



HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

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*The Westminster Confession of Faith is Holy Trinity Church's doctrinal statement. Note annotations.

**The Westminster Confession of Faith and The Book of Church Order together comprise HTC's Constitution.

SECTION I

THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH

NOTE ON THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

Holy Trinity Church uses the Westminster Confession of Faith as our doctrinal statement. The lettered footnotes are the Holy Trinity Church Session's annotations, providing further theological clarity to our particular beliefs (these annotations can also be found on page 223).

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THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

CHAPTER I: 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 me^a unexcusable;¹ yet they are 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.^{6b}

^a The vocabulary of the Westminster Confession reflects a historic use of the English language which was appropriate for its time. When statements are made using masculine nouns or pronouns, where the context makes clear the referent is humanity in general, we understand and affirm both males and females to be intended.

^b We believe that the office and function of the Old Testament Prophet and New Testament Apostle no longer continue with the completion of the canon. However, the Holy Spirit continues to manifest himself in believers for the common good through a variety of spiritual gifts (see 1 Corinthians 12-14 and Romans 12:3-5).

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 Testament, which are these:

Of the Old Testament:

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

Of the New Testament:

The Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians I, Corinthians II, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians I, Thessalonians II, to Timothy I, to Timothy II, to Titus, to Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, The Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second, and third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation of John.

All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.⁷

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.⁸

1.4. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, depends 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.⁹

1.5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture.¹⁰ 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 maketh of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, 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.¹¹

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.¹² 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:¹³ 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.¹⁴

1.7. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all:¹⁵ 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.¹⁶

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;¹⁷ so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.¹⁸ 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,¹⁹ therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,²⁰ that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner;²¹ and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.²²

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.²³

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.²⁴

1. Romans 2:14-15; 1:19-20; Psalm 19:1-3; Romans 1:32; 2:1;
2. 1 Corinthians 1:21; 2:13-14;
3. Hebrews 1:1;
4. Proverbs 22:19-21; Luke 1:3-4; Romans 15:4; Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; Isaiah 8:19-20
5. 2 Timothy 3:15; 2 Peter 1:19
6. Hebrews 1:1-2
7. Luke 16:29, 31; Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 22:18-19; 2 Timothy 3:16
8. Luke 24:27, 44; Romans 3:2; 2 Peter 1:21
9. 2 Peter 1:19, 21; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:13
10. 1 Timothy 3:15
11. 1 John 2:20,27; John 16:13-14; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; Isaiah 54:21
12. 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Galatians 1:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:2
13. John 6:45; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12
14. 1 Corinthians 11:13-14; 14:26, 40
15. Peter 3:16
16. Psalm 119:105, 130
17. Matthew 5:18
18. Isaiah 8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39, 46
19. John 5:39
20. 1 Corinthians 14:6, 9, 11-12, 24, 27-28
21. Colossians 3:16
22. Romans 15:4
23. 2 Peter 1:20-21; Acts 15:15-16
24. Matthew 22:29, 31; Ephesians 2:20; Acts 28:25

CHAPTER II: 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,c}; 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

2.2. God hath all life,²⁵ glory,²⁶ goodness,²⁷ blessedness,²⁸ in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He hath made,²⁹ nor deriving any glory from them,³⁰ 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;³¹ and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleases.³² In His sight all things are open and manifest,³³ His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature,³⁴ so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain.³⁵ He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands.³⁶ To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or

^c We interpret "...without...passions..." to intimate that God is not subject to capricious, unpredictable, or whimsical emotions as are we. God is in an eternal and unchangeable state of bliss, joy and contentment, neither suffering, nor in pain or want due to contingencies within his creation.

obedience He is pleased to require of them.³⁷

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 Spirit.³⁸ The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father;³⁹ the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.⁴⁰

1. Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4,6
2. 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Jeremiah 10:10
3. Job 11:7-9; 26:14
4. John 4:24
5. 1 Timothy 1:17
6. Deuteronomy 4:15-16; John 4:24; Luke 24:39
7. Acts 14:11, 15
8. James 1:17; Malachi 3:6
9. 1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23-24
10. Psalm 90:2; 1 Timothy 1:17
11. Psalm 145:3
12. Genesis 17:1; Revelation 4:8
13. Romans 16:27
14. Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8
15. Psalm 115:3
16. Exodus 3:14
17. Ephesians 1:11
18. Proverbs 16:4; Romans 11:36
19. 1 John 4:8,16
20. Exodus 34:6-7
21. Hebrews 11:6
22. Nehemiah 9:32-33
23. Psalm 5:5-6
24. Nahum 1:2-3; Exodus 34:7
25. John 5:26
26. Acts 7:2
27. Psalm 119:68
28. 1 Timothy 6:15; Romans 9:5
29. Acts 17:24-25
30. Job 22:2-3
31. Romans 11:36
32. Revelation 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:15; Daniel 4:25, 35
33. Hebrews 4:13

34. Romans 11:33-34; Psalm 147:5
35. Acts 15:18; Ezekiel 11:5
36. Psalm 145:17; Romans 7:12
37. Revelation 5:12-14
38. John 5:7; Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 8:14
39. John 1:14, 18
40. John 15:26; Galatians 4:6

CHAPTER III: 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

3.2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions;⁴ yet He hath not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.⁵

3.3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels⁶ are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.⁷

3.4. These angels and men, thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.⁸

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,⁹ 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;¹⁰ and all to the praise of His glorious grace.¹¹

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.¹² Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ,¹³ are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified,¹⁴ and kept by His power, through faith, unto salvation.¹⁵ Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.¹⁶

3.7. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extends or withholds mercy, as He pleases, 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.¹⁷

3.8. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care,¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God;²⁰ and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.²¹

1. Ephesians 1:11; Romans 11:33; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9:15, 18

2. James 1:13, 17; 1 John 1:5

3. Acts 2:23; Matthew 17:12; Acts 4:27-28; John 19:11; Proverbs 16:33

4. Acts 15:18; 1 Samuel 23:11-12; Matthew 11:21, 23

5. Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18

6. Timothy 5:21; Matthew 25:41

7. Romans 9:22-23; Ephesians 1:5-6; Proverbs 16:4

8. 2 Timothy 2:19; John 13:18

9. Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11; Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9

10. Romans 9:11, 13, 16; Ephesians 1:4, 9
11. Ephesians 1:6, 12
12. 1 Peter 1:2; Ephesians 1:4-5; 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13
13. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10; Titus 2:14
14. Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13
15. 1 Peter 1:5
16. John 17:9; Romans 8:28; John 6:64-65; 10:26; 8:47; 1 John 2:19
17. Matthew 11:25-26; Romans 9:17-18, 21-22; 2 Timothy 2:19-20; Jude 4; 1 Peter 2:8
18. Romans 9:20; 11:33; Deuteronomy 24:29
19. 2 Peter 1:10
20. Ephesians 1:6; Romans 11:33
21. Romans 11:5, 6, 20; 2 Peter 1:10; Romans 8:33; Luke 10:20

CHAPTER IV: OF CREATION

4.1. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,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;^d and all very good.³

4.2. After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female,⁴ with reasonable and immortal souls,⁵ endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image;⁶ having the law of God written in their hearts,⁷ and power to fulfil it;⁸ and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change.⁹ Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil;¹⁰ which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.¹¹

1. Hebrews 1:2; John 1:2-3; Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4

2. Romans 1:20; Jeremiah 10:12; Psalm 104:24; 33:5-6

3. Genesis 1; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16; Acts 17:24

4. Genesis 1:27

5. Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:43; Matthew 10:28

6. Genesis 1:26; Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24

^d Although our confession explicitly states that God created in six days, we interpret Genesis chapter 1 as primarily a theological statement, rather than a modern scientific account of creation. Genesis chapter 1 does recount the actual historic events in the creation of all that exists, including time itself, using Hebraic literary devices of symmetry and parallelism which correspond to the progression of the historical creative acts of God. This said, we do not believe that it is necessarily beyond the power or will of God to have created in the space of six 24-hour days.

7. Romans 2:14-15
8. Ecclesiastes 7:29
9. Genesis 3:6; Ecclesiastes 7:29
10. Genesis 2:17; 3:8-11, 23
11. Genesis 1:26, 28

CHAPTER V: 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

5.2. Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly;⁸ yet, by the same providence, He orders them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.⁹

5.3. God, in His ordinary providence, maketh use of means,¹⁰ yet is free to work without,¹¹ above,¹² and against them,¹³ at His pleasure.

5.4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extends itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men;¹⁴ and that not by a bare permission,¹⁵ but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding,¹⁶ and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends;¹⁷ yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceeds 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.¹⁸

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;¹⁹ 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.²⁰

5.6. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous Judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden,²¹ from them He not only withholdeth His grace whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts;²² but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had,²³ and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption maketh occasion of sin;²⁴ and, withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan,²⁵ whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God uses for the softening of others.²⁶

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.²⁷

1. Hebrews 1:3

2. Daniel 4:34-35; Psalm 135:6; Acts 17:25-26, 28; Job 38: 39: 40; 41

3. Matthew 10:29-31

4. Proverbs 15:3; Psalm 104:24; 145:17

5. Acts 15:18; Psalm 94:8-11

6. Ephesians 1:11; Psalm 33:10-11

7. Isaiah 63:14; Ephesians 3:10; Romans 9:17; Genesis 45:7; Psalm 145:7

8. Acts 2:23

9. Genesis 8:22; Jeremiah 31:35; Exodus 21:13; Deuteronomy 19:5; 1 Kings 22:28, 34; Isaiah 10:6-7

10. Acts 27:31, 44; Isaiah 55:10-11; Hosea 2:21-22

11. Hosea 1:7; Matthew 4:4; Job 34:10

12. Romans 4:19-21
13. 2 Kings 6:6; Daniel 3:27
14. Romans 11:32-34; 2 Samuel 24:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1; 1 Kings 22:22-23; 1 Chronicles 10:4, 13-14; 2 Samuel 16:10; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28
15. Acts 14:16
16. Psalm 76:10; 2 Kings 19:28
17. Genesis 50:20; Isaiah 10:6-7, 12
18. James 1:13-14, 17; 1 John 2:16; Psalm 50:21
19. 2 Chronicles 32:25-26, 31; 2 Samuel 24:1
20. 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Psalm 73; Psalm 77:1, 10, 12; Mark 14:66-72; John 21:15-17
21. Romans 1:24, 26, 28; 11:7-8
22. Deuteronomy 29:4
23. Matthew 13:12; 25:29
24. Deuteronomy 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12-13
25. Psalm 81:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12
26. Exodus 7:3; 8:15, 32; 2 Corinthians 2:15-16; Isaiah 8:14; 1 Peter 2:7-8; Isaiah 6:9-10; Acts 28:26-27
27. 1 Timothy 4:10; Amos 9:8-9; Romans 8:28; Isaiah 43:3-5, 14

CHAPTER VI: OF THE FALL OF MAN, OF SIN, AND THE PUNISHMENT THEREOF

6.1. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptations 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

6.2. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion, with God,³ and so became dead in sin,⁴ and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.⁵

6.3. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed;⁶ and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.⁷

6.4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good,⁸ and wholly inclined to all evil,⁹ do proceed all actual transgressions.^{10,e}

6.5. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth

^e The doctrine of total depravity explained here is not to be understood that every person is as thoroughly depraved as possible, nor that we indulge in every form of sinful activity, nor that we are unable to admire beauty or perform virtuous actions, nor that we have lost all ability to discriminate between good and evil, but rather, that sin pervades every aspect of our lives, including, body, soul, mind, will and affections.

However, every person has the potential of ever-increasing sinfulness and the ability to commit the most grievous evils. We are thus totally incapable of expressing any spiritual goodness toward God and we are guilty as such.

remain in those that are regenerated;¹¹ and although it be, through Christ, pardoned, and mortified; yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.¹²

6.6. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto,¹³ doth in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner,¹⁴ whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God,¹⁵ and curse of the law,¹⁶ and so made subject to death,¹⁷ with all miseries spiritual,¹⁸ temporal,¹⁹ and eternal.²⁰

1. Genesis 3:13; 2 Corinthians 11:3
2. Romans 11:32
3. Genesis 3:6-8; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 3:23
4. Genesis 2:17; Ephesians 2:1
5. Titus 1:15; Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18
6. Genesis 1:27-28; 2:16-17; Acts 17:6; Romans 5:12, 15-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45, 49
7. Psalm 51:5; Genesis 6:3; Job 14:4; 15:14
8. Romans 5:6; 8:7; 7:18; Colossians 1:21
9. Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Romans 3:10-12
10. James 1:14-15; Ephesians 2:2-3; Matthew 15:19
11. 1 John 1:8, 10; Romans 7:14, 17-18, 23; James 3:2; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20
12. Romans 7:5-8, 25; Galatians 5:17
13. 1 John 3:4
14. Romans 2:15; 3:9, 19
15. Ephesians 2:3
16. Galatians 3:10
17. Romans 6:23
18. Ephesians 4:18
19. Romans 8:20; Lamentations 3:39
20. Matthew 25:41; 2 Thessalonians 1:9

CHAPTER VII: 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

7.2. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works,² wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity,³ upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.⁴

7.3. Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second,⁵ commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved,⁶ and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.⁷

7.4. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in 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.⁸

7.5. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the Gospel:⁹ 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;¹⁰ 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,¹¹ by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament.¹²

7.6. Under the Gospel, when Christ, the substance,¹³ 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:¹⁴ 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,¹⁵ to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles;¹⁶ and is called the New Testament.¹⁷ There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.¹⁸

1. Isaiah 40:13-17; Job 9:32-33; 1 Samuel 2:25; Psalm 113:5-6; 100:2-3; Job 22:2-3; 35:7-8; Luke 17:10; Acts 17:24-25
2. Galatians 3:12
3. Romans 10:5; 5:12-20
4. Genesis 2:17; Galatians 3:10
5. Galatians 3:21; Romans 8:3; 3:20-21; Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 42:6
6. Mark 16:15-16; John 3:16; Romans 5:6,9; Galatians 3:11
7. Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 6:44-45
8. Hebrews 9:15-17; 7:22; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25
9. 2 Corinthians 3:6-9
10. Hebrews 8-10; Romans 4:11; Colossians 2:11-12; 1 Corinthians 5:7
11. 1 Corinthians 10:1-4; Hebrews 11:13; John 8:56
12. Galatians 3:7-9, 14
13. Colossians 2:17
14. Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25
15. Hebrews 12:22-27; Jeremiah 31:33-34
16. Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 2:15-19
17. Luke 22:20
18. Galatians 3:14, 16; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:21-23, 30; Psalm 32:1; Romans 4:3, 6, 16-17, 23-24; Hebrews 13:8

CHAPTER VIII: 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

8.2. The Son of God, the second person of 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,¹⁰ with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin;¹¹ being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance.¹² 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.¹³ Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.¹⁴

8.3. The Lord Jesus, in His human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, above measure,¹⁵ having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;¹⁶ in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell;¹⁷ to the end that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth,¹⁸ He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety.¹⁹ Which office He took not unto Himself, but was thereunto called by His Father,²⁰ who put all power and judgment into His hand, and gave Him commandment to execute the same.²¹

8.4. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake;²² which that He might discharge, He was made under the law,²³ and did perfectly fulfill it;²⁴ endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul,²⁵ and most painful sufferings in His body;²⁶ was crucified, and died,²⁷ was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption.²⁸ On the third day He arose from the dead,²⁹ with the same body in which He suffered,³⁰ with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father,³¹ making intercession,³² and shall return, to judge men and angels, at the end of the world.³³

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;³⁴ and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for those whom the Father hath given unto Him.³⁵

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.³⁶

8.7. Christ, in the work of mediation, acts according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself;³⁷ 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.³⁸

8.8. To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same;³⁹ making intercession for them,⁴⁰ and revealing unto them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation;⁴¹ effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by His word and Spirit;⁴² 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.⁴³

1. Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 1:19-20; John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:5
2. Acts 3:22
3. Hebrews 5:5-6
4. Psalm 2:6; Luke 1:33
5. Ephesians 5:23
6. Hebrews 1:2
7. Acts 17:31
8. John 17:6; Psalm 22:30; Isaiah 53:10
9. 1 Timothy 2:6; Isaiah 55:4-5; 1 Corinthians 1:30
10. John 1:1, 14; 1 John 5:20; Philippians 2:6; Galatians 4:4
11. Hebrews 2:14, 16-17; 4:15
12. Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Galatians 4:4
13. Luke 1:35; Colossians 2:9; Romans 9:5; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 Timothy 3:16
14. Romans 1:3-4; 1 Timothy 2:5
15. Psalm 45:7; John 3:34
16. Colossians 2:3
17. Colossians 1:19
18. Hebrews 7:26; John 1:14
19. Acts 10:38; Hebrews 12:24; 7:22
20. Hebrews 5:4-5
21. John 5:22, 27; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36
22. Psalm 40:7-8; Hebrews 10:5-10; John 10:18; Philippians 2:8
23. Galatians 4:4
24. Matthew 3:15; 5:17
25. Matthew 26:37-38; Luke 22:44; Matthew 27:46
26. Matthew 26-27
27. Philippians 2:8
28. Acts 2:23-24, 27; 13:37; Romans 6:9

29. 1 Corinthians 15:3-5
30. John 20:25, 27
31. Mark 16:19
32. Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25
33. Romans 14:9-10; Acts 1:11; 10:42; Matthew 13:40-42; Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4
34. Romans 5:19; Hebrews 9:14, 16; 10:14; Ephesians 5:2; Romans 3:25-26
35. Daniel 9:24, 26; Colossians 1:19-20; Ephesians 1:11, 14; John 17:2; Hebrews 9:12
36. Galatians 4:4-5; Genesis 3:15; Revelation 13:8; Hebrews 13:8
37. Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 3:18
38. Acts 20:28; John 3:13; 1 John 3:16
39. John 6:37, 39; 10:15-16
40. John 2:1-2; Romans 8:34
41. John 15:13, 15; Ephesians 1:7-9; John 17:6
42. John 14:16; Hebrews 12:2; 2 Corinthians 4:13; Romans 8:9, 14; 15:18-19; John 17:17
43. Psalm 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25-26; Malachi 4:2-3; Colossians 2:15

CHAPTER IX: OF FREE WILL

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

9.2. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom, and power to will and to do that which was good and well pleasing to God;² but yet, mutably, so that he might fall from it.³

9.3. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation:⁴ so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good,⁵ and dead in sin,⁶ is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.⁷

9.4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin;⁸ and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good;⁹ yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, or only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.¹⁰

9.5. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone in the state of glory only.¹¹

1. Matthew 17:12; James 1:14; Deuteronomy 30:19

2. Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 1:26

3. Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6

4. Romans 5:6; 8:7; John 15:5

5. Romans 3:10, 12

6. Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:13

7. John 6:44, 65; Ephesians 2:2-5; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Titus 3:3-5

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

9. Philippians 2:13; Romans 6:18, 22

10. Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:15, 18-19, 21, 23

11. Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 12:23; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24

CHAPTER X: OF EFFECTUAL CALLING

10.1. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed 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

10.2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man,⁹ who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit,¹⁰ he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.¹¹

10.3. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ, through the Spirit,¹² who works when, and where, and how He pleases:¹³ so also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.¹⁴

10.4. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word,¹⁵ and may have some common operations of the Spirit,¹⁶ yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved:¹⁷ much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the laws of that religion they do profess.¹⁸ And to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested.¹⁹

1. Romans 8:30; 11:7; Ephesians 1:10-11
2. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Corinthians 3:3, 6
3. Romans 8:2; Ephesians 2:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:9-10
4. Acts 26:18; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 12; Ephesians 1:17-18
5. Ezekiel 36:26
6. Ezekiel 11:19; Philippians 2:13; Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:27
7. Ephesians 1:19; John 6:44-45
8. Song 1:4; Psalm 110:3; John 6:37; Romans 6:16-18
9. 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:4-5; Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9; Romans 9:11
10. 1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 8:7; Ephesians 2:5
11. John 6:37; Ezekiel 36:27; John 5:25
12. Luke 18:15-16; Acts 2:38-39; John 3:3, 5; 1 John 5:12; Romans 8:9
13. John 3:8
14. 1 John 5:12; Acts 4:12
15. Matthew 22:14
16. Matthew 7:22; 13:20-21; Hebrews 6:4-5
17. John 6:64-66; 8:24
18. Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Ephesians 2:12; John 4:22; 17:3
19. 2 John 9-11; 1 Corinthians 16:22; Galatians 1:6-8

CHAPTER XI: OF JUSTIFICATION

11.1. Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifies;¹ not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for any thing 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

11.2. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification:⁴ yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but works by love.⁵

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.⁶ Yet, in as much as He was given by the Father for them;⁷ and His obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead;⁸ and both, freely, not for any thing in them; their justification is only of free grace;⁹ that both the exact justice, and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.¹⁰

11.4. God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect,¹¹ and Christ did, in the fullness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification:¹² nevertheless, they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them.¹³

11.5. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified;¹⁴ and although they can never fall from the state of justification,¹⁵ 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.¹⁶

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.¹⁷

1. Romans 8:30; 3:24
2. Romans 4:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21; Romans 3:22, 24-25, 27-28; Titus 3:5, 7; Ephesians 1:7; Jeremiah 23:6;
3. 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; Romans 5:17-19
4. Acts 10:44; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9; Acts 13:38-39; Ephesians 2:7-8
5. John 1:12; Romans 3:28; Romans 5:1
6. James 2:17, 22, 26; Galatians 5:6
7. Romans 5:8-10, 19; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 10:10, 14; Daniel 9:24, 26; Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12
8. Romans 8:32
9. 2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 3:17; Ephesians 5:2
10. Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7
11. Romans 3:26; Ephesians 2:7
12. Galatians 3:8; 1 Peter 1:2, 19-20; Romans 8:30
13. Galatians 4:4; 1 Timothy 2:6; Romans 4:25
14. Colossians 1:21-22; Galatians 2:16; Titus 3:4-7
15. Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:7, 9; 1 John 2:1-2
16. Luke 22:32; John 10:28; Hebrews 10:14
17. Psalm 89:31-33; Psalm 51:7-12; Psalm 32:5; Matthew 26:75; 1 Corinthians 11:30, 32; Luke 1:20
18. Galatians 3:9, 13-14; Romans 4:22-424; Hebrews 13:8

CHAPTER XII: OF ADOPTION

12.1. All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, 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. Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:4-5

2. Romans 8:17; John 1:12

3. Jeremiah 14:9; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12

4. Romans 8:15

5. Ephesians 3:12; Romans 5:2

6. Galatians 4:6

7. Psalm 103:13

8. Proverbs 14:26

1. Matthew 6:30, 32; 1 Peter 5:7

2. Hebrews 12:6

3. Lamentations 3:31

4. Ephesians 4:30

5. Hebrews 6:12

6. 1 Peter 1:3-4; Hebrews 1:14

CHAPTER XIII: OF SANCTIFICATION

13.1. They, who are once 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

13.2. This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man;⁷ yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part;⁸ whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.⁹

13.3. In which war, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail;¹⁰ yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome;¹¹ and so, the saints grow in grace,¹² perfecting holiness in the fear of God.¹³

¹ 1 Corinthians 6:11; Acts 20:32; Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:5-6

² John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

³ Romans 6:6, 14

⁴ Galatians 5:24; Romans 8:13

⁵ Colossians 1:11; Ephesians 3:16-19

⁶ 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14

⁷ 1 Thessalonians 5:23

⁸ 1 John 1:10; Romans 7:18, 23; Philippians 3:12

⁹ Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11

¹⁰ Romans 7:23

¹¹ Romans 6:14; 1 John 5:4; Ephesians 4:15-16

¹² 2 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 3:18

¹³ 2 Corinthians 7:1

CHAPTER XIV: 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

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;⁵ and acts differently upon that which each particular passage thereof contains; yielding obedience to the commands,⁶ trembling at the threatenings,⁷ and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come.⁸ 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.⁹

14.3. This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong;¹⁰ may be often and many ways assailed, and weakened, but gets the victory;¹¹ growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance, through Christ,¹² who is both the author and finisher of our faith.¹³

1. Hebrews 10:39

2. 2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 1:17-19, 2:8

3. Romans 10:14, 17

4. 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:32; Romans 4:11; Luke 17:5; Romans 1:16-17

5. John 4:42; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:10; Acts 24:14

6. Romans 16:26

7. Isaiah 66:2

8. Hebrews 11:13; 1 Timothy 4:8

9. John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Galatians 2:20; Acts 15:11

10. Hebrews 5:13-14; Romans 4:19-20; Matthew 6:30; 8:10

11. Luke 22:31-32; Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4-5

12. Hebrews 6:11-12; 10:22

13. Hebrews 12:2

CHAPTER XV: 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

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 grieveth for, and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God,³ purposing and endeavoring to walk with Him in all the ways of His commandments.⁴

15.3. Although repentance is not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof,⁵ which is the act of God's free grace in Christ,⁶ yet it is of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.⁷

15.4. As there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation;⁸ so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.⁹

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.¹⁰

15.6. As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof;¹¹ upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy;¹² so, he that scandalizeth his brother, or the Church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession, and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended,¹³ who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive

him.¹⁴

1. Zechariah 12:10; Acts 11:18
2. Luke 24:47; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21
3. Ezekiel 18:30-31, 36:31; Isaiah 30:22; Psalm 51:4; Jeremiah 31:18-19; Joel 2:12-13; Amos 5:15; Psalm 119:128; 2 Corinthians 7:11
4. Psalm 119:6, 59, 106; Luke 1:6; 2 Kings 23:25
5. Ezekiel 36:31-32; 16:61-63
6. Hosea 14:2, 4; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7
7. Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30-31
8. Romans 6:23; 5:12; Matthew 12:36
9. Isaiah 55:7; Romans 8:1; Isaiah 1:16, 18
10. Psalm 19:13; Luke 19:8; 1 Timothy 1:13, 15
11. Psalm 51:4-5, 7, 9, 14; 32:5-6
12. Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9
13. James 5:16; Luke 17:3-4; Joshua 7:19; Psalm 51
14. 2 Corinthians 2:8

CHAPTER XVI: 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 pretence of good intention.²

16.2. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith:³ and by them believers manifest their thankfulness,⁴ strengthen their assurance,⁵ edify their brethren,⁶ adorn the profession of the Gospel,⁷ stop the mouths of the adversaries,⁸ and glorify God,⁹ whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto,¹⁰ that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.¹¹

16.3. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ.¹² And that they may be enabled thereunto, beside 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 pleasure¹³ 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.¹⁴

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.¹⁵

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,¹⁶ but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants:¹⁷ and because, as they are good, they proceed from His Spirit,¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

16.6. Notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in Him;²⁰ not as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unreproveable in God's sight;²¹ 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.²²

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 others²³ yet, because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith;²⁴ nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word;²⁵ nor to a right end, the glory of God,²⁶ they are therefore sinful and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God:²⁷ and yet, their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God.²⁸

1. Micah 6:8; Romans 12:2; Hebrews 13:21
2. Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13; 1 Peter 1:18; Romans 10:2; John 16:2; 1 Samuel 15:21-23
3. James 2:18, 22
4. Psalm 116:12-13; 1 Peter 2:9
5. 1 John 2:3, 5; 2 Peter 1:5-10
6. 2 Corinthians 9:2; Matthew 5:16
7. Titus 2:5, 9-12; 1 Timothy 6:1

8. 1 Peter 2:15
9. 1 Peter 2:12; Philippians 1:11; John 15:8
10. Ephesians 2:10
11. Romans 6:22
12. John 15:4-6; Ezekiel 36:26-27
13. Philippians 2:13; 4:13; 2 Corinthians 3:5
14. Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 6:11-12; 2 Peter 1:3, 5, 10-11; Isaiah 64:7; 2 Timothy 1:6; Acts 26:6, 7; Jude 20,21
15. Luke 17:10; Nehemiah 13:22; Job 9:2-3; Galatians 5:17
16. Romans 3:20; Romans 4:2, 4, 6; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; Romans 8:18; Psalm 16:2; Job 22:2-3; 35:7-8
17. Luke 17:10
18. Galatians 5:22-23
19. Isaiah 64:6; Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:15, 18; Psalm 143:2; 130:3
20. Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5; Exodus 28:38; Genesis 4:4; Hebrews 11:4
21. Job 9:20; Psalm 143:2
22. Hebrews 13:20-21; 2 Corinthians 8:12; Hebrews 6:10; Matthew 25:21, 23
23. 2 Kings 10:30-31; 1 Kings 21:27, 29; Philippians 1:15-16, 18
24. Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4, 6
25. 1 Corinthians 13:3; Isaiah 1:12
26. Matthew 6:2, 5, 16
27. Haggai 2:14; Titus 1:15; Amos 5:21-22; Hosea 1:4; Romans 9:16; Titus 3:15
28. Psalm 14:4; 36:3; Job 21:14-15; Matthew 25:41-43, 45; Matthew 23:23

CHAPTER XVII: 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

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;² upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ,³ the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them,⁴ and the nature of the covenant of grace:⁵ from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.⁶

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;⁷ and, for a time, continue therein:⁸ whereby they incur God's displeasure,⁹ and grieve His Holy Spirit,¹⁰ come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts,¹¹ have their hearts hardened,¹² and their consciences wounded;¹³ hurt and scandalize others,¹⁴ and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.¹⁵

^{1.} Philippians 1:6; 2 Peter 1:10; John 10:28-29; 1 John 3:9; 1 Peter 1:5, 9

^{2.} 2 Timothy 2:18-19; Jeremiah 31:3

^{3.} Hebrews 10:10, 14; 13:20-21; 9:12-15; Romans 8:33-39; John 17:11, 24; Luke 22:32; Hebrews 7:25

^{4.} John 14:16-17; 1 John 2:27; 3:9

^{5.} Jeremiah 32:40

^{6.} John 10:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 John 2:19

^{7.} Matthew 26:70, 72, 74

^{8.} Psalm 51:10; 51:14

9. Isaiah 64:5, 7, 9; 2 Samuel 11:27
10. Ephesians 4:30
11. Psalm 51:8, 10, 12; Revelation 2:4; Song 5:2-4, 6
12. Isaiah 63:17; Mark 6:52; 16:14
13. Psalm 32:3-4; 51:8
14. 2 Samuel 12:14
15. Psalm 89:31-32; 1 Corinthians 11:32

CHAPTER XVIII: OF 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 salvation¹ (which hope of theirs shall perish):² yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace,³ and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.⁴

18.2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope;⁵ but an infallible assurance of faith founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation,⁶ the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made,⁷ the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God,⁸ which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.⁹

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 it¹⁰ 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.¹¹ And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure,¹² that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience,¹³ the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness.¹⁴

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:¹⁵ yet are they never so 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;¹⁶ and by the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.¹⁷

1. Job 8:13-14; Micah 3:11; Deuteronomy 29:19; John 8:41
2. Matthew 7:22-23
3. 1 John 2:3; 3:14, 18-19, 21, 24; 5:13
4. Romans 5:2, 5
5. Hebrews 6:11, 19
6. Hebrews 6:17-18
7. 2 Peter 1:4-5, 10-11; 1 John 2:3; 3:14; 2 Corinthians 1:12
8. Romans 8:15-16
9. Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22
10. 1 John 5:13; Isaiah 50:10; Mark 9:24; Psalm 88; Psalm 77:1-12
11. 1 Corinthians 2:12; 1 John 4:13; Hebrews 6:11-12; Ephesians 3:17-19
12. 2 Peter 1:10
13. Romans 5:1-2, 5; 14:17; 15:13; Ephesians 1:3-4; Psalm 4:6-7, 119:32
14. 1 John 2:1-2; Romans 6:1-2; Titus 2:11-12, 14; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Romans 8:1, 12; 1 John 3:2-3; Psalm 130:4; 1 John 1:6-7
15. Song 5:2-3, 6; Psalm 51:8, 12, 14; Ephesians 4:30-31; Psalm 77:1-10; Matthew 26:69-72; Psalm 31:22; Psalm 88; Isaiah 50:10
16. 1 John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Job 13:15; Psalm 73:15; Psalm 51:8, 12; Isaiah 50:10
17. Micah 7:7-9; Jeremiah 32:40; Isaiah 54:7-10; Psalm 22:1; Psalm 88

CHAPTER XIX: 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

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:² the first four commandments containing our duty toward God; and the other six, our duty to man.³

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;⁴ and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties.⁵ All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the New Testament.⁶

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 under any now, further than the general equity thereof may require.⁷

19.5. The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof;⁸ 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.⁹ Neither doth Christ, in the Gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.^{10,f}

^f See footnotes for chapter 21.

19.6. Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned;¹¹ 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;¹² discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts and lives;¹³ so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin,¹⁴ together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of His obedience.¹⁵ It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin:¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof:¹⁸ although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works.¹⁹ So as, a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourages to the one and deters from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law; and not under grace.²⁰

19.7. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it;²¹ 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, requires to be done.²²

1. Genesis 1:26-27; 2:17; Romans 2:14-15; 10:5; 5:12, 19; Galatians 3:10, 12; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Job 28:28
2. James 1:25; 2:8, 10-12; Romans 13:8-9; Deuteronomy 5:32; 10:4; Exodus 34:1
3. Matthew 22:37-40

4. Hebrews 9; 10:1; Galatians 4:1-3; Colossians 2:17
5. 1 Corinthians 5:7; 2 Corinthians 6:17; Jude 23
6. Colossians 2:14, 16-17; Daniel 9:27; Ephesians 2:15-16
7. Exodus 21; 22:1-29; Genesis 49:10; 1 Peter 2:13-14; Matthew 5:17, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 9:8-10
8. Romans 13:8-10; Ephesians 6:2; 1 John 2:3-4, 7-8
9. James 2:10-11
10. Matthew 5:17-19; James 2:8; Romans 3:31
11. Romans 6:14; Galatians 2:16; 3:13, 4:4-5; Acts 13:39; Romans 8:1
12. Romans 7:12, 22, 25; Psalm 119:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 5:14, 16, 18-23
13. Romans 7:7; 3:20
14. James 1:23-25; Romans 7:9, 14, 24
15. Galatians 3:24; Romans 7:24-25; 8:3-4
16. James 2:11; Psalm 119:101, 104, 128
17. Ezra 9:13-14; Psalm 89:30-34
18. Leviticus 26:1-14; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 6:2-3; Psalm 37:11 Matthew 5:5; Psalm 19:11
19. Galatians 2:16; Luke 17:10
20. Romans 6:12, 14; 1 Peter 3:8-12; Psalm 34:12-16; Hebrews 12:28-29
21. Galatians 3:21
22. Ezekiel 36:27; Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 31:33

CHAPTER XX: 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, and 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 child-like 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

20.2. God alone is Lord of the conscience,¹⁰ and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in any thing, contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship.¹¹ So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience:¹² and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.¹³

20.3. They who, upon pretence 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.¹⁴

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 pretence 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.¹⁵ 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,¹⁶ and proceeded against, by the censures of the Church.

1. Titus 2:14; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Galatians 3:13
2. Galatians 1:4; Colossians 1:13; Acts 26:18; Romans 6:14
3. Romans 8:28; Psalm 119:71; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Romans 8:1
4. Romans 5:1-2
5. Romans 8:14-15; 1 John 4:18
6. Galatians 3:9, 14
7. Galatians 4:1-3, 6-7; 5:1; Acts 15:10-11
8. Hebrews 4:14, 16; 10:19-22
9. John 7:38-39; 2 Corinthians 3:13, 17-18
10. James 4:12; Romans 14:4
11. Acts 4:19; 5:29; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Matthew 23:8-10; 2 Corinthians 1:24; Matthew 15:9
12. Colossians 2:20, 22-23; Galatians 1:10; 2:4-5; 5:1
13. Romans 10:17; 14:23; Isaiah 8:20; Acts 17:11; John 4:22; Hosea 5:11; Revelation 13:12, 16-17; Jeremiah 8:9
14. Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16; 2 Peter 2:19; John 8:34; Luke 1:74-75
15. Matthew 12:25; 1 Peter 2:13-14, 16; Romans 13:1-8; Hebrews 13:17
16. Romans 1:32; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 5, 11, 13; 2 John 10-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; Titus 1:10-11, 13; 3:10; Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Revelation 2:2, 14-15, 20; 3:9

CHAPTER XXI: OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, AND THE SABBATH DAY^g

21.1. The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might.¹ But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the 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,h,i}

21.2. Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and to Him alone;³ not to angels, saints, or any other creature:⁴ and, since the fall, not without a Mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.⁵

^g The Confession is “strictly” Sabbatarian in its perspective. However, we affirm the Sabbath “principally”: that a believer is to set aside one day in seven, when their primary duty is to the public and private worship of God.

^h Chapter 21 of the Confession is fundamentally concerned with prescriptive expressions of corporate worship. However, the New Testament teaches that every area of the believer’s life is under the lordship of Christ and therefore is an expression of worship. Biblical worship, therefore, is not limited to formal expressions but is the totality of a life lived in joyful obedience to God’s Word.

ⁱ We do not believe that God has set in Scripture an exhaustive prescriptive statement limiting appropriate means for worship. Rather, the Scriptures provide guidelines, models and principles concerning what is and what is not permissible, beneficial, and edifying in corporate worship

21.3. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship,⁶ is by God required of all men:⁷ and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son,⁸ by the help of His Spirit,⁹ according to His will,¹⁰ with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love and perseverance;¹¹ and, if vocal, in a known tongue.¹²

21.4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful;¹³ and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter:¹⁴ but not for the dead,¹⁵ nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.¹⁶

21.5. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear,¹⁷ the sound preaching¹⁸ and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith and reverence,¹⁹ singing of psalms with grace in the heart;²⁰ as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ, are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God:²¹ beside religious oaths,²² vows,²³ solemn fastings,²⁴ and thanksgivings upon special occasions,²⁵ which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in an holy and religious manner.^{26,j}

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:²⁷ but God is to be worshipped everywhere,²⁸ in spirit and truth,²⁹ as, in private families³⁰ daily,³¹ and in secret, each one by himself;³² so, more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected, or

^j In Colossians chapter 3 verse 16, the Apostle clearly teaches that not only psalms but various hymns and other spiritual songs are acceptable for corporate worship.

forsaken, when God, by His Word or providence, calleth thereunto.³³

21.7. As it is 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:³⁴ which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week: and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week,³⁵ which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day,³⁶ and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.³⁷

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 wordly employments and recreations;³⁸ 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.^{39,k}

1. Romans 1:20; Acts 17:24; Psalm 119:68; Jeremiah 10:7; Psalm 31:23; 18:3; Romans 10:12; Psalm 62:8; Joshua 24:14; Mark 12:33
2. Deuteronomy 12:32; Matthew 15:9; Acts 17:25; Matthew 4:9-10; Deuteronomy 15:1-20; Exodus 20:4-6; Colossians 2:23
3. Matthew 4:10; John 5:23; 2 Corinthians 13:14
4. Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10; Romans 1:25
5. John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Ephesians 2:18; Colossians 3:17
6. Philippians 4:6
7. Psalm 65:6
8. John 14:13-14; 1 Peter 2:5
9. Romans 8:26

^k We believe to prescribe what an individual may or may not do on such a day is a violation of Christian liberty.

10. 1 John 5:14
11. Psalm 47:7; Ecclesiastes 5:1-2; Hebrews 12:28; Genesis 18:27; James 5:16; 1:6-7; Mark 11:24; Matthew 6:12, 14-15; Colossians 4:2; Ephesians 6:18
12. 1 Corinthians 14:14
13. 1 John 5:14
14. 1 Timothy 2:1-2; John 17:20; 2 Samuel 7:29; Ruth 4:12
15. 2 Samuel 12:21-23; Luke 16:25-26; Revelation 14:13
16. 1 John 5:16
17. Acts 15:21; Revelation 1:3
18. 2 Timothy 4:2
19. James 1:22; Acts 10:33; Matthew 13:19; Hebrews 4:2; Isaiah 66:2
20. Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; James 5:13
21. Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29; Acts 2:42
22. Deuteronomy 6:13; Nehemiah 10:29
23. Isaiah 19:21; Ecclesiastes 5:4-5
24. Joel 2:12; Esther 4:16; Matthew 9:15; 1 Corinthians 7:5
25. Psalm 107; Esther 9:22
26. Hebrews 12:28
27. John 4:21
28. Malachi 1:11; 1 Timothy 2:8
29. John 4:23-24
30. Jeremiah 10:25; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Job 1:5; 2 Samuel 6:18, 20; 1 Peter 3:7; Acts 10:2
31. Matthew 6:11
32. Matthew 6:6; Ephesians 6:18
33. Isaiah 56:6, 7; Hebrews 10:25; Proverbs 1:20-21, 24; 8:34; Acts 13:42; Luke 4:16; Acts 2:42
34. Exodus 20:8, 10-11; Isaiah 56:2, 4, 6-7
35. Genesis 2:2-3; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7
36. Revelation 1:10
37. Exodus 20:8, 10 Matthew 5:17-18
38. Exodus 20:8; 16:23, 25-26, 29-30; 31:15-17; Isaiah 58:13; Nehemiah 13:15-19, 21-22
39. Isaiah 58:13; Matthew 12:1-13

CHAPTER XXII: OF LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS

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

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.³ 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.⁴ 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;⁵ so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters, ought to be taken.⁶

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:⁷ neither may any man bind himself by oath to any thing but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform.⁸

22.4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation, or mental reservation.⁹ It cannot oblige to sin; but in any thing not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt.¹⁰ Not is it to be violated, although made to heretics, or infidels.¹¹

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.¹²

22.6. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone:¹³ 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.¹⁴

22.7. No man may vow to do any thing 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.¹⁵ 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.^{16,1}

1. Deuteronomy 10:20
2. Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12; 2 Corinthians 1:23; 2 Chronicles 6:22-23
3. Deuteronomy 6:13
4. Exodus 20:7; Jeremiah 5:7; Matthew 5:34, 37; James 5:12
5. Hebrews 6:16; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Isaiah 65:16
6. 1 Kings 8:31; Nehemiah 13:25; Ezra 10:5
7. Exodus 20:7; Jeremiah 4:2
8. Genesis 24:2-3, 5-6, 8-9
9. Jeremiah 4:2; Psalm 24:4
10. 1 Samuel 25:22, 32-34; Psalm 15:4
11. Ezekiel 17:16, 18-19; Joshua 9:18-19 2 Samuel 21:1
12. Isaiah 19:21; Ecclesiastes 5:4-6; Psalm 61:8; 66:13-14
13. Psalm 76:11; Jeremiah 44:25-26
14. Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Psalm 50:14; Genesis 28:20-22; 1 Samuel 1:11; Psalm 66:13-14; 132:2-5
15. Acts 23:12, 14; Mark 6:26; Numbers 30:5, 8, 12-13
16. Matthew 19:11-12; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Peter 4:2; 1 Corinthians 7:23

¹The Westminster Confession of Faith reflects the social and religious milieu of the 17th century. We find their use of inflammatory language throughout the Confession to be both unfortunate and unnecessary.

CHAPTER XXIII: 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 defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers.¹

23.2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto:² in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth;³ so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion.⁴

23.3. Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments⁵ or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven;⁶ or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith.⁷ Yet, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger.⁸ And, 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 voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief.⁹ It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretense of religion or of infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other

person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.^{10,m}

23.4. It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates,¹¹ to honor their persons,¹² to pay them tribute or other dues,¹³ to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake.¹⁴ Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrates' just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them:¹⁵ from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted,¹⁶ 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 pretence whatsoever.¹⁷

1. Romans 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-14
2. Proverbs 8:15-16; Romans 13:1-2, 4
3. Psalm 2:10-11; 1 Timothy 2:2; Psalm 82:3-4; 2 Samuel 23:3; 1 Peter 2:13
4. Luke 3:14; Romans 13:4; Matthew 8:9, 10; Acts 10:1, 2; Revelation 17:14, 16
5. 2 Chronicles 26:18;
6. Matthew 18:17; Matthew 16:19; 1 Corinthians 12:28-29; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; Romans 10:15; Hebrews 5:4
7. John 18:36; Acts 5:29; Ephesians 4:11-12
8. Isaiah 49:23; Romans 13:1-6
9. Psalm 105:15; Acts 18:14-15
10. Romans 13:4; 1 Timothy 2:2
11. 1 Timothy 2:1-2
12. 1 Peter 2:17

^m We agree in principle with the Confession that the State is not to interfere with religion, but to protect the religious freedom of all faiths, except in cases where religious expressions are a clear violation of human rights, decency and propriety.

13. Romans 13:6-7
14. Romans 13:5; Titus 3:1
15. Peter 2:13-14,16
16. Romans 13:1; 1 Kings 2:35; Acts 25:9-11; 2 Peter 2:1,10-11; Jude 8-11
17. 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:15-17

CHAPTER XXIV: 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

24.2. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife,² for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed;³ and for preventing of uncleanness.⁴

24.3. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent.⁵ Yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord.⁶ 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.⁷

24.4. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden by the Word.⁸ 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.⁹

24.5. Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, gives just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract.¹⁰ In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce and, after the divorce,¹¹ to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.¹²

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 willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church, or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage:¹³ 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.¹⁴

1. Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Proverbs 2:17
2. Genesis 2:18
3. Malachi 2:15
4. 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9
5. Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 4:3; 1 Corinthians 7:36-38; Genesis 24:57-58
6. 1 Corinthians 7:39
7. Genesis 34:14; Exodus 34:16; Deuteronomy 7:3-4; 1 Kings 11:4; Nehemiah 13:25-27; Malachi 2:11-12; 2 Corinthians 6:14
8. Leviticus 18; 1 Corinthians 5:1; Amos 2:7
9. Mark 6:18; Leviticus 18:24-28
10. Matthew 1:18-20
11. Matthew 5:31-32
12. Matthew 19:9; Romans 7:2-3
13. Matthew 19:8-9; 1 Corinthians 7:15; Matthew 19:6
14. Deuteronomy 24:1-4

CHAPTER XXV: 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 fulness of Him that fills all in all.¹

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;² and of their children:³ and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ,⁴ the house and family of God,⁵ out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.⁶

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.⁷

25.4. This catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible.⁸ 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.⁹

25.5. The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error;¹⁰ and some have so degenerated, as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan.¹¹ Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to His will.¹²

25.6. There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ.¹³ Nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof.¹⁴

1. Ephesians 1:10, 22-23; 5:23, 27, 32; Colossians 1:18
2. 1 Corinthians 1:2; 12:12-13; Psalm 2:8; Revelation 7:9; Romans 15:9-12
3. 1 Corinthians 7:14; Acts 2:39; Ezekiel 16:20-21; Romans 11:16; Genesis 3:15; 17:7
4. Matthew 13:47; Isaiah 9:7
5. Ephesians 2:19; 3:15
6. Acts 2:47
7. 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-13; Matthew 28:19-20; Isaiah 59:21
8. Romans 11:3-4; Revelation 12:6, 14
9. Revelation 2-3; 1 Corinthians 5:6-7
10. Corinthians 13:12; Matthew 13:24-30, 47
11. Revelation 18:2; Romans 11:18-22
12. Matthew 16:18; Psalm 72:17; 102:28; Matthew 28:19-20
13. Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22
14. Matthew 23:8-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 8-9; Revelation 13:6

CHAPTER XXVI: 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 grace, 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

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;⁴ 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.⁵

26.3. This communion which the saints have with Christ, doth not make them in any wise 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.⁶ Nor doth their communion one with another, as saints, take away, or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods and possessions.⁷

1. 1 John 1:3; Ephesians 3:16-19; John 1:16; Ephesians 2:5-6; Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:5-6; 2 Timothy 2:12

2. Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 3:21-23; Colossians 2:19

3. 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; Romans 1:11-12, 14; 1 John 3:16-18; Galatians 6:10

4. Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:42, 46; Isaiah 2:3; 1 Corinthians 11:20

5. Acts 2:44-45; 1 John 3:17; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Acts 11:29-30

6. Colossians 1:18-19; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Isaiah 42:8; 1 Timothy 6:15-16; Psalm 45:7; Hebrews 1:8-9

7. Exodus 20:15; Ephesians 4:28; Acts 5:4

CHAPTER XXVII: 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

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.⁶

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:⁷ but upon the work of the Spirit,⁸ and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.⁹

27.4. There are 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.¹⁰

27.5. The sacraments of the Old Testament in regard to the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the new.¹¹

1. Romans 4:11; Genesis 17:7, 10

2. Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23

3. 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:25-26; Galatians 3:27; 3:17

4. Romans 15:8; Exodus 12:48; Genesis 34:14

5. Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 21

6. Genesis 17:10; Matthew 26:27-28; Titus 3:5
7. Romans 2:28-29; 1 Peter 3:21
8. Matthew 3:11; 1 Corinthians 12:13
9. Matthew 26:27-28; Matthew 28:19-20
10. Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:20, 23; 4:1; Hebrews 5:4
11. 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

CHAPTER XXVIII: 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 the 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

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 Spirit, by a minister of the Gospel, lawfully called thereunto.⁹

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.^{10,a}

28.4. Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ,¹¹ but also the infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.^{12,o}

28.5. Although it is a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance,¹³ yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated, or saved, without it:¹⁴ or, that all that are baptized are

^a We believe the mode of Baptism to be irrelevant.

^o We acknowledge that there is sincere disagreement among prayerful Christians with respect to the Bible's teaching on infant baptism. In the interest of Christian liberty, believing parents should decide, after prayer, study of the Scriptures and consultation with the Session, whether to baptize their children.

undoubtedly regenerated.^{15,p}

28.6. The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered;¹⁶ yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited, and conferred, by the Holy Spirit, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongs unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in His appointed time.¹⁷

28.7. The sacrament of Baptism is but once to be administered unto any person.^{18,q}

1. Matthew 28:19
2. Corinthians 12:13
3. Romans 4:11; Colossians 2:11-12
4. Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:5
5. Titus 3:5
6. Mark 1:4
7. Romans 6:3-4
8. Matthew 28:19-20
9. Matthew 3:11; John 1:33; Matthew 28:19-20
10. Hebrews 9:10, 19-22; Acts 2:41; 16:33; Mark 7:4
11. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:37-38
12. Genesis 17:7, 9 Galatians 3:9, 14; Colossians 2:11-12 ; Acts 2:38, 39; Romans 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 7:14; Matthew 28:19; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15
13. Luke 7:30; Exodus 4:24-26
14. Romans 4:11; Acts 10:2, 4, 22, 31, 45, 47
15. Acts 8:13, 23
16. John 3:5, 8
17. Galatians 3:27; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 5:25-26; Acts 2:38, 4
18. Titus 3:5

^p We believe baptism to be modeled in the New Testament, instituted by Christ's command and therefore is a necessary part of Christian discipleship. Baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration as well as a distinguishing mark setting apart the believer from the world and aligning them with the church. Therefore, baptism ought to be performed in close intimacy with conversion.

^q Individuals who desire to be rebaptized must seek the counsel of the Session.

CHAPTER XXIX: 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

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;² 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:³ 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 His elect.⁴

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;⁵ but to none who are not then present in the congregation.^{6,r}

^r We hold it a duty of the Session to ensure the administration of the Lord's Supper to the infirm and homebound, who are also in good standing within the Church.

29.4. Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other alone;⁷ as likewise, the denial of the cup to the people,⁸ worshipping 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.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;¹⁰ albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.¹¹

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; overthrows the nature of the sacrament, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions; yes, of gross idolatries.¹²

29.7. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements, in this sacrament,¹³ 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.¹⁴

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,¹⁵ or be admitted thereunto.¹⁶

1. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 21; 1 Corinthians 12:13
2. Hebrews 9:22, 25, 26, 28
3. 1 Corinthians 11:24-26; Matthew 26:26-27
4. Hebrews 7:23-24, 27; 10:11-12, 14, 18
5. Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
6. Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20
7. 1 Corinthians 10:6
8. Mark 14:23; 1 Corinthians 11:25-29
9. Matthew 15:9
10. Matthew 26:26-28
11. 1 Corinthians 11:26-28; Matthew 26:29
12. Acts 3:21; 1 Corinthians 11:24-26; Luke 24:6, 39
13. 1 Corinthians 11:28
14. 1 Corinthians 10:16
15. 1 Corinthians 11:27-29; 2 Corinthians 6:14,16
16. 1 Corinthians 5:6-7, 13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; Matthew 7:6

CHAPTER XXX: 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

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.^{2,s}

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.³

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.⁴

1. Isaiah 9:6-7; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Acts 20:17-18; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Matthew 28:18-20

2. Matthew 16:19; 18:17-18; John 20:21-23; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8

^s We understand the Confession's use of the words, "to retain, and remit sins" to be interpreted by the explanation here of admonition and censure.

3. 1 Corinthians 5; 1 Timothy 5:20; Matthew 7:6; 1 Timothy 1:20; 1 Corinthians 11:27-34; Jude 23
4. 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 13; Matthew 18:17; Titus 3:10

CHAPTER XXXI: 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 belongs 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

31.2. It belongs 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.⁴

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.⁵

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 required by the civil magistrate.⁶

1. Acts 15:2, 4, 6
2. Acts 15
3. Acts 15: 22-23, 25
4. Acts 15:15, 19, 24, 27-31; 16:4; Matthew 18:17-20
5. Ephesians 2:20; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 2:5; 2 Corinthians 1:24
6. Luke 12:13-14; John 18:36

CHAPTER XXXII: 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 Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledges none.

32.2. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed:⁵ 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.⁶

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.⁷

1. Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36

2. Luke 23:43; Ecclesiastes 12:7

3. Hebrews 12:23; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6, 8; Philippians 1:23; Acts 3:21; Ephesians 4:10

4. Luke 16:23-24; Acts 1:25; Jude 6-7; 1 Peter 3:19

5. 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

6. Job 19:26-27; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44

7. Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:43; Philippians 3:21

CHAPTER XXXIII: 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

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.^{5,†}

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:⁶ 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.⁷

[†] We interpret "everlasting destruction" to mean an eternal, unalterable, conscious suffering of punishment, out of the presence of God forever.

1. Acts 17:31
2. John 5:22,27
3. 1 Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4
4. 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 2:16; 14:10, 12; Matthew 12:36-37
5. Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 2:5-6; 9:22-23; Matthew 25:21; Acts 3:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10
6. 2 Peter 3:11, 14; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-7; Luke 21:27-28; Romans 8:23-25
7. Matthew 24:36, 42-44; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-36; Revelation 22:20

SECTION II

THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER

NOTE ON THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER

Holy Trinity Church is governed by a Constitution, also called the Book of Church Order. It is, in part, based on the PCA Book of Church Order. It is comprised of three separate parts, 1) the Form of Government of Holy Trinity Church, 2) the Rules of Discipline and 3) the Directory for Worship. Each part and each subsequent amendment has been adopted by full vote of the membership of Holy Trinity Church.

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PART I

FORM OF GOVERNMENT FOR HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

CHAPTER 1

The Doctrine of Church Government for Holy Trinity Church

§1-1. The Scriptural form of Church government, which is Elder rule, is comprehended under four heads: 1. The Church; 2. Its members (note: congregation, communing members and members are used interchangeably in this document); 3. Its officers; 4. Its orders.

§1-2. The Church which the Lord Jesus Christ has erected in this world for the gathering and perfecting of the saints is His visible kingdom of grace, and is one and the same in all ages.

§1-3. The members of this visible Church catholic are all those persons in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and promise submission to His laws.

§1-4. The officers of the Church, who serve in publicly recognized roles of household service, are, according to the Scriptures, Elders and Deacons.

§1-5. The ordination of officers is ordinarily by a Session, except in the case of ordination by a Session's evangelist (see 8-8).

§1-6. This Scriptural doctrine of Elder rule is necessary to the perfection of the order of the visible Church, but is not essential to its existence.

CHAPTER 2

The Visible Church Defined

§2-1. The visible Church before the law, under the law, and now under the Gospel, is one and the same and consists of all those who make profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, together with their children.

§2-2. This visible unity of the body of Christ, though obscured, is not destroyed by its division into different denominations of professing Christians; but all of these which maintain the Word and Sacraments in their fundamental integrity are to be recognized as true branches of the Church of Jesus Christ.

§2-3. It is according to Scriptural example that the Church should be divided into many individual churches.

CHAPTER 3

The Nature and Extent of Church Power

§3-1. The power which Christ has committed to His Church vests in the whole body, the Elders and the congregation, constituting it a spiritual commonwealth. This power, as exercised by the people, extends to the choice of those officers whom He has appointed in His Church.

§3-2. Ecclesiastical power, which is wholly spiritual, is twofold. The officers exercise it sometimes severally, as in preaching the Gospel, administering the Sacraments, reproving the erring, visiting the sick, and comforting the afflicted, which is the power of order; and (they exercise it sometimes jointly in a Church Session), after the form of judgment, which is the power of jurisdiction.

§3-3. The sole functions of the Church, as a kingdom and government distinct from the civil commonwealth, are to proclaim, to administer, and to enforce the excellencies of Christ revealed in the Scriptures.

§3-4. The power of the Church is exclusively spiritual; that of the State includes the exercise of force. The constitution of the Church derives from divine revelation; the constitution of the State must be determined by human reason and the course of providential events. The Church has no right to construct or modify a government for the State, and the State has no right to frame a creed or polity for the Church. They are as planets moving in concentric orbits: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21).

§3-5. The Church, with its ordinances and officers, is the agency which Christ has ordained for the edification and government of His people, for the propagation of the faith, and for the evangelization of the world.

§3-6. The exercise of ecclesiastical power has the divine sanction when in conformity with the statutes enacted by Christ, the Lawgiver, and when put forth by officers appointed thereunto in His Word.

CHAPTER 4

Holy Trinity Church as a particular church

§4-1. Holy Trinity Church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their children, associated together for divine worship and godly living, agreeable to the Scriptures, and submitting to the lawful government of Christ's kingdom.

§4-2. Its officers are its Elders and its Deacons.

§4-3. Its jurisdiction, being a joint power, is lodged in the church Session, which consists of its Pastor(s) and its Elders.

§4-4. The ordinances established by Christ, the Head, in His Church are prayer; singing praises; reading; expounding and preaching the Word of God; administering the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; public solemn fasting and thanksgiving; catechizing; making offerings for the relief of the poor and for other pious uses; exercising discipline; the taking of solemn vows; and the ordination to sacred office.

§4-5. When Holy Trinity Church is without Pastor it ought not to forsake assembling together, but should be convened by the Session one day in seven, and at other suitable times, for prayer, praise, the presenting and expounding of the Holy Scriptures, and exhortation, or the reading of a sermon of some approved Pastor. In like manner, Christians whose lot is cast in destitute regions ought to meet regularly for the worship of God.

CHAPTER 5

The Organization of a Particular Church planted by Holy Trinity Church

A. Mission Churches

§5-1. A mission church may be properly described in the same manner as the particular church is described in paragraph 4-1. It is distinguished from Holy Trinity Church in that it has no permanent governing body, and thus must be governed or supervised by others. However, its goal is to mature and be organized as a particular church as soon as this can be done decently and in good order.

§5-2. Ordinarily, the responsibility for initiation and oversight of a mission church lies with the Session of Holy Trinity Church.

§5-3. The mission church, because of its transitional condition, requires a temporary system of government. Depending on the circumstances and at its own discretion, the Session of Holy Trinity Church may provide for such government in one of several ways:

- (1) Appoint an Evangelist as prescribed in paragraph 8-6.
- (2) The Session of Holy Trinity Church may arrange a mother-daughter relationship with a mission church. The Session may then serve as the temporary governing body of the mission church.
- (3) Appoint a commission to serve as a temporary Session of the mission church.

§5-4. At the discretion of the temporary governing body, members may be received into the mission church as prescribed in Chapter 11.

§5-5. Mission churches and their members shall have the right to the privilege of discipline from the Session of Holy Trinity Church.

§5-6. Mission churches shall maintain a roll of communicant and noncommunicant members.

§5-7. It is the intention of Holy Trinity Church that mission churches enjoy the same status as particular churches in relation to civil government.

B. The Organization of a Particular Church

§5-8. A mission church shall be organized into a particular church only by the authority of the Session of Holy Trinity Church. The Session may proceed with the organization directly, or through an especially appointed commission, or through an evangelist to whom the Session has entrusted the power to organize churches. In the organization of a church, whatever be the way in which the matter originated, the procedure shall be as follows:

(1) The Session of Holy Trinity Church shall receive and approve a petition subscribed to by those persons seeking to be organized into a particular church, appointing a time and date for a service of organization.

(2) At the service of organization these persons shall in the next place be required to enter into covenant, by answering the following question affirmatively, with up-lifted hand:

"Do you, in reliance on God for strength, solemnly promise and covenant that you will walk together as an organized church, on the confession and order of Holy Trinity Church,

and that you will be zealous and faithful in maintaining the purity and peace of the whole body?"

Congregation responds: "We do."

(3) The presiding Pastor shall then say:

"I now pronounce and declare that you are constituted a church according to the Word of God. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

(4) Action shall be taken to secure, as soon as practicable, the regular administration of the Word and Sacraments.

§5-9. The following procedures shall be used in nominating and training Elders prior to the organization and the election of a Session:

(1) All senior men of the mission church (unless they decline) shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office of Elder by the organizing commission or the evangelist.

(2) These men shall be evaluated by the organizing commission or the evangelist according to the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Attention shall be paid to their Christian character, submission to the Word of God, willingness to assume the office of Elder, and adoption of the Confession of faith and the Constitution of this church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures. The organizing commission or the evangelist shall present a list to the members of the mission church of all who are found to be presently qualified for nomination.

(3) Not less than 30 days prior to the date of election, members of the mission church shall submit, from the list of all those found qualified, nominations of

members for the office of Elder to the Session designated, organizing Commission or evangelist.

(4) The congregation will determine the number of Elders following procedures outlined in §21-4 and §21-5.

(5) Those elected, ordained and installed Elders should meet as soon as is practicable to elect a moderator and a clerk. The moderator may be one of their own number.

§5-10. If deacons are elected follow the procedures of (1) through (5) above for both men and women (cf. 9-3). If deacons are not elected, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the Session.

§5-11. The following procedures may be used in the selection of a Pastor in a newly organized congregation:

(1) Not less than thirty days prior to the date of organization the petitioners shall elect from their own body a Pulpit Nominating Committee. This election shall take place at a meeting of the petitioners announced at least one week in advance. Only those who have made a written commitment to membership in the new church are eligible to vote at this meeting.

(2) The Pulpit Committee may report at the organizational meeting of the congregation, or any subsequent congregational meeting called for that purpose.

(3) If at the organizational meeting a Pastor is called who is a member of the organizing Session, he may be installed at that time by that Session or a Commission authorized by that Session. If the Pastor elect is not a member of the organizing Session, his Call must be confirmed under the provisions of Chapter 18.

CHAPTER 6

Church Members

§6-1. The Session shall establish and oversee the process for becoming a member and shall keep a list of members in good standing. Members of Holy Trinity Church are those who have entered into a solemn covenant with God and His Church by making a public profession of faith in Christ, assenting to the following declarations and promises:

1. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His wrath, and without hope save His sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you place your faith and trust in Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
4. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavour to live as becometh the followers of Christ?
5. Do you promise to support this church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
6. Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the church and promise to study its purity and peace?

The Session shall establish and oversee the process for becoming a member and shall keep a list of members in good standing.

§6-2. The children of communing members are, through the covenant and by right of birth, non-communing members of the Church. Hence they are entitled to baptism, and to the pastoral oversight, instruction and government of the Church, with a view to their embracing Christ and thus possessing personally all benefits of the covenant.

§6-3. All persons baptized or dedicated as infants by Holy Trinity Church are entitled to the watchful care, instruction and government of the Church, even though they are adults and have made no profession of their faith in Christ.

§6-4. Those only who have made a profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized, and having entered in membership, been admitted by the session to the Lord's Table, are entitled to all the rights and privileges of the Church.

CHAPTER 7

Church Officers—General Classification

§7-1. Under the New Testament, our Lord at first collected His people out of different nations, and united them to the household of faith by the ministry of extraordinary officers who received extraordinary gifts of the Spirit and who were agents by whom God completed His revelation to His Church. Such officers and gifts related to new revelation have no successors since God completed His revelation at the conclusion of the Apostolic Age.

§7-2. The ordinary and perpetual classes of household office in the Church are Elders and Deacons. The Elders jointly have the government and spiritual oversight of the Church, including teaching. The office of Deacon is not one of rule, but rather of service both to the physical and spiritual needs of the people and is functionally subordinate to the Elders. In accord with scripture, the office of Elder is open to men only, the office of Deacon to men and women (cf. 9-3).

§7-3. No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein, or receive any official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed in the Scriptures.

CHAPTER 8

Elders and Pastors of Holy Trinity Church

An Elder

§8-1. This office is one of dignity and usefulness. The man who fills it has in Scripture different titles expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed Bishop or Shepherd. As it is his duty to be solemn and prudent, an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and Kingdom of Christ, he is termed Presbyter or Elder. As he expounds the Word, and by sound doctrine both exhorts and convinces the hearer, he is termed Pastor/Teacher. These titles do not indicate different grades of office, but all describe one and the same office.

§8-2. He that fills this office should possess a competency of human learning and be blameless in life, sound in the faith and apt to teach. He should exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel. He should rule his own house well and should have a good report of them that are outside the Church.

§8-3. It belongs to the office of Elder, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. They must exercise government and discipline, and take oversight not only of the spiritual interests of the particular church, but also the Church generally when called there unto. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the Church. They should set a worthy example to the flock entrusted to their care by their zeal to evangelize the unconverted and make disciples. All those duties which private Christians are

bound to discharge by the law of love are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for the people, being careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock.

§8-4. Elders should, moreover, cultivate zealously their own aptness to teach the Bible and should improve every opportunity of doing so.

§8-5. It is often expedient that the Session should appoint and elect godly men and women of the congregation to assist the Elders and Deacons in shepherding and caring for the congregation.

A Pastor

§8-6. As the Lord has given different gifts to men and has committed to some special gifts and callings, the Church is authorized to call and appoint some to labor as Pastor; in such works as may be needful to the Church. When a Pastor is called to such needful work, it shall be incumbent upon him to make full proof of his ministry by disseminating the Gospel for the edification of the Church.

§8-7. When a man is called to labor as a Pastor, it belongs to his order to feed the flock by reading, expounding and preaching the Word of God and to administer the Sacraments. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed Ambassador. As he bears glad tidings of salvation to the ignorant and perishing, he is termed Evangelist. As he stands to proclaim the Gospel, he is termed Preacher. As he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed Steward of the mysteries of God.

§8-8. When a Pastor is appointed to the work of an Evangelist, he is commissioned to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments in foreign countries or the destitute parts of the Church. The Session of Holy Trinity Church may by separate acts from that by which it commissioned him, entrust to the Evangelist for a period of twelve months the power to organize churches, and, until there is a Session in the Church so organized, to instruct, examine, ordain, and install Elders and Deacons therein, and to receive or dismiss members.

§8-9. The Session of Holy Trinity Church may, at its discretion, rescind the call of a Pastor who decides to work with an organization outside the context of a mission or particular church.

CHAPTER 9

A Deacon of Holy Trinity Church

§9-1. The office, or publicly recognized household role, of Deacon is set forth in the Scriptures as ordinary and perpetual in the Church.

The office is one of sympathy and service, after the example of the Lord Jesus; it expresses also the communion of saints, especially in their helping one another in time of need.

§9-2. It is the duty of the Deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation.

In the discharge of their duties the Deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure Deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the Elders.

§9-3. . To the office of Deacon, which is spiritual in nature, shall be chosen men and women of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment in accordance with 1 Tim. 3:8-13. Married couples shall be selected and serve together.

§9-4. The Deacons of Holy Trinity Church shall be organized with reference to the Session to serve the needs of the Congregation. They shall carry out their service to the Congregation in a way that preserves the Session's focus on prayer and word ministry. One Deacon shall be appointed by the Session as treasurer to whom shall be entrusted the funds for the current expenses of the church. Another Deacon shall be appointed by the Session as financial secretary. Deacons shall routinely participate in portions of Session meetings to join in prayer, biblical discussion and to receive particular responsibilities regarding service within God's household. Deacons shall keep individual Elders abreast of their activity which may be recorded, as necessary, by the Session's clerk.

§9-5. It may also be helpful for the Session, when devising plans of church finance, to invite wise and consecrated Deacons to their council.

§9-6. The Deacons may, with much advantage, hold conference from time to time for the discussion of the interests committed to them. Such conferences may include representatives of the church covering areas of smaller or larger extent. Any actions taken by these conferences shall have only an advisory character.

§9-7. It is often expedient that a Session should select and appoint godly men and women of the congregation to assist the Deacons in caring for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or need.

CHAPTER 10

Jurisdiction of the Church Session

§10-1. The Session of Holy Trinity Church is altogether distinct from the civil magistracy, and has no jurisdiction in political or civil affairs. It has no power to inflict temporal pains and penalties, but its authority is in all respects moral and spiritual.

§10-2. The jurisdiction of the Session is only ministerial and declarative, and relates to the doctrines and precepts of Christ, to the order of the Church, and to the exercise of discipline. First, it can make no laws binding the conscience; but may frame symbols of faith, bear testimony against error in doctrine and immorality in practice, within or without the Church, and decide cases of conscience. Secondly, it has power to establish rules for the government, discipline, worship, and extension of the Church, which must be agreeable to the doctrines relating thereto contained in the Scriptures, the circumstantial details only of these matters being left to the Christian prudence and wisdom of the Church officers. Thirdly, it possesses the right to require obedience to the laws of Christ. Hence, it admits those qualified to sealing ordinances and to their respective offices, and it excludes the disobedient and disorderly from such offices or from sacramental privileges. The highest censure to which its authority extends is to cut off the contumacious and impenitent from the congregation of believers. Moreover, it possess all the administrative authority necessary to give effect to these powers.

CHAPTER 11

The Church Session

§11-1. The church Session consists of the Pastor(s) and the Elders. If there are three or more Elders, the Pastor and two Elders shall constitute a quorum. If there are fewer than three Elders, the Pastor and one Elder shall constitute a quorum.

When the church has no Pastor and there are five or more Elders, three shall constitute a quorum; if there are less than five Elders, two shall constitute a quorum. The Session, by a majority vote of its members, may fix its own quorum, provided that it is not smaller than the quorum stated in this paragraph.

§11-2. The Senior Pastor is, by virtue of his office, the Moderator of the Session. In his absence, if any emergency should arise requiring immediate action, the Session may elect one of its members to preside. Should prudential reasons at any time make it advisable for someone other than the Pastor to preside, the Pastor may, with the concurrence of the Session, invite an Elder from the Session or an outside ordained Pastor of godly character to preside.

§11-3. When Holy Trinity Church is without a Pastor, the Moderator of the Session will be one of its own members elected to preside.

§11-4. An associate Pastor may substitute for the Pastor as moderator of the Session at the discretion of the Pastor and Session.

§11-5. The church Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the church, for which

purpose it has power to inquire into the knowledge, principles, and Christian conduct of the church members under its care; to censure those found delinquent; to receive members into the communion of the church; to remove them for just cause; to grant letters of dismissal to other churches, which, when given to parents, shall always include the names of their non-communing baptized children; to examine, ordain, and install Elders and Deacons on their election by the church, and to require these officers to devote themselves to their work; to examine the records of the proceedings of the Deacons; to approve and adopt the budget; to approve actions of special importance affecting church property, and to call congregational meetings when necessary; to establish and control all special groups in the church, to promote world missions; to promote obedience to the Great Commission in its totality at home and abroad; to order collections for pious uses; to exercise in accordance with the *Directory for Worship*, authority over the time and place of the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, over all other religious services, over the music in the services, and over the uses to which the church building and associated properties may be put; to take the oversight of the singing in the public worship of God; to assemble the people for worship when there is no Pastor and to determine the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the church.

§11-6. The Session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly. Moreover, the Pastor has power to convene the Session when he may judge it requisite; and he shall always convene it when requested to do so by any two of the Elders. When there is no Pastor, it may be convened by two Elders.

§11-7. The Session shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings, including minutes and records of baptisms, of communing members, of non-communing members, and of the deaths and dismissions of church members.

§11-8. Meetings of the Session shall be opened and closed with prayer.

§11-9. The Session has power to receive and issue appeals, complaints, and references brought before it in an orderly manner. It has power to receive under its care candidates for the ministry; to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry; to receive, dismiss, ordain, install, remove and judge Pastors; to review the records of mission churches; to establish the Pastoral relation and to dissolve it at the request of one or both of the parties, or where the interest of religion imperatively demands it; to set apart evangelists to their proper work; to require Pastors to devote themselves diligently to their sacred calling and to censure the delinquent; to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the Church; to devise measures for the enlargement of the Church within its bounds; in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the church under its care.

CHAPTER 12

Ecclesiastical Commissions

§12-1. A commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it by the Session. It shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the Session, which if approved, shall then be entered on its minutes, and regarded and treated as the action of the Session. In the event of complaint or appeal against an action of a commission, such complaint or appeal shall be made to the Session.

§12-2. Every commission appointed by the Session shall consist of at least two Elders, with a majority of a commission's members as Elders. However, should the Session clothe a commission with judicial powers and authority to conduct judicial process, or with power to ordain or install a Pastor, the quorum of such commission shall not be less than three Elders. When the ordination of a Pastor is committed to a commission, the Session itself shall conduct the examination.

Every commission appointed by the Session shall consist of at least two Elders, with a majority of a commission's members as Elders. However, should a Session clothe a commission with judicial powers and authority to conduct judicial process, or with power to ordain or install a Pastor, the quorum of such commission shall not be less than three Elders. When the ordination of a Pastor is committed to a commission, the Session itself shall conduct the examination.

§12-3. The Session may of its own motion commit any judicial case to a commission, and should ordinarily follow this procedure, especially when requested by one or both parties to the case.

A judicial commission of the Session shall consist of not less than five, of whom not less than two shall be Elders. If the commission is larger than ten, 2/3 is the necessary quorum. The commission shall try the case in the manner prescribed by the *Rules of Discipline*; shall submit to the Session a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered, all of which shall be entered on the minutes of the Session if approved and accepted as its action and judgment in the case.

CHAPTER 13

Church Orders—The Doctrine of Vocation

§13-1. Ordinary vocation to office in Holy Trinity Church is the calling of God by the Spirit, through the inward testimony of a good conscience, the manifest approbation of God's people, and the concurring judgment of the Session.

§13-2. The household service to Holy Trinity Church is by officers gifted to represent Christ, and the right of God's people to recognize by election to office those so gifted is inalienable. Therefore no man, can be placed in any office without the election, or at least the consent of the congregation. (Throughout this chapter, the masculine pronoun shall refer to both men and women for Deacons and only to men for Elders.)

§13-3. Upon those whom God calls to bear office in His Church He bestows suitable gifts for the discharge of their various duties. And it is indispensable that, besides possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, every one admitted to an office should be sound in the faith, and his life be according to godliness. Wherefore every candidate for office is to be approved by the Session, evangelist, or commission by which he is to be ordained.

CHAPTER 14

Doctrine of Ordination

§14-1. Those who have been called to office in Holy Trinity Church are to be inducted by the ordination of the Session.

§14-2. Ordination is the authoritative admission of one duly called to an office in the Church of God, accompanied with prayer and the laying on of hands, to which it is proper to add the giving of the right hand of fellowship.

§14-3. As every ecclesiastical office, according to the Scriptures, is a special charge, no man shall be ordained unless it be to the performance of a definite work.

CHAPTER 15

Candidates for the Gospel Ministry

§15-1. A candidate for the ministry is a member of Holy Trinity Church in full communion who, believing himself to be called to preach the Gospel, submits himself to the care and guidance of the Session in his course of study and of practical training to prepare himself for this office.

§15-2. Every applicant for the ministry must put himself under the care of the Session. Every applicant for care shall be a member of the congregation for at least six months before filing his application, except in those cases deemed extraordinary by the Session. Every applicant must file his application with the clerk of the Session at least two months before the meeting of the Session. An applicant for care may not be received under care and examined for ordination at the same meeting of the Session, since he must serve a period of at least one year of pastoral internship prior to ordination (see 18-7). An applicant for pastoral internship is obliged to be under care and may be licensed to preach the Gospel; further, one who is not already under care may be taken under care, be licensed to preach the Gospel, and become an pastoral intern at the same meeting of Session.

§15-3. The applicant shall appear before the Session in person, and shall be examined by the Session on experiential religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry.

If the testimonials and the examination prove satisfactory, the Session shall receive him under its care after the following manner:

The Moderator shall propose to the applicant these questions:

- (1) Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?
- (2) Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Session in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?

If these questions be answered in the affirmative, the Moderator, or someone appointed by him, shall give the candidate a brief charge; and the proceeding shall close with prayer. The name of the applicant is then to be recorded in the Session's roll of candidates for the ministry.

§15-4. It shall be the duty of the Session to show a kindly and sympathetic interest in him, and to give him counsel and guidance in regard to his studies, his practical training, and the institutions of learning he should attend. In no case may a candidate omit from his course of study any of the subjects prescribed in the *Form of Government* as tests for ordination without obtaining the consent of the Session; and where such consent is given the Session shall record the fact and the reasons thereof.

§15-5. For the development of his Christian character, for the service he can render, and for his more effective training, the candidate, when entering on his theological studies, should be authorized and encouraged by the Session to conduct public worship, to expound the Scriptures to the people, and to engage in other forms of Christian work. These forms of service should be rendered under the direction of the Session, and also with the sanction and under the guidance of the candidate's

instructors during the time of his being under their instruction. A candidate should not undertake to serve a church which is without a Pastor as regular supply unless he has been licensed and approved for that supply by the Session.

§15-6. The Session shall require every candidate for the ministry under its care to make a report to it at least once a year; and it shall secure from his instructors an annual report upon his deportment, diligence, and progress in study.

§15-7. The Session may, upon application of the candidate, give a certificate of dismissal to another church. A candidate shall, at his request, be allowed to withdraw from the care of the Session. The Session may also, for sufficient reasons, remove the name of the candidate from its roll of candidates; but in such it shall report its actions and the reasons therefore to the candidate and record their decision in their records.

CHAPTER 16

Licensure and Internship

Licensure

§16-1. To preserve the purity of the preaching of the Gospel, no man is permitted to preach in the pulpit of Holy Trinity Church on a regular basis without proper licensure. An Elder, a candidate for the ministry, a Pastor from some denomination, or some other man may be licensed for the purpose of regularly providing the preaching of the Word upon his giving satisfaction to the Session of his gifts and passing the licensure examination.

Examination for Licensure

§16-2. The examination for licensure shall be as follows:

- A. Give a statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel in written form and/or orally before the Session;
- B. Be tested with a written and/or oral examination by the Session (at the discretion of the Session) for his:
 - 1. Practical knowledge of the English Bible.
 - 2. Basic knowledge of Biblical doctrine as outlined in the Westminster Confession of Faith.
 - 3. Basic knowledge of the government of Holy Trinity Church.
- C. Be examined orally before Session for his views in the areas outlined in Part B.
- D. Provide his written sermon on an assigned passage of Scripture embodying both explanation and application, and present orally his sermon or exhortation before the Session or before a committee of the Session.

The Session shall not omit any of these parts of examination except in extraordinary cases; and whenever the Session shall omit any of these parts, it shall always make a record of the reasons therefore, and of the trial parts omitted.

Questions for Licensure

§16-3. If the Session be satisfied with the trials of the applicant, it shall then proceed to license him in the following manner:

The Moderator shall propose to him the following questions, namely:

- (1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- (2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Constitution of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture?
- (3) Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?
- (4) Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this Session?

§16-4. The applicant having answered these questions in the affirmative, the Moderator shall offer a prayer suitable for the occasion, and shall address the applicant as follows: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which He has given to the Church for its edification, we do license you to preach the Gospel in this Church or wherever God in His providence may call you; and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen."

Record shall be made of the licensure in the following or like form, namely: At _____ the _____ day of _____, the Session of Holy Trinity Church, having received testimonials commending _____, proceeded to submit him to the prescribed examination for licensure, which was met to the approval of the Session. Having satisfactorily answered the questions for licensure, _____ was licensed by the Session to preach the Gospel.

§16-5. The license to preach the Gospel shall expire at the end of four years. The Session may, if it thinks proper, renew it without further examination. The licentiate must apply for renewal prior to expiration. If the license expires, the Clerk shall report the expiration to the Session, and such action shall be recorded in the minutes. The procedures of chapter 16-2 must be followed for re-licensure and such fact shall be recorded in the minutes.

Pastoral Internship

§16-6. The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously made of those who are to be ordained to the ministry of the Word, both concerning their gifts and concerning their ability to rule as Elders, in order that this sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak or unworthy men, and so that Holy Trinity Church may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the gifts of those to whom this sacred office is to be committed. To provide for such a period of trial, a candidate for ordination must serve an internship. This period of internship shall be at least one year in length, and may be longer at the discretion of the Session so as to give sufficient time for the Session to judge the candidate's qualifications and service. The nature of the internship shall be determined by the Session, but it should involve the candidate in full scope of the duties of

any regular ministerial calling approved by the Session. It is to be both a time of practical instruction and testing by the Session, and may be in any work which the Session deems to be a suitable ministry to test the intern's gifts. The intern should be closely supervised by the Session throughout this trial period.

§16-7. An applicant for internship must be a candidate and may be a licentiate. He may, however, become a candidate, and an intern at the same meeting of Session.

Examination for Internship

§16-8. Before the applicant begins his period of internship, he shall give to the Session a written and/or an oral statement (at the discretion of the Session) of his inward call to the ministry of the Word.

§16-9. When an applicant is approved for internship, the Moderator of the Session shall offer a prayer suitable for the occasion, and shall address the applicant as follows: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which He has given to the Church for its edification, we do declare you to be an intern of this Session as a means of testing your gifts for the holy ministry wherever God in His providence may call you; and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen"

Record shall be made of the internship in the following or like form, namely, At _____, the _____ day of _____, the Session of Holy Trinity Church, having received testimonials commending _____, having received him as a candidate for the ministry, has placed him under internship at his request in order to test his gifts for the holy ministry.

§16-10. The Session should require interns to devote themselves diligently to the trial of their gifts; and no one should be ordained to the work of the ministry of the Word until he has demonstrated the ability both to edify and to rule in the Church. Reports on every intern of the Session should be presented annually by the committee of Session charged with the oversight of interns, and these reports shall become a part of the minutes of Session.

§16-11. At the end of the period of time set by the Session for his internship, an intern shall have his internship either approved or disapproved. Even if it is approved, he cannot be ordained without a call to some specific work. If the internship is disapproved, the Session may either extend it for another definite period of time or it may completely rescind his intern status and may revoke his internship. If the intern shall devote himself unnecessarily to such pursuits as interfere with a full trial of his gifts, it shall be the duty of the Session to rescind his intern status, and to record its reasons therefor in the minutes of Session.

§16-12. An intern, who, during his internship, is to serve a congregation in the capacity of the minister of the Word must be called by the congregation in the same way that a regular Pastor is called. A congregation may later call such a man as its Pastor. This call must be approved by the Session prior to the time of ordination. In the event a congregation does not desire to call such a man as its Pastor as determined by a congregational vote, notice should be given as early as possible.

Restrictions

§16-13. The intern may be asked by the moderator of the Session temporarily to chair the meeting of the Session. In such cases the moderator shall supervise this activity

and may overrule the intern or re-assume the chair at will. The intern is not a member of the Session and may not vote in the meetings unless he has previously been ordained an Elder and elected to the Session by the congregation. Normally, he shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Session and Diaconate when he has been called to work out his internship by the congregation. He may serve on committees of the church he serves.

§16-14. Where circumstances warrant, the Session may approve previous experience which is equivalent to internship. This equivalency shall be decided by a three-fourths vote of Session at any of its regular meetings. Such equivalent experience shall be decided only after the Session's internship committee has determined and reported that the candidate has met the following requirements:

- a) He has had at least one year of experience in comparable ministry;
- b) He has satisfactorily performed the full scope of ministerial duties;
- c) He has the manifest approbation of God's people in a local church as having the requisite gifts for the Pastoral ministry.

General Internship

§16-15 A general internship is for testing of spiritual gifts, and specific instruction and experience in Christian service. Every applicant for a general internship shall be a member or associate member of the congregation except in those cases deemed extraordinary by the Session. Each applicant must file an application with the clerk of the Session.

Upon the acceptance of an application for internship, a ministry-training plan shall be established under the supervision of the Session and include:

- 1) An area of specific ministry in involvement
- 2) A suitable range of Biblical instruction
- 3) An appropriate course of reading
- 4) A length of service not less than three months.

CHAPTER 17

The Election of Pastors

§17-1. Before a candidate, or licentiate, can be ordained to the office of the ministry, he must receive a call to a definite work. Ordinarily the call must come from a church. If the call comes from another source, the Session shall always make a record of the reasons why it considers the work to be a valid Christian ministry.

A proper call must be written and in the hands of the prospective Pastor prior to the congregational vote in his candidacy. It must include financial arrangements (such as salary, vacation, insurance, retirement, etc.) between those calling and the one called, and assurance that the definite work will afford the liberty to proclaim and practice fully and freely the whole counsel of God, as contained in the Scriptures.

§17-2. Holy Trinity Church should be under the oversight of a Pastor, and when the church has no Pastor it should seek to secure one without delay. Holy Trinity Church shall proceed to elect a Pastor in the following manner: The Session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pulpit committee which may be composed of at least one Elder as well as members from the congregation at large, or the Session itself, as designated by the congregation (see Chapter 22).

The Session shall order a congregational meeting to convene at the regular place of worship. Public notice of the time, place, and purpose of this meeting shall be given at least one week prior to the time of the meeting.

§17-3. The Session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order. All communing members in

good and regular standing, but no others, are entitled to vote.

§17-4. Method of voting: The voters being convened, and prayer for divine guidance having been offered, the Moderator shall put the question: "Are you ready to proceed to the election of a Pastor?" If they declare themselves ready, the Moderator shall call for nominations, or the election may proceed by ballot without nominations. In every case a majority of all the voters present shall be required to elect.

§17-5. On the election of a Pastor, if it appears that a large minority of the voters are averse to the candidate who has received a majority of votes, and cannot be induced to concur in the call, the Moderator shall endeavor to dissuade the majority from prosecuting it further; but if the electors be nearly or quite unanimous, or if the majority shall insist upon their right to call a Pastor, the Moderator shall proceed to draw a call in due form, and to have it subscribed by them, certifying at the same time in writing the number of those who do not concur in the call, and any facts of importance, all of which proceedings shall be laid before the Session, together with the call.

§17-6. Form of call: The terms of the call shall be approved by the Session in the following or like form:

Holy Trinity Church , being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of, _____and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call you to undertake the Pastoral office in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support,

encouragement and obedience in the Lord. That you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of \$...a year in regular monthly payments, and other benefits, such as, retirement, insurance, vacations, moving expenses etc., during the time of your being and continuing the regular Pastor of this church.

In testimony whereof we have respectively subscribed our names this _____day of _____, AD.

Attest: I, having moderated the congregational meeting which extended a call to _____ for his ministerial services, do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the *Book of Church Order*, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

CHAPTER 18

The Ordination and Installation of Pastors

§18-1. When a pastoral intern has completed his internship to the satisfaction of the Session, and has accepted a call, the Session shall take immediate steps for his ordination.

§18-2. A pastoral intern applying for ordination shall be required to present an endorsement from a theological study program approved by the Session. He shall also present satisfactory testimonials as to the completion and approval of his internship in the practice of the ministry. Every candidate for ordination shall ordinarily have met the requirements of the Session's approved curriculum. Ordinarily, the intern shall have been examined in most of the following trials when he was licensed. If the Session previously approved all parts of the licensure examination, it need not reexamine the intern in those areas at this time. If there were areas of weakness, which the Session noted, or if any member of the Session desires to do so, the intern may be examined on particular points again. Additionally, the pastoral intern shall be examined on any parts required for ordination, which were not covered in his examination for licensure. In all cases, he should be asked to indicate whether he has changed his previous views concerning any points of doctrine.

Trials for ordination shall consist of a careful examination as to his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in I Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1), as to the extent of his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages, the English Bible, theology, the Sacraments, and Church History. The Session may accept

a Seminary degree which includes study in the original languages in lieu of an oral examination in the original languages. He shall prepare a thesis on some theological topic assigned by the Session. The candidate shall prepare an exegesis on an assigned portion of Scripture, requiring the use of the necessary tools of exegesis. He shall further be required to preach a sermon before the Session. The Session shall not omit any of these parts of trial for ordination except in extraordinary cases, and then only with three-fourths approval of the Session. Whenever the Session shall omit any of these parts, it shall always make a record of the reasons for such omissions and of the trial parts omitted. The Session being fully satisfied of his qualifications for the sacred office, shall appoint a day for his ordination, which ought, if practicable, to be in that church of which he is to be the Pastor.

§18-3. The day appointed for the ordination having come, and the congregation being convened, a sermon suitable for the occasion shall be preached by a person appointed or invited by the Session. The Session member appointed to preside shall afterwards briefly recite from the pulpit the proceedings of the Session preparatory to the ordination; he shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance, and endeavor to impress the audience with a proper sense of the solemnity of the transaction.

Questions for Ordination

Then, addressing himself to the candidate, he shall propose to him the following questions:

- (1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- (2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* of this Church, as containing the system of

doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will on your own initiative, make known to the Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?

(3) Do you approve of the form of government and discipline practiced in this church?

(4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His Son?

(6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(7) Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a minister of the Gospel, whether personal or relational, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make you overseer?

(8) Are you now willing to take the charge of this church, agreeable to your declaration when accepting their call? And do you, relying upon God for strength, promise to discharge to it the duties of a Pastor?

Questions to Congregation

§18-4 The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the presiding Pastor shall propose to the church the following questions:

(1) Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive (Pastor name here), whom you have called to be your Pastor?

(2) Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?

(3) Do you promise to encourage him in his labors, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?

(4) Do you engage to continue to him while he is your Pastor that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and to furnish him with whatever you may see needful for the honor of religion and for his comfort among you?

§18-5. The people having answered these questions in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall kneel, and the presiding Pastor shall, with prayer and the laying on of hands of the Session, according to the apostolic example, solemnly set him apart to the holy office of the Gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise from his knees; and the Pastor who presides shall first, followed by all members of the Session, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this effect: "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this ministry with us." The presiding Pastor shall then say: "I now pronounce and declare that (Pastor name here) has been regularly elected, ordained, and installed Pastor of this congregation, agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the *Constitution* of Holy Trinity Church; and that as such he is entitled to all support, encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

After which the Pastor presiding, or some other Elder appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge to the Pastor and to the congregation, to persevere in the discharge of their reciprocal duties, and then after prayer and the singing of a psalm, or hymn, the congregation shall be dismissed with the benediction. The Session shall duly record its proceedings.

§18-6. After the installation, the heads of families of the congregation then present, or at least the Elders and Deacons, should come forward to their Pastor, and give him their right hand, in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.

Questions for Installation

§18-7. In the installation of an ordained Pastor, the following questions are to be substituted for those addressed to a candidate for ordination, namely:

- (1) Are you now willing to take charge of this congregation as their Pastor, agreeable to your declaration in accepting its call?
- (2) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that, in taking upon you this charge, you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of the Church?
- (3) Do you solemnly promise that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of a Pastor to this congregation, and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a minister of the Gospel of Christ, agreeable to your ordination engagements?

Questions to Congregation

§18-8. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the presiding Pastor shall propose to the church the following questions:

- (1) Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive (Pastor name here) whom you have called to be your Pastor?
- (2) Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?
- (3) Do you promise to encourage him in his labors, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?
- (4) Do you engage to continue to him while he is your Pastor that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and to furnish him with whatever you may see needful for the honor of religion and for his comfort among you?

§18-9. In the ordination of interns as evangelists the same questions are to be propounded as in the ordination of Pastors, with the exception of the eighth, for which the following shall be substituted:

"Do you now undertake the work of an evangelist, and do you promise, in reliance on God for strength, to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties incumbent on you as a minister of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?"

CHAPTER 19

The Pastoral Relations

§19-1. The various Pastoral relations are Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor (s) and Assistant Pastor(s). In addition to these Pastoral relations, Holy Trinity Church may employ individuals as Ministry Directors.

§19-2. The Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor (s) are elected by the congregation using the form of call in chapter 17-6. Being elected by the congregation, they become members of the Session. Assistant Pastors and Ministry Directors are elected by a $\frac{3}{4}$'s vote of the Session and are therefore not members thereof. Assistant Pastors and Ministry Directors shall be installed to their offices using the form of installation in chapter 21-6.^a

§19-3. In order to provide necessary changes in Pastorates, a temporary relation may be established between a church and a Pastor called Stated Supply.

§19-4. Such temporary relationships can take place at the invitation of the Church Session to the minister of the Word, the licentiate, or the Elder. The length of the relationship will be determined by the Session and the Pastor, the licentiate, or the Elder, with the approval of the Session. Stated Supply, Student Supply, or Elder Supply relationships will be for no longer than one year, renewable at the request and review of the Session.

^a The HTC Session approved this amendment on April 19, 2005 according to §23-2 of this document.

CHAPTER 20

The Dissolution of the Pastoral Relation & The Procedure for Honorable Retirement

§20-1. When any Pastor shall tender the resignation of his Pastoral charge to his Session, the Session shall receive the resignation and the Pastoral relation shall be dissolved.

If any church desires to be relieved of its Pastor, a similar procedure shall be observed. But whether the Pastor or the church initiates proceedings for a dissolution of the relation, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation called and conducted in the same manner as the call of the Pastor. In any case, the Pastor must not physically leave the field until the Session or its commission empowered to handle uncontested requests for dissolution has dissolved the relation.

The Associate Pastor(s) may continue to serve a congregation when a Pastoral relation of the Senior Pastor is dissolved.

§20-2. The Session may designate a Pastor as honorably retired when the Pastor, by reason of age wishes to be retired, or by reason of infirmity is no longer able to serve Holy Trinity Church in the active ministry of the Gospel.

§20-3. A Pastor, being honorably retired, may be elected Pastor Emeritus by Holy Trinity Church which seeks to honor his past earnest labors among them.

CHAPTER 21

Election, Ordination and Installation of Elders & Deacons

Nomination and Election

§21-1. Holy Trinity Church shall nominate persons to the offices of Elder and Deacon in the following manner:

The Session shall give public notice of the time, place, and purpose of this meeting at least one month prior to the appointed time, during this meeting the congregation is asked to submit names by paper ballot to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. In accord with scripture, while both men and women may be nominated for Deacon, only men shall be nominated for Elder.

(Throughout this chapter, the masculine pronoun shall refer to both men and women for Deacons and only to men for Elders.)

The prospective officer shall undergo a period of examination by the Session in his Christian experience, his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained in the *Constitution*, the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination (21-6.) The Session having examined those nominated shall set a date for the election of nominees. The Session shall give public notice of the time, place and purpose of the meeting at least one month prior to the appointed time.

§21-2. If one fourth of the persons entitled to vote shall at any time request the Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional officers, it

shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting on the above procedure. The number of officers to be elected shall be determined by the congregation after hearing the Session's recommendation.

§21-3. The Pastor is, by virtue of his office, Moderator of congregational meetings. If there is no Pastor, the Session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order and to preside until the congregation shall elect their presiding officer.

§21-4. All communing members in good and regular standing, but no others, are entitled to vote in the election of church officers. A majority vote of those present is required for election.

§21-5. The voters being convened, the Moderator shall explain the purpose of the meeting and then put the question: "Are you now ready to proceed to the election of additional Elders (or Deacons) from the slate presented?" If they declare themselves ready, the election may proceed by private ballot without nomination. In every case a majority of all the voters present shall be required to elect.

Ordination and Installation

§21-6. The day having arrived, and the Session being convened in the presence of the congregation, a sermon shall be preached after which the presiding Pastor shall state in a concise manner the warrant and nature of the office of Elder, or Deacon, together with the character proper to be sustained and the duties to be fulfilled. Having done this, he shall propose to the candidate, in the presence of the church, the following questions, namely:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to the Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?

(3) Do you approve of the form of government and discipline exercised in this church?

(4) Do you accept the office of Elder (or Deacon, as the case may be) in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the church of which God has made you an officer?

(5) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(6) Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?

The Elder or Deacon elect having answered in the affirmative, the Pastor shall address to the members of the church the following question: Do you, the members of Holy Trinity Church, acknowledge and receive this brother as an Elder (brother or sister if Deacon), and do you promise to yield them all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which their office, according to the Word of God and the Constitution of this Church, entitles them?

The members of the church having answered this question in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the Pastor shall proceed to set apart the candidate, with prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Session, to the office of Elder (or Deacon). Prayer being ended, the members of the Session (and the Deacons, if the case be that of a Deacon) shall take the newly ordained officer by the hand, saying in words to this effect: "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this office with us." The Pastor shall then say: "I now pronounce and declare that (Elder or deacon name here) has been regularly elected, ordained and installed an Elder (or Deacon) in this church, agreeable to the Word of God; and that as such he is entitled to all encouragement, honor and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." After which he shall give to the Elder (or Deacon) and to the church an exhortation suited to the occasion.

§21-7. Ordination to the offices of Elder or Deacon is perpetual; nor can such offices be laid aside at pleasure; nor can any person be degraded from either office but by deposition after regular trial; yet an Elder or Deacon may have reasons which he deems valid for being released from the active duties of his office. In such a case the Session, after conference with him and careful consideration of the matter, may, if it thinks proper, accept his resignation or request for leave and dissolve the official relationship which exists between him and the church.

The Elder or Deacon, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, may become unacceptable in his official capacity to a majority of the church which he serves. In such a case the church may take the initiative

by a majority vote at a regularly called congregational meeting, and request the Session to dissolve the official relationship between the church and the officer without censure. The Session, after conference with the Elder or Deacon, and after careful consideration, may use its discretion as to dissolving the official relationship. In either case the Session shall report its action to the congregation. If the Session fails or refuses to report to the congregation within sixty days from the date of the congregational meeting or if the Session reports to the congregation that it declined to dissolve such relationship, then any member or members in good standing may file a complaint against the Session.

§21-8. When an Elder or Deacon who has been released from his official relation is again elected to his office in the same church, he shall be installed after the above form with the omission of ordination.

§21-9. When an Elder or Deacon cannot or does not for a period of one year perform the duties of his office, his official relationship shall be dissolved by the Session and the action reported to the congregation.

§21-10. When a Deacon or an Elder becomes infirm, he may at his request and with the approval of the Session be designated Deacon or Elder Emeritus. When so designated, he is no longer required to perform the regular duties of his office, but may continue to perform certain of these duties on a voluntary basis, if requested by the Session.

§21-11. Indemnification Of Directors And Officers

Indemnification in Actions Other Than By or In the Right of the Corporation.

The Corporation shall indemnify any person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative (other than an action by or in the right of the Corporation) by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, or who is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a Director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with such action, suit or proceeding, if such person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the Corporation, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner which he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the Corporation, or, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, that the person had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

Indemnification in Actions by or in the Right of the Corporation.

The Corporation may indemnify any person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party, to any threatened pending or completed action or suit by or in

the right of the Corporation to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a Director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against expenses (including attorneys' fees) actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with the defense or settlement of such action or suit, if such person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the Corporation, provided that no indemnification shall be made in respect of any claim, issue or matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his or her duty to the Corporation, unless, and only to the extent that the court in which such action or suit was brought shall determine upon application that, despite the adjudication of liability, but in view of all the circumstances of the case, such person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for such expenses as the court shall deem proper.

Right to Payment of Expenses

To the extent that a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation has been successful, on the merits or otherwise, in the defense of any action, suit or proceeding referred to in Sections (A) and (B) of this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue or matter therein, such person shall be indemnified against expenses (including attorneys' fees) actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection therewith.

Determination of Conduct

Any indemnification under Sections (A) and (B) of this Article (unless ordered by a court) shall be made by the

Corporation only as authorized in the specific case, upon a determination that indemnification of the Director, officer, employee or agent is proper in the circumstances because he or she has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Sections (A) and (B) of this Article. Such determination shall be made (1) by the Board of Directors by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of Directors who were not parties to such faction, suit or proceeding; (2) if such a quorum is not obtainable, or, even if attainable, if a quorum of disinterested Directors so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (3) by the Members entitled to vote, if any.

Payment of Expenses in Advance

Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit or proceeding may be paid by the Corporation in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding as authorized by the Board of Directors in the specific case, upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the Director, officer, employee or agent to repay such amount, unless it shall ultimately be determined that he or she is entitled to be indemnified by the Corporation as authorized in this Article.

Indemnification not Exclusive

The indemnification provided by this Article shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification may be entitled under any agreement, vote of disinterested Directors, or otherwise, both as to action in his or her official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office, and shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a Director, officer, employee or agent, and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of such a person.

Insurance

The Corporation may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, or who is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a Director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against any liability asserted against such person and incurred by such person in any such capacity, or arising out of his or her status as such, whether or not the Corporation would have the power to indemnify such person against such liability under the provisions of this Article.

References to Corporation

For purposes of this Article, references to "the corporation" shall include, in addition to the surviving corporation, any merging corporation (including any corporation having merged with a merging corporation) absorbed in a merger which, if its separate existence had continued, would have had power and authority to indemnify its Directors, officers, and employees or agents, so that any person who is or was a Director, officer, employee or agent of such merging corporation or is or was serving at the request of such merging corporation as a Director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, shall stand in the same position under the provisions of this Article with respect to the resulting or surviving corporation as such person would have with respect to such constituent corporation if its separate existence had continued.

Other References

For purposes of this Article, references to "other enterprises" shall include employee benefit plans;

reference to "fines" shall include any excise taxes assessed on a person with respect to an employee benefit plan; and references to "serving at the request of the corporation" shall include any service as a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation which imposes duties on or involves services by such Director, officer, employee or agent with respect to an employee benefit plan, its participants, or beneficiaries. A person who acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in the best interests of the participants and

beneficiaries of an employee benefit plan shall be deemed to have acted in a manner "not opposed to the best interests of the corporation" as referred to in this Article.

Severability

The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision in this Article shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining provisions of this Article.

CHAPTER 22

Congregational Meetings

§22-1. The congregation consists of all the communing members of Holy Trinity Church and they only are entitled to vote.

§22-2. Whenever it may seem for the best interests of the church that a congregational meeting should be held, the Session shall call such a meeting and give public notice of at least five days nor more than sixty days, and in the case of removal of an Elder, merger, consolidation, dissolution or sale lease, or exchange of assets, the notice shall not be less than twenty days, nor more than sixty days, and in the case of removal of a Elder, merger, consolidation, dissolution or sale lease, or exchange of assets, the notice shall be not less than twenty days, nor more than sixty days. No business shall be transacted at such meeting except what is stated in the notice. The Session shall always call a congregational meeting when requested in writing to do so by one fourth of the communing members of a church of not more than 100 such members, by one-fifth of the communing members of a church of more than 100 and not more than 300 such members, by one-sixth of the communing members of a church of more than 300 and not more than 500 such members, by one-seventh of the communing members of a church of more than 500 such members but not more than 700 members, by 100 members of a church of more than 700 members.

§22-3. The quorum of the congregational meeting shall consist of one fourth of the resident communing members, if the church has not more than 100 such members, and of one-sixth of the resident communing members if the church has more than 100 such members.

§22-4. The Pastor shall be the Moderator of congregational meetings by virtue of his office. If it should be impracticable or inexpedient for him to preside, or if there is no Pastor, the Session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order and to preside until the congregation shall elect their presiding officer, who may be any male member of that particular church.

§22-5. A Clerk shall be elected by the congregation to serve at that meeting or for a definite period, whose duty shall be to keep correct minutes of the proceedings and of all business transacted and to preserve these minutes in a permanent form, after they have been attested by the Moderator and the Clerk of the meeting. He shall also send a copy of these minutes to the Session of the church.

§22-6. If a particular church is incorporated, the provisions of its charter should always be in accord with the *Book of Church Order*. All the communing members on the roll of that church shall be members of the corporation. The officers of the corporation, whether they be given the title "trustee" or some other title, shall be the elected officers of the church in accordance with the order established in 7-2.

All funds collected for the support and expense of the church and for the benevolent purposes of the church shall be controlled and disbursed by the Session and the Board of Deacons as their relative authorities may from time to time be established and defined in accordance with the order established in 7-2.

To the officers of the corporation may be given by the charter of the corporation any or all of the following

responsibilities: The buying, selling and mortgaging of property for the church, the acquiring and conveying title to such property, the holding and defending title to the same, the managing of any permanent special funds entrusted to them for the furtherance of the purposes of the church, provided that such duties do not infringe upon the powers and duties of the Session or of the Board of Deacons. In buying, selling, and mortgaging real property such officers shall act solely under the authority of the corporation, granted in a duly constituted meeting of the corporation.

§22-7. The corporation of a particular church, through its duly elected trustees or corporation officers, (or, if unincorporated, through those who are entitled to represent the particular church in matters related to real property) shall have sole title to its property, real, personal, or mixed, tangible or intangible, and shall be sole owner of any equity in any real estate, or any fund or property of any kind held by or belonging to any particular church, or any board, society, committee, Sunday school class, neighborhood group, or branch thereof.

§22-8. All particular churches shall be entitled to hold, own and enjoy their own local properties, without any right of reversion whatsoever to the previous overseeing church.

§22-9. The provisions of this chapter are to be construed as a solemn covenant whereby Holy Trinity Church as a whole promises never to attempt to secure possession of the property of any congregation against its will, whether or not such congregation remains within or chooses to withdraw from this body. All officers and the Session of

the Church are hereby prohibited from making any such attempt.

§22-10. If Holy Trinity Church is dissolved by the Session at the request of the congregation and no disposition has been made of its property by those who hold the title to the property within six months after such dissolution, then those who held the title to the property at the time of such dissolution shall deliver, convey and transfer to the officers or trustees of College Church in Wheaton, or to their authorized agent, all property of the church; and the receipt and acquittance of the officers or trustees of College Church In Wheaton, or its proper representatives, shall be a full and complete discharge of all liabilities of such persons holding the property of the church. The officers, or trustees, of College Church In Wheaton receiving such property shall apply the same or the proceeds thereof at its discretion.

Dissolution of Holy Trinity Church can be effected only in the following manner:

- (1) The approval of the proposed union by 2/3 majority of the complete Session.
- (2) The advice and input of the communing members.

- (3) The approval and consummation by a subsequent congregational meeting by 2/3 majority vote of those present and voting.

CHAPTER 23

Amending the Constitution of Holy Trinity Church

§23-1. The Constitution of Holy Trinity Church, which is subject to and subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the inerrant Word of God, consists of its doctrinal standards set forth in the its *Confession of Faith*, together with the *Book of Church Order*, comprising the *Form of Government*, the *Rules of Discipline* and the *Directory for Corporate Worship* as adopted by the Church.

§23-2. Amendments to the *Book of Church Order* may be made only in the following manner:

- (1) Approval of the proposed amendment by 2/3 majority of the Session.
- (2) The advice and input of communing members.
- (3) The approval and enactment by a subsequent congregational meeting by a 2/3 majority of those present and voting.

§23-3. Amendments to the *Confession of Faith* may be made only in the following manner:

- (1) Approval of the proposed amendment by 3/4 majority of the complete Session.
- (2) The advice and input of the communing members.
- (3) The approval and enactment by a subsequent congregational meeting by 3/4 majority of those present and voting.

This paragraph (§23-3) can be amended only by the same method prescribed for the amendment of the *Confession of Faith*

§23-4. In voting upon an amendment to the Constitution of Holy Trinity Church, the congregation may not divide

the parts of the amendment except as directed by the Session which has recommended its adoption.

§23-5. Full organic union and consolidation of Holy Trinity Church with any other ecclesiastical body can be effected only in the following manner:

(1) The approval of the proposed union by 2/3 majority of the complete Session.

(2) The advice and input of the communing members.

(3) The approval and consummation by a subsequent congregational meeting by 2/3 majority vote of those present and voting.

This paragraph (23-5) can be amended only by the same method prescribed for the amendment of the *Confession of Faith*.

Part II

RULES OF DISCIPLINE FOR HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

CHAPTER 24

Discipline - Its Nature, Subjects and Ends

§24-1. Discipline is the exercise of authority given the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ to instruct and guide its members and to promote its purity and welfare.

The term has two senses: the one referring to the whole government, inspection, training, guardianship and control which the Session of Holy Trinity Church maintains over its members, and its officers; the other a restricted and technical sense, signifying judicial process.

§24-2. All baptized persons, who are members of Holy Trinity Church are subject to its discipline and entitled to the benefits thereof.

§24-3. The exercise of discipline is highly important and necessary. In its proper usage discipline maintains:

1. The glory of God
2. The purity of His Church
3. The keeping and reclaiming of disobedient sinners. Discipline is for the purpose of godliness therefore, it demands a self-examination under Scripture.

Its ends, so far as it involves judicial action, are the rebuke of offenses, the removal of scandal, the vindication of the honor of Christ, the promotion of the

purity and general edification of Holy Trinity Church, and the spiritual good of offenders themselves.

§24-4. The power which Christ has given the Church is for building up, and not for destruction. It is to be exercised as under a dispensation of mercy and not of wrath. By discipline the Church authoritatively separates between the holy and the profane. In this it acts the part of a tender mother, correcting her children for their good, that every one of them may be presented faultless in the day of the Lord Jesus. Discipline is systematic training under the authority of God's Scripture. No communing or non-communing member of Holy Trinity Church should be allowed to stray from the Scripture's discipline. Therefore, Elders must a) instruct the officers in discipline, b) instruct the Congregation in discipline, c) jointly practice it in the context of the congregation and the Session.

§24-5. Scriptural law is the basis of all discipline because it is the revelation of God's Holy will.

Proper dictionary principles are set forth in the Scriptures and must be followed. They are: (a) instruction in the Word; (b) individuals' responsibility to admonish one another (Matthew 18:15, Galatians 6:1); (c) if the admonition is rejected, then the calling of one or more witnesses (Matthew 18:16); (d) if rejection persists, then the Church must act through the Session unto admonition, suspension, excommunication and deposition (See Chapters 27 and 28 for further explanation). Steps (a) through (d) must be followed in proper order for the exercise of discipline.

CHAPTER 25

Discipline of Non-communing Members

§25-1. The spiritual nurture, instruction and training of children of the Church are committed by God primarily to their parents. They are responsible to the Church for faithful discharge of their obligations. It is a principle duty of Holy Trinity Church to promote true religion in the home. True discipleship involves learning the Word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit both at home and in the Church. Without learning there is no growth and without growth there is no discipline and without discipline there is sin and iniquity.

§25-2. The home and Holy Trinity Church should also make special provision for instructing the children in Bible and some catechisms. To this end the Session should establish methods as may be found helpful. The Session shall encourage the parents of the Church to guide their children in the catechizing and disciplining of them in the Christian faith.

§25-3. The Church should maintain constant and sympathetic relations with the children. It also should encourage them on coming to years of discretion to make confession of the Lord Jesus Christ and to enter upon all privileges of full Church membership. If they are wayward they should be cherished by the Church and every means used to reclaim them.

§25-4. Adult non-communing members, who receive with meekness and appreciation the oversight and instruction of the Church, are entitled to special attention. Their rights and privileges under the covenant should be frequently and fully explained, and they should be warned

of the sin and danger of neglecting their covenant obligations.

§25-5. All non-communing members shall be deemed under the care of Holy Trinity Church, if they live under the parental roof and are minors; otherwise, under that of the Church where they reside, or with which they ordinarily worship.

CHAPTER 26

Offenses

§26-1. An offense, the proper object of judicial process, is anything in the doctrines or practices of a Church member professing faith in Christ which is contrary to the Word of God. Holy Trinity Church's *Confession of Faith*, together with the formularies of government, discipline, and worship are accepted by Holy Trinity Church as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice. Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any court as an offense, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such by Scripture.

§26-2. Offenses are either personal or general, private or public; but all of them being sins against God, are therefore grounds for discipline.

§26-3. Personal offenses are violations of the divine law, considered in the special relation of wrongs or injuries to particular individuals. General offenses are heresies or immoralities having no such relation, or considered apart from it.

§26-4. Private offenses are those which are known only to a few persons. Public offenses are those which are notorious.

CHAPTER 27

Church Censures

§27-1. The censures which may be inflicted by the Session of Holy Trinity Church are admonition, suspension, excommunication, and deposition. When a lower censure fails to reclaim the delinquent, it may become the duty of the Session to proceed to the infliction of a higher censure.

§27-2. Admonition is the formal reproof of an offender by the Session, warning him or her of guilt and danger, and exhorting him or her to be more circumspect and watchful in the future.

§27-3. Suspension, with respect to church members, is their temporary exclusion from the sealing ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Suspension, with respect to church officers, is exclusion from their office and the sealing ordinances. It may be either definite or indefinite as to its duration.

Definite suspension is administered when the credit of religion, the honor of Christ, and the good of the delinquent demand it, even though he may have given satisfaction to the Session. (Throughout this chapter, the masculine pronoun shall refer to both men and women for Deacons and only to men for Elders.)

Indefinite suspension is the exclusion of an offender from the sealing ordinances, or from his office, until he exhibits signs of repentance, or until by his conduct, the necessity of the highest censure be made manifest.

§27-4. Excommunication is the excision of an offender from the communion of Holy Trinity Church. This censure is to be inflicted only on account of gross crime or heresy and when the offender shows himself or herself incorrigible and contumacious. The design of this censure is to operate on the offender as a means of reclaiming him or her, to deliver the Church from the scandal of offense, and to inspire all with fear by the example of discipline.

§27-5. Deposition is the degradation of an officer from his office, and may or may not be accompanied with the infliction of other censure.

CHAPTER 28

The Parties in Cases of Process

§28-1. Original jurisdiction in relation to ministers of the Gospel pertains to the Session or, if advisable, to the previous overseeing Church Session or Commission which they might appoint, and in relation to other Church members to the Session.

§28-2. It is the duty of the Session of Holy Trinity Church exclusively to exercise care over those subject to their authority. They shall with due diligence and great discretion demand from such persons satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting their Christian character. This duty is more imperative when those who deem themselves aggrieved by injurious reports shall ask an investigation.

If such investigation, however originating, should result in raising a strong presumption of the guilt of the party involved, the Session shall institute process and shall appoint a prosecutor to prepare the indictment and to conduct the case. This prosecutor shall be a member of the Session.

§28-3. The original and only parties in a case of process are the accuser and the accused. The accuser is always Holy Trinity Church, whose honor and purity are to be maintained. The prosecutor, whether voluntary or appointed, is always a representative of the Church, and as such has all its rights in the case.

§28-4. Every indictment shall begin: “In the name of Holy Trinity Church,” and shall conclude, “against the peace, unity and purity of the Church, and the honor and majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the King and Head

thereof.” In every case the Church is the injured and accusing party, against the accused.

§28-5. An injured party shall not become a prosecutor of personal offenses without having tried the means of reconciliation and of reclaiming the offender, required by Christ.

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.” (Matthew 18:15-16, ESV)]

The Session, however, may judicially investigate personal offenses as if general when the interests of religion seem to demand it. So, also those to whom private offenses are known cannot become prosecutors without having previously endeavored to remove the scandal by private means.

§28-6. When the offense is general, the case may be conducted either by any person appearing as prosecutor or by a prosecutor appointed by the Session.

§28-7. When the prosecution is instituted by the Session, the previous steps required by our Lord in the case of personal offenses are not necessary. There are many cases, however, in which it will promote the interests of religion to send a committee to converse in a private manner with the offender, and endeavor to bring him or her to a sense of guilt, before instituting actual process.

§28-8. Great caution ought to be exercised in receiving accusations from any person who is known to indulge a malignant spirit towards the accused; who is not of good character; who is himself or herself under censure process; who is deeply interested in any respect in the conviction of the accused; or who is known to be litigious, rash or highly imprudent.

§28-9. Every voluntary prosecutor shall be previously warned, that if he or she fail to show probable cause of the charges, he or she may be censured as a slanderer of the brethren.

§28-10. When an officer of the church is under process, all his official functions may be suspended at the Session's discretion; but shall never be done in the way of censure.

§28-11. In the discussion of all questions arising in his or her own case, the accused shall exercise the rights of defendant only, not of judge.

CHAPTER 29

General Provisions Applicable in all Cases of Process

§29-1. It is incumbent on every member of a court of Jesus Christ engaged in a trial of offenders, to bear in mind the inspired injunction: “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1, ESV).

§29-2. Process against an offender shall not be commenced unless some person or persons undertake to make out the charge; or unless the Session finds it necessary, for the honor of religion, itself to take the step provided for in chapter 28-2.

§29-3. It is appropriate that with each citation the moderator or clerk call the attention of the parties to the Rules of Discipline and assist the parties to obtain access to them. When a charge is laid before the Session, it shall be reduced to writing, and nothing shall be done at the first meeting of the Session, unless by consent of parties, except (1) to appoint a prosecutor, (2) to order the indictment drawn and a copy, along with names of witnesses then known to support it, served on the accused, and (3) to cite all parties and their witnesses to appear and be heard at another meeting which shall not be sooner than ten days after such citation. At the second meeting of the Session the charges shall be read to the accused, if present, and he or she shall be called upon to say whether he or she be guilty or not.

If the accused confesses, the Session may deal with him or her according to its discretion; if he or she plead and take issue, the trial shall proceed.

Accused parties may plead in writing when they cannot be personally present. Parties necessarily absent should have counsel assigned to them.

§29-4. The citation shall be issued and signed by the Moderator or Clerk by order and in the name of the Session. He shall also issue citations to such witnesses as either party shall nominate to appear on his behalf.

§29-5. In drawing the indictment, the times, places and circumstances should, if possible, be particularly stated, that the accused may have an opportunity to make his defense.

§29-6. When an accused person shall refuse to obey a citation, he or she shall be cited a second time. This second citation shall be accompanied with a notice that if he or she does not appear at the time appointed (unless providentially hindered, which fact he or she must make known to the court), or that if he or she appear and refuse to plead, he or she shall be dealt with for contumacy, as hereinafter provided.

§29-7. The time which must elapse between the serving of the first citation on the accused person, and the meeting of the Session at which he or she is to appear, shall be at least ten days. The time allotted for his or her appearance on the subsequent citation shall be left to the discretion of the Session, provided that it be quite sufficient for a seasonable and convenient compliance with the citation.

§29-8. When the offense with which the accused person stands charged took place at a distance, and it is inconvenient for the witnesses to appear before the Session, that Session may appoint a commission of its

body to take the testimony for it. The accused shall always have reasonable notice of the time and place of the meeting of this commission.

§29-9. Before proceeding to trial, the Session ought to ascertain that their citations have been duly served.

§29-10. When the trial is about to begin, it shall be the duty of the Moderator solemnly to announce from the chair that the Session is about to pass to the consideration of the case, and to enjoin on the members to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, and the solemn duty in which they are about to engage.

§29-11. In order that the trial may be fair and impartial, the witnesses shall be examined in the presence of the accused, or at least after he or she shall have received due citation to attend. Witnesses may be cross-examined by both parties, and any questions asked must be pertinent to the issue.

§29-12. On all questions arising in the progress of the trial of a case, the following order shall be observed: (1) The Moderator shall charge the court. (2) The indictment shall be read, and the answer of the accused heard. (3) The witnesses for the prosecutor and then those for the accused shall be examined. (4) The parties shall be heard: first, the prosecutor, and then the accused, and the prosecutor shall close. (5) The roll shall be called, and the members may express their opinion in the case. (6) The vote shall be taken, the verdict announced and judgment entered on the records.

§29-13. Either party may, for cause, challenge the right of any member to sit in the trial of the case, which question shall be decided by the other members of the court.

§29-14. Pending the trial of a case, any member of the Session who shall express his opinion of its merits to either party, or to any person not a member of the Session; or who shall absent himself from any sitting without the permission of the Session, or satisfactory reasons rendered, shall be thereby disqualified from taking part in the subsequent proceedings.

§29-15. The parties shall be allowed copies of the whole proceedings at their own expense if they demand them. Minutes from the trial shall be kept by the Clerk, which shall exhibit the charges, the answer, all the testimony, and all such acts, orders, and decisions of the court relating to the case, as either party may desire, and also the judgment.

The Clerk shall without delay attach together the charges, the answer, the citations and returns thereto, and the minutes herein required to be kept. These papers, when so attached, shall constitute “the record of the case.”

§29-16. No professional counsel shall be permitted as such to appear and plead in cases of process in any court; but an accused person may, if he or she desires it, be represented before the Session by any communing member of Holy Trinity Church. A member of the Session so employed shall not be allowed to sit in judgment in the case.

§29-17. Process, in the case of scandal, shall commence within the space of one year after the offense was committed or first became known to the Session, unless it

has recently become flagrant. When, however, a Church member shall commit an offense, after removing to a place far distant from his or her former residence, and where his or her connection with the church is unknown, in consequence of which process cannot be instituted within the time above specified, the recent discovery of Holy Trinity Church of the individual shall be considered as equivalent to the offense itself having recently become flagrant. The same principle, in like circumstances, shall also apply to Pastors.

CHAPTER 30

Special Rules Pertaining to Process Before the Session

§30-1. When an accused person, having been twice duly cited, shall refuse to appear before the Session, or appearing, shall refuse to plead, the court shall enter upon its records the fact, together with the nature of the offense charged, and he or she shall be suspended from sealing ordinances for his contumacy. The censure may be made public, should this be deemed expedient by the Session, and shall in no case be removed until the offender has not only repented of his or her contumacy, but has given satisfaction in relation to the charges.

§30-2. If the charges be one of gross crime or heresy, and the accused persist in his or her contumacy, the court may proceed to inflict the highest censure.

§30-3. When it is impracticable immediately to commence process against an accused church member, the Session may, if it think the edification of the Church requires it, prevent the accused from approaching the Lord's Table until the charges against him or her can be examined.

CHAPTER 31

Special Rules Pertaining to Process Against a Pastor

§31-1. Process against a Pastor of Holy Trinity Church shall be entered before the Session.

§31-2. As no Pastor ought, on account of his office, to be screened in his sin, or slightly censured, so scandalous charges ought not be received against him on slight grounds.

§31-3. If any one knows a Pastor to be guilty of a private offense, he should warn him in private. But if the offense be persisted in, or become public, he should bring the case to the attention of one member of the Session.

§31-4. If a Pastor accused of an offense, having been twice duly cited, shall refuse to appear before the Session, he shall be immediately suspended. If after another citation, he shall still refuse to attend, he shall be deposed as contumacious, and suspended or excommunicated from the Church. Record shall be made of the judgment and the charges under which he was arraigned, and the sentence shall be made public.

§31-5. Heresy and schism may be of such a nature as to warrant deposition; but errors ought to be carefully considered, whether they strike at the vitals of religion and are injuriously spread, or whether they arise from the weakness of human understanding and are not likely to do much injury.

§31-6. If the Session find on trial that the matter complained of amounts to no more than such acts of infirmity as may be amended, so that little or nothing

remains to hinder the Pastor's usefulness, it shall take all prudent measures to remove the scandal.

§31-7. When a Pastor, pending a trial, shall make confession of a matter that is base and flagitious, such as drunkenness, uncleanness, or crimes of a higher nature, however penitent he may appear to the satisfaction of all, the court shall without delay suspend him from the exercise of his office, or depose him from the ministry.

§31-8. A Pastor suspended or deposed for scandalous conduct shall not be restored, even on the deepest sorrow for his sin, until he shall exhibit for a considerable time such an eminently exemplary, humble and edifying life and testimony as shall heal the wound made by his scandal. A deposed Pastor shall in no case be restored until it shall appear that the general sentiment of the Church is strongly in his favor, and demands his restoration; and then only by the Session inflicting the censure, or with its consent.

§31-9. When a Pastor is deposed, his Pastoral relation shall be dissolved; but when he is suspended, it shall be left to the discretion of the Session whether the censure shall include the dissolution of the Pastoral relation.

§31-10. Whenever a Pastor of the Gospel shall habitually fail to be engaged in the regular discharge of his official functions, it shall be the duty of the Session, at the stated meeting, to inquire into the cause of such dereliction and, if necessary, to institute judicial proceedings against him for breach of his covenant engagement. If it shall appear that his neglect proceeds only from his lack of acceptance to the Church, the Session may, upon the same principle upon which it withdraws license from a licentiate for lack of evidence of the divine call, divest him of his office

without censure, even against his will, a majority of three fourths being necessary for this purpose.

In such a case, the Clerk shall under the order of the Session forthwith deliver to the Pastor concerned a written notice that, at the next stated meeting, the question of his being so dealt with is to be considered. This notice shall distinctly state the grounds for this proceeding. The party thus notified shall be heard in his own defense; and if the decision pass against him he may appeal, as if he had been tried after the usual forms. This principle may apply, with any necessary changes, to Elders and Deacons.

CHAPTER 32

Evidence

§32-1. All persons of proper age and intelligence are competent witnesses except such as are generally known to be untrustworthy in word and deed. The accused party may be allowed, but shall not be compelled to testify; but the accuser shall be required to testify, on the demand of the accused. Either party has the right to challenge a witness whom he or she believes to be incompetent, and the court shall examine and decide upon his or her competency. It belongs to the court to judge the degree of credibility to be attached to all evidence.

§32-2. A husband or wife shall not be compelled to bear testimony against one another in court.

§32-3. The testimony of more than one witness shall be necessary in order to establish any charge; yet if, in addition to the testimony of one witness, corroborative evidence be pronounced, the offense may be considered to be proved.

§32-4. No witness afterwards to be examined, unless a member of the Session, shall be present during the examination of another witness on the same case, if either party object.

§32-5. Witnesses shall be examined first by the party introducing them; then cross-examined by the opposite party; after which any member of the Session, or either party, may put additional interrogatories. No question shall be put or answered except by permission of the Moderator, subject to an appeal to the Session. The Session shall not permit questions frivolous or irrelevant to the charge at issue.

§32-6. The oath or affirmation to a witness shall be administered by the Moderator in the following or like terms, “Do you solemnly promise, in the presence of God, that you will declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, according to the best of your knowledge in the matter in which you are called to witness, as you shall answer it to the great Judge of the living and the dead?” If, however, at any time a witness should present himself or herself before the court, who for conscientious reasons prefers to swear or affirm in any other manner, he or she should be allowed to do so.

§32-7. Every question put to a witness shall, if required, be reduced to writing. When answered, it shall, together with the answer, be recorded, if deemed by the Session or by either party of sufficient importance, and the testimony of the witness shall be read to him or her for his or her approbation and subscription.

§32-8. The records of a Session or any part of them, whether original or transcribed, if regularly authenticated by the Moderator and Clerk, or by either of them, shall be deemed good and sufficient evidence.

§32-9. When it is not convenient for a Session to have the whole or perhaps any part of the testimony in any particular case taken in its presence, a commission shall be appointed, or coordinate court requested, to take the testimony in question, which shall be considered as if taken in the presence of the Session.

Due notice of the commission or coordinate court, and of the times and place of its meeting, shall be given to the opposite party, that he or she may have the opportunity of attending. If the accused shall desire on his or her part

to take testimony at a distance for his or her own exculpation, he or she shall give notice to the Session of the time and place at which it shall be taken, in order that a commission or coordinate court, as in the former case, may be appointed for the purpose. Testimony may be taken on written interrogatories by filing the same with the Clerk of the court having jurisdiction of the case, and giving two weeks' notice thereof to the adverse party, during which time he or she may file cross-interrogatories, if desired. Testimony shall then be taken by the commission or coordinate court in answer to the direct and cross-interrogatories, if such are filed, and no notice need be given of the times and place of taking the testimony.

§32-10. A member of the Session who has given testimony in a case becomes disqualified for sitting as a judge if either party makes objection.

§32-11. An officer or private member of Holy Trinity Church refusing to testify may be censured for contumacy.

§32-12. If after trial before the Session new testimony be discovered which the accused believes important, it shall be his or her right to ask a new trial and it shall be within the power of the court to grant his or her request.

CHAPTER 33

The Infliction of Church Censures

§33-1. When any member or officer of Holy Trinity Church shall be found guilty of an offense the court shall proceed with all tenderness and shall deal with its offending brother or sister in the spirit of meekness, the members considering themselves lest they also be tempted. (Throughout this chapter, the masculine pronoun shall refer to both men and women for Deacons and only to men for Elders.)

§33-2. Church censures and modes of administering them should be suited to the nature of the offenses. For private offenses censure should be administered in the presence of the Session alone, or in private by one or more members of the Session. In the case of public offenses, the degree of censure and mode of administering it shall be within the discretion of the Session, acting in accordance with the paragraphs below which deal with particular censures.

§33-3. The Censure of admonition should be administered in private by one or more members of the Session if the offense is known only to a few and is not aggravated in character. If the offense is public, the admonition should be administered by the Moderator in the presence of the Session and may also be announced in public should the Session deem it expedient.

§33-4. Definite suspension should be administered in the presence of the Session alone and public announcement thereof shall be at the court's discretion.

§33-5. Indefinite suspension should be administered after the manner prescribed for definite suspension, but with

added solemnity, that it may be the means of impressing the mind of the delinquent with a proper sense of his danger, and under the blessing of God of leading him to repentance. When the court has resolved to pass this sentence, the Moderator shall address the offending brother or sister to the following purpose:

“Because, you.....(here describe the person as an Elder or Deacon of Holy Trinity Church) are convicted by sufficient proof (or are guilty by your own confession) of the sin of.....(here insert the offense), we the Session of Holy Trinity Church in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, do now declare you suspended from the Sacraments of the Church (and from the exercise of your office), until you give satisfactory evidence of repentance.”

To this shall be added such advice or admonition as may be judged necessary, and the whole shall be concluded with prayer to almighty God that He would follow this act of discipline with His blessing.

§33-6. Excommunication shall be administered according to one or other of the two modes laid down for indefinite suspension, or to be inflicted in public as the court may decide. In administering this censure the Moderator of the Session shall make a statement of the several steps which have been taken with respect to the offender, and of the decision to cut him or her off from the communion of the Church. He shall then show from Matthew 18:15-18 and I Corinthians 5:1-5 the authority of the Church to cast out unworthy members, and shall explain the nature, use, and consequences of this censure. He shall then administer the censure in the words following:

“Because, _____, a member of Holy Trinity Church has been by sufficient proof convicted of the sin of _____, and after much admonition and prayer, obstinately refuses to hear the Church, and has manifested no evidence of repentance: Therefore, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, we, the Session of Holy Trinity Church do pronounce him or her to be excluded from the Sacraments, and cut off from the fellowship of the Church.”

Prayer shall then be made that by God’s blessing this solemn action of the Session may issue in the repentance and restoration of the offender, and in the establishment of all true believers.

§33-7. The censure of deposition shall be administered by the Moderator in the words of the following:

“Because, _____, an Elder or Deacon of Holy Trinity Church has been proved, by sufficient evidence to be guilty of the sin of _____, we the Session of Holy Trinity Church do adjudge him disqualified for the office of the Christian ministry (Eldership, or Deaconship), and therefore we do hereby, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, remove from the office of an (Elder or Deacon) the said _____, and do prohibit him from exercising any of the functions thereof.”

If the censure include suspension or excommunication, the Moderator shall proceed to say: “We do moreover, by the same authority, suspend the said. _____ from the

Sacraments of the Church, until he shall exhibit satisfactory evidence of sincere repentance,” or “exclude the said _____ from the Sacraments, and cut him off from the fellowship of the Church.”

The sentence of deposition ought to be inflicted with the solemnities similar to those already prescribed in the case of excommunication.

CHAPTER 34

The Removal of Censure

§34-1. After any person has been suspended from the Sacraments, it is proper that the Elders of Holy Trinity Church should frequently converse with him or her as well as pray with and for him or her, that it would please God to give repentance.

§34-2. When the Session shall be satisfied as to the reality of the repentance of a suspended offender, he or she shall be admitted to profess his or her repentance, either in the presence of the Session alone or publicly, and be restored to the Sacraments of the Church, and to his office, if such be the judgment of the Session, which restorations shall be declared to the penitent in words of the following import:

“Because, you, _____, have been debarred from the Sacraments of the Church (and from the office of the Gospel ministry, Eldership, or Deaconship), but have now manifested such repentance as satisfies the Church, we, the Session of Holy Trinity Church, do hereby, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, absolve you from the said sentence of suspension, and do restore you to the full communion of the Church (and the exercise of your said office, and all the functions thereof).”

After which there will be prayer and thanksgiving.

§34-3. When an excommunicated person shall be so affected with his or her state as to be brought to repentance, and to desire to be readmitted to the communion of the Church, the Session, having obtained

sufficient evidence of sincere penitence, shall proceed to restore him or her. This may be done in the presence of the Session alone, or of the congregation, as seems best to the Session.

On the day appointed for his restoration, the Pastor shall call upon the excommunicated person and propose to him in the presence of the Session or the congregation the following questions:

“Do you, from a deep sense of your great wickedness, freely confess your sins in thus rebelling against God, and in refusing to hear His Church; and do you acknowledge that you have been in justice and mercy cut off from the communion of the Church? Answer, “I do.” “Do you now voluntarily profess your sincere repentance and contrition for your sin and obstinacy; and do you humbly ask the forgiveness of God and His Church?” Answer, “I do.” “Do you sincerely promise, through divine grace, to live in all humbleness of mind and circumspection; and to endeavor to adorn by a holy life the doctrine of God our Savior?” Answer, “I do.”

Here the Pastor shall give the penitent a suitable exhortation, encouraging and comforting him or her. Then he shall pronounce the sentence of restoration in the following words:

“Because, you, _____ have been shut out from the communion of the Church, but now have manifested such repentance as satisfies the Church; in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by His authority, we, the Session of Holy Trinity Church, do declare you absolved from the

sentence of excommunication formerly pronounced against you, and we do restore you to the communion of the Church, that you may be a partaker of all the benefits of the Lord Jesus Christ to your eternal salvation.”

The whole shall be concluded with prayer and thanksgiving.

§34-4. The restoration of a deposed officer, after public confession has been made in a manner similar to that prescribed in the case of the removal of censure from an excommunicated person, shall be announced to him by the Moderator in the following form, namely:

“Because, you _____, formerly an (Elder or Deacon of Holy Trinity Church), have been deposed from your office, but now have manifested such repentance as satisfies the Church; in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by His authority, we, the Session of Holy Trinity Church do declare you absolved from the said sentence of deposition formerly pronounced against you; and we do furthermore restore you to your said office, and to the exercise of all the functions thereof, whenever you may be orderly called thereto.”

After this there shall be prayer and thanksgiving, and the members of the Session shall extend to him the right hand of fellowship.

§34-5. When an Elder or Deacon has been absolved from the censure of deposition, he cannot be allowed to

resume the exercise of his office in the church without reelections by the people.

§34-6. In the restoration of a Pastor who has been suspended or deposed, it is the duty of the Session to proceed with great caution. It should first admit him to the Sacraments, if he has been debarred from them, and afterwards should grant him the privilege of preaching on probation for a time, so as to test the sincerity of his repentance and the prospect of his usefulness, and when satisfied in these respects the Session shall take steps to restore him to his office. But the case shall always be under judicial consideration until the sentence of restoration has been pronounced.

CHAPTER 35

Special Rules Pertaining to Personal Conflicts and Legal Recourse

35-1. A conflict is a dispute between two communing members of Holy Trinity Church that does not involve an offense as defined in Chapter 26 of the *Rules of Discipline*.

35-2. Strife among Christians is grievous to the Holy Spirit and injurious to the Body of Christ and should not be permitted to persist indefinitely. Therefore every effort should be made to resolve conflicts in a biblical manner as swiftly as is reasonably possible.

35-3. The Scriptures clearly teach that it is shameful for Christians to seek to resolve personal conflicts among them by recourse to secular courts. (1 Cor. 6:1-8) Therefore, communing members of Holy Trinity Church who cannot resolve a personal conflict according to biblical principles (Prov. 17:14; 19:11; Matt. 18:15-20; Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 3:12-14; 1 Pet. 4:7-8) shall submit their case to the mediation and, if necessary, arbitration of the Session of Holy Trinity Church.

35-4. The judgment of the Session of Holy Trinity Church in resolution of a conflict is binding upon the parties involved and must be adhered to by everyone involved directly or indirectly with the case.

35-5. If no resolution to a conflict can be made by the individuals involved, and if one of the parties refuses to submit the case to the arbitration of the Session, that person shall be subject to the discipline of the Session according to the *Rules of Discipline*.

If having received the judgment of the Session one or both of the parties involved refuses to adhere to the ruling, they shall be subject to the discipline of the Session according to the *Rules of Discipline*.

35-6. The Session, in order to carry out their responsibility to arbitrate conflicts among communing members, shall appoint a Commission to be chaired by a member from their own number to hear the case. The Session may also appoint further commission members from among the congregation of Holy Trinity Church. These shall be communing members whose Christian character, wisdom and reputation is beyond question.

CHAPTER 36

Cases Without Process

§36-1. When any person shall come forward and make his or her offense known to the Session, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process.

§36-2. A minister of the Gospel against whom there are no charges, if fully satisfied in his own conscience, that God has not called him to the ministry, or if he has satisfactory evidence of his inability to serve the Church with acceptance, may report these facts at a stated meeting of the Session. At the next stated meeting, if after full deliberation the Session shall concur with him in judgment, it may divest him of his office without censure. This provision shall in like manner apply with any necessary changes to the case of Elders and Deacons.

§36-3. When a member or officer shall renounce the communion of Holy Trinity Church by joining some other evangelical Church; if in good standing, the irregularity shall be recorded, and his name erased. But if charges are pending against him, they shall be communicated to the Church which he has joined. If the denomination be heretical, an officer shall have his name stricken from the roll, and all authority to exercise his office derived from Holy Trinity Church shall be withdrawn from him; but a private member shall not be otherwise noticed than as above prescribed.

CHAPTER 37

References

§37-1. A reference is a written representation and application made by the Evangelist, Ecclesiastical Commission, or Session of a Mission Church to the originating particular church for advice or other action on a matter pending before the Mission Church, and is ordinarily to be made to the Session of the Originating Particular Church.

§37-2. Among proper subjects for reference are matters that are new, delicate or difficult; or on which the members of the mission church are very seriously divided; or which relate to questions involving the Constitution and legal procedures respecting which the Mission Church feels the need of guidance.

§37-3. In making a reference the Mission Church may ask for advice only, or for final disposition of the matter referred; and in particular it may refer a judicial case with request for its trial and decision by the originating particular church.

§37-4. A reference may be presented to the Session of the originating particular church by one or more representatives appointed by the Evangelist, Ecclesiastical Commission, or Session of the Mission Church for this purpose. It should be accompanied with so much of the record as shall be necessary for proper understanding and consideration of the matter referred.

§37-5. Although references are sometimes proper, in general it is better that every Evangelist, Ecclesiastical Commission, or Session should discharge the duty assigned it under the law of the Church.

An originating particular church is not required to accede to the request of the Mission Church, but it should ordinarily give advice when requested.

§37-6. When the Mission Church makes reference, it ought to have all the testimony and other documents duly prepared, produced and in perfect readiness, so that the originating particular church may be able to fully consider and handle the case with as little difficulty or delay as possible.

CHAPTER 38

Complaints

§38-1. A complaint is a written representation made against some act or decision of the Session of Holy Trinity Church. It is the right of any communing member of the church in good standing to make complaint against any action of the Session.

§38-2. A complaint shall be made to the Session whose act or decision is alleged to be in error. Written notice of complaint, with supporting reasons, shall be filed with the clerk of the Session. The court shall consider the complaint at its next stated meeting, or at a called meeting prior to its next stated meeting.

CHAPTER 39

Dissents and Protests

§39-1. Any member of the Session who had a right to vote on a question and is not satisfied with the action taken by the Session, is entitled to have a dissent or protest recorded. Written notice of such dissent or protest shall be filed with the clerk of the Session no later than the end of the next stated meeting of the Session.

§39-2. A dissent is a declaration on the part of one or more members of a minority, expressing a different opinion from the majority in its action on any issue before the Session, and may be accompanied with the reasons on which it is founded.

§39-3. A protest is a more solemn and formal declaration by members of a minority, bearing their testimony against what they deem an improper or erroneous action on any issue before the Session, and is generally accompanied with the reasons on which it is founded.

§39-4. If a protest or dissent be couched in temperate language, and be respectful to the court, it shall be recorded; and the court may, if deemed necessary, put an answer to the dissent or protest on the records along with it. Here the matter shall end, unless the parties obtain permission to withdraw their dissent or protest absolutely, or for the sake of amendment.

§39-5. None can join in dissent or protest against an action of any court except those who had a right to vote in the case.

CHAPTER 40

Jurisdiction

§40-1. When any church member shall remove their residence beyond the bounds of the congregation, so that they can no longer regularly attend its services, it shall be their duty to transfer their membership by presenting a certificate of dismissal from the Session of Holy Trinity Church to the church with which they wish to unite.

§40-2. When any church member shall remove their residence beyond the bounds of Holy Trinity Church into the bounds of another, it shall be the duty of the Elders of Holy Trinity Church, as far as possible, to continue Pastoral oversight of them and to inform them that according to the teaching of the *Book of Church Order* it is their duty to transfer their membership as soon as practicable to a church in whose bounds they are living.

If any member, after having thus been advised, shall neglect for twelve months to have their membership transferred, their name shall be removed by the Session unless special permission is granted by the Session for such as: servicemen, students, etc. to remain on the roll.

The name of any member whose residence has been unknown for one year to the Session shall be removed from the roll and such names are not to be counted in the annual statistical reports, though the act of removal should be recorded in the Session's minutes. If such a person at a later date should appear or desire transfer of his or her letter, the Session will inform the governing body of the inquiring Church of their action in removing said person from their roll.

§40-3. Members of Holy Trinity Church dismissed to join another church shall be held to be under the jurisdiction

of the Session of Holy Trinity Church until they form a regular connection with that to which they have been dismissed.

§40-4. Associate members are those believers temporarily residing in a location other than their permanent homes. Such believers may become associate members of Holy Trinity Church without effecting their status in their home churches. An associate member shall have all the rights and privileges of that church, with the exception of voting in a congregational or corporation meeting, and holding an office in that church.

§40-5. When a member of Holy Trinity Church has willfully neglected the church for a period of one year, or has made it known that he or she has no intention of fulfilling the church vows, then the Session should exercise proper discipline by deleting such names from the church roll, but only after the procedure described in 24-5 has been followed.

§40-6. No certificate of dismissal from the Session shall be valid testimony of good standing for a period longer than one year, unless its earlier presentation be hindered by some providential cause; and such certificates given to persons who have left the bounds of the Session granting them shall certify the standing of such persons only to the time of their leaving those bounds.

Part III

DIRECTORY FOR THE CORPORATE WORSHIP OF GOD AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

CHAPTER 41

The Principles and Elements of Corporate Worship

§41-1. Since the Holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice, the guiding principles for the corporate worship of Holy Trinity Church will be derived from the Bible.

The Scriptures forbid the worshipping of God by images, or in any other way prohibited in His Word, and requires the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in His Word.

§41-2. A service of corporate worship is a gathering of God's children with each other for edification, and a meeting of the triune God with His chosen people. God is present in corporate worship not only by virtue of His Divine omnipresence but, much more intimately as the faithful Covenant Savior.

§41-3. The end of the corporate worship of Holy Trinity Church is the glory of God. We should engage in all its several parts with an eye single to his glory. Corporate worship has edification as its aim, the building of Christ's Church by the perfecting of the saints, and evangelism, the addition to its membership of such as are being

saved—all to the glory of God. Through corporate worship Holy Trinity Church seeks to learn to serve God all the days of the week in every activity, remembering, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God.

§41-4. Corporate worship is Christian when the worshipers recognize that Christ is the mediator by whom alone they can come unto God, when they honor Christ as the Head of the church, who rules over corporate worship, and when their worship is an expression of their faith in Christ and of their love for him.

§41-5. Corporate worship must be performed in spirit and in truth. Externalism and hypocrisy stand condemned. The forms of worship have value only when they serve to express the inner affections of the worshiper 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 affections and devotion.

§41-6. The Lord Jesus Christ has prescribed no fixed forms for corporate worship but, in the interest of life and power in worship, has given His church a large measure of liberty in this matter. It may not be forgotten, however, that there is true liberty only where the laws of God's Word are observed and the Spirit of the Lord is, 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 worship should be characterized by that simplicity which is an evidence of sincerity and by that beauty and dignity which are a manifestation of holiness.

§41-7. Corporate worship is served by His saints united as His Covenant people, the body of Christ. For this reason,

children should be present so far as possible 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.

§41-8. It behooves Holy Trinity Church not only to come into His presence with a deep sense of awe at the thought of His perfect holiness and our exceeding sinfulness, but also considering how to spur one another toward love and good deeds. We must enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise for the great salvation which he has so graciously wrought for us through his only begotten Son and applied to us by the Holy Spirit.

§41-9. The Bible teaches that the following are proper elements of corporate worship: reading of Holy Scripture, singing of Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, the offering of prayer, the preaching of the Word, the presentation of offerings, confessing the faith and observing the sacraments; and on special occasions, taking oaths.

CHAPTER 42

The Lord's Day Principle

§42-1. "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."

§42-2. It is the duty of every person to remember this 'principle' (42-1); and to prepare for it before its approach. All worldly business should be so ordered, and seasonably laid aside, as that they may not be hindered thereby from setting apart one day in seven, as the Holy Scriptures require.

§42-3. The whole day is to be kept holy to the Lord, and to be employed in the public and private exercises of religion. Therefore, it is requisite, that there is a holy resting, all the day, from unnecessary labors; and an abstaining from those recreations which may be lawful on other days; and also, as much as possible, from worldly thoughts and conversation.

§42-4. Let the provisions for the support of the family on that day be so ordered that others be not improperly detained from the corporate worship of God, nor hindered from setting apart that day unto the Lord.

§42-5. Let every person and family, in the morning, by secret and private prayer, for themselves and others, especially for the assistance of God to their Pastor, and for the blessing upon his ministry, by reading the Scriptures, and by holy meditation, prepare for communion with God in His public ordinances.

§42-6. Let the time not used for corporate worship be spent in prayer, in devotional reading, and especially in the study of the Scriptures, meditation, catechizing, religious conversation, the singing of hymns, or spiritual songs; visiting the sick, relieving the poor, teaching the ignorant, holy resting, and in performing such like duties of piety, charity, and mercy.

CHAPTER 43

The Ordering of Public Worship

§43-1. When Holy Trinity Church meets for corporate worship, the people (having before prepared their hearts thereunto) ought all to come and join therein; not absenting themselves from the public ordinances through negligence, or upon pretense of private meetings.

§43-2. Let the people assemble at the appointed time, that all being present at the beginning they may unite with one heart in all the parts of worship. Let none unnecessarily depart until after the blessing be announced.

§43-3. All who attend public worship are expected to be present in a spirit of reverence and godly fear, forbearing to engage in any conduct unbecoming to the place and occasion. Since the family, as ordained by God, is the basic institution in society, and God in the Covenant graciously deals with us, not just as individuals but also as families, it is important and desirable that families worship together.

CHAPTER 44

The Public Reading of the Holy Scriptures

§44-1. Through the public reading of the Holy Scriptures God speaks most directly to the congregation, even more directly than through the sermon. In the public reading of Scripture, God addresses His people; in the public responsive reading of Scripture God's people give expression in the words of Scripture to their contrition, adoration, gratitude and other holy sentiments.

§44-2. The reading of the Holy Scriptures in the congregation is a part of the public worship of God and should be done by the Pastor or some other person.

§44-3. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments shall be read from a good translation, not a paraphrase, in the language of the people, that all may hear and understand.

§44-4. How large a portion shall be read at once is left to the discretion of every Pastor; and he may, when he thinks it expedient, expound any part of what is read; always having regard to the time, that neither reading, singing, praying, preaching, nor any other ordinance, be disproportionate the one to the other; nor the whole rendered too short, or too tedious.

CHAPTER 45

The Singing of Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs

§45-1. Praising God through the medium of music is a duty and a privilege. Therefore, the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and the use of music instruments should have an important part in corporate worship.

§45-2. In singing the praises of God, we are to sing in the spirit of worship, with understanding in our hearts.

§45-3. It is recommended that hymns be sung along with the Psalms and spiritual songs of the church, but that caution be observed in the selection of hymns and spiritual songs, that they be true to the Word. These should have the note of praise, or be in accord with the spirit of the sermon.

§45-4. The leadership in song is left to the judgment of the Session, who should give careful thought to the character of those asked to lead in this part of worship, and the singing of a choir should not be allowed to displace congregational singing.

§45-5. The proportion of time of public worship given to praise is left to the judgment of the Pastor, and the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs by the congregation should be encouraged.

CHAPTER 46

Corporate Prayer

§46-1. It is proper to begin public worship with prayer, humbly adoring the infinite majesty of the living God, expressing a sense of our distance from Him as creatures, and our unworthiness as sinners; and humbly imploring His gracious presence, the assistance of His Holy Spirit in the duties of His worship, and His acceptance of us through the merits of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

§46-2. Public worship should also include a congregational prayer which should be a full and comprehensive prayer: First, adoring the glory and perfections of God, as they are made known to us in the works of creation, in the conduct of Providence, and in the clear and full revelation He hath made of Himself in His written words; Second, giving thanks to Him for all His mercies of every kind, general and particular, spiritual and temporal, common and special; above all, for Christ Jesus, His unspeakable gift, the hope of eternal life through Him, and for the mission and work of His Holy Spirit; Third, making humble confession of sin, both original and actual, acknowledging and endeavoring to lead the heart of every worshiper with a deep sense of the evil of all sin, as such, as being a departure from the living God; and also taking a particular and affecting view of the various fruits which proceed from this root of bitterness; as sins against God, our neighbor, and ourselves; sins in thought, in word, and in deed; sins secret and presumptuous; sins accidental and habitual. Also, the aggravations of sin, arising from knowledge, or the means of it; from distinguishing mercies; from valuable privileges; from breach of vows, etc.; Fourth, making earnest supplication for the pardon of sin, and peace with God, through the blood of the atonement, with all

important and happy fruits; for the Spirit of sanctification, and the abundant supplies of the grace that is necessary to the discharge of our duty; for support and comfort, under all the trials to which we are liable, as we are sinful and mortal; and for all temporal mercies that may be necessary in our passage through this valley of tears; always remembering to view them as flowing in the channel of covenant love, and intended to be subservient to the preservation and progress of the spiritual life; Fifth, pleading from every principal warranted in Scripture; from our own necessity; the all-sufficiency of God; the merit and intercession of our Savior; and the glory of God in the comfort and happiness of His people; Sixth, intercession and petition for others, including the whole world for mankind; for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh; for the peace, purity, and extension of the church of God; for Pastors and missionaries in all lands; for all who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for the particular church then assembled, and all other churches associated in one body with it; for the sick, dying, and bereaved; for the poor and destitute; for strangers, for prisoners, for the aged and the young; for those who travel; for the community in which the church is situated; for civil rulers, and for whatever else may seem to be necessary or suitable on the occasion. The prominence given each of these topics must be left to the discretion of those who lead the congregation in prayer.

§46-3. Ordinarily there should be prayer after the sermon having relation to the subject that has been treated in the discourse; and all other public prayers should be appropriate to the occasion.

§46-4. Those who lead congregational prayer are not confined to fixed forms of prayer for public worship, yet it is their duty to prepare and qualify themselves for this

part of their work. They should, by a thorough acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, by the study of the best writers on prayer, by meditation, and by a life of communion with God, endeavor to acquire both the spirit and the gift of prayer. Moreover, when offering prayer in public worship, one's spirit should be composed, and thoughts ordered, that the duty may be performed with dignity and propriety, and with profit to the worshipers, lest this important service be disgraced by coarse, undignified, careless, irregular or extravagant expressions.

§46-5. All prayer is to be offered in the language of the people.

CHAPTER 47

The Preaching of the Word

§47-1. The preaching of the Word is an ordinance of God for the edification of believers and the salvation of the nations. Serious attention should be paid to the manner in which it is done. The Pastor should apply himself to it with diligence and prove himself a “workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15).

§47-2. The subject of a sermon should be some verse or verses of Scripture, and its object, to explain, defend and apply the glory of God’s redemption in Christ and to point out the nature, and state the bounds and obligation, of some duty. A text should not be merely a motto, but should fairly contain the doctrine proposed to be handled. It is proper also that large portions of Scripture be sometimes expounded, and particularly improved, for the instruction of the people in the meaning and use of the Sacred Scriptures.

§47-3. Preaching requires much study, meditation, and prayer, and Pastors should prepare their sermons with care, and not indulge themselves in loose, extemporary harangues, nor serve God with that which costs them nothing. They should, however, keep the simplicity of the gospel, and express themselves in language that can be understood by all. They should also by their lives adorn the gospel which they preach, and be examples to believers in word and deed.

§47-4. As a primary design of public ordinances is to unite the people in acts of common worship of the most high God, Pastors should be careful not to make their sermons so long as to interfere with or exclude the

important duties of prayer and praise, but should preserve a just proportion in the several parts of public worship.

§47-5. By way of application of the sermon the Pastor may urge his hearers by commandment or invitation to repent of their sins, to put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, and to confess Him publicly before others.

§47-6. No person should be invited to preach at Holy Trinity Church without the consent of the Session.

CHAPTER 48

The Worship of God by Offerings

§48-1. The Holy Scriptures teach that God is the owner of all persons and all things and that we are but stewards of both life and possessions; that God's ownership and our stewardship should be acknowledged; that this acknowledgment should take the form, in part, of giving willingly and joyfully of our income and other offerings to the work of the Lord through Holy Trinity Church, thus worshipping to Lord with our possessions; and that the remainder should be used as is fitting for Christians.

§48-2. It is both a privilege and a duty, plainly enjoyed in the Bible, to make regular, weekly, systematic and proportionate offerings for the support of religion and for the propagation of the gospel in our own and foreign lands, and for the relief of the poor. This should be done as an exercises of grace and an act of worship, and at such time during the service as may be deemed expedient by the Session.

CHAPTER 49

Confessing the Faith

§49-1. It is proper for the congregation of God's people publicly to confess their faith, using creeds or confessions that are true to the Word, such as, the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed.

§49-2. It is also proper for church members, when called upon by the Session, to edify the congregation of God's people through public testimonies of God's grace and faithfulness in their lives.

CHAPTER 50

The Administration of Baptism

§50-1. Baptism is not to be unnecessarily delayed, but encouraged for all unbaptized believers. Nor is it to be administered, in any case by any private person; but by an ordained Elder, called to be a steward of the mysteries of God.

§50-2. It is not to be privately administered, but in the presence of the congregation under the supervision of the Session.

§50-3. When converted, but unbaptized persons apply for admission into the Church, they shall, ordinarily, after giving satisfaction with respect to their knowledge and piety, make a public profession of their faith, in the presence of the congregation, and thereupon be baptized.

§50-4. Before baptism, the Pastor is to use some words of instruction, touching the institution, nature, use, and ends of this sacrament, showing:

That it is instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ: That it is a seal of the covenant of grace, of our ingrafting into Christ, and our union with Him, of remission of sins, regeneration, adoption, and life eternal: That the water, in baptism, represents and signifies both the blood of Christ, which taketh away all guilt of sin, original and actual; and the sanctifying virtue of the Spirit of Christ against the dominion of sin, and the corruption of our sinful nature: That baptizing, or sprinkling and washing with water, signifies the cleansing from sin by the blood and for the merit of Christ, together with the mortification of sin, and rising from sin to newness of life, by virtue of the death

and resurrection of Christ and that outward baptism is not so necessary, that through the want thereof, the infant is in danger of damnation.

§50-5. When believing parents apply for the baptism of their child(ren), the child to be baptized is to be presented, by one or both the parents, signifying the desire that the child be baptized. Before the baptism, the Pastor is to use similar words of institution as are found in the section above. He should also mention that the promise is made to believers and that the children of believers have an interest in the covenant, Holy Trinity Church holds their right to the seal of it, and to the outward privileges of the church, under the gospel, no less the children of Abraham in the time of the Old Testament; the covenant of grace. That children by baptism are not regenerated, but are solemnly received into the bosom of the visible church, distinguished from the world, and them that are without, and united with believers; and that all who are baptized in the name of Christ, do renounce, and by their baptism are bound to fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh: That the inward grace and virtue of baptism is not tied to that very moment of time wherein it is administered; and that the fruit and power thereof reacheth to the whole course of life. By virtue of being born of believing parents children are, because of God's covenant ordinance, made members of the Church, but this is not sufficient to make them continuing members of the Church. When they have reached the age of discretion, they become subject to obligations of the covenant faith, repentance and obedience. They then must make public confession of their faith in Christ, or become covenant breakers and subject to the discipline of the Church.

The Pastor is also to exhort the parents of the careful performance of their duty, requiring:

That they teach the child[ren] to read the Word of God; that they instruct him in the principles of our holy faith, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as an excellent summary of which we have in the *Confession of Faith*, which is to be recommended to them as adopted by the Church, for their direction and assistance, in the discharge of this important duty; that they pray with and for him; that they set an example of piety and godliness before him; and endeavor, by all the means of God's appointment, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

§50-6. Whether baptizing adult converts, or infants of believing parents the Pastor shall read some suitable portions from Scripture and then propose the following questions:

- (1) Do you acknowledge your (child's) need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?
- (2) Do you claim God's covenant promises on your (his) behalf, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for your (his) salvation, (as you do your own)?
- (3) Do you now unreservedly dedicate yourself (your child) to God, and promise, in humble reliance upon divine grace, that you will endeavor to set before us (him) a godly example, that you will pray (with and for him), that you will study (teach him) the doctrines of our holy faith, and that you will strive, by all the means of God's appointment, to grow (bring him up) in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

(4) To the congregation: Do you as a congregation undertake the responsibility of assisting these individuals in Christian nurture?

§50-7. Then the Pastor is to pray for a blessing to attend this ordinance, after which, calling the individual by name, he shall say: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” As he pronounces these words, he is to baptize the individual with water, by pouring, sprinkling, or immersion, without adding any other ceremony; and the whole shall be concluded with prayer.

CHAPTER 51

The Admission of Adults and Children to the Lord's Supper

§51-1. It is recommended, as edifying and proper, that baptized persons, when admitted by the Session to the Lord's Supper, make a public profession of their faith in the presence of the congregation. But in all cases, there should be a clear recognition of their previous relation to the Church as baptized members.

§51-2. Believers' children within the visible Church are non-communing members under the care of the Church. They are to be taught to love God, and to obey and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. When they are able to understand the Gospel, they should be earnestly reminded that it is their duty and privilege personally to accept Christ, to confess Him before men, and to seek admission to the Lord's Supper.

§51-3. The time when young persons come to understand the gospel cannot be precisely fixed. This must be left to the prudence of the Session, whose office it is to judge, after careful examination, the qualifications of those who apply for admission to the Lord's Supper.

§51-4. The time having come for the making of a public profession, and those who have been approved by the Session having taken their places in the presence of the congregation, the Pastor may state that:

- (1) Those who were baptized in infancy, as heirs of the covenant promises, the Session has examined and approved (call them by name), who come now to assume for themselves the full privileges and responsibilities of their inheritance in the household of faith.

(2) The Pastor may then address those making a profession in the following terms:

(All of) you being here present to make a public profession of faith, are to assent to the following declarations and promises, by which you enter into a solemn covenant with God and His Church;

1. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His wrath, and without hope save His sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
4. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becometh the followers of Christ?
5. Do you promise to support this church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
6. Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church and promise to study its purity and peace?

The Pastor now welcomes those who have given affirmation to these questions to the Lord's Supper.

§51-5. Persons received from other churches by letters of dismissal as well as those being received by reaffirmation of faith should give a testimony of their Christian experience to the Session. Their names are to be announced to the congregation with a recommendation of them to its Christian confidence and affection.

CHAPTER 52

The Administration of the Lord's Supper

§52-1. The Communion, or Supper of the Lord, is to be observed frequently; the stated times to be determined by the Session, as it may judge most for edification.

§52-2. The ignorant and scandalous are not to be admitted to the Lord's Supper.

§52-3. It is proper that public notice should be given to the congregation at least the week before the administration of this ordinance, and that either then, or on some day of the week, the people be instructed in its nature, and a due preparation for it, that all may come in a suitable manner to this feast.

§52-4. On the day of the observance of the Lord's Supper, when the sermon is ended, the Pastor shall show:

That this is an ordinance of Christ; by reading the words of institution, either from one of the evangelists, or from I Corinthians 11, which as to him may appear expedient, he may explain and apply; that it is to be observed in remembrance of Christ, to show forth His death till He come; that it is of inestimable benefit, to strengthen His people against sin; to support them under troubles; to encourage and quicken them in duty; to inspire them with love and zeal; to increase their faith, and holy resolution; and to beget peace of conscience, and comfortable hopes of eternal life.

Since, by our Lord's appointment, this sacrament sets forth the communion of saints, the Pastor, before the

observance begins, should invite all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and who trust and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the gospel, to participate in the ordinance. It is proper also to give a special invitation to non-communicants to remain during the service.

§52-5. The table, on which the elements are placed, being decently covered, and furnished with bread and wine, and the communicants orderly sitting around it (or in their seats before it), the Pastor should then set the elements apart by prayer and thanksgiving.

The bread and wine being thus set apart by prayer and thanksgiving, the Pastor is to take the bread and break it in the view of the people, saying: “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me” (I Corinthians 11:23-24, ESV).

After having given the bread, he shall take the cup, and say: “In the same way He took the cup also, after supper saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

§52-6. Since believers are to act personally in all their covenanting with the Lord, it is proper that a part of the time occupied in the distribution of the elements should be spent by all in silent communion, thanksgiving, intercession and prayer.

§52-7. The Pastor may, in a few words, put the communicants in mind: Of the grace of God, in Jesus Christ, held forth this sacrament; and of their obligation

to be the Lord's; and may exhort them to work worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called; and, as they have professedly received Christ Jesus the Lord, that they be careful so to walk in Him, and to maintain good works.

It may not be improper for the Pastor to give a word of exhortation also to those who have been only spectators, reminding them: Of their duty, stating their sin and danger, by living in obedience to Christ, in neglecting this holy ordinance; and calling upon them to be earnest in making preparation for attending upon at the next time of its celebration.

Then the Pastor is to pray and give thanks to God,

For his rich mercy, and invaluable goodness, vouchsafed to them in that sacred communion; to implore pardon for the defects of the whole service; and to pray for the acceptance of their persons and performances; for the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit to enable them, as they received Christ Jesus the Lord, so to walk in Him; that they may hold fast to that which they have received, that no man take their own crown; that their conversation may be as becometh the gospel; that they may bear about with them, continually, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in their mortal body; that their light may so shine before men that others, seeing their good works, may glorify their Father who is in heaven.

An offering for the poor or other sacred purpose is appropriate in connection with this service, and may be made at such time as shall be ordered by the Session.

Now let a Psalm or hymn be sung, and the congregation dismissed, with a benediction.

CHAPTER 53

The Solemnization of Marriage

§53-1. Marriage is a divine institution though not a Sacrament, nor peculiar to the Church.

§53-2. Christians should marry in the Lord; therefore it is fit that their marriage be solemnized by a lawful Pastor, or one licensed by the Session, that special instruction be given them, and suitable prayers offered, when they enter into this relation.

§53-3. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman, in accordance with the Word of God.

§53-4. The parties should be of such years of discretion as to be capable of making their own choice; and if they are underage, or live with their parents, the consent of the parents or others, under whose care they are, should be previously obtained, and well certified to the Pastor, or the one licensed by the Session, before he proceeds to solemnize the marriage.

§53-5. Parents should neither compel their children to marry contrary to their inclinations, nor deny their consent without just and important reasons.

§53-6. Marriage is of a public nature. The welfare of civil society, the happiness of families, and the credit of Christianity, are deeply interested in it. It is enjoined on all Pastors, or those licensed by the Session, to be careful that, in this matter, they transgress neither the laws of God, nor the laws of the community; and that they may not destroy the peace and comfort of families, Pastors should be assured that, with respect to the parties

applying to them, no just objections lie against their marriage.

§53-7. The Session should keep a proper register of the names of all persons whom it marries, and of the time of their marriages, for the perusal of all whom it may concern.

CHAPTER 54

Visitation and Prayer for the Sick

§54-1. The power of the prayer of faith is great, and Christians therefore should make entreaty for the sick at the throne of heavenly grace, and should also seek God's blessing upon all proper means which are being employed for their recovery. Moreover, when persons are sick, their immediate neighborhood group leader, or some officer of the church, should be notified, that officers and members may unite their prayers on behalf of the sick. It is the privilege and duty of God's people to visit the sick and to minister to their physical, mental, and spiritual welfare. In view of varying circumstances of the sick, the Pastor should use discretion in the performance of this duty.

§54-2. Although Holy Trinity Church does not see fit to have healing services, there may be times when the Session or Pastor deems it appropriate to extend an invitation for those desirous of healing to request the counsel and prayer of the Elders for such healing, according to the principles laid down for us in James 5:14-16.

CHAPTER 55

The Burial of the Dead

§55-1. The services proper for such an occasion are: The singing of appropriate Psalms or hymns; the reading of some suitable portion or portions of Scripture, with such remarks as it may seem proper to the Pastor to make; prayer, in which the bereaved shall be especially remembered, and God's grace sought on their behalf, that they may be blessed to their spiritual good.

§55-2. The funeral services are to be left largely to the discretion of the Pastor performing them, but he should always remember that the proper object of service is the worship of God and the consolation of the living.

CHAPTER 56

Days of Fasting, Prayer, and Thanksgiving

§56-1. The observance of days of fasting, prayer, and thanksgiving, as the dispensations of Divine Providence may direct, is both spiritual and rational.

§56-2. Fasting, prayer, and thanksgiving may be observed by individual Christians; by families; by neighborhood groups; by the entire congregation of Holy Trinity Church; or by a number of congregations contiguous to each other.

§56-3. It should be left to the judgment and discretion of every Christian and family to determine when it is proper to observe a private fast, prayer time, or time of thanksgiving; and to the Session to determine for Holy Trinity Church. When it is deemed expedient that a fast, prayer time, or time of thanksgiving should be general, the call for it should be issued by the Session. If at any time the civil power should appoint a fast, prayer time, or time of thanksgiving, in keeping with the Christian faith, it is the duty of the Pastors and people of our communion to pay all due respect to it.

§56-4. Public notice should be given a sufficient time before the appointed day of fasting, prayer, or thanksgiving, that persons may so order their affairs as to allow them to attend properly to the duties of the day.

§56-5. On the days of fasting and prayer, the Pastor should point out the authority and providences calling for the observance; and he should spend more than the usual time in solemn prayer, particular confession of sin, especially of the sins of the day and place; and the whole day should be spent in prayer and meditation.

§56-6. On days of thanksgiving, he should give information respecting the authority and providences which call for the observance; and he should spend more than the usual time in giving thanks, agreeably to the occasion, and in singing Psalms or hymns of praise. On these days, the people should rejoice with holy gladness of heart; but their joy should be tempered with reverence.

CHAPTER 57

Christian Life in the Home

§57-1. In addition to corporate worship, Holy Trinity Church affirms the duty of each person in secret, and of every family in private, to worship God.

§57-2. Secret worship is most plainly enjoined by our Lord. In this duty everyone, apart, should spend some time in prayer, reading the Scriptures, holy meditation, and serious self-examination. The many advantages arising from a conscientious performance of these duties are best known to those who are found in the faithful discharge of them.

§57-3. Family worship, which should be observed by every family, consists in prayer, reading the Scriptures, and singing praises; or in some briefer forms of outspoken recognition of God.

§57-4. Parents should instruct their children in the Word of God, and in the principles of our holy faith. The reading of devotional literature should be encouraged and every proper opportunity should be embraced for religious instruction.

§57-5. Parents should set an examples of piety and consistent living before the family.

§57-6. In the supreme task of Christian education, parents should cooperate with the Church by setting their children an example in regular and punctual attendance upon the meetings of Holy Trinity Church and by leading them in the consistent application of the teachings of the gospel in their daily activities.

§57-7. The Christian home is a center of hospitality and family ministry towards others. Families should open their homes regularly to both strangers and fellow believers. In an open home the benefits of family worship and scriptural instruction, an atmosphere rich with the word of Christ, will overflow to the church and the non-believer alike.

SECTION III

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH'S
ANNOTATIONS TO THE
WESTMINSTER CONFESSIO
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OF FAITH

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH'S

ANNOTATIONS TO THE WESTMINSTER

CONFESSION OF FAITH

CHAPTER I, OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

^a The vocabulary of the Westminster Confession reflects a historic use of the English language which was appropriate for its time. When statements are made using masculine nouns or pronouns, where the context makes clear the referent is humanity in general, we understand and affirm both males and females to be intended.

^b We believe that the office and function of the Old Testament Prophet and New Testament Apostle no longer continue with the completion of the canon. However, the Holy Spirit continues to manifest himself in believers for the common good through a variety of spiritual gifts (see 1 Corinthians 12-14 and Romans 12:3-5).

CHAPTER II, OF GOD AND OF THE HOLY TRINITY

^c We interpret “...without...passions...” to intimate that God is not subject to capricious, unpredictable, or whimsical emotions as are we. God is in an eternal and unchangeable state of bliss, joy and contentment, neither suffering, nor in pain or want due to contingencies within his creation.

CHAPTER IV, OF CREATION

^d Although our confession explicitly states that God created in six days, we interpret Genesis chapter 1 as primarily a theological statement, rather than a modern scientific account of creation. Genesis chapter 1 does recount the actual historic events in the creation of all that exists, including time itself, using Hebraic literary

devices of symmetry and parallelism which correspond to the progression of the historical creative acts of God.

This said, we do not believe that it is necessarily beyond the power or will of God to have created in the space of six 24-hour days.

CHAPTER VI, OF THE FALL OF MAN, OF SIN, AND THE PUNISHMENT THEREOF

^e The doctrine of total depravity explained here is not to be understood that every person is as thoroughly depraved as possible, nor that we indulge in every form of sinful activity, nor that we are unable to admire beauty or perform virtuous actions, nor that we have lost all ability to discriminate between good and evil, but rather, that sin pervades every aspect of our lives, including, body, soul, mind, will and affections. However, every person has the potential of ever-increasing sinfulness and the ability to commit the most grievous evils. We are thus totally incapable of expressing any spiritual goodness toward God and we are guilty as such.

CHAPTER XIX, OF THE LAW OF GOD

^f See footnotes for chapter 21.

CHAPTER XX, OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND THE SABBATH DAY

^g The Confession is “strictly” Sabbatarian in its perspective. However, we affirm the Sabbath “principally”: that a believer is to set aside one day in seven, when their primary duty is to the public and private worship of God.

^h Chapter 21 of the Confession is fundamentally concerned with prescriptive expressions of corporate worship. However, the New Testament teaches that every area of the believer’s life is under the lordship of Christ and therefore is an expression of worship. Biblical

worship, therefore, is not limited to formal expressions but is the totality of a life lived in joyful obedience to God's Word.

ⁱ We do not believe that God has set in Scripture an exhaustive prescriptive statement limiting appropriate means for worship. Rather, the Scriptures provide guidelines, models and principles concerning what is and what is not permissible, beneficial, and edifying in corporate worship

^j In Colossians chapter 3 verse 16, the Apostle clearly teaches that not only psalms but various hymns and other spiritual songs are acceptable for corporate worship.

^k We believe to prescribe what an individual may or may not do on such a day is a violation of Christian liberty.

CHAPTER XXII, OF LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS

^l The Westminster Confession of Faith reflects the social and religious milieu of the 17th century. We find their use of inflammatory language throughout the Confession to be both unfortunate and unnecessary.

CHAPTER XXIII, OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE

^m We agree in principle with the Confession that the State is not to interfere with religion, but to protect the religious freedom of all faiths, except in cases where religious expressions are a clear violation of human rights, decency and propriety.

CHAPTER XXVIII, OF BAPTISM

ⁿ We believe the mode of Baptism to be irrelevant.

^o We acknowledge that there is sincere disagreement among prayerful Christians with respect to the Bible's teaching on infant baptism. In the interest of Christian liberty, believing parents should decide, after prayer, study

of the Scriptures and consultation with the Session, whether to baptize their children.

^p We believe baptism to be modeled in the New Testament, instituted by Christ's command and therefore is a necessary part of Christian discipleship. Baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration as well as a distinguishing mark setting apart the believer from the world and aligning them with the church. Therefore, baptism ought to be performed in close intimacy to conversion.

^q Individuals who desire to be rebaptized must seek the counsel of the Session.

CHAPTER XXIX, OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

^r We hold it a duty of the Session to ensure the administration of the Lord's Supper to the infirm and homebound, who are also in good standing within the Church.

CHAPTER XXX, OF CHURCH CENSURES

^s We understand the Confession's use of the words, "to retain, and remit sins" to be interpreted by the explanation here of admonition and censure.

CHAPTER XXXIII, OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

^t We interpret "everlasting destruction" to mean an eternal, unalterable, conscious suffering of punishment, out of the presence of God forever.