

The Somerset (Particular Baptist) Confession, 1656

The great Particular Baptist apostle to the West of England was Thomas Collier, a lay-preacher of extraordinary gifts and energy. There seems to have been scarcely a place in Wessex which he did not visit in his evangelistic tours. Of course, he founded churches, and to these he was writing "General Epistles" by 1649 (Footnote* Whitley, *A Baptist Bibliography*, 40). Collier himself may have been the chief link among the churches, but it is evident that there was a kind of brotherhood among them by 1651. On November 6-7, 1653, representatives of the churches met at Wells. The laying on of hands for all baptized believers was the foremost question discussed. Collier calls this one "the First" among several meetings of the Association between 1653 and 1657 (Footnote* Collier, "*Several Resolutions and Answers to Queries*")

The seventh meeting of the Association took place at Bridgewater on September 5-6, 1656, at which time a Confession of Faith was approved. It was evidently the work of Collier, but the fact that decisions in favor of some of the positions announced in the Confession were made at this meeting, might indicate that he had help in preparing the Confession. It is evident from the Epistle Dedicatory that the Quakers were chiefly responsible for the appearance of the Confession in 1656. The authors said that two facts caused them to set forth their beliefs. First, they denied the "general charge" that their churches were not Calvinistic and so were out of accord with the London Particular churches, and owned both the London brethren and their Confession (Footnote* Underhill, "*Confessions of Faith*" pg. 63). Second, that they were: very sensible of the great distractions and divisions that are amongst professing people in this nation, the many ways and wiles of Satan to seduce and deceive souls, the great departing from the faith, and that under glorious notions of spiritualness and holiness. .

Collier had specific knowledge of the Quakers. Early in 1654 the Quaker pioneers, Audland and Ayrey, moved on Bristol, skirting Wales and preaching as they went. Once in Bristol, Audland appears to have gone straight to a Baptist meeting, where his preaching was well received. He and Ayrey soon moved on to preach in many places in Somersetshire and adjacent counties. Before leaving for London, however, they ran into Baptist opposition and in July were drawn into a debate with some Baptists at Broadmead, Bristol, on "the inner light." (Footnote* Langley, loc. cit., in *Transacts. Baptist Historical Society*). By October, Audland had returned to Bristol with John Canne (formerly a Baptist) at his side (Footnote* Braithwaite, op. Cit., 165-167). They were given a tremendous reception, thousands attending their outdoor preaching. Many Baptists were attracted to the new movement, and Baptist churches faced a grim task in trying to maintain unity and peace in their fellowship. Braithwaite admits the Quaker movement became strong in Somerset largely through proselyting Baptists. More fuel was added to the Quaker fire with the coming of George Fox, toward the end of 1655, on a tour of the Southwest.

The Quaker fire was burning menacingly around the Baptists when their Western (or Somerset) Association met in September, 1656, at Bridgewater. The Confession which the churches at that meeting decided to publish may have been originally drawn up before 1656, possibly in 1653 when it, like the Midland Particular Association Confession, would have served as a basis of union, for the authors said that "when the Lord set us first upon this work, we did not think of bringing it to public view," but meant it to "try our unity in the faith." (Footnote* Underhill, op. cit., 63). In either case, Collier, who in 1654 was given the unique office of "General Superintendent and Messenger of all the Associated Churches," was its principal author.

The Confession bears the mark of careful preparation, and the impress of Collier can be seen at various points. While an effort is made to approximate the theological position of the London Confession, there is complete independence of expression, and there are some noteworthy omissions of material of the older document. Perhaps there was some ground for the saying that these Baptists did not quite have the same theological outlook as their London brethren. McGlothlin suggests that "some jealousy and fear" of the London churches prompted the setting forth of this Confession, but it seems

improbable that this fear concerned the authority of the London churches as much as the theology of some London Baptists. The Calvinism of the Western Association was not of a rigid type.

Collier, as a lay-evangelist, was troubled by some of the same practical difficulties which the General Baptists said they saw in the doctrine of a restricted or particular atonement, yet he liked the Calvinistic framework.

It is important to note that there were General Baptists within the area of the Western Association, and the Confession of 1656 probably represents an attempt to comprehend all Baptists of the district irrespective of their Calvinism or Arminianism (*Footnote - see the Association's view of the Atonement in 1655 in Collier, *Several Resolutions and answers of Queries*). Article 34 is one of the clearest statements on the missionary obligation of a church to be heard before the time of William Carey. This is the only Baptist Confession to include an article on the Jews and on the attitude that Christians should take toward them. The ubiquitous Quakers were partly responsible for the Article, having in 1656 debated with Collier the question of the Jews' admission to England. (*Footnote - See *A brief answer to some of the objections made against the coming in of the Jews in this Commonwealth* {1656}). The emphasis on obedience to "the ordinances of Christ" is due to the experience of Collier (Footnote - *In The Right Constitution and True Subjects of the Visible Church* {Epistle Dedicatory} Collier says the he once was "against the practice of Ordinances," but that God had cleared up his understanding.) and to the Quaker controversy. The angelology and eschatology of the Confession were called for by certain views of the Quakers.

This Confession is notable on two accounts: first, it represents the earliest important effort at bringing Particular and General Baptists into agreement and union; and, second, it clearly enunciates three distinctively Baptist principles, - the duty of a church to receive only those who give evidence of having been regenerated, the right of a church to call out and ordain its own ministers, and the obligation of the church to send representatives to preach the gospel to the world. These principles were brought to public attention by the Confession, and their practice defeated Quakerism among Baptists and fostered a united group of evangelistic churches, numbers of which continue to this day.

Original copies of this Confession are to be found in the British Museum; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; and the Manchester British College Library, Manchester. Facsimile copies of the Confession are in Underhill, *Confessions of Faith*, Crosby, *History of the English Baptists* (Vol.1, Appendix III), and McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*. This copy is taken from McGlothlin.

A

CONFESSION

OF THE

FAITH

OF SEVERAL

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

In the County of Somerset, and of some Churches in the Counties neer adjacent.

I Peter iii. 15.

Sanctifie the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready alwaies to give an answer to every man that asketh

you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

Matthew x. 32.

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, which is in heaven.

Isaiah viii. 20.

To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this rule it is because there is no light in them.

Acts xvii. II.

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of minde, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

London, Printed by Henry Hills, and are to be sold by Thomas Brewster, at the three Bibles at the West end of Pauls, 1656.

August 10.

A CONFESSIO^N of the FAITH of several congregations of Christ in the county of Somerset, and some churches in the counties near adjacent. Printed at London, Anno 1656.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY

To the Sons and Daughters of Zion, grace, peace, ect., be multiplied.

Dearly Beloved, it may with some seem altogether needless and useless to bring to public view, a narrative of faith in such a day as This is, especially there having been the like brought forth by several baptized congregations formerly. Unto which we reply, that our publishing This Narrative of our faith and practice, is not from any dislike we found with the former Confession of our beloved Brethren. (We mean the Narrative published by the seven Churches in London), whom we own, and with whom we are one both in faith and practice. Neither is there any thing in ours contradictory to our brethren, that we know of, that have gone before us.

We can say when the Lord set us first upon This work, we did not think of bringing it to public view, but did it rather for a trial of our unity in the faith, and for our more clear fellowship one with another, from our harmony in faith and practice.

1. In regard of the general change laid upon our profession, as if none in the counteries that professed baptism were of our Brethren's judgment that published that Confession of faith in London, but old freewill, falling away from grace, &c., all which through the grace of God we disclaim, and not only we, but to our knowledge, many other Churches in the adjacent Counties, who stand fast in the profession of the unchangeable love of God in Jesus Christ to His people.
2. Being very sensible of the great distractions and divisions that are among profession people in This nation, the many ways and wiles of Satan to seduce and deceive souls, the great departing from the faith, and that under glorious notions of spiritualness and holiness, Satan transforms himself into an Angel of light, and His Ministers into Ministers o righteousness, we could not but judge it our bounden duty in This our day to come forth in a renewed Declaration of our faith, as a public testimony before all men that (through grace) we do with one soul desire to cleave to the Lord, contending earnestly for the faith that was once given to the Saints: for This

being the great design of Satan to destroy the faith and practice of the Gospel churches, we judge nothing more suitable and proper to us as Churches of our Lord, wherein we might bear our witness for him (in This day of temptation) in print as well as in practice, then thus our testimony to the faith and truth, as it is in Jesus. And, Oh, that it might be a Remembrancer to all our Sister-churches in This Commonwealth, that they be not soon moved from the hope of the Gospel, and give us leave to cry mightily unto you, and to be your remembrancers as from the Lord in these few following particulars:

1. That it be our care, and that which may daily lay next to your hearts to have a high and precious esteem of Jus Christ, and of Him crucified; God having made Him to His people, to be the way, the truth and the life, John 14:6. Know that it has been the design of Satan in all ages to seek the undermining of Him; for Satan knows that God has made Him to be the way of salvation to all that truly believe in Him. Hence it is that the devil said to Christ, we know thee who thou art, &c. the devil knows that there is no other name given under heaven by which we may be saved, Acts 4:12, he who goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour, I Peter. 5:8. If he cannot have His prey in one way, he will seek it in another. He can and does transform himself into an Angel of light, and His Ministers as the Ministers of the righteousness, 2 Cor. 11:14, 15. It is all one with the adversary, whether he ruins souls in a way of profession or in a way of profaness; and if in profession, he cannot quite souls with the form without the power, (which is His great work) 2 Tim. 3., from the first to the fifth verse, Titus 1:16; then he will pretend to being them into a power without all form; all form must be accounted fleshly, yea, Christ Himself (the most glorious Dispensation of God, the spirit, and the life of souls truly living in Him by faith, with out whom there is neither grace nor glory) must now be accounted fleshly, and all that own it must be of the Devil. Oh, the subtle ways of Satan to deceive and ruin souls. Oh, give us leave to call upon you, and to cry unto the Lord both for our selves and you. That He who is our Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, would now be our Keeper in the hour of temptation. Oh, be not easily cheated out of your esteem of, and interest in a crucified Jesus. Oh, little do souls think, what they lose when they part with the man Christ Jesus, trampling the blood of the covenant under feet, for nothing but wind and vanity, they sow the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind; if mercy do not recover them again, who lay aside Christ, scripture and obedience all at once, subjecting themselves to a suggestion, or voice within them, more than to the mind of God written in the Holy Scriptures, who lay aside Christ in all His Offices; we say again let it be your care, yea your great care, as you hope for mercy in that day, that you keep close to your head, Christ Jesus, from Whom some are turned aside, and let it be our work rather to be mourning and lamenting the state of poor deluded souls, then to run away from Christ, and truth with them. Oh! Let not any of us, who have owned the Lord, part with Him because others do it; or trample underfoot His ordinances, because we see and hear others do it; but rather let that noble spirit appear in you that was in the prophet, Psa. 119:97; and verse 126, 127; they make void thy Law, therefore I love thy commandments above Gold; do men under pretence of light, trample under foot the blood of the covenant, and the ordinances all at once, and pretend love in it, and persuade you to do it. Oh! Love Christ and His laws the more, love them above gold, yea, above fine gold, so shall you manifest yourselves to be the Spouse of Christ, betrothed unto Him in truth, and not a harlot that does run away from him, and say all is well.
2. Let it be your great care to press after, and live more in the power of the Gospel, This is that will prove the condemnation of men who live in the profession of the Gospel; without the power and life of the Gospel, 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 1:16, for the Gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation, Rom. 1:16, and if you do indeed live in the power of the Gospel, you shall

have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, Romans 6:22. We do not mind such a power as men pretend to in these days, viz., a light and a voice within them, without any relation to Christ, or Scriptures, but the power of Christ handed forth in the Ministration of the Gospel through the exercise of faith in Jesus, for ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, I Peter 1:5, living in the constant apprehensions of Christ crucified for you, everlasting to make intercession, Hebrews 7:25, by virtue of which the spirit, power and virtues of Christ are daily manifested in you, so Christ is not only for you, but in you, the hope of glory.

3. Take heed of being ensnared and entangled with the evils of the world, This is what which Christ has prayed for (to This farther) that those who believe in Him might be kept from the evils of the world, John 17:15. And, indeed we cannot but judge that it much concerns the Lord's people (on whom His name is called) to die daily to the worlds ways and fashions; how often are the saints called upon in Scripture to This work, Ephesians 4:17, 18,19. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their minds, &c., Col. 3:5, mortify therefore your members which are upon earth, 7C., Rom. 12:2, and be not conformed to This world, &c., I Peter 1:14, as obedience children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lust in your ignorance, &c., with many other the life. Oh, therefore, give us leave to mind you (and we desire the Lord to mind both you and us) of those abominable sins of formality, hypocrisy, covenantousness, pride, &c., with many other gross enormities, which are too incident to professing people, and we have cause to fear it is that which has and does at This day very deeply wound the truth; Oh, that it might wound our hearts more, and & that the hearts of Saints might be signing and crying, not only for the abominations of the profane, but the likewise of professing people; these aforementioned evils we can say, through grace, that God has in a measure set home upon our hearts, but 2 of them we shall mention more particularly, viz., Pride in apparel and covetousness, and has likewise set our hearts in seeking and endeavoring a reformation, and we shall present unto you our light in This matter, covetousness and pride, being not only natural sins, but reigning evils, were not discovered and opposed; for the finding out of which evils that it may be discerned and dealt withal, we judge covetousness to consist either in: 1, in getting of goods, and not by right; or 2, in an over eager pursuit of a lawful calling; 3, in a close keeping, when the necessity of the Saints calls for it; for pride and vanity in apparel, we judge that things that are altogether needless and useless, may clearly come under the denomination of vanity and pride; as likewise costly array, when more costly than profitable; these we judge are the symptoms of a vain mind, and oh, that the Lore would set it home upon the hearts of all the Saints to reform, and that it might become Church work to look after those things; for Church-sins will bring down Church-afflictions, if not repented of, see Revelation the second and third chapters. As the Lord in His infinite goodness has purposed to work His people into a conformity to Jesus, that as they have born the image of the earthly, so they might bear the image of the heavenly man, I Cor. 15:49, so it is or should be the longing desire of all the Saints that do indeed expect to be like Christ in glory, to be pressing more after a conformity to Him here, I John 3:3. He who has this hope in him purifies himself, as he is pure. Nut how much does the contrary appear, are not many professing men and women in our days; rather pressing after the world in is pride and fashions, then after Christ in meekness and holiness. And we fear that there may be some rising in some good people against a reformation in these things, and we earnestly desire that one may so pursue it, as to adventure the loss of an interest in Christ, rather than to part with such lusts as these are, which do indeed war against the soul. But it may be objected that pride consists in the hearts and not in apparel, persons may be as proud in mean apparel as others are in costly.

We answer first, it is true, it may be so, yet we have no rule to judge our brethren's heart in such a case,

but love should teach us other things, and we do not question, but that those that are most mortified in This matter, have full experience of too much pride in their nature.

Secondly, we judge it to be too carnal a way of reasoning for Saints, to suppose their brethren may be proud in mean apparel, and from hence resolve to be proud in gay apparel. We desire that Satan may not get such an advantage over any o f the Lord's people in this thing.

Thirdly, we cannot but judge that from our own experience in past, that the true cause why there is so much vanity and pride of apparel upon the back is because the root of all lies in the heart. If it were not in the heart, it would not appear so much on the back as it does. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, and suitably the body acts. If we see a proud and gay outside, we may easily conjecture where there is a proud heart.

Objection: We find ourselves in the use of such things, not al all puffed up, and therefore we judge it Lawful, &c.

We answer, first, if it were so in truth it's the better.

But secondly, we cannot but conceive that as the original of all lies in the heart; so that those who do not know that those needless vain things on the back, do minister occasion to the vain mind to be puffed up. They do not know their own hearts, and it may be discovered in such things as these;

1. The heart's desiring after, and preferring of persons in gay attire, before those in mean, James chapter 5;
2. The heart's unwillingness to part with it; a heart never so knows His love to pride in a thing, till he comes to part with it.
3. A heat rising against a reproof of this vanity. Herod heard John the Dipper gladly till he touched him in His beloved sin; and this reformation probably may make many startle who are glorious in profession, but we hope that Sion's Sons and Daughters will be willing upon a right information to come to a right reformation.

Objection: If we should lay aside the fashions of the World, we should be slighted among the people of the world, pass through shame, be as an Owl among birds, none of fashion would care for our company.

We answer, First, it is the portion of the followers of Christ to suffer shame in the world for His sake, and to be slighted of men, I Peter 1:4. They think strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, and shall any that fear the Lord run with the world to this excess of pride in apparel, that so the world may not think strange of them, God forbid.

But, 2; we are in expectation of such a general conviction (from the Lord) amongst the Saints in this matter; that ere long it will be a shame to a Saint to be found in Babylon's deckings in the outward man as well as in spiritual things. However, we desire not to be tedious, we hope a word to the wise, through the blessings of God may be enough; only we commend unto further,

1. that the name of the Lord is much concerned in it. What advantage does Satan and His instruments take to reproach the truth from the vanity and pride of professing people in this matter;
2. Secondly, it is a sin that is attended with many other sins, as covetousness, oppression, &c. to maintain it.

3. Thirdly, it is a sin most of all abhorred of God, all that are proud in heart, are an abomination to him; He resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.
4. Fourthly, it was the sin and cause of the condemnation of the Devil, first of Timothy the third chapter and the sixth verse. It was the sin and cause of the fall of man from His first estate, Genesis the third chapter and the fifth verse, ye shall be as God knowing good and evil, and this prevailed to draw on to disobedience.
5. Fifthly, and finally, it is that for which men must stand liable to the burning flame, when the great and terrible day of our Lord comes, which day we believe to be near at hand.

When that day comes that shall burn like an oven, Malachi the fourth chapter and the first verse, then proud persons must be the fuel of that fire. Oh, take heed and beware of this sin of pride, both in heart, and in the outward man. Take heed and beware of covetousness, take heed and beware of hypocrisy, and of all those abominations by which men are fitted for the everlasting burning, for even our God is a consuming fire.

Objection, it may be some may fear they should be accounted covetous by the world, if they should set about such a reformation as we here mind.

We say that God has appointed other ways for His people wherein they may give convincing testimony of their liberality; that is in clothing the backs and refreshing the bowels of the poor, and needy, and not in decking their own backs with needless vanities, and that too it may be when the poor and needy are crying for want. Oh, that it may be your care and ours for the future, to show forth the life and virtues of Christ by our good works to the praise and glory of God.

4. Let it be your care to seek after things that make for peace and things wherein you may edify one another, follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which none shall see the Lord, Hebrews the 12th chapter and the 14th verse, as God is the God of Peace, and Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. So, let the Lord's people manifest themselves to be indeed the Sons of Peace. However, if any be contentious, let no such custom be owned in the Churches of Christ.
5. Let it be your care in this evil day to cleave close to the principles of truth, the want of which we judge to be the cause of falling from the truth, souls not being grounded in principles, for we judge that there are such doctrinal principles of truth, left by the Lord unto, and wrought in His peace, that if an Angel from heaven should come and preach contrary unto it, they might let him be accursed. Some of which we believe to be, that Jesus Christ crucified, was raised again by the power of God, and is the way, the truth, and the life, that we are justified by faith in His blood, that a person justified is to live to him and obey him according to His will in Scripture, that he is ascended into the heavens, and is with the Father, making intercession for His people, that He will come again and raise and change His people, and judge and reign and rule, & c. And His people shall reign with, &c.
6. Let it be your care in all things to live holy in this world, to be holy in all manner of conversation, I Peter 1:15, that both you and we may have our conversation in heaven from whence we look for a Savoir, Phil. 3:20.
7. Let it be much upon our hearts (to the end that it may be so) to be much in the exception of, and the exercise of faith in the promises of God, for the powering forth of a greater measure of the Holy Spirit.

And lastly, Oh, that the glorious appearing and kingdom of our Lord Jesus might be much upon your hearts and ours, which is the blessed hope of Saints, Titus 2:13. Then, what manner of persons should we be in all manner of holy conversation? For he that has this hope in himself purifieth himself as He

is pure, I John 3:3. However, lest we should be thought too tedious, we shall proceed no further, only mind a word to the Reader. For his help in the narrative, we have set down for the most part the Scriptures between every clause or branch of the article, and most of the Scriptures are set down at length. For the benefit of the Reader, the articles are in the same letters or characters as this Epistle is, and what is in a different character from those, they are the Scriptures in proof of the foregoing Article.

Thus dear Friends, having given some account of the reasons of our publishing this Narrative at this time, we commend it to you, as it is, desiring it may be useful to that end; for which it is intended. We have not desired either to follow cunningly devised fables, nor to use the excellency of speech, which man's wisdom teaches, but to bring forth the truth or our faith in the plainness and simplicity of our hearts, and that we believe according to the truth, as it is in Jesus, in whose hands we leave it for a blessing upon it to you, Fare ye well.

Signed in the name, and by the appointment of the several Churches, by us whose names are as followeth:

In the County of Somerset:

Of the Church of Christ meeting at Bridge-water, Alexander Atkins and Tobias Wells; Of the Church meeting at Ryden, Robert Adrigde; Of the Church meeting at Hatch, George Parsons; Of the Church meeting at Chard, Robert Chanson, and John Sparke; Of the Church meeting at Somerton, William Scriven and William Anger; Of the Church meeting at Wells, David Barret, and Thomas Savery; Of the Church meeting at Wedmore, Thomas Urch and Richard Coals; of the Church meeting at Stoak, William Hare; Of the church meeting at Wincanton, Blaze Allen and Ambrose Brook; Of the Church meeting at Munticue, Thomas Bud.

In the County of Wilts: Of the Church meeting at North-Bradly, William Crab, and Nicholas Elliot.

In the County of Devon: Of the Church meeting at Luppit, Edward Burford and Samuel Ham.

In the County of Gloucester: Of the Church meeting at Sedburg, James Nobs; Of the Church meeting at Bristol, Henry Hineham.

In the County of Dorset: Of the Church meeting in, and near Lime, Abraham Podger.

Thomas Collier.

I.

WE believe that there is but one God (I Cor. 8:6.), who is immortal, eternal, invisible, only wise (I Tim. 1:17.), holy (Lev. 11:44.), almighty (Gen. 17:1.) infinite (I Kings 8:27; Isa. 40:28; Ps. 147:5); a Spirit (John 4:24.), glorious in holiness (Ex. 15:11), just, merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in mercy and truth (Ex. 34:6, 7.), faithful in all things (Deut. 7:9.).

II.

THAT this God, who is so in himself, did according to his own will in time, create all things, by, and for Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:2; Col. 1:16; John 2:3); who is the word of God (John 1:1) and upholds all things by the word of his power (Heb. 1:3.).

III.

THAT God made man after his own image (Gen. 1:27), in an estate of uprightness and human perfection (Eccles. 7:29.),

IV.

THAT God gave Adam a just law, requiring obedience under the penalty of death (Gen. 2:17), which law he brake, and brought himself and his posterity under the guilt and judgment denounced (Gen. 3:6; Rom. 5:12, 17, 18, 19.).

V.

MAN being in this undone estate, God did in the riches of his mercy hold forth Christ in a promise (Gen. 3:15.).

VI.

THAT in process of time God gave forth his laws by the hand of Moses (Exod. 20; John 1:17), to fallen man (Gal. 3:19), not for justification to eternal life (Gal. 3:17; Rom. 3:20.), but that all might appear guilty before the Lord by it (Rom. 3:19; 5:20).

VII.

THAT out of this condition none of the sons of Adam were able to deliver themselves (Rom. 8:3; Eph. 2:1, 5; Rom. 5:6.).

VIII.

THAT God continued and renewed the manifestation of his grace and mercy in Christ after the first promise made (Gen. 3), in other promises (Gen. 22:18 with Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:16.); and in types, as the passover (Exod. 12:8 and ver. 13 with I Cor. 5:7.), and the brazen serpent (Numb. 21:9 compared with John 3:14); with the ministry and ministration of Moses and Aaron, the sacrifices, &c. being all figures of Christ (Heb. 7:8 and Chap. 9.); and in prophesies (as Isa. 9:6; 11:1, 2; 53:6 compared with I Pet. 2:24; I Cor. 15:3.).

IX.

THAT God in his son did freely, without respect to any work done, or to be done by them as a moving cause, elect and choose some to himself before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3, 4; 2 Tim. 1:9.), whom he in time hath, doth, and will call, justify, sanctify and glorify (Rom. 8:29, 30).

X.

THAT those that were thus elected and chosen in Christ were by nature (before conversion) children of wrath even as others (Eph. 2:3; Rom. 3:9.).

XI.

THAT those that are chosen of God, called and justified, shall never finally fall from him, but being born from above are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (John 6:39; 10:28; 11:26; I Pet. 1:5; Ps. 89:30, 31, 32, 33, 34; I John 3:9; John 14:19; Heb. 12:2; Jer. 31:3; John 10:29; Ps. 37:28; Jer. 32:40; Rom. 8:39; I Cor. 1:8, 9; Rom. 8:30; Ps. 48:14.).

XII.

THAT when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman (Gal. 4:4, 5.) according to the promises and prophesies of the scriptures; who was conceived in the womb of Mary the virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit of God, (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:20.), and by her born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:11; Luke 2:6, 7.).

XIII.

WE believe that Jesus Christ is truly God (Isa. 9:6; Heb. 1:8; Rom. 9:5.) and truly man, of the seed of David (I Tim. 2:5; Acts 13:23; Rom. 1:3.).

XIV.

THAT after he came to be about thirty years of age, being baptized, he manifested himself to be the Son of God (Luke 3:21, 23 with John 2:7, 11.), the promised Messiah, by doing such works both in his life and in his death which were proper unto, and could be done by none but the Son of God, the true Messiah (John 1:49; 6:9, &c.).

XV.

THAT this man Christ Jesus suffered death under Pilate, at the request of the Jews (Luke 23:24.), bearing the sins of his people on his own body on the cross (I Pet. 2:24), according to the will of God (Isa. 53:6), being made sin for us, (2 Cor. 5:11) and so was also made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13, 14; I Pet. 3:18.), that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:11), and by his death upon the cross, he hath obtained eternal redemption and deliverance for his church. (Col 1:14; Eph. 1:7; Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:12; I Pet 1:18, 19.).

XVI.

THAT this same Jesus having thus suffered death for our sins, was buried (Matt. 27:59, 60.), and was also raised by the power of God (Eph. 1:19.) the third day according to the scriptures (I Cor. 15:3, 4.), for our justification (Rom.4:25.).

XVII.

THAT after he had been seen forty days upon the earth, manifesting himself to his disciples (Acts 1:3.), he ascended into the heavens (Acts 1:9, 10, 11; Heb. 4:14.), and is set on the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 8:1; Heb. 1:3.), whom the heavens must receive until the time of the Restitution of all things. (Acts 3:21.).

XVIII.

THAT the Father having thus exalted him, and given him a name above every name (Phil. 2:9.), and hath made him who is mediator (I Tim. 2:5), priest (Heb. 10:21; 8:1), prophet (Acts 3:22.), and king to his people (Ps. 2:6; Rev. 15:3.). As he is our priest, so is he our peace and reconciliation (Eph. 2:14, 15; Rom. 5:9, 10.), and being entered into the holy place, even heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God (Heb. 9:24.), making continual intercession for us (Heb. 7:24, 25.), he is become our advocate

(I John 2:1.) by whom we have boldness and access unto the throne of grace with acceptance (Heb. 10:19; Eph. 3:12; Heb. 4:16.). As he is our prophet, so he hath given us the scriptures, the Old and New Testament, as a rule and direction unto us both for faith and practice (John 5:39; I Pet. 1:10, 11, 12; 2 Tim. 3:16; I Pet. 1:20, 21; Eph. 2:20; I Cor. 14:37; Tit. 1:2, 3.); and that he hath sent, doth and will (according to his promise) send his Holy Spirit the Comforter, by whom he leadeth us into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13.); and by his continual presence with us, and in us (John 14:16, 17.), teaching, opening and revealing the mysteries of the kingdom, and will of God unto us (I Cor. 2:10, 11, 12, 13; Rev. 2:29; 5:5.), giving gifts in his church for the work of the ministry, and edifying the body of Christ (Eph. 4:8, 12; I Cor. 12:4, 5, 6.), that through the powerful teachings of the Lord, by his Spirit in his church, they might grow up in him (Eph. 4:15.), be conformed to his will (Ezek. 36:27; I Pet. 1:2.), and sing praises unto his name (Heb. 2:12; I Cor. 14:15.). And as he is our prophet, and king, lord, and law-giver (Isa. 33:22; 55:4.), Prince of life (Acts 3:15.), Prince of peace (Isa. 9:6.), Master of his people (Matt. 23:8.), Head of his church (Col. 1:18.), the Almighty (Rev. 1:8.), so he hath given rules unto us, by the which he ruleth over us (Luke 6:46; John 10:16; I John 2:4; John 14:15; Matt. 28:20.), and ruleth over all things for his church (Eph. 1:22; Rev. 19:16.) and by the power of love ruleth by his Spirit in us (2 Cor. 5:14; I John 2:5.), making us (in a measure) both able and willing to honour him (Phil. 4:3; Heb. 13:21; Eph. 6:10; Phil. 2:13), and bow before him (Ps. 95:6; 110:3; Rev. 4: 10, 11.), submitting ourselves to him alone in all his commands with joy (John 15:14; Rev. 14:4; 7:15; Ps. 119:2, 47; Rev. 15:3, 4.).

XIX.

THAT the Spirit is administred by or through the word of faith preached (Gal. 3:2) which word was first declared by the Lord himself, and was confirmed by them that heard him (Heb. 2:3.), which word is called the gospel of God's grace (Acts 20:24.), the word of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19.), the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17.), the weapon of a Christian (2 Cor. 10:4.); a faithful (Rev. 22:6.), quick, powerful (Heb. 4:12.), plain (Prov. 8: 9.), comfortable (Rom. 15:4.), pure (Ps. 12:6.), right, true (Ps. 33:4.), sound (Tit. 2:8.), and wholesome word (I Tim. 6:3.).

XX.

THAT this spirit of Christ, being administer'd by the word of faith, worketh in us faith in Christ (John 3: 5; I Pet. 1:22 Acts 16:14; Gal. 5:22.) by virtue of which we come to receive our sonship (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26.), and is further administer'd unto us through faith in the promises of God (Eph. 1:13; Acts 2:38, 39; Acts 1:4.), waiting on him in those ways and means that he hath appointed in his word (John 14:15, 16, 17; Luke 11:9, 13.), this faith being the ground of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1.).

XXI.

THAT justification is God's accounting and declaring that man justified from the guilt and condemnation of all his sin, who hath received Jesus Christ and doth believe in him (in truth and power) according to the record given of him by God in scripture (Rom. 4: 5; I John 5:10, 11; Joh. 3:36.).

XXII.

THAT justification from the guilt and condemnation of sin is only obtained through faith in that man Jesus Christ, crucified at Jerusalem, and by God raised from the dead (Rom. 5:1, 9; Acts 13:38, 39; Rom. 4:25; 10:9.). And that those who bring in any other way of justification, do therein make void, and acquit themselves of having any interest in the gospel and grace of Christ (Gal. 2:21; 5:4.).

XXIII.

THAT this faith being wrought in truth and power, it doth not only interest us in our justification, sonship, and glory, but it produceth as effects and fruits, a conformity, in a measure, to the Lord Jesus, in his will, graces and virtues (Rom. 5:3, 4; I John 3:23, 24; 2 Pet. 1:5, 6, 7; Gal. 5:6; Acts 26:18; I Thess 1:3.).

XXIV.

THAT it is the duty of every man and woman, that have repented from dead works, and have faith towards God, to be baptized (Acts 2:38; 8:12, 37, 38.), that is, dipped or buried under the water (Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12.), in the name of our Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16.), or in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19.), therein to signify and represent a washing away of sin (Acts 22:16.), and their death, burial, and resurrection with Christ (Rom. 6:5; Col. 2:12.), and being thus planted in the visible church or body of Christ (I Cor. 12:3.), who are a company of men and women separated out of the world by the preaching of the gospel (Acts 2:41; 2 Cor. 6:17.), do walk together in communion in all the commandments of Jesus (Acts 2:42.), wherein God is glorified and their souls comforted (2 Thes. 1:11, 12; 2 Cor. 1:4.).

XXV.

THAT we believe some of those commandments further to be as followeth.

1. CONSTANCY in prayer (Col. 2:23, 24.).
2. BREAKING of bread (I Cor. 11:23, 24.).
3. GIVING of thanks (Eph. 5:20.).
4. WATCHING over one another (Heb. 12:15.).
5. CARING one for another (I Cor. 12:25) by visiting one another, especially in sickness and temptations (Matt. 25:36.).
6. EXHORTING one another (Heb. 3:13.).
7. DISCOVERING to each other, and bearing one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2.).
8. LOVING one another (Heb. 13:1.).
9. REPROVING when need is one another (Matt. 18:15.).
10. SUBMITTING one to another in the Lord (I Pet. 5:5.).
11. ADMINISTERING one to another according to the gift received, whether it be in spirituals, or temporals (I Pet. 4:10.).
12. THE offender to seek reconciliation, as well as the offended (Matt. 5:23, 24.).
13. LOVE our enemies and persecutors, and pray for them (Matt. 5:23, 24).
14. EVERY one to work if he be able, and none to be idle (2 Thes. 3:10, 11, 12).
15. THE women in the church to learn in silence, and in all subjection (I Tim. 2:11; I Cor. 14:37.).
16. PRIVATE admonition to a brother offending another; and if not prevailing, to take one or two more; if he hear not them, then to tell it to the church; and if he hear not them, to be accounted as an heathen and publican (Matt. 18:15.).
17. PUBLICK rebuke to publick offenders (I Tim. 5:20.).
18. THE brethren in ministring forth their gifts, ought to do it decently and in order, one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted (I Cor. 14:31, 40.).
19. A SPECIAL care to assemble together, that their duty to God, and the church may not be neglected (Heb. 10:24, 25.).
20. AND all things in the church, done in the name and power of the head, the Lord Christ Jesus (Col. 3:7.).
21. THAT in admitting of members into the church of Christ, it is the duty of the church, and ministers whom it concerns, in faithfulness to God, that they be careful they receive none but such as

do make forth evident demonstration of the new birth, and the work of faith with power (John 3:3; Matt. 3:8, 9; Acts 8:37; Ezek. 44:6, 7, Acts 2:38; 2 Cor. 9:14; Ps. 26:4, 5; 101:7.).

XXVI

THAT those that truly repent, and believe, and are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, are in a fit capacity to exercise faith, in full assurance to receive a greater measure of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 39; Eph. 1:13.).

XXVIII. (Sic Original)

THAT it is the duty of the members of Christ in the order of the gospel, tho' in several congregations and assemblies (being one in the head) if occasion be, to communicate each to other, in things spiritual, and things temporal (Rom. 15:26; Acts 11:29; 15:22; 11:22.).

XXIX.

THAT the Lord Christ Jesus being the foundation and corner stone of the gospel church whereon his apostles built (Eph. 2:20; Heb. 2:3), He gave them power and abilities to propagate, to plant, to rule and order (Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 10:16), for the benefit of that his body, by which ministry he did shew forth the exceeding riches of his grace, by his kindness towards it in the ages to come (Eph. 2:7), which is according to his promise (Matt. 28:20.)

XXX.

THAT this foundation and ministration aforesaid, is a sure guide, rule and direction, in the darkest time of the anti-christian apostacy, or spiritual Babylonish captivity, to direct, inform, and restore us in our just freedom and liberty, to the right worship and order belonging to the church of Jesus Christ (I Tim. 3:14, 15; 2 Tim. 3:15, 16, 17; John 17:20; Isa. 59:21; Rev.2:24; Isa.40:21; Rev. 2:5; I Cor. 14:37; Rev. 1:3; 2 Thes. 3:14; Rev. 2: 11; I Pet. 1:25; I John 4:6; 2 Pet. 1:15, 16; Isa. 58: 11, 12; 2 Pet. 3:2; Isa. 8:20.).

XXXI.

THAT the church of Jesus Christ with its ministry may from among themselves, make choice of such members, as are fitly gifted and qualified by Christ, and approve and ordain such by fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands (Acts 13: 3; 14:23.), for the performance of the several duties, whereunto they are called (Acts 20:28; Rom, 12:6,7, 8; 2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 6:3.).

XXXII

THAT such a ministry labouring in the word and doctrine, have a power to receive a livelihood of their brethren, whose duty it is to provide a comfortable subsistence for them, if they be able, to whom for Christ's sake they are servants (I Cor. 9:4,7; I Tim. 5:17, 18.). Yet it is commendable in cases of necessity, for them, for example sake, and that they may be able to support the weak, to labour and work with their hands (Acts 20: 24, 25.).

XXXIII.

THAT the authority of Christ in an orderly ministry in his church, is to be submitted unto (Heb. 13: 17; 2 Thes. 3: 14.).

XXXIV.

THAT as it is an ordinance of Christ, so it is the duty of his church in his authority, to send forth such brethren as are fitly gifted and qualified through the Spirit of Christ to preach the gospel to the world (Acts 13:1, 2, 3; 11:22; 8:14.).

XXXV.

THAT it is the duty of us believing Gentiles, not to be ignorant of that blindness that yet lieth on Israel, that none of us may boast (Rom. 11:25.), but to have bowels of love and compassion to them, praying for them (Rom. 10:1.), expecting their calling, and so much the rather, because their conversion will be to us life from the dead (Rom. II: 15.).

XXXVI.

THAT it is the will of the Lord, and it is given to the saints not only to believe in him, but to suffer for his name (John 16:13; Phil. 1:26.) and so to pass through many tribulations into the kingdom of God (Acts 14: 22; 2 Tim. 3:12; 2:12.).

XXXVII.

THAT the angels of the Lord are ministring spirits, sent forth for the good of those that shall be the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14; Ps. 91:11, 12; Acts 27:23; Luke 22:43.).

XXXVIII.

THAT the wicked angels (Ps. 78: 49.) kept not their first estate in which they were created (Jude 6.), the prince of whom is called the devil (Matt. 8: 28.), and the great dragon, and the old serpent, and satan (Rev. 12:9.), and the accuser of our brethren (Rev. 12:10.), and the prince of this world (John 14:30.), and a prince that ruleth in the air; a spirit working in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2: 2.), and our adversary (I Pet. 5:8.), whose children the wicked are (Matt. 13:39; John 8:44.) To him we ought not to give place (Eph. 4:27.), whose power Christ hath overcome for us (Heb. 2: 14.), and for him and his angels everlasting fire is prepared (Matt. 25:41.).

XXXIX.

THAT it is our assured expectation, grounded upon promises, that the Lord Jesus Christ shall the second time appear without sin unto salvation, unto his people, to raise and change the vile bodies of all his saints, to fashion them like unto his glorious body, and so to reign with him, and judge over all nations on the earth in power and glory (Phil. 3:20, 21; Heb. 9:28; Acts 3:19,20, 21; Matt. 19:28; Rev. 2:26, 27; I Cor. 6:2; Ps. 72:8, 11; Dan. 7:27; Zech. 14:9; PS. 2:8, 9; Jer. 23:5,6; Ezek. 21:26,27; Isa.32:1; Rev. 11:15; Ps. 82:8; Rev. 5:9, 10; 20:6.).

XL.

THAT there is a day appointed, when the Lord shall raise the unjust as well as the righteous, and judge them all in righteousness (John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15.), but every man in his own order (I Cor. 15:23; I Thes. 4:16.), taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose punishment will be everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (2 Thes. 1:7, 8, 9, 10; Jude 14, 15; Rev. 20:11, 12, 13, 14.).

XLI.

THAT there is a place into which the Lord will gather all his elect, to enjoy him for ever, usually in scripture called heaven (2 Cor. 5:1; John 14:2, 3.).

XLII.

THAT there is a place into which the Lord will cast the devil, his angels and wicked men, to be tormented for ever, from his presence and the glory of his power, usually in scripture called hell (Mark 9:43, 44, 45; Ps. 9:17; Matt. 25:41; 10:28; 23:33; Luke 10:15; 16:23.).

XLIII.

THAT it is both the duty and privilege of the church of Christ (till his coming again) in their fellowship together in the ordinances of Christ, to enjoy, prize, and press after, fellowship through and in the Spirit with the Lord, and each with other (Acts 2:42; I Cor. 11:26; Eph. 2:21,22; Eph. 4:3,4, 5, 6; I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 3: 9; Col. 2:2), which we believe to be attained through the exercise of faith in the death, resurrection, and life of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 16; Col. 2:12; Phil. 3:9, 10, 11; I Pet. 2:5.).

XLIV.

THAT the ministry of civil justice (being for the praise of them that do well, and punishment of evil-doers) is an ordinance of God, and that it is the duty of the saints to be subject thereunto not only for fear, but for conscience sake (Rom. 13:1, 2, 3, 4, 5; I Pet. 2: 13, 14.) and that for such, prayers and supplications are to be made by the saints (I Tim. 2: 1, 2.).

XLV.

THAT nothing doth come to pass by fortune or chance, but all things are disposed by the hand of God, and all for good to his people (Gen. 45:5; 50:20; Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:11; Job 14:5; Isa.4:5,7.).

XLVI

AND that a church so believing, and so walking, though despised, and of low esteem, is no less in the account of her Lord and King, than though

BLACK, yet comely, Cant. 1:5.

FAIREST, without spot, Cant. 4:7.

PRECIOUS, Isa. 43:4.

BEAUTIFUL, Cant. 7:1.

HOLY, without blemish, Eph. 5:27.

PLEASANT, Cant. 1:15.

WHOSE soul loveth Christ, Cant. 1:7.

RUNNERS after Christ, Cant. 1:4.

HONOURABLE, Isa. 43:4.

THE desire of Christ, Cant. 7:10.

COM PLEAT in Christ, Col. 2:10.

LOVERS of the Father, John 16:27.

THE blessed of the Father, Matt. 25:34.

KEPT by the Lord, I Pet. 1:5; Isa. 27:3.

GRAVEN on the palms of his hands, Isa. 49:16.

TENDER to the Lord as the apple of his eye, Zech. 2:8.

TAUGHT of the Lord, Isa. 54:13.

ONE that hath obtained mercy, I Pet. 2 10.

ONE that hath a redemption, Eph. 1:7.

THE gates of hell shall not prevail against it, Matt. 16:18.

IN that church be glory unto God by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages world without end. Amen. Eph. 2:21.