

**A BRIEF SUMMARY OF
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, AND A
FORM OF COVENANT, ADOPTED
BY THE FIRST CHURCH IN
DEDHAM; MARCH 9, 1821**

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A Brief Summary of Christian Doctrine, and a Form of Covenant, Adopted by the First Church in Dedham; march 9, 1821 by Various

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ARTICLE I.

Jehovah, the true and eternal God, who made, supports and governs the world, is perfect in natural and moral excellence.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Deut. 6. 4. I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other Gods before me. Deut. 5. 6, 7. I am the Lord, and I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEROVAH was I not known to them. Ex. 6. 3. And God said unto Moses, I am that I am: and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. Ex. 3. 14. That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEROVAH, art the Most High over all the earth. Ps. 83. 18. The Lord JEROVAH is my strength. Is. 12. 2. Trust ye in the Lord forever: For in the Lord JEROVAH is everlasting strength. Is. 26. 4.

I am the Lord and there is none else; there is no God besides me. Is. 45. 5. The Lord is the true God, he is the living God. Jer. 10. 10. And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. John 17. 3. Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. 1 Thess. 1. 9. This is the true God and eternal life. 1 John 5. 20. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever. 1 Tim. 1. 17. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Rev. 4. 8. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Ps. 90. 2.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Gen. 1. 1. These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. Gen. 2. 4. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. Neh. 9. 6. Every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. Heb. 3. 4. We preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth and the sea, and all things that are therein; Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. Acts 14. 15, 16, 17. He stretched out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. Job 26. 7. In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. Job 12. 10. I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand,

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er say unto him, What doest thou? Dan. 4. 34, 35. Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Eph. 1. 11. The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord. Prov. 16. 33. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall upon the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Mat. 10. 29, 30.

God is love. I John 4. 8. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Mat. 5. 48. God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. John 4. 24. He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. Deut. 32. 4. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. Ps. 145. 8—10. Great is our Lord and of great power: his understanding is infinite. Ps. 147. 5. And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. Ex. 34. 6, 7.

ARTICLE II.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were written by holy men as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and are an infallible rule of doctrine and duty.

From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works. II Tim. 3. 15—17. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. II Pet. 1. 19—21. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. Luke 24. 27, 44, 45. Search the Scriptures. John 5. 39. God who at sundry times and divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. Heb. 1. 1, 2. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. II Sam. 23. 1, 2. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Is. 8. 20. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. Gal. 1. 8. For I testify unto every man that

heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Rev. 22. 18, 19. Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures. Mat. 22. 29. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Ps. 119. 105. O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day. Ps. 119. 97.

ARTICLE III.

Jehovah, who is adored in heaven by the hosts of the angels and the great assembly of the saints, to whom the church on earth in the ordinance of baptism is solemnly consecrated, and with whom the people of God maintain communion in acts of holy worship, adoration and grateful dependence, exists in three Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, who possess the same nature and are equal in every divine perfection.

Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Mat. 28. 19. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. II Cor. 13. 14. Grace be unto you and peace from him, which is and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throns; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Rev. 1. 4—6. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Is. 6. 4. The four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb, forever and ever. Rev. 5. 8—13. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1. 13. If there be any consolation in Christ—if any fellowship of the Spirit.—Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God—And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2. 1, 6, 11. By his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who, being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. And let all the angels of God worship him. But unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Heb. 1. 2, 3, 6, 8. In the beginning was the Word, and the word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. John 1. 1, 3.

But Peter said, Ananias, Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. Acts 5. 3, 4. And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia. Acts 13. 2—4.

ARTICLE IV.

God created the world to display his glory, and both knew and ordained whatsoever comes to pass: His decrees are eternal, universal and immutable.

The heavens declare the glory of God. Ps. 19. 1. Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Rev. 4. 11. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things. Is. 46. 7. The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. Prov. 16. 4. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Rom. 11. 33.

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Acts 15. 18. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. Acts 2. 23. There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord that shall stand. Prov. 19. 21. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure. Is. 46. 10. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed. Luke 22. 22. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. Acts 4. 27, 28. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Eph. 1. 11. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath. Heb. 6. 17. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Ps. 33. 11. I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Mal. 3. 6.

ARTICLE V.

Men are responsible and immortal. The law of God is perfect, and his government just and good. The present world is a state of probation, and the eternal world is a state of retribution.

Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Rom. 14. 12. Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. Mat. 12. 36. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Gen. 2. 16, 17.

I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Mat. 22. 32. The spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Eccles. 12. 7. And fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Mat. 10. 28.

The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Rom. 7. 12. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. Ps. 19. 7, 9.

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints. Rev. 15. 3. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. II Cor. 5. 10.

ARTICLE VI.

Adam, our progenitor, was created in the moral image of God, and constituted the representative of his posterity.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Gen. 1. 26, 27. Put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. Col. 3. 10. Put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. 4. 24. Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions. Eccles. 7. 29. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Rom. 5. 12, 19.

ARTICLE VII.

In consequence of the apostasy of Adam, his natural descendants in their succeeding generations are destitute of holiness; and, unless they are renewed by the Holy Spirit, possess the carnal mind which is enmity against God.

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth. Gen. 6. 5—7. For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. Gen. 8. 21. The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live. Eccles. 9. 3. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt; they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Ps. 14. 1—3. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Jer. 17. 9. All have sinned. Rom. 5. 12. Among whom we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of our flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Eph. 2. 3. What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Rom. 3. 9—18. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh can not please God. Rom. 8. 6—8.

ARTICLE VIII.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Word, assumed the nature of man and by his mediation and death on the cross made atonement for the sins of the world.

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of