

13. A Gospel Church

We believe that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the teachings of Christ; governed by his spiritual laws, and **exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word**; that its scriptural officers are Bishops, or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

14. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer **into** the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a Church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the Church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

15. The Christian Sabbath

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath; and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations; by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for that rest that remains for the people of God.

16. Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates (*civil authorities*) are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the

conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

17. The Righteous and the Wicked

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

18. The World to Come

We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to durative punishment, and the righteous to durative joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles according to Christ's righteousness.

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A Common Christian Confession

1. The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

2. The True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three (*hypostases*) persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct and harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

3. The Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by self-willed causation Adam caused himself to distrust, and disobey the specific command from God to not eat from the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil; therefore he was cast down from that holy and happy state: He fell alongside in consequence of which fall-alongside mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but in *Adam's* choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

4. The Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is **wholly of grace**, through the One Mediator, the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; fulfilled the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death paid full redemption of us from our sins; that having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in His wonderful person the tender mercies with divine perfections, He is in every way qualified to be a propitious, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

5. Justification

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

6. The Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient

faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and self-caused disbelief of the gospel; which disbelief involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

7. The Gospel in Regeneration

We believe that sinners must believe the Gospel to be born again as the apostle Paul stated: "In Christ I generated you through the Gospel." Regeneration results in a giving of a **holy disposition** to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the commandments of Christ; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of continually believing, loving and knowing God; continually doing a definite kind of justice, and continually refusing to negate the testimony of Christ. Finally, that the Gospel precedes the moment of faith, and the new birth precedes the continuation of faith: The purpose of the Gospel is in order that one might believe; the result of the New Birth is continual faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: That all continuation of faith is exclusively attributed to the New Birth.

8. Repentance and Faith

We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred **inseparable duties**: That to mind-after the right-message is conjoined to our obligation to be believing that same message; whereby being convinced of our sin of not believing into Jesus, and of the way of His salvation, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, agreement and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

9. God's Purpose of Grace

We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, **according to His foreknowledge**: His foreknowledge of Israel is declared in Deuteronomy 7:7 where He announced the purpose for His love being **set upon** them and the reason for **His choice** of them as a nation. His election of all Christians today is according to His foreknowledge as well, according to which

foreknowledge He positions His love together with Christians; literally, onto us who believe, forever ascribing to us His purpose for setting His love onto us as expressly stated in Romans 5:8 While we were still devoted ones to negatively testify, God positioned His love together with us, onto us, to directly assure His purpose for loving us, both Jews and Gentiles.

10. Sanctification

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

11. The Preservation of the Saints

We believe that such only are born again believers as overcome the world; that their longsuffering and patience in Christ are the fruits of the Spirit which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

12. The Harmony of the Law and the Gospel

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love darkness of sin more than light of salvation; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and **of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church.**