

100 CHAPTER I – ARTICLES OF FAITH

The following Articles contain our confession of Christian Faith:

101 OF GOD

There is but one true and living God, an eternal Being, a Spirit without body, indivisible, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Creator and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible. In this Godhead there is a Trinity, of one substance and power, and coeternal, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

102 OF JESUS CHRIST

The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only begotten Son of God, was born of the Virgin Mary, grew into perfect manhood and became acquainted with all the infirmities, temptations, and sorrows of men. In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead, so that, uniting Deity and humanity in one Christ, He is sole Mediator between God and man. He gave His life a ransom for all and by His death on the cross made a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, wherein He abideth, our great High-Priest and King, and must reign until all things are put in subjection under Him.

103 OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, and of the same eternal nature, power, and glory, is everywhere present with men to convict of sin, work newness of life in them that believe, and lead them into all truth.

104 OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

By the Holy Scriptures we understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, which the church has at all times received as such. These books in order are as follows:

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, the Psalms, the Proverbs of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The New Testament

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts, Epistle to the Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, Epistle of James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude, Revelation.

These Scriptures, given by Divine inspiration, contain the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation; so that whatever is not contained therein nor can be proved thereby is not to be enjoined on any as an article of faith.

105 OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY

All men have sinned, and they inherit a depravity of nature that is continually propagated in the entire race of Adam. This corruption of nature so far removes them from the original righteousness of man that of themselves they have no ability to recover from their fallen condition but are continually inclined to that which is evil.

106 OF SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST

The love of God has made salvation possible to all through the mediation of Jesus Christ, whereby every man is graciously provided with freedom of will to accept or reject the offer of eternal life.

107 OF REPENTANCE

Repentance is sorrow for sin, wrought in the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. The awakened sinner is thereby made to recognize the holiness of God, the righteousness of His law and the guilt and shame of his own perverse nature. Thus deeply humbled, he turns unto God and forsakes his sins.

108 OF JUSTIFICATION

Justification is that act of God by which, when we yield ourselves in full confidence to our Savior, Jesus Christ, we are freely acquitted from the guilt of sin and accounted righteous in His sight. We are accordingly justified, not by works which we perform, but by faith in Him who died for us.

109 OF REGENERATION

Regeneration is that work of the Holy Spirit wrought in us whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature and experience newness of life in Christ Jesus. By this new birth, the believer becomes a child of God, receives the spirit of adoption, and is made an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

110 OF THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

The witness of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God, the heavenly Comforter, immediately convinces the regenerate believer that he has passed from death unto life, that his sins are all forgiven, and that he is a child of God.

111 OF SANCTIFICATION

Entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, is a state of righteousness and true holiness that every regenerate believer may attain. It consists in being cleansed from all sin; loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength; and loving our neighbor as ourselves. This gracious state of perfect love is attainable in this life by faith, both gradually and instantaneously, and should be earnestly sought by every child of God; but it does not deliver us from the infirmities, ignorance and mistakes that are common to man.

112 OF GOOD WORKS

The Holy Spirit dwelling in man begets within him love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, temperance, and all other ennobling virtues, and these show themselves in numerous outward acts, which become so many evidences of a living faith. Although such good works cannot put away sin, they are ever well-pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God.

113 OF APOSTASY

The gracious help of God is pledged to all those who continue steadfast in faith; but, on account of man's free will, which no power may coerce, apostasy from God is possible so long as we continue in the flesh. Wherefore, constant watchfulness, prayer, and holy living are necessary on the part of man, lest he fall away from the grace of God, grieve and quench the Holy Spirit, and lose his soul at last.

114 OF IMMORTALITY

The soul of man is immortal and, on its separation from the body at death, continues in a conscious state of existence in the world of spirits. It there either enters into bliss or undergoes torment, according to its character as formed and fixed in the present life.

115 OF THE RESURRECTION

Christ did truly rise from the dead and took again his own body and ascended into heaven. Likewise, all the dead shall be raised up by the power of God through Christ, both the just and the unjust; but those who have done good shall come forth unto an eternal life of glory, and those who have wrought wickedness shall be adjudged to everlasting punishment.

116 OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT

God has appointed a day in which He will judge all men by Jesus Christ, to whom is committed the judgment of this world. We must all, accordingly, appear before the judgment seat of Christ who will judge in righteousness in accordance with the gospel and our response thereto.

117 OF HEAVEN

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has provided for those who are redeemed by His grace a heavenly and eternal rest, into which He purposes ultimately to gather them and dwell with them in unspeakable glory. There shall be no more sorrow, pain, or death, and the glorified saints shall see God and walk in His light forever.

118 OF HELL

The incorrigible sinner, having rejected Christ and all the offers and opportunities of grace, is without God and without hope in the world and makes himself a child of Satan. When he dies, his soul awakes to the torment of hell, from which there is no promise or hope of deliverance, but the sentence of everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels.

119 OF THE CHURCH

The holy general church consists of the great body of believers who confess the Lord Jesus Christ and have life in Him. The individual church is a congregation or society of Christian believers, in which the pure worship of God is maintained, His holy word is preached, and His commandments and ordinances are sacredly observed.

120 OF THE MINISTRY

The ministry of the gospel is a sacred office and calling, ordained by Christ for the proclamation of His truth in all the world and for the orderly administration of the sacraments, the worship, and the *Discipline of the Evangelical Congregational Church*. No man may assume this office without the conviction of a divine call thereto and the recognition and ratification of that call by the church.

121 OF BAPTISM

The sacrament of baptism is the formal application of water to an infant, or to an adult believer, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, as a visible sign and seal that the person so consecrated stands in a holy covenant relation to God and His people.

122 OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is not merely a token of love and union that Christians ought to have among themselves but is a sacrament instituted in memory of the sufferings and death of Christ, whereby those who rightly and worthily receive the same partake of the body and blood of Christ by faith, not in a bodily but in a spiritual manner, in eating the broken bread and in drinking the blessed cup. We thereby also continually show forth our Christian faith and hope.

123 OF CHURCH POLITY

The Lord Jesus Christ ordained no particular form of government for His church, so that whatever polity, rules, regulations, rites, and ceremonies are adopted and approved by common authority, and are not repugnant to the Word of God, may be acknowledged as sufficient to constitute a true church of the living God. Such polity, rules, rites, and ceremonies may be lawfully changed from time to time, as the needs of men and the diversity of nations, countries, and manners may require.

124 OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT

Civil government is an ordinance of God, grounded in the necessities of human nature and essential to the maintenance of public order, the security of personal rights, and the punishment of evil-doers. It is the duty of all men to be subject to the supreme authority of the country in which they reside and to respect and honor the civil magistrates.

125 OF THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD

The gospel is designed for all nations, its field of operation is the whole world, and the church and people of God are under solemn obligation to make known its saving truth and power among the heathen. To this great work we are impelled and encouraged by the command of the Lord and the promises and prophecies of the Holy Scriptures.