First Head of Doctrine –

*Divine Election and Reprobation*

**ARTICLE 1—ALL MANKIND CONDEMNABLE BEFORE GOD**
Since all men have sinned in Adam, lie under the curse, and deserve eternal death, God would have done injustice to no one if He had willed to leave the whole human race in sin and under the curse, and to condemn it on account of its sin, according to these words of the apostle: that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God (Rom. 3:19). All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23); and, the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

**ARTICLE 2—THE SENDING OF THE SON OF GOD**
But in this the love of God was made manifest, that He sent His only-begotten Son into the world, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (1 John 4:9; John 3:16).

**ARTICLE 3—THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL**
So that men may be brought to faith, God mercifully sends heralds of this most joyful message to whom He will and when He wills. By their ministry men are called to repentance and to faith in Christ crucified. For how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? (Rom. 10:14, 15)

**ARTICLE 4—A TWOFOLD OUTCOME**
The wrath of God remains upon those who do not believe this gospel. But those who receive it and embrace Jesus the Saviour with a true and living faith are delivered by Him from the wrath of God and from destruction, and are given eternal life.

**ARTICLE 5—THE CAUSE OF UNBELIEF, THE SOURCE OF FAITH**
The cause or guilt for this unbelief, as well as for all other sins, is by no means in God, but rather in man. Faith in Jesus Christ and salvation through Him, however, is the free gift of God, as it is written: By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8). Similarly, It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should . . . believe in Him (Phil. 1:29).

**ARTICLE 6—GOD’S ETERNAL DECREE**
That God in time confers the gift of faith on some, and not on others, proceeds from His eternal decree. For all His works He knows from eternity (Acts 15:18), and He accomplishes all things according to the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11). According to this decree He graciously softens the hearts of the elect, no matter how hard they may be, and inclines them to believe; those not elected, however, He leaves in their own wickedness and hardness by a just judgment. And here especially is disclosed to us the profound, merciful, and at the same time just distinction between men equally worthy of condemnation, or that decree of election and reprobation which has been revealed in God’s Word. Although perverse, impure, and unstable men twist this decree to their own destruction, it provides unspeakable comfort for holy and God-fearing souls.

**ARTICLE 7—ELECTION DEFINED**
Election is the unchangeable purpose of God whereby, before the foundation of the world, out of the whole human race, which had fallen by its own fault out of its original integrity into sin and perdition, He has, according to the sovereign good pleasure of His will, out of mere grace, chosen in Christ to salvation a definite number of persons, neither better nor more worthy than others, but with them involved in a common misery. He has also from eternity appointed Christ to be the Mediator and Head of all the elect and the foundation of salvation and thus He decreed to give to Christ those who were to be saved, and effectually to call and draw them into His communion through His Word and Spirit. He decreed to give them true faith in Him, to justify them, to sanctify them, and, after having powerfully kept them in the fellowship of His Son, finally to glorify them, for the demonstration of His mercy and the praise of the riches of His glorious grace. As it is written: God chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and
blameless before Him. He destined us in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved (Eph. 1:4, 5, 6). And elsewhere, Those whom He predestined He also called; and those whom He called He also justified; and those whom He justified He also glorified (Rom. 8:30).

ARTICLE 8—ONE DECREED OF ELECTION
There are not various decrees of this election, but it is one and the same decree concerning all those that are to be saved under both the Old and the New Testament. For Scripture declares that the good pleasure, purpose, and counsel of the will of God is one. According to this purpose He has chosen us from eternity both to grace and to glory, both to salvation and to the way of salvation, which He prepared for us that we should walk in it (Eph. 1:4; 2:10).

ARTICLE 9—ELECTION NOT BASED ON FORESEEN FAITH
This election is not based on foreseen faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality of disposition, as a cause or condition in man required for being chosen, but men are chosen to faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, and so on. Election, therefore, is the fountain of every saving good, from which flow faith, holiness, and other saving gifts, and finally eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects. This the apostle teaches when he says, He chose us (not because we were, but) that we should be holy and blameless before Him (Eph. 1:4).

ARTICLE 10—ELECTION BASED ON GOD’S GOOD PLEASURE
The cause of this gracious election is solely the good pleasure of God. This good pleasure does not consist in this, that out of all possible conditions God chose certain qualities or actions of men as a condition for salvation, but in this, that out of the common mass of sinners He adopted certain persons to be His own possession. For it is written, Though they (the children) were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, and so on, she (namely, Rebecca), was told, “The elder will serve the younger.” As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” (Rom. 9:11, 12, 13) And, as many as were ordained to eternal life believed (Acts 13:48).

ARTICLE 11—ELECTION UNCHANGEABLE
As God Himself is most wise, unchangeable, all-knowing and almighty, so His election can neither be undone and redone, nor changed, revoked, or annulled; neither can the elect be cast away, nor their number be diminished.

ARTICLE 12—THE ASSURANCE OF ELECTION
The elect in due time, though in various stages and in different measure, are made certain of this their eternal and unchangeable election to salvation. They attain this assurance, however, not by inquisitively prying into the hidden and deep things of God, but by observing in themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unfailing fruits of election pointed out in the Word of God—such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins, and a hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

ARTICLE 13—THE VALUE OF THIS ASSURANCE
The awareness and assurance of this election provide the children of God with greater reason for daily humbling themselves before God, for adoring the depth of His mercies, for cleansing themselves, and for fervently loving Him in turn who first so greatly loved them. It is therefore not true at all that this doctrine of election and the reflection on it makes them lax in observing the commands of God or falsely secure. In the just judgment of God, this usually happens to those who rashly presume to have the grace of election, or idly and boldly chatter about it, but refuse to walk in the ways of the elect.

ARTICLE 14—HOW ELECTION IS TO BE TAUGHT
This doctrine of divine election, according to the most wise counsel of God, was preached by the prophets, by Christ Himself, and by the apostles, under the Old as well as the New Testament, and was then committed to writing in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, also today this doctrine should be taught in the Church of God, for which it was particularly intended, in its proper time and place, provided it be done with a spirit of discretion, in a reverent and holy manner, without inquisitively prying into the ways of the most High, to the glory of God’s most holy Name, and for the living comfort of His people (Acts 20:27; Rom. 11:33, 34; 12:3; Heb. 6:17, 18).
ARTICLE 15—REPROBATION DESCRIBED
Holy Scripture illustrates and recommends to us this eternal and undeserved grace of our election, especially when it further declares that not all men are elect but that some have not been elected, or have been passed by in the eternal election of God. Out of His most free, most just, blameless, and unchangeable good pleasure, God has decreed to leave them in the common misery into which they have by their own fault plunged themselves, and not to give them saving faith and the grace of conversion. These, having been left in their own ways and under His just judgment, God has decreed finally to condemn and punish eternally, not only on account of their unbelief but also on account of all their other sins, for the declaration of His justice. This is the decree of reprobation, which by no means makes God the author of sin (the very thought is blasphemous!), but rather declares Him an awesome, blameless, and just judge and avenger thereof.

ARTICLE 16—RESPONSES TO THE DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION
Some do not yet clearly discern in themselves a living faith in Christ, an assured confidence of heart, peace of conscience, a zeal for childlike obedience, and a glorying in God through Christ; nevertheless, they use the means through which God has promised to work these things in us. They ought not to be alarmed when reprobation is mentioned, nor to count themselves among the reprobate. Rather, they must diligently continue in the use of these means, fervently desiring a time of more abundant grace, and expect it reverently and humbly. Others seriously desire to be converted to God, to please Him only, and to be delivered from the body of death. Yet they cannot reach that point on the way of godliness and faith which they would like. They should be even less terrified by the doctrine of reprobation, since a merciful God has promised not to quench the smoking flax nor to break the bruised reed.
Still others disregard God and the Saviour Jesus Christ and have completely given themselves over to the cares of the world and the lusts of the flesh. For them this doctrine of reprobation is rightly fearsome as long as they are not seriously converted.

ARTICLE 17—CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS WHO DIE IN INFANCY
We must judge concerning the will of God from His Word, which declares that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they are included with their parents. Therefore, God-fearing parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in their infancy (Gen. 17:7; Acts 2:39; 1 Cor. 7:14).

ARTICLE 18—NOT PROTEST BUT ADORATION
To those who argue against this grace of undeserved election and the severity of righteous reprobation, we reply with this word of the apostle: But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? (Rom. 9:20) And with this word of our Saviour, Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to Me? (Matt. 20:15)
We, however, with reverent adoration of these mysteries, exclaim with the apostle: O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counsel? Or who has given a gift to Him that He might be repaid? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory for ever. Amen (Rom. 11:33-36).
Second Head of Doctrine –
*The Death of Christ and the Redemption of Man by It*

**ARTICLE 1—THE JUSTICE OF GOD REQUIRES PUNISHMENT**
God is not only supremely merciful but also supremely just. And as He Himself has revealed in His Word, His justice requires that our sins, committed against His infinite majesty, should be punished not only in this age but also in the age to come, both in body and soul. We cannot escape these punishments unless satisfaction is made to the justice of God.

**ARTICLE 2—THE SATISFACTION MADE BY CHRIST**
We ourselves, however, cannot make this satisfaction and cannot free ourselves from God’s wrath. God, therefore, in His infinite mercy has given His only Son as our Surety. For us or in our place He was made sin and a curse on the cross so that He might make satisfaction on our behalf.

**ARTICLE 3—THE INFINITE VALUE OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST**
This death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins, of infinite value and worth, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world.

**ARTICLE 4—WHY HIS DEATH HAS INFINITE VALUE**
This death is of such great value and worth because the person who submitted to it is not only a true and perfectly holy man, but also the only-begotten Son of God, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for these qualifications were necessary for our Saviour. Further, this death is of such great value and worth because it was accompanied by a sense of the wrath and curse of God which we by our sins had deserved.

**ARTICLE 5—THE UNIVERSAL PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL**
The promise of the gospel is that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life. This promise ought to be announced and proclaimed universally and without discrimination to all peoples and to all men to whom God in His good pleasure sends the gospel, together with the command to repent and believe.

**ARTICLE 6—WHY SOME DO NOT BELIEVE**
That, however, many who have been called by the gospel neither repent nor believe in Christ but perish in unbelief does not happen because of any defect or insufficiency in the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross, but through their own fault.

**ARTICLE 7—WHY OTHERS DO BELIEVE**
But to those who truly believe and are by the death of Christ freed from their sins and saved from perdition, this benefit comes only through God’s grace, given to them from eternity in Christ. God owes this grace to no one.

**ARTICLE 8—THE EFFICACY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST**
For this was the most free counsel of God the Father, that the life-giving and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect. It was His most gracious will and intent to give them alone justifying faith and thereby to bring them unfaillingly to salvation. This means: God willed that Christ through the blood of the cross (by which He confirmed the new covenant) should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and tongue all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation and were given to Him by the Father. God further willed that Christ should give to them faith, which, together with other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, He acquired for them by His death; that He should cleanse them by His blood from all sins, both original and actual, both those committed after faith and before faith; and that He should guard them faithfully to the end and at last present them to Himself in splendour without any spot or wrinkle.
ARTICLE 9—THE FULFILMENT OF GOD’S COUNSEL

This counsel, proceeding from eternal love for the elect, has from the beginning of the world to the present time been powerfully fulfilled, and will also continue to be fulfilled, though the gates of hell vainly try to frustrate it. In due time the elect will be gathered together into one, and there will always be a Church of believers, founded on the blood of Christ. This Church shall steadfastly love and faithfully serve Him as Her Saviour (who as bridegroom for his bride laid down His life for her on the cross) and celebrate His praises here and through all eternity.
Third And Fourth Heads of Doctrine –
The Corruption of Man, His Conversion to God, and the Manner in Which It Occurs

**ARTICLE 1—THE EFFECT OF THE FALL**

In the beginning man was created in the image of God. He was adorned in his mind with true and wholesome knowledge of his Creator and of all spiritual things; his will and heart were upright, all his affections pure, and therefore man was completely holy.

But rebelling against God through the instigation of the devil and through his own free will, he deprived himself of these excellent gifts, and instead brought upon himself blindness, horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment in his mind; malice, rebelliousness, and stubbornness in his will and heart; and impurity in all his affections.

**ARTICLE 2—CORRUPTION PROPAGATED**

Since after the fall man became corrupt, he as a corrupt father brought forth corrupt children. Thus the corruption has spread from Adam to all his descendants, with the exception of Christ alone, not by imitation, as the Pelagians of old maintained, but by the propagation of a vicious nature, according to the righteous judgment of God.

**ARTICLE 3—MAN’S TOTAL INABILITY**

Therefore all men are conceived in sin and are born as children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in sins, and slaves of sin. And without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they neither will nor can return to God, reform their depraved nature, or prepare themselves for its reformation.

**ARTICLE 4—THE INADEQUACY OF THE LIGHT OF NATURE**

To be sure, there is left in man after the fall, some light of nature, whereby he retains some notions about God, about natural things, and about the difference between what is honourable and shameful, and shows some regard for virtue and outward order. But he is so far from arriving at the saving knowledge of God and true conversion through this light of nature that he does not even use it properly in natural and civil matters. Rather, whatever this light may be, man wholly pollutes it in various ways and suppresses it by his wickedness. By doing this, he makes himself inexcusable before God.

**ARTICLE 5—THE INADEQUACY OF THE LAW**

What holds for the light of nature also applies to the Ten Commandments, given by God through Moses particularly to the Jews, for though it reveals the greatness of sin, and more and more convicts man of his guilt, yet it neither points out a remedy nor gives him power to rise out of this misery. Rather, weakened by the flesh, it leaves the transgressor under the curse. Man cannot, therefore, through the law obtain saving grace.

**ARTICLE 6—THE NEED FOR THE GOSPEL**

What, therefore, neither the light of nature nor the law can do, God performs by the power of the Holy Spirit through the word or ministry of reconciliation, which is the gospel of the Messiah, by which it has pleased God to save men who believe, both under the old and new dispensation.

**ARTICLE 7—WHY THE GOSPEL IS SENT TO SOME AND NOT TO OTHERS**

Under the old dispensation God revealed this mystery of His will to few. Under the new dispensation, however, He took the distinction between the peoples away and revealed it to more. The cause of this very distribution of the gospel is not to be ascribed to the worthiness of one people above another, nor to the better use of the light of nature, but to the sovereign good pleasure and undeserved love of God. Therefore we to whom so great a grace is granted, beyond and contrary to all we deserve, ought to acknowledge it with a humble and grateful heart. But as regards others to whom this grace is not given, we ought with the apostle to adore the severity and righteousness of the judgments of God but by no means inquisitively to pry into them.
ARTICLE 8—THE EARNEST CALL BY THE GOSPEL
But as many as are called by the gospel are earnestly called, for God earnestly and most sincerely reveals in His Word what is pleasing to Him, namely, that those who are called should come to Him. He also earnestly promises rest of soul and eternal life to all who come to Him and believe.

ARTICLE 9—WHY SOME WHO ARE CALLED DO NOT COME
It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of the Christ offered by the gospel, nor of God, who calls through the gospel and who even confers various gifts upon them, that many who are called through the ministry of the gospel do not come and are not converted. The fault lies in themselves. Some of them do not care and do not receive the word of life. Others do indeed receive it, but not into their hearts, and therefore, after the joy of a temporary faith has vanished, they turn away. Still others choke the seed of the word by the thorns of the cares and the pleasure of this world, and bring forth no fruit. This our Saviour teaches in the parable of the seed, Mt 13.

ARTICLE 10—WHY OTHERS WHO ARE CALLED DO COME
Others who are called by the ministry of the gospel do come and are converted. This is not to be ascribed to man. He does not distinguish himself by his free will above others who are furnished with equal or sufficient grace for faith or conversion (as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains). It is to be ascribed to God. He has chosen His own in Christ from eternity and calls them effectually in time. He gives them faith and repentance; He delivers them from the power of darkness and transfers them to the kingdom of His Son. All this He does that they may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light, and may boast not of themselves but of the Lord, according to the testimony of the apostles in various places.

ARTICLE 11—HOW GOD BRINGS ABOUT CONVERSION
God carries out His good pleasure in the elect and works in them true conversion in the following manner. He takes care that the gospel is preached to them, and powerfully enlightens their minds by the Holy Spirit, so that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God. By the efficacious working of the same regenerating Spirit He also penetrates into the innermost recesses of man. He opens the closed and softens the hard heart, circumcises that which was uncircumcised, and instils new qualities into the will. He makes the will, which was dead, alive; which was bad, good; which was unwilling, willing; and which was stubborn, obedient. He moves and strengthens it so that, like a good tree, it may be able to produce the fruit of good works.

ARTICLE 12—THE DIVINE CHARACTER OF REGENERATION
This conversion is that regeneration, new creation, resurrection from the dead, making alive, so highly spoken of in the Scriptures, which God works in us without us. But this regeneration is by no means brought about only by outward preaching, by moral persuasion, or by such a mode of operation that, after God has done His part, it remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not regenerated, converted or not converted. It is, however, clearly a supernatural, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, marvellous, mysterious, and inexpressible work. According to Scripture, inspired by the Author of this work, regeneration is not inferior in power to creation or the resurrection of the dead. Hence all those in whose hearts God works in this amazing way are certainly, unfailingly, and effectually regenerated and do actually believe. Therefore the will so renewed is not only acted upon and moved by God but, acted upon by God, the will itself also acts. Hence also man himself is rightly said to believe and repent through the grace he has received.

ARTICLE 13—REGENERATION IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE
As long as they are in this life, believers cannot fully understand the way in which God does this work. Meanwhile, however, it is enough for them to know and experience that by this grace of God they believe with the heart and love their Saviour.

ARTICLE 14—FAITH A GIFT OF GOD
Faith is therefore a gift of God, not because it is merely offered by God to the free will of man, but because it is actually conferred on man, instilled and infused into him. It is not a gift in the sense that God confers only the power to believe and then awaits from man’s free will the consent to believe or the act of believing. It is, however, a gift in the sense that He who works both to will and to work brings about in man both the will to believe and the act of believing, and indeed all things in all.
ARTICLE 15—CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE WITH RESPECT TO GOD’S UNDESEVED GRACE
This grace God owes to no one. For what could He owe to man? Who has given Him first that he might be repaid? What could God owe to one who has nothing of his own but sin and falsehood? He, therefore, who receives this grace owes and renders eternal thanks to God. He who does not receive this grace, however, either does not care at all for these spiritual things and is pleased with what he has, or in false security vainly boasts that he has what he does not have. Further, about those who outwardly profess their faith and amend their lives we are to judge and speak in the most favourable way, according to the example of the apostles, for the inner recesses of the heart are unknown to us. As for those who have not yet been called, we should pray for them to God, who calls into existence the things that do not exist. But we must by no means act haughtily towards them, as if we had distinguished ourselves.

ARTICLE 16—MAN’S WILL NOT TAKEN AWAY BUT MADE ALIVE
Man through his fall did not cease to be man, endowed with intellect and will; and sin, which has pervaded the whole human race, did not deprive man of his human nature, but brought upon him depravity and spiritual death. So also this divine grace of regeneration does not act upon men as stocks and blocks and does not take away the will and its properties, or violently coerce it, but makes the will spiritually alive, heals it, corrects it, pleasantly and at the same time powerfully bends it. As a result, where formerly the rebellion and resistance of the flesh fully dominated, now a prompt and sincere obedience of the Spirit begins to prevail, in which the true, spiritual renewal and freedom of our will consists. And unless the admirable Author of all good should deal with us in this way, man would have no hope of rising from his fall through this free will, by which he, when he was still standing, plunged himself into ruin.

ARTICLE 17—THE USE OF MEANS
The almighty working of God whereby He brings forth and sustains this our natural life does not exclude but requires the use of means, by which He according to His infinite wisdom and goodness has willed to exercise His power. So also the aforementioned supernatural working of God whereby He regenerates us, in no way excludes or overthrows the use of the gospel, which the most wise God has ordained to be the seed of regeneration and the food of the soul. For this reason the apostles and the teachers who succeeded them, in the fear of the Lord instructed the people concerning this grace of God, to His glory and to the abasement of all pride. In the meantime, however, they did not neglect to keep them, by the holy admonitions of the gospel, under the administration of the Word, the sacraments, and discipline. So today those who give or receive instruction in the Church should not dare to tempt God by separating what He in His good pleasure has willed to be kept very close together. For grace is conferred through admonitions, and the more readily we do our duty, the more this favour of God, who works in us, usually manifests itself in its lustre and the more directly His works proceed. To God alone all glory, both for the means and for their saving fruit and efficacy, is due throughout eternity. Amen.
Fifth Head of Doctrine –
*The Perseverance of the Saints*

**ARTICLE 1—THE REGENERATE NOT FREE FROM INDWELLING SIN**
Those whom God according to His purpose calls into the fellowship of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and regenerates by His Holy Spirit, He certainly sets free from the dominion and slavery of sin, but not entirely in this life from the flesh and from the body of sin.

**ARTICLE 2—DAILY SINS OF WEAKNESS**
Therefore daily sins of weakness spring up and defects cling to even the best works of the saints. These are for them a constant reason to humble themselves before God, to flee to the crucified Christ, to put the flesh to death more and more through the Spirit of prayer and by holy exercises of godliness, and to long for the goal of perfection until at last, delivered from this body of death, they reign with the Lamb of God in heaven.

**ARTICLE 3—GOD PRESERVES HIS OWN**
Because of these remains of indwelling sin and also because of the temptations of the world and of Satan, those who have been converted could not persevere in that grace if left to their own strength. But God is faithful, who mercifully confirms them in the grace once conferred upon them and powerfully preserves them in that grace to the end.

**ARTICLE 4—SAINTS MAY FALL INTO SERIOUS SINS**
The power of God whereby He confirms and preserves true believers in grace is so great that it cannot be conquered by the flesh, yet the converted are not always so led and moved by God that they cannot in certain particular actions turn aside through their own fault from the guidance of grace and be seduced by and yield to the lusts of the flesh. They must therefore constantly watch and pray that they may not be led into temptation. When they do not watch and pray, they not only can be drawn away by the flesh, the world, and Satan into serious and atrocious sins, but with the righteous permission of God are sometimes actually drawn away. The lamentable fall of David, Peter, and other saints, described in Holy Scripture, demonstrates this.

**ARTICLE 5—THE EFFECTS OF SUCH SERIOUS SINS**
By such gross sins, however, they greatly offend God, incur deadly guilt, grieve the Holy Spirit, suspend the exercise of faith, very grievously wound their consciences, and sometimes for a while lose the sense of God’s favour—until they return to the right way through sincere repentance and God’s fatherly face again shines upon them.

**ARTICLE 6—GOD WILL NOT PERMIT HIS ELECT TO BE LOST**
But God, who is rich in mercy, according to the unchangeable purpose of His election, does not completely withdraw His Holy Spirit from His own even in their deplorable fall. Neither does He permit them to sink so deep that they fall away from the grace of adoption and the state of justification, or commit the sin unto death or the sin against the Holy Spirit and, totally deserted by Him, plunge themselves into eternal ruin.

**ARTICLE 7—GOD WILL AGAIN RENEW HIS ELECT TO REPENTANCE**
For in the first place, in their fall, He preserves in them His imperishable seed of regeneration, so that it does not perish and is not cast out. Further, through His Word and Spirit He effectually renews them to repentance. As a result they grieve from the heart with a godly sorrow for the sins they have committed; they seek and obtain through faith with a contrite heart forgiveness in the blood of the Mediator; they again experience the favour of a reconciled God and adore His mercies and faithfulness. And from now on they more diligently work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

**ARTICLE 8—THE GRACE OF THE TRIUNE GOD PRESERVES**
So it is not through their own merits or strength but through the undeserved mercy of God that they neither totally fall back from faith and grace nor persist in their backslidings and are finally lost. As far as they are concerned, this could not only easily happen but would undoubtedly happen. But as far as God is concerned, this cannot possibly happen, since His counsel cannot be changed, His promise cannot fail, the calling according to His purpose cannot be revoked, the merit, intercession, and preservation of Christ cannot be nullified, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit can neither be frustrated nor destroyed.
ARTICLE 9—THE ASSURANCE OF THIS PRESERVATION
Believers themselves can be certain and are certain of this preservation of the elect to salvation and the perseverance of true believers in the faith. This assurance is according to the measure of their faith, by which they surely believe that they are and always shall remain true and living members of the Church, and that they have forgiveness of sins and life eternal.

ARTICLE 10—THE GROUND OF THIS ASSURANCE
This assurance is not produced by a certain private revelation besides or outside the Word, but by faith in the promises of God, which He has most abundantly revealed in His Word for our comfort; by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our spirit that we are children and heirs of God (Rom. 8:16); and, finally, by the serious and holy pursuit of a good conscience and of good works. And if the elect of God did not have in this world the solid comfort of obtaining the victory and this unfailing pledge of eternal glory, they would be of all men the most miserable.

ARTICLE 11—THIS ASSURANCE NOT ALWAYS FELT
Scripture meanwhile testifies that believers in this life have to struggle with various doubts of the flesh and, placed under severe temptation, do not always feel this full assurance of faith and certainty of persevering. But God, the Father of all comfort, will not let them be tempted beyond their strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13), and by the Holy Spirit will again revive in them the certainty of persevering.

ARTICLE 12—THIS ASSURANCE DOES NOT LEAD TO COMPLAiNCENCY
So far, however, is this certainty of perseverance from making true believers proud and complacent that, on the contrary, it is the true root of humility, childlike reverence, genuine godliness, patience in every conflict, fervent prayers, constancy in the cross and in the confession of the truth, and lasting joy in God. Further, the consideration of this benefit is for them an incentive to the serious and constant practice of gratitude and good works, as is evident from the testimonies of Scripture and the examples of the saints.

ARTICLE 13—THIS ASSURANCE DOES NOT LEAD TO CARELESSNESS
This renewed confidence does not produce carelessness or neglect of godliness in those who have been restored after their fall; rather, it renders them more careful and diligent to discern the ways of the Lord so that by walking in them they may retain the certainty of persevering. They do this lest, because of their abuse of His fatherly goodness, the reconciled God should again turn away His face from them (the contemplation of which is to the godly sweeter than life, and the withdrawal of it more bitter than death), and they should fall into more severe torments of soul.

ARTICLE 14—THE USE OF MEANS INCLUDED
As it has pleased God to begin this work of grace in us by the preaching of the gospel, so He maintains, continues, and perfects it by the hearing and reading of His Word, by meditation upon it, by its exhortations, threatenings, and promises, and by the use of the sacraments.

ARTICLE 15—THIS DOCTRINE HATED BY SATAN BUT LOVED BY THE CHURCH
This doctrine of the perseverance of true believers and saints, and of the certainty of it, which God has most abundantly revealed in His Word, for the glory of His Name and for the consolation of the godly, and which He impresses on the hearts of believers, the flesh does not really understand. Satan hates it, the world ridicules it, the ignorant and hypocrites abuse it, and the heretics oppose it. The Bride of Christ, however, has always most tenderly loved and constantly defended it as a treasure of inestimable value, and God, against whom no counsel can avail and no strength can prevail, will see to it that she continues to do so to the end. To God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be honour and glory forever. Amen.