight over the flock under their care, remaining alert to the dangers that threaten the church's life and testimony and constantly considering how to edify God's people. Church sessions and the presbytery will therefore keep aware of the needs, views, and suggestions of their constituents and will seek to encourage the free flow of ideas among their members as to how best to respond to them.
- c. They are legislative bodies. As such, they are empowered to enact laws, measures, or procedures governing those under their care, in compliance with the beliefs, standards, and regulations set forth in the *B.C.O.*

- d. They are judicial bodies. They are the courts of the church, having the authority to decide cases of controversy, try and adjudicate on cases of complaint or alleged offense, and impose church censure to the degree they consider warranted by an offence in the light of Scripture.
- e. Since the legislative and judicial functions of sessions and presbyteries are in many ways their primary responsibilities and those most open to abuse, misunderstanding, or challenge, we will give careful attention to defining them and delineating their use.

4.3 Church courts exercise no civil jurisdiction and inflict no civil penalties. Their power is moral, spiritual, and ministerial. They “are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical; and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs ... unless by way of humble petition ... or by way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience” (WCF, 31.4).

4.4 Notwithstanding the limitations in paragraph 4.3, church courts have a statutory obligation to report certain crimes to the civil authorities. Where compliance with state law involves no breach of God’s law, the courts of the Free Presbyterian Church willingly accept this duty. Scripture declares, “Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever” (Psalm 93:5). It is, therefore, no part of the church’s function to shield either its ministers or members from the just administration of law by the civil authorities. In matters where there is no statutory requirement to report to the civil authorities, church courts must exercise wise discretion. Their actions must reflect their ministerial function and must not raise a barrier to needy sinners seeking the Lord in repentance, as would be the likely result if the church evidenced little concern to protect their confidentiality.

4.5 Church courts and their officers must always make it clear to people who seek their counsel or who come under their discipline that they will refuse to be made complicit in criminal illegalities and will fulfill what they consider their statutory obligations and civic duty. This spirit of cooperation with civil authorities in their actions against criminal activity must never become an excuse to compromise with any attempt by the civil power to invade or usurp the powers that God has vested in His church for its welfare and government.

4.6 Church courts have the authority and responsibility to require obedience to the laws of Scripture and adherence to the standards accepted by the church united under their jurisdiction.

4.7 Church courts also have the authority and responsibility to investigate complaints and to impose sanctions where necessary. “Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring of others from the like offenses; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating of the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing of the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer His covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders” (WCF, 30.3).

4.8 The censures that a church court may impose may be one of the following, according to the nature of the crime and the demerit of the person with whom the church court is dealing (see WCF, 30.4 and the Additional Statement).

- a. *Admonition* is a solemn rebuke of an offender for his sin, warning him of the danger of his sin, and exhorting him to repent and to manifest greater faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ and His testimony in the church.

- b. *Suspension* deprives a church member of the privileges of his membership or of his office or of both. It may be for a definite or an indefinite period of time. Suspension of a church officer from the privileges of membership automatically includes suspension from office, but suspension from office does not necessarily involve the loss of the privileges of membership. By “the privileges of membership” are meant the right to participate at the Lord’s Table, take any public part in the services or ministries of the church, be a candidate for election to any church office, or vote in any such election.

When the church court that suspended the member or officer is satisfied that he has manifested a genuine repentance and has satisfied the conditions prescribed for his restoration, it shall remove the censure. In the case of a suspended church officer, the privileges of church membership may be restored to him without restoration to office.

- c. *Dismissal* is a permanent removal of a person from the membership of a local church that falls short of the severity of excommunication. It is appropriate in cases in which one who is generally of a sound Christian character and testimony refuses to abide by the adopted standards of the church, fails to respond to other forms of censure, resists or defies church authority, or is guilty of contumacy by ignoring or refusing summonses to appear before a church court.

In dismissing a person from membership a church court declares that for the reasons conveyed to the dismissed person it considers him unfit or unable to fulfill the demands of membership in that particular assembly. It makes no other judgment concerning the reality or sincerity of his Christian profession or his fitness to be a part of another Christian fellowship. However, any dismissed person who seeks to attach himself to another Free Presbyterian congregation shall be required to satisfy its session that he has repented of the attitudes and/or actions that caused his dismissal.

- d. *Erasure* is the removal of a member from the church rolls on account of prolonged absenteeism, there being no other known grounds for disciplinary proceedings (see 5.20).
- e. *Deposition* is the removal of a church officer—minister, elder, or deacon—from his office. It may or may not be accompanied or followed by the infliction of any other censure.

Deposition may be for a definite or indefinite period as is appropriate:

1. In cases in which an officer’s offensive behavior creates a serious hindrance to the execution of his official duties or to the effective working of the official body of which he is a part.
 2. In cases of heresy or schism.
 3. In cases of contumacy, as when a church officer under investigation refuses to answer the summons, acknowledge the authority, or cooperate in the disciplinary proceedings of a church court to which he is properly subject.
- f. *Excommunication* is the most severe form of church discipline and is reserved for those guilty of offenses that are aggravated by willful or persistent impenitence. The severity of excommunication lies in the fact that in passing this judgment a church court declares that the offender is no longer considered a member of the body of Christ. The severity of excommunication is also emphasized by the court’s public reporting of its judgment to the congregation in which the offender held membership.

4.9 The courts of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America will be of two kinds, namely, sessions of local churches and a presbytery composed of ministers and representative elders from the local churches. Should the Free Presbyterian Church of North America decide to form itself into more than one presbytery, it shall at the same time form either a general synod or a general assembly as the highest court of the church.

- 4.10 Every court of Christ's church should seek to ensure that all its deliberations and decisions reflect the high honor and responsibility of governing the affairs of God's house, paying special attention to maintaining good order and fairness by observing the requirements of the church's "F.G." and "C.P.D." This solemn responsibility devolves even more heavily on the presbytery as the church's highest court, there being no appeal of its decisions to another court. (See C.P.D.) for the manner in which dissent from and protests against presbytery decisions may be registered and considered).**

CHAPTER 5

THE SESSION, THE COURT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

- 5.1 The spiritual oversight and government of a local Free Presbyterian church is the responsibility of its session. Every local church must be under the oversight and government of a session.**
- 5.2 The church over which it exercises this ministry is composed of the total number of baptized believers in any place who are organized as a congregation by the presbytery on the basis of a credible profession of faith and of their acceptance of the doctrine, practice, and government of the church.**
- a. In establishing the credibility of an applicant's profession of faith, the session shall inquire into his testimony and reputation. It shall also inquire into his membership in or involvement with fraternal organizations or secret societies, as distinct from trade, business, or educational associations. It shall declare that involvement in or with any fraternal organization that rejects the truth of the historic Christian faith, or that uses the name of the Christian faith as a pretext for subversive activities, is incompatible with a credible profession of faith and membership in a Free Presbyterian church.
 - b. In establishing an applicant's acceptance of the doctrine, practice, and government of the church, the session shall not demand as the standard for church membership a detailed knowledge of theology and church polity, as this would be an unscriptural denial of a proper place in the body of believers to new or immature Christians. However, it shall inquire into an applicant's doctrinal positions for any that are in opposition to the standards of the church. In particular, it shall inquire into his attitude towards and experience of alleged charismatic gifts, notably glossalalia, as practiced by modern Pentecostalist movements. It shall declare that the private or public practice of such alleged gifts is incompatible with a sincere acceptance of the standards of the Free Presbyterian Church and therefore with membership in any of its congregations.
 - c. In establishing the eligibility of an applicant for membership the session shall ensure that the applicant does not support in any manner a definition of marriage that is contrary to WCF 24.1. Support of an alternative view of marriage contrary to WCF 24.1 is grounds for denying an application for membership or, in the case of an existing member, termination of membership upon further inquiry by the Session (see Additional Statement to WCF 24.1).
- 5.3 The session also has the authority and responsibility to protect the church's purity and testimony, for which reason it:**
- a. Shall keep a watchful control over all announcements, literature, promotions, and presentations directed to the congregation under its care;

- b. May restrict the attendance of non-members at any church service or deny them the privilege of participating at the Lord's Supper.
- 5.4** After the initial or charter membership of a local church has been established, members may be added to the church roll only by the action of the session of the church (5.18). In receiving or refusing applications for membership, each session will be careful to maintain the standards of 5.2 as the minimum requirements for acceptance into the membership of any local Free Presbyterian church.
- 5.5** Ordinarily, the session of a church consists of its minister(s) and its ruling elders—ruling elders being men properly elected by the membership of the church (see 2.18). However, if a church has not matured sufficiently to elect elders from its members, or if a session has ceased to exist, the presbytery will appoint an interim session to assume responsibility for the congregation's oversight until ruling elders are elected. The interim session may be the session of another congregation or it may consist of any number of ministers and/or elders from various congregations especially designated for the task by the presbytery, or in the cases noted in 5.13.e and f, by the Executive Committee (see 11.7–8). If the presbytery considers that a session has become too small to operate effectively, it may appoint any number of ministers and/or elders it deems advisable to augment the existing session or it may require the congregation to pursue the election of additional elders.
- 5.6** The minister of the church is the moderator of the session. From its membership, the session must elect a clerk whose duty it is to maintain accurate records of all session business (see 5.16) and to preserve all documents relevant to session business (5.17). The clerk must present the minutes of each meeting at the next statutory meeting of the session and must be able to present all session documents committed to his charge upon request of the moderator or pursuant to a decision of the session.
- 5.7** Each church session should have a statutory or regular meeting once per month, although the session shall have the power to postpone its next regular meeting until a later date. However, in no case should a session exceed three months without a regular meeting.
- 5.8** A session may convene for a special meeting at the call of the moderator. In this case the moderator must state the reason for the meeting and specify the business that necessitates it. No other business may be conducted at a special meeting than the business given in the reason for calling the meeting. Ordinarily, the moderator is required to ensure that if possible all session members be notified of a special meeting. However, a session may adopt procedures that allow the moderator to call a special meeting without prior notification of the elders. For example, a session may decide that since all elders will ordinarily be at all the stated services of the church, the moderator may convene a special session meeting by announcing it at any such service.
- 5.9** No session meeting may be convened without the moderator's consent or in his absence unless he gives his consent.
- a. In the case of a session meeting conducted in his absence, the moderator will appoint a moderator pro tempore from the ruling elders, and discussion and business will be limited to the agenda that the moderator has communicated to the moderator pro tempore. If there is more than one minister in a church, the moderator will appoint a ministerial colleague as moderator pro tempore.

The session may in this case proceed to deal with all the business properly brought before it.

- b. If the moderator arrives at a session meeting at any stage of its deliberations, he will assume the chair and the pro tempore function will cease.
- c. In the case of the prolonged absence of the moderator from meetings of the session, as for example through illness, any other minister ordained to serve in the congregation will act as moderator pro tempore and conduct the regular and special meetings of the session. In cases where there is no other minister in the service of a local church, the presbytery will provide a minister to act as moderator pro tempore. In this case, the appointed moderator pro tempore may not cast any vote (see 5.12).
- d. In cases where a local church is without a called minister, the presbytery will appoint an interim moderator.
 - i. The interim moderator will have full ministerial powers, including the authority to conduct all session business and the right to register a casting vote in session meetings.
 - ii. As soon as possible after his appointment, the interim moderator must communicate with the session and committee of the church to establish the procedures to govern their working relationship.

5.10 A moderator is required to convene all statutory meetings of the session and any special meeting requested by a majority of the ruling elders. He is also required to convene such meetings of the session as the presbytery instructs.

5.11 A moderator and session are free to invite ministers from other churches, or any other expert advisers, to attend any session meeting to give the session the benefit of their expertise. Such visitors may take part in the deliberations of the session, but may not vote.

5.12 Ordinarily the moderator does not vote in session meetings, except to break a tie vote. He is not obligated to register such a casting vote, but he is free to do so if he deems it wise. If he declines to do so, he must declare the motion before the session to have been lost. However, in the case of sessions with one or two ruling elders, the moderator may propose and second motions and participate in the regular voting of the session.

5.13 To conduct session business a quorum is necessary. Any number less than what is required by the subsections immediately following does not make a session and is not competent to transact session business. The numbers of elders with a minister necessary to form a quorum are as follows:

- a. In sessions with two ruling elders, one elder and the minister will constitute a quorum.
- b. In sessions with three to eight ruling elders, two elders, with the minister, shall constitute a quorum.
- c. In sessions with nine or more elders, one-third of the elders, with the minister, shall be necessary to form a quorum.
- d. In infant or feeble works where it is impracticable for a time to have more than one ruling elder, that elder and the minister form the session and are competent to conduct its business.

- e. In cases where the refusal of elders to act deprives the session of the possibility of forming a regular quorum, the minister shall inform the presbytery's Executive Committee (11.7; 11.8), through the clerk of presbytery. The Executive Committee may recognize the remaining elder(s) and the minister as a quorum or may appoint an interim session according to the provisions of 5.5 to act with them, its decision being subject to approval by the presbytery at its next regular meeting.
- f. In cases where ruling elders refuse to act, leaving none but the minister to continue session business, the minister shall apply, through the clerk of presbytery, to the presbytery's Executive Committee (see 11.7; 11.8), which shall appoint an interim session according to the provisions of 5.5 to act with him, its decision being subject to approval by the presbytery at its next regular meeting.

5.14 The session of a church is charged with the following responsibilities:

- a. Maintaining scriptural government in the church.
- b. Conducting its meetings in a manner that is fair and just. Since sessions may be small, the rules that govern presbytery procedures do not necessarily apply to them. However, the moderator of the session should seek to follow the principles that those procedures enshrine by ensuring that (1) the session's business is conducted in an orderly fashion; (2) each member has full opportunity to participate in session business; (3) motions are disposed of in accordance with the distinction made in 9.17 between formal and informal discussion and in accordance with the general rules governing the introduction of motions (9.22); (4) all issues and persons dealt with by the session are dealt with in accordance with the provisions of this *B.C.O.*
- c. Overseeing all matters concerning the conduct of public worship, though having set the policy of the church, it will ordinarily delegate the ongoing application of its principles to the care of the minister.
- d. Promoting the edification of the church and setting forward the work of evangelism.
- e. Receiving, dismissing, and disciplining the members of the church.
- f. Interviewing and examining candidates for the office of ruling elder or deacon as to their suitability and capability according to the requirements of Scripture; to ascertain their knowledge of and adherence to the doctrine and practice of the church; to inquire into their motives in seeking the office in question. This provision gives the session the responsibility of approving the candidature of only those men who have satisfied it that their election would be both scriptural and beneficial to the church. A session's refusal to approve a man's candidature may be appealed to the presbytery.
- g. Working with the elected deacons and maintaining oversight of their work and the work of all other organizations in the congregation.
- h. Overseeing the use of properties belonging to or rented by the church.
- i. Appointing those of its number who are to serve as its commissioners to the presbytery for each calendar year (see 9.43–44).
- j. Nominating men for the office of moderator, deputy moderator, clerk, deputy clerk, and treasurer

of the presbytery. Each session shall forward its nominations in writing to the Executive Committee through the clerk of presbytery by the date determined by the clerk in advance of the first regular presbytery meeting of each calendar year.

5.15 The session should follow a regular order of business. In consultation with the moderator, the clerk should prepare an agenda to deal with the business that will come before the session. The following order of business is suggested as a way to cover the items of business most likely to come before a session, except those connected with judicial cases:

- a. Opening Bible reading and prayer
- b. Calling the roll
- c. The reading and approval of minutes
- d. Business arising from the minutes
- e. New business
- f. Examination of applicants for membership
- g. Dismissions or transfers of members
- h. The updating of the church roll
- i. Report to presbytery when necessary
- j. Unfinished business
- k. Miscellaneous business
- l. Settlement of the next time of meeting
- m. Motion to adjourn
- n. Closing prayer and benediction

5.16 The session must ensure that accurate minutes of its meetings are kept, including the minutes of all special meetings. The minutes of a statutory meeting should be read and ratified as to their accuracy at the next statutory meeting. The minutes of all special meetings should be read at the next statutory meeting.

5.17 The session is also required to keep an up-to-date roll of members with the date of the reception of each. This congregational roll shall reflect births, deaths, censures, restorations, and dismissions to another church. The session is also required to maintain accurate records of baptisms, applications for membership and interviews with applicants with the decision on each application, changes in membership of the congregation, and minutes of all congregational meetings.

- 5.18** The session has the sole power to accept any person for church membership (5.4). The session also has power to deprive members of their membership in the church, subject to the provisions of the *B.C.O.* The presbytery cannot require a session to receive a person into membership, except in a case where it sets aside the session's disciplinary judgment against a deposed or excommunicated member (see 4.8).
- 5.19** The session has the biblical responsibility and authority to maintain discipline among the members under its care. This oversight extends to every elder, deacon, and church member, but not to a minister, because the presbytery maintains direct responsibility for the discipline of ministers. If the session judges that a complainant has established a *prima facie* case against a member, it shall proceed to try the case in accordance with the provisions of the "C.P.D." and may pass judgment on an offender in accordance with 4.8.
- 5.20** The session may in one of two ways grant a request from a member not currently under church discipline, or under a charge that may lead to such discipline, to be removed from the membership of a local church:
- It may grant a request for dismissal to another congregation, in which case the clerk of session shall write a letter of transfer commending the member to the care of the receiving church. The session shall then remove the member's name from the church roll. If the session does not approve of the church to which a member intends to transfer his membership, and he cannot be dissuaded, the session shall give him a certificate of standing, unless it sees reason to institute disciplinary proceedings against him. On the granting of a certificate of standing, the session shall remove the member's name from the roll of the church.
 - It may permit him to resign from membership. The session will seek to learn the reasons for his request to resign. It will emphasize that no Christian should place himself outside the fellowship and discipline of the visible church and will therefore seek to guide him either to maintain his membership or to transfer it to another local church. If the member persists in his request to resign, the session will inform him that it has accepted his resignation. It will remove his name from the church roll, noting that he resigned while in good standing.
- 5.21** In the case of a member who is absent from the stated services of the church or from the communion service at the Lord's Table for a period of six months, but against whom there are no other known grounds for disciplinary proceedings, the session shall endeavor to discover the cause of the absenteeism and seek to deal with it. If, having made contact with the absentee member, the session is unable to bring him to a faithful attendance on the public means of grace, it shall warn him that it intends to erase his name from the church roll, which it shall proceed to do if within two months of its warning the member has not resumed normal attendance. If the session is unable to make contact with an absentee member to encourage his return to the church's fellowship or to issue a warning of pending erasure, it shall act to erase the member's name from the church roll at its first session meeting at which it is evident that all attempts to make contact have failed.
- 5.22** **Interim Sessions**
A. Application of Provisions of *B.C.O.* While distance, or other circumstances, may prohibit the members of an interim session from fulfilling all of the duties of the session set forth in the several provisions of the *B.C.O.*, except as such circumstances make compliance difficult, or impossible, all remaining provisions of the *B.C.O.* as to the functioning of a church session shall apply to an interim session. Because of the nature of an interim session and the desire to minimize the term and the

need for such a session, the following provisions are intended to give guidance to such a session in its functioning and to set forth additional requirements of an interim session that are not applicable to regular sessions.

B. Duties

1. To Presbytery

The interim session shall make a report to Presbytery on each anniversary of its appointment regarding:

- a. The activities of the session regarding the fulfillment of its duties as a session.
- b. Whether there are men in the congregation eligible to be elected to the office of elder.
- c. The efforts made to train and equip men to be qualified to serve as an elder.

2. To Minister

The interim session shall meet with the minister and the deacons, if any, as required in Sections 5.7, 5.8, and 5.14(g). It is the duty of the minister of the church to arrange such meetings. The session shall also be active in the fulfillment of the provisions of Sections 5.3 and 5.4. Meetings with the minister and the committee may be done by electronic means but minutes shall be made of all such meetings.

3. To Congregation

In performing its duties to the congregation the interim session shall be mindful of the provisions of Sections 2.3(a), 4.2, 5.1, and 5.14. To this end, all members of the congregation shall be furnished the names of each member of the interim session along with contact information for each. Each member of the interim session shall be furnished with the names of the church members and the contact information for each. The members of the congregation shall be informed regarding the function of the interim session and encouraged to freely contact one or more members of the session regarding any matter.

CHAPTER 6

THE PRESBYTERY, THE COURT OF THE REGIONAL CHURCH

- 6.1 The Free Presbyterian Church of North America recognizes that presbyterian churches usually form presbyteries to operate in relatively limited geographic regions. It also recognizes that there are many good reasons for this practice and that it may in due time feel the need to follow this procedure. Nevertheless, the Free Presbyterian Church has found that as long as it comprises a manageable number of congregations, there are good reasons for maintaining a simple two-tiered system of presbyterial government, that is, of local sessions acting under the jurisdiction of one presbytery. While North America is such a vast geographic region that it presents a huge challenge to such a concept, it does not render it impossible. On the other hand, the benefits of increased fellowship, unity, and intimacy among all our congregations are sufficient to lead us to adopt this system.**

- 6.2** A regional church comprises all the members of the local churches within a given region. The Free Presbyterian Church of North America comprises churches in the United States and Canada together with congregations in any other places formed and operated under the jurisdiction of the presbytery.
- 6.3** The presbytery is the governing body of the regional church and consists of the ordained ministers and all the ruling elders from its constituent churches. However, in all matters involving formal debate only two ruling elders officially commissioned by each session will have the right to vote (see 5.14.i).

CHAPTER 7

MEMBERS OF THE PRESBYTERY

- 7.1** All ordained ministers have the right to participate and vote in meetings of the presbytery. All ruling elders may participate in all the deliberations of the presbytery, but their voting shall be in accordance with the provisions of 9.43 and 9.44.
- 7.2** Three ordained ministers, with at least one ruling elder, shall form a quorum for the legitimate prosecution of business.
- 7.3** The presbytery may permit unordained men whom it has licensed as probationer ministers to participate in its meetings and to propose and vote upon motions in informal deliberations (9.42). However, licensed probationers may not make or second proposals or vote upon motions made during formal debate, upon matters affecting students or their training, or upon matters of complaint, appeal, or censure.
- 7.4** The presbytery shall welcome to its deliberations visiting ministers or elders from other Free Presbyterian churches with whom fraternal relations exist and may permit ministers or elders from other churches to be present at its meetings and to participate in its deliberations but not in its voting. In the latter case, presbytery members should, where possible, give the clerk notice of their desire to have visitors attend at least two weeks prior to the relevant meeting.

CHAPTER 8

OFFICERS OF THE PRESBYTERY

- 8.1** The offices of the presbytery are its moderator, deputy moderator, clerk, deputy clerk, and treasurer.
- These are elective offices.
 - Elections for these offices shall take place at the commencement of the first regular presbytery meeting of each calendar year.
 - Nominations for each of these offices may be made by any church session or by any minister, nominations to be sent to the Executive Committee through the clerk by the date determined by the clerk in advance of the first regular presbytery meeting of each calendar year.
 - Voting in elections for the presbytery's officers shall be according to paragraphs 9.43 and 9.44.

- e. The occupants of the offices of the deputy moderator and deputy clerk do not automatically succeed to the offices of moderator and clerk when the incumbents of those offices retire from their duties. The presbytery may still exercise its option to follow the provisions of 8.3 and/or 8.12 according to its discretion.
- f. Consistent with the limitation upon a member to be elected to no more than two consecutive terms as moderator after which he may not serve as moderator for another two years, the deputy moderator's office shall be subject to the same limitation. No such limitation will be applied to the office of deputy clerk.

8.2 The presbytery shall elect one of its members to be its moderator for a term of one year but for no more than two consecutive terms. After he has served for two consecutive terms, a man may not be considered for election to a further term as moderator or deputy moderator for at least two years.

8.3 In the absence of the moderator, the deputy moderator shall discharge the moderator's duties, unless the presbytery takes action to elect another member as a moderator pro tempore to serve either for the current meeting or any portion thereof or for the entire period during which the moderator may be absent. If the moderator appears at any stage during the presbytery's proceedings, he shall assume his duties and any pro tempore function shall cease. However, the moderator may decline to assume his duties if he believes such action to be in the best interests of the presbytery to complete the business at hand.

8.4 The moderator's responsibilities are:

- a. To preside over the devotional exercises with which each presbytery meeting commences and concludes.
- b. To ensure that the business of the presbytery is conducted in a fair and legitimate manner in accordance with this *B.C.O.*, and to call on members to state their views and register their votes or to discharge any functions that the presbytery has assigned to them.
- c. To adjudicate on points of order and to issue decisions, rebukes, admonitions, and instructions in accordance with the will of the presbytery.
- d. To maintain impartiality on matters of debate and therefore to refrain from participating in the debate while he is in the chair. The moderator may legitimately participate in a debate in presbytery but must vacate the chair while he does so. This limitation refers only to motions under formal debate and not to matters that the presbytery may decide to deliberate and decide upon in an informal manner (see 9.17; 9.40).

8.5 The deputy moderator's responsibilities are, in addition to serving on the Executive Committee:

- a. To assist the moderator in the administration of the business of the presbytery in any ways that the moderator deems to be needed.
- b. To preside at meetings of the presbytery in the absence of the moderator unless the presbytery opts to use the provisions of 8.3.
- c. To discharge the moderator's responsibilities in services of ordination and/or installation of ministers or ruling elders unless the presbytery opts to use the provisions of 8.3.

- d. To serve the presbytery in preparing himself for any subsequent service to which the members of the presbytery may elect him.
- 8.6 From its membership, the presbytery must elect a clerk, whose term of office shall be one year, though he may be reelected for as many consecutive terms as the presbytery shall decide.**
- 8.7 The clerk shall be responsible for keeping accurate minutes of all presbytery meetings and shall maintain a complete record of all the presbytery's correspondence and actions.**
- 8.8 It is the duty of the clerk, acting in accordance with the decisions of the presbytery's Executive Committee (see 11.7–8), to prepare in printed form an agenda for the business of all meetings of the presbytery and to circulate this agenda to all sessions under the presbytery's jurisdiction. To ensure that the Executive Committee has sufficient time to prepare the agenda, all items for inclusion in it should be received by the clerk at least one month before the meeting at which they are advanced for discussion. Though he may attempt to include late-arriving material in the Executive Committee's deliberations, the clerk shall not be held responsible if it does not gain inclusion in the agenda. Items that do not appear on the agenda may not be raised at the presbytery for formal deliberation (9.17).**
- 8.9 The clerk shall ensure that each minister and elder in attendance at a presbytery meeting registers his presence at the commencement of each meeting and each time the presbytery reconvenes after an adjournment. He shall also keep an up to-date record of commissioned elders (see 9.44) and shall maintain accurate minutes of all presbytery meetings and preserve all documents that are relevant to the presbytery's business. He must present the minutes of each meeting at the next regular meeting of the presbytery and must lay before the presbytery any documents committed to his charge, upon request of the moderator or pursuant to a decision of the presbytery.**
- 8.10 From its membership, the presbytery must elect a deputy clerk, whose term of office shall be one year, though he may be reelected for as many consecutive terms as the presbytery shall decide.**
- 8.11 The deputy clerk's responsibilities are:**
- a. To assist the clerk in the management of the presbytery's business as the clerk shall deem needed.
 - b. To serve the presbytery in preparing himself for any subsequent service to which the members of the presbytery may elect him.
 - c. Not inclusive of the duties of the minute secretary unless so directed by the presbytery.
- 8.12 In the absence of the clerk, the deputy clerk shall discharge the clerk's duties, unless the presbytery takes action to elect another member to act as clerk pro tempore. The fact of his appointment must be noted in the minutes, and the minutes he records should be signed by him as clerk pro tempore. If the clerk appears at any stage during the presbytery's proceedings he shall assume his duties and any pro tempore function shall cease. However, the clerk may decline to assume his duties if he believes such action to be in the best interests of the presbytery to complete the business at hand.**
- 8.13 The presbytery may at its own discretion appoint from its members a minute secretary to assist the clerk in taking the minutes of its meetings.**

- 8.14 The presbytery shall also elect a treasurer whose term of office shall be one year, though he may be reelected for as many consecutive terms as the presbytery shall decide.
- 8.15 The treasurer shall be responsible for the banking of funds to the account or accounts of the presbytery in a bank designated by the presbytery. With the assistance of the Finance Committee he shall also maintain the presbytery's financial records and shall have prepared in approved form under his direction for each regular presbytery meeting, or more often as the presbytery shall direct, a financial report showing the true status of the various funds of the presbytery.
- 8.16 The treasurer shall act as chairman of the Finance Committee (see 11.5–6). It is his duty to keep sessions informed of presbytery decisions regarding all fees or contributions that devolve upon constituent congregations (see 10.15).
- 8.17 To facilitate the conduct of its financial affairs in Canada and the United States, the presbytery may elect an assistant treasurer to ensure that it maintains accounts and records in both jurisdictions.
- 8.18 In the meetings of the presbytery, the deputy moderator, the deputy clerk, and the treasurer shall be seated with the other members of the presbytery. At the presiding officer's table will be seated the moderator and clerk with provision to be made for the minute secretary to be seated near the clerk.

CHAPTER 9

MEETINGS OF THE PRESBYTERY

- 9.1 Presbytery meetings may be of three kinds:
- Regular, or statutory, meetings are those required by the *B.C.O.* as set forth in 9.2.
 - A special meeting is one appointed by the presbytery to transact some particular business. The business and the time and place for its transaction in a special meeting must be specified in the minutes of the immediately previous regular meeting and must be publicly announced by the moderator at that regular meeting. With the exception of a report from the Seminary Committee (see 11.11.i), no other business may be transacted at the special meeting unless all sessions have been informed by the clerk and a majority of them agree to the expansion of the agenda for the special meeting.
 - An emergency meeting is one called between regular meetings because of unexpected business having arisen which requires immediate attention. Emergency meetings may be called by the moderator on his own motion or as a result of a request he has received from a member or members of the presbytery. The specific business of the meeting must be communicated to all sessions and adequate time given to them to respond to the call. With the exception of a report from the Seminary Committee (see 11.11.i), no other business than the matter(s) communicated in the call for the meeting may be discussed at an emergency meeting of the presbytery.
 - Any meeting of the presbytery may be adjourned by the vote of the members to another day. Meetings so adjourned are the original meeting still continuing, with the same rights or limitations.

- e. If a majority of voting members agrees, the presbytery may use technology such as video conferencing to enable members who for good reason cannot attend in person to participate in any of its meetings. Such participants shall be counted as present at the meeting and shall have all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of those who are present in person.

- 9.2 **The presbytery will conduct regular business twice a year, usually in May and October, on dates decided by the presbytery at its last regular meeting. It may at any time increase the number of its statutory meetings but may not decrease them without a formal amendment of this paragraph. If for any reason no day has been fixed for the next regular meeting, the moderator shall consult as soon as possible with the churches through their ministers and shall appoint a day for meeting that is acceptable to most of them. If he appears to fail in this responsibility, a minimum of three ministers may require the clerk to issue a call for a meeting of presbytery on a day of their choosing to conduct its regular business, providing they allow sufficient time for all the churches to be notified.**
- 9.3 **In its first regular meeting in any calendar year, the presbytery shall elect its officers.**
- 9.4 **In light of the difficulties that presbyters from widely separated churches experience in attending presbytery meetings, the presbytery authorizes the Executive Committee to adopt the following method of avoiding unnecessary travel between regular meetings. To deal with matters that require immediate attention, arising out of prior presbytery decisions or actions, or to deal with matters that the Executive Committee considers to be in need of urgent action, the clerk should inform all sessions by mail, electronic mail, or faxed message of the issue(s) needing attention and stating why the Executive Committee believes the business in view does not necessitate calling an emergency meeting. In his communication the clerk should set before the sessions the Executive Committee's suggestions for action on the matter(s) in question. Sessions may register their approval of or dissent from any suggested action, or they may make an alternative suggestion, or call for an emergency meeting to consider the matter before them. The agreement of a majority of the sessions will be sufficient warrant for the Executive Committee to prosecute the business under consideration.**

Conduct of Presbytery Meetings

- 9.5 **All meetings of presbytery shall be constituted with the reading of Scripture and with prayer, after which the moderator shall declare the meeting open for all the business that shall properly be brought before it.**
- 9.6 **Meetings of the presbytery will ordinarily be open for members of any of its constituent churches to observe. Those who avail themselves of this privilege must not by word or deed seek to participate in or exert any influence upon the deliberations of the court. Non-church members may be admitted to observe at the presbytery's discretion, under the same conditions just mentioned. The presbytery may at any time decide to sit in closed session. It may do so for any reason it deems sufficient, especially in cases involving discipline or other sensitive matters.**
- 9.7 **At any time during presbytery deliberations any member may raise a point of order. That is, he may request the moderator to rule whether a statement or action currently before the presbytery is permissible in the light of the *B.C.O.* A member raising a point of order must be heard and any member speaking at the time of the intervention must resume his seat until the moderator has ruled on the question raised. The moderator's ruling on all questions of order and procedure**

is binding on all members, though any member may challenge it by calling for a vote of the presbytery on the question. Any member may speak to the question of order before it is put to the vote. A simple majority of voting members is sufficient to sustain or to overrule the moderator's original ruling.

9.8 The presbytery's order of business for its statutory meetings will be as follows, unless by a vote of its members it shall determine otherwise:

- a. Calling the meeting to order by the reading of Scripture and prayer and declaring it open for all business that shall properly be brought before it
- b. Seating of visitors (see 7.4)
- c. Calling of the roll
- d. Greetings to and from other churches; messages of congratulations, sympathy, etc., to churches and members arising out of events that occurred since the last meeting
- e. Matters adjourned from a prior meeting to the present meeting (see 9.30.d)
- f. Approval of the Executive Committee's proposed agenda
- g. The reading and approving of the minutes of the last regular meeting, of any special or emergency meetings, and of all deliberations and decisions pursued in accordance with the special provisions of 9.4
- h. Business arising from the minutes
- i. Reports from presbytery committees, commencing with the financial report
- j. Reports from special commissions
- k. Examination of and reports from churches
- l. Unfinished business
- m. New business (see 8.7)
- n. At the moderator's discretion, informal discussion of non-agenda matters raised by members
- o. Setting the time and place of the next meeting
- p. Motion to adjourn
- q. Closing prayer and benediction

9.9 During the reading of the minutes and prior to their adoption, no business covered by them may be discussed except to ensure the sufficiency, clarity, or accuracy of the clerk's record, with the exception noted in 9.11.

- 9.10 Challenges to the sufficiency, clarity, or accuracy of any part of the clerk's record may be raised by any member. No changes may be made in the clerk's minutes except to make it clearer or more accurate in its record of the presbytery's deliberations and decisions or to expunge the record of an unconstitutional or illegitimate action (see 9.11).
- 9.11 When the minutes of a meeting are before the presbytery for ratification, any member may raise a question about the constitutionality or legitimacy of any action recorded in those minutes with a view to having the action nullified and the minute of it expunged from the record. Such a question must be introduced before the minutes are adopted, because no adopted minute may be expunged from the record (though, of course, it may be reversed by a subsequent presbytery decision). When such a challenge is made, the reading of the minutes will be suspended while the presbytery considers the matter. In this deliberation discussion is limited to questions of constitutionality and legitimacy. All other issues, such as advisability or consistency with other decisions or actions, are excluded. If a majority of the presbytery concludes that the decision under discussion was made unconstitutionally or otherwise illegitimately, the minute will be marked as expunged and can never be employed in any way as part of the presbytery's record. However, the fact that the decision was challenged and expunged will form a part of the record of the meeting in which this action takes place. If the challenge fails, the minute of the action in question will stand as part of the presbytery's record. The minute of the challenge will be read and ratified in the usual course at the next regular meeting and cannot be challenged or changed, except for sufficiency, clarity, or accuracy.
- 9.12 If there are no changes to the minutes as presented by the clerk, the moderator shall ask if some member will propose the adoption of the minutes as read. He will then ask for a second to the motion and call for a voice vote, upon which the minutes will become ratified. In the event of changes having been made to the clerk's record, the moderator shall ask if some member will propose the adoption of the minutes as amended. He will then ask for a second and call for a voice vote, upon which the minutes will be ratified.
- 9.13 All minutes read and adopted will be dated and signed by the moderator and the clerk, and all changes in the clerk's record will be initialed by the moderator and the clerk.
- 9.14 Except in cases that involve a change in the provisions of the *B.C.O.*, decisions of presbytery shall take effect as soon as they are made and do not need to await the ratification at the next regular meeting of the minutes recording them. Changes in the *B.C.O.* are governed by the procedures laid down in 10.19 and 10.20.
- 9.15 The moderator will allocate time to each item on the agenda according to the total time available and will be responsible to keep members on schedule. If the presbytery desires, it may adjourn consideration of one or more items on the agenda until its next meeting or to a special meeting at a specified place, day, and time. If time permits after the agenda has been completed, the moderator may allow members to raise other business for informal discussion but not for formal debate (see 9.17–39).
- 9.16 The presbytery has the power to temporarily suspend its standing orders, that is, the order of business set forth in 9.8, as it deems necessary. Standing orders are the servant not the master of the church and will be employed by the presbytery to ensure the good and orderly

government of the church. If in the judgment of a majority of its members, expressed in a formal vote, good and orderly government, or the just disposal of any matter before it, is best served by adopting special procedures, the presbytery shall suspend its standing orders and enact temporary procedures.

Formal Deliberations

9.17 Presbytery deliberations may be of two kinds, formal and informal. Formal deliberations are necessary when:

- a. The question of constitutionality or legitimacy of a decision, the minute of which is before the presbytery for ratification, is raised (see 9.11);
- b. The proposer and seconder of a motion expressly request it, and the presbytery, by a simple majority of votes cast in accordance with 9.43 and 9.44, accedes to their request;
- c. The motion before the presbytery calls for the inauguration of a new policy or a substantial modification of an existing policy. The moderator shall rule whether a motion comes under either category, though any member may ask the presbytery to overrule his decision, which it may do by a simple majority of votes cast in accordance with 9.43 and 9.44;
- d. The motion deals with changes to the *B.C.O.* (see 10.19–21);
- e. The presbytery conducts a trial, hears an appeal, or deals with a matter of legal process. Cases of these types shall be dealt with according to the provisions of the “C.P.D.”

9.18 When a matter is the subject of formal deliberation, the proposer of the motion must forward it to the clerk in good time (see 8.7), thus enabling the Executive Committee to seek to provide time in the presbytery’s schedule and to include a printed statement of the motion on the agenda to be sent to all sessions. To facilitate the business of the presbytery, ministers or ruling elders who wish to be heard in favor of or in opposition to the motion should communicate their desire to the moderator within a week of receiving a copy of the agenda. A member’s expression of intention to speak to a motion does not guarantee that he will be called in the debate as time constraints (9.19) or the introduction of motions of higher priority (see 9.22) may preclude the moderator from calling him.

9.19 In formal deliberations, the moderator shall announce the amount of time he has allocated for debating the motion. As the debate proceeds, he may upon his own motion or in response to a request made by at least two members and sustained by a majority vote of the presbytery extend the time allocated.

9.20 The moderator shall call upon the clerk to read the motion before the presbytery. The moderator shall then ask if there is a second to the motion. If there is not, there can be no discussion of the motion or of the issue(s) raised in it.

9.21 Once a motion has been seconded, the moderator shall call upon the proposer to speak in favor of his motion for a specified time, which the presbytery may by a simple majority consent to extend.

9.22 When a motion has been read and seconded, no other motion may be introduced, except the following, which are listed in the order of their priority:

- a. To adjourn the meeting (see 9.28)
- b. To pass from the question (see 9.29)
- c. To adjourn the debate (see 9.30)
- d. To refer to a committee (see 9.31)
- e. To close the debate (see 9.32)
- f. To amend (see 9.33–35)

- 9.23** After the member who has proposed the motion has finished his argument in its favor, the moderator shall call on members to speak against and for the motion, as far as possible alternately. He shall allocate a specified time to each member called to speak, though one member may defer all or part of his time to another.
- 9.24** When all members who desire to speak to a motion have done so, or if time expires before all who desire to speak have been called, and the presbytery declines to extend the time available (see 9.19), the moderator shall call on an opponent of the motion followed by its seconder to conclude the debate and, unless the presbytery first passes one of the motions listed in 9.22. *a–e*, shall then call for a vote.
- 9.25** If time permits, the moderator may allow members who did not give prior notification of their desire to participate in the debate to address the question under debate, subject to the time constraints of 9.15, 9.19, and 9.23.
- 9.26** Unless the presbytery requests him to do so, a member may not speak more than once in the course of a debate, except to raise a point of order or of information. However, a member who has already spoken shall be permitted briefly to explain a statement of his own which he considers has been misunderstood, but he must confine his additional remarks to such explanation.
- 9.27** An opponent or a seconder of a motion who is called on to conclude a debate will be allowed a time specified by the moderator, whose decision may be altered by a simple majority of votes cast in accordance with 9.43 and 9.44.
- 9.28** A motion to adjourn the meeting is always in order, except when a vote is being taken. Once proposed it must immediately be put to the vote without discussion of any kind.
- 9.29** A motion to pass from the question may be moved on any motion with the exception of a motion to adjourn the meeting (9.28) but may not be introduced to dispose of cases of trial or appeal. Once proposed and seconded, such a motion may be discussed before being put to the vote. A simple majority of the votes cast in accordance with 9.43 and 9.44 is sufficient to carry it, in which case the presbytery will proceed without further discussion of the matter to the next business.
- 9.30** At any time during a debate, a motion to adjourn the debate may be considered, except when a motion to adjourn the meeting or to pass from the question is being disposed of.

- a. The moderator may make the motion to adjourn the debate and call for an immediate vote on his motion.
- b. A motion to adjourn the debate may be proposed and seconded from the floor.
- c. A simple majority of the voting members present is sufficient to carry a motion to adjourn a debate.
- d. A debate may be adjourned either indefinitely or to a specified time. In the case of an indefinite adjournment, the debate may be resumed only after a motion to do so has been proposed, seconded, and passed by a simple majority of voting members present. A debate adjourned to a specified time takes precedence over all other business for that time and cannot be entered upon sooner. The member who proposed the adjournment shall be called to speak first when the debate is resumed, provided he is present and prepared to do so at the time of the resumption.

9.31 A motion to refer to a committee may be moved on any motion, with the exception of those named in 9.22.a–c, but may not be introduced to dispose of cases of trial or appeal. Once proposed and seconded, such a motion may be discussed before being put to the vote. A simple majority of the votes cast in accordance with 9.43 and 9.44 will carry the motion. If the presbytery passes a motion to refer to a committee, it shall at once appoint the committee, stipulating its terms of reference and the time allocated for it to complete its work.

9.32 A motion to close the debate may be moved at any time during the discussion of a motion other than those named in 9.22.a–d except after the moderator has called for a vote on it.

- a. If a motion to close the debate is seconded, the moderator shall allow the proposer or seconder of the motion to close the debate to speak in favor of it for a specified time and shall allow the proposer or seconder of the original motion the same amount of time to reply. He shall then, without further discussion, put the motion to close the debate to a vote.
- b. If a motion to close the debate fails to gain two-thirds of the votes cast in accordance with 9.43 and 9.44, the moderator shall declare it lost and resume debate on the original motion.
- c. If a motion to close the debate gains two-thirds or more of the votes cast in accordance with 9.43 and 9.44, the moderator shall declare it carried and shall have the clerk read the terms of the original motion, which he shall at once put to a vote.

9.33 After a motion has been proposed and seconded, at any time during the discussion, unless any motion named in 9.22.a–e is being disposed of, any member may propose an amendment. If another member seconds this amendment, it becomes the question before the presbytery, and until it has been rejected or withdrawn, further discussion of the original motion is not permitted, and no other amendment may be introduced.

9.34 A mere negation of a motion may not be received as an amendment; nor may any proposal that does not set the original motion aside be received as an amendment. In cases of legal process or appeal, no proposal may be received as an amendment that would not, if carried, determine the case or forward its progress toward resolution.

9.35 In the event an amendment is defeated, the presbytery shall adopt the following procedure:

- a. A second amendment to the original motion may be proposed, seconded, and disposed of.

- b. If the second amendment is rejected, a third amendment may be proposed, seconded, and disposed of. If the third amendment is rejected, discussion of the original motion shall proceed without further amendment.
- c. If a first or second amendment is carried, it shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion before the presbytery, on which one further amendment may be moved. If a third amendment is carried, it shall become the substantive motion, on which no further amendment may be moved.

- 9.36 Before a final vote is taken, the moderator shall call on the clerk to read the substantive motion before the presbytery.**
- 9.37 A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by its proposer with the support of at least two-thirds of the voting members of the presbytery. However, such a motion or amendment shall remain a part of the presbytery minutes as will the fact of its withdrawal.**
- 9.38 When speaking to any motion, a member shall address the moderator.**
- 9.39 Should any member conduct himself offensively, either in speech or in demeanor, whether in participating in debate or otherwise, and it comes to the attention of the moderator, the moderator shall call him to order. Unless the presbytery shall by a simple majority of voting members present overrule the moderator's ruling of a member's words or actions as objectionable, the offending member shall in the hearing of the presbytery tender an apology in a manner that is satisfactory to the moderator. Failure to do so shall result in the immediate suspension either of the member's right to attend or of his right to participate in the presbytery's deliberations during the current meeting, as the presbytery shall decide by a simple majority of voting members. If at any time during the period of his suspension a suspended member tenders an apology that is acceptable to the presbytery, his suspension will be immediately removed.**

Informal Discussion

- 9.40 In discussions relating to matters that do not meet the criteria of 9.17, the presbytery may discuss its business in an informal manner. That is, the moderator may conduct what may be termed a general conversation on the matter under consideration. In this discussion members may speak more than once, and the moderator himself may participate in the conversation, always ensuring, however, that all the views of members receive a fair hearing.**
- 9.41 Informal discussions may proceed without a motion before the presbytery and may or may not lead to the proposing of a motion.**
- 9.42 Any member may propose a motion at any time during the presbytery's informal discussion. Before calling for a second of the motion, the moderator shall rule whether the motion falls under the provisions of 9.17.c and d and therefore may be considered only in formal debate. His ruling is subject to challenge by any presbyter present (see 9.7).**
- a. If the moderator rules that a motion arising out of informal discussion may properly be considered only in formal debate, he shall declare it out of order and advise the member who proposed it that he may proceed with his motion only according to paragraphs 8.8 and 10.19.
 - b. If the moderator rules that a motion arising out of an informal discussion does not necessitate formal

debate, he shall call for a second to the motion. If the motion is seconded, the moderator shall call for discussion of it before calling for a vote upon it. If there is a discussion of a motion before the presbytery, the rules of debate set out in paragraphs 9.20 through 9.39 shall be observed.

Voting in Presbytery Meetings

- 9.43 In all matters involving formal debate, including all those involving procedural questions, the election of presbytery officers (see 8.1), and legal process, trial, or appeal (see 9.17), only ministers and two ruling elders from each local church may vote.**
- 9.44 Ruling elders who vote in disposing of matters dealt with by formal debate must be commissioned by their sessions to do so. Each session is therefore required to forward to the clerk, in writing, at least four weeks before the first presbytery meeting in a calendar year, the names of the elders commissioned to vote during that calendar year. If for any reason a session needs to send a substitute elder to subsequent presbytery meetings during that calendar year, it shall notify the clerk of the change as soon as possible after the appointment is made. No substitute commissioner may vote in formal debate unless the presbytery has received written notification of his appointment from his session and has duly recorded his appointment. In any case of substitution, the session must inform the clerk whether the new commissioner is to act for the remainder of the calendar year or only on a pro tempore basis.**
- 9.45 In cases of trial or appeal, a member who has not been present to hear the evidence presented on each side of the issue is not permitted to vote.**
- 9.46 In all matters other than those defined in 9.43, all ordained ministers and ruling elders present at a presbytery meeting may vote.**
- 9.47 All votes must be registered in person (see 9.1.e for the full extent of this provision); proxy votes are not permitted.**
- 9.48 The method of voting may be by one of the following methods:**
- a. By voice vote, as when the moderator calls for those in favor of a motion to say “aye,” and those against to say “no.” The moderator will rule that either the “ayes” or the “noes” have the majority. Any member may challenge the moderator’s decision and call for a new vote by either of the methods described in sections (b) or (c) of this paragraph.
 - b. By a show of hands for and against the motion. The moderator will call on all members to remain in their places until the clerk makes an accurate tally of the votes indicated.
 - c. By a roll call. The clerk will call each name from the list of registered members (see 9.44) and record each man’s response to the question from the moderator, “Do you vote ‘aye’ or ‘no’ on this motion?” Having recorded each member’s vote, the clerk will count those in favor of and those against the motion. He will give the result of the vote to the moderator, who will announce that the motion has been carried or lost, as the case may be.
 - d. By unanimous consent. A vote by “unanimous consent” will avoid the necessity of a motion and a second prior to a vote on a matter. This procedure for voting may be proposed in either of two ways.

First, the Moderator or Clerk may specify this form of voting next to any item on the proposed agenda. Approval by the Presbytery of the agenda, with the designation as to voting, will be approval of the form of voting by unanimous consent. However, the Moderator may, by his own action or in response to a request by a member of presbytery, require normal voting procedure on any matter.

Second, a member may propose that the item on the floor be adopted by unanimous consent. The moderator will ask if there is any objection. If there is no objection then the moderator will declare the motion passed. If there is an objection then standard procedures requiring a proposal, second, discussion and vote will apply.

- 9.49 The moderator may not vote on any motion, except when a vote is tied, in which case he may cast the deciding vote. If he declines to do so, he must declare the motion lost.**
- 9.50 Any member who votes against a motion may request that his dissent be recorded in the minutes. However, he is bound to abide by the decision of the presbytery expressed in the vote from which he dissents, until such time as that vote may be overturned in a lawful manner by another vote of the presbytery.**

CHAPTER 10

POWERS OF THE PRESBYTERY

Limitation of Presbytery Powers

- 10.1 The powers of the presbytery are limited to those set down in the *B.C.O.* or those specifically delegated to it according to the procedures laid down in 10.2. All other powers belong to the local church and cannot be assumed by the presbytery.**
- 10.2 Additional powers may be delegated to the presbytery either temporarily to meet the exigencies of a special situation or permanently.**
- a. Temporary powers may be delegated for a stipulated purpose or period of time only after all ministers and sessions have been notified in writing of the proposed action and the proposal is sustained by the vote of at least two-thirds of all the sessions and three-fourths of the total number of members present and eligible to vote (see 9.43–44). Temporary powers will lapse as soon as the stipulated purpose or time period passes, and they may be removed at any time if two-thirds of all the sessions and three-fourths of eligible voting members (9.43–44) vote for their removal.
 - b. Additional permanent powers may be granted to the presbytery only according to the regulations covering amendments to the *B.C.O.* (10.19–21).
- 10.3 The presbytery possesses de jure the powers defined in the *B.C.O.* that are delegated to it.**
- a. The presbytery may not knowingly make decisions that give it new de facto constitutional powers.
 - b. No decision of presbytery may knowingly proceed by the assumption of powers that belong to the local church.

- c. However, if the presbytery erroneously assumes or exercises powers not delegated to it and such action is unchallenged, decisions made as the result of the erroneous assumption of power shall have full authority in accordance with paragraph 10.19.
- d. If under challenge the presbytery determines that it assumed in good faith powers that it did not rightly possess, it may vote by a simple majority to vacate any or all decisions or actions it made in exercise of those powers or it may by the vote of at least two-thirds of its eligible voting members (9.43–44) allow any or all of them to stand. However, allowing any or all of them to stand does not establish a precedent for future presbytery conduct.

10.4 Though the presbytery may amend the *B.C.O.* according to 10.19, it may not otherwise make any decision that alters the doctrinal basis on which ministers and elders enjoy good standing. Nor may it make any decision or action that infringes upon the rights and protections that the constitution affords ministers or members of local churches, except in pursuance of an investigative or disciplinary action.

The Power of Oversight

10.5 To the presbytery belongs the responsibility and authority to oversee the spiritual welfare of the churches under its care, subject to the “Limitation of Presbytery Powers” described in paragraphs 10.1 and 10.2. More particularly, the presbytery has the power:

- a. To deal with all petitions or requests for direction or advice addressed to it from all ministers, sessions, and committees of churches under its care.
- b. To deal with petitions or complaints addressed to it from members of churches under its care. In cases where such petitions or complaints deal with local church concerns, the presbytery may assume immediate jurisdiction over the issue raised but shall where possible seek to maintain the right of a session to be the first church court to deal with the spiritual concerns of its members.
- c. To deal with any complaints addressed to it from a session, minister, or member of any local church under its care with reference to wrongs alleged to have been done by another session under its care. Before deciding to receive such complaints, the presbytery shall seek to establish that the complainant has a legitimate interest in the case either by showing that the alleged wrong has been done against the complainant or that it is a matter of public scandal.
- d. To look into the conduct of sessions and committees, or any church organization or activity under their control, and to correct them if they have erred.
- e. To appoint interim sessions. To be viable, a session must have at least one ruling elder to act along with the minister of the church. In churches where there are no local ruling elders, or where the session is deemed by the presbytery to be too small to operate as the court of the church, the presbytery shall appoint an interim session to act under the moderatorship of the minister of the church.
- f. To appoint interim moderators of sessions in churches during a vacancy or during the incapacity of the regular minister.
- g. To take students for the ministry under its care, examine them, and if they are found qualified, license them to preach the gospel.

- h. To grant or deny moderation, that is, permission to congregations to meet for the purpose of issuing a call to a minister or of electing a specified number of ruling elders. In cases in which it considers a local session to be failing in its duty to present such petitions, the presbytery may initiate the process of giving the congregation an opportunity of meeting to call a minister or to elect elders.
- i. To arrange for the election of ministers, to receive and sustain or reject calls, to ordain and install men called to congregations under its care, and to ordain and commission men called to the mission field.
- j. To ordain and install ruling elders.
- k. To ensure that the various duties of the ministry and of the eldership are properly discharged.
- l. To receive existing congregations and take them under its care and to form and constitute new congregations.
- m. To visit congregations to inquire into the conduct of their spiritual and temporal affairs and to intervene in any matter which in the presbytery's judgment affects their welfare.
- n. To determine the required use of the denominational name by any particular church or church ministry under its jurisdiction.

10.6 Only the presbytery or an investigative or judicial commission specially appointed by it for the task may receive or act on complaints or charges against a minister or impose any discipline on a minister.

The Power of Licensure

10.7 The Scriptures require that only tried and proven men be ordained to the ministry of the gospel (1 Timothy 3:6; 2 Timothy 2:2). Thus, it is the responsibility of the presbytery to evaluate the calling and develop the gifts of those under its care who aspire to the office of a minister. In furtherance of this purpose, it shall place students who have successfully completed their academic preparation as probationers, required to fulfill an internship of at least one year under the direction of an ordained minister and his session. However, at its discretion under special circumstances, the presbytery, while maintaining its oversight, may waive the internship requirement, allowing the probationer under its care to proceed to the Examination Committee to be cleared or not cleared either to be licensed or to receive a call and proceed to ordination (see 11.18–19).

- a. The overseeing minister and session shall submit a report of the probationer's work and progress to each regular meeting of the presbytery during the period of the internship. Upon completion of the internship, a probationer shall be examined by the Examination Committee, which shall in the light of this examination recommend that he be cleared or not cleared to be licensed or to receive a call and proceed to ordination (see 11.18–19)
- b. The presbytery may allow a probationer who has fulfilled the requirements of the Examination Committee for licensing to pioneer an extension work as a licentiate under its auspices before proceeding to ordination. If it pursues this course, the presbytery shall make provision for the licentiate to be supported by the diligent oversight and guidance of an ordained minister and shall receive a report of his labors and progress at each of its regular meetings.

The Power of Ordination

- 10.8 To the presbytery alone belongs the power to sanction the election of ministers and ruling elders and to ordain and install them in office. On receiving a petition to arrange a meeting to call a minister or to ordain ruling elders or on initiating the procedure by its own action (see 10.5.h), the presbytery shall inquire into the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church in question and, if it is satisfied that such a meeting will serve the welfare of the congregation, shall arrange for a presbytery deputation to conduct the meeting in accordance with the provisions of the “C.P.D.”**

The Power of Appeal

- 10.9 The presbytery may receive and act to resolve all appeals from local church members against alleged erroneous judgments or actions taken against them by their sessions. It has the right to refuse to hear an appeal if it deems the grounds for it to be insufficient. It shall agree to hear an appeal only if the appellant can show that there is prima facie evidence that the session, the court of original action, acted unconstitutionally, employed biased or illegal procedures, conducted its business unfairly, or imposed an inappropriate discipline.**
- 10.10 In hearing and adjudicating appeals the presbytery may decide to act as a whole or to appoint a judicial commission to conduct the business (see 11.30.f).**
- 10.11 An appeal to the presbytery against a session’s action or decision shall observe the following procedures:**
- a. The appellant(s) shall submit a written statement of the nature and grounds of the appeal together with a petition for the action the presbytery is being asked to take. With this statement the appellant(s) must send copies of all relevant documents and names of witnesses. The appellant(s) must assure the presbytery that the session whose action or decision is being appealed has received the same documentation.
 - b. The presbytery by written notice shall require the session to submit a rebuttal document together with a copy of the minutes of its proceedings in its dealings with the case.
 - c. If it determines that an appellant has established a prima facie case for his appeal to be heard, the presbytery shall set a place, date, and time to hear it.
 - d. The originals of all copies of documents sent to the clerk must be produced at the appeal hearing.
 - e. Unless the presbytery has given specific authorization to the contrary, the appellant(s) must appear in person, as must the minister and session whose decision or action is being appealed.
 - f. Ordinarily, legal counsel shall not be permitted to appear at a presbytery meeting either on behalf of the session or of the appellant(s), unless an appellant or a member of the session is a member of the legal profession. The presbytery has the right to modify this rule if it deems it wise to do so, and it may at any time retain legal counsel or other expert assistance to guide it in its own deliberations.
 - g. The presbytery shall decide whether to conduct the appeal in open or in closed hearings. If it decides to open all or part of the proceedings to members of the public the stipulations of 9.6 shall be rigorously applied.

- h. The presbytery shall have full power to adopt such rules of procedure as it deems necessary for the just and expeditious disposal of the case before it. At the appeal hearing, the moderator shall explain the procedures to the appellant(s) and to the defending minister or session.
- i. The presbytery also has power to determine whom, other than the appellant(s) and defendants, it shall hear at the appeal.
- j. Neither the minister nor any member of the defending session may sit as a member of the court or register any vote in determining the outcome of the appeal.
- k. The moderator shall ensure that when the presbytery is satisfied that it has heard all the relevant evidence, it shall discuss the case privately and render its findings to the appellant(s) and the defendants. These findings shall be final and binding on all parties.
- l. Having stated the presbytery's findings, the moderator will announce any action necessitated by them that the appellant(s), the defendant(s), or the presbytery must take, either in confirmation, modification, or reversal of the session's original decision or action.

The Power of Review

- 10.12 The presbytery has authority to call for and to review all records of sessions and committees in all the churches under its care at any time and to approve or censure them.**
- 10.13 It shall obtain annually from all local churches detailed answers from ministers, sessions, and committees to the questionnaire "Annual Examination of Churches" as provided for in the "C.P.D."**

The Power of Control

- 10.14 The presbytery has power to ensure that sessions observe the provisions of the *B.C.O.* and to visit particular churches for the purpose of inquiring into their state, of redressing failures to comply with the said provisions, and of taking appropriate measures to strengthen the government or ministry of a local church.**
- 10.15 The presbytery has the power to levy such fees on the churches under its care as are necessary for the conduct of its business and to order such arrangements as it deems necessary and wise to support the schemes it adopts for the furtherance of the work of God at home or abroad. To impose a new levy, the presbytery must pass a motion to do so in formal debate with at least two-thirds of the eligible voting members present (see 9.43–44) supporting the motion.**
- 10.16 The presbytery may also instruct each church under its care with reference to its compensation of its minister.**

The Power to Authoritatively Interpret the Church's Substandards

- 10.17 The presbytery is the sole judge and arbiter of the meaning and application of the church's constitutional standards and statements and of its rules of practice and procedure. It alone has the power to resolve questions of doctrine for the church or to identify and condemn opinions or practices that it deems offensive to Scripture or to the purity or peace of the church.**

10.18 The presbytery also has power to finally adjudicate on whether the procedures laid down in the *B.C.O.* have been adequately observed in any of its meetings or of those of any session, committee, or congregation under its jurisdiction. It is under no necessity to judge every failure to observe the relevant procedures set forth in the *B.C.O.* a sufficient reason to invalidate the deliberation, action, or decision of the body in question. If an aggrieved party appeals an action or decision on the ground of an alleged failure to observe correct procedure, the presbytery shall have power to rule whether the infringement complained of:

- a. Did in fact occur;
- b. Materially affected the action or decision taken;
- c. Resulted in a violation of scriptural norms of truth and fairness. If the presbytery rules that the infringement complained of did occur, it may void the action or decision in question. However, it is required to do so only if by a vote of a majority of its eligible voting members (9.43–44) it decides that a possible miscarriage of justice, as described in sections (a) or (b) above, did take place. Thus if, in the presbytery's opinion, the action or decision in question is fair and would have been the same had there been no procedural infringement, it is free to declare the infringement inconsequential and to dismiss the appeal.

The Power of Amendment

10.19 Not possessing the authority to enact constitutional change merely by its own vote, the presbytery shall adopt the following procedures in dealing with proposals to amend any part of the *B.C.O.*:

- a. It may receive a proposal to amend from any session, or from any commission, committee, or member of presbytery.
- b. Having received a proposal to amend, it shall either form a special commission to study the proposed change(s) and make a full report or a series of reports; or it shall call as many special meetings as may be necessary to consider the matter in full sittings of the presbytery.
- c. In either case, it shall ensure adequate study of the subject under consideration and give a full and fair hearing to all ministers and sessions and their representative elders who wish to contribute to the deliberations.
- d. It shall formulate a proposal that has gained the support of at least two-thirds of the eligible voting members (9.43–44), which the clerk shall then transmit with all relevant documentation to the sessions for their consideration.
- e. In transmitting its proposal to the sessions, the presbytery shall set a time and place to meet to consider the responses of the sessions. This meeting may be the next regular meeting or a special meeting, and the matter will take its place on the agenda according to the provisions of 9.1.b or 9.8.
- f. When the presbytery meets to consider the responses of sessions to a proposal for constitutional change(s), the moderator shall instruct elders that they are bound to vote according to the instructions of the session of which they are representatives. Ministers, not being delegates from a session, may vote according to personal choice.

- g. A constitutional change shall be enacted only if a minimum of half of all the sessions under the presbytery's care and at least two-thirds of the eligible voting members of the presbytery (9.43–44) vote in favor.
- 10.20 Any proposed decision or action by the presbytery that infringes on the rights and privileges of ministers or members under this constitution or that effectively changes the terms under which a minister or member may remain in good standing (other than a disciplinary decision or action properly arrived at) is invalid. If a decision or action is not challenged and the minute of it expunged from the record as provided for in 9.11, it shall be accepted as the rule of the church, obligatory upon all ministers and members, until it has been abrogated, either by a new decision of presbytery or as the result of a successful challenge to its constitutionality before the presbytery.**
- 10.21 Decisions of the presbytery resulting from the assumption of powers later deemed unconstitutional shall be dealt with in accordance with paragraph 10.3.d.**
- 10.22 Any amendments or alterations to the *B.C.O.* established according to the provisions of paragraph 10.19 shall be declared adopted by the presbytery and shall from that moment go into effect, unless immediately upon their adoption a motion to delay their implementation until a specified date is proposed, seconded, and passed by a vote of at least two-thirds of the eligible voting members present (9.43–44).**

The Power of Discipline

- 10.23 The presbytery has power to investigate reports affecting the character or efficiency of ministers and licentiates.**
- 10.24 It also has power to receive charges or complaints against ministers, licentiates, ruling elders, or sessions and may cite witnesses, take evidence, and pronounce and publish judgment as it deems proper.**
- 10.25 The presbytery will not ordinarily hear a charge against a member of one of the churches under its care, though it may hear an appeal against the finding of a session with reference to any member. However, in cases in which it considers the session incompetent or unwilling to act or when it deems that peculiar circumstances exist that warrant such action, by a simple majority vote as per 9.43 and 9.44 the presbytery may assume immediate jurisdiction.**
- 10.26 The presbytery may implement a judicial decision that suspends or terminates a person's membership in a local church in one of two ways:**
 - a. It may inform the session of the church of its findings and instruct it to take action to implement the presbytery's judgment. The session shall be required to send to the clerk a copy of the minutes that record its compliance with the presbytery's instructions.
 - b. At the request of the session or when it considers that the best interests of the church so require, the presbytery may act without referring the matter to the session, acting by its own immediate authority to suspend or terminate the member's privileges in the local church. When the presbytery adopts this course, it shall write to inform the session of its action and to instruct the session to record receipt of the presbytery's communication and to make it a permanent part of the session's records. The presbytery shall also require the session to send to the clerk evidence—in the form of copies of a minute and of any relevant correspondence—of any changes to the church roll as the result of the presbytery's decision.

CHAPTER 11

COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY

- 11.1** The presbytery may appoint standing committees to facilitate its regular business and ecclesiastical commissions to consider, and in most cases to conclude, matters of particular difficulty or importance. The difference between a committee and a commission is that whereas a committee is appointed to examine, consider, and report to the presbytery, a commission is authorized to deliberate on and conclude the business referred to it, except in the case of a judicial commission (11.28). Except in the case of a commission appointed to act as the temporary session of a local church (see 11.22.e), each commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the presbytery, entered into its minutes, and regarded as the action of the presbytery.
- 11.2** Standing committees shall be elected annually and ecclesiastical commissions shall be elected to serve for the period of time allocated by the presbytery for the accomplishment of the tasks assigned to them. The presbytery may alter the membership of a committee or commission at any time. However, it shall not introduce a new member to a judicial commission after the evidentiary stage of a disciplinary case has commenced, unless it agrees to commence the hearing anew so that the new member of the commission may be aware of all the evidence.
- 11.3** In lieu of holding meetings in person, committees may conduct business by means of telecommunication, mail, or electronic mail on condition that more than one-half of a committee's members agree to the procedure and that all data is made equally available to all members.
- 11.4** While the presbytery, or its committees and commissions, may employ all necessary means of assistance in its work from any source, consistent with the doctrines and practices of the church, it may not delegate the regular business of the church to any person not in membership in it and or to any person or entity not subject to its jurisdiction.

Standing Committees of Presbytery

- 11.5** The Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall be elected annually at the first regular presbytery meeting of each calendar year. There is no limitation to the number of terms a member may serve on this committee. The person elected by the presbytery as its treasurer will automatically be a member of the Finance Committee and shall serve as its chairman (see 8.11–13). In keeping with the provisions of 11.4, in discharging its duties set forth in 11.6, the Finance Committee may employ the help of such persons or entities within or outside its own membership as it deems necessary to properly administer the financial affairs of the presbytery.
- 11.6** The duties of the Finance Committee shall be
- To execute the financial schemes and plans adopted by the presbytery.
 - To assist the treasurer in keeping accurate and current financial records of all the presbytery's business and to report regularly on the state of all the funds under its care.
 - To keep the presbytery informed of each local church's fulfillment of its financial obligations to the presbytery and its ministries.

- d. To review the treasurer's financial records prior to their presentation to the presbytery.
- e. To review annually the financial records of all the churches under the presbytery's care and to report to the presbytery on the financial health of each church.
- f. To receive from local churches all applications to borrow money from any source for building or capital improvements and to recommend the presbytery to uphold, modify, or deny the application.

11.7 The Executive Committee. The moderator, deputy moderator, clerk, deputy clerk and treasurer shall form the Executive Committee and shall handle such administrative business as may be referred to it by the presbytery. No judicial business may be referred to it. This limitation is not to be interpreted as prohibiting the presbytery from appointing one or all of the members of the Executive Committee to form all or part of a judicial commission.

11.8 The general duties of the Executive Committee shall be:

- a. To receive from church sessions their nominations for the offices of moderator, deputy moderator, clerk, deputy clerk, and treasurer (see 5.14.), to consult with all nominees to confirm their willingness to serve, and to prepare a final ballot for a vote of the presbytery (see 9.43–44).
- b. To consider all matters proposed for presbytery consideration or action and to prepare an agenda for each regular presbytery meeting. It may consider that a matter submitted by a session, minister, or member should not be included on the agenda for the next regular meeting, either because of time constraints or because the matter in question requires more time to prepare for a full and fair discussion of it. In this case, it must inform the proposer of the business of its decision. The proposer may challenge the Executive Committee's decision in presbytery by raising the matter when the moderator moves the adoption of the Executive Committee's proposed agenda. If the challenge gains a second and the votes of a majority of the eligible voting members (9.43–44), the agenda shall be amended to include the matter in question.
- c. In the interval between presbytery meetings, to administer the policies and decisions of the presbytery and to take the steps necessary to give effect to the decisions of the presbytery.
- d. To act to ensure that a session deprived of a quorum by the refusal of one or more ruling elders to act may continue to have the oversight and government of a session, according to the provisions of paragraph 5.13.e and f.
- e. The Executive Committee must make a full report of its decisions and actions to each regular meeting of the presbytery.

11.9 The Seminary Committee. The presbytery shall elect from its members a Seminary Committee to govern the ministry and operations of Geneva Reformed Seminary, its denominational seminary.

11.10 The Seminary Committee shall be required to maintain a vigilant oversight of all aspects of the seminary's ministry and operations, including budget, institutional development, and any associations with accrediting agencies or other bodies, and shall ensure that the seminary fulfills its responsibility for the theological and professional training of candidates for the ministry in all branches of the work under the presbytery's care.

11.11 In exercising its oversight of Geneva Reformed Seminary, the Seminary Committee shall operate under the following guidelines:

- a. It will elect a moderator and a clerk from its members.
- b. It will meet at least twice a year to receive from the seminary president a full financial accounting and a written report of all aspects of the seminary's operation, including current enrollment, faculty and student performance, and admissions and dismissions.
- c. The committee's moderator shall be required to call a meeting if requested in writing by the president or by at least two members of the committee.
- d. It shall consult with the president regarding the need for additions to or dismissions from the faculty and staff and shall advise the presbytery of its recommendations.
- e. It shall recommend to the presbytery:
 - i. As to the President of the seminary:
 - (a) A man who has been approved by presbytery to teach in the seminary, and who has taught (other than language) not less than four years;
 - (b) A man who can be on site as often as may be required to handle administrative matters, advising of students, and presiding at seminary functions; and
 - (c) A man who can advance the interests of the seminary in religious and academic circles.
 - ii. As to faculty, teachers which the Seminary Committee and president believe to be qualified to teach biblical, theological, linguistic, or ecclesiastical subjects in the seminary. The Seminary Committee and president shall seek to use FPC ordained ministers for meeting the needs of faculty, but shall not be limited thereto. All faculty must be approved by presbytery prior to teaching in the seminary.
- f. It shall keep on record a signed statement from each member of faculty affirming his agreement with the seminary's mission and his resolve to advance that mission both by his teaching and by his example. The committee shall also conduct an annual written examination of each member of faculty, as the presbytery does of each minister under its care, inquiring particularly into his continued acceptance of and adherence to the creedal and constitutional standards of the church, his aptitude for and diligence in his labors, his relations with faculty, staff, and students, and his general Christian testimony. The results of these examinations, together with any recommendations, must be reported to the presbytery at its next regular meeting.
- g. The Seminary Committee may also appoint non-ministers on an adjunct or temporary basis to lecture on specialized subjects, as for example on legal or financial matters.
- h. Where necessary, the Seminary Committee may employ or co-opt expert assistance from outside its or the presbytery's membership or may authorize the president to do so. Such special assistants may participate in the committee's discussions but may not vote in its decisions.
- i. The committee shall place the seminary's faculty and staff under the immediate leadership and authority of the president, subject to its own general oversight. It shall vest in the president the

power to review the employment or suspend the service of any member of faculty or staff, pending a hearing by the committee. In dealing with suspensions by the president, the committee shall investigate the grounds of his decision and shall confirm or overrule them as it deems proper. Its decisions immediately carry the authority of the presbytery. At the next meeting of the presbytery, whether it be a regular, special, or emergency meeting (see 9.1.a–c) the committee must present a full report of its discussions, procedures, decisions, and actions with a view to obtaining final approval of them. If approval is withheld, any decision or action taken by the committee shall be vacated, and the presbytery will instruct the seminary president and committee as to how they should proceed.

- j. The Seminary Committee shall have no power to grant tenure to any member of faculty. Every member of the seminary faculty or staff holds his position solely at the will of the presbytery. The committee shall obtain from each appointee a written assurance that he assumes his position on the basis of this principle and that he accepts that no removal from a seminary position may be construed as wrongful dismissal if it is sustained by a vote of the presbytery.
- k. The committee shall receive from the president a detailed statement of the seminary curriculum and shall be notified of any proposed changes to it. The committee shall recommend to the presbytery at its next regular meeting that such changes be approved or amended.

11.12 The Church Extension Committee. The presbytery shall elect a Church Extension Committee that shall be responsible to develop plans to promote the work and witness of the church by all scriptural means and to submit such plans to the presbytery.

11.13 The Church Extension Committee's task shall also be to encourage ministers and local churches to endeavor to establish extension works and to oversee their plans to do so. Every local church and minister has full liberty to evangelize. However, so as to ensure that their plans do not conflict with those that other brethren may have for the same area and that they receive the fullest possible prayerful and practical support that the presbytery and the other local churches can provide, they shall submit any plans to establish a mission or extension work to the Church Extension Committee.

11.14 The Church Extension Committee shall receive and respond to all inquiries that the presbytery may receive from parties interested in forming Free Presbyterian churches, unless the presbytery shall decide to take up the matter directly.

11.15 The Foreign Missions Committee. The presbytery shall elect a foreign missions committee, to be known as the Mission Board, to promote interest in the church's missionary activities and to investigate possible areas of missionary endeavor.

11.16 The Mission Board shall be responsible to receive applications from missionary candidates, to interview such candidates, and to make recommendations to the presbytery. It shall also be responsible to supervise the preparation of accepted candidates and to oversee the work of missionaries on the foreign field. It shall submit a written report of all its interviews, decisions, and actions to each regular meeting of the presbytery.

11.17 The decisions of the Mission Board shall carry full and immediate authority, provided that it does not take any action committing the presbytery to a policy or expenditure not already explicitly approved by presbytery decision. Any such action must be held in abeyance until a full report with the board's recommendations has been made to the presbytery and its approval has been received.

- 11.18 The Examination Committee.** The presbytery shall elect an Examination Committee to conduct a rigorous examination of all candidates for licensing. The committee shall receive a full transcript of the candidate's seminary education together with a report from the seminary of his character and behavior. It will also receive a report from the candidate's session and shall examine him specifically regarding his spiritual experience and service. It will inquire into his moral and spiritual state, including his personal history, sexual orientation and behavior, and any other matters it considers relevant. It will satisfy itself regarding the candidate's competence in Greek, Hebrew, Biblical Exegesis and Hermeneutics, English Bible, Reformed Theology, Apologetics, Pastoral Theology, Church History, and the principles and practices of Free Presbyterian church government as set out in this *B.C.O.* In order to satisfy the committee, the candidate will be tested with a written examination regarding his basic knowledge of theology as outlined in the substandards, basic knowledge of Bible content, and basic knowledge of the government of the FPCNA as found in the *B.C.O.* In addition, the candidate for license should prepare a sermon on an assigned text to be preached either to the examination committee or to the presbytery.
- 11.19 The Examination Committee** shall not recommend a candidate for licensure merely on the strength of his seminary results or even on the basis of his good report. In addition to these it will inquire into such matters as the following: his experience of the saving and sanctifying grace of God; his entire dedication to God's will and work; his assurance of a divine calling to the work of the Free Presbyterian ministry and the basis of that assurance; his grasp of and commitment to the doctrines and standards of the church; his gifts for the work of the ministry, particularly in the area of preaching; his experience in evangelical endeavors; his fruit in gospel preaching. Only when it is satisfied on these matters will the Examination Committee recommend a candidate for licensure.
- 11.20 The Examination Committee** shall report its findings to the presbytery, which may call the candidate before it and interview him before adopting the committee's report.
- 11.21 The presbytery** may ask the Examination Committee to interview and examine any applicant for the ministry who has been ordained in another church. The presbytery will hear its report before deciding whether to call the applicant before it.

Ecclesiastical Commissions

- 11.22 The presbytery** may appoint a commission to act on its behalf in the following cases:
- a. The ordination of ministers and ruling elders;
 - b. The installation of ministers and elders;
 - c. The constitution of new churches;
 - d. The visitation of portions of the church affected with disorder;
 - e. The temporary adoption of the role of the session of a local church while it is without ruling elders (see 5.5);
 - f. The disposition of matters referred to it by a session seeking guidance in constitutional matters or in issues of particular delicacy or difficulty that the session feels unable to deal with satisfactorily;

- g. The investigation of complaints against a minister or session;
- h. The taking of testimony in judicial cases;
- i. The conduct of a judicial hearing of a case against a minister or session;
- j. The examination of a session or congregation desiring to be accepted into the Free Presbyterian Church;
- k. The detailed consideration of any matter of the church's constitution, faith, or practice that the presbytery considers to be in need of clarification or amendment;
- l. The examination of the church's relations with or attitude toward other ecclesiastical bodies, or in regard to issues of concern to the church.

11.23 In all cases an ecclesiastical commission shall have power to conclude the business assigned to it, except in the matters listed in 11.22.h–k.

Investigative Commissions

- 11.24 In the exercise of its powers of oversight and discipline, the presbytery may elect from its members an investigative commission to inquire into a complaint against a minister or session to determine if judicial process should be instituted. In the event that an investigative commission finds that there is a prima facie case against the minister or session in question and decides to recommend that charges be approved in the presbytery, it shall have authority to temporarily suspend from their official functions those under investigation, until the full presbytery shall approve or disapprove its recommendations.**
- 11.25 If the presbytery approves the findings and recommendations of an investigative commission in favor of judicial process, it shall proceed to draw up charges according to the procedures laid down in the “C.P.D.” and try the case either before the presbytery as a whole or before a judicial commission.**
- 11.26 If the presbytery disapproves the findings and recommendations of an investigative commission in favor of judicial process, it shall either exonerate the party or parties investigated or it shall agree to examine the matter further, either by acting as a whole or by appointing a new commission.**
- 11.27 If the presbytery disapproves the findings and recommendations of an investigative commission against judicial process, it shall proceed to draw up charges in accordance with the “C.P.D.” or it shall agree to examine the matter further, either by acting as a whole or by appointing a new commission.**

Judicial Commissions

- 11.28 A judicial commission is a commission charged with the task of acting in judicial cases in which the presbytery decides not to act as a whole.**

11.29 The presbytery may transmit to a judicial commission the business of:

- a. Taking testimony in judicial cases;
- b. Conducting a trial of a minister, session or licentiate against whom charges have been laid and approved for process by the presbytery;
- c. Conducting a trial of a minister, session, or licentiate around whom a public scandal has been raised because of alleged breaches of God's law;
- d. Reviewing the records of sessions and approving or censuring them;
- e. Redressing whatever sessions may have done contrary to the *B.C.O.*;
- f. Hearing and adjudicating appeals from church members against allegedly erroneous judgments or actions of a session.

11.30 A judicial commission may be required by the presbytery to make an interim report of its activities. Upon completing its business it shall be required to report its findings and decisions and submit them for ratification to the presbytery either at the presbytery's next regular meeting or at a meeting called especially to hear the report.**11.31 A judicial commission shall have power to enter a judgment in the case before it and to pass sentence accordingly. In the interim between a judicial commission's completion of its business and its report to the presbytery, its decisions shall carry the full authority of the presbytery. Upon hearing a judicial commission's report the presbytery shall approve or disapprove the judgment, ordinarily without debate. However, if a motion to debate any part of the report or to refer it back to the judicial commission or to another specially appointed commission for further deliberation is seconded and passed by a majority of its eligible voting members (9.43–44), the presbytery shall take the necessary steps to implement the decision. In the meanwhile, the judgment of the original commission will continue to carry the full authority of the presbytery unless the presbytery has by its own motion vacated all or part of its decisions.**

The presbytery shall pay particular regard to any strictly constitutional element in the judgment rendered by a judicial commission to ensure that in reaching it the commission correctly interpreted and acted upon the church's constitution expressed in this *B.C.O.*.

CHAPTER 12

UNDER CARE OF PRESBYTERY

12.1 Defined

Coming under the care of presbytery is the creation of a relationship between a ruling body of the denomination and an individual who seeks to become eligible to minister within the denomination. This relationship involves the following:

- a. A commitment of the individual to a ministry within the denomination and a commitment of the denomination to help the individual become fully equipped to fulfill that goal;

- b. A respect of each for the other worthy of co-laborers in the work of Christ notwithstanding the position that each has in the relationship created by coming under care;
- c. A bringing to a successful conclusion, by the grace of God, of the undertaking of the individual for the good of each other and to the glory of God.

12.2 Persons eligible

- a. Only persons whose ultimate ministry will be overseen by the denomination are eligible candidates to apply to come under care. These include candidates for:
 - i. The gospel ministry;
 - ii. Missionary work;
 - iii. Men desiring to teach in the seminary.
- b. Every candidate must be a member of a Free Presbyterian church (NA or Ulster) for a period of one (1) year. If the candidate is married the spouse must also have been a member for at least one (1) year. This time period may be waived by presbytery for the candidate and/or the spouse if circumstances warrant. This will be in the sole discretion of the presbytery. If accepted to come under care of presbytery, the candidate will remain a communicant member of his home church subject to the jurisdiction of the session.
- c. The candidate must believe he/she is called of God for the work for which training, oversight, and counsel is sought from the presbytery.
- d. The candidate must complete all procedural requirements established by presbytery for a person seeking to come under care.

12.3 Procedure to come under care

- a. Every person considering application to the presbytery to come under care must first meet with his local minister and session to consider his call and his qualifications since these elders must give a recommendation to the presbytery regarding acceptance of the individual to come under care.
- b. With the local session approval and written endorsement the individual must complete the application furnished by presbytery and submit the application with all required supporting documents to the clerk of presbytery. This must be submitted not less than one month prior to the meeting of presbytery at which the application is to be acted upon.
- c. Upon written notice from the clerk of presbytery the candidate shall appear before presbytery or the presbytery's Examination Committee at the time appointed to:
 - i. Give testimony regarding salvation.
 - ii. Give reason for the application to come under care.
 - iii. Answer any questions posed by members of presbytery.

- iv. Fulfill any other requirements that the presbytery has assigned as part of the notice to appear.
- d. Upon the conditional acceptance by presbytery for the candidate to come under care, the candidate must answer to the satisfaction of presbytery the following questions:
 - i. Do you promise to maintain a Christian character and testimony becoming of a worker in the ministry of the gospel and to be diligent in your studies and preparation for the work you are called to do?
 - ii. Do you promise to submit to the care and supervision of the presbytery in all matters that concern your preparation for service in the ministry of the gospel?
 - iii. Have you read and do you accept the positions of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America as set forth in the substandards of the denomination as contained in the *B.C.O.*

12.4 Duties of Presbytery

Realizing the grave responsibility of assuming care of a candidate, presbytery shall be responsible to fulfill the following duties:

- a. All members of presbytery, acknowledging the need of the help of God, shall pray for the help of the Holy Spirit in the granting of wisdom to properly fulfill the oversight and for the help and protection of God for the candidate as preparation is made for the work to which he is called.
- b. Oversee the training of the candidate in both the formal training (classroom) and the practical training (hands on experience). This requires direction regarding study and preparation and providing opportunity to work in a local church in the various ministries of the church and to attend church government meetings to observe the working of the committee, the session, and the presbytery. A student under care should not be the regular supply of a church without a minister unless approved and especially licensed by the presbytery for that ministry.
- c. Provide financial assistance in such ways as shall be determined in the discretion of the presbytery to reduce the cost for the education of the candidate, the fulfillment of internship requirements, and for such other needs as shall come before the presbytery.

12.5 Duties of the seminary

The seminary of the denomination shall assist with the care of the candidate by:

- a. Implementing the directives of presbytery regarding the training of the candidate;
- b. Providing the formal education in all areas required by the *B.C.O.* and the presbytery;
- c. Assisting in arranging for the practical training of the candidate;
- d. Reporting to presbytery regarding the work of the candidate in the classroom, the general demeanor of the candidate (as evidenced by approach to studies, interaction with faculty and students, and practical application of training in the work of the church) and needs (spiritual, material, social) of the candidate that come to the attention of the seminary.

12.6 Duties of the candidate

- a. The candidate shall complete all of the procedural requirements set forth in paragraph 12.3 above;
- b. The candidate shall always be mindful of, and seek to fulfill, the answers given to the questions set forth in paragraph 12.3(d) above;
- c. The candidate should regularly meet with, and seek the advice of the minister and the ruling elders of the church which he is attending or working in and the Seminary faculty discussing with them any problems, concerns, or needs that the candidate has;
- d. In addition to reading God's Word and praying daily, commit to, and carry out, diligence in studies and preparation;
- e. Read the *B.C.O.*, including the Confession of Faith and the F.G. sections, at least once each year;
- f. As part of his practical training under the direct supervision and guidance of the presbytery, each candidate for the ministry must serve an internship, the exact period of which is at the discretion of the presbytery. The purpose of the internship is to provide practical training in the operation of the church and to allow the candidate and the presbytery to evaluate the candidate's preparedness and Scriptural qualifications for the ministry. The internship may run concurrent with his academic training, occur between academic terms or after the completion of his theological course. How and where the internship occurs is the determination of the presbytery. The internship should involve all the duties of the ministry and church operation. The presbytery will provide guidelines to supervising ministers and sessions regarding the expectations. Under rare circumstances when a student may be serving a church without a minister, the internship and licensing for that particular ministry may be concurrent. This would require a special commission of presbytery to be directly responsible for the supervision of the candidate;
- g. Participate in the local Free Presbyterian church;
- h. Attend at least three days of meetings of presbytery before graduation from studies;
- i. Report to presbytery in writing or in person as directed by presbytery.

12.7 Duties of local session and minister

- a. To assist the candidate in meeting the procedural requirements set forth in paragraph 12.3.
- b. Give opportunity to any person having an interest in ministry to give evidence of a call, to deepen the desire for service, and to help in the training and development of God-given gifts.
- c. Keep the candidate before the local congregation and encourage the congregation to pray diligently for him.
- d. Continue the oversight of the candidate, who remains a communicant member of his local church, especially to encourage him in the Lord.
- e. Report to presbytery as may be required in this chapter or as requested by presbytery.

- f. Provide, or assist in arranging for, opportunities for the candidate to fulfill the practical training requirements of internship.
- g. Consider providing financial support to the candidate to help defray the cost of training and meeting the requirements of internship.

PART THREE

DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP

- 1.1** Biblical worship in the New Testament dispensation is distinctively and starkly simple. The Scripture has not prescribed any fixed forms or specific order of service for public worship; rather—in the interest of life and power in worship—it has allowed the church a large measure of liberty in this matter. However, true liberty exists only where the rules of God’s Word are observed and the Spirit of the Lord is present. Scriptural and spiritual liberty, therefore, requires that all things must be done decently and in order, and that God’s people should serve Him with reverence and in the beauty of holiness. From its beginning to its end, a service of public worship should be characterized by that simplicity which is an evidence of sincerity and by that beauty and dignity which are manifestations of holiness.
- 1.2** In keeping with the Scripture’s directives, the Directory of Worship of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America is not to be interpreted as mandated prescriptions of liturgy or practice but as recommendations to aid in lively, orderly, and spiritual worship in the fear of God.

CHAPTER 2

CONDUCT FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP

- 2.1** At the times designated for public worship, the people (having before prepared their hearts thereunto) ought to come and join therein, not absenting themselves from the public ordinances through negligence or upon pretense of private meetings.
- 2.2** The people should be encouraged to assemble at the appointed time so that all being present at the beginning may unite with one heart in all the parts of public worship. None should unnecessarily depart until the final benediction has been pronounced.
- 2.3** Upon entering the sanctuary, the people should be encouraged to take their seats in a decent and reverent manner and engage in meditation and silent prayer for a blessing upon themselves, the minister, and all present, as well as upon those who are unable to attend worship.
- 2.4** All in attendance should behave in a spirit of reverence and godly fear, refraining from any conduct unbecoming to the place and occasion. This includes adherence by members to the teaching of Scripture regarding head covering so that men keep their heads uncovered and women cover their heads in public worship (1 Corinthians 11:1-16). Also since the Scripture assigns such importance to the family and God’s covenant promises extend to the family, it is desirable that families worship together.

CHAPTER 3

THE PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

- 3.1 Since the Holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice, the principles of public worship must be derived from the Bible and from no other source.
- 3.2 A service of public worship is not merely a gathering of God's children with each other but before all else a meeting of the triune God with His chosen people. God is present in public worship not only by virtue of the divine omnipresence but, much more intimately, as the faithful covenant Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Consciousness of that promised and therefore certain presence coupled with the concern for God's glory should foster a sobriety that effects the biblically required decency and order that must mark public worship.
- 3.3 The end of public worship is the glory of God. Acceptable worship flows from the true knowledge of God and follows His revealed will. Worship is holy service rendered to the Lord. His people should engage in all its constituent parts with a solitary focus on His glory. Public worship has as its aim the building of Christ's church by the perfecting of the saints and the addition to its membership of such as are being saved, all to the glory of God. Through public worship on the Lord's Day, Christians should learn to serve God all the days of the week in their every activity, remembering that whether they eat or drink or whatever they do, to do all to the glory of God.
- 3.4 Since true worship can be rendered only to the true God and only as He reveals Himself to be, and since He reveals Himself to be one, yet three, it is impossible to worship God in truth without that worship being directed to and received by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Although biblical worship is Trinitarian, it is still the case that public worship is Christian when the worshippers recognize that Christ is the mediator by whom alone they can come unto God. They must also honor Christ as the head of the church, who rules over public worship, and recognize that their worship is an expression of their faith in Christ and of their love for Him. Apart from Jesus Christ true worship is impossible.
- 3.5 Worship that is pleasing and acceptable to God must not only conform to God's revelation but must also flow from a heart that is alive with conscious devotion to the Lord. Since heartless worship is offensive to God, public worship must be performed in spirit and in truth, that is, with a truthful spirit or sincere heart. Externalism and hypocrisy stand condemned. The forms of public worship have value only when they serve to express the inner reverence of the worshipper and his sincere devotion to the true and living God. And only those whose hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit are capable of such reverence and devotion.
- 3.6 Public worship differs from private worship in that in public worship, God is served by His saints unitedly as His covenant people, the body of Christ. For this reason the children of believers should be present—so far as possible and so as not to cause distraction—as well as adults. For the same reason no favoritism may be shown to any who attend. Nor may any member of the church presume to exalt himself above others as though he were more spiritual, but each shall esteem others better than himself.
- 3.7 It behooves God's people not only to come into His presence with a deep sense of awe at the thought of His perfect holiness and their own exceeding sinfulness, but also to enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise for the great salvation which He has so graciously wrought for them through His only begotten Son and applied to them by the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 4

CONSTITUENT PARTS OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

The regular parts of ordinary worship are the reading of Scripture, prayer, the preaching of the Word, the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, the sacraments, and the giving of tithes and offerings.

4.1 The Reading of Scripture

- a. The Scripture is a means of grace whereby the Lord reveals Himself most directly to the people. Although worship is active service rendered to God, part of that service is receptive. If the public reading of Scripture is to be an effective component of worship, both the reading and hearing of Scripture must give deference to the Word, as it is in truth the Lord Himself speaking. In the public reading the minister should refrain from exposition or explanation, thus emphasizing the inherent power in the Word. The people, being conscious that what is being heard is indeed the Word of God, should with reverence listen attentively.
- b. The public reading of Scripture by a minister contributes to the sobriety and sanctity of this part of the worship service as the Lord's messenger proclaims the Lord's message. Congregational or responsive reading is also appropriate as a means of God's people giving expression to their own hearts in the words of Scripture before the Lord. The Psalms are particularly suited to corporate reading.
- c. Adopting and maintaining a standard English translation for use in all services of public worship will contribute to the decency and order required for worship that would otherwise suffer if multiple versions were in use. Without prejudice to other faithful translations, the Authorized Version of the Bible should be used in all worship services. In missionary situations, ministers are free to make use of the best translations available in the languages of those to whom they minister.

4.2 Praying

- a. Prayer is a vital component in worshipping God, whether in private or in public. As part of preparation for worship, each person in the congregation should engage in silent prayer for the Lord's blessing to attend the worship service. There is a particular sense in which public praying, specifically the pastoral prayer, contributes to and helps to foster a spirit of genuine worship. The pastoral prayer is a means of glorifying God and of edifying the people. It is a means of leading the congregation into the presence of the Lord. Therefore, in the pulpit prayer, the minister is the voice of the congregation. He should pray in such a way that the whole assembly can pray with him, and the members of the congregation should both listen as he prays and pray in their hearts.
- b. It is incumbent upon ministers to take seriously the obligation to pray in such a manner as to direct the congregation to God and to teach the people by example how to approach God reverently. To that end, it is appropriate for ministers to prepare what they are going to pray before they lead the congregation in such a sacred exercise. Part of the minister's thoughtful preparation should be with a view to incorporate the language of Scripture into public prayers and to shape those prayers according to biblical models. Although it is recommended to saturate the pulpit prayer with scriptural phraseology and petition, the prayer should not be just a recital of Bible verses, but should be true prayer offered unto God concerning relevant needs and actual desires.

- c. Public prayer should include the following: (1) *invocations* that call upon God, hallow His name, claim Him in the Trinity of His sacred persons to be the one true, living, and personal God, and appeal both to the blood and merits of Christ as the basis of approaching the throne of grace and to the Holy Spirit as the necessary aid to worship; (2) *confessions* that focus on the corporate failure and sins of both church and state; (3) *intercessions* that appeal to God's intervention for others; (4) *petitions* that supplicate God for special needs—particularly those of the body as a whole—and especially for illumination to be granted for the ministry of the Word; (5) *imprecations* that seek divine intervention against those who hinder and oppose the work of the kingdom, and (6) *praise* and *thanksgiving* that bring to focus and memory God's past blessings and faithfulness.
- d. All prayer and especially the pulpit prayer should be marked by reverence, humility, sincerity, trust, earnestness, and purity. All prayer must be offered in the language of the people.
- e. Prayer is such a vital component in worship that, in addition to having a prominent place in Sabbath worship services, entire meetings should be designated for prayer. Corporate prayer meetings may be called at any time for special occasions and needs but should be held weekly on a regular schedule. The minister or a member of session should conduct the church prayer meeting, or they may invite any duly qualified member of the church to lead the meeting in their absence. The corporate prayer meeting should always include the reading of the Scripture with necessary instruction and exhortation to give direction to the public praying. The focus of the regular church prayer meetings should be on the work of the church at large, though individual needs and crises should not be ignored. The people of the church, young and old and men and women, should be encouraged to participate in prayer and to have an active part in the prayer meeting.

4.3 Preaching the Word

- a. The central and prominent component in biblical worship is preaching the Word of God. Since the preaching of the Word is an ordinance of God for the salvation of men, every minister should give serious attention and diligent application to this sacred duty. He should endeavor to prove himself to be a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.
- b. The magnitude of biblical preaching is inherent in its content and executed through its delivery. Preaching is the means of glorifying God, evangelizing the lost, and edifying saints. In performing this duty, the preacher serves as the messenger of the Lord and should declare only the Lord's message, the whole counsel of God. The preacher's authority is to proclaim "thus saith the Lord" and not to use the Scripture as a pretext for expressing his own opinions.
- c. The style and form of the sermon should serve to communicate the message of Scripture by declaring the timeless and consequently contemporary relevance of God's Word. Regardless of the type of sermon structure, every sermon should be thoroughly biblical, coupling the explanation of the text with the appropriate application of the text to the lives of those hearing the message. So fearful is the duty to preach that ministers should seek for guidance and illumination from the Holy Spirit as they prepare the message from God for the people. Ministers should prepare their sermons with care, keeping to the simplicity of the gospel and expressing themselves in language that can be understood by the congregation. They should also by their lives adorn the gospel which they preach and be examples to believers in word and deed.
- d. By way of application the minister should urge his hearers by commandment or invitation to be doers of the Word and not only hearers. According to the nature and purpose of the sermon, this

may include invitations to repent of sins, to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, or to confess Him publicly before men.

- e. Preaching will accomplish its purpose when it is received with obedient faith and reverence. It behooves those who listen to pray that the one who preaches will have a word from the Lord and the spiritual power to communicate it, and to pray for themselves that God will open their ears and their eyes to behold the wondrous things out of God's law.

4.4 Singing Psalms and Hymns

- a. Worshipping God through music is a duty and privilege. The singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs as well as the use of suitable musical instruments should have an important part in public worship.
- b. The focus of music must be consonant with every other aspect of biblical and spiritual worship. The focus must be God—His person, perfections, and works. There should be such a wedding of tunes with words that the message is conveyed without distraction. Tunes and music that identify with worldly environments have no place in the worship of God. The consciousness of God's holiness should strongly influence the kind of music brought into His presence to praise Him and to offer the thanksgiving He deserves.
- c. Singing the praises of God should be the expression of an inward spiritual experience, the expression of a heart affected by truth.
- d. Singing the Psalms should be a regular element in the music service since the Psalms are divinely inspired songs of prayer, praise, and proclamation of truth. Singing Psalms is proper because the God revealed in the Old Testament is still our God. But thoroughly Christian worship must include the details of truth that have been more thoroughly expounded after the incarnation in the New Testament. Although not inspired, all hymns should be true to the Word of God.
- e. Singing should be service rendered to God by the entire congregation. Choral arrangements or solos are in order, but caution is necessary that musical offerings are not occasions for entertainment. Listening to music must adhere to the same guidelines as listening to the preached Word. Like those who preach, those who minister with music must adorn their profession with godliness.

4.5 Giving of Tithes and Offerings

- a. Worshipping God with tithes and offerings is both a duty and a privilege. Since God has given us all things richly to enjoy, He has ordained the tithe as His worthy portion for us to express our submission to His Lordship over all we are and have. In our recognition of His bountiful goodness to us, we have the privilege of expressing our gratitude by presenting our offerings to Him beyond the tithe.
- b. These tithes and offerings are to be given as acts of worship unto the Lord with a genuine spirit of humble thanksgiving and heartfelt joy. Both the tithe and the offerings are to be presented to God without selfish motive or vainglory.

CHAPTER 5

OBSERVANCE OF THE SACRAMENTS

5.1 General Statement

- a. The service of the sacraments, the Christ-ordained ordinances for the church, is an integral part of biblical worship. The sacraments are visible signs of gospel truths, and they function as visible aids to spiritual worship. However, their use is never in isolation or independent from the Scripture. God's Word is a means of grace, and the sacraments, as visible portrayers of the Word received by faith, owe their significance to that Word, and consequently their legitimate use rests in company with the written Word. It is the inherent connection to the Word of God and the exercise of faith that constitutes the sacraments as means of grace.
- b. Since God has instituted and ordered baptism and the Lord's Supper as the only ordinances, there is a divine mandate for their observance in the church. Baptism was part of Christ's great commission to the church (Matthew 28:19), and thus its practice must accompany the expansion of the church. Paul, in his great exposition on the Lord's Supper, made it clear that the Lord Himself had given the command to eat and drink in remembrance of Him (1 Corinthians 11:23–26). Therefore, incorporating the sacraments into the ministry of the church and observing them according to biblical instructions are mandatory for Christian worship. Although neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper is essential for salvation, neither is optional. The privilege of participation is also a duty. Neglecting these divinely ordained ordinances is de facto disobedience. For a Christian not to be baptized or habitually to refrain from coming to the Lord's Table is incongruous with what it means to be a Christian. This disobedience defies the divine intent of the sacraments to mark a visible difference between Christians and the world. Neglecting the sacraments is unchristian.
- c. Since the sacraments are ordinances given to the visible and organized church, they are not to be administered except under the oversight of the government of the church. In normal circumstances, they are properly observed only during the gathering of the congregation and never in private celebration. The session may judge that certain circumstances, such as ministry to those homebound, warrant the observance of the sacrament apart from the regular venue of worship. But even in these special observances, the church must be represented by the attendance of some of its members.
- d. Although the significance of the sacrament does not depend on the administrator, only men ordained or licensed to the ministry of the gospel are permitted to officiate and administer either baptism or the Lord's Supper.

5.2 The Lord's Supper

- a. The frequency of observing the Lord's Supper is at the discretion of the session. Its celebration should be frequent enough for the people to recognize it as an integral part of public worship and for them to benefit often from the blessing it affords. Although it is advisable to establish a regular schedule, there may be occasions of special observance.
- b. Regardless of the frequency of observance, the special privilege of attending the table and the sacredness of the occasion should consistently be emphasized. The people should be admonished in anticipation of coming to the table to prepare themselves spiritually so that they come with

sincerity and pureness of heart and with expectancy to meet with the Lord. Every caution should be taken to avoid making the Lord's Supper simply an appendix to the regular worship service. This, for example, could be achieved by devoting a separate service to its observance where all the other constituent parts of the worship direct the thinking of the congregation to the message of the table and climax in the communal partaking of the elements.

- c. Although the Lord alone knows the state of the heart, the session has the responsibility to guard the sanctity of the table. Since the table belongs to Christ, we do not limit participation to Free Presbyterians, but we do limit it only to those who have a professed and credible testimony of saving faith and who are not under any church discipline. For this reason, children who have not made a public profession of faith or have not been examined by a minister or session regarding their profession and their ability to understand the significance of the sacrament are prohibited from partaking. It is recommended, however, that parents bring their children to the communion service as a means of instructing them in the gospel, of instilling within them the sanctity of the table, and of increasing their desire to experience this blessing personally. For the same reason, others disqualified from partaking are not prohibited from being physically present so that they too can learn and see the benefits of fellowship with Christ.
- d. The observance of the Lord's Supper should always be in connection with the reading and preaching of the Word of God in order to demonstrate the unity between the written and visible Word. Before the distribution of the elements, the words of institution should be read, either from 1 Corinthians 11 or the Gospels, and general instructions given regarding the institution and nature of the sacrament in terms of what it signifies and seals when accompanied by faith. It should be emphasized that the benefits are received only as faith looks beyond the sensible signs to the spiritual realities being portrayed. With the elements of the bread and the cup on the table, the minister should offer a prayer of thanksgiving and consecration setting the elements apart for the special and holy purpose, divinely defined for them for this occasion. Ordinarily, the ruling elders will aid the minister in distributing the elements to the congregation according to the pattern of the New Testament that specifies first the eating of the bread and then the drinking of the cup. It would be appropriate that prayer be offered in thanksgiving for the bread by the minister, an elder, or a member of the congregation selected by the minister. After this prayer of thanksgiving the minister will give the elements to the elders to distribute to the congregation. The congregation may partake as they receive the element or wait until all are served that they might commune together. The minister should specify the policy before the elements are distributed to avoid confusion. If the congregation partakes as they receive the element, the specific words of institution regarding the bread should be read before the distribution. If the congregation partakes together, the words should be read after all are served, including the elders and minister, to mark the time for the communal eating. After a period of silence allowing each communicant to meditate, pray, and give thanks, the minister will introduce the cup, and follow the same procedure in distributing and partaking as was done for the bread. Closing the meeting with a hymn and prayer would be appropriate.

5.3 Baptism

Baptism is administered by the authority of Jesus Christ, the sole king and head of the church, and in the name of the triune God (Matthew 28:19). Just as in the observance of the Lord's Supper, baptism should always be in connection with the reading and preaching of the Word of God in order to demonstrate the unity between the written and visible Word. Whereas the Lord's Supper is observed repeatedly, baptism should be administered once. Water baptism has no merit or power to effect the new birth into the

spiritual body of Christ. Baptism, rather, marks the public identification of the person being baptized with Christ and the visible church. The policy of the FPCNA allows baptism only to professing believers or their infant children. The broadness of the policy should not be an excuse for neglecting the sacrament. Since Christ has commanded baptism, it follows that neglecting baptism is disobedience, and it also robs both the individual and the church of great blessing. There are obvious benefits for those being baptized. There are benefits to those observing baptism as they reflect on the significance of their own.

5.4 Believer's Baptism

- a. Persons who have trusted Christ may request to be baptized upon their public profession of faith. In addition to a credible testimony of conversion, a candidate for believer's baptism should have a clear grasp of the nature of the sacrament. Before the sacrament is administered, persons desiring baptism should receive instructions concerning the significance of baptism and be examined by the minister or session regarding their conversion and understanding of the sacrament. Although children may be truly converted at a young age, delaying baptism until those children are mature enough to articulate their testimony and comprehension of the significance of baptism to the satisfaction of the minister or session is advisable. This caution protects both the solemnity of the sacrament and the spiritual welfare of the individual.
- b. Candidates for baptism should be instructed to think seriously about their conversion to Christ and their commitment to Him. Believer's baptism involves both a confession of faith in Christ as Lord and Savior and a confession of belief in the great doctrines of the gospel: the inspiration and authority of the Scripture, the Trinity, the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the virgin birth and incarnation of Christ, His perfect sinlessness, His blood atonement, His bodily resurrection from the dead, justification by grace through faith in Christ's merits, Scriptural holiness, and the second coming of Christ. The candidate should likewise recognize that in being baptized, he is declaring his willingness to consecrate his life to Christ, that in being baptized he is wholeheartedly giving himself to God to live in holiness and to fulfill the calling of a member of the visible body of Christ. Those being baptized should never forget the baptismal covenant and thus walk in light of its privileges and obligations.
- c. At the baptismal service the minister shall declare the meaning of the sacrament to all assembled and exhort those already baptized to remember their own baptismal covenant. Such persons as are to be baptized shall publicly profess their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and shall promise by dependence on the grace of God to live as is fitting for followers of Christ. The following prescription provides a paradigm for confessing their faith and commitment to Christ.
 - I confess that there is one, living and true God, who exists eternally in the Trinity of His sacred persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
 - I confess God the Father as my heavenly Father, who gave His Son for my redemption, who chose me in Christ and effectually called me by His Spirit to eternal salvation.
 - I confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners. I trust solely in the merits of His blood and righteousness to make me acceptable to God, and I acknowledge Him as my personal Savior.
 - I confess the Holy Spirit as my comforter and sanctifier, the one who begot spiritual life in me and enabled me to repent and believe in Christ and who applied, and continues to apply, the merits of Christ to me.

- In making this confession and in submitting myself for Christian baptism, I wholeheartedly enter into covenant with the triune God, declaring that by His grace I have repented of my sin and have trusted Christ as my Savior and that I give myself up to Him to live for His glory in obedience to His Word and will.
- d. Upon this confession, the minister will baptize the candidate in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. A ministerial prayer commending those baptized to the Lord, including the Aaronic blessing, would be in order.

5.5 Infant Baptism

- a. Believing parents may present their infant children for baptism. This offer extends to situations where only one parent is a Christian. Since the FPCNA defines infants as those who are mentally incapable of comprehending the gospel and thus incapable of faith and repentance, parents should bring their infants for baptism without unnecessary delay.
- b. As in every case of baptism (believer or infant), the minister and session exercise authority and supervision over its administration. Prior to infant baptism, the session or minister in behalf of the session should thoroughly interview the parents making sure that they understand the basis and purpose of infant baptism. It is imperative to emphasize that although baptism admits the infant into the visible organization of the church, it does not make them members of the spiritual body of Christ. Those baptized as infants, when they reach the age of discretion, are subject to the claims of the gospel. To be saved they must believe the gospel and repent of their sins. To continue their association with the church, they must make public profession of their faith in Christ. Although baptism is not essential for the child's salvation, its significance should be part of the child's religious instruction as an aid in bringing the child ultimately to the reality of saving grace.
- c. At the baptism service the minister, in addition to reading and preaching the Word, should give whatever instruction may be required to prevent misunderstandings or errors regarding the sacrament and should admonish the congregation regarding their responsibility to assist in the nurturing of the child in the Christian faith.
- d. As the infant is then presented for baptism, the minister should read the relevant Scriptures regarding the covenant promises (Acts 2:39; Genesis 17:7; Acts 16:31). He should then direct the following questions to the parent(s):
 - 1. Do you testify before God and this people that you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?
 - 2. Do you acknowledge your child's sinful nature and his need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ and the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit if he/she is to be saved?
 - 3. Do you claim God's covenant promise for this child, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for his/her salvation as you do for your own?
 - 4. Do you consecrate your child to God and promise in reliance on divine grace that you will set before him/her a godly example, that you will pray with and for him/her, that you will instruct him/her in the doctrines of the Christian faith, and that you will endeavor by the means of God's appointment to raise him/her in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

- e. After the parents answer the questions in the hearing of the congregation, he will call the child by name and baptize the child by sprinkling or pouring water on the head, saying these words: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
- f. After the ceremony, a ministerial prayer commending those baptized to the Lord, including the Aaronic blessing, would be in order.

CHAPTER 6

THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE LORD’S DAY

6.1 The Sabbath—the Lord’s Day—is a divine gift of grace for the sanctification of God’s people to aid them in worshipping Him in spirit and truth. It takes time and a proper frame of mind to worship, and the Sabbath provides for both. The Christian must set himself apart from everyday labors and activities in order to worship the Lord effectively. By setting aside those things that are lawful and necessary on other days and making it the delight of the heart to spend time in public and private worship and in performing works of necessity and mercy with a true heart, the Christian will enjoy His God and find the necessary impetus to serve His God with fervent zeal. Keeping the Sabbath day holy is not to be equated with mere adherence to a list of proscriptions or prescriptions; the following directives, therefore, are guidelines rather than rules for keeping the Sabbath day:

- a. God commanded His Old Testament people to keep holy the last day of the week, but He sanctified the first day as the Sabbath by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. For this reason the church of the new dispensation has from the time of the apostles kept holy the first day of the week as the Lord’s Day. Everyone should remember this day and prepare for it before its approach. As an aid to keeping the Sabbath, all worldly business should be so ordered by each person on the preceding day that he may not be hindered thereby from sanctifying the Sabbath, as the Holy Scriptures require. This preparation should be considerate of others so that they be not improperly detained from the public worship of God nor otherwise hindered from sanctifying the Sabbath;
- b. The whole day should be kept holy to the Lord and should be employed primarily in the public and private exercises of religion. This keeping of the Sabbath should entail refraining from unnecessary labors, recreations, and as much as possible from such worldly thoughts and conversations as are not suitable to this purpose;
- c. By reading the Scriptures, by holy meditation, and by prayer, every person individually and every family together should prepare for communion with God in His public ordinances. In particular, there should be prayer for God to assist the minister and for a blessing upon the ministry of the Word;
- d. Although it is fitting and proper that the members of Christ’s church meet for worship on other occasions also, which are left to the discretion of the particular churches, it is the sacred duty and high privilege of God’s people everywhere to convene for public worship on the Lord’s Day. God has expressly enjoined them in His holy Word not to forsake the assembling of themselves together;

- e. The time not spent in public worship could profitably include holy resting, prayer, devotional reading, the study of Scripture, meditation, catechizing, religious conversation, the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, visiting the sick, relieving the poor, and in performing such like duties of piety, charity, and mercy;
- f. Caution is necessary that attempts to keep the Sabbath do not become burdensome nor equated with conformity to set standards. Although God's moral law orders keeping the Sabbath, Israel's civil laws or traditions do not prescribe the nature of Christian observance. It is possible to follow rigidly a list of rules, keeping what may appear to be the letter of the law, and still miss the meaning and purpose of the Sabbath. Although the Sabbath is a day that must be treated differently from every other day, the specific standards of what is permitted or not permitted are to be determined by the individual Christian's conscience that is directed by and subject to God's Word.

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Free Presbyterian Church Of North America

Code of Practice and Discipline

May 2019

Chapter One

Ordination and Installation

1.1 Ordination and installation of ministers

- a. Ordination of ministers
 - i. Ordination is an action of the presbytery to set apart a licentiate as a minister of the Word and sacraments. Ordinarily ordination will occur during a presbytery-convened service in the particular church that has issued the call. Ordination is perpetual apart from action by the minister or the presbytery to terminate it (F.G. 2.11).
 - ii. Candidates for ordination as a minister have satisfied all the demands of presbytery regarding the doctrine and practice of the FPCNA, having been thoroughly examined by the Examination Committee.
 - iii. Candidates are eligible for ordination to the ministry upon receiving their first call to a duly constituted church, or their assignment by the presbytery to serve as a professor in the denominational seminary, or in other circumstances deemed appropriate by the presbytery according to the provisions of F.G. 2.5.
- b. Installation of ministers
 - i. Installation is the action of the presbytery to initiate the service of an ordained minister in a particular church or other field for which a call has been sustained by the presbytery. Installation does not involve the laying on of hands by the presbytery for a previously ordained minister.
 - ii. According to the terms of 1.1.a.iii above, candidates for ordination will also be installed in their particular ministry at the time of their ordination.
 - iii. An ordained minister shall be installed in a particular church when all the requirements related to the issuing, ratifying and responding to a call from the particular church have been met.

1.2 Presbytery requirements of a minister for ordination/installation

- a. At the time of the ordination/installation service the clerk shall put to the candidate the approved

questions listed below. When the candidate has responded satisfactorily to these questions he shall pledge himself to these commitments by his signature of the prescribed formula in the presbytery minute book.

- b. Prescribed questions for ordination/installation of a minister;
 1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
I DO
 2. Do you confess the LORD, Jehovah, as one God, in the trinity of His eternal persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and do you acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord?
I DO
 3. Do you sincerely receive and believe the confession and constitution of this church as containing the system of doctrine and polity taught in the Word of God?
I DO
 4. Are you firmly resolved through divine grace to adhere to the doctrine contained in these standards and teach and defend it to the utmost of your power against all error?
I AM
 5. The following are distinctive positions of doctrine and practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America:
 - A. The Christ-centered exposition of the Reformed Faith, with a strong commitment to evangelism;
 - B. The centrality and all-sufficiency of the Person and Work of Christ in the preaching of the gospel;
 - C. The doctrine of God's free justification of sinners by grace alone through faith alone in the merits of Christ alone;
 - D. Separation from the apostasy of the ecumenical movement, opposition to false charismaticism, and steadfast adherence to the historic, Reformed, and Protestant faith;
 - E. The personal separation of believers from worldliness in holiness unto the Lord;
 - F. The necessity of giving ourselves to earnest prayer for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit's power to make our service effective and glorifying to God, and for genuine revival in our day.
Do you sincerely embrace and will you faithfully maintain these distinctive positions?
I DO AND I WILL
 6. Are you now willing to assume the responsibilities of a minister in this denomination, engaging to conduct yourself with exemplary piety and to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all personal and private duties that become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties that pertain to your particular responsibilities?
I AM

- c. The candidate for ordination will sign the Confessional Substandards of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America under the following formula:

I BELIEVE THE CONFESSIONAL SUBSTANDARDS OF THIS CHURCH TO BE FOUNDED ON AND AGREEABLE TO THE WORD OF GOD, AND AS SUCH I SUBSCRIBE THEM AS A CONFESSION OF MY OWN FAITH.

- d. The moderator will then ask the congregation to stand and will invite all the members of presbytery present to lay hands on the candidate, and will use the following formula to confer the presbytery's ordination:

"In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great King and only Head of the Church, we the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America, according to the authority that Christ has vested in His Church for its edification and government, do hereby ordain you, _____, to the ministry of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America and install you as the minister of _____ Free Presbyterian Church in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The moderator will then lead in prayer.

- e. In the case of the installation of an ordained minister the following formula is used to induct him into the office of minister in a particular church:

"In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great King and only Head of the Church, we the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America, according to the authority that Christ has vested in His church for its edification and government, do hereby install you, _____, as the minister of _____ Free Presbyterian Church in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

- f. In the case of the ordination/installation of a seminary professor the moderator will adjust the applicable part of the formula, by selecting one of the following options:
"...we do hereby ordain you _____ to the ministry of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America and install you as a professor in Geneva Reformed Seminary..."

"...we do hereby install you _____ as a professor in Geneva Reformed Seminary..."

1.3 Ordination and installation of ruling elders

- a. Ordination
- i. Ordination is an action of the presbytery to set apart a man as a ruling elder in a particular church. Ordination is perpetual apart from action by the elder or the presbytery to terminate it (F.G. 2.11).
 - ii. Candidates for ordination as a ruling elder have satisfied all the demands of presbytery regarding the doctrine and practice of the FPCNA, and have been elected by a particular church at a properly convened congregational meeting according to the provisions of F.G. 2.18 and C.P.D. Chapter 9.

iii. A man is eligible to be ordained as a ruling elder in a particular church once his election has been sustained by a vote of presbytery (F.G. 2.20).

b. Installation

i. Installation is the action of the presbytery to initiate the service of an ordained elder in a particular church. Installation does not involve the laying on of hands by the presbytery for a previously ordained elder.

ii. An elder-elect will be installed in his office at the time of his ordination.

iii. An ordained elder shall be installed in a particular church when all the requirements related to his election by the particular church have been met.

iv. Ruling elders serve only in the congregation that elected them. According to the requirements of F.G. 2.19 & 2.22, ordained elders who transfer membership to another particular church must be duly elected before they can be installed to serve in that congregation.

1.4 Presbytery requirements for the ordination/installation of a ruling elder

a. At the time of the ordination/installation service the clerk shall put to the elder(s) elect the approved questions listed below. When the elder elect has responded satisfactorily to these questions he shall pledge himself to these commitments by his signature of the prescribed formula in the Presbytery minute book.

b. Prescribed questions for ordination/installation of an elder;

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

I DO

2. Do you confess the LORD, Jehovah, as one God, in the Trinity of His eternal persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and do you acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord?

I DO

3. Do you sincerely receive and believe the confession and constitution of this church as containing the system of doctrine and polity taught in the Word of God?

I DO

4. Are you firmly resolved through divine grace to adhere to the doctrine contained in these standards and teach and defend it to the utmost of your power against all error?

I AM

5. The following are distinctive positions of doctrine and practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America:

A. The Christ-centered exposition of the Reformed Faith, with a strong commitment to evangelism;

B. The centrality and all-sufficiency of the Person and Work of Christ in the preaching of the gospel;

- C. The doctrine of God's free justification of sinners by grace alone through faith alone in the merits of Christ alone;
- D. Separation from the apostasy of the ecumenical movement, opposition to false Charismatism, and steadfast adherence to the historic, Reformed, and Protestant faith;
- E. The personal separation of believers from worldliness in holiness unto the Lord;
- F. The necessity of giving ourselves to earnest prayer for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit's power to make our service effective and glorifying to God, and for genuine revival in our day.

Do you sincerely embrace and will you faithfully maintain these distinctive positions?

I DO AND I WILL

- 6. Are you now willing to assume the responsibilities of a ruling elder in this congregation, engaging to conduct yourself with exemplary piety and to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all personal and private duties that become you as a Christian and a ruling elder in this denomination, as well as in all the duties that pertain to your particular responsibilities?

I AM

- c. The elder elect will sign the Confessional Substandards of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America under the following formula:

I BELIEVE THE CONFESSIONAL SUBSTANDARDS OF THIS CHURCH TO BE FOUNDED ON AND AGREEABLE TO THE WORD OF GOD, AND AS SUCH I SUBSCRIBE THEM AS A CONFESSION OF MY OWN FAITH.

- d. The moderator will then ask the congregation to stand and will invite all the members of presbytery present to lay hands on the elder(s) elect, and will use the following formula to confer the presbytery's ordination:

"In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great King and only Head of the Church, we the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America, according to the authority that Christ has vested in His Church for its edification and government, do hereby ordain you, _____, as a ruling elder in the Free Presbyterian Church of North America and install you as a ruling elder in _____ Free Presbyterian Church, _____(location) in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The moderator will then lead in prayer.

- e. In the case of the installation of an elder previously ordained in the FPCNA, the following formula is used to induct him into the office of ruling elder in a particular church.

"In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great King and only Head of the Church, we the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America, according to the authority that Christ has vested in His Church for its edification and government, do hereby install you, _____, as a ruling elder in _____ Free Presbyterian Church, _____(location) in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Chapter Two

Licensing Candidates to Preach the Gospel

- 2.1 To preserve the purity of the preaching of the gospel, no man is permitted to preach on a regular basis in the pulpits of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America without proper licensure from the presbytery.**
- 2.2 A ruling elder, a candidate for the ministry, a minister from some other denomination, or some other man may be licensed by the presbytery for the purpose of regularly preaching of the Word in its member congregations. The requirements for a man to be accepted for the gospel ministry in the FPCNA appear in detail in F.G. Chapter 12. For licensure he must satisfy the presbytery of his preaching gifts and pass examination for licensure before the presbytery's Examination Committee.**
- 2.3 Under examination for licensure the applicant must be prepared to give satisfaction on the following:**
- a. A personal experience of saving grace and evidence of a godly life. In the case of a FPCNA congregation member, the application must be accompanied by a supporting recommendation from his local session, or in the case of a student under care, from his internship supervisor and session.
 - b. The call of God in his life to preach the gospel
 - c. Evidence of a basic knowledge of biblical doctrine as outlined in the doctrinal substandards of the FPCNA
 - d. Evidence of a basic understanding of the *B.C.O.* and the government of the FPCNA.
 - e. His preaching ability in a sermon preached before the Examination Committee as appointed by it.
 - f. In the specific case of licensure for seminary work, in addition to the above, evidence of his academic preparation and calling of God to this task will be required.
 - g. Any other matters the Examination Committee deems appropriate to inquire into according to its established procedures.
- 2.4 The Examination Committee shall bring a recommendation to presbytery following an examination of the candidate for licensure. At its discretion, the presbytery may make further inquiry into any matter relating to the application.**
- 2.5 If satisfied with the examination of the candidate, the presbytery shall proceed to license him. The clerk shall put to the candidate the approved questions listed below. Upon receipt of satisfactory responses the candidate shall pledge himself to these commitments by his signature of the prescribed formula in the presbytery minute book.**
- a. Prescribed questions for licensure
 - 1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice? I DO

2. Do you confess the LORD, Jehovah, as one God, in the Trinity of His eternal persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and do you acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord?
I DO
3. Do you sincerely receive and believe the confession and constitution of this church as containing the system of doctrine and polity taught in the Word of God? I DO
4. Are you firmly resolved through divine grace to adhere to the doctrine contained in these substandards and teach and defend it to the utmost of your power against all error? I AM
5. The following are distinctive positions of doctrine and practice of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America:
 - A. The Christ-centered exposition of the Reformed Faith, with a strong commitment to evangelism;
 - B. The centrality and all-sufficiency of the Person and Work of Christ in the preaching of the gospel;
 - C. The doctrine of God's free justification of sinners by grace alone through faith alone in the merits of Christ alone;
 - D. Separation from the apostasy of the ecumenical movement, opposition to false Charismatism, and steadfast adherence to the historic, Reformed, and Protestant faith;
 - E. The personal separation of believers from worldliness in holiness unto the Lord;
 - F. The necessity of giving ourselves to earnest prayer for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit's power to make our service effective and glorifying to God, and for genuine revival in our day.
Do you sincerely embrace and will you faithfully maintain these distinctive positions?
I DO AND I WILL
6. Are you now willing to assume the responsibilities of licensed minister in this denomination, engaging to conduct yourself with exemplary piety and to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all personal and private duties that become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties that pertain to your particular responsibilities? I AM
- b. The candidate for licensure will sign the Confessional Substandards of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America under the following formula:

I BELIEVE THE CONFESSIONAL SUBSTANDARDS OF THIS CHURCH TO BE FOUNDED ON AND AGREEABLE TO THE WORD OF GOD, AND AS SUCH I SUBSCRIBE THEM AS A CONFESSION OF MY OWN FAITH.
- c. The moderator will then ask the Presbytery to stand and will use the following formula to confer the Presbytery's license to preach. "In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great King and only Head of the Church, we the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church, according to the authority that Christ has vested in us, do hereby give you, _____, the authority to preach under license of the Free Presbyterian Church in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. The moderator will then lead in prayer.

- 2.6 A license to preach is transferrable to another presbytery only where both bodies agree on its transfer. The receiving presbytery may exercise the option to re-examine the licentiate.**
- 2.7 A license to preach the gospel shall expire at the end of four years. The presbytery may, if it thinks proper, renew it without further examination. It is the responsibility of the licentiate to apply in writing to the clerk of presbytery for renewal of his license not less than 90 days prior to its expiration. If the license expires, the clerk shall report that fact to the presbytery and to the individual's session.**
- 2.8 Revocation of a license**
- a. A license to preach is immediately revoked if:
 - i. the licentiate surrenders his license.
 - ii. the licentiate's own session or the presbytery enacts disciplinary measures against him.
 - iii. the licentiate resigns his membership in his FPCNA congregation.
 - b. Revocation of a license in any of these circumstances will be reported to the presbytery. Apart from any judicial process the report of revocation does not require presbytery action.

Chapter Three

Organization of a Mission Church

- 3.1 A mission church is an assembly of believers associated under the government of the FPCNA for divine worship and the observance of the sacraments and discipline within the requirements of the *B.C.O.*, but still dependent on external oversight. The objective is to advance toward constitution as soon as it can be accomplished decently and in order.**
- 3.2 Initiation of a Mission Church**
- A mission church may be initiated in the following ways:
- a. By presbytery. The presbytery, at the request of a session of a member church, a licentiate, an ordained minister, or on its own initiative, according to established procedures may begin the forming of an assembly of believers as the first step in seeking to establish a particular church.
 - b. By a particular church. The session of a member church may, as an outreach of that church, initiate the forming of an assembly of believers as the first step in seeking to establish a particular church.
 - c. Any assembly of believers established pursuant to either paragraph 3.2.a or 3.2.b shall be known as a "Mission Church."
- 3.3 The oversight of a mission church will be according to the following:**
- a. The oversight of a mission church initiated by the presbytery shall be in the Church Extension Committee unless otherwise directed by the presbytery.

- b. The oversight of a mission church initiated by a local session shall be in the local session.
- c. A mission church initiated by presbytery that is located in a place other than North America shall be under the oversight of the Foreign Missions Committee unless otherwise directed by the presbytery.

3.4 Function of a Mission Church

The purpose of the mission church phase is to allow time for the maturing of the assembly to a point that it may be constituted as a particular church of the presbytery. During this period of maturing, the overseeing body (3.3) shall direct all matters of government and worship, educate attendees in the substandards of the FPCNA, and provide instruction for men who are potential candidates for office.

3.5 Membership in a Mission Church

- a. Since a mission church is a church in a transitory or temporary status, any membership in a mission church shall be deemed also to be temporary. However, such membership is encouraged for the following reasons:
 - i. To express a commitment and desire to see the formation of a particular church in the FPCNA
 - ii. To express a formal agreement with the substandards of the FPCNA
 - iii. To encourage other persons to consider membership
 - iv. To express a commitment to assist in the work of the mission church
 - v. As a step in the maturing of the mission church towards its constitution as a particular church in the presbytery.
 - vi. To determine persons who may be elected according to the provisions of the *B.C.O.* as elders and deacons following the constitution of the congregation.
- b. The decision to have a membership in the mission church shall be in the discretion of the overseeing body.
- c. All candidates for membership of the mission church shall be subject to the provisions of F.G. 5.2.
- d. All members of a mission church shall be subject to oversight by the body charged with oversight as set forth in 3.3 above. Members of a mission church shall also have the right of appeal to the presbytery from decisions of the overseeing body.

3.6 Officers of a Mission Church

- a. A mission church may not elect elders or deacons but may call a minister within the context of the process of the presbytery constituting the congregation.
- b. The overseeing body may appoint men to serve as an interim committee to assist in the temporal matters of the mission church. Such appointment shall be accompanied with clear instruction as to the duties, powers, and limitations of the appointed office.
- c. A mission church and its members shall have no standing in presbytery except the right of appeal (3.5.d.) and the right to petition the presbytery for constitution as a particular church.

Chapter Four

Constitution of a Particular Congregation in the FPCNA

- 4.1 The authority to constitute a particular church resides in presbytery alone.**
- 4.2 Constitution of a particular church shall be initiated by a petition signed by all persons willing to become charter members of a particular church. Before submitting such a petition potential members must receive such information as reasonably required (*B.C.O.* copy, denominational websites and other material published by presbytery) to make an informed decision. Such petition shall be in the form adopted by the FPCNA. In the absence of a form, the petition must acknowledge an understanding by the petitioners of the substandards of the FPCNA and a willingness to be governed thereby.**
- 4.3 Procedure for constitution of a particular church.**
- a. The petition for constitution shall be forwarded to the clerk of presbytery for review by the Church Extension Committee. The CEC shall respond to said petition and make such inquiry as is necessary to be able to provide the report required in 4.3.c
 - b. The petitioners shall supply any additional information requested by the clerk, and/or the Church Extension Committee as part of these inquiries.
 - c. The overseeing body (3.3) shall submit a report in support of the petition which shall include the following:
 - i. Evidence that the petitioners have been instructed as to the substandards and practical distinctives of the FPCNA; and have access to the *B.C.O.* and other presbytery approved materials.
 - ii. The number of regular attendees
 - iii. The frequency of services
 - iv. The number of men eligible to hold the office of elder and/or deacon upon constitution of the church. The lack of qualified men to hold office must be accompanied by information on any steps taken to instruct men for office; and reasons the petition should be approved absent such men.
 - v. The financial status of the petitioners as a church (i.e., the ability to pay for a place of worship and the ability to support a minister).
 - vi. Any concerns regarding the petition.
 - d. A petition may not be considered by presbytery without the support of the overseeing body (3.3). However, if applicable, the overseeing body must report to presbytery as to why it does not support the petition.
 - e. Upon satisfaction of the requirements of 4.3 a, b, and c, the clerk shall forward a copy of the petition and the report of the overseeing body to all sessions for review.

- f. Each session shall consider the petition and report and shall submit any statements of support or objection within the time set by the clerk.
- g. The clerk shall forward all statements of support of, or objection to, the petition to all sessions.
- h. When all the requirements set forth above have been completed, the clerk shall submit the petition to the presbytery at the next regular meeting for action.
- i. If the presbytery rejects the petition it must set forth the reasons for rejection and the necessary requirements for reconsideration.
- j. If the presbytery approves the petition it shall:
 - i. Appoint a time and place for a meeting of the petitioners with a commission appointed by the presbytery
 - ii. Conduct the meeting which shall include:
 - (a) A time of singing, prayer, and instruction from God's Word
 - (b) Affirmation by the persons seeking to be the charter members as to their:
 - i. salvation
 - ii. acceptance of the substandards and practical distinctives of the FPCNA.
 - iii. commitment to support the church by attendance, prayer, tithing, and participation in outreach.
 - (c) A pronouncement by the designated representative of presbytery that the church is now constituted and that the petitioners are now charter members of the church. The representative of the presbytery shall charge the congregation to maintain the peace and purity of the body.
 - (d) A statement identifying the overseeing members of the interim session in a written document containing the names and contact information of all members of the interim session to be given to all members
 - (e) If applicable, the steps to be taken for the election of elders and deacons and the calling of a minister
 - iii. Assist in establishing accounting and contribution records.
- k. A petition may include a request for Presbytery to ratify a call to a minister, so that ordination and or installation can be done in conjunction with the constitution of the church. With regard to any call to a minister, the overseeing body shall include in its report to the Presbytery (3.3) the willingness of the minister to accept the call, if known.

Chapter Five

Withdrawal By A Congregation

- 5.1** In the case of receipt by presbytery of a written notice from a member church of its intent to withdraw from the presbytery (F.G. 3.6-3.8), the presbytery will appoint a commission of no fewer than three persons to meet with the pastor and session of the church. The moderator will appoint a chairman for the investigation commission. The moderator and clerk of presbytery shall be ex-officio members of the commission.
- 5.2** The commission shall hold an initial meeting with the pastor and session to identify the reasons for their desire to sever the denominational affiliation. The commission should question the pastor and session according to the following:
- a. What issue(s) generated the thought of withdrawal?
 - b. To what extent is the congregation united in this matter?
 - c. To what extent have members or attendees left the church over the matter?
 - d. Have those opposing withdrawal been given ample opportunity to voice their opinions?
 - e. To what extent has the congregation received financial support from presbytery?
 - f. How does the session believe withdrawal will better serve the kingdom of Christ and enhance the spiritual welfare of the congregation?
 - g. Have any overtures been made to other denominations for membership?
- 5.3** The commission will send a letter to the members of the congregation explaining the investigation process, including contact information for each member of the commission, in order to provide access for the expression of concerns.
- 5.4** The session will schedule congregational meetings convened according to *B.C.O.* guidelines, at which the session and commission will discuss with the congregation issues generating the request for withdrawal and the procedure to be followed. The commission will have discretion to decide how many informational meetings will be required before a congregational meeting is convened to take action on the motion for withdrawal.
- 5.5** In the meeting called to take action a quorum will be two-thirds plus one of the membership present in person or by absentee ballot. The names of all present will be recorded.
- 5.6** The members of the presbytery commission will chair and oversee the meeting (F.G. 3.6c).
- 5.7** The congregational vote to withdraw will be by written ballot. For the purposes of 5.9.a. each ballot must be signed to be deemed valid. A vote of two-thirds plus one of the eligible voting membership must vote in favor of withdrawal for it to take effect (F.G. 3.6a).

5.8 If the proposal for dismissal passes:

- a. The commission shall report the result of the meeting to the presbytery and seek ratification of its report. In addition, if possible, the commission should make provision for any members who did not support the motion for dismissal and who desire to continue as Free Presbyterians.
- b. In the case that the congregation is in debt to the presbytery, a date will be determined to repay all loans according to the agreements under which financial assistance was given.
- c. If expenses are incurred in the process, the dismissed congregation will assume its share of the expenses.
- d. The withdrawing church shall take the following action within 45 days or longer if granted by presbytery:
 - i. Remove the denominational name from church signage, all printed material, and all internet platforms on which the denominational name is used.
 - ii. Change the name on all financial accounts.
 - iii. Take such legal action as is necessary to amend the name of the church as may be registered with relevant government agencies.
 - iv. Surrender all denominational records (printed and electronic) in its possession or in possession of any minister or elder of the withdrawing church or any person, or entity, to whom such records have been given and, after surrender, purge all such electronic records.
 - v. Provide evidence of compliance with the above requirements as requested by presbytery.
- e. The presbytery may:
 - i. Notify denominational affiliates.
 - ii. Remove any information regarding the withdrawing church or ruling or teaching elder of the withdrawing church from any denominational material or web sites.

5.9 In the event that a proposal to request dismissal fails:

- a. Any who have voted in support of the motion for dismissal may be deemed, at the discretion of presbytery, to have resigned their membership in the particular church in the FPCNA.
- b. Those members of the church who opposed the proposal shall be the legal possessors of all the rights and privileges of the local church, including the ownership of all its real and personal properties, and shall be so recognized by the presbytery.
- c. The former church officers will co-operate with the commission in the immediate surrender of control of all church assets.
- d. Presbytery will take steps to ensure continuing oversight for the remaining congregation.

- e. The minister(s) who supported the proposal for dismissal will be required to resign from the presbytery. Refusal by any such minister to do so may result in presbytery taking action to terminate his membership.

Chapter Six

Moderators

- 6.1 From its members, the presbytery shall elect each year one man who will serve as moderator. The election shall take place at the outset of the initial regular presbytery meeting each year. The same man may be elected to as many as two consecutive terms, after which he shall not be eligible for election as moderator, or deputy moderator, until two additional terms have elapsed, after which he could be considered for election to either office for as many as two consecutive terms.**
- 6.2 The moderator is the presbytery's presiding officer, and ex officio member of all committees, in which capacity he is to ensure that the business of the presbytery is conducted decently and in good order. Outside of the specific responsibilities enumerated in the F.G. 8.4 in which the moderator may employ executive authority, he has no authority aside from that which the presbytery votes to confer upon him.**
- 6.3 The purpose of the moderator is to exercise all the authority that is required to carry out the responsibilities of presiding at meetings of the presbytery, calling it to order, declaring recesses and adjournments. He is a member and the chairman of the Executive Committee of the presbytery on which he shares equal authority with the other members in carrying out presbytery directives and in responding to emergency situations that may arise between regular meetings of the presbytery. The moderator may act on behalf of the Executive Committee at its direction. The moderator may exercise his discretion in deciding to call any emergency meetings of the presbytery, but must call such a meeting at the request of any member of presbytery. The moderator must call an emergency meeting of the presbytery on the request of at least two Sessions.**
- 6.4 In instances of formal deliberation, except as permitted in F.G. 8.4.d, the moderator should take care to ensure that his voice remains objective and will not cast any votes unless a tie exists in which case he may cast a tie-breaking vote. In less formal deliberations, the moderator may participate in discussions by the presbytery, but even in those cases should exercise care not to influence discussion unduly. His main responsibility is to ensure that each member has the opportunity to express his views on any questions before the presbytery.**
- 6.5 At the conclusion of the presbytery's annual election, if the incumbent moderator has not been re-elected or is ineligible to continue serving, he shall vacate the presiding officer's chair and invite the newly elected moderator to that seat. Upon occupying the chair, the newly elected moderator may take a reasonable amount of time to make any remarks he considers to be appropriate.**
- 6.6 Removal from office**
 - a. A moderator holds his office at the pleasure of the presbytery. He may be required at any time to leave office if:

- i. He becomes subject to any judicial process of a disciplinary nature where preliminary investigation indicates sufficient grounds to proceed against him.
 - ii. He demonstrates persistent unremedied incompetence in the orderly management of presbytery business.
 - iii. He willfully exceeds the bounds of authority conferred upon his office by the presbytery.
- b. The procedure to remove a moderator from office may be initiated in any of the following ways:
 - i. Where a preliminary investigation in a judicial process indicates sufficient grounds to proceed with discipline against him, he must vacate his office.
 - ii. Any member of presbytery may file a motion for the removal of the moderator on the grounds of his persistent and unremedied incompetence in the orderly management of presbytery business, or if he willfully exceeds the bounds of authority conferred upon his office by the presbytery. If the motion is seconded and supported by a vote of two-thirds plus 1 of presbytery members present, the moderator must vacate the office. He may be required to vacate the chair until the disposition of the motion.
 - iii. Any session may make an overture to presbytery to consider removing the moderator on the grounds stated above in 6.6.a.

Chapter Seven

Clerk of Presbytery

- 7.1 From its members, the presbytery shall elect each year one man who will serve as clerk. The election shall take place at the outset of the initial regular presbytery meeting each year. The same man may be elected to as many consecutive terms as the presbytery shall decide.**
- 7.2 The clerk is the chief advisor to the presbytery on all matters of procedure and business. He shall stand in an advisory capacity to all presbytery committees to ensure that the business of the presbytery is conducted according to the *B.C.O.*. Outside of the specific responsibilities enumerated in the F.G. 8.6-8.9 he has no authority aside from that which the presbytery confers upon him.**
- 7.3 The purpose of the clerk is to exercise all the authority that is required to carry out the responsibilities enumerated in F.G. 8.6-8.9 in addition to any other tasks assigned to him by the presbytery. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the presbytery on which he shares equal authority with the other members in carrying out presbytery directives and in responding to emergency situations that may arise between regular meetings of the Presbytery. The clerk shall be available to advise the Executive Committee of options on responding to such events.**
- 7.4 At the conclusion of the presbytery's annual election, if the incumbent clerk has not been re-elected or has retired from office, he shall vacate the clerk's chair. In the case of a change in the occupant of the clerk's office, the outgoing clerk will be responsible to deliver to his successor in due course all of the presbytery's records that are under his control.**

7.5 Removal from office

- a. A clerk holds his office at the pleasure of the presbytery. He may be required at any time to leave office if:
 - i. He becomes subject to any judicial process of a disciplinary nature when a preliminary investigation indicates sufficient grounds to proceed against him.
 - ii. He demonstrates persistent unremedied incompetence in the orderly management of presbytery business.
 - iii. He willfully exceeds the bounds of authority conferred upon his office by the presbytery.
- b. The procedure to remove a clerk from office may be initiated in any of the following ways:
 - i. Where a preliminary investigation in a judicial process indicates sufficient grounds to proceed with discipline against him he must vacate his office.
 - ii. Any member of presbytery may file a motion for the removal of the clerk on the grounds of his persistent and unremedied incompetence in the orderly management of presbytery business; or if he willfully exceeds the bounds of authority conferred upon his office by the presbytery. If the motion is seconded and supported by a vote of two-thirds plus 1 of presbytery members present, the clerk must vacate the office.
 - iii. Any session may make an overture to presbytery to consider removing the clerk on the grounds stated above in 7.5.a.

Chapter Eight

Session and Committee Meeting Procedures

8.1 Session meeting procedures.

- a. **Members.** Members eligible to vote at a properly convened session meeting include installed ministers and installed ruling elders. Assistant ministers may attend but may not vote (F.G. 2.7, 2.8, 2.20, 5.5).
- b. **Notice.** Notice requirements for a properly convened session meeting are to be found in F.G. 5.7-5.10.
- c. **Quorum.** Quorum requirements are laid down in F.G. 5.13.
- d. **Agenda.** A session should follow a regular order of business. A suggested template for an agenda is to be found in F.G. in 5:15.
- e. **Minutes.** Ordinarily, the minutes of a statutory meeting should be read and ratified as to their accuracy at the next statutory meeting. Minutes of any special meetings that have occurred in the interim should be included (See F.G. 5.16).

- f. Discussion. The moderator is to ensure that all members have opportunity to participate freely in an open and full discussion of any proposal.
- g. Voting. Voting is to be on the basis of regular order following a proposal, second and appropriate discussion. Any vote needs to be recorded in the minutes including details of the proposer, seconder, and result.

8.2 Committee meeting procedures

- a. Members. Members eligible to vote at a properly convened session and committee meeting include installed ministers, installed ruling elders, and installed deacons. Assistant ministers may attend but may not vote. Except as provided in F.G. 2.30.a, all committee meetings require the presence of a session member. (F.G. 2.3.b, 2.30.a, 8.1.a).
- b. Ordinarily, committee meetings involve the presence of session members. With the exception of an emergency situation, no committee meeting or action is to occur without the knowledge and approval of the session (See F.G. 2.30.a). Committee decisions are only valid when authorized by the session.
- c. Notice. The committee shall meet monthly as determined in the last regular meeting (See F.G. 2.30.b).
- d. Quorum. See F.G. 2.30.c. Ordinarily, the minister is the moderator of a meeting of the committee (See F.G. 2.30.d).
- e. Agenda. A committee should establish and follow a regular order of business (See F.G. 2.30.b). The scope of the agenda of a committee meeting is limited to business relating to the function of a deacon detailed in F.G. 2.3.b. Ordinarily, the agenda should always provide for a review of church finances according to the provisions of F.G. 2.30.f.
- f. Minutes. Ordinarily, the minutes of a statutory meeting should be read and ratified as to their accuracy at the next statutory meeting. Minutes of any special meetings that have occurred in the interim should be included (See F.G. 2.30.e).
- g. Discussion. The moderator is to ensure that all members have opportunity to participate freely in an open and full discussion of any proposal.
- h. Voting. Voting is to be on the basis of regular order following a proposal, second and appropriate discussion. Any vote needs to be recorded in the minutes including details of the proposer, seconder, and result.

8.3 Ad hoc committees

The committee may appoint sub-committees according to the requirements of F.G. 2.30.g. The committee must establish terms of reference and procedures for the conduct of business by any sub-committee.

Chapter Nine

Congregational Meetings

- 9.1 The congregation consists of all the communicant members of a particular church, and they only are entitled to vote so long as they are in good standing, i.e., not under church discipline (See F.G. 2.2b).**
- 9.2 A congregational meeting shall be called for any of the following purposes:**
- a. To elect church officers, i.e., minister, associate ministers, elders and deacons.
 - b. To provide on an annual basis reports to the membership on the Church's business.
 - c. To satisfy any legal requirements in the jurisdiction in which the particular church is located.
 - d. To inform the congregation of disciplinary issues, as determined by the session.
 - e. To comply with a directive of presbytery or a presbytery commission.
 - f. To consider withdrawal from the presbytery by congregation.
 - g. To consider dissolving the congregation.
 - h. For other circumstances which the session deems necessary.
- 9.3 A congregational meeting is called by the session, with public notice being given on at least two Lord's Days prior to the meeting. This notice must be accompanied by a published list of eligible voters. Only these persons will be eligible to vote in the congregational meeting. The session may waive the notice requirement of this paragraph on any matter that does not require a vote by the congregation. Waiver of notice must be noted in the minutes of the Session recording the decision to call the congregational meeting.**
- 9.4 The quorum at a congregational meeting is one-third of the eligible voting membership (F.G. 2.7, 2.18, 2.27). In the case of a motion for withdrawal by, or dissolution of, the congregation, the quorum will be two-thirds plus one of the eligible voting membership. Any congregational meeting at which a vote will not be taken is not subject to quorum requirements. Congregational meetings called to satisfy legal requirements will be subject to quorum rules established by the particular jurisdiction. Unless otherwise directed, the quorum in any congregational meeting convened at a directive of presbytery shall be one-third of the eligible voting membership. Any quorum includes both those physically present in the meeting and those who cast valid absentee ballots (9.5.c.i below, F.G. 3.6.a).**
- 9.5 Procedures in a congregational meeting.**
- a. The agenda for a congregational meeting is established by the session. Notification of the meeting must include the specific business to be transacted. No other business shall be discussed or decided.

- b. The moderator and clerk of the session will ordinarily preside at a congregational meeting. In cases where a presbytery commission has called a congregational meeting, the chairman and secretary of that commission will preside. The presiding officers will ensure that the meeting operates according to procedures established by the *B.C.O.*. As part of that order the clerk shall certify at the outset of the meeting that a quorum exists.
- c. Voting procedures.
 - i. In cases not involving the election of officers, voting procedures shall be according to regular order, i.e., proposal and second of a motion followed by discussion as supervised by the presiding officer. Under presbytery rules voting cannot be by proxy. However, absentee ballots are permitted on the request of those who cannot be present at the meeting. Absentee ballots are only valid if cast by a communicant member in good standing. Those presiding at a congregational meeting must adopt measures to ensure the integrity of the absentee ballots.
 - ii. Ordinarily, regular motions will be declared to have passed by obtaining a majority of the votes cast, i.e., 50% +1 of the votes cast. In the case of a motion for withdrawal by, or dissolution of, a congregation the requirement will be two-thirds plus one of the eligible voting membership.
 - iii. For a minister to be elected he must receive two-thirds of the votes cast at a properly convened congregational meeting. A meeting convened for the election of a minister requires the prior grant of moderation from the presbytery, and the report of an election of a minister must be sustained by a vote of the presbytery (F.G. 2.7).
 - iv. Elders are elected by receiving 50% + 1 of the votes cast at a properly convened congregational meeting. A meeting convened for the election of ruling elder(s) requires the prior grant of moderation from the presbytery, and the report of an election of elder(s) must be sustained by a vote of the presbytery (F.G. 2.7).
 - v. The congregational meeting for the election of deacons does not require the grant of moderation from presbytery. For a man to be elected as a deacon he must receive at least 50% + 1 of the number of votes cast at a properly convened congregational meeting (F.G. 2.27). The session will have discretion to arrange for the installation of men who have been elected as deacons.
 - vi. Voting in a congregational meeting may be by any method that permits an accurate tally of the votes. In the case of withdrawal by the congregation, ballots must be signed by the voter since a vote for withdrawal is a formal resignation from the Free Presbyterian Church. Election votes are usually by secret ballot. For absentee ballots, the session will need to devise a means to receive the vote in a way that allows for its validation but also preserves the anonymity of the actual ballot. (For example, having the ballot enclosed in a sealed envelope within a second sealed envelope that has the member's name on it.)
 - vii. Sessions should devise a method to ensure an accurate count of all votes cast, perhaps involving other male members who are present. The result of the vote is to be announced to the meeting immediately by the presiding officer. In elections of ministers and elders there is to be a reminder given that the result of the vote is subject to ratification by presbytery.
 - viii. In an election vote, if no candidate receives the required number of votes, the session may employ either of the following options:

- a. Conduct a second vote in the same meeting with a reduced number of candidates.
- b. Postpone subsequent voting and call for a motion to adjourn.

9.6 Report of election

- a. A report of any election must be filed by the session with the clerk of presbytery as soon as possible after the election as detailed in the C.P.D. 10.7 and 12.7.
- b. This report must include the following details:
 - i. The name of the church
 - ii. Date of the election
 - iii. Date of the grant of moderation and any terms and conditions of the grant
 - iv. Total number of communicant members
 - v. A detailed description of how the provisions of 9.3, 9.4, 9.5 were implemented.
 - vi. Numerical information including: total number of communicants; number of communicants present and eligible to vote; total number of absentee ballots; total number of votes cast; total number of spoiled votes if any; number of votes required for election (9.4.c. iii, iv, v); total votes cast for each nominee.
 - vii. Names of nominees declared elected.
 - viii. The session report must be signed and dated by the clerk of session.

Chapter Ten

Calling a Minister

- 10.1 It is typically expected that a particular church will be under the pastoral oversight of a minister. A minister is a man whom the presbytery has declared eligible to receive a call.**
- 10.2 Candidates eligible for a call include ordained ministers of the FPCNA, licensed ministers of the FPCNA, ordained ministers of a presbytery with which fraternal relations exist that allow for such a call, and other ordained ministers approved by the presbytery. The provisions of this chapter also apply to the call of associate minister(s).**
- 10.3 Before any election of a minister can proceed, a presbytery grant of moderation must be obtained by the session. Ordinarily a request for moderation is submitted to the clerk of presbytery for inclusion on the agenda of a regular meeting of presbytery.**

10.4 Various options are available for nomination of a man eligible to be called as the minister. For example:

- a. The session may have one or more nominees for the congregation to consider.
- b. The session may call for nominations from the membership according to a procedure established by the session. The session has a responsibility to ensure that the congregation understands the process by which nominations are to be submitted. Only those who are eligible voting members may submit nominations. As to all nominations from the congregation, the session will decide which of them proceed to the ballot.

10.5 A congregational meeting for the election of a minister follows the procedures established in Chapter 9 of the C.P.D.

10.6 Post-election procedures by the session

- a. As soon as possible after the election, the session will transmit to the clerk of presbytery a detailed report of the election and will request that it be placed before the presbytery for ratification.
- b. In addition the session may wish to provide an opportunity for members and others who attend the services of the church to indicate their support of the call by preparing a written statement of the call that they can sign.

10.7 Post-election procedures by the presbytery

- a. Presbytery must ratify the call. Ratification entails:
 - i. Ascertaining by means of a report from those overseeing the election if the congregational meeting was convened and conducted according to the procedures established by presbytery.
 - ii. Authentication of the eligibility of the man elected to hold the office to which the congregation has called him.
- b. Ratification must be declined by the presbytery if:
 - i. There is a defect in any process of election, i.e., any irregularity in procedure that fails to comply with the established requirements of the *B.C.O.* in preparing for and conducting an election unless otherwise waived by the presbytery.
 - ii. There is a defect in the man called that affects his eligibility for the office.
- c. Once the clerk receives the report of the election from the session he shall proceed to place the report of the election on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the presbytery. However, if the grant of moderation includes the ability to seek ratification by electronic vote then the clerk of the presbytery shall proceed as follows:
 - i. Send the submitted election report to the members of the Executive Committee for review as to the procedures followed and the eligibility of the man elected.

- ii. Upon conclusion of the review, and approval of the election report by the Executive Committee, the clerk shall transmit to the presbytery the Executive Committee's recommendation to proceed with electronic ratification of the call.
- iii. In the event the Executive Committee does not recommend ratification of the call, the report of the election will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of presbytery as provided in c above.
- d. If presbytery declines to ratify the call the grant of moderation ceases and the session must begin the process again. The clerk of presbytery will communicate to the session any reasons why ratification was declined.
- e. If the presbytery ratifies the report of the election, it shall present to the man who has been called the evidence of the call and the need to respond within 30 days. Before the end of this 30-day period he may request up to an additional 30 days to consider his response.

10.8 Response to a call

- a. If the man elected accepts the call, he will communicate his acceptance to the clerk of presbytery within the specified time period. The presbytery will then consult with him and the session to arrange for his ordination/installation. The presbytery will consult with the session on specific details of any such service.
- b. In the event he declines to accept the call he must communicate this fact to the clerk of presbytery within the specified time period. The grant of moderation ceases and for any subsequent election the session must seek a new grant of moderation.
- c. Ordinarily, the clerk of presbytery will communicate to the session any response to a call.

Chapter Eleven

Dissolving Ministerial Relationships and Divesting from Office

Dissolution of ministerial relationship includes relations within the Seminary. The ministerial relationship may be dissolved in the following ways.

11.1 Resignation to accept another call

- a. A minister may resign from his responsibilities in a particular church in order to accept a call to another particular church or ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery; or, under the jurisdiction of another denomination with which fraternal relations exist allowing for the transfer of membership. The minister must first inform his session of his resignation. He must then submit his resignation in writing to the clerk of the presbytery who will then arrange for a presbytery response to the resignation. At the session's discretion, and with the approval of presbytery, the resignation may be announced to the congregation.
- b. In the case where a minister resigns from a particular church or ministry to take up a call to a denomination, church or ministry where no fraternal relations exist, he will be required to terminate

his membership in the denomination and may be required to surrender his ordination credentials to the presbytery (See F.G. 2.11).

11.2 Resignation on medical grounds

In the event of medical disability a minister may tender his resignation to the clerk of presbytery and request dissolution of the ministerial relationship. Where the circumstances cannot be remedied by a leave of absence or additional ministerial supply, the presbytery may at its discretion accept the resignation.

11.3 Resignation with no stated reason

If a minister requests the dissolution of the ministerial relation with a particular church without stating a reason for doing so, the presbytery has the right to make such inquiry as it deems appropriate into such a resignation before determining a response.

11.4 Resignation by reason of becoming unfit for the ministry

In the case of a minister requesting dissolution of the ministerial relation to a particular church, stating as a reason that he has been rendered ineligible for the office by inappropriate conduct, the presbytery shall make inquiry and pursue any relevant judicial process it deems appropriate.

11.5 Retirement

- a. A minister is subject to the provisions of F.G. 2.12 regarding retirement at the legally defined age of retirement. A minister may retire earlier than the statutory age of retirement but the provision of F.G. 2.12 shall not apply.
- b. Upon a minister's retirement the ministerial relation is deemed to be dissolved. However, according to the terms of F.G. 2.13 a local church may request a minister who has reached retirement age, to whom a renewed call is not being extended, to remain active in its work according to the terms set by the session.
- c. In the case of a retired minister who has served the congregation with distinction a particular church may honor him with the title of minister emeritus according to the provisions of F.G. 2.14.
- d. A retired minister remains a full member of the presbytery and retains voting rights and may hold presbytery office (F.G. 2.15).

Originated by the congregation

11.6 If the congregation has lost confidence in the ministry of its pastor it may through the session petition the presbytery for a dissolution of the ministerial relation. This petition will take the form of a request for moderation to hold a congregational meeting for the purpose of dissolving the ministerial relationship. (See F.G. 2.11) The presbytery may at its discretion decide to make further inquiry into the matter and may recommend remedial actions before responding to such a request.

11.7 A congregational meeting for the purposes of dissolving the ministerial relationship must conform to the provisions of the C.P.D. Chapter 9.

- 11.8 If the congregational vote meets the requirement of two-thirds of the votes cast and the presbytery votes to sustain the result of the vote then the ministerial relationship is dissolved.**

Actions by the Presbytery to dissolve the ministerial relationship.

- 11.9 The final opinion of judicial action by the presbytery (See C.P.D. Chapter 15) dissolves the ministerial relationship in a particular church.**

Chapter Twelve

Election of Elders

- 12.1 It is typically expected that a particular church will be under the oversight of a Session composed of ruling elders elected from the communicant membership of the congregation and any ordained ministers of the particular church.**
- 12.2 A candidate eligible for election to the office of ruling elder in a particular church is any male member of the congregation meeting the qualifications established by the F.G. 2.19.**
- 12.3 Before any election of a ruling elder can proceed, a presbytery grant of moderation must be obtained by the session. Ordinarily a request for moderation is submitted to the clerk of presbytery for inclusion on the agenda of a regular meeting of presbytery and will stipulate a maximum number of ruling elders that are being sought. In the event that more than this number receive the required number of votes, the men elected will then be determined by plurality of votes.**

(Amended October 2025).

- 12.4 Various options are available for nomination of a man eligible to be elected as elder.**

For example:

- a. The session may have one or more nominees for the congregation to consider.
 - b. The session may call for nominations from the membership according to a procedure established by the session. The session has a responsibility to ensure that the congregation understands the process by which nominations are to be submitted. Only those who are eligible voting members may submit nominations. As to all nominations from the congregation, the session will decide which of them proceed to the ballot.
- 12.5 A congregational meeting for the election of ruling elder(s) follows the procedures established in Chapter 9.5.c.iv, vi, vii, viii of the C.P.D.**
- 12.6 Post-election procedures by the Session.**

As soon as possible after the election, the session will transmit to the clerk of presbytery a detailed report of the election and will request that it be placed before the presbytery for ratification.

12.7 Post-election procedures by the Presbytery

- a. Presbytery must ratify the call. Ratification entails:
 - i. Ascertaining by means of a report from those overseeing the election if the congregational meeting was convened and conducted according to the procedures established by presbytery.
 - ii. Authentication of the eligibility of any man elected to hold the office of elder.
- b. Ratification must be declined by the presbytery if:
 - i. There is a defect in any process of election, i.e., any irregularity in procedure that fails to comply with the established requirements of the *B.C.O.* in preparing for and conducting an election, unless otherwise waived by the presbytery.
 - ii. There is a defect in the man elected that affects his eligibility for the office.
- c. Once the clerk receives the report of the election from the session he shall proceed to place the report of the election on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the presbytery. However, if the grant of moderation includes the ability to seek ratification by electronic vote then the clerk of the presbytery shall proceed as follows:
 - i. Send the submitted election report to the members of the Executive Committee for review as to the procedures followed and the eligibility of the man elected.
 - ii. Upon conclusion of the review, and approval of the election report by the Executive Committee, the clerk shall transmit to the presbytery the Executive Committee's recommendation to proceed with electronic ratification of the election report.
 - iii. In the event the Executive Committee does not recommend ratification of the election report, the report will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of presbytery as provided in paragraph 12.7.c above.
- d. If presbytery declines to ratify the call the grant of moderation ceases and the session must begin the process again. The clerk of presbytery will communicate to the session any reasons why ratification was declined.
- e. If the presbytery ratifies the report of the election, the clerk of presbytery will communicate this fact to the session, and then the presbytery will then consult with the session to arrange the time and plan the specific details of an ordination/installation service.

Chapter Thirteen

Missions

- 13.1 Definition. According to the FPCNA's Statement of Purpose (see *B.C.O.* Introduction) in paragraph *f*, the purpose of the FPCNA is "to promote and participate in worldwide evangelism through biblically sound and separated mission activity."**

13.2 Local Church. In line with the purpose of the FPCNA cited above in 13.1, each session under the presbytery's care should take care to pursue the following objectives:

- a. To teach about missions.
- b. To conduct local mission activity (outreach).
- c. To inform the congregation about FPC missionaries and their activities on various mission fields.
- d. To educate, especially the young, about the lives of and works of missionaries from the past.
- e. To encourage public and private prayer for:
 - i. FPC missionaries and their activities.
 - ii. For the calling by the Lord of additional laborers.
- f. To encourage members to participate in foreign mission opportunities.
- g. To encourage individual interaction with FPC missionaries.
- h. To endeavor to establish extension works.

13.3 Presbytery. In line with the purpose of the FPCNA cited above in 13.1, the presbytery should take care to discharge the following responsibilities:

- a. To receive applicants for missionary training and service.
- b. To provide financial and administrative support and oversight for missionaries.
- c. To inform all FPCNA churches concerning FPC missionaries and their activities.
- d. To send presbyters to visit missionaries for the purpose of encouragement, review, and reporting to the presbytery.
- e. To cooperate with mission activities of denominations with which fraternal relations exist.
- f. To provide evangelistic materials for use in mission activities.
- g. To use radio, internet, and other such means for the spread of the gospel.
- h. To encourage ministers and local churches to endeavor to establish extension works.

Chapter Fourteen

Nature and Purposes of Discipline

14.1 Basis. The WCF 30.1 says, “The Lord Jesus Christ, as king and head of His church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.” The church has received authority and direction from the Lord Jesus Christ that it must exercise for the well-being of the flock under its care. (1 Peter 5:1-4) Having received this appointment, the elders must feed the flock and take oversight for the benefit of all the sheep. Church discipline fulfills all these responsibilities.

14.2 Function

- a. Administrative. The Word of God and the *B.C.O.* provide the disciplinary framework by which the church operates in a decent and orderly manner.
- b. Judicial. This aspect of church government is the individual application of the disciplinary framework to address a particular problem.

14.3 Subjects

- a. Persons. All communicant members and their households, and regular attendees, are subject to, and beneficiaries of, the practice of church discipline as may apply to their respective positions as members and attendees.
- b. Officers. The practice of church discipline requires the recognition, training, and use of gifts that God has given to the church in the form of leaders who use those gifts in the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12).
- c. Church. Discipline is the means whereby the church, as a body, seeks to accomplish the duties that God has assigned to it in His Word.
- d. Courts. Discipline is the means whereby the various church courts provide biblical government to those under their authority.

14.4 Purposes. The proper implementation of church discipline will:

- a. Glorify God and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. Benefit the church in its worship, administration of the sacraments, maintenance of purity, and proclamation of the gospel.
- c. Assist members in the proper understanding and application of the Word of God.
- d. Lead to growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- e. Aid in the maintenance of doctrinal and moral purity, both individually and in the church at large.

14.5 Means. The means whereby the church administers discipline are:

- a. Scriptural instruction
- b. Oversight of church activities
- c. Judicial proceedings
- d. Exhorting one another in the things of the Lord
- e. Prayer

Chapter Fifteen**Judicial Process****15.1 Overview**

- a. The judicial process is designed and intended to be a help to the local church and to the denomination by encouraging a knowledge of and obedience to the Word of God and the substandards established by the FPCNA. Therefore, all judicial proceedings must have as a starting point a specific provision of Scripture and a specific provision of the substandards of the church. Every judicial action must set forth with clarity the Scripture and substandard involved and the nature of the action in light of the cited authority.
- b. Commencement of a judicial proceeding is a formal and serious matter as it requires a ruling by the church court involved in the proceeding concerning the person or matter being adjudicated. All persons and church bodies are directed to seek resolution of a matter avoiding, if possible, the necessity of such a formal proceeding. Judicial process should be regarded as a last resort.
- c. Judicial proceedings may be one of the following:
 - i. Disciplinary or remedial. This process deals with an alleged offense of Scripture and the substandards of the church.
 - ii. Interpretive or preventive. This process seeks a clarification of Scripture and the substandards of the church in order to avoid an offense.

15.2 Institution of judicial process

- a. All judicial proceedings must commence with the filing of a written document (charge or petition) with the clerk of the church body to consider the matter, setting forth the following:
 - i. The type of action, disciplinary or interpretive
 - ii. The Scripture and substandard that is applicable
 - iii. The person, or persons, alleged to be in violation (disciplinary only)

- iv. The alleged offense, with sufficient detail to allow response
 - v. Action taken to resolve the matter prior to this proceeding
 - vi. Names of all persons with any knowledge of the matter
 - vii. The relief sought
- b. The document must be signed by the person bringing the action.
 - c. Judicial process may be commenced by a ruling body in which case the charge should be signed by the clerk of the body and documentation supplied should include the resolution adopted by the body authorizing the action.

15.3 Response to judicial process

- a. If the action is disciplinary in nature, the clerk shall provide the alleged offender named in the charge with a copy of the charge. The alleged offender shall be given time to respond in writing to the charge. The time granted to respond shall be in the discretion of the ruling body and determined in light of the nature of the alleged offense and the potential for harm to the body and/or scandal to the Person and work of Christ.
- b. If the action is interpretive, the clerk of the governing body shall acknowledge receipt of the petition. The governing body shall then appoint one or more members of the body to draft a response which, upon approval of the governing body, shall be given to the person or body filing the petition.
- c. All responses filed with the clerk shall be supplied to the non-filing party.

15.4 Investigation phase

- a. After the charge, or petition, and response have been filed with the clerk, the governing body shall conduct such investigation as it deems necessary. The governing body may request any documentation it deems necessary and may meet with any persons, including the parties involved in the matter, for the purpose of obtaining information.
- b. The church court may also conduct interim hearings to obtain testimony and to allow both parties to examine or cross-examine witnesses.

15.5 Preliminary Report

- a. Upon completion of its investigation, the court shall issue a written preliminary report based upon its findings. The report shall be furnished to all parties.
- b. If all parties agree in writing with the report, it shall become the final opinion of the church court. If either party disagrees with the report, the court shall schedule a hearing on the matter.

- 15.6 At the hearing, the court shall receive all testimony and any written argument which the dissenting party seeks to offer. The other party (non-dissenting) may present testimony and written argument but must give written notice to the court of intent to do so. The court may also present testimony (from non-court members) if it so desires. The court may establish time limits for all parties at the hearing for the presentation of oral testimony.
- 15.7 The final opinion shall be either the preliminary report (per the procedure set forth in 15.5 above) or the opinion rendered after the hearing. A copy of the final opinion shall be furnished to the parties and retained in the records of the court. If the proceeding takes place at session level the final opinion may be appealed to a higher church court.

Chapter Sixteen

Censure and Restoration

- 16.1 The censures that a church court may impose are detailed in F.G. 4.8, WCF Chapter 30 and the additional statement to WCF 30.4.
- 16.2 In the case of a minister, the power of discipline and imposition or removal of censure is exercised solely by the presbytery, F.G. 10.23-24. When a minister is deposed, the ministerial relationship with a particular church is automatically dissolved. If a minister is suspended from office, the presbytery has discretion to determine whether the censure includes dissolving the ministerial relation. In any case all membership privileges are suspended during the period of censure.
- 16.3 Censures may be imposed as the result of due process for a definite or indefinite period. In the case of an indefinite period the censure shall be reviewed by the church court that imposed it after a period of no more than 6 months, or as decided by the court when it imposed the censure. A review must determine whether there has been evidence of repentance on the part of the offender. Such a review may lead to a removal, continuation, or increase of the censure. No party under censure may resign from membership before satisfying the stated conditions for restoration. Any attempt to resign may lead to the imposition of further censure without further trial. Except in the case of admonition, during any censure all membership privileges are suspended for the disciplinary period.
- 16.4 In cases of excommunication, announcement of the censure imposed will be made by the session to the congregation (See F.G. 4.8.f.). In all other cases the session shall have discretion to determine the degree to which imposed censures are made public.
- 16.5 Restoration occurs when the censured party satisfies the court that imposed the censure that the stated conditions for restoration have been met (See F.G. 4.8.b). The court must also take into account the impact of any restoration on the testimony of the gospel.
- a. When censure is removed the court that imposed it must clearly inform the party concerned of their restoration.
 - b. In the case where the court made the imposition of a censure public, the removal of that censure must also be made public.

- c. Restoration of an elder or deacon to the privileges of membership does not automatically lead to restoration to office (See F.G. 4.8.b). Restoration to office in the case of suspension depends upon the ruling of the church court that imposed the censure. In the case of an elder or deacon who has been deposed, holding office again depends upon subsequent election by the congregation, and in the case of an elder, ratification of that election by the presbytery.
- d. A minister who has been subject to a censure of deposition, or suspension which included dissolution of the pastoral relationship, may only hold office again upon a subsequent election which has been ratified by the presbytery, followed by ordination if required and installation according to the terms set by the presbytery.

Chapter Seventeen

Appeals

17.1 Definition

An appeal is an action requesting a higher court to review a lower court's action or to reconsider its own action.

17.2 Eligibility

An appeal may be filed by a party to an action heard in a lower court or by a court whose judgment has been reversed or modified by a higher court.

17.3 Basis

All appeals must be based upon the judgment rendered in the matter. However, the appeal shall state all grounds upon which it is founded.

17.4 Procedure

- a. Written notice of an intention to appeal must be filed with the clerk of the higher and lower court not later than ten (10) days after the receipt of the judgment to which the appeal pertains. The time for filing the written notice may be extended at the higher court's discretion.
- b. The appeal must be filed with the clerk of the higher court not later than thirty (30) days after the filing of the notice of intention to appeal (17.4.a).
- c. The clerk of the higher court shall:
 - i. Furnish a copy of the appeal to the lower court and to all other parties to the action.
 - ii. Request the record from the lower court.
 - iii. Inform all parties as to the date, time, and place set for the hearing.
 - iv. Furnish to all parties the final written decision of the higher court.

- d. Any parties desiring to respond to the appeal must file a response with the clerk of the higher court not later than twenty (20) days after receipt of the appeal.
- e. The higher court, or a commission appointed by the higher court, shall:
 - i. Review the appeal, any response, and the record from the lower court.
 - ii. Set a date, time, and place for the hearing, if the court determines that a hearing is required.
 - iii. After review, and conducting a hearing when required, render its decision, which maybe any of the following: affirmed (in whole or in part), reversed (in whole or in part), modified, or sent back to the lower court for further action as directed by the higher court.
 - iv. Furnish its decision to the clerks of the courts involved in the appeal process.

Chapter Eighteen

Dissents, Protests, and Objections

18.1 Dissents

Any member of a court, or a committee or commission that the court established, who is entitled to vote on a question may request that his dissenting vote be recorded in the minutes noting his name. He may also request that he be allowed to submit for inclusion in the minutes his reasons for his dissenting vote. The written dissent must be received by the court not later than ten (10) days following adjournment, unless extended by the court in question. The court reserves the right to require the dissenter to modify his dissent if it determines that any aspect of the dissent is inappropriate. The court shall inform the dissenter of any deadline for resubmission of the modified dissent.

18.2 Protests

a. Definition

A protest is a written dissent by a lower court (i.e., session) to action taken by a higher court (i.e., presbytery).

b. Time

A protest must be filed with the higher court not later than thirty (30) days after the approval of the minutes recording the disputed action, except as provided in F.G. 9.11.

c. Procedure

- i. The protest shall be filed in writing with the clerk of the higher court and state the reasons upon which it is founded.
- ii. The higher court, at its next regular meeting, shall report reception of the protest and shall furnish a copy of the protest to all of its members.
- iii. The higher court may also take such action as it determines, if any, to respond to the protest.

18.3 Objections

An objection by a member of the court as to any matter and for any reason must be raised during the court's deliberations but prior to a vote on that matter. Thereafter, the member shall be limited to the provisions for dissent or appeal, except that the member may also follow the provisions of the *B.C.O.* to have the matter reconsidered by the court.

PART 5

SUGGESTED FORMS OF SPECIAL SERVICES

Ordination/Installation of Ministers, Elders
Constitution of a New Church
Marriage Service
Baptismal Service
Dedication of Infants
Deaths and Burials