

## A Summary Overview of the

### 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith (LBCF)

Errol Hale

**Why the Confession?** The Confession is an essential component of the Statement of Faith of Grace Bible Church of Moorpark. To become a member of our church, one must affirm the Confession. We can discuss differences of opinion on lesser details. If they are in fact lesser details, differences would not exclude a person from membership—so long as the person understood this is what we teach, and they would agree not to discuss those differences with others in the body in a manner that would be divisive or undermining our church's convictions.

**Why such a short summary of the Confession?** While the Confession is an essential component of the statement of faith at Grace Bible Church of Moorpark, it is not easy for all modern readers to read with understanding. Here are two reasons: (1) The Confession was written in the 1600's when the English language and common sentence structure were different from the English language as it is today. (2) The Confession may be considered more doctrinally technical than some can easily understand. We do not want to limit church membership only to individuals with more advanced reading skills. Nor do we expect all church members to understand the doctrinal precision of the Confession. While it would be important for every elder to be able to read and understand the Confession as originally written, we only require church members to understand and affirm the more detailed points of the Confession.

**A word about how this summary is presented.** (1) The summary does not contain every point made in the Confession. (2) There are additional points made in the summary that are not mentioned in the Confession. These are noted. (3) Scripture references are not exhaustive. Many more references could be cited. Those sections of the summary that include scriptural citations are primarily those that are directly associated with scripture passages. Many sections of the summary have no scriptural citations, not because they are not scriptural, but because they are based either on numerous passages, and / or the overall teaching of the Bible, making specific citations less clear.

**INTRODUCTION:** Confessions are not a replacement for the Bible. They are important, however, because they help to ensure that we have a uniform and Orthodox interpretation of the Bible. It's simply not enough to say, "I believe the Bible," since many non-Christian cults and isms also claim to "believe the Bible." While all believers may not embrace every doctrine set forth in a particular confession, we do not believe that only those who subscribe to this Confession are Christians. However, being members together in a local church does require a more uniform understanding of doctrine. We do not, therefore, want to divide the Body of Christ based on the LBCF, we do believe the Confession encourages like-minded believers in a local church to celebrate our unity.

**CHAPTER ONE: THE BIBLE.** The London Baptist confession begins by affirming the place of Scripture in the Christian faith. This is an important place to begin since the Bible provides the only unchanging objective source for everything we know about Christianity. We do not worship the Word of God, we worship the God of the Word, but the only way to be sure we know Him accurately is through careful study of the Bible. We believe in the sole authority of God's Word the Bible. The Bible is made up of all the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is given by inspiration of God (meaning it

is the actual words of God to humanity) (2 Timothy 3:16-17). As God's Word the Bible is without error (since God cannot err) and is therefore supremely authoritative (since God is supremely authoritative.)

**CHAPTER TWO: GOD AND THE TRINITY.** The doctrine of God, including the Trinity (God's tri-unity) is the most important issue after the Bible because it is God whom we worship and serve. This chapter of the Confession provides instruction about God's character, and particularly about the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is simply that there is only one true and living God (Isaiah 45:5) who is also three distinct Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)—distinct but never separated. This doctrine has long been a litmus test for orthodoxy since when a person denies the Trinity it's likely that he'll be wrong about many other doctrines as well.

**CHAPTER THREE: GOD'S DECREES.** The doctrine of God's decrees is simply that whatever God decrees, will come to pass; and all things that come to pass, God has decreed (Isaiah 46:10). God has decreed all things, from all eternity past. God's decrees are not based on His foreknowledge of what will happen. Rather, His decrees determine all things that will happen. His decrees cannot be thwarted or changed. How do we understand that God has decreed all things, including things that are bad? God's decrees take into consideration what His creature will do (including evil things) (Acts 4:27-28). He decrees to permit His creatures to act sinfully for the accomplishment of His purposes. He does this without ever forcing His creatures to sin, and is therefore never responsible for their sin (James 1:13).

**CHAPTER FOUR: CREATION.** The doctrine of Creation is foundational and vitally important. Jesus and the Apostle Paul referred to the creation order when explaining difficult issues (Matthew 19:4-6, 1 Timothy 2:13-14). In so doing, they both affirm the creation as both true and pivotal. Satan has sought to get rid of the doctrine of creation in order to do away with God. He has only succeeded in the minds of those who disbelieve what nature tells us and who listen instead to those who hate God. The doctrine of creation also establishes the fact that everything has purpose. Denial of creation, and therefore a Creator says everything is due to chance. If that were so, life has no meaning. Since that is not true, life has particular meaning as determined by God. We teach a literal six-day creation as described in the Bible (Genesis 1:31).

**CHAPTER FIVE: PROVIDENCE.** The doctrine of God's providence teaches that God is not only the Creator, but the Sustainer of all things (Colossians 1:17). Providence may be understood as God's sovereign, benevolent, and just provision for His creatures. Providence teaches that God is not distant and uninvolved, but near and involved. Nothing happens by random impersonal change. Rather, all things happen because of God's purposeful and personal providence. And since God is only always good, His providence is always good, even when we do not understand it, or like it!

**CHAPTER SIX: THE FALL OF MAN, SIN, AND PUNISHMENT.** Like the doctrine of creation, the doctrine of the fall is vital to Christianity. We believe that when Adam sinned all his descendants sinned in him (Romans 5:12). All of Adam's descendants are therefore born into sin and under God's just condemnation (Romans 5:17). This is an important doctrine because it establishes the universal need for a Savior. In the same way that all in Adam are sinners, all who by faith in Christ are forgiven (Romans 5:17-21). We believe in the depravity of mankind and that Jesus Christ is mankind's only hope for salvation. (Please read Romans 5:12-21.)

**CHAPTER SEVEN: GOD'S COVENANT.** God established a covenant of works with Adam, a covenant which Adam broke by disobeying God (Genesis 2:16-17, 3:12-13). Adam, and therefore all of Adam's

descendants, deserve God's wrath (Romans 1:16-17). Instead of pouring out His wrath on all mankind, however, God has been pleased to establish His covenant of grace. God decreed both the initial covenant of works and the subsequent covenant of grace, by His grace, since God owed nothing whatsoever to mankind, before or after Adam sinned. The covenant of Grace is not God's "Plan B." The initial revelation of the covenant of grace was given in the Garden of Eden after Adam sinned when God promised Adam that salvation would be provided by the seed of a woman (Genesis 3:15). Throughout the Old Testament God progressively revealed more of the details of this covenant of grace until it was manifested in its fullness in Jesus Christ (Luke 22:19-20). We believe that no one has ever been saved except by God's grace alone through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). Old Testament believers did not know the details about Jesus Christ. Theirs was a faith in what God would do. Ours is a faith in what God has done through Jesus Christ. It is all by God's grace.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CHRIST THE MEDIATOR. The Confession teaches and we believe that there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). No mere human priest or angel can mediate for sinners. Only Jesus Christ, who is both fully human and fully divine, can be our Mediator. Both the humanity and the Deity of Christ are essential. The perfect Mediator is equal to, and is one with, both parties He represents. He had to be a man to be able to live and die for us (God cannot die). He had to be God to be worthy to die in our place (no sinner can die and take away the sins of another sinner). Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead to secure salvation for those He came to save (1 Corinthians 15: 3-4, 12-20).

CHAPTER NINE: FREE WILL. Before he sinned, Adam was the only human who had a truly free will. When Adam sinned his will and the will of all of his descendants became enslaved to sin (John 8:34, Romans 6:16-23). While sinful people can and do make decisions, our wills, enslaved by sin, can do nothing that is untainted by sin. Thankfully, unsaved people are not as sinful as they could be. People who have been born again have had their wills freed from slavery to sin (Romans 6:6-9). Though believers are free not to sin, even the redeemed are incapable of being sinless in this life. When we are glorified in Heaven, we will not sin at all, ever again (Revelation 21:27).

CHAPTER TEN: THE EFFECTUAL CALL. This doctrine teaches that all who God decrees to be saved will be saved. Jesus said, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). In that sentence the "called" are those who hear the outward call; the "chosen" are those who have received the effectual call." Everyone who hears the gospel proclaimed hears an outward call of God, but because of sin no one is able respond to it. It is only as the Holy Spirit of God opens blind eyes and deaf ears that any can hear the effectual call. Therefore, we believe that salvation is not based on human ability to persuade people through any outward call, to believe and repent, but rather on the work of the Holy Spirit who issues the effectual call enabling and causing the elect to believe and repent (John 1:11-13). The effectual call is issued in conjunction with an outward call as the gospel is proclaimed. The outward call (proclamation of the gospel) is God's appointed means to communicate the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:22-24, Romans 10:13-15), but the outward call alone will not be effectual apart from the Ministry of the Holy Spirit of God (John 3:5-6). The effectual call is what happens when we are born again (John 3:3). We are not born again because we believe and repent; rather, we believe and repent because we are born again (John 10:26-28).

CHAPTER ELEVEN: JUSTIFICATION. Justification is God's declaration that sinners are righteous through faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. Justification is not based on human effort or merit

whatsoever. It is based solely on God's grace. When a person is justified, he is not made righteous. He is declared righteous and there is a difference. Unrighteousness continues to exist even in believers. Justification takes place when we believe, but we believe only because by God's grace we have been born again (Romans 3:23). All who are justified will be saved, and will remain saved until the end (Romans 8:29-30).

CHAPTER TWELVE: ADOPTION. All believers are adopted into the family of God (Ephesians 1:5). The adopted children of God become "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:16-17)—meaning that we receive equal inheritance with Jesus of everything, except the adopted children of God will never be divine. Divinity belongs solely to the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ. (Please read Romans 8:14-17).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: SANCTIFICATION. After a person is justified by grace through faith which is a one-time action by God, the process called sanctification begins. During this lifelong process, God incrementally changes us, making us more holy. Through sanctification we are becoming like what we have been declared to be when we were justified. All who are justified are being, and will be sanctified (Philippians 1:6). Sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:16). Unlike justification that is solely the work of the Holy spirit, sanctification requires our participation (Philippians 2:12). Our participation, however, is only possible because of the work of God's Spirit in us (Philippians 2:13). No one is perfectly sanctified or made completely holy in this life. The task is completed only when we are glorified, either when we die or at Christ's Second Coming, whichever occurs first. We believe that all Christians are called to holiness (1 Thessalonians 4:3, 1 Peter 1:15-16).

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: FAITH. This chapter teaches that saving faith does not originate in us. It is a gift of God's grace given to the elect by the Holy Spirit. The usual means through which we receive this gift is through hearing the Word of God. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Our faith is strengthened as we apply other means of grace including the sacraments, prayer, fellowship, and so, on. It is through God-given faith, that believers trust God for salvation and then with every other aspect of their lives. True saving faith may be weak, or it may be strong. True saving faith lasts even though the believer may suffer setbacks and lapses in faith. That saving faith lasts, sets it apart from the faith possessed by non-believers and those who seem to believe for a time, but who later fall away.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: REPENTANCE TO LIFE AND SALVATION. Repentance is a necessary component of salvation. Repentance, like faith, is a gift of God (Acts 11:18), which means it is not a meritorious work of human origin. God gives His elect an awareness of sin and a heart to turn from it. Repentance does not mean that a person has ceased to sin altogether. It means that whereas one had a greater desire for sin than righteousness before one was saved; once that person is saved he has a God-given prevailing desire for righteousness that is greater than his former desire for sin. Repentance does not end when one is initially saved. Repentance is to be practiced throughout one's Christian life, repenting of particular known sins, particularly. This is an important means by which believers are preserved unto salvation. While every sin is equally damning, no sins in a believers life are beyond God's forgiveness when one truly repents.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: GOOD WORKS. What constitutes good works is up to God not to men. "Good works" performed by those who are dead in sin are not good in God's eyes—and are in fact, no better than "filthy rags" in His sight (Isaiah 64:6). Therefore, not only do the bad deeds performed by the lost

count against them, so are their “good works.” The only truly good works are performed by those who have been redeemed. These good works are done in obedience to God’s commands, in the strength of the Holy Spirit. These good works are the fruit and evidence of true salvation. Jesus said, “by their fruits you will know them” (Matthew 7:16-20). While we are not saved by good works we are saved for good works according to Ephesians 2:8-10. Those who do truly good works have the desire and the ability to do them because of God’s grace. It is impossible to do more good works that are required since what is required is absolute perfection. Good works do not add to our standing before God since our standing before God is not based on our works anyway but on the finished work of Christ on the cross.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS. Those who are truly saved by God’s grace are also kept by God’s grace (Romans 8:31-39). No one who truly believes ever becomes a non-believer. Those who seem to be believers but who fall away are either disobedient saints who need to repent (2 Corinthians 7:10), or else they were never believers (1 John 2:19). In many cases only God knows. Perseverance, like all else that ends in salvation, is a work of God before it is a work of man. We persevere with Him only because He preserves with us (Hebrews 13:5). This is a great comfort to those who walk with the Lord. Those who profess faith in Christ but who do not persevere in sanctifying spiritual growth and obedience have no room for assurance of their salvation (1 John 2:3-6).

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: ASSURANCE OF GRACE AND SALVATION. There is no shortage of people who are sure they are saved—but who are not! (Matthew 7:21-23) This is false assurance usually based on the common unbiblical practice of telling people who have just repeated a “sinner’s prayer,” that they should have assurance of salvation. True biblical assurance is based on fruitful obedience. 1 John 2:3-4 says, “By this we know we know him if we keep his Commandments. He who says I know him and does not keep his Commandments is a liar and the truth is not in Him.” Therefore, while salvation is by grace through faith, in some sense assurance is ours as we persevere in grateful obedience.”

CHAPTER NINETEEN: THE LAW OF GOD. God wrote His law on the heart of Adam having also given him a very specific law not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). Adam broke the law of obedience written on his heart and he broke the specific precept given to him by God concerning the tree (Genesis 3:6). This law that was written on Adam’s heart continued to be the perfect rule of righteousness after the fall until the much more detailed law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai (Romans 5:12-14). The law given to Moses had three parts. The law given to Moses was in part moral, it was in part ceremonial or religious, and third, it was civil. The ceremonial or religious law given to Israel was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The civil law expired when the nation of Israel ceased to be a civil government. But the moral law of God is still binding (as are the moral principles in both the ceremonial and civil laws). Grace does not free us from the demand of righteousness of God’s law (Romans 7:12). It only frees us from the inability to perform it and condemnation for our failure to do so (Romans 7:6. 8:1).

CHAPTER TWENTY: THE GOSPEL, THE EXTENT OF THE GRACE OF THE GOSPEL. The gospel in three points is simply: (a) All mankind is ruined by sin. (b) God has graciously supplied the only remedy for salvation. That remedy is Jesus Christ who took the penalty we deserved and supplied us with the reward of righteousness that He alone deserves. And (c) each must receive Jesus Christ by faith alone, in Christ alone, accompanied and validated by repentance. The gospel is only made known through the Word of God (Romans 10:13), therefore the Word of God must be preached since no one comes to salvation by looking at nature or based on any sort of natural or metaphysical light (Romans 10:13-14). While

preaching the gospel is the only outward means of communicating salvation (1 Corinthians 1:18-25) , preaching alone without the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit of God will not produce salvation in anyone (John 15:5). Once again, that's the difference between the outward call (preaching) and the effectual call (the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit). All who believe the gospel and repent will be saved, and do so only by the sovereign grace of God (John 3:3-5).

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE. Once saved, believers are freed from guilt, from condemnation, from the wrath of God, the curse of the law, the world, and from bondage to sin and Satan. This Christian freedom is given to all believers and only to believers. Christian liberty does not give believers freedom to "sin so that grace may abound" (Romans 6:1-2). Conscience is not the only arbiter of what is right and wrong since the conscience may be incorrectly programmed. Only God has the right to say what is right and what is wrong. So, the popular notion of, "If it's not wrong to you, then it's not wrong." is wholly unbiblical. For example, some people might not think it's wrong to commit adultery, but God says it is. While this chapter doesn't address this particularly, let it also be understood that the Bible teaches while a believer may have liberty in certain areas of his life, he should not exercise his Liberty at the expense of those around him who may observe him in his liberty; who then either sin by judging him or sin by following him into activities that are contrary to the convictions that God has given them. Our freedom to exercise our liberties end where our weaker brothers or sisters may be harmed. Read Romans 14 for more on this subject.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND THE SABBATH DAY. There are many ways in which people purport to worship God, but the only acceptable way of worship God is established by God and revealed in His Word the Bible. Therefore, we are not free to worship God in our own way, or any way we choose (Deuteronomy 12). We are to worship God only, never any other created being or thing (Luke 4:8). We worship through biblical prayer. We worship God through the reading of the Bible and hearing the Bible preached. We worship God through exhortations. We worship God through music and singing. We worship God through the sacraments.

Worship is not made valid because of the location in which it is offered since God is everywhere so the idea that you can only worship in a church is not valid (John 4:20-21). God is to be worshipped in private by individuals, in homes by families, and in public worship services or at church. Worship must be reverent but at times it is also celebrative.

Regarding the Sabbath: At the time of creation God established the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath and said that this is to be a special time for worship. Because of that, the concept of the Sabbath predates the Law of Moses. This refutes those who refuse to honor the Sabbath claiming, "We're not under The Law of Moses." When God gave His Law to Moses, He commanded His people to worship Him on the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath was on the seventh day from creation (Genesis 2:1-3) until the resurrection of Christ. Since the resurrection of Christ, God's people have gathered for corporate worship on the first day which is known in scripture in the New Testament as "the Lord's Day" rather than on the Sabbath of the seventh day (Revelation 1:10). The observance of the Sabbath is to be perpetuated until the end of the world even though it is done on the Lord's Day; on Sunday rather than on Saturday. The Sabbath is to be kept holy unto the Lord by ceasing commerce and by honoring the Lord in worship (Exodus 20:8-11). It is not just another day off to do as we please. We do not establish a set of do's and don'ts for Christians regarding how they should keep the Sabbath. Sadly there seem to be many more professing believers who do not honor the Sabbath than those who do. We would

encourage all to prayerfully seek the Lord by studying the scriptures on the matter, and then doing as God's Word commands.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE: LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS. Certain oaths are not bad as long as they're kept. These might include vowing to tell the truth in a court of law, or making wedding vows. Sinful oaths would include making vows that one cannot, or will not keep (Ecclesiastes 5:5), or invoking God's name simply to strengthen a promise. Oaths and vows ought never be a bargaining chip with God such as, "Get me out of this mess and I'll never do \_\_\_\_\_ again." Using God's name as a part of an oath is not necessarily sinful as long as God's name is called upon in reverence and as long as the oath is kept (Deuteronomy 10:20). Religious vows that are not prescribed in the Word of God are better not to be entered into because they tend to be superstitious and they are usually not kept which makes them snares into sin.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE. God, who is the Supreme Ruler over all things, has ordained all civil authorities (Romans 13:1), for His glory, even the ones we may not like. Therefore, Christians must submit to the governing authorities and be the best citizens they can be in any nation in which they find themselves (Romans 1:1-2). God has established civil authorities for the public good. They are charged by God to give encouragement to those who do good and to punish evildoers (Romans 13:3-7). Civil authorities are given the right to use the sword which means they can use force as a means to accomplish these ends to keep law and order (Romans 13:4-5). Christians can be civil authorities, be it in politics, law enforcement, military, etc. When a Christian is in a position of civil authority, he should be the very best in that position. Why? Because he knows God who has ordained the position and placed him in that position.

The Confession states that Christians must be in subjection in all lawful things. This means that when the government commands a person to do what God forbids or forbids a person to do what God commands, we must not obey the government. We must disobey respectfully, however, because we are members of God's elect. The Confession does not state this specifically, but we believe that while God has given the state the sword, allowing the state to use force, He has not given the sword (other than the Bible) to the Church. Therefore, while we believe that civil authorities are to do God's will the civil authorities are not called, and are therefore forbidden, to use their position to force religion of any sort. They certainly must not use the sword to accomplish religious ends even those ends that might be Christ's honoring. Force cannot be used for religious purposes either by the Church or by the civil government.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE: MARRIAGE. Marriage was ordained and instituted by God from the beginning (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18-25). Marriage is to be one man and one woman, for life. All sexual expressions that are not heterosexual and monogamous are, therefore, sinful. All sexual unions that are forbidden in the Bible, including incestuous unions, are sinful (Leviticus 18:8-18, 20:11-21). Once either partner in a marriage is deceased the living partner is free to remarry (1 Corinthians 7:39).

God's ordained purposes for biblical marriage include: companionship (Genesis 2:18), for mutual help of the husband and the wife (Genesis 2:18), both for procreation being fruitful and multiplying (Genesis 1:26-27), reproducing godly offspring (Malachi 2:15), and as a means to avoid sexual uncleanness or sexual sin (1 Corinthians 7:2-5). Christians may only marry Christians (Deuteronomy 7:1-4, 1 Corinthians 7:39). Godly Christians should not marry worldly Christians or those who embrace theological heresy even if they profess to know Christ. Disobedience in this matter leads only to trouble.

Though this is not in the confession, God permits divorce because of the hardness of our hearts, but only on the grounds of sexual infidelity (Matthew 16:8-9)

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX: THE CHURCH. This is the longest chapter in the Confession. It teaches that there is one invisible Church made up of all the elect of God throughout all ages. Christ is the Head over the Church (Colossians 1:8), and there is no other head. All professing Christians (whether they are saved or not) make up the visible Church. No local church or fellowship of churches is perfect. Some churches may degenerate to the extent that they should no longer be recognized as New Testament churches. All those called to Christ are called to associate with a local church for worship, edification, and accountability. Each local church is to (a) preach God's Word, (b) lead the saints in worship including the observance of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and (c) exercise biblical church discipline when necessary.

Each local church is to have leaders and members. Those called to be pastors, elders or deacons in a local church must be chosen with all seriousness. They are to be ordained by the laying on of hands by the eldership of that local church. Elders are to minister to the local church particularly in the Word and in prayer (Acts 6:4). Elders are to shepherd the flock since they will have to give an account to God for their ministry (Hebrews 13:17). The church is to supply the temporal needs for their vocational elders (pastors) so that the pastors do not need to be entangled by secular employment which would distract them from their ministries (1 Timothy 5:17-18). Elders must preach the Word (1 Timothy 3:2), but others gifted and approved by the eldership may also preach.

Church members must not allow differences and offenses to keep them from participating in the church, rather they should wait on the Lord to solve problems between people working through the elders as mediators if necessary. This is particularly important since there are an increasing number of people who say, "I don't go to church anymore because I had a bad experience." Sorry. That's not a legitimate excuse to drop out of the Church of Jesus Christ. We must solve our problems, forgiving those who have wronged us, and seeking forgiveness from those that we have wronged (James 5:16).

Local churches must pray for and support the existence of all other true churches everywhere, never adopting the attitude that "We are the only church." Local churches should be associated with other like-minded churches. One reason is that when there is a dispute or division in a local church sister churches can serve as mediators and provide objective biblical counsel. If a local church refuses to heed the counsel, the association of churches has no jurisdiction over that local church, meaning the Association cannot dictate what the church must do. However if a local church is deemed to be in sin and will not repent, the association may mark that local church and disfellowship that church, making the decision to disfellowship the problem church known to the rest of the churches in the association.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN: THE COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS. Believers must not forsake the fellowship of the Saints (Hebrews 10:24-25), but rather, serve one another together under the headship of Christ (Galatians 5:13). We are saved individually, but we are saved to be in the corporate Body of Christ, the Church.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT: BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER. These are the only two ordinances / sacraments of the church established by Jesus Christ, and are to be observed by His people, in the local church, until the end of the world. Except in a case when there is no church, the ordinances /

sacraments are to be administered by those who are qualified and recognized by the local church, under the headship of Christ.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE: BAPTISM. This chapter provides more detail concerning Baptism. Baptism is a sign of one's fellowship with Christ and one's association with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Colossians 2:11-12). Baptism is a sign of having one's sins washed away (1 Peter 3:21). Only believers are to be baptized (Acts 2:41, 8:12, 8:36-37, although (v.37) does not appear in all Greek texts). Baptisms are to be in water, by immersion (Matthew 3:16), in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20).

CHAPTER THIRTY: THE LORD'S SUPPER. This chapter provides more detail concerning the Lord's Supper, also known as Communion. Christ instituted the Supper on the night on which he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies (1 Corinthians 11:23). The Lord's Supper is to be observed in Christ's Church until the end of the world as a remembrance of Him (1 Corinthians 11:24-25) showing the sacrifice He made for His people. The Supper provides spiritual nourishment for believers who receive in faith. The Supper also serves to unify the church. The Supper is not a sacrifice made for sin, but a remembrance of the one and only final sacrifice for sin made by Christ as he offered His body and His blood for His people. Following the example of the Lord himself, those who administer the elements of bread and wine are to bless the elements and distribute them to the communicants. Communion is for Christians only. Non-believers are forbidden to receive the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:29).

Because the Confession was written in the 1600s, when tensions between Protestants and Roman Catholics were higher, the authors also included warnings against the following serious errors: (1) The church must not deny the cup to the people except as a duly recognized means of church discipline. (2) The communion elements must not be lifted up or worshiped. (3) The presence of Christ in the elements is spiritual, not physical. The bread, although called "the body of Christ," does not become the actual flesh of Jesus; nor does the cup, though called "the blood of Christ," actually become the blood of Jesus. The elements remain symbols.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE: THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH AND OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. When we die, our physical bodies will become dust (genesis 3:19), but our souls will live on (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Our souls do not die, nor do they sleep. All human souls will immediately go to God who made them (1 Corinthians 5:8) and He will then judge them (Hebrews 9:27). The souls of believers will be received into paradise where they will be forever with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8). The redeemed shall see the face of God (1 John 3:2), waiting in glory until the resurrection when they will receive glorified bodies (1 Corinthians 15:35-58) and be forever honored with Christ. The souls of non-believers will be cast into hell where they will remain in torment and in utter darkness until the resurrection when they will also receive bodies that will not die and they will forever be dishonored (Revelation 20:12-15). The Bible does not speak of any third category of person, or of any third place. There are believers and non-believers, heaven and hell. That is all. There will be some who are still alive at the time of the final resurrection. They shall not die but shall be changed and go into eternity with new bodies that will never die; the saved going to honor in heaven, and the lost going to dishonor in Hell (1 Corinthians 15:52-54).

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE: THE FINAL JUDGMENT. God has set one day to judge the world in righteousness. God's Judgment will be done by the Son (John 5:22). Apostate angels and all humans who have ever lived will be judged on that day. Each will have to give an account of his thoughts, words,

and deeds, receiving just judgment whether for good or evil (Revelation 20:12-13). On this day of judgment God will be glorified for His grace and mercy lavished upon the redeemed; and He shall be glorified for His righteous judgment and wrath poured out on the lost (Romans 9:18-24). The saved shall then go into eternity with God wherein they will enjoy their everlasting reward (Revelation 21-22). The lost shall then go into eternity of torment and everlasting destruction (Revelation 20:12-15). Both Hell and Heaven are real. They are eternal, and their inhabitants are alive and aware forever. Biblical teaching about the Day of Judgment is important for at least three reasons: (1) For the lost, too persuade the wicked to repent. (2) For the saved, as it reminds them to be watchful of their souls, making their calling an election sure (2 Peter 1:10-11), and watching for the Second Coming of the Lord which is the believer's blessed hope (Titus 2:11-14). (3) For the righteous who suffer in this life because it gives them consolation reminding them that their tribulations in this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is yet to be revealed (Romans 8:16-18).

CONCLUSION: That concludes this overview of the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689. May it not only help you better understand the Confession, but prompt you read the Confession now that you know what it is about. Because this Confession is a part of the statement of faith for Grace Bible Church it is important to understand it if you are considering membership in our church. Of course, if you have any questions about the Confession or its contents, feel free to ask. May the Lord richly bless you.

e:\literature\booklets\LBCF1689-Overview Booklet 8-2018