

I. INSPIRATION

A. "We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as verbally inspired of God and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Verbally: This refers to the fact that the Bible, even its very words, are true and without error in the original writings. Therefore, more than just the thought or concept is inspired, but also every word is inspired (Matt. 5:17,18; Prov. 30:5,6). The word "plenary" is often used with "verbal" to give the view that all Scripture is fully and equally inspired (II Tim. 3:16,17).

2. Inspired (Inspiration): Inspiration is that particular work of God by which the Holy Spirit, becoming the co-author of Scripture, supernaturally directed the writers of Scripture, and without excluding their human intelligence, their individuality, their literary style, their personal feelings, or any other human factor, they recorded God's own complete and coherent message to men in perfect accuracy and the very words of the Bible bear the authority of this divine authorship. Inspiration is not equivalent to dictation except in certain instances, as God uses the experience, feelings, and thinking of the human author. The end result, however, is just as accurate as if God, Himself, had taken the pen. Hence, the Scriptures were inspired or breathed out by God and, though the authors were fallible men, what they wrote was without error (II Peter 1:20,21). Inspiration does not suppress intellectual ability and talents, but rather uses that intellectual ability and talents (Luke 1:1-3; II Sam. 23:2).

3. Inerrant: Inerrant means that the Scriptures in their original writings were without error (John 10:35; Luke 16:17).

4. Final Authority: The Scriptures are God's special revelation (communication of truth) to man and because they are inspired and inerrant they become our final authority. However, be careful to note what the Bible indicates as not being authoritative, such as Satan's statement to Eve in the Garden of Eden, "Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:4,5; II Tim. 3:16,17).

II. TRINITY

A. "We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit: three in one, co-equal, which is the Trinity."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Eternally Existing: There is but one God (Isa. 45:5; Mark 12:29-32) who has no beginning and no ending (Psa. 90:3; Gen. 1:1).
2. Three In One: The words or thoughts of man can never fully define the doctrine of the Trinity. However, the Bible clearly describes the Trinity as being three persons, co-equal, eternally existing--yet one (I Cor. 13:12; Matt. 28:19).
3. Co-Equal:
 - a. The Bible tells us that the Father is God (John 6:27; Romans 1:7).
 - b. The Son is recognized as God (John 1:1, 20:28; Heb. 1:8; I John 5:20; Phil. 2:6).
 - c. The Holy Spirit is also identified as God.

III. INCARNATION

A. "We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Jesus Christ: He was God-man. Two natures (deity-humanity) in one person. The relationship is such that there is no dividing of person and no confounding of two natures (John 1:1,14).
2. Conceived of the Holy Spirit: This was a divine act of God (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:26-38).
3. Born of the Virgin Mary: The Son of God was born of a woman, who was a virgin (Matt. 1:18-25; Isa. 7:14).

IV. HOLY SPIRIT

A. "We believe in the Holy Spirit, third Person of the Trinity, Who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He is the life of every believer, and He empowers the preaching and teaching of the Gospel."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity--equal with the Father and Son (John 14:16,17; Matt. 28:19).
2. Convicts: This purpose of the Holy Spirit is seen in Christ's words in John 16:7-11. He also restrains Satan until God's purpose is fulfilled (II Thess. 2:7).
3. Life: The Holy Spirit is the agent of the New Birth (John 3:5-7). At the moment of conversion a believer is regenerated, indwelt, sealed, and baptized into the Body of Believers (I Cor. 12:13). After conversion, the Holy Spirit is the strength and guide of the believer's life (Eph. 1:13; John 16:13; Rom. 8:26,27). The believer is commanded to continually be filled with the Holy Spirit. This yielding to the control of God in our lives is the fullness for power and guidance Eph. 5:8
4. Empowers: He empowers the spreading of God's Word in testimony, preaching and practical living (John 15:26,27).

V. MAN

A. "We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and those who reach moral responsibility become sinners in thought, word and deed."

B. This statement is self-defining. We will merely take the phrases and give Scriptural references.

1. Created in the Image of God: Gen. 1:27; 5:1; I Cor. 11:7
2. Separation from God: When man, of his own free will, chose to disobey God, he sinned (the breaking of God's law). Sin separates us from God. As a sinner, man incurs not only physical death, but also spiritual death (Rom. 6:23; 3:10-23; Gal. 3:22)

VI. ATONEMENT

A. "We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Representative: This means that Jesus Christ represented all the sins of the world. He who knew no sin was made sin for us (II Cor. 5:14-21). Adam was the representative of man in the fall. Christ is the representative of a saving sacrifice (I Cor. 15:22). Therefore, if Christ represented all, His sacrifice will cover all (John 3:16).
2. Substitutionary: This is called the "vicarious" suffering in that He died in our place. Christ did not die for His sin (Heb. 4:15,16; I John 3:5) but He died for the sins of others (I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 5:21; Romans 5:8).
3. All: The gift of salvation provided by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is for all men. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved" (Romans 10:13; I John 2:2)
4. Justified: Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the guilty and depraved sinner to be righteous because of the sinner's belief in Jesus Christ. (Man receives a new standing) (Romans 5:1)

VII. RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, EXALTATION

A. "We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, His ascension into Heaven and His present life there as High Priest and Advocate for all believers."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Resurrection: We believe that after three days and three nights, Jesus Christ arose bodily from the grave (Luke 24:23-40). This doctrine is essential to salvation (Rom. 10:9,10).
2. Ascension: After His resurrection and 40-day ministry, Jesus ascended up into Heaven (Acts 1:1-11; I Peter 3:22).
3. High Priest and Advocate: This means that whereas before we could not enter the presence of God, now through Jesus Christ, Who as our High Priest represents us before God, we are able to enter God's presence. As an advocate, He sympathizes with our needs and gives us strength (John 14:18; Heb. 4:14; 5:1-10; 13:5; 7:25).

VIII. ESCHATOLOGY (Last Things)

A. "We believe in that blessed hope, the personal, pre-millennial, and imminent return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Blessed Hope: This means that Christ will return again as He promised in John 14:1-6; Acts 1:11; Titus 2:13.
2. Personal: Jesus, Himself, will appear, not a Spirit, not a gust of wind, but Jesus Christ, Himself. ". . . this same Jesus" (Acts 1:11).
3. Pre-Millennial: Means that Jesus Christ will come before the Millennium. The Millennium is a period of 1,000 years in which Christ will set up an earthly kingdom. (This point cannot be covered in a few verses, but Rev. 20:1-10 will help illustrate.)
4. Imminent: There were many signs given to the nation, Israel, which would precede Christ's coming to earth to set up His Millennial kingdom (The Revelation). However, there were no signs given to the Church. The Church was to live believing Christ could return immediately (at any moment) to take them into His presence (John 14:2,3; I Cor. 15:51,52; I Peter 1:3,4). The believer is told to be watching for Christ, Himself, and not just for signs. The signs given for Israel are shadows that indicate the nearness of the Light, Christ, Himself, returning for us (I Thess. 5:6; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:3).

IX. SALVATION

A. "We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and, thereby, they become children of God and heirs of eternal life. This is a relationship in which they are eternally secure."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Faith: Heb. 11:1, Paul, in his book to the Galatians, shows that faith is the only criterion of salvation. Works are ruled out. Therefore, a man is saved by faith alone and is kept not by his works, but through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:5,8,9).
2. Born Again: The word means a "change of direction." It is essential to salvation (John 3:7). It is a "new birth" born of the Word of God and Spirit of God (John 3:5). This brings spiritual life as birth of the flesh brings physical life. "Must," because first birth only takes us to death--Spiritual birth gives us eternal life, the life of God.

3. Children: We become the Sons of God because of what Christ has done for us (I John 3:1,2).

4. Heirs of Eternal Life: We are saved for eternity. We cannot fall from grace because our salvation does not depend on works, but we are kept through the eternal grace of God (Romans 8:14-17).

X. FUTURE STATE

A. "We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost in hell, and the everlasting blessedness of the saved in heaven."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Bodily Resurrection: Those saints who are "asleep in Jesus" will be raised at the same time the living saints are "raptured" and changed. (This is before the Tribulation) (I Thes. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51-58) After the Millenium and the final battle of Gog and Magog, all the unsaved will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment. Those not found written in the Book of Life are cast into the Lake of Fire.

2. Everlasting Conscious Suffering: Luke 16:23-31 explains this.

3. Heaven: We believe heaven to be a literal place where Jesus Christ is preparing an eternal home for believers of all ages (John 14:1-6; Heb. 11:10-16).

4. Hell: An actual place: Hades (abode of the unseen dead) is where unsaved men go now, and after the final judgment they will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15; Matt. 13:36-43).

XI. DEVIL

A. "We believe in the existence of a personal devil, who is still working in the world to destroy the souls of men and that he and all his angels and all who receive not Christ as their Saviour will eternally perish in the Lake of Fire."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Devil: He was a created being. One of Heaven's highest angels, but he fell because he wanted to be greater than God--pride as seen in his use of "I" (Isaiah 14:12-15).

2. Eternally Perish: Rev. 20:10, 14:11, 19:20 gives us the final doom of the devil and his angels.

XII. CHURCH

A. "We believe in the Church, the Body of Christ, whose mission it is to preach the Gospel to all the world. All of its endeavors being supported by God's financial plan of the "tithe" and "offering."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Body of Christ: The collective body of believers in Jesus Christ is the Church (Eph. 5:23-32; Col. 1:18). Simplest form of the Church: Matt. 18:20.
2. Mission: Mark 16:15; Romans 15:6; Eph. 1:15-23
3. Tithes: Gen. 14:18-20, 28:10-22; Mal. 3:8-10; I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6-8; Heb. 7:1-9. The word "Tithe" means tenth.
4. Offerings: II Chron. 31:12. An offering is that amount given above 10 per cent. (Hebrew custom)

XIII. ORDINANCES

A. "We believe that the ordinances of the Church, given by our Lord are baptism (by immersion following conversion) and the Lord's Table (Communion)."

B. Terms Explained:

1. Baptism: Is an act of witness of our acceptance and identification with Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. To be baptized is to obey (observe) the words of Christ, Who commanded the disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, then to baptize all those who received Him as Saviour (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:16). The Apostles and early disciples obeyed this command (Acts 2:38, 41; Acts 8:12,13,36,38).

NOTE: Immersion was the only type of baptism known to the early Christians. It signifies the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 6:3,4; Acts 18:8; I Pet. 3:21 gives us the proper place of baptism--it follows one's acceptance of Christ as Saviour. It is not necessary for salvation, but is an act of further dedication and identification with the Lord Jesus. We emphasize that all believers should be baptized, but it is not necessary for entrance in heaven.)

2. Communion: (Lord's Supper) This ordinance was instituted by our Lord on the night in which He was betrayed (Matt. 26:26-30). We find our information and direction of use given by Paul in I Cor. 11:23-30. The bread and wine are symbols of the sacrifice of our Lord's body and blood.

We believe that all the foregoing are Bible Doctrines; therefore, we stand firm upon this Declaration of Our Faith.