

# **CONFESSION OF FAITH**

of the

## **Minnesota Baptist Association**

(An Association of Independent, Fundamental Baptist Churches) Brought up to date as of August 4, 1998.

Minnesota Baptists at their Annual Convention at Medicine Lake, Minnesota, August 20 to 26, 1951, appointed a committee consisting of George J. Carlson, chairman, Richard V. Clearwaters and William H. Murk, to consider the necessity of issuing a statement of Bible-believing Baptist faith and message. Facing the misunderstanding existing between confessions of faith and creeds and their own need of expressing their evangelical faith as they saw it in the Scriptures, the committee examined and revised the New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1859) and The Baptist Faith and Message of the Southern Baptist Convention (1925) adding additional articles growing out of present needs.

Since clarification and understanding of the difference between creeds and confessions of faith is an important one to present for future Bible-believing Baptists, the following is quoted from an article appearing in the Watchman Examiner (September 28, 1944) by George J. Carlson:

It has been the genius of the Baptist fellowship through the years to return to the Scriptures and square its belief with the contents of the Scriptures. Each time the squaring process has occurred there has come into existence, either locally or on a wider scale, a Confession of Faith that has crystallized the belief of those who had thus banded together. Every evidence is shown by history that before the twentieth century there was a unanimity of what Baptists basically believed. Most of all the Confessions of Faith up to that time were brought about to defend the Baptist positions against other denominations. History shows that Baptist groups in the past were persecuted for their beliefs by both Protestants and Catholics. It is only in recent years that Baptists have had to formulate Confessions of Faith to distinguish between Baptists within Baptist ranks. Current Baptist literature shows (American Baptist Publication Society) that since 1922 there has been a positive attempt to preface all statements of Baptist principles with a word of explanation temporizing these beliefs.

It is often said that Baptists have no creeds. Historically and practically this is very true. A creed in an historical sense is a dogma that was formulated after long deliberation by theological and Church councils, and possesses complete ecumenical sanction. A Confession of Faith, on the other hand, may be expressed belief of many Christians, drawn up and drafted by one individual, or several, and given wide, but unsubscribed acceptance. In this sense, Baptists have had a Confession of Faith or Confessions of Faith up to at least the turn of the century. The essential difference between the two is that a creed is static, while a Confession of Faith need not be. The Baptist method is always contemporaneous and its very method demands that there shall be frequent, new, purposeful redefinings of its historic position. Church history shows that every time a crisis arises and men return to the Bible and to believer's baptism, Baptists are born. As long as Baptists continue in this method they will avoid the decadence of the past and will avoid the destructive changes of modernity, which is a tree struggling from too much vegetation and too little root.

A careful study of the history of our Baptist movement will evidence the truth that Baptists of the past did not believe that a Confession of Faith was incompatible with religious liberty. Baptists from the sixteenth century until now (excluding the Munster Kingdom, and those of like character, who were not really Baptists) have never been guilty of persecution and violence toward those who did not believe as they. Yet, almost every one of these Baptist groups had specific tenets of faith, and excluded by the use of the ban or otherwise those who held contrary views within their own fellowship.

Philip Schaff, in "The Creeds of Christendom," says that Baptists lower the authority of general creeds to mere Confessions of Faith prevailing at the time in the denomination. These confessions were prepared at first for apologetic and defense purposes. A review of the past discloses the following significant list of Confessions of Faith:

- 1524** - At Waldshut, the Confession prepared by Balthasar Hubmaier.
- 1526** - At Augsburg, an Anabaptist Confession.
- 1527** - At Augsburg, a Confession prepared by a General Synod.
- 1532** - Bernhard Rothmann's Thesis and Confession of Faith.
- 1533** - Jon Matthys' "Twenty-one Articles."
- 1644** - Confession of Seven Churches in London (this was published during the sitting of the Westminster Assembly, from whose deliberations Baptist divines were excluded).
- 1647** - Schleithem Confession of Faith.
- 1656** - The Confession of Somerset (drawn up by sixteen churches in Somerset, England).
- 1689** - The Confession of 1689 by one hundred churches in London.
- 1742** - The Philadelphia Confession. The Philadelphia Association adopted a Confession based on the London Confession of 1689. The Philadelphia Association was organized in 1707 and became the first permanent association among Baptists in America.
- 1767** - The Warren Association in Rhode Island adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.
- 1800** - Most of the Associations in New England up to this time adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. This Confession of Faith was then considered standard for the Baptists.
- 1824** - Central Association of Vermont adopted a concise statement of belief.
- 1825** - The Eastern Maine Association published a Declaration of Faith of seventeen articles.
- 1833** - The New Hampshire Confession of Faith.

The occasion of its preparation (stated in the preface to the Declaration) was this: "It was ascertained by the Convention that many churches were in want of copies of their Declaration of Faith for the use of their members, and were about to print new editions. It was thought, therefore, that if one were issued under the sanction of the Convention, it might be executed on a better plan, furnished at a lower price and be blessed by the great Head of the Church to promote still more that delightful harmony of sentiment and ardent brotherly love which now exists in so eminent a degree among our churches."

The New Hampshire Confession received a wide distribution. The churches were able from this time on to obtain this standard Confession of Baptist Belief. There was no call for other associations to draft Confessions of Faith after publication and adoption of this Confession by the New Hampshire State Convention, for local churches everywhere began to make this the norm of their belief.

**1853** - J. Newton Brown, the editorial secretary of the American Baptist Publication Society, issued a revision of the Confession and the New Hampshire Confession has been published ever since by this Society.

**1859** - New Hampshire confession reported to have a wide acceptance and that churches formed after this date used this Confession as their organizing basis.

In the year of 1900 the Southern Baptist Convention faced the problem of what Baptists believe. Accordingly the Sunday School Board of that Convention published in that year a book entitled "Baptists, Why and Why Not?" The preface of the book is self-explanatory:

"A denominational work, presenting a comparative study of denominational creeds. The writers, twenty-five in number, have set forth with fairness and ability, what is believed by other denominations, and have put over against this by way of contrast, the things which distinguish the belief of our people from the belief of others."

"All denominations accept the Bible, but the questions arise: What do you believe about the Bible? What do you believe the Bible teaches? These questions are basal and have their answer, so far as Baptists are concerned, in the Declaration of Faith printed at the close of this volume, and of most general use among Baptist Churches of this country."

The Southern Baptist Convention in 1924 appointed a committee consisting of E. Y. Mullins, Chairman; S. M. Brown, W. J. McGlothlin, E. C. Dargan, and L. R. Scarborough to consider the advisability of issuing a statement of the Baptist Faith and Message. That Committee presented at the meeting of the Convention in 1925 the New Hampshire Confession of Faith revised at certain points and with some additional articles growing out of present needs.

We quote the statement in full as to Confessions of Faith:

**(1)** That they constitute a consensus of opinion of some Baptist body, large or small, for the general instruction and guidance of our own people and others concerning those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us. They are not intended to add anything to the simple conditions of salvation revealed in the New Testament, viz., repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

**(2)** That we do not regard them as complete statements of our faith, having any quality of finality or infallibility. As in the past so in the future, Baptists should hold themselves free to revise their statements of faith as may seem to them wise and expedient at any time.

**(3)** That any group of Baptists, large or small, have the inherent right to draw up for themselves and publish to the world a confession of their faith whenever they may think it advisable to do so.

**(4)** That the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Confessions are only guides in interpretation, having no authority over the conscience.

**(5)** That they are statements of religious convictions, drawn from the Scriptures, and are not to be used to hamper freedom of thought or investigation in other realms of life."

## CONCERNING THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written inerrant in its original languages by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction;<sup>1</sup> that it has God for its Author, salvation for its end,<sup>2</sup> and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter;<sup>3</sup> that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us;<sup>4</sup> and therefore is and shall remain to the end of the age, the true center of Christian union,<sup>5</sup> and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.<sup>6</sup>

### Places in the Bible Where Taught

<sup>1</sup>**II Tim. 3:16,17.** (Also II Peter 1:21; II Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16; 3:21; John 10:35; Luke 16:29, 31; Ps. 119:111; Rom. 3:1,2).

<sup>2</sup>**II Tim. 3:15.** (Also I Peter 1:10-12; Acts 11:14; Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:16; John 5:38,39).

<sup>3</sup>**Prov. 30:5,6.** (Also John 17:17; Rev. 22:18,19; Rom. 3:4).

<sup>4</sup>**Rom. 2:12.** (Also I Cor. 4:3,4; Luke 10:10-16; 12:47,48).

<sup>5</sup>**Phil. 3:16.** (Also Eph. 4:3-6; Phil. 2:1,2; I Cor. 1:10; I Peter 4:11).

<sup>6</sup>**I John 4:1.** (Also Acts 17:11; I John 4:6; Jude 3; Eph. 6:17; Ps. 119:59,60; Phil. 1:9-11).

## CONCERNING THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent, perfect Spirit and personal Being, the Creator, Preserver, and Supreme Ruler of the universe,<sup>1</sup> inexpressibly glorious in holiness<sup>2</sup> and all other perfections, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love;<sup>3</sup> that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;<sup>4</sup> equal in every divine perfection,<sup>5</sup> and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.<sup>6</sup>

### Places in the Bible Where Taught

<sup>1</sup>I John 4:24. (Also Heb. 3:4; Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:10).

<sup>2</sup>Exod. 15:11 (Isa. 6:3; I Peter 1:15,16; Rev. 4:6-8).

<sup>3</sup>Mark 12:30. (Matt. 10:37; Jer. 2:12,13).

<sup>4</sup>Matt. 28:19. (I Cor. 12:4-6; I John 5:7).

<sup>5</sup>John 10:30. (John 5:17; 14:23; 17:5,10; Acts 5:3,4; I Cor. 2:10,11; Phil. 2:5,6).

<sup>6</sup>Eph. 2:18. (Rev. 1:4,5; comp. ch. 2:7).

## CONCERNING THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created by the special act of God, as recorded in Genesis. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27).<sup>1</sup> "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7).<sup>2</sup>

We believe that the days of creation in Genesis chapter 1 were solar, that is, twenty-four hour days.<sup>3</sup>

We believe that man was created in a state of holiness, under the law of his Maker,<sup>4</sup> but through the temptation of Satan he voluntarily transgressed and fell from this holy state;<sup>5</sup> in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners,<sup>6</sup> not by constraint, but choice,<sup>7</sup> being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin,<sup>8</sup> without defense or excuse.<sup>9</sup>

### Places in the Bible Where Taught

<sup>1</sup>Gen. 1:27.

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 2:7.

<sup>3</sup>Ex. 20:9,11. (Ex. 31:17)

<sup>4</sup>Gen. 1:27. (Eccl. 7:29; Acts 17:26-29; Gen. 2:16,17).

<sup>5</sup>Gen. 3:6-24. (Rom. 5:12).

<sup>6</sup>Rom. 5:19. (John 3:6; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:15-19; 8:7).

<sup>7</sup>Isa. 53:6. (Gen. 6:12; Rom. 3:9-18).

<sup>8</sup>Eph. 2:13. (Rom. 1:32; 2:1-16; Gal. 3:10; Matt. 20:15).

<sup>9</sup>Ezek. 18:19,20. (Gal. 3:22).

## CONCERNING THE WAY OF SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace;<sup>1</sup> through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God;<sup>2</sup> Who pre-existed,<sup>3</sup> and Who by the appointment of the Father, and Who by the Holy Spirit was conceived, and born of the virgin Mary, freely took upon Him man's nature, yet without sin;<sup>4</sup> honored the divine law by His perfect obedience,<sup>5</sup> and after a miraculous ministry, by His death made a full atonement for our sins;<sup>6</sup> that having risen from the dead bodily He is now enthroned in heaven<sup>7</sup> to reign in eternal sovereignty and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and all-sufficient Savior and Lord.<sup>8</sup>

### Places in the Bible Where Taught

<sup>1</sup>Eph. 2:8. (Matt. 18:11; I John 4:10; I Cor. 3:5,7; Acts 15:11).

<sup>2</sup>John 3:16. (John 1:1-14; Heb. 4:14; 12:24).

<sup>3</sup>John 8:58.

<sup>4</sup>Phil. 2:6,7. (Heb. 2:9,14; II Cor. 5:21).

<sup>5</sup>Heb. 5:8,9. (Phil. 2:8; Gal. 4:4,5; Rom. 3:21).

<sup>6</sup>Isa. 53:4,5. (Matt. 20:28; Rom. 4:25; 3:21-26; I John 4:10; 2:2; I Cor. 15:1-3; Heb. 9:13-15).

<sup>7</sup>Heb. 1:8. (Heb. 1:3; 8:1; Col. 3:1-4).

<sup>8</sup>Heb. 7:25. (Heb. 7:26; Ps. 89:19; Ps. 34).

## **CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION**

We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ<sup>1</sup> secures to such as believe in Him is Justification;<sup>2</sup> that Justification includes the pardon of sin,<sup>3</sup> and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness;<sup>4</sup> that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood;<sup>5</sup> by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God;<sup>6</sup> that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.<sup>7</sup>

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>John 1:16. (Eph. 3:8).

<sup>2</sup>Acts 13:39. (Isa. 53:11,12; Rom. 8:1).

<sup>3</sup>Rom. 5:9. (Zech. 13:1; Matt. 9:6; Acts 10:43).

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 5:17. (Titus 3:5-7; I Peter 3:7; I John 2:25; Rom. 5:21).

<sup>5</sup>Rom. 4:4,5. (Rom. 5:21; 6:23; Phil. 3:7-9).

<sup>6</sup>Rom. 5:19. (Rom. 3:24-26; 4:23-25; I John 2:12).

<sup>7</sup>Rom. 5:1,2. (I Cor. 1:30,31; Matt. 6:33; I Tim. 4:8).

## **CONCERNING THE FREENESS OF SALVATION**

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel;<sup>1</sup> that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith;<sup>2</sup> and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel;<sup>3</sup> which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.<sup>4</sup>

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>Isa. 55:1. (Luke 14:17).

<sup>2</sup>Rom. 16:25,26. (Mark 1:15; Rom. 1:15-17).

<sup>3</sup>John 5:40. (Matt. 23:37; Rom. 9:32; Prov. 1:24; Acts 13:46).

<sup>4</sup>John 3:19. (Matt. 11:20; Luke 19:27; II Thess. 1:8).

## **CONCERNING GRACE IN REGENERATION**

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated or born again;<sup>1</sup> that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the soul;<sup>2</sup> that it is effected, in a manner above our comprehension, by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth,<sup>3</sup> so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel;<sup>4</sup> and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.<sup>5</sup>

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>John 3:3. (John 3:6,7; I Cor. 2:14; Rev. 14:3; 21:27).

<sup>2</sup>II Cor. 5:17. (Ezek. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 2:28,29; 5:5; I John 4:7).

<sup>3</sup>John 3:8. (I Cor. 1:30; Phil. 2:13).

<sup>4</sup>I Peter 1:22-25. (Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:9-11).

<sup>5</sup>Eph. 5:9. (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 2:14-21; Matt. 3:8-10; 7:20; I John 5:4,18).

## CONCERNING REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God;<sup>1</sup> whereby, being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ,<sup>2</sup> we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy;<sup>3</sup> at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and all-sufficient Savior.<sup>4</sup>

### Places in the Bible Where Taught

<sup>1</sup>Mark 1:15.

<sup>2</sup>John 16:8. (Acts 16:30,31).

<sup>3</sup>Luke 18:13. (Luke 15:18-21; James 4:7-10; II Cor. 7:11; Rom.10:12,13; Ps. 51).

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 10:9-11. (Acts 3:22,23; Heb. 4:14; Ps. 2:6; Heb. 1:8; 7:25; II Tim. 1:12).

## CONCERNING GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners;<sup>1</sup> that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends as well as embraces all the means in connection with the end;<sup>2</sup> that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable;<sup>3</sup> that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of His free mercy;<sup>4</sup> that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree;<sup>5</sup> that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel;<sup>6</sup> that it is the foundation of Christian assurance;<sup>7</sup> and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.<sup>8</sup>

### Places in the Bible Where Taught

<sup>1</sup>II Tim. 1:8,9. (Eph. 1:3-14; I Peter 1:1,2; Rom. 11:5,6; John 15:16; I John 4:19).

<sup>2</sup>II Thess. 2:13,14. (Acts 13:48; John 10:16; Matt. 20:16; Acts 15:14).

<sup>3</sup>Exod. 33:18,19. (Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:23,24; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 11:28,29; James 1:17,18; II Tim. 1:9; Rom. 11:32-36).

<sup>4</sup>I Cor. 4:7. (I Cor. 1:26-31; Rom. 3:27; 4:16; Col. 3:12; I Cor.15:10; I Peter 5:10; I Thess. 2:12,13; I Peter 2:9; Luke 18:7).

<sup>5</sup>II Tim. 2:10. (John 6:37-40; II Peter 1:10).

<sup>6</sup>I Thess. 1:4-10.

<sup>7</sup>Rom. 8:28-31. (Isa. 42:16; Rom. 11:29).

<sup>8</sup>II Peter 1:10,11. (Phil. 3:12; Heb. 6:11).

## **CONCERNING SANCTIFICATION**

We believe that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness;<sup>1</sup> that it is a progressive work;<sup>2</sup> that it is begun in regeneration;<sup>3</sup> and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers throughout their earthly life, by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.<sup>4</sup>

We believe that the gift of tongues was among those temporary spiritual gifts bestowed by God upon His churches in apostolic times. When its purpose was completed, the gift ceased. It was never the required outward demonstration of either the baptism or the filling of the Spirit<sup>5</sup>.

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>I Thess. 4:3. (II Cor. 7:1; 13:9; Eph. 1:4).

<sup>2</sup>Prov. 4:18. (Heb. 6:1; II Peter 1:5-8; Phil. 3:12-16).

<sup>3</sup>I John 2:29. (John 3:6; Phil. 1:9-11).

<sup>4</sup>Phil 2:12,13. (Eph. 4:11,12,30; 6:18; I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18; II Cor. 13:5; Luke 9:23; 11:35; Matt. 26:41).

<sup>5</sup>Acts 2:8. (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:18ff; I Cor. 12:30; I Cor. 13:8).

## **CONCERNING SEPARATION**

We believe that separation is a doctrine as well as a practice and that the separation principle runs through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. We believe that true spiritual fellowship is the result of a common faith and practice. We believe there are various aspects of Biblical separation.

Personal separation demands the separation of the believer from the world and sin in order to serve God. This involves a separation from acts of sin, the world system, the unbeliever, heretics, and false teachers.<sup>1</sup> This also involves the separation of the believer from an erring brother. We believe that we must separate from those who continue in disobedience to the Word of God.<sup>2</sup> We also believe the Scriptures admonish every believer not to love the world or the things in the world, but rather to flee evil desires, avoid every kind of evil and refrain from questionable practices which destroy one's testimony, offend one's brother and fail to glorify God.<sup>3</sup>

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>I Jn. 2:15-17. (Josh. 24:15; Eph. 5:15-18; II Cor. 6:14 - 7:1; Tit. 3:10; II Jn. 9 - 11; I Jn. 4:1).

<sup>2</sup>II Thess. 3:6,14,15. (Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5:11).

<sup>3</sup>I Cor. 6:18-20. (I Jn. 2:15-17; Rom. 14:19-21; I Cor. 8:9-13; 10:23; II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:7-11; I Thess. 4:7).

Ecclesiastical separation demands the separation of believers from apostasy. We believe the Scriptures teach that believers should be separated from ecclesiastical compromise. This doctrine is based upon God's eternal principle of division between truth and error and His specific command to be separate from unbelievers and disobedient brethren. We believe ecumenical evangelism (or other programs) which involves apostates violates the principles taught in God's Word.

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

II Cor. 6:14-17. (II Jn. 9-11; II Tim. 4:2-4; Mt. 18:15-17; Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5:7-13; Gal. 1:8-9; I Tim. 6:3-6; II Tim. 2:16-19; Tit. 3:10-11).

## CONCERNING THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

We believe that all real believers endure unto the end;<sup>1</sup> that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors;<sup>2</sup> that a special Providence watches over their welfare;<sup>3</sup> and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.<sup>4</sup>

### Places in the Bible Where Taught

<sup>1</sup>John 8:31. (I John 2:27,28; 3:9; 5:18).

<sup>2</sup>I John 2:19. (John 13:18; Matt. 13:20,21; John 6:66-69).

<sup>3</sup>Rom 8:28. (Matt. 6:30-33; Jer. 32:40; Ps. 121:2; 91:11,12).

<sup>4</sup>Phil. 1:6. (Phil. 2:12,13; Jude 24,25; Heb. 1:14; 13:5; I John 4:4).

## CONCERNING THE HARMONY OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government;<sup>1</sup> that it is holy, just and good;<sup>2</sup> and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin;<sup>3</sup> to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.<sup>4</sup>

### Places in the Bible Where Taught

<sup>1</sup>Rom. 3:31. (Matt. 5:17; Luke 16:17; Rom. 3:20; 4:15).

<sup>2</sup>Rom. 7:12. (Rom. 7:7,14,22; Gal. 3:21; Ps. 119).

<sup>3</sup>Rom. 8:7,8. (Josh. 24:19; Jer. 13:23; John 6:44; 5:44).

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 8:2-4. (Rom. 10:4; Heb. 8:10; 12:14; Jude 20,21).

## CONCERNING A GOSPEL CHURCH

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers,<sup>1</sup> associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel;<sup>2</sup> observing the ordinances of Christ;<sup>3</sup> governed by His laws;<sup>4</sup> and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word;<sup>5</sup> seeking to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth;<sup>6</sup> that its only Scriptural officers are Bishops, or Pastors, and Deacons,<sup>7</sup> whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the epistles to Timothy and Titus.

### Places in the Bible Where Taught

<sup>1</sup>I Cor. 1:1-13. (Matt. 18:17; Acts 5:11; 8:1; 11:21-23; I Cor. 4:17; 14:23; III John 9).

<sup>2</sup>Acts 2:41,42. (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 5:12,13).

<sup>3</sup>I Cor. 11:2. (II Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16:17-20; I Cor. 4:17).

<sup>4</sup>Matt. 28:20. (John 14:15; 15:12; I John 4:21; John 14:21; I Thess. 4:2; II John 6; Gal. 6:2; all the Epistles).

<sup>5</sup>Eph. 4:7

<sup>6</sup>Matt. 28:20.

<sup>7</sup>Phil. 1:1. (Acts 14:23; 15:22; I Tim. 3; Titus 1).

## **CONCERNING A GOSPEL CHURCH IN ITS INDEPENDENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

We believe that the local visible church of Christ is a voluntary and independent autonomous group of baptized believers;<sup>1</sup> that it is a pure democracy, which organically can join nothing;<sup>2</sup> and that it has the power and right within itself to confess its own faith in accordance with the New Testament;<sup>3</sup> and that each congregation recognizes its own democratic self-containing government as its highest authority for carrying out the will of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>Matt. 18:15-18. (Matt. 23:8-10; I Peter 5:3).

<sup>2</sup>Rom. 12:16. (I Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3; Phil. 1:27).

<sup>3</sup>I Tim. 3:15. (Jude 3; Rev. 2 and 3).

<sup>4</sup>Matt. 18:15-18. (Acts 1:23-26; 6:3-5; I Cor. 5:4,5,13).

## **CONCERNING BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

We believe that both Christian baptism and the Lord's Supper are each a memorial, a symbol and a prophecy.<sup>1</sup> We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer,<sup>2</sup> in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;<sup>3</sup> to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life;<sup>4</sup> that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper;<sup>5</sup> in which the members of the Church, by the sacred use of bread and fruit of the vine to commemorate together the dying love of Christ;<sup>6</sup> preceded always by solemn self-examination.<sup>7</sup>

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>Rom. 6:3. (Mark 10:38; Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27; I Peter 3:21; Eph. 4:5; I Cor. 12:13; I Cor. 15:12,22).

<sup>2</sup>Acts 8:36-39. (Matt. 3:5,6; John 3:22,23; 4:1,2; Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12; 16:32-34; 18:8).

<sup>3</sup>Matt. 28:19. (Acts 10:47,48; Gal. 3:27,28).

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 6:4. (Col. 2:12; I Peter 3:20,21; Acts 22:16).

<sup>5</sup>Acts 2:41,42. (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts and Epistles).

<sup>6</sup>I Cor. 11:26. (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20).

<sup>7</sup>I Cor. 11:28. (I Cor. 5:1,8; 10:3-32; 11:17-32; John 6:26-71).

## **CONCERNING THE LORD'S DAY**

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, and is a Christian institution;<sup>1</sup> it is to be kept sacred to spiritual purposes,<sup>2</sup> by abstaining from all unnecessary secular labor and sinful recreations,<sup>3</sup> for it commemorates the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead;<sup>4</sup> by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private<sup>5</sup> and public;<sup>6</sup> and by preparation for the rest that remaineth for the people of God.<sup>7</sup>

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>Acts 20:7. (Gen. 2:3; Col. 2:16,17; Mark 2:27; John 20:19; I Cor. 16:1,2).

<sup>2</sup>Exod. 20:8.

<sup>3</sup>Isa. 58:13,14.

<sup>4</sup>Acts 20:7. (Mark 16:9; John 20:19).

<sup>5</sup>Ps. 118:15.

<sup>6</sup>Heb. 10:24,25.

<sup>7</sup>Heb. 4:3-11.

## **CONCERNING CIVIL GOVERNMENT AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society<sup>1</sup> and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed;<sup>2</sup> except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>3</sup> Who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth;<sup>4</sup> and that church and state should be separated, the state owing the church protection and full freedom;<sup>5</sup> no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be preferred above another by the state;<sup>6</sup> the state should not impose taxes for the support of any form of religion; a free church in a free state is the Christian ideal.<sup>7</sup>

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>Rom. 13:1-7. (Deut. 16:18; II Sam. 23:3; Exod. 18:21-23; Jer. 30:21).

<sup>2</sup>Matt 22:21. (Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13; I Tim. 2:1-3).

<sup>3</sup>Acts 5:29. (Dan. 3:15-18; 6:7-10; Acts 4:18-20).

<sup>4</sup>Matt. 23:10. (Ps. 72:11; Ps. 2; Rom. 14:9-13).

<sup>5</sup>I Tim. 2:1,2. (II Peter 2:18-21).

<sup>6</sup>James 4:12.

<sup>7</sup>I Cor. 3:5. (Matt. 22:21; Mark 12:17).

## **CONCERNING THE STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED**

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked;<sup>1</sup> that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His sight;<sup>2</sup> while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse;<sup>3</sup> and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.<sup>4</sup>

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>Mal. 3:18. (Prov. 12:26; Isa. 5:20; Gen. 18:23; Acts 10:34,35; Rom 6:16).

<sup>2</sup>Rom. 1:17. (I John 3:7; Rom. 6:18,22; I Cor. 11:32; Prov. 11:31; I Peter 4:17,18).

<sup>3</sup>I John 5:19. (John 3:36; Isa. 57:21; Ps. 10:4; Isa. 55:6,7).

<sup>4</sup>Prov. 14:32. (John 8:21-24; Luke 12:4,5; 9:23-26; John 12:25,26; Eccl. 3:17; Matt. 7:13,14).

## CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION

We believe the Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus rose from the dead bodily, His grave was emptied of its contents;<sup>1</sup> that He appeared to the disciples after His resurrection in many convincing manifestations;<sup>2</sup> that He now exists in His glorified body at God's right hand;<sup>3</sup> and that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and a resurrection of the wicked, separated in time;<sup>4</sup> that the bodies of the righteous will conform to the glorious spiritual body of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup>

### Places in the Bible Where Taught

<sup>1</sup>Matt. 28:1-8. (I Cor. 15:1-58; II Cor. 5:1-8).

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 28:6. (John 20:9,20; Acts 1:3; 10:39-41).

<sup>3</sup>I Peter 3:22; Heb. 4:14.

<sup>4</sup>John 5:28,29; Acts 24:15.

<sup>5</sup>Phil 3:21.

## CONCERNING THE RETURN OF THE LORD

We believe that the end of the age is approaching;<sup>1</sup> that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His own is pretribulational and premillennial. *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."*<sup>2</sup> *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."*<sup>3</sup> *"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison . . .";*<sup>4</sup> that a solemn separation will then take place;<sup>5</sup> that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy;<sup>6</sup> and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven and hell, on principles of righteousness.<sup>7</sup>

### Places in the Bible Where Taught

<sup>1</sup>I Peter 4:7. (I Cor. 7:29-31; Heb. 1:10,12; Matt. 25:31; 28:20; 13:39-43; I John 2:17; II Peter 3:3-13; Acts 1:11).

<sup>2</sup>I Thess. 4:16-18.

<sup>3</sup>John 5:28,29.

<sup>4</sup>Rev. 20:5-7.

<sup>5</sup>Matt. 13:49. (Matt. 13:37-43; 24:30,31; 25:31-33).

<sup>6</sup>Matt. 25:31-46. (I Cor. 6:9,10; Mark 9:43-48; II Peter 2:9; Jude 7; Phil. 3:19; Rom. 6:23; II Cor. 5:10,11; John 4:36; II Cor. 4:18).

<sup>7</sup>Rom. 3:5,6. (Heb. 6:1,2; I Cor. 4:5; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:2-16; Rev. 20:11,12; I John 2:28; 4:17).

## **CONCERNING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

We believe that Christianity is the religion of enlightenment and intelligence; that in Jesus Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;<sup>1</sup> and that all sound learning is therefore a part of our Christian heritage;<sup>2</sup> that the new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge; that an adequate system of school is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's church; and that the cause of education among New Testament churches is coordinate with the causes of evangelism, missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches.<sup>3</sup>

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>Matt. 28:20. (Col. 2:3).

<sup>2</sup>Deut. 4:1,5,9,13,14. (Deut. 6:1,7-10; Ps. 19:7,8; Prov. 8:1-7; 4:1-10; Neh. 8:1-4).

<sup>3</sup>Matt. 28:20.

## **CONCERNING SOCIAL SERVICE**

We believe that every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ regnant in his own life and in human society;<sup>1</sup> to oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice; to provide for the orphaned, the aged, the helpless, and the sick; to support everything that is good and righteous in industry, government and society as a whole for the benefit of men so that all men may live spiritually and righteously before God;<sup>2</sup> and that all means and methods used in social service for the amelioration of society and the establishment of righteousness among men must finally depend on the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

### **Places in the Bible Where Taught**

<sup>1</sup>Luke 10:25-27. (Ex. 22:10,14).

<sup>2</sup>Lev. 6:2. (Deut. 20:10; 4:42; Deut. 15:2; 27:17; Ps. 101:5).

<sup>3</sup>Heb. 2:15. (Zech. 8:16; Ex. 20:16; James 2:8; Rom. 12:14; Col. 3:12-17).