

A
CONFESSIO*N* OF FAITH

AND
CHURCH ORDER,


ADOPTED BY THE
BAPTIST CHURCH OF CHRIST,
IN
EXETER, NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

Constituted October 7th 1800.

*Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard
of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*

PAUL.

EXETER :
C. E. CLARK, PRINTER,
Merrill's Block, 23 Water Street.
MCCCXLIX.



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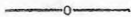
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ARTICLES

TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED BY THOSE WHO

JOIN THE CHURCH.



HAVING been enabled through divine grace to give up our souls to the Lord, and likewise to one another by the will of God; we esteem it a duty incumbent upon us to make a declaration of our faith, and practice, to the honor of Christ and the glory of his name; knowing *that with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, Rom.x.10.*

WE THEREFORE DECLARE AS FOLLOWS—

1. We believe, That the scriptures of the old and new testament are (*a*) the word of God, and the only (*b*) rule of faith, and practice.

2. We believe, That there is but one (*c*) only living and true God: that there are (*d*) three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the (*e*) Holy Ghost; who are equal in nature, power, and glory, that the Son (*f*) and the Holy Ghost are as truly and properly God as the Father.

3. We believe, That God created our first parents upright, (*g*) yet they did not long abide in this honor, but willfully transgressed the law of their Creator, in eating the forbidden fruit; (*h*) by their sinful rebellion, they fell from their original righteous-

(*a*) 2 Tim. iii, 15, 16, 17. 2 Pet. i, 21.

(*b*) John v, 39, Acts xvii, 11. 2 Pet. i, 19, 20.

(*c*) Deut. vi, 4. 1 Cor. viii, 6. 1 Tim. ii, 5
Jer. x 10.

(*d*) 1 John v, .7 Matt. xxviii, 19.

(*e*) John x, 30. Phil. ii, 6. Rom. ix, 5. 1 John v, 20.

(*f*) Isa. ix, 6. John i, 1, 2. Rom. ix, 5. 1 Thes.
v 23. Acts v, 3, .4

(*g*) Gen. i, 2.9 Eccl. vii, 27.

(*h*) Gen. iii, 6, 7, and ii, 17.

ness, and lost communion with God; (*i*) and all we with them became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties both of soul and body; (*k*) they being the root, and by God's appointment standing in stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin of our first parents was imputed, and their corrupt nature conveyed to all their posterity, (*l*) so that we all are by nature the children of wrath—the servants of sin—the subjects of death—and of all other miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal; and by their original guilt and corruption, we are utterly indisposed, and become opposed to all good, and wholly inclined to evil.

4. We believe, That before the world began, God did elect (*m*) a certain number of men unto everlasting salvation, and that in pursuance of this gracious design, he

(*i*) Rom. v, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. 1 Cor. xii, 21, 22. Psalms v, 1, 5. Ezek. xvi, 3, 4, 5, 6. Isa. i, 6. Rom. iii, 10. Titus i, 15, 16.

(*k*) Gen. i, 27, 28. Rom. v, 13, 19. Psal. xiv, 3, 6.

(*l*) Eph. ii, 3. Rom. vii, 14. & v, 12, 13, 14, & vi, 16, 23. Job xi, 12. Rom. viii, 7.

(*m*) Eph. i, 4. 1 Thes. i, 4, & v, 9. 2 Thes. ii, 13. Rom. iii, 30.

did enter into a covenant (*n*) of grace and peace with his Son Jēsus Christ, (*o*) on the behalf of those persons for whom Christ became a Saviour, and all spiritual blessings (*p*) provided for them, as also their persons, (*q*) with all their grace, (*r*) and glory, were put into the hands of Christ, and his care and charge.

5. We believe, That the Lord Jesus Christ, being set up from everlasting (*s*) as the mediator of the new covenant, did engage to be (*t*) the surety of his people, and did in the fulness of time, really assume (*u*) human nature, in which nature he really suffered and died (*w*) as their substitute, in their room, and stead, whereby he made all that satisfaction (*x*) for their sins, which the law and justice of God re-

(*x*) Rom. viii. 3, 4, & x, 4. Isa. xlii, 21. Rom. viii, 1, 33, 34.

(*n*) 2 Sam. xxiii, 5. Psalms lxxxix, 3, 28, 34. Isa. xlii, 6.

(*o*) Psalms lxxxix, 19. Isa. xlix, 6.

(*p*) 2 Sam. xxii, 5. Isa. lv, 4. Eph. i, 3.

(*q*) Deut. xxxiii, 3. John vi, 37, 39, & x, 28, 29.

Jud. i, 1.

(*r*) 2 Tim, i, 9. Eph. i, 3. Col. iii, 3, 4.

(*s*) Prov. viii 22, 23. Heb. xii, 24.

(*t*) Psal. xl, 6, 7, 8. Heb. vii, 22.

(*u*) John i, 14. Gal. iv, 4. Heb. ii, 14, 16, 17.

(*w*) Rom. iv, 25. 1 Cor. xv, 3. Eph. v, 2.

1 Peter iii, 18.

quired, as well as procured all those blessings, (*y*) which are needful for them, both for time and eternity.

6. We believe, That the eternal redemption which Christ has obtained by the shedding of his blood, (*z*) is special and particular, that is to say, that it was only intentionally designed for the elect of God, and the sheep of Christ, who only share the special and peculiar blessings of it.

7. We believe, The jurisdiction of God's elect is only by the (*a*) righteousness of Christ imputed to them, without the consideration of any works of righteousness done by them; and that the full and free pardon of all their sins and transgressions, past, present and to come, is only through the blood (*b*) of Christ, according to the riches of his grace.

8. We believe, That the work of faith, conversion, regeneration and sanctification

(*y*) 1 Cor. i, 30. Eph. i, 7, 14.

(*z*) Mat. xx, 28. John x, 11, 15. Rev. v, 9.
Rom. iii, 35.

(*a*) Rom. iii, 28, & iv, 6, & v, 6, 18, 19.

(*b*) Rom. iii, 25. Eph. i, 7. Col. ii, 13. 1 John
i, 7, 9

is not a work of (c) man's free will and power, but of the mighty, efficacious and and irresistable (d) grace of God.

9. We believe, That a full assurance of faith is attainable in this life, (e) and that it is a duty highly incumbent upon us to labor after it with all dilligence, (f) though we do by no means look upon assurance to be of the essence of saving faith, (g) but one of the consequent delectable effects thereof.

10. We believe, That all those who are chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, shall certainly (h) and finally persevere to the end, so that not one of them shall ever perish, but shall have everlasting life.

11. We believe, That baptism, (i) and the Lord's supper are ordinances of Christ, to be continued until his second coming;

(c) John i, 13. Rom. ix, 16, & viii, 7.

(d) Phil. ii, 13. 2 Tim. i, 9. Jam. i, 18. 1 Pet. i, 3. Eph. i, 19. Isa. xliii, 13.

(e) 1 John ii, 3, & v, 13. Rom. v, 2, & viii, 16. Job xix, 25.

(f) Heb. vi, 11. 2 Peter i, 10.

(g) John v, 13. Isa. v, 10. Eph. i, 13.

(h) Matt. xxiv, 24. John vi, 39, 40, & x, 28, 29. Matt. xvi, 18. Psal. cxxv, 1, 2. 1 Peter i, 5. Jude i, 24. Heb. ii, 13. Rom. viii, 13.

and that the former is pre-requisite to the latter; that is to say, that those (*k*) are to be admitted into the communion, and to participate of all ordinances in it, (*l*) who upon profession of their faith have been baptized (*m*) in the name of the Father, (*n*) and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

12. We believe, that the Lord's day, or the first day of the week is to be sanctified and kept holy, (*o*) and that it is our indispensable duty to assemble ourselves together on that day for the public worship of God, by prayer with thanksgiving, and hearing the word, and singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (*p*).

13. We believe, That there will be a resurrection of the dead, (*q*) both of the just and of the unjust, and that Christ will

(*i*) Mat. xxviii, 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi, 23, 26.

(*k*) Acts ii, 41, & ix, 18, 28. Mark xvi, 16.

(*l*) Acts viii, 12, 36, 37, & xvi, 31, 32, 33, 34, & xviii, 8.

(*m*) Mat. iii, 6, 16. John iii 23. Acts viii, 38, 39. Rom. vi, 4. Col. ii, 12.

(*n*) Mat. xxviii, 19.

(*o*) Rev. i, 10. Acts xx, 7.

(*p*) Heb. x, 24, 25. Acts i, 24. Phil. iv, 6. Eph. v, 19. Col. iii, 16.

(*q*) Acts xxiv, 15. John v, 28, 29. Dan. xii, 2.

come a second time, (*r*) to judge both the quick and the dead; when he will take vengeance on the wicked, and introduce his own people into his kingdom and glory, where they shall be forever with him.

Now all and each of these doctrines and ordinances, we look upon ourselves under the highest obligations, to embrace, maintain and defend, believing it to be our duty (*s*) to stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

And we being very sensible that our conversation, both in the world and in the church, ought to be as becometh the gospel of Christ. (*t*) We judge it our incumbent duty to (*u*) walk in wisdom toward hem, who are without, to exercise (*w*) a conscience void of offence toward God and man; by living (*x*) soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world, (*y*) with all

(*r*) Heb. ix, 28. Acts xvii, 31. 2 Tim. iv, 1.

2 Thes. i, 7, 8, 9, 10. 1 Thes. iv, 15, 16, 17.

(*s*) Acts xxiv, 15. Phil. i, 27. Jude i, 3.

(*t*) Phil. i, 27.

(*u*) Col. iv, 5.

(*w*) Acts xxiv, 16.

(*x*) Titus ii, 12.

(*y*) Rom. xiii, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

due submission to magistracy as an ordinance of God.

With respect to our carriage toward each other in our church communion, we esteem it our duty to (z) walk with each other in all humility and brotherly love; to watch (a) over each others conversation, to stir up one [b] another to love and good works, not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, as we have opportunity, to worship God according to his revealed will; and when circumstances require it, to warn, [c] rebuke and admonish one another according to the rules of the gospel.

We also think ourselves in duty bound to sympathize with each other, [d] in all conditions, both internal and external, into which God in his providence may bring us; as also to bear with one another's [e] infirmities, weaknesses and failings, and particularly to pray for one another, [f] and

(z) Eph. iv, 1, 2, 3. Rom. xii, 9, 10, 16. Phil ii, 2, 3.

(a) Lev. xix, 17. Phil. ii, 4.

[b] Heb. x, 24, 25.

[c] 1 Thes. v, 14. Rom. xv. 14. Lev. ix, 17.
Mat. xviii, 15, 16, 17.

[d] Rom. xii, 15. 1 Cor. xii, 26.

[e] Rom. xv, 1. Eph. iv, 2. Col. iii, 13.

[f] 2 Thes. iii, 1.

that the gospel and ordinances of Christ may be blessed to the edification and comfort of each other's soul, and for the gathering in of others to Christ, besides those who are already gathered.

In the performance of all which duties, we desire to be found, through the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit; while we both admire and adore the grace which has given us a name and place in God's house, better than that of sons and daughters.

ARTICLES OF REGULATION.

1. WE believe, That a gospel church is to be composed of persons, who are true believers in Ghrist; and that the design of God in having a church in the world is to show forth his declarative glory, in maintaining his doctrine, ordinances and worship, for the gathering in of his elect, and for the mutual edification and comfort of his people.

2. We believe, That the manner in which God's people should come together in church state, is by a verbal relation to one another, of the work of grace on their hearts, and the same to be required of all who join the body.

3. We believe, That the officers, who are to be ordained in the church, consist of bishops or elders, and deacons, and their

character to be such as are described in 1st Tim., iii Chap., from the 1st verse to the end of the 8th.

4. We believe, That the work of a bishop is to attend on reading, studying and preaching the word, and to administer the special ordinances of the gospel, and also to stand a leader and overseer in the church.

5. We believe it to be the duty of the church to commit the care of the communion table to the deacons, as being one peculiar part of their office, as well as other things which may call for their particular attention.

6. We believe it to be the duty of the church to sympathize with the poor members of the same, and to administer to them in cases of necessity as she is able.

7. We believe it to be the duty of the church to see that her pastor is supported, so that he may be able to devote himself wholly to the work of the ministry.

8. We believe, That the manner in which we ought to support our pastor, is by a free-will-offering, and in case of need and equality, and in like manner to defray

all other charges which may arise in the church.

9. We believe, That gifts of exhortation ought to be improved in the church, and the right of any brother, speaking by way of specialty, is by no means to be prohibited; but all the gifts of the church ought to be in subjection to the body.

10. We believe, That churches are independent of each other, in the power of action, therefore each church has a right to elect and ordain her own officers.

11. We believe, That a woman has no right to act in the church, either in teaching or governing; yet the right of unbosoming themselves to the church, in case of joy or grief, is by no means to be prohibited.

12. We believe, That in case of the absence of a brother or sister from public worship, the Lord's supper, and church meetings, it is the duty of the church to visit them, and inquire into the cause of such absence.

13. We believe, That a private offence is not to be brought into the church, except by the rule as in Matt. xviii, from 15 to 18; but a public offence to be taken up by the church as a body.

14. We believe, That the church ought not to admit any case of discipline for trial in the church, unless it is either committed in the presence of the church, or brought into the church according to the xviiiith of Matthew.

15. We believe, That the transactions of the church, ought to be kept in the church, except such transactions as are necessary to be made public for the honor of Christ and his kingdom.

16. We believe, That no brother or sister hath a right to go to law with each other, while in a church state together.