

ENGLISH BAPTIST
GENERAL CONFESSIONS

Copyright (Public Domain)

www.reformedontheweb.com/home/.html

(Reformed on the Web)

A BRIEF CONFESSION
OR
DECLARATION OF FAITH

Set forth by many of us, who are (falsely) called Ana-Baptists, to inform all Men (in these days of scandal and reproach) of our innocent Belief and Practise; for which we are not only resolved to suffer Persecution, to the loss of our Goods, but also Life itself, rather than to decline the same.

Subscribed to by certain Elders, Deacons, and Brethren, met at London, in the first month (called March, 1660.) in the behalf of themselves, and many others unto whom they belong, in London, and in several Counties of this Nation, who are of the same Faith with us.

After the Way which men call Heresie, so Worship we the God of our Fathers; Believing all things which are written in the Law, and in the Prophets, Acts 24, 4.

LONDON

Printed by C. D. for F. Smith, at the Elephant and
Castle, near Temple-Barr, 1660.

I. We Believe and are verily confident, that there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, from everlasting to everlasting, glorious, and unwordable in all his attributes, 1 Cor. 8, 6; Isa. 40. 28.

II. That God in the beginning made Man Upright, and put him into a state and condition of Glory, without the least mixture of misery, from which he by transgression fell, and so came into a miserable and mortal estate, subject unto the first death, Gen. 1. 31; Eccles. 7. 29; Gen. 2. 17; 3. 17, 18, 19.

III. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, who is the only begotten Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary; yet as truly Davids Lord, and Davids root, as Davids Son, and David's Offspring [page 4], Luke 20. 44; Revel. 22. 16. whom God freely sent into the World (because of his great love unto the World) who as freely gave himself a ransome for all, 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. tasting death for every man, Heb. 2. 9. a propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole World, 1 John 2. 2.

IV. That God is not willing that any should Perish, but that all should come to repentance, 2 Pet. 3. 9. and the knowledge of the truth, that they might be saved, 1 Tim. 2. 4. For which end Christ hath commanded, that the Gospel (to wit, the glad tydings of remission of sins) should be preached to every creature, Mark 16. 15. So that no man shall eternally suffer in Hell (that is, the second death) for want of a Christ that dyed for them, but as the Scripture saith, for denying the Lord that bought them, 2 Pet. 2. 1. or because they believe not in the name of the only begotten Son of God, John 3. 18. Unbelief therefore being the cause why the just and righteous God, will condemn the children of men; it follows against all contradiction, that all men at one time or other, are put into such a capacity, as that (through the grace of God) they may be eternally saved, John 1. 7. Acts 17. 30; Mark 6. 6; Heb. 3. 10, 18, 19; 1 John 5. 10; John 3. 17.

V. That such who first orderly comes into, and are brought up in the School of Christs Church, and waiting there, comes to degrees of Christianity, rightly qualified and considerably gifted by Gods Spirit; ought to exercise their gifts not only in the Church, but also (as occasion serves) to preach to the World (they being approved of by the Church so to do) Acts 11. 22, 23, 24; Acts 11. 19. 20. and that among such some are to be chosen by the Church, and ordained by Fasting, Prayer, and Laying on of Hands, for the work of the Ministry, Acts 13. 2, 3; Acts 1. 23. Such so ordained, (and abiding faithful in their work) we own as Ministers of the Gospel; but all such who come not first to repent of their sins, believe on the Lord Jesus, and so Baptizes in his name for the remission of Sins, but are only brought up in the Schools of humane learning, to the attaining humane arts, and variety of languages, with many vain curiosities of speech, 1 Cor. 1. 19, 21; 2. 1, 4, 5. seeking rather the gain of large revenues, then the gain of souls to God: such (we say) we utterly deny, being such as have need rather to be taught themselves, than fit to teach others, Rom. 2. 21.

VI. That the way set forth by God for men to be justified in, is by faith in Christ, Rom. 5. 1. [page 5]. That is to say, when men shall assent to the truth of the Gospel, believing with all their hearts, that there is remission of sins, and eternal life to be had in Christ. And that Christ therefore is most worthy their constant affections, and subjection to all his Commandments, and therefore resolve with purpose of heart so to subject unto him in all things, and no longer unto themselves, 2 Cor. 5. 15. And so, shall (with godly sorrow

for the sins past) commit themselves to his grace, confidently depending upon him for that which they believe is to be had in him: such so believing are justified from all their sins, their faith shall be accounted unto them for righteousness, Rom. 4. 22, 23, 24; Rom. 3. 25, 26.

VII. That there is one holy Spirit, the pretious gift of God, freely given to such as obey him, Ephes. 4. 4; Acts 5. 32. that there by they may be thoroughly sanctified, and made able (without which they are altogether unable) to abide stedfast in the faith, and to honour the Father, and his Son Christ, the Author and finisher of their faith; 1 Cor. 6. 11. There are three that bear record in Heayen, the Father, the Word, the holy Spirit, and these three are one; which Spirit of promise such have not yet received, (though they speak much of him) that are so far out of Love, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, and Temperance, (the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. 5. 22, 23.) as that they breath out much cruelty, and great envy against the Liberties, and peaceable living of such, as are not of their judgment, Though holy as to their conversations.

VIII. That God hath even before the foundation of the world chosen, (or elected) to eternal life, such as believe, and so are in Christ, John 3. 16; Ephes. 1. 4; 2 Thes. 2. 13. yet confident we are, that the purpose of God according to election, was not in the least arising from fore-seen faith in, or works of righteousness done by the creature, but only from the mercy, goodness, and compassion dwelling in God, and so it is of him that calleth, Rom. 9. 11. Whose purity and unwordable holiness, cannot admit of any unclean person (or thing) to be in his presence, therefore his decree of mercy reaches only the godly man, whom (saith David) God hath set apart for himself, Psal. 4. 3.

IX. That men not considered simply as men, but ungodly men, were of old ordained to condemnation, considered as such, who turn [page 6] the grace of God unto wantonness, and deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, Jude 4. God indeed sends a strong delusion to men, that they might be damned; but we observe that they are such (as saith the Apostle) that received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, 2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12. and so the indignation and wrath of God, is upon every soul of man that doth evil, (living and dying therein,) for there is no respect of persons with God. Rom. 2. 9, 10, 11.

X. That all Children dying in Infancy, having not actually transgressed against the Law of God in their own persons, are only subject to the first death, which comes upon them by the sin of the first Adam, from whence they shall be all raised by the second Adam; and not that any one of them (dying in that estate) shall suffer for Adams sin, eternal punishment in Hell. (which is the second death) for of such belongs the Kingdome of Heaven, 1 Cor. 15. 22; Mat. 19. 14. not daring to conclude with that uncharitable opinion of others, who though they plead much for the bringing of children into the visible Church here on earth by Baptism, yet nevertheless by their Doctrine that Christ dyed but for some, shut a great part of them out of the Kingdome of Heaven for ever.

XI. That the right and only way, of gathering Churches, (according to Christs appointment, Mat. 28. 19, 20.) is first to teach, or preach the Gospel, Mark 16. 16. to the Sons and Daughters of men; and then to Baptise (that is in English to Dip) in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Spirit, or in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; such only of them, as profess repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts. 2. 38; Acts 8. 12; Acts 18. 8. And as for all such who preach not this Doctrine, but instead thereof, that Scriptureless thing of Sprinkling of Infants (falsly called Baptisme) whereby the pure word of God is made of no effect, and the new Testament-way of bringing in Members, into the Church by regeneration, cast out; when as the bond-woman & her son, that is to say, the old Testament-way of bringing in Children into the Church by generation, is cast out, as saith the Scripture, Gal. 4. 30, 22, 23, 24; Mat. 3. 8, 9. all such we utterly deny, forasmuch as we are commanded to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them, Ephes. 5. 11.

XII. That it is the duty of all such who are believers Baptized, to draw nigh unto God in submission to that principle of Christs [page 7] Doctrine, to wit, Prayer and Laying on of Hands, that they may receive the promise of the holy Spirit, Heb. 6. 1. 2; Acts 8. 12, 15, 17; Acts 19. 6; 2 Tim. 1. 6. whereby they may mortife the deeds of the body, Rom. 8. 13. and live in all things answerable to their professed intentions, and desires, even to the honour of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.

XIII. That it is the duty of such who are constituted as aforesaid, to continue stedfastly in Christs and the Apostles Doctrine, and assembling together, in

fellowship, in breaking of Bread, and Prayer, Acts 2. 42.

XIV. That although we thus declare the primitive way, and order of constituting Churches, yet we verily believe, and also de dare, that unless men so professing, and practising the forme and order of Christs Doctrine, shall also beautifie the same with a holy and wise conversation, in all godliness and honesty; the profession of the visible form will be rendered to them of no effect; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12. 14; Isa. 1. 11, 12, 15, 16.

XV. That the Elders or Pastors which God hath appointed to oversee, and feed his Church (constituted as aforesaid) are such, who first being of the number of Disciples, shall in time appear to be vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, &c. not greedy of filthy lucre (as too many National Ministers are) but patient; not a brawler, not covetuous, &c. and as such chose, and ordained to office (according to the order of Scripture, Acts 14. 23.) who are to feed the flock with meat in due season, and in much love to rule over them, with all care, seeking after such as go astray; but as for all such who labour to feed themselves with the fat, more than to feed the flock, Ezek. 34. 2, 3. seeking more after theirs, than them, expresly contrary to the practise of the Ministers of old, who said, we seek not yours, but you, 2 Cor. 12. 14. All such we utterly deny, and hereby bear our continued Testimony against, Ezek. 34.

XVI. That the Ministers of Christ, that have freely received from God, ought freely to Minister to others, 1 Cor. 9. 17. and that such who have spiritual things, freely Ministered unto them, ought freely to communicate necessary things to the Ministers, (upon the account of their charge) 1 Cor. 9. 11; Gal. 6. 6. And as for [page 8] Tyths, or any forced Maintenance, we utterly deny to be the Maintenance of Gospel Ministers.

XVII. That the true Church of Christ, ought after the first and second admonition, to reject all Hereticks, Tit. 3. 10, 11. and in the name of the Lord to withdraw from all such, as profess the way of the Lord, but walks disorderly in their conversations, 2 Thes. 3. 6. or any wayes causes divisions or offences, contrary to the Doctrine (of Christ) which they have learned, Rom. 16. 17.

XVIII. That such who are true Believers, even Branches in Christ the Vine, (and that in his account, whom he exhorts to abide in him, John 15. 1, 2, 3, 4,

5.) or such who have charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of Faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. 1. 5. may nevertheless for want of watchfulness, swerve and turn aside from the same, vers. 6, 7. and become as withered Branches, cast into the fire and burned, John. 15. 6. But such who add unto their Faith Vertue, and unto Vertue Knowledge, and unto Knowledge Temperance, &c. 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7. such shall never fall, vers. 8, 9, 10. 'tis impossible for all the false Christs, and false Prophets, that are, and are to come, to deceive such, for they are kept by the power of God, through Faith unto Salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 5.

XIX. That the poor Saints belonging to the Church of Christ, are to be sufficiently provided for by the Churches, that they neither want food or rayment, and this by a free and voluntary contribution, (and not of necessity, or by the constraint or power of the Magistrate) 2 Cor. 9. 7; 1 Cor. 8. 11, 12, and this through the free and voluntary help of the Deacons, (called Overseers of the poor) being faithful men, chosen by the Church, and ordained by Prayer and Laying on of Hands, to that Work, Acts 6. 1, 2. 3, 4, 5, 6. So that there is no need in the Church of Christ, of a Magesterial compulsion in this case, as there is among others, who being constituted in a fleshly and generational way, are necessitated to make use of a carnal sword, to compel even a small, mean, and short Maintenance for their poor; when as many other Members of their Churches, can and do part with great and large Sums of Money, to maintain their vain fashions, Gold, Pearls, and costly Array, which is expressly contrary to the Word of God. 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10; 1 Pet. 3. 3. Alas, what will such do when God riseth up, and when he visiteth, what will they answer him? Job 31. 14. [page 9]

XX. That there shall be (through Christ who was dead, but is a live again from the dead) a Resurrection of all men from the graves of the Earth, Isa. 26. 19. both the just and the unjust, Acts 24. 15. that is, the fleshy bodies of men, sown into the graves of the earth, corruptible, dishonourable, weak, natural, (which so considered cannot inherit the Kingdome of God) shall be raised again, incorruptable, in glory, in power, spiritual, and so considered, the bodies of the Saints, (united again to their spirits) which here suffer for Christ, shall inherit the Kingdome, raigning together with Christ, 1 Cor. 15. 21, 22, 42, 43, 44, 49.

XXI. That there shall be after the Resurrection from the graves of the Earth,

An eternal Judgement, at the appearing of Christ, and his Kingdome, 2 Tim. 4. 1; Heb. 9. 27. at which time of judgement which is unalterable, and irrevocable, every man shall receive according to the things done in his body, 2 Cor. 5. 10.

XXII. That the same Lord Jesus who shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, Acts I. 3. which was taken up from the Disciples, and carried up into Heaven, Luke 24. 51. Shall so come in like manner as he was seen go into Heaven, Acts. 1. 9, 10, 11. And when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory, Col. 3. 4. For then shall he be King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Rev. 19. 16. for the Kingdome is his, and he is the Governour among the Nations, Psal. 22. 28. and King over all the earth, Zech. 14. 9. and we shall raigh (with him) on the Earth, Rev. 5. 10. the Kingdomes of this World, (which men so mightily strive after here to enjoy) shall become the Kingdomes of our Lord, and his Christ, Rev. 11. 15. for all is yours, (O ye that overcome this world) for ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods, 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. For unto the Saints shall be given the Kingdome, and the greatness of the Kingdome, under (mark that) the whole Heaven, Dan. 7. 27. Though (alas) now many men be scarce content that the Saints should have so much as being among them; but when Christ shall appear, then shall be their day, then shall be given unto them power over the Nations, to rule them with a Rod of Iron, Rev. 2. 26, 27. then shall they receive a Crown of life, which no man shall take from them, nor they by any means turned, or overturned from it, for the oppressor shall be broken in pieces, Psal. 72. 4. and their now vain, rejoycings turned into mourning, and bitter Lamentations, as 'tis written, [page 10] Job 20. 5, 6, 7. The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the Hypocrite but for a moment; though his excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet shall he perish for ever, like his own dung; they which have seen him, shall say, where is he?

XXIII. That the holy Scriptures is the rule whereby Saints both in matters of Faith, and conversation are to be regulated, they being able to make men wise unto salvation, through Faith in Christ Jesus, profitable for Doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works, 2 Tim. 3. 15, 16, 17; John 20. 31; Isa. 8. 20.

XXIV. That it is the will, and mind of God (in these Gospel times) that all men should have the free liberty of their own Consciences in matters of Religion, or Worship, without the least oppression, or persecution, as simply upon that account; and that for any in Authority otherwise to act, we confidently believe is expressly contrary to the mind of Christ, who requires that whatsoever men would that others should do unto them, they should even so do unto others, Mat. 7. 12. and that the Tares, and the Wheat should grow together in the field, (which is the world) until the harvest (which is the end of the world,) Mat. 13. 29, 30, 38, 39.

XXV. We believe that there ought to be civil Magistrates in all Nations, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well, 1 Pet. 2. 14. And that all wicked lewdness, and fleshly filthiness, contrary to just and wholesome (Civil) Laws, ought to be punished according to the nature of the offences; and this without respect of any Persons, Religion, or profession whatsoever; and that we and all men are obliged by Gospel rules, to be subject to the higher Powers, to obey Magistrates, Tit. 3. 1. and to submit to every Ordinance of man, for the Lords sake, as saith 1 Peter 2. 13. But in case the Civil Powers do, or shall at any time impose things about matters of Religion, which we through conscience to God cannot actually obey, then we with Peter also do say, that we ought (in such cases) to obey God rather than men; Acts 5. 29. and accordingly do hereby declare our whole, and holy intent and purpose, that (through the help of grace) we will not yield, nor (in such cases) in the least actually obey them; yet humbly purposing [page 11] (in the Lords strength) patiently to suffer whatsoever shall be inflicted upon us, for our conscionable forbearance.

These things (O ye Sons and Daughters of Men) we verily believe to be the Lords will and mind, and therefore cannot but speak, and if herein we differ front many, yea from multitudes, from the learned, the wise and prudent of this World, we (with Peter and John) do herein make our solemne, and serious appeale, namely, whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto men, (of a contrary perswasion) more than unto God? Oh let the judicious, judge righteous judgement! Acts 4. 19, 20.

And in the beleife, and practise of these things, (it being the good old Apostolical way) our souls have found that rest, and soul peace, which the world knows not, and which they cannot take from us; of whom then should

we be afraid? God is become our strength, our light, our salvation; therefore, we are resolved (through grace) to seal the truth or these things in way of suffering persecution, not only to the loss of our goods, freedoms, or liberties, but with our lives also (if called thereunto.)

Moreover we do utterly, and from our very hearts, in the Lords fear, declare against all those wicked, and divillish reports, and reproaches, falsly cast upon us, as though some of us (in & about the City of London) had lately *gotten knives, booked knives, & the like, & great store of Arms* besides what was given forth by order of Parliament, intending to cut the throats of such as were contrary minded to us in matters of Religion, and that many such *knivez*, and Armies, for the carrying on some secret design, hath been found in some of our houses by search; we say, from truth of heart, in the Lords fear, that we do utterly abhor and abominate the thoughts thereof, and much more the actions; and do hereby challenge both City, and Country (in our innocency herein) as being not able to prove the things whereof they accuse us; and do forevermore declare the Inventors of such reports, to be lyers, and wicked devisers of mischeife, and corrupt designs: God that is above all will justifie our innocency herein, who well knows our integrity, in what we here declare, the Lord lay it not to their charge.

In the time of building the decayed House of God, Samballet, & Tobiah, (wicked Counsellors) hired Shemaiah to make good Nehemiah afraid; and laboured against him, that they might have matter for [page 12] an evil report, that they might reproach him, & hinder the building of the house of God. Neh. 6. 12. For I have heard (saith the Prophet) the defaming of many; report, say they, and we will report it, Jer. 20. 10.

Suscribed by certain Elders, Deacons, and Brathren met at London, in the first Month (called March, 1660.) in the behalf of themselves, and many others unto whom they be long, in London, and in several Counties of this Nation, who are of the same Faith with Us.

Joseph Wright,
William Jeffery,
Thomas Monck,
John Hartnoll,

Benjamin Morley,
Francis Stanley,
George Hammon,
William Smart,

John Reebe,
Thomas Parrot,
John Wood,
Francis Smith,
Edward Jones,
Humphrey Jones,
Matthew Caffen,
Samuel Loveday,
John Parsons, Senior
Thomas Stacy,
Edward Stanley,
Jonathan Gennings,
John Hammersly,
William Russet,
Joseph Keeich,
Nicholas Newberry,

Samuel Lover,
George Wright,
John Parsons, Junior,
John Claton,
Thomas Seele,
Michaiel Whiticar,
Giles Browne,
John Wells,
Stephen Tone,
Thomas Lathwel,
William Chadwell,
William Raph,
Henry Browne,
William Paine,
Richard Bowin,
Thomas Smith,

THE END

A SHORT CONFESSION
OR
A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF FAITH

CHAP. I

1. We believe that there is but one only living and true God, and that this one God, is a spiritual being and substance, hath his being in and of himself, and in omnipotent, omnipresent, or by his spirit present everywhere, omniscient, or knoweth all things, invisible, eternal, immortal, incomprehensible and glorious, the great creator and preserver of all things, throughout, the rewarder of them, that diligently seek him; the Lord of hosts in his name.

2. As we do believe this one God to be an infinite, eternal, glorious, self-being, invisible, immortal, and incomprehensible, to, according to the Scriptures of truth, we do believe the father, son, and spirit, to be this one God, so that this one God subsisteth in three, to wit, father, son, and holy spirit, and these three are one' each of them is God, and yet there is but one God. Concerning each we shall give our thoughts distinctly, yet very briefly.

I. Concerning God the Father, we believe him to be the original, or great efficient cause of all things. To us there is one God, the father of whom are all things, for all things; one God the father of all.

II. Concerning God the Son, our Lord *Jesus Christ*, we believe him to be the son of God, and the son of man, truly God, and truly man, the Messiah promised; that as to his divine nature, it was and is of an eternal existence, of and with the father, an so truly God, and this Godhead veiled itself in a human Body, and took upon him the nature and sunstance of man, in all its parts and infirmities, sin only excepted. And as he was thus veiled in a human body united in that one person, so he is truly, not only the son of God, but the son of man. And we do believe that our redeemer never was revealed or discovered to any man, but in the union of natures, as he came forth in time, nor never will be. Thus he was in all the promises that God made concerning him; it was as he was manifested in time, and no otherwise. In the first promise, it was the seed of the woman. When renewed to Abraham, it was to his seed. The same was renewed to Isaac, and the same to Jacob. And the same promise to David, that his seed should endure forever. And thus was he

prophetically spoken of as a prophet, or in his prophetic Office, and so he performed his priestly office upon the cross, and is still performing of it at his father's right hand. And so he is prophesied of in his kingly office; from all which we conclude that our Lord *Jesus Christ*, before he was manifested in the flesh, and since his manifestation therein, and in the day of glory, was not, is not, nor ever will be, known to any man, in any of his titles, offices, power, and glory, but only in the union of natures; and so we own him to be the object of our faith, and our redeemer.

III. Concerning the Holy Spirit, we believe, suitable to the scriptures that speak thereof, that the holy spirit is of God, and is God, of the divine essence, coeternal with the father and the son and proceeding from both, God of the same nature, the enlightner, convincer, converter, sanctifier, strengthener, and comforter of his people, in and by the means appointed for that end, namely, the word of, truth, and doctrine of the gospel.

CHAP. II

Of the Holy Scriptures

Concerning the holy scriptures, we believe, that the scriptures of the old and new testament are the written word and will of God, given by inspiration to the holy prophets and apostles; and are left upon record for our learning, that we through patience, and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope; and that they are a perfect rule, containing all things necessary to salvation; they being the counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, and the eternal good of souls, relating both to matters of faith and practice, especially the doctrine of the gospel therein contained.

CHAP. III

Of the Creation

Concerning the creation we believe, that in the beginning it pleased God almighty, for reasons best known to himself to create or make the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

After God made the heavens and the earth, and all other creatures, he made man, male and female, after his own image, in a state of glorious perfection, free from sin, but a little lower than the Angels; having dominion over the works of his hands. And the Lord having made man, places him in the garden

of Eden, where the Lord had provided all things necessary to his accommodation, that might tend to make his state or condition altogether happy. In which state of innocency, happiness, and felicity, he might have continued, any decree of God in any wife notwithstanding.

CHAP. IV

Of the fall of Man

Concerning the fall of man we believe,

1. That notwithstanding God made man upright, in a perfect state, not only free from sin, but also from all those miseries that now are the portion of mankind, as the sad effects of sin, and gave him a perfect law, which had he kept it, it had been unto life, and threatned death upon the breach thereof; yet, through the instigation of the serpent, and the subtilty of Satan in and by him; man continued not in that state, but without any compulsion, did wilfully fall from it by transgressing the righteous law of his maker, in eating the forbidden fruit. Which transgression of our first parents, God was pleased, according to his most wise and holy counsel, to permit, knowing how to order it to his own glory.

2. By which transgression our first parents fell from their original righteousness, and became guilty of that sin, commonly known by the name of original sin, and in them all their posterity, being then in their loins.

3. Man having thus fallen, by transgressing the law of his maker, God, as a righteous law-executor proceeds after an orderly manner to pronounce sentence,

(1.) Against the serpent,

(2.) Against the woman,

(3.) Against the man.

4. As this transgression did not only reach the cafe of our first parents, but also their posterity, being then in them; so likewise did the sentence that the Lord past upon them, concern not only the persons of our first parents, but in them all those generations of men, that in succeeding ages were to descend from them. Judgment came upon all men, etc. The same penalties that were inflicted upon our first parents for that sin, which penalties are death, together with those temporal miseries that came upon them as an effect of that sin, do

certainly come upon their posterity. They are brought forth in a mortal dying state, liable to all the miseries of this life, and in fine to death itself. Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Mortal man could not procreate an immortal feed; he begat a son in his own likeness, in his own image.

5. From whence we conclude, that our first parents, by virtue of the first transgression, brought not only themselves but their whole posterity, into a state of sin and death; together with those many inconveniencies and miseries that are now come upon mankind as the sad effects of sin. But that this transgression did procure in itself the second death, *viz.* In the lake of fire, or hell torments, either to Adam, or any of his posterity, as is by some not only imagined but affirmed; as it's a doctrine that is altogether scriptureless, and so false, so it's altogether irrational; from whence it hath no room in our faith. We shall here set down a saying of Dr. Jer. Taylor, taken out of his discourse of *Original Sin*, in opposition to those that were of the judgment, that all infants dying without baptism, are sentenced to hell torments for original sin: His words are these:

(1.) Original sin is not an inherent evil, not a sin properly, but metonymically, that is, it is the effect of one sin, and the cause of many; a (frain?)^[1] but no sin.

(2.) It does not destroy our liberty which we had naturally.

(3.) It does not introduce a natural necessity of sinning.

(4.) It does not damn any infant to the eternal pain of hell. And in his *Epistle to the Reader* we find these words: "I take great comfort in this, that my doctrine stands on that side where God's justice, goodness, and mercy stand apparently."

6. This sin did not only concern mankind in general, but also the creation that was made with man for his use, is by virtue thereof fallen under the curse, is brought into a decaying dying state, and made subject to vanity.

CHAP. V

Of the Love of God

Concerning the Love of God, we believe, that man being fallen into a state of sin, and misery, and death, as an effect thereof, God of his own free grace and love, when none desired it as his hands, did contrive the way of man's

recovery out of his fallen state. No sooner had man fallen from his created innocency, but the Lord finds out a way of recovery; and before he pronounces the sentence against him, promises that the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head; which feed of the woman we understand to be the Lord *Jesus Christ*, who was the seed and son of the woman; whom God the father, of his own free grace and love to sinful fallen man, did send into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved: The love of God the father we understand to lie at the foundation of all gospel grace. And that God, by *Jesus Christ*, design'd not the recovery of a few only, as some imagine, but of all mankind. We have seen, and do testify, that the father sent the son to be the saviour of the world. He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

CHAP. VI

Of the Extent of the Death of Christ

Concerning the extent of the death of our dear redeemer, we believe, that suitable to the great end of God the father in sending him into the world, he gave himself a ransom for all mankind; for the world, the whole world; and that thereby the world have its present being; and that thereby there is a way of reconciliation, acceptation, and salvation opened for all men: From whence we conclude, that if any man come short of obtaining reconciliation, acceptation, and salvation, it is not for want of grace in the father, nor a sacrifice in the son.

CHAP. VII

Of the Gospel

Concerning the gospel we believe, that the gospel is in itself glad or good tidings; and that there is no bad tidings therein to any man except it be to those that do wilfully reject and neglect the grace therein tendered and sincerely offered unto them, by their own wilful unbelief and disobedience; and that this glad tidings or good news is to be published or made known to all men throughout all ages.

CHAP. VIII

Of the Power and Will of Man

Concerning the power and will of man, we believe,

1. That the power and will of man are proper attributes and faculties of the soul; and if so, then it's God's workmanship, and properly of and from God; so then man hath neither will nor power, but what he receives from the Lord, tho he improves it to contrary ends, and not for that end for which it was and is given him.
2. Notwithstanding all the power and abilities that men have, are of and from the Lord, yet we are strobly inclined to believe, that the will and power of man is greatly debilitated by the fall, but no wholly lost; man, in all his parts, is weaken'd by the fall, but no part wholly lost.
3. We believe that there remaineth still in man, a power to will his own good.
4. Yet we believe, that man knoweth not what is good any otherwise but as he is taught of the Lord.
5. Man being taught of God what is good, and how and when to will this good, being thus shewed of the Lord, he hath now capacity, in the use of the means that God hath appointed, to bring his will to an inclinable frame, truly to be seeking after his eternal well-being; so, in short, we sum up all this: That man hath neither power nor will, nor a matter what to will for his own good, nor how, nor when, in respect of a seasonable time, but what he hath from God, for all power belongeth to God; yet we believe, that man ought to employ his will, yea, all the powers and faculties of his soul, in and about spiritual things, which if men were faithful in, God would have the glory and they the advantage.

CHAP. IX

Of free Grace

I. Concerning free grace, we believe, that whatsoever a good man does, or shall enjoy, either temporal, spiritual, or eternal, is freely given to him of God, without the least desert on man's part; therefore wholly of free grace, or the effects of God's great love to man. As,

1. The gift of his son is a gracious and a free gift.

2. The gift of his holy law of grace is a free gift.
3. The gift of his holy spirit is a free gift.
4. The giving of ordinances are free gifts; yea, all the graces and qualifications of a christian are freely given to him of God; for man could not do any thing, no not in any wise, whereby he could deserve the least favour that he now does, or hereafter shall enjoy; and therefore all our enjoyments here, and eternal life hereafter, are freely given to us of our good God; and yet not to be obtained without our accepting of God's free grace; by *Jesus Christ*, and living to God by him, as the holy terms thereof; yet not so as by doing or accepting meritoriously to procure eternal life; for when we have done all we are but unprofitable servants and therefore we deserve nothing from the Lord as a just and meritorious recompense; but eternal Life is freely given to us of God, as an act of his own free grace and mercy, designed by him in the way of our duty; and we believe that this grace of God, by his son, and in his law, is truly tendered to the world in general.

CHAP. X

Of Faith

Concerning faith we believe, that justifying saving faith does not only consist in a bare believing in God, Christ, etc. but also in the truth of God's word, as it is verbally declared to us in the scriptures, which is the rule of our faith; so that whatsoever is plainly stated in the scriptures concerning the grace and love of God towards man, and the sacrifice of *Christ* for the world, and the duty of man towards the Lord, with whatever else is plainly stated in the word of God, we are to believe it, as it is therein delivered, and to endeavour to bring our understandings to submit to the plain word of the Lord, and not make the plain express word of God to stoop to our understandings and interpretations; for so to do, is to exalt our interpretations above the word of the Lord, which always ought to have the preeminence. It's true, such sayings in scripture, as are spoken by way of allegory, metaphor, etc. ought to have a sense given to them, which always ought to be such a one, as does comport and agree with the plain and express word of the Lord, and the great design of God therein; and not to understand such sayings in the scripture, so as do in any wise derogate therefrom; so that divine faith, is really to believe the truth of what the Lord hath spoken in his word; or to be fully persuaded and satisfied in our own judgments and consciences, that whatsoever is declared

to us by the Lord in holy scripture, is absolutely and really true, without any kind of reservation whatsoever. This was the faith of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and therefore must be the faith of his children; which faith, if attended with love to God, and sincere obedience to his will, we take to be that faith which is of a justifying saving nature.

CHAP. XI

Of Repentance

Concerning repentance we believe,

1. That it is a gospel duty of great and weighty concern to all those of whom it is required, and from whom it is expected, without which they can have no expectation before the Lord; which repentance we understand thus, *viz.*, To be truly and sincerely humble before the Lord, in a deep and thorough sight and sense of our sins, not for some sins only, but for all our actual and personal transgressions against God and his holy law.
2. That this repentance is the duty of all actual sinners.
3. Wherever the scripture does require men to repent, we understand that it intends them considered as actual sinners against God; and that no repentance is required in the word of the Lord, for that sin which we could in no wise prevent, *viz.* Original sin, but for mens own actual sins and transgressions against the holy word and will of the Lord, it's their duty and great concern to repent.
4. We believe that where this repentance is in truth and power, it doth effect a change, and is accompanied, not only with a forsaking of the sins repented of, but with an utter detestation and abhorrence of them, from a deep sense and apprehension that they are offensive to the Lord.

CHAP. XII

Of Baptism

Concerning baptism we believe,

1. That there is but one baptism properly so called; and that this one baptism is a holy ordinance, ordained by our Lord *Jesus Christ* himself, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with him in his death and resurrection, of his being engrafted into him, of remission of sins, and of his giving up of himself to the Lord to walk in newness of life.

2. Those that do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, are the only proper subjects of this holy ordinance.
3. The outward element to be made use of in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the father, son, and holy ghost.
4. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the right administration of this ordinance.
5. From whence we conclude, that sprinkling a little water in the face is no baptism, neither are infants the proper subjects of it.

CHAP. XIII

Of the Lord's Supper

Concerning the supper of the Lord, we believe,

1. That it was instituted by him, the same night wherein he was betrayed, to be observed in his churches unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of his dying love, in offering up himself upon the cross once for all.
2. The materials to be made use of in this holy ordinance, are bread and wine, which figuratively do represent the body and blood of *Christ*.
3. That none ought to communicate in this holy ordinance but such as are orderly members of the church of *Christ*, made so by repentance, faith, and baptism, and then they have a lawful right unto it; which holy ordinance ought to be duly observed and kept up in the orderly church of *Christ*, only for the ends for which it was appointed.

CHAP. XIV

Of the Work of the Holy Spirit

Concerning the work of the holy spirit, we believe,

1. That God does give the blessings of his spirit in and with his word; the word being the spirit's ministration, so that where the word is in truth, light, and power preached, there it is attended with the spirit.
2. That there is an absolute necessity of the workings of the spirit, both in bringing and keeping souls to the Lord.

3. Yet we do believe, that the holy spirit is not so given, but that it may be resisted, and hath been to mens destruction. And we have just cause to believe that multitude of souls do still resist the motions of the spirit, or they would not go on, and wilfully persist in the practice of sin and wickedness as they do.

4. We do believe that God does give greater measures of his spirit, after believing and obeying, than before; which he is pleased to communicate unto them in the way of their duty in seeking, asking, and waiting upon the Lord, in the way of his own appointment; which seems evident by the light of these scriptures. We desire to honour God in the gifts and graces of his holy spirit; yea, we believe that we ought to submit to its motions and operations upon our souls, lest we reject the council and work of the Lord to our own destruction.

CHAP. XV

Of Justification

Concerning justification, we believe,

1. That men are not justified, before and without faith.
2. That no man is or can be justified by the works of the law, as delivered by Moses.
3. That no man is justified by faith alone.
4. We do believe, that the terms on which men are justified, are faith and gospel works; which, according to the doctrine of the gospel, are the terms of our interest in the justification and life therein promised, and that so absolutely the condition thereof, as that without which none that are capable subjects can obtain it. Yet not as the meritorious or deserving cause, that being alone in *Christ* Jesus; which terms in short are,
 - (1.) Faith, without which it is impossible to please god.
 - (2.) Repentance, without which we must perish.
 - (3.) Love to *Jesus Christ* in his ways, and people, without which we are cursed.
 - (4.) Holiness, without no man shall see the Lord. From whence we argue thus. Whatsoever is the terms of our acceptation before the Lord, is the terms

of our justification; but faith, repentance, love to *Christ*, and holiness, without which no man can see the Lord, are the terms of our acceptance, ergo, so they are of our justification.

(5.) In short we understand that men are justified.

[1.] By the grace of God, as the primary efficient cause.

[2.] By the death and suffering of *Christ*, as the meritorious and deserving cause.

[3.] By the word of the Lord, with its ministry, as the instrumental cause, to beget faith and obedience.

[4.] By faith and obedience, as the conditional cause, or the holy terms on which they are justified.

CHAP. XVI

Of Sanctification

Concerning sanctification we believe,

1. That as God hath a people in the world, whom he doth accept and own for his own people, whom he hath chosen out of all the world besides, to be a peculiar people to himself; so he doth not only afford unto them the grace of justification but also of sanctification. Whom he justified, them he also sanctified. God, who is a holy God, will have his people to be a holy and sanctified people. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. This was one great end of the Lord in giving himself for his church; and to the same end hath he given forth unto his people a holy law of grace; tending to nothing more than the promotion of holiness, in which he hath ordained holy ordinances for his people to be observing, and doth communicate unto them his holy spirit, that they may be a holy and sanctified people, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing (the spots and blemishes of sin, is that which renders persons unlovely in the eyes of the Lord) the great design of God in the gospel, is to prepare a holy people now in this day of grace, by the powerful operation of his word and spirit, fitted and prepared not only to be espoused to the holy Jesus while here, but to be with him where he is, or shall be, in his holy habitation hereafter in glory. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, etc.

2. This sanctification is wrought in God's people as an effect of the Lord's undertaking, by the word and spirit, in and through the exercise of faith; by virtue of which the body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof more and more weakened and mortified, and they the more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice and exercise of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

3. This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man; yet imperfect in this life: While here, in this imperfect state, there abideth still the remainders of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual war, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

4. In which war, although the remaining corruption may at times, through temptation prevail against the best of God's servants; yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying spirit of *Christ*, communicated to them, in the way of their duty, in waiting upon the Lord in his holy ordinances, the regenerate part doth overcome, and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord; and are pressing after a heavenly life, in obedience to all the commands of the Lord *Jesus Christ* their head and king.

CHAP. XVII

Of Perseverance

Concerning perseverance we believe,

1. That it is absolutely necessary, in order to the obtaining of the end (namely salvation with eternal glory) for believers to cleave to the Lord, and to keep close to him in the way of duty.

(1.) To watch and pray.

(2.) To keep close to the publick worship and service of God.

(3.) To be mortifying the corrupt deeds of the body.

(4.) To be continuing in the exercise of faith.

(5.) To be growing and increasing in all the graces of the new covenant.

In which way of keeping close to the Lord, watching and praying, worshipping and serving God, mortifying the corrupt deeds of the body, growing and increasing in all the graces of the new covenant; to wit, faith,

love, humility, patience, etc. they shall be supplied with sufficiency of grace here, to preserve them safely to the kingdom of glory hereafter.

2. Yet we believe, that it's possible for true believers, through their remisness or negligence in point of duty towards God, through the temptations of Satan, and corruptions of their own deceitful hearts, finally to apostatize from the truth they once made profession of, and in so doing render their latter end to be worse than their beginning.

CHAP. XVIII

Of God's decrees

Concerning God's decrees we believe,

1. That the word of God is his decreed will; and that there is no secret will or decree of God contrary to his revealed word and will; and that his decree is, that whosoever believeth and obeyeth him, persevering therein to the end, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned.

2. We believe, that whatsoever God hath absolutely decreed, shall certainly and inevitably come to pass. But then,

3. We believe, that many things that do come to pass are not decreed of God. For it seems to us not only unscriptural, but also altogether irrational, to imagine, that the righteous and holy God should decree any sin, or unholiness, either in angels or men; that being not only contrary to his word, which commands men to be holy, but also to his name and nature, which is most holy; and therefore could decree no unrighteousness. From whence we conclude, that all the wicked and ungodly actions, either of angels or men, tho' God doth permit them to come to pass, yet there is no decree of his, that do necessitate the being of them. It might suit the nature of the Devil, or wicked men, to decree wickedness; but far be it from the righteous God so to do; shall not the judge of all the earth do right?

CHAP. XIX

Of Providence, or Foreknowledge

Concerning providence or foreknowledge we believe, that notwithstanding God foreknoweth whatsoever cometh to pass, yet we believe, this foreknowledge is not so exercised, as to necessitate the coming to pass of things; but that they may, or may not be, may come to pass, or may be

prevented. As for instance in the case of David. David being king in Keilab, and Saul was coming to take him, David asked of the Lord, whether Saul would come down? And whether the men of Keilab would deliver him into his hands? The Lord answered that Saul would come down, and the men of Keilab would deliver him. The David with his men departed, and prevented both Saul, and the men of the town; so what the Lord said to David would come to pass, did not, etc. Another instance we have, That at what instant God should speak concerning a nation, to pluck up, to pull down, or to build or plant; if the people against whom the Lord would repent of the evil; and when he did promise to build, etc. if the people did do evil, he would repent of the good he promised to do to, and for them. The truth of which is evident in the case of Nineveh. Jonah preach'd, that Nineveh in forth days should be overthrown, and yet on their repentance it was prevented, God repented him of the evil that he thought to do. Another Instance is concerning Israel: They sinned, for which the Lord would have destroyed them; but on the intercession of Moses, the Lord was entreated, and repented him of the evil, which he thought to have done unto them. Many more scriptures might be made use of to the same purpose; yea, all the promises and threatnings in God's word do prove the same; that is to say, that God's providence, or foreseeing of things, doth not necessitate the being of them, but that in the use of means it might be prevented, God having to do with men capable to understand him, both in his promises and threatnings, and not with stocks or stones, neither with vegetive or merely sensitive creatures.

CHAP. XX

Of Election

Concerning election we believe,

1. Not as some who express themselves after this manner, in these words, by the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated or fore-ordained to eternal life, thro' *Jesus Christ*; and that these angels and men, thus predestinated and fore-ordained, are particularly, and unchangeable designed, and their number so certain, and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.
2. And affirmatively we believe, that the infinitely wise and holy God, suitable to his name and nature, did elect or choose unto himself from eternity, and (merely of his own good pleasure) out of the whole body and

bulk of mankind, an entire species, or sort of men, namely those that in time do believe, and sincerely obey him, patiently continuing in the way of well doing unto the end.

3. We believe this election to be in *Christ* Jesus, of God;s eternal purpose and grace, before the foundation of the world.

4. We do believe that God's electing grace doth extend itself to the whole number of the godly in all nations throughout all ages, under the various dispensations, under which they live.

CHAP. XXI

Of Reprobation

Concerning reprobation we believe,

1. That God hath not decreed, from eternity, the reprobation of any person of mankind, considered as such, who may not very possible be saved, notwithstanding any decree in God; much less do we hold a decree of reprobation, from eternity, of the greatest part of mankind, excluding a possibility of their being saved; for we believe that God doth not hate or reprobate any man, as his creature, before he considers him as an actual sinner.

2. We believe, that whensoever God doth reject or reprobate any person of mankind, it is for their own wilful and actual transgressions, as the just deserving cause thereof, and not from his own will, any otherwise considered.

3. That the intent (at least the primary or antecedent intent) of God in his decree of reprobation, is the salvation and not the damnation of men. The Lord declares that he had rejected or reprobated them, yet exhorts them to duty, with promises on their performance; and if ever the Lord does finally reprobate any person or persons, it is for their final rejecting him, in his many calls, and gracious invitations.

4. From whence we conclude, that those that own personal election, and personal reprobation before time, so as to deny the love of God to the world, do not own the faith of the gospel.

5. We believe, that God hath not decreed the reprobation of any infant, dying before the commission of actual sin.

CHAP. XXII

Of God's governing of the World

Concerning God's governing of the world, we believe,

1. That God is the supreme Lord and governor of the whole world.
2. As to the method that the Lord makes use of in his governing the world (we mean the world of mankind) we believe that,

(1.) For the keeping up and maintaining of all civil society amongst men, in natural and moral things, the Lord hath set up governors, ordained by himself, unto whom he hath given power and authority to execute judgement and justice amongst men; which governors, in respect of that power and authority which the Lord hath given them, are in scripture called gods, being his deputies; whose work is to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well; to keep up, maintain, and cherish all civil, natural, and moral principles amongst men, and to punish the breach thereof; for the law is made for the lawless and disobedient; that is, for those that transgress the law; and the magistrate is the Lord's executioner, and beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon them that do evil. And thus far the governors of the world ought to exercise their authority over men, viz. In all things of human and civil concern; and so far it's the duty and great concern of *Christians*, to be obedient and subject to them, and to render to them all that honour that by the ordinance of God is due to them.

(2.) As to spiritual things, of religious, ecclesiastical, or divine concern, we believe, that God, by *Jesus Christ*, doth govern the world: We mean thus; That government herein (according to the will of the Lord) is not left to the will of men, but the Lord hath provided and instituted holy and spiritual laws for men to believe in, cleave to, and be saved by; and that these laws are given forth by the Lord *Jesus Christ*, as the alone legislator, or law-giver; and these holy and spiritual laws are, by virtue of the Lord's commission, to be preached to the whole world, as a rule for them, not only to believe, but also to walk by. And those amongst men that do obey the Lord in these his spiritual laws, he espouseth to himself to be his church and spouse, in and with whom his spiritual kingdom is exercised and kept up. And those that believe not, nor obey the Lord in these his holy laws, that will not have him to reign over them, but are enemies to him and his government, the Lord will

destroy, when he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, nor obey his gospel.

So that the punishments of men, for the breach of gospel laws belongs to God alone, and not in any wise to man; we mean in such things as concern God;s worship only. Yet we believe that where the gospel doth not come, that if men be govern'd by the law of God written in their hearts, and by the works of God without them, which are sufficient to teach them that there is a God, and to endeavour to live to God, suitable to the light they have received, no doubt but they shall be accepted, though they are not under the ministration of the gospel, and in the great day of judgment rewarded according to their works.

CHAP. XXIII

Of the Church of Christ

Concerning the church of *Christ*, we believe,

1. That the Lord *Jesus Christ* hath a church in the world, which we understand to be taken,

(1.) more generally, for the whole number of the godly throughout all ages;

(2.) more particularly, for a particular assembly of people, gathered out of the world by the ministry of the gospel, to the visible profession of faith in *Christ*, and obedience to his will, in all his holy institutions. Such a people, so gathered into a particular congregation, continuing stedfastly in the doctrine of *Christ*, and his holy apostles, we understand to be a gospel church.

2. We believe that the Lord *Jesus Christ* is the alone head of his church whether we understand it more generally for all God's people, or more particularly for any particular congregation of them; and no other Lord or law-giver do we own in religion and divine things, that do concern the worship and service of God, but the Lord *Jesus Christ* alone.

3. As to the way of entrance into the church of *Christ*, we understand it to be by faith, repentance, and baptism, and that none ought to enter in but in that way.

4. We believe, that to each of these churches, or particular congregations thus gathered, according to the mind and will of the Lord declared in his word, he hath given all that power and authority, which is any ways necessary and needful for their carrying on of that order in worship and discipline, which he

hath instituted for them to observe, with commands and rules for the right and due exercising and executing of that power.

5. As all believers are bound by the law of *Christ* to join themselves to particular churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do; so all that are admitted to the privileges of a church, are also under the government and censures thereof, according to the rule of *Christ*.

6. We believe, that no church-members upon any offence taken by them, having performed their duty required of them towards the person they are offended at, ought to make any breach in church order, or absent themselves from the assemblies of the church, or administration of any ordinances, upon the account of any such offence at any of his fellow-members; but to keep his place and duty in the church, and to wait upon the Lord in their further proceedings with such members against whom the offence is taken.

7. We believe, that as it is the duty of each church to pray continually for the good of all the churches; so the churches, when planted by the providence of God, so as they may have opportunity for it ought to hold communion with each other for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification.

8. We believe, that a particular church gathered, and completely fitted, or accomplished, for the worship and publick service of God, consists of officers and member' and the officers appointed by *Christ* to be chosen and set apart by the church, for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power of duty in any respect which he intrusts them with, or calls them to, ore bishops, or elders, and deacons.

9. We believe, that the churches ought to take great care, that the persons they chuse and set apart to office in the churches, be such as are suitably qualified and gifted for that work, according to the mind of *Christ*.

10. The way appointed by *Christ* for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the holy spirit, unto the office of bishop or elder in a church, is , that he be chosen thereunto by the general consent of the church itself; and solemnly set apart, by fasting, prayer, and impolition of hands of the eldership of the church, if there by any before constituted therein; and of a deacon, that he be chosen by like consent, and set apart by a prayer, and the like imposition of hands.

11. As we do believe that the churches ought to take great care, and be very

heedful that the persons they chuse and set apart to the work and office of elders in the congregations, be such as be gifted, and suitably qualified, according to the mind of the Lord, for that office; so we do believe that the learning of the languages, to wit, *Hebrew, Greek, Latin, etc.* is no qualification so absolutely necessary to the being of a minister, or elder, but that person may very possibly be sufficiently qualified for that office without it; tho' we readily grant, that the learning of the languages may be useful in its place, as a servant to help, etc. but to make it a qualification, absolutely necessary to the being of a minister, we dare not.

Our reasons are,

- (1.) Because the gospel was at first preached and brought forth into the world by unlearned men; such were the apostles.
- (2.) Because amongst the many qualifications required in the scriptures, to be found in those that are set apart to the work and office of an elder, we never find this recorded as one of those qualifications.
- (3.) Because experience testifies, that men unlearned in the languages, have been very useful in the Lord's hands, and have been famous instruments for the good of souls. Have not many souls been converted? Have not many famous churches been gathered by unlearned men? Why then such persons should be laid aside, as not suitably qualify'd for the Lord's work, in point of ministry, or eldership, we see no reason?
- (4.) Because the confining to a learned ministry seems greatly contrary to the mind of the Lord, and his method in bringing forth the gospel; and this appears, in that the scripture lets us know, that the Lord hath chosen foolish and weak things to confound those that are mighty; and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are. Have not the great things of the gospel been hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes; *viz.* To such as were little in the world's eyes, that so men might not look after gospel things for the excellency of the persons that do bring it forth, but for the worth and excellency that is therein; and that the faith of God's people might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, that so no flesh might glory in his presence. Had the Lord made choice of the wise and learned only to have been employed in the great Work of gospel-preaching, had he not then chosen the wise to confound the foolish, and the mighty to confound the weak, and things that are esteem'd in the world's eyes, to bring to naught

things that are not? And had not our faith then stood in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God? And then might not flesh have glorified in his presence, contrary to the Lord's design? What great and good effects have we seen of learning? Why should men be so fond of it? Was not the *Apostacy* brought into the world by learned men? Has it not been maintain'd and carried on by such ever since? And may there not be great cause to fear, that the bringing of persons to a great degree of learning, on purpose to qualify them for the work of the ministry, is that which will be degrees usher in another *Apostacy*? And that this of learning, which now is pretended as a servant to help, will, after a while, become a lord to rule; so that those that have it not, tho' otherwise ever so well qualified and gifted for the work of the ministry, will be rejected from that work, meerly because they are not learned men: And may not this be a means, in time, to reduce the few faithful labourers the Lord hath in his vineyard to a smaller number? But as to the qualifications that ought to be found in those that are called to the ministry, read and ponder, 1 *Tim.* 3. 2, &c. and 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. Compared with *Tit.* i. 6, 7, &c. and of a deacon, 1 *Tim.* 3. 8, 9, &c.

12. As we do believe it to be the work of pastors, constantly to attend the service of *Christ* in his churches, in the ministry of the word and prayer, with watching for their souls, as they that must give an account to him; so we do believe, that its a duty of great concern for the churches to whom they minister, not only to give them all due respect, but also to communicate to them of all their good things, according to their ability; so as they may have a comfortable supply without being themselves entangled in secular affairs, that so they may have a sufficiency of opportunity to be faithful in the discharge of a good conscience towards God, in the great work he hath called them to; and this is required by the law of nature, and by the express command of our Lord who hath ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

13. Although we do believe it to be incumbent on the pastors of the churches, to be instant in preaching the word by way of office; yet the work of preaching the word is not so confined to them, but that others also, gifted and fitted by the holy spirit for it, and approved, and called by the church, may, and ought to perform it.

14. As we do believe it to be the duty of *Christians* earnestly to desire

spiritual gifts, but rather that they may prophesy; so we do believe, that every church of *Christ* ought to be a nursery, to nurse up and cherish gifts amongst themselves, and to embrace any among them, whether learned or unlearned, that tare likely to be usefull in the Lord's work.

CHAP. XXIV

Of the resurrection of the dead

Concerning the resurrection of the dead we believe, according to the scriptures,

1. That there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.
2. That the same persons that sleep in the dust of the earth, even all the generations of men, from one end of the world to the other, shall be raised in the resurrection; the same body shall rise again and not another.
3. In this resurrection, the vile bodies of the saints shall be changed and fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Lord himself.
4. The end of this resurrection is to the saints, the perfecting of the restoration of the new covenant, and receiving their end of their faith, &c. And to the wicked that they may receive the due and just recompence of their wickedness and rebellion against the Lord.
5. We believe, that there will be an order in the resurrection, *Christ* is the first fruits, then next or after, they that are *Christ's* at his coming, then or afterwards cometh the end.

CHAP. XXV

Of the eternal Judgment

Concerning the eternal Judgment we believe,

1. That God having appointed a day wherein he will judge the world by *Jesus Christ*, to whom all power and judgment is given of the father, in which day not only the apostate angels shall be judged; but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth, shall appear before the tribunal of *Christ*, to give an account of all their thoughts, words and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body.
2. We believe, that as all men shall give an account unto the Lord, so the matters then to enquired into, and for which they must be accountable, will

be their own willful and personal sins, either of omission or commission; and that whosoever at that day shall be sentenced to condemnation, will then know, that it was their wilfulness, not weakness, actual, nor original sin, that was the procuring cause thereof, or they will not be left inexcusable, the truth of which appeareth from the light of the aforementioned scriptures.

3. We believe, that whomsoever of all the sons and daughters of Adam, shall in the great day of judgment appear without actual sin, which is the case only of those that die in infance, shall not in that day fall into condemnation; but shall be saved with such a degree of salvation, as the righteous and merciful Lord and judge shall see fit to confer upon them; all the reason we shall here render in this matter is,

(1.) They have no sin of their own to condemn them.

(2.) They have the grace of the father, and the merits of the son to save them.

(3.) The Lord tells us of such (meaning little children) are the kingdom of heaven.

(4.) Because the contrary is a merciless principle, contrary to God's name and nature.

4. We believe, that suitable to mens improvement of their time and talents here, will their judgments be hereafter; from whence we conclude, that there will be very great degrees of reward, both in glory and punishment.

5. We believe, that in this great judgment, the eternal state both of angels and men will be determined; so that suitable to the sentence, then given by the righteous Lord and judge, will be their eternal state, and that there will be no revoking or altering of the sentence, which shall then pass upon either angels or men; and so it will be an irrevocable and eternal judgment, and men will know in the judgment, when the sentence is past how it will be with them for ever after.

CHAP. XXVI

Of the restitution of all things

Concerning the restitution we believe, that there shall be a restitution of all things. And he that sat upon the throne said, behold I make all things new. God made the first or old world, both heaven and earth, and all things therein, for the use of man, and then made man to possess it; but man fell by sin, and

the whole creation with him for his sin, as a just judgment of God upon him. Now inasmuch as this old creation was lost and fallen, the design of God by the man *Christ* Jesus, was the recovery and restauration of all again, and to make all new, not of new matter, but the old things must be made new, for it will be a restitution, or renovation, not properly a creation, which restauration, will wonderfully tend to set forth the power and godhead of the great creator, not only in making and preserving but also in restoring of so wonderful a creation, and his wisdom will illustriously be seen not only in contriving and creating of such various and many sorts of creatures, and to bring all out of nothing, but also his wisdom and power will be wonderfully declared by his works in the restitution for ever more.

CHAP. XXVII

Of the Reign of Christ

Concerning the kingdom and reign of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, as we do believe,

1. That he is now in heaven at his fathers right hand, so we do believe, that at the time appointed of the father, he shall come again in power and great glory; and that at, or after his coming the second time, he will not only raise the dead, judge and restore the world, but will also take to himself his kingdom, and will, according to the scriptures, reign on the throne of his father *David*, on mount *Sion* in *Jerusalem* for ever.
2. We believe, that this kingdom of our Lord will be an universal kingdom and that in this kingdom the Lord *Jesus Christ* himself will be the alone visible supreme Lord and King of the whole earth.
3. We believe, that as the kingdom will be universal, so it will also be an everlasting kingdom, that shall have no end, nor cannot be shaken; in which kingdom the saints and faithful in *Christ Jesus* shall receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls; where the Lord is, they shall be also.
4. We believe, that the new *Jerusalem*, that shall come down from God out of heaven, when the tabernacle of God shall be with them, and he will dwell among them, will be the metropolitan city of this kingdom, and will be the glorious place of residence, of both *Christ*, and his saints for ever, and will be so situated, as that the kingly palace will be on mount *Sion*, the holy hill of *David*, where his throne was.

5. We do believe, that this kingdom will be a peaceable and a very glorious kingdom, beyond conception, and much more beyond expression, of which *Solomon's* kingdom was a type.

6. We believe, that this kingdom of our Lord, will be, that that shall succeed the fourth monarch spoken of, and will be the stone cut out of the mountain without hands which shall fill the whole earth.

7. We believe, that this kingdom ought not to be set up by the material sword, that being so exceeding contrary to the very nature of *Christianity*; for which we shall give these following brief reasons.

(1.) Because a *Christians* life is to love our enemies, and to pray for them, and not destroy them; to pray for all men.

(2.) To be subject to government in all cases of civil concern; and patiently endure and suffer tribulation and persecution for the kingdom of *Christ's* sake.

(3.) Because *Christ's* kingdom is not of the world, therefore his servants ought not to fight. From which considerations, we cannot cheerfully have communion with those that own the setting up *Christ's* kingdom by the power of the sword; believing that his spiritual kingdom, which is his church here on earth; ought not to be set up or forced, either by the sword, or any civil law whatsoever, but by the preaching of the gospel, which is the sword of the spirit, the word of God. And,

(4.) His eternal kingdom on the throne of his father *David*, of which we are speaking, himself will set up at his appearing and kingdom, when the great men and noblemen, bondmen, and freemen shall run to the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the presence of the lamb. This will be the day of the Lord's vengeance; and it belongs to him to execute it, and not unto us.

Footnote:

[1] From the original document the word is indiscernible

THE COALHEAVER'S CONFESSION

by William Huntington

1745-1813

I BELIEVE, that every man who is enlightened to see the fellowship of the gospel mystery, enabled to receive it in the love of it, who is blessed with enlargement of heart, access to God, and freedom with him in prayer, is delivered from the yoke and bondage of Moses's law, in every sense of the words: he is free born, a son of the free woman and made free by the Son of God; is a free citizen of Mount Zion: has a granted right to all the privileges of it; and is an heir of God's eternal kingdom. God the Father appointed his Son to proclaim liberty to him: the Son has made him free: the Spirit of the Lord is in him, and there is liberty. The truth has made him free, and he is free indeed; and free he must remain, unless he abuse his liberty, or suffer blind guides to entangle him again with the yoke of bondage.

I believe, that every one that looketh into this perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, is a sanctified hearer of the gospel, and an evangelical doer of the work of faith, being blessed in his deed. And, whosoever sends this free man to the binding law of Moses, as his only rule of life, sends him to the only place to which he can send him, to have him cursed in his deed: for, "as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse."

I believe, that whatsoever is the saint's only rule of life, that the saint is under that rule; subject to that rule, he must be obedient to that rule; walk by that rule; work by that rule; and live by that rule. And, if the law of Moses be that rule, the saint is under the law; subject to the law: his obedience is the obedience of the law; he walks in the letter of the law; his works are the works of the law; and he that does these things in the law, shall live in them. And, if this be true, the ministers of the letter are right: Moses's disciples, and all the ministers of circumcision who opposed the gospel, were the only orthodox men and, consequently, all the apostle's charges against them were groundless and unjust.

I believe that the gospel furnishes the believer with every thing he wants; and with his only and all-sufficient rule of life also; or else, he could not, with propriety, be said to be under grace, subject to the gospel, obedient to the faith, a walker in newness of life, a worker of righteousness by faith, and one

who lives by the faith of the Son of God.

I believe, that a true servant of the Lord, is called a minister of the Spirit, a minister of Christ, a preacher of the gospel, and an ambassador of peace; a steward of grace, and an evangelist; that every one who enforces the necessity and sufficiency of the Spirit, that makes Christ Jesus the Lord all in all, as Paul did, preaches the gospel in all its branches, and makes full proof of it; that enforces peace between God and conscience, by faith in a Saviour's blood; holds forth the word of life, as a good steward of the manifold grace of God; and who leads people unto Christ Jesus, enforces union with him, liberty in him by the Spirit, a close walk with him, heavenly mindedness, and joy and peace in believing, are the persons who have a right to the above titles, and none else.

I believe, that the reason of so many persons making shipwreck of their confession of faith, and apostatizing from their profession of it, is, because they had no other bond to hold them to it but the bondage of the law; nor any other rule to walk by but the commandments. Had the bond of everlasting love got hold of them, and Paul's gospel rule of eternal life been given them, I believe it would have been otherwise.

I believe, that love is the strongest cord of the law of the Spirit of life; and, that natural love is the strongest tie of the law of nature. The former keeps Christ and the church together; the latter keeps kings and subjects, fathers and families together. Where the former is wanting, apostasy is certain: where the latter is wanting, the kingdom and the house will soon be divided. I believe, these words, "To have, and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part;" is as binding a law as letters can make; and is a rule to be observed by every married couple as long as they live; nor can the woman be loosed from that law, till her husband be dead; then, but not till then, is she free.

I believe, that no couple fulfill this covenant engagement, or live up to this rule, but those who, in heart, sincerely love one another: for, if love works no ill to a neighbor, it can work none to a wife or husband, who are the nearest, and ought to be the dearest, of all neighbors.

I believe, the only reason of so many divorces in the world, unfaithfulness, inconstancy, and treacherous elopements among married people, is, because they have no other yoke than the letter of their covenant: no binding ties to

keep them within bounds, but that; no rule to live or walk by, but the law of marriage; which is too weak, through the lust of the flesh, to make some men constant; and too weak, through the same, to keep some wives either chaste or frugal.

I believe, that where there are the strong ties of mutual affection, my lady will never abandon her lord, nor yield to the intrigues or artifice of the worst of thieves; 'tis for the want of this, that his grace's eye is not satisfied with his duchess, and for the same reason my lady is as “rottenness in her lord's bones,” Prov. 12:4.

I believe, that those who make the law of Moses their only rule of life, must stand or fall, live or die, by that law, when they appear before him to whom vengeance belongeth; and those who die violators of the law of marriage, shall have their share of that cup; for God is the avenger of all such.

I believe, that a congregation gathered by legal preaching, will soon be scattered by the same; for, if the kingdom of God stands not in word, which gives no life, it can never stand in the letter, which ministers death.

I believe, that a preacher of morality [as it is falsely called] to a lifeless people, is, in the strictest sense of the words, the dead burying the dead: or, as the burial service saith, it is committing body and soul both to the ground; 'tis adding ashes to ashes, and dust to dust; nor can any assurance or certain hope of a blessed resurrection rise from thence.

I believe, that the preacher who abandons the gospel will soon he abandoned by the elect of God; and those of his own cast who stick to him, will do but little to support him: the preacher begins in the Spirit, and ends in the flesh: the hearers begin in the letter, and end in the world.

I believe, there is no real morality to be found in any of the children of men, but in those who are quickened by the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of holiness of faith, of power, of love, and of a sound mind; for, if all the law and the prophets hang upon these two points “love to God and our neighbor,” there can be none of this morality in a carnal mind, which is enmity against God and his law; unless it can be proved that purity springs from filth, holiness from sin, love from enmity, activity from death, or obedience from rebellion. Paul calls human righteousness dung and dross.

I believe, the reason why Paul loved the law of God after the inner man, was

not owing to any act of kindness or favor received from the law, but because he was renewed in the spirit of his mind by the Holy Ghost, who put God's law in his heart and wrote it in his mind: which made his mind heavenly, and filled him with life and peace.

I believe, that those who yoke the believer with Moses's law as his only rule of life, neither handle the law lawfully, nor the gospel evangelically; they are neither faithful to Moses, nor faithful to Christ; neither to saints nor to sinners. - Not faithful to Moses, because they do not shew his accusations; not to Christ, because they do not make him all in all; not to the believer, because they send him from Mount Zion, where all his real friends are; nor to the bond children, because they do not shew them their state; but by applying Zion's privileges to them, make them stage-players in the city of God, till God discovers what they are; and then the hypocrites in Zion are afraid, and cry, Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

I believe, that the liberty of the gospel is as great an opposite to the bondage of the law, as life is to death, light to darkness, love to hatred, mercy to wrath, or salvation to damnation.

I believe, that if the gospel of Christ be not a sufficient rule of life for men to believe in, be obedient to, and live and walk by, that men would never be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God, and from the glory of his power, for want of a knowledge of him, and obedience to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe, that when God said, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him," it implied, that Christ is our God, our head, our law-fulfiller, king, and ruler; and that all the words of this king and ruler to his subjects are not killing letters; but that the words which he speaks are spirit and they are life; and that the works of the law are the works of the flesh; and that, if the flesh profiteth nothing, the works of it profit less: that which is born of the flesh is flesh, which cannot inherit eternal life; but that which is born of the spirit is spirit, and is the earnest of our future inheritance.

I believe, the term used, "The law is the only rule of life," is the same in the mouths of some men as the word "influenza" is in the mouths of some gentlemen of the faculty; it implies everything, but fixes nothing. A persecutor is influenced by Satan, a covetous man by Mammon, an unclean

man by Belial, an idolater by Moloch; the word “influenza” implies all these; yea, it reaches to everything which influences the bodies or souls of men, whether in heaven, earth, or hell, for they are all under some influence. The saints are under the law of the spirit of life and love in this world, and so they are in heaven, for eternal life and eternal love can never fail; and sinners are under the law of sin and death in this world, and they are under the guilt of sin and the second death in hell; and he that can fix these two laws upon one subject, is the most likely man to fix the disorder, called the influenza, upon some particular complaint.

I believe, that mingling the law with the gospel afforded the first twig for the whore of Babylon to build her nest on; since which she has made room for the whole superstructure of justification by works, works of supererogation, a superfluity of merits for others. Fleshly penance, human mediators, and carnal works, are all in all with them; Christ is only mimicked by antichrist, and his gospel serves only as a catch-penny, or as a snare to entangle and murder the saints of God, who dare to oppose the craft by which they get their wealth.

I believe, that enforcing the “law as the believer's only rule of life,” is the only footing that arminianism stands upon. Human righteousness can never be established upon the gospel of Christ, for “therein is the righteousness of God revealed,” and his righteousness only. The doctrine of free-will can never stand upon the mystery of God's sovereign good-will to his elect; the doctrine of final apostasy can never be established on the doctrine of everlasting life and love; nor can the system of fleshly perfection find any footing on a “sea of glass that makes manifest the councils of the heart.”

I believe, that the covenant of promise belongs to the heirs of promise; and that the ministration of the Spirit is sent with power to none but to the heirs of eternal life; and that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God to all those that are predestinated to be called, justified, and glorified. Therefore, to preach a pure gospel, that reveals God's righteousness, and no other, a gospel that sets forth the Saviour as the believer's all in all, and to enforce and maintain subjection to the gospel of Christ, and an experience of the life and power of it, obedience to it, a life, walk, and conversation in it, to insist on the fruits of the Spirit, the works of righteousness, the works of faith, and labors of love, is the only way to be useful to God's elect, and the only way to

glorify Christ. This doctrine sets aside at once all arminianism, and all arminians or bond children, and fixes them on their own covenant with the rest of the world, and under the commands and threatening of that law on which they build, and to which they look for righteousness and perfection.

I believe, that all national religion, all courts of inquisition, all the dignity and authority of spiritual lords over God's heritage, all trains of ceremonies and human forms of godliness, have no foundation in the unconditional promise of eternal life, nor in the Spirit's powerful influence on the souls of God's elect: all these things must stand on something like “the doctrine of the law being the only rule of life.” Hence, we hear of a church, and of an holy religion, by law established, in distinction from another, which is said “to be built not by might; nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

I believe, the doctrine of the law being the believer's only rule of life, has been of use to several sorts of men, though it has afforded neither life nor help to God's elect. The whole code of tithelaws must be fixed upon some law by which all tithes, revenues, offerings, fees, &c., are extracted, or rather exacted. There is no authority to get these things from carnal men by the gospel; but, by law they can get them, if not by fair means, they can by foul; for, like Eli's sons, they can take them by force.

I believe, the gospel never allows any true minister to take the charge of a whole parish; nor yet to take carnal things of carnal men, unless freely offered – an ambassador of peace is not to go from house to house: where he carries peace to a son of peace, there he is to abide, eating and drinking such things as are set before him; if he sows spiritual things, he is to reap carnal things. When preachers bring men to the name of the Lord our God, the Holy One of Israel, agreeably to the prophecy, the suppliants are to come, bringing their gold and silver with them, Isaiah, lx. 9, as was fulfilled in the apostle's days, when they had converted souls to Christ by their ministry, the wealth of their converts was laid at their feet.

I believe, the doctrine of the law, as a rule of life, has been of use to many ministers, fitted, polished, sent out, and ordained by men; such being sensual, having not the Spirit, they have been obliged to enforce the law as the only rule of life, in order to keep people together; for, if a church be not in the preacher's heart to live and die with them, and if the preacher be not made manifest by God's Spirit in the conscience of the church, they will be renting

and splitting; therefore, it is needful that uninspired men enforce Moses's law to believers, or else dwell perpetually on the commands of Christ, or on the laws of his house; and when once they can blind a simple people, benumb their consciences, stifle their convictions, brace them with bigotry, arm them with malice against all others, fix a few gospel notions in their head, and fill them with a carnal rage (under the name of zeal) in behalf of the law as the only rule of life, telling them it is fulfilling all righteousness, the work is done, and the people are united, not by the girdle of truth, or bond of love, but by the yoke of priest-craft.

I believe, that by this yoke of priest-craft legions are shackled and bound to the preacher's pews, his table, his ministry, and his community; and by these means the subscriptions of the people are secured also, without the bond of eternal love, the bond of peace, or the unity of the faith.

I believe, that no preacher has any authority, or power, to confine me to his ministry, meeting, table, or community, any longer than he can shew himself approved unto God, a pastor after God's own heart, who feeds me with knowledge and understanding, and who goes before me both in judgment and experience; or can say, as Paul did, "Be ye followers of me."

I believe, that the yoke of priest-craft is as galling as the yoke of Moses; and keeps men under as gross bondage to the fear of man, which brings a snare, as Moses's law does to the fear of vengeance, which brings the fears and snares of death.

I believe, a poor alarmed sinner easily catches this kind of doctrine, being, as the wise man says, one of those simple ones who believe every word; but if ever the Spirit of God comes upon such, these yokes are like Sampson's cords, they fly like tow; and as soon as such a bird is escaped out of the snare of the fowler, the messengers and members of such churches will pursue him, perplex him, and hunt him, as bad as ever Saul hunted David, or Moses's law hunted the awakened sinner when under the arrests of divine justice.

I believe nothing to be obedience to the faith, but that which is done in faith; nor any thing to be a fruit of the Spirit, but that which the Spirit leads a man to, and helps him in the performance or; nor any thing to be a work or fruit of righteousness, but that which is done by persons in a justified state, and under the influence of the faith of God's elect, by which the elect are justified.

I believe, that every man who appears in a pulpit among the saints of God, in the character of a servant of Christ, a minister of the Spirit, or a steward of the grace of God, while in an unconverted state, is one of the greatest and worst of all impostors, little inferior to Antichrist, Simon Magus, or Balaam.

I believe, that he is the greatest enthusiast in this world, who, in a public pulpit, lays claim to the Spirit and grace of God, and counterfeits his divine influence to beguile people into the belief of it, while he is altogether destitute of both; for he deceives sinners, he deceives himself, and tries to deceive even the elect of God also.

I believe, that a man who allows no claim to be made on Christ or his gospel, but on the footing of what he calls a good, meek, or quiet temper, would exclude Jeremiah, Jonah, and Elias, if not Moses, Paul, and Job, and all the elect of God.

I believe that man to be of the most quiet temper, where the strong man armed keeps possession of the palace and his goods in peace – for they are at ease in Zion; but those who are at war with the world, the flesh, and the devil, or, like Jonah, three days and three nights in the deep, are such adversaries to Satan, that he will not let them be at peace in the flesh – such must have tribulation in the world, and seek peace only in the Saviour.

I believe, that every man who boasts of the excellency of his temper, or of any other branch of fleshly perfection, is a stranger to Christ, and destitute of all true holiness. When Job saw the Lord, he cried out, “I abhor myself in dust and ashes!” When Isaiah saw him, he said, “Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips!” When Daniel saw him, he said, “all his comeliness was turned to corruption, and he retained no strength.” And if any man come to me, says Christ, and hate not his father and his mother, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

I believe, that the man who loves his sovereign in his heart, and sincerely prays for him in private, where no eye but God's sees him, is as loyal a subject in God's account, as he who rises early and never blesses him but with a loud voice; or any other who continues his circular motion under the sovereign influence of the *Regis Donum*.

I believe, that all persons who put out their money to build or fit up chapels for the gospel, in hope or expectation of making eight, ten, fifteen, or twenty

per cent of their money, are the worst of usurers, and are trading with a commodity that will one day sink them in eternal insolvency: for, if a usurer is excluded from the citizens of Zion, Psalm 15, what must his state be who waters the root of all evil with unlawful interest, by making merchandise of the bounties of heaven?

I believe, there never were but two ways to heaven and glory; the one is by works, the other by faith. The first is, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." The second is, "We that believe, do enter into rest." These are the only two ways that ever God opened; the man therefore that attempts a middle way, walks in "a way not cast up," Jer. 18:15, or wanders in a wilderness where there is no way.

I believe, telling country tales and old wives' fables in a pulpit, is not feeding people with knowledge and understanding, nor bringing things from God's treasures, new and old, but has a tendency to make people more like Athenians than Christians, seeing they are trained up to hear and tell some new thing.

I believe, that all spouting clubs, alias disputing societies, kept by graceless men for the sake of sixpence per head, can never be vindicated by the account we have of Paul's disputing in the school or one Tyrannus; it is casting pearls before swine; it is calling for the judgment of this world upon those mysteries which God has hid from the wise and prudent: no good man dares thus to tempt God; and a fool of no understanding is forbidden to take God's covenant in his mouth: it is making sport, clapping hands, and causing clamorous shouts, where faith and reverence should act, which, it is to be feared, will one day end in weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

I believe, that it is one thing for a man to begin in the Spirit, and another thing for the Spirit to begin in the man.

I believe, that every man who begins in the Spirit, or with the gospel, will certainly end in the flesh, and under the law; man makes nothing perfect, and the law makes nothing perfect: the law will ever veil the carnal man, and the carnal man will ever veil the gospel: the gospel is a lamp that burneth, and they must be children of the light that bear it. There were but three hundred in Gideon's days, out of thirty thousand, that were allowed to bear the lamps and pitchers, and cry, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon;" and these were the men that would not bow their knees for a draft of water, much less to Baal or

Mammon.

I believe, that wherever the Spirit of God begins a work of grace, he carries it on. What God doth, it is done for ever, all his work is perfect; the Spirit is a well of living water in the believer, that springs up into everlasting life; the Comforter abides for ever, he shall never depart from the chosen seed, world without end.

I believe, that real morality, according to Paul's doctrine, is charity, the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned; and though to have pity on the poor and relieve their distresses, are the best performances that the children of nature are capable of, yet a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burnt, and be destitute of charity, consequently destitute of real morality.

I believe, that Paul could boast of human performances as much, if not more than any man living; he was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, one of the strictest sect of the pharisees; touching the law, blameless; concerning zeal, persecuted the church, and these things he counted gain; but when grace reached his heart, he counted these things as loss, yea, dung and dross, and palms them upon his ignorance and unbelief; but neither ignorance nor unbelief is the root of real morality.

I believe, that it is one thing for the holy commandment to be delivered unto a man, 2 Peter 2:21, and another thing for God to put the holy commandment in his mind, and write it on his heart: the former stands by his own faithfulness, to what is delivered to him; the latter stands on the faithfulness of God to Christ and his seed, being within the bond of the everlasting covenant: the former must keep the holy commandment delivered unto him; the latter is "kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation."

I believe, that Herod heard the preaching of John gladly, and did many things; but those make a better end than Herod who hear the gospel with sadness, and are convinced that they can do nothing; seeing the God of truth declares, without him we can do nothing, but through him Paul could do all things.

I believe, that the man who preaches up the redemption of all the world, is a stranger to the application of redemption. If he were to preach particular redemption, or the redemption of Zion only, he would exclude himself; but

universal redemption takes in all the human race, consequently the preacher among the rest; but it is but a tottering foundation after all, because we read of some being in hell already, and not one there but what gives the doctrine of universal redemption the lie.

I believe, that our present forgers of the restoration of devils, are a kind of mediators that require very extraordinary qualifications; the Jewish mediators, such as Moses, the high priests, the judges, prophets, &c., were Jews; they were of the Jewish religion, and stood not between God and the world, but between God and Israel only. God appointed them to the office and qualified them by his Spirit to “stand in the gap.”

I believe, that Christ took on him the seed of Abraham; the children of promise being flesh and blood, Jesus himself took part of the same; he was made sin for us, and made perfect through sufferings, and became a most blessed and suitable mediator between God and his elect Israel, not between God and the world, for his mediatorial kingdom is not of this world; he prayed not for the world; he has not revealed his mysteries to the world; he redeemed his sheep (not the world); nor does he intercede for the world.

I believe, that all the mediators whom the papists have made, were of their own faith and profession, and that none of them were ever empowered by the Pope to stand between God and heretics; their intercession or mediation is confined to the whore of Babylon only.

I believe, therefore, that the forger and defender of the restoration of devils, must be qualified for his mediatorial office by being partaker of the nature of devils; he must be of the profession of devils; he must have fellowship not only with the unfruitful works of darkness, but with the workers also; he must have fellowship with devils, 1 Cor. 10:20, if he becomes a mediator and a minister of a “congregation that is in the depths of hell,” Prov. 9:18; without the above qualifications he is not fit for his office; for he cannot be touched with a feeling of the devil's infirmities; nor can he have universal charity enough to sympathize and condole with them; all the earthly mediators that God appointed, were compassed with infirmities as well as the people.

I believe, it will be a hard task to find one text in the Bible which allows a man to take upon himself that office, and equally as hard to apply one text for the restoration of devils; seeing the Almighty says, “Unto you, O men! I call, and my voice is to the sons of men;” they must therefore say, with Saul the

king, I forced myself into this office.

I believe, that these advocates for devils do not allow Satan that share of serpentine wisdom which the Scriptures apply to him; for if Christ is to restore all things, both devils and damned souls, to the favor of God, the devil must be a mere fool to tempt so many saints to blaspheme the Saviour; and a bigger fool still, to wish to destroy him from the pinnacle of the temple; for if Satan could have destroyed the Great Restorer, what would become of his restoration? This doctrine, contrary to the doctrine of Christ, represents Satan as divided against himself; and if so, either his kingdom or his restoration must fall: Satan must be divided against himself, or else be ignorant of this mystery of his restoration; and if the devil be ignorant of it, 'tis a mystery to me where these advocates for the devil got it.

I believe, that man must be a master of arts, who can fix any time, either in the purpose of heaven, or in his own brain, when the devil's everlasting chains under darkness are to be broken; when the punishment with everlasting destruction from the presence of God is to have a period; when those who shall awake to everlasting shame and contempt are to be glorified; when the eternal law is to be repealed; when the jots and tittles of it are to fail, and the Saviour's words pass away; when the irrevocable decree of reprobation is to be displaced; when the eternal damnation that Christ speaks of is to cease; the sentence which is passed be recalled; the gulph fixed be removed; the smoke which ascends for ever and ever blow over; and when those to whom Christ says, "Where I am ye cannot come," are to come where he is; and when "this device and knowledge that is fetched from the grave" and hell is to take place.

I believe, that he had need be a master of languages, and a master of arts too, who dreams of times and periods after the destruction of the world, seeing all beyond is vast eternity.

I believe, that the forger and defender of this doctrine of the devil's restoration, and the power which authorizes and influences this sort of intercessors, is the father of lies himself, who keeps possession of these his advocates and his goods in peace; but should grace reach their hearts, and the hour of temptation follow that, after they have been winnowed in Satan's sieve, as Peter was, "buffeted by the devil," as Paul was, or have their "goods, family, body, and soul smitten by him," as Job had, they would soon

quit, if they did not curse, their office; for they would find work enough to make their own calling and election sure; and, consequently, would leave the devil to plead his own cause, and say, with Paul, “We are not ignorant of Satan's devices;” and counsel others to have no fellowship with devils.

I believe, that the Pope, who is the founder and upholder of purgatory, received (agreeably to Scripture) his seat, power, authority, and doctrine, from the devil himself; and I believe, those that are trading with the doctrine of devils' restoration, received their lies from the same father.

I believe, that the apostles' doctrine is daily fulfilling, which saith, “In the latter days many shall depart from the faith.” And I believe, that our modern hypocrites are awfully fallen from the honest confession of their ancestors: The ancient hypocrites were afraid, and said, Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting burning? But out stage-players intimate, that they were in great fear where no fear was; for there is no such thing as everlasting burning.

I believe, that the confession of the ancient hypocrites in Zion contained the words of truth and sound doctrine; that there really are such things as devouring fire and everlasting burnings; where the wicked shall go, as the Saviour saith, “Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,” Matt. 25:41, that is, into hell; into the fire that never shall be quenched; where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, Mark. 9:43, 44.

I believe, that those who ascertain the death of this never dying worm, and the going out of this unquenchable fire, have not properly considered either the fire or the fuel. “Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it,” Isa. 30:33. When all the withered branches of fallen Adam are cast into this Tophet, all the vessels of wood and of earth, which Paul calls vessels to dishonor, together with every corrupt tree, and every fruitless fig tree, made to be taken and destroyed, and the breath of Almighty God “kindling in these thickets of briars and thorns,” we may well say, with the prophet, this funeral pile consisteth of fire and much wood; and that man had need be a master of languages who resolves the Saviour's question about this subject, “If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” Luke 23:31.

I believe, that if the words “everlasting destruction, tormented for ever and

ever, eternal damnation, &c.” have no other meaning than a limited time, that “eternal life, everlasting love, everlasting salvation, and shining in the glory of God's kingdom for ever and ever,” must have a limited time also; and the everlasting God, the eternal God, who lives for ever and ever, may cease to exist at some certain period too. The words which aver the eternal existence of God, fix the eternal salvation of the elect, and the everlasting doom of the damned; therefore, If this goal delivery for devils could be proved, there is nothing certain; for the very kingdom of heaven might be moved. - A ground of hope in the depths of hell would make the pillars of heaven tremble.

I believe, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God; and that suffering under the curse of the law in hell, can by no means be called obedience to the precepts of the law, any more than condemned sinners “cursing their king and their God,” can be said to be fulfilling all righteousness.

I believe, that no men are so proper to carry on the public business of spouting, and disputing about the glorious mysteries of God in the assemblies of the wicked, as those who have had their enmity stirred up, their rage inflamed, their consciences seared, and who have received a savour of death onto death, by sitting under the gospel. These men move in their proper element; “for they were of old ordained to this condemnation;” but for men that have any reverence of God, conscience towards him, knowledge of the truth, or love to it, to tempt God, and grieve his Spirit, by attending upon the scorner's chair, and frequenting the assemblies of hypocritical mockers, act quite out of character, and will make a deal of hard work for conscience another day: God tells us to let the potsherd's strive with the potsherd's of the earth; these pitchers that have been broken at the fountain, and are to be sunk in the pit, can never be of any use to God's elect. Men whom Christ in a way of judgment has blinded, from whom God has hid the mysteries of his kingdom, can be no better judges of the doctrines of the gospel than a drove of Lapland witches.

I believe, that the wise man had some meaning, when he said, “The lips of a fool swallow up himself;” for some men, by disputing against “God's making any man to be damned,” are ripening themselves for damnation, by disputing against it.

Thus ends the Coal-Heaver's Confession, written, signed, and published by

W. HUNTINGTON, S. S.

ARTICLES OF RELIGION OF THE NEW CONNEXION, 1770

Article I. *On the Fall of Man.* We believe, that man was made upright in the image of God, free from all disorder natural and moral; capable of obeying perfectly the will and command of God his Maker; yet capable also of sinning: which he unhappily did, and thereby laid himself under the divine curse; which, we think, could include nothing less than the mortality of the body and the eternal punishment of the soul. His nature also became depraved; his mind was defiled; and the powers of his soul weakened-that both he was, and his posterity are, captives of Satan till set at liberty by Christ.

Article II. *On the Nature and Perpetual Obligation of the Moral Law.* We believe, that the moral law not only extends to the outward actions of the life, but to all the powers and faculties of the mind, to every desire, temper and thought; that it demands the entire devotion of all the powers and faculties of both body and soul to God: or, in our Lord's words, to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul and strength:-that this law is of perpetual duration and obligation, to all men, at all times, and in all places or parts of the world. And, we suppose that this law was obligatory to Adam in his perfect state-was more clearly revealed in the ten commandments-and more fully explained in many other parts of the bible.

Article III. *On the Person and Works of Christ.* We believe, that our Lord Jesus Christ is God and man, united in one person: or possessed of divine perfection united to human nature, in a way which we pretend not to explain, but think ourselves bound by the word of God firmly to believe:-that he suffered to make a full atonement for all the sins of all men-and that hereby he has wrought out for us a compleat salvation; which is received by, and as a free gift communicated to, all that believe in him; without the consideration of any works done by us, in order to entitle us to his salvation.-Though we firmly believe, that no faith is the means of justification, but that which produces good works.

Article IV. *On Salvation by Faith.* We believe, that as this salvation is held forth to all whom the gospel revelation comes without exception, we ought in

the course of our ministry, to propose or offer this salvation to all those who attend our ministry: and, having opened to them their ruined wretched state by nature and practice, to invite all without exception, to look to Christ by faith, without any regard to any thing in, or done by, themselves; that they may, in this way alone, that is, by faith be possessed of this salvation.

Article V. *On Regeneration by the Holy Spirit.* We believe, that, as the scriptures assure us, we are justified, made the children of God, purified and sanctified by faith:-that when a person comes to believe in Jesus (and not before) he is regenerated or renewed in his soul, by the spirit of God, through the instrumentality of the word, now believed and embraced; which renewal of his soul naturally produces holiness in heart and life: -that this holiness is the means of preparing us for the enjoyments and employments of the heavenly world; and of preserving in our souls a comfortable sense of our interest in the Lord, and of our title to glory; as well as to set a good example before men, and to recommend our blessed Redeemer's cause to the world.

Article VI. *On Baptism.* We believe, that it is the indispensable duty of all who repent and believe the gospel, to be baptized, by immersion in water, in order to be initiated into a church state; and that no person ought to be received into the church without submission to that ordinance.