

HANNEY CHAPEL

BASIS OF FAITH

The following paragraphs provide a convenient summary of the truths upheld and taught in this church. They are in no way equal to the infallible authority of the Word of God. They are, however, a useful guide to those joining or visiting the church and they help to safeguard the doctrinal orthodoxy of the church for future generations.

1.1 THE BEING OF GOD

We believe that there is one true and living God, glorious, sovereign, and whose very nature is love. In the one essence of God are three distinct persons, co-equal and co-eternal, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

We believe that God is our Creator. He alone is the source of life. All creation derives its being from him. The supreme act of creation was God's forming of man and woman in his own image.

We believe that God is our Sustainer. He has not abandoned the world to the powers of chance or to the dictates of the ungodly. God is sovereign over angels, people and events, and is guiding history towards its predestined end.

We believe that God is our Redeemer. The salvation of sinners in its origin, provision and application is entirely the work of God. In the unfolding of his redemptive purposes God's triune nature is most clearly revealed.

1.2 THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe that God's glory revealed in creation is not sufficient to give mankind a saving knowledge of him. For this reason God has graciously given in the Scriptures that complete and reliable unfolding of his character and will necessary for salvation. The Scriptures are, therefore, of divine origin.

In communicating his revelation God used human authors without employing them mechanically or disregarding their personalities. The Holy Spirit so prepared and guided the writers that the original Scriptures were preserved from all error. We, therefore, accept the divine authority of the whole Bible – that is, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments.

We acknowledge the validity of true biblical scholarship and encourage those who seek to establish a correct interpretation of God's revealed truth. Diligent and careful study of God's Word is to be welcomed if done in dependence on the Holy Spirit and in submission to the authority of the Scriptures. We believe that God never guides his people in a way that is inconsistent with his written Word and, therefore, the Bible is to be decisive in all matters of belief and behaviour.

1.3 MANKIND IN SIN

We believe that Adam and Eve were created holy and happy and that, tempted by Satan, the leader of the fallen angels, they rebelled against God. By this fall Adam, as the representative of the human race, forfeited his high privilege and brought about the condemnation of all mankind.

We believe that, although all people are alienated from God by their sin, they are still accountable to him. In view of their fallen state, however, they cannot save themselves and are unwilling and unable to please God or to choose Christ.

1.4 THE PLAN OF SALVATION

We believe that salvation is entirely the result of divine grace. God in eternity graciously predestined to salvation a great multitude of sinners for whom the eternal Son of God willingly became the Mediator. In the fullness of time the Son of God took a real and sinless human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary and lived a perfect life, yielding full obedience to the holy law of God. He bled and died at Calvary, giving himself as a substitute for his elect, bearing

the full penalty of their sin, and rose from the dead on the third day. He ascended into heaven, where he lives and reigns, interceding for his church and governing all things until the end of time.

1.5 THE APPLICATION OF SALVATION

We believe that the salvation secured by the work of Jesus Christ is communicated to the elect by the Holy Spirit. By his powerful and mysterious work those dead in sin are quickened into spiritual life. They hear the call of God through his Word and are given the desire and ability to repent of sin and believe in Christ as their Saviour and Lord. Awakened by the Spirit, repenting sinners are justified by faith alone, having their sins pardoned and Christ's righteousness imputed to them. Those whom God justifies will finally persevere and enter into the joys of heaven.

1.6 THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We believe that the Christian experiences the twin blessings of the new covenant, namely, the forgiveness of sins and the creation of an inward desire to glorify God by a sanctified life which conforms to his laws. Good works and practical holiness are, therefore, indispensable evidences of a genuine experience of divine grace.

1.7 THE CHURCH

We believe that the universal church is the innumerable company of God's elect in every age, while the local church is made up of those who have joined together in a visible fellowship. We believe that it is the duty of all believers to unite with a local church in commitment to the Lord, to the truth and to other members. Such commitment is necessary for their spiritual growth and their corporate testimony to the world.

We believe that it is the responsibility of God's people to preach the gospel in their locality and among all nations.

We believe that the sole head of the church is Jesus Christ who communicates his will through his Word and guides the church by his Spirit. As the ascended Lord he also bestows gifts for the maintenance of his work on earth. The local church is served by elders and deacons.

We believe that the local church is responsible to Christ for its own administration and in this respect is independent of every other form of control.

1.8 THE ORDINANCES

We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted by Christ and that both ordinances belong in the local church and are to be observed until Christ returns. We believe that Baptism is only for those who have made a credible profession of repentance and of faith in Christ and that the symbolism of this ordinance is only adequately portrayed by immersion in water. While Baptism is initiatory, the Lord's Supper is a continuing means of grace to the believer. The very nature of these ordinances, therefore, indicates that before converts share in the Supper they should identify with the Lord Jesus and his people in Baptism and church membership.

1.9 THE LAST THINGS

We believe that, at a time known only to God, the Lord Jesus Christ will return to this earth with power and glory to raise the dead, both believers and unbelievers, and to judge all mankind. Unbelievers will hear the dreadful sentence of the righteous judge and go away to eternal punishment. Believers will be presented before God's presence without fault through the merits of Christ and will enjoy the eternal bliss of the new heavens and the new earth.