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## The Confession, Covenant and Government of the Advent Christian Church, Bridgton, Maine

Advent Christian Church (Bridgton, Me.)

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THE  
CONFESSION, COVENANT AND  
GOVERNMENT  
OF THE  
ADVENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH,  
BRIDGTON, MAINE.

ADOPTED MAY 23, 1896.

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“Those things most surely believed among us.”—LUKE i. 1.

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BOSTON,  
ADVENT CHRISTIAN PUBLICATION SOCIETY,  
. 144 HANOVER STREET.

THE  
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ADVENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

BRIDGTON, MAINE.

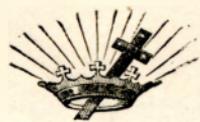
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## ARTICLES OF FAITH.

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ARTICLE 1. We, as a church, believe that the canon of Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, is the only system of faith, and divine in its arrangements, teaching us that there is one God,<sup>1</sup> the Father of us all,<sup>2</sup> eternal,<sup>3</sup> Creator of all things,<sup>4</sup> Almighty.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 4. There is none other God but one.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. iv. 6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. i. 17. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus xx. 11. The Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. xvii. 1. I am the Almighty God.

ART. 2. We believe the Bible teaches that there is one Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>1</sup> the only begotten Son of God,<sup>2</sup> who died and was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures,<sup>3</sup> and ascended into heaven,<sup>4</sup> there to appear in the presence of God for us,<sup>5</sup> from whence he will return<sup>6</sup> to judge the living and the dead at his appearing and kingdom.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 6. One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.

<sup>4</sup> Acts i. 11. This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. ix. 24. Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 1. The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [living] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.

ART. 3. We believe in the Bible record of the Holy Spirit, sent as the Comforter of the church,<sup>1</sup> and to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 26. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> John xvi. 8. He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

ART. 4. We believe the Bible record of the creation of man,<sup>1</sup> and that by disobedience to the divine law he fell from the state of uprightness in which he was created and involved himself and posterity in death,<sup>2</sup> which death would have been eternal without a redeemer;<sup>3</sup> that such a Redeemer was provided by God in the person of his Son Jesus Christ,<sup>4</sup> who died on the cross that he might become the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him; that this redemption is of two-fold nature. First, the redemption<sup>5</sup> of all men from the result of Adam's

sin by a resurrection of the dead.<sup>6</sup> Second, the redemption of believers from personal sins by forgiveness<sup>7</sup> and cleansing of sin by the blood of Jesus Christ,<sup>8</sup> that they may, in his name, receive the gift of eternal life,<sup>9</sup> they shall not be hurt of the second death.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gen. i. 27. So God created man in his own image.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. v. 12. 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.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. iii. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. viii. 23. The redemption of the body.

<sup>6</sup> John v. 28, 29. The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth.

<sup>7</sup> Eph. i. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

<sup>8</sup> 1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

<sup>9</sup> John xx. 31. These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

<sup>10</sup> Rev. ii. 11. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

ART. 5. We believe in repentance toward God,<sup>1</sup> and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as essential to eternal salvation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts iii. 19. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xvi. 30, 31. Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house.

ART. 6. We believe that the Bible teaches that pardoned sinners should be buried with Christ "in baptism," thus showing their faith in Christ's burial and resurrection:<sup>1</sup> also that believers are commanded to be baptized.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 3-5. Know ye not that so many of us as were (margin, are) baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 38. Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxviii. 18-20. All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

ART. 7. We believe in the observance of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the communion of saints, in eating the Lord's supper "till he come."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii. 19, 20. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and break it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 26. As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

ART. 8. We believe the Bible teaches that the finally impenitent will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,<sup>1</sup> and the extinction of all evil.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess i 7-9. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 23. The wages of sin is death.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 46. These shall go away into everlasting punishment.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 41. Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

<sup>1</sup> Mal. iv. 1. For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xxii. 3. And there shall be no more curse.

ART. 9. We believe that this same Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem of Judea, crucified, buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures, ascended to heaven, and will return personally to this earth,<sup>1</sup> to raise the dead, judge the world in righteousness, and reward every man according to his works,<sup>2</sup> giving eternal life to the believer,<sup>3</sup> and the unbeliever recompensed with conscious suffering,<sup>4</sup> burning in fire and brimstone,<sup>5</sup> resulting in the event death;<sup>6</sup> and this wrath of God to abide forever,<sup>7</sup> resulting in everlasting punishment.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 11. This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 16. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 7. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 3. I will come again and receive you unto myself.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iii. 20. Our conversation (literally our citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xxii. 12. Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John ii. 25. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxv. 46. The righteous into life eternal.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. ii. 8, 9. But unto them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxiv. 51. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>5</sup> Luke xvii. 29, 30. The same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. vi. 23. The wages of sin is death.

<sup>7</sup> John iii. 36. The wrath of God abideth on him.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. xxv. 46. These shall go away into everlasting punishment.

ART. 10. We believe that the entire action of the church, in council, in missionary labor, in public instruction, social worship and communion,<sup>1</sup>

should be with direct reference to the crowning event, *viz.*, the personal coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv. 14. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.

<sup>1</sup> Amos iv. 12. Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

ART. 11. We believe that the fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures, in embracing the physical,<sup>1</sup> moral,<sup>2</sup> political<sup>3</sup> and financial<sup>4</sup> signs of the times, indicate that the return of the Saviour is near, and that the time has arrived when the subject should be made prominent by all preachers of the gospel.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv. 29. The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 1. In the latter times some shall depart from the faith.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 1-9. This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Dan. ii. 43, 44. Whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. In the days of these kings the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom.

<sup>4</sup> James v. 3. Ye have heaped together treasure for the last days.

ART. 12. We believe that this earth will be changed at the time of the final redemption of man, and will become the eternal home of the saved,<sup>1</sup> called in the Scriptures the kingdom of God; also new heavens, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 5. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xi. 15. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Peter iii. 10-13. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also. . . Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xiii. 28. Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God.

ART. 13. We believe that the government of the church should be congregational.

## COVENANT.

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We, in the presence of God and this assembly, do now seriously, deliberately and forever, declare the Lord Jehovah to be our God, Jesus Christ to be our Saviour, the Holy Spirit to be our sanctifier, and the Holy Scriptures to be the rule of our Christian faith and practice; and have solemnly given ourselves up to God, to be wholly his, to be governed by his laws, to be guided by his Spirit, to be disposed of by his providence, and to be saved by his grace, in the way of the gospel; and we further promise to receive in meekness and love the pure doctrines of the gospel, and by the aids of divine grace to lead a life of piety towards God, and benevolence towards our fellowmen.

We also submit ourselves to the government of Christ in his church, and to the regular administration of it. Attending the worship of God, and the ordinances of the gospel; living in Christian charity and communion with its members; conscientiously endeavoring to promote its peace, purity and edification, and to discharge all these duties by which God may be glorified, and the religion of the Bible extended and established among men.

Christian character being our only test of fellowship, we have entered into these solemn engagements in humble dependence on the grace of God,

and with a full belief that our vows are recorded on high, and will be reviewed in the day of judgment.

[*Members of the church will rise.*]

We then, as a church, do cordially receive you into our fellowship and communion, and give thanks to God, who, we trust, has inclined your heart to fear his name.

We promise to treat you with Christian affection; to watch over you with tenderness; and to offer our prayers to the Father of the great head of the church, to enable you to fulfill the solemn covenant which you have now accepted with us.

Now we commend you to God, and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up in the most holy faith, and to present you faultless before the throne of his glory with exceeding joy.

## GOVERNMENT.

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### I.—ANNUAL MEETING AND CHOICE OF OFFICERS.

ARTICLE 1. This church shall be called the Advent Christian Church, of Bridgton, Maine.

ART. 2. There shall be a meeting of the church annually, on the last Saturday in the month of May, for the transaction of the annual business of the church.

ART. 3. At each annual meeting, the officers shall be chosen by ballot (except three of the cabinet officers).

ART. 4. The officers of the church shall consist of the Pastor, and a Cabinet of six members, two Deacons, two Deaconesses, a Secretary, a Treasurer, two Tithing Men, two Ushers, Sunday School Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Sunday School Secretary and Sunday School Treasurer, Librarian, Assistant Librarian, and two Auditors (and all officers shall be members of this church).

ART. 5. The Pastor shall appoint the Church Secretary, the Treasurer, the Sunday School Superintendent and three others as his Cabinet; these with the two Deacons and two Deaconesses shall constitute an Official Board.

ART. 6. The Pastor's Cabinet shall be known as the Secretary of the Church, Secretary of the

Treasury, Secretary of Missions, Secretary of Music, Secretary of Membership, Secretary of Order, and shall be appointed at the regular annual meeting of the church, and must be approved by a vote of the church.

ART. 7. It shall be the duty of the Pastor and his Cabinet to examine the qualifications of persons, who may offer themselves as candidates for admission into the church, and can be admitted if the Pastor and his Cabinet are unanimous in recommending the candidate.

## II.—ADMISSION OF MEMBERS.

ART. 1. Candidates for admission to the church by profession, shall be examined by the Pastor and his Cabinet, two weeks previous to their admission, *except in special cases, when they may be received on shorter notice.*

ART. 2. Persons may be received by letter from other churches, after the Secretary of Church has publicly read said letter of recommendation, and has stated that unless objection be made to the Pastor and his Cabinet, within one week, the person shall be considered a member in regular standing, after signing the Covenant, and receiving the right hand of fellowship, if said letter has been submitted to the Pastor and his Cabinet, and said recommendation has been approved by them.

ART. 3. Candidates shall be elected to membership by a two-thirds vote of the members present, at any meeting called by the Pastor and three members of his Cabinet, and shall become members

in regular standing, after signing the Covenant and receiving the hand of fellowship.

ART. 4. Any person wishing dismissal from the church membership, shall present the reasons for such a desire, in writing, to the Pastor and his Cabinet, and if they shall recommend the dismissal, a two-thirds vote of the members present, shall grant the dismissal.

ART. 5. Members of the church, who shall conduct themselves in a manner unbecoming a Christian—and their conduct shall be decided by plain Scripture—and shall persist in so doing, after having been labored with by the Pastor and his Cabinet, shall be dismissed from the membership of the church, by a two-thirds vote of the members present, if the dismissal has been recommended by the Pastor and three members of his Cabinet.

### III.—SPECIAL MEETINGS.

ART. 1. If the Pastor and his Cabinet refuse, or neglect, to call a special business meeting, when requested to do so in writing, by seven members of the church, who shall state their reasons for desiring said meeting, the Deacons shall have power to call said meeting, by having notice of the meeting publicly read two Sundays before the time appointed for said meeting.

### IV.—QUARTERLY MEETINGS.

ART. 1. There shall be business meetings held on the last Saturday evenings, in the months of February, May, August and November.

## V.—PASTOR.

ART. 1. The Pastor shall have the general oversight of the church, Sunday School, Loyal Workers, and all auxiliary organizations, and shall preside at all of the business meetings of the church. He shall also have power to dismiss one or more members of his Cabinet (except the Secretary and Treasurer, and Sunday School Superintendent), at any time during the year, if the cause for dismissal be approved by a majority of the Official Board of the church; he shall also have power to fill any vacancies, that may occur in his Cabinet, during the year.

## VI.—QUORUM.

ART. 1. Seven shall constitute a Quorum.

## VII.—SUNDAY SCHOOL.

ART. 1. The officers of the Sunday School shall be elected by the church, and shall be elected at the time of the annual meeting of the church. They shall be elected by ballot.

ART. 2. The officers of the Sunday School shall be a Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian, Assistant Librarian and two Auditors.

## VIII.—AMENDMENTS.

The confession, covenant, and regulations of government, may be amended at any regular annual meeting of the church, or at any special meeting, providing notice that a change is to be made, be given from the pulpit two Sundays before said meeting.

