

ARTICLES OF FAITH
AND
RULES

2008

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PREFACE

In reprinting the Gospel Standard booklet of **Articles of Faith and Rules**, the opportunity has been taken to make a few improvements to the appearance and presentation of the booklet.

It is emphatically stated that no alteration whatever has been made to any of the Articles of Faith. These are enrolled in Chancery; they appear in the Trust Deeds of many of our chapels; and church members have signed them on being admitted into church membership. Therefore, apart from the correction of printing errors the wording of every Article remains the same as in previous editions of this booklet. It is acknowledged that minor improvements could be made to the grammar, punctuation and the use of capital letters but it has been decided not to make any changes to these.

The only alterations between this edition and previous ones are as follows:

1. The Scripture references which formerly appeared in the text of the Articles have been removed and have been placed below each Article. This makes the Articles themselves much easier to read.
2. The Scripture references which in most previous editions appeared in Roman numerals have been changed to Arabic numerals. Most people today are not familiar with Roman

numerals.

3. In the Scripture references, some of the abbreviations for books of the Bible have been simplified, eg. John instead of Jno.

4. Headings have been introduced to each Article. These headings are not an integral part of the Articles but are provided for reference purposes only.

5. An Index has been introduced.

6. Because this booklet has been prepared for general distribution, Church Rules have not been included in all copies as formerly. For the convenience of those who are accustomed to having their Church Rules bound up together with the Articles of Faith, some copies have however been printed with the Rules included. These are available on request to the Publishers.

It is the fervent prayer and hope of the Gospel Standard Committee that this improved presentation of our Articles of Faith will lead to a better acquaintance with them amongst church members and others.

These are the truths which “set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us” (Luke 1. 1). In these days of spiritual darkness and superficiality, it has become more than ever needful that, by the grace of God, we should seek to understand more clearly what we believe and so be better equipped to contend earnestly “for the faith

which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), and to combat error in whatever forms it may appear.

It is recommended that churches should distribute copies of this new booklet to all church members: also that members of congregations, especially our young people, be urged to read and study our Articles of Faith so that they become thoroughly conversant with what Gospel Standard churches profess to believe and practise.

The Gospel Standard Committee

November 1998

Note: For further amplification of these Articles of Faith, readers are referred to the book, *What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe*, by J. H. Gosden, published by the Gospel Standard Societies in 1993 and obtainable from Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 12(b) Roundwood Lane, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 3BZ.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

(Preamble reproduced *verbatim* from original booklet)

The following Articles of Faith are the same as those of the “Gospel Standard” Aid and Poor Relief Societies. Some of them are taken from those of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1640, &c., and the General Assembly of Baptist Ministers and Messengers, in London, 1689, and subsequently revised by Dr. Gill. These were amended by the late Mr. W. Gadsby, Mr. J. M’Kenzie, and Mr. J. C. Philpot; and afterwards, in 1878, well considered and unanimously agreed to by a duly-appointed Committee, consisting of the following friends: Mr. J. Gadsby, Mr. Hatton, Mr. Hazlerigg, Mr. Hemington, Mr. Hinton, Mr. J. Knight, Mr. Mockford, Mr. Vine, and Mr. Wilton; and finally unanimously adopted at a General Meeting of the Founders, ministers and others, of the Societies. The Rules of the Societies require that no person shall receive benefit from the Societies until he or she shall acknowledge his or her belief in the Articles.

ARTICLE 1
THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe in the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and receive them as a gracious revelation of the mind and will of God¹; and we believe that therein are revealed all the doctrines and truths which we here state².

Scripture references:

¹ Deut. 4. 2; Ps. 19. 7; Prov. 30. 5, 6; 2 Pet. 1. 19-21;
Rev 22. 18, 19; John 5. 39.

² 2 Tim. 3. 15-17.

ARTICLE 2

THE TRINITY

We believe that there is but one living and true God¹; that there are Three Persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost² – and that these Three Persons are equal in nature, power and glory; and we believe that the Son and the Holy Ghost are as truly and as properly God as the Father³.

Scripture references:

¹ Exod. 3. 14; Deut. 4. 35; Deut. 6. 4; Num. 23. 19; 1 Sam. 2. 2, 3; Ps. 90. 2; Ps. 115. 3; Ps. 135. 5; Ps. 139. 7-10; Prov. 15. 3; Ecc. 3. 14; Isa. 40. 28; Isa. 45. 22; Isa. 46. 9; Jer. 10. 10; Jer. 23. 24; Mal. 3. 6; Mark 12. 29; John 4. 24; 1 Cor. 8. 6; Col. 1. 16.

² Matt. 28. 19; John 1. 1; 2 Cor. 13. 14; 1 John 5. 7; Jude 20, 21.

³ John 10. 15, 30; Eph. 2. 22; Heb. 1. 3; Heb. 9. 14.

ARTICLE 3

THE EVERLASTING LOVE OF GOD; ELECTION; PREDESTINATION; ADOPTION; AND THE ETERNAL COVENANT OF GRACE

We believe in the everlasting and unchangeable love of God¹; and that before the foundation of the world the Father did elect a certain number of the human race unto everlasting salvation, whom He did predestinate unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will²; and we believe that in fulfilling this gracious design, He did make a covenant of grace and peace with the Son and with the Holy Ghost on behalf of those persons thus chosen³, and that in this covenant the Son was appointed a Saviour, and all spiritual blessings provided for the elect, and also that their persons, with all the grace and glory designed for them, were put into the hands of the Son as their Covenant Head, and made His care and charge⁴.

Scripture references:

¹ Jer. 31. 3.

² Gal. 4. 5; Eph. 1. 2-13; 1 Thess. 5. 9; 2 Thess. 2. 13; 2 Tim. 1. 9; 1 John 3. 1; 1 Pet. 1. 2; 1 Pet. 2. 9.

³ 2 Sam. 23. 5; John 1. 17.

⁴ Ps. 111. 8, 9; Isa. 42. 6; Isa. 54. 10; Isa. 55. 4; Jer. 31. 3; John 6. 37; John 17. 2; Acts 4. 12; Rom. 8. 29, 30; Eph. 1. 3; Eph. 2. 13; Heb. 2. 13; Heb. 6. 17, 18; Heb. 8. 8, 9.

ARTICLE 4

THE FALL OF MAN

We believe in the Fall of our first parents, and that by it the whole of the human race became involved in, and guilty of, Original Sin; and that as they are born into the world, the whole of their posterity are, in consequence, actual transgressors against God¹. And we believe that by the Fall all men were rendered both unable and unwilling spiritually to believe in, seek after, or love God until called and regenerated by the Holy Ghost².

Scripture references:

¹ Rom. 5. 12-21; Ps. 58. 3.

² Gen. 6. 5; Gen. 8. 21; Job 14. 4; Job 25. 4; Ps. 51. 5; Jer. 13. 23; Jer. 17. 9; Matt. 15. 19; Rom. 3. 10-24; Rom. 5. 12-19; 1 Cor. 15. 22, 45-50; Eph. 2. 3; 1 John 5. 19.

ARTICLE 5

THE SACRED HUMANITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND HIS OFFICES AS MEDIATOR, SURETY AND SUBSTITUTE

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, being set up from everlasting as the Mediator of the New Covenant, and having engaged to be the Surety of His people, did, in the fulness of time, really and truly assume human nature, and not before, either in whole or in part¹. And we believe that, though He existed from all eternity as the eternal Son of God², the human soul of the Lord Jesus did not exist before it was created and formed in His body by Him who forms the soul of man within him, when that body was conceived, under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary³. And we believe that Christ's human nature consists of a true body and reasonable soul, both of which, together and at once, the Son of God assumed into union with His Divine Person, when made of a woman and not before⁴; that this human nature was not sinful, peccable, or mortal⁵, though capable of death by a voluntary act⁶, but essentially and intrinsically pure and holy⁷; and that in it He really suffered, bled and died, as the Substitute and Surety of His church and people, in their room and stead, and for no others⁸; whereby, together with His holy, spotless life, He fulfilled the law, and satisfied all the claims of justice, as well as made a way for all those blessings which are needful for His people, both for time and eternity⁹.

Scripture references:

¹ Prov. 8. 23.

² John 1. 18; Phil. 2. 5-8; Heb. 1. 5, 8; Heb. 13. 8; 2 John 3;
Rev. 1. 8.

³ Isa. 7. 14; Matt. 1. 23; Luke 1. 26-38; John 1. 14;
Gal. 4. 4.

⁴ Luke 2. 40; Heb. 2. 14-17.

⁵ Ps. 16. 10; Acts 2. 27.

⁶ John 10. 17, 18.

⁷ Song 5. 9-16; Heb. 7. 26.

⁸ John 10. 15, 26; John 17. 9, 13.

⁹ Heb. 9. 22-28.

ARTICLE 6

PARTICULAR REDEMPTION

We believe that the eternal redemption which Christ has obtained by the shedding of His blood is special and particular¹; that is to say, that it was intentionally designed only for the Elect of God, the Sheep of Christ, who therefore alone share in the special and peculiar blessings thereof².

Scripture references:

¹ Gal. 3. 13; Heb. 9. 12-15.

² Isa. 35. 10; John 10. 15, 25-28; Acts 2. 47; Acts 13. 48; Acts 20. 28; Rom. 5. 8-10; Rom. 8. 33, 34; Rom. 9. 13, 15, 16; Rev. 14. 4.

ARTICLE 7

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS; JUSTIFICATION; AND PARDON

We believe that the justification of God's Elect is only by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ imputed to them¹, without consideration of any works of righteousness, before or after calling, done by them, and that the full and free pardon of all their sins, past, present, and to come, is only through the blood of Christ, according to the riches of His grace².

Scripture references:

¹ Isa. 45. 24; Isa. 64. 6; Jer. 23. 6; Matt. 7. 18; Luke 18. 13; Acts 13. 39; Rom. 4. 4, 5; Rom. 5. 19; Rom. 10. 4; 1 Cor. 1. 30; 2 Cor. 5. 21; Phil. 3. 9; Titus 3. 5.

² Rom. 3. 20-27; Rom. 4. 22; Rom. 9. 11; 2 Tim. 1. 9; Heb. 1. 3; Heb. 9. 22; 1 Pet. 3. 18; 1 John 2. 1.

ARTICLE 8
REGENERATION

We believe that the work of regeneration is not an act of man's free will and natural power, but that it springs from the operation of the mighty, efficacious and invincible grace of God.

Scripture references:

Jer. 50. 20; Ps. 110. 3; John 1. 13; John 6. 29, 63, 65;
John 16. 8; Rom. 8. 16; Rom. 11. 4, 6; James 1. 18.

ARTICLE 9

CONVICTION OF SIN; BELIEVING IN CHRIST; AND FINAL PERSEVERANCE

We believe that all those who were chosen by the Father and redeemed by the Son, and no others, shall, at the appointed time, certainly be convinced in their hearts of sin by the Spirit¹, be brought in guilty before God, and made the recipients of eternal life, coming to Christ for salvation, and believing on Him as the Anointed of the Father, and the only Mediator between God and man²; but that none can spiritually come to Christ unless drawn by the Father³; and that all the elect shall be thus drawn to Christ, and shall finally persevere; so that not one of the elect shall perish, but all arrive safely in glory⁴.

Scripture references:

¹ John 16. 8; 1 Cor. 2. 14; Eph. 2. 1.

² 1 Tim. 2. 5; Heb. 8. 6; Heb. 9. 15; Heb. 12. 24.

³ John 6. 44, 65.

⁴ Job 17. 9; Matt. 25. 34; John 4. 14; John 5. 24; John 6. 37, 44-47; John 10. 28; John 17. 6, 12, 24; Acts 2. 47; Rom. 8. 29-39; Phil. 1. 6; 1 Pet. 1. 3-5.

ARTICLE 10

SPIRITUAL DEATH AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

We believe that all men are by nature so completely dead in trespasses and sins that they cannot, while in that state, know or feel anything of God in Christ, spiritually, graciously, and savingly¹. And we believe that, when quickened into everlasting life in Christ (as the elect alone are, or can be, or will be), the vessel of mercy then first feels spiritually the guilt of sin, and is taught to know, in his own experience, the fall and ruin of man². Thus every quickened child of God is brought, in God's own time and way, through the Spirit's teaching, from necessity to depend for salvation on Christ's blood and righteousness alone³. And we believe that this teaching will not lead him to licentiousness, but make him willing to walk in good works, to which he is ordained, and which are acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ⁴.

Scripture references:

¹ Eph. 2. 1-3.

² Isa. 1. 6; Rom. 3. 10-19; Rom. 7. 18.

³ John 6. 68; John 10. 9; John 14. 6; Acts 4. 12; Eph. 2. 8-10; Heb. 6. 18.

⁴ Rom. 8. 14; Gal. 5. 16-25; Gal. 6. 14-16.

ARTICLE 11

MAN UNABLE TO PERFORM SPIRITUAL GOOD WORKS UNTIL HE IS CALLED BY GRACE

We believe that man can never do a good work, properly so called, until the grace of God is implanted in his heart¹, and that nothing is spiritually good but what God Himself is pleased to communicate to, and work in, the soul, both to will and to do of His good pleasure². And we also believe that man's works, good or bad, have not anything to do with his call, or being quickened, by the Holy Spirit³.

Scripture references:

¹ Rom. 8. 8.

² Phil. 2. 13.

³ 2 Cor. 3. 5; Eph. 2. 3-9; Tit. 3. 5; Heb. 13. 21.

ARTICLE 12

EFFECTUAL CALLING; THE APPLICATION OF THE LAW; AND THE MANIFESTATION OF MERCY AND PARDON

We believe in the effectual calling of all the elect vessels of mercy out of the ruins of the Fall in God's appointed time, and that the work of regeneration, or new birth, is the sovereign work of God, and His work only, the sinner being as passive therein as in his first birth, and previously thereto dead in trespasses and sins¹. We believe in the application of the Law to the elect sinner's conscience by the Spirit of God², showing the sinner how greatly he has broken that Law, and feelingly condemning him for the same; and in the manifestation of mercy and pardon through Christ alone made known to the soul by God the Holy Ghost³.

Scripture references:

¹ John 3. 3-8; John 6. 37-65; Rom. 8. 30; 1 Cor. 1. 26-29; Eph. 2. 4, 5.

² Rom. 7. 7, 9, 12.

³ Ps. 30. 3; Ps. 130. 7; Isa. 40. 2; Jer. 33. 8; Mic. 7. 18; Rom. 7. 5-10.

ARTICLE 13

THE EFFECTS OF FAITH

We believe that faith is the gift of God¹, as well as true spiritual repentance and hope², and a manifestation of pardon to the soul; that through faith Christ is made precious to the soul³, and the soul drawn out in love to God⁴; that all are the fruits and effects of the blessed Spirit, and that they will most certainly be productive of good works, and a walk and conversation becoming the Gospel⁵.

Scripture references:

¹ Eph. 2. 8.

² Acts 5. 31; Rom. 15. 13; 2 Thess. 2. 16; 1 Pet. 1. 3.

³ 1 Pet. 2. 7.

⁴ 1 John 4. 19.

⁵ Gal. 2. 16-21; Gal. 5. 22-26.

ARTICLE 14

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY; AND ETERNAL GLORY OR DAMNATION

We believe in the Resurrection of the body, both of the just and the unjust¹; that the just (the elect) shall be raised up in glory and honour², and be openly acknowledged and fully acquitted in the Judgment Day, before angels, devils and sinners, and made fully and eternally blest both in body and soul; and that the wicked shall be raised up to be condemned, body and soul, to the unspeakable torments of hell for ever and ever³.

Scripture references:

¹ Acts 24. 15.

² Matt. 24. 31; Matt. 25. 31-40.

³ Isa. 26. 19; Dan. 12. 2; Matt. 25. 31-46; John 5. 28, 29; Acts 23. 6; Rom. 6. 23; Rom. 8. 11, 23; Rom. 14. 10-12; 1 Cor. 15. 52; 2 Cor. 5. 10; Rev. 20. 12-15.

ARTICLE 15

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper¹ are ordinances of Christ, to be continued till His Second Coming; and that the former is requisite to the latter; that is to say, that those only can scripturally sit down to the Lord's Supper who, upon their profession of faith, have been baptised, by immersion, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and that, therefore, what is called "Mixed Communion"² is unscriptural, improper, and not to be allowed in the churches of Christ³.

Scripture references:

¹ 1 Cor. 11. 2, 26; 1 Cor. 14. 40; Col. 2. 5-8.

² Rom. 16. 17.

³ Matt. 3. 13-16; Matt. 28. 19, 20; John 3. 22, 23; Acts 2. 37-42; Acts 8. 12; Acts 9. 18; Acts 10. 47, 48; Acts 16. 14, 15, 30, 31, 33; Acts 18. 8; Acts 19. 1-6; Rom. 6. 3; Col. 2. 12.

ARTICLE 16

THE GOSPEL, NOT THE LAW, THE BELIEVER'S RULE OF CONDUCT

We believe that the Believer's Rule of conduct is the gospel, and not the law, commonly called the Moral Law, issued on Mount Sinai, which hath no glory in it by reason of the glory that excelleth, that is to say, the Gospel¹; the Gospel containing the sum and substance and glory of all the laws which God ever promulgated from His throne, and the Jews, because of the hardness of their hearts, being permitted some things which the Gospel forbids².

Scripture references:

¹ Gal. 6. 15, 16; 2 Cor. 3. 10; Rom. 7. 2-4.

² Deut. 24. 1; Matt. 19. 8, 9.

ARTICLE 17

INFANT BAPTISM DENIED

We deny and reject, as unscriptural and erroneous, the baptism of infants, whether by immersion, sprinkling, pouring, or any other mode.

Scripture references:

Heb. 11. 6; Acts. 8. 12, 37.

ARTICLE 18

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION DENIED

We reject as blasphemous the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration; that is, that the person baptised is or can be regenerated in, by or through baptism, much less, if possible, by infant sprinkling.

Scripture references:

John 1. 13; 1 Pet. 1. 23.

ARTICLE 19

SANCTIFICATION

We believe in the sanctification of God's people, the term sanctification signifying a separation and setting apart by and for God. This, in the child of God, is three-fold: 1, by election by God the Father¹; 2, by redemption by God the Son²; and 3, by the almighty regenerating operation of God the Holy Ghost³. We believe that the blessed Spirit is the Author of what is styled in Scripture the new creature, or creation⁴, or new heart⁵; being, in truth, an implantation of the Divine nature⁶, through which the child of God would, according to the inner man⁷, be holy as God is holy, and perfectly fulfil all the good pleasure of the Father's will; but groans being burdened, being constantly opposed by the contrary workings of the old man⁸. We reject the doctrine of progressive sanctification, or that a child of God experiences such a gradual weakening, subduing, or rectification of the old nature, called in Scripture the old man⁹, or such a continued general improvement as shall make him at any time less dependent upon the communications of the Spirit and grace of Christ for all goodness, or less a poor, vile, wretched, helpless sinner in himself, and in his own estimation¹⁰.

Scripture references:

¹ Jude 1.

² John 17. 19.

³ Rom. 15. 16.

⁴ 2 Cor. 5. 17; Eph. 4. 24.

⁵ Ezek. 36. 26.

⁶ 2 Pet. 1. 4.

⁷ Rom. 7. 22.

⁸ Rom. 7; Gal. 5. 17.

⁹ Eph. 4. 22; Col. 3. 9.

¹⁰ John 15. part of 5; 2 Cor. 3. 5; Rev. 3. 17.

ARTICLE 20

GROWTH IN GRACE

We believe that the grace of God produces a real change in a man, and teaches him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live godly¹, and that there is a growth in grace², which consists principally in a growing experimental knowledge of a man's sinful self³, the vanity of the creature, the glory of God, the spirituality of His law, and the want and worth of Jesus Christ. This is accompanied by a deepening distrust of everything but the grace and love of God in Christ for salvation, and is not a growth in conscious goodness, but in felt necessity and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ⁴.

Scripture references:

¹ Tit. 2. 11, 12.

² 2 Pet. 3. 18; Phil. 3. 8-10; Mark 4. 26-29; 1 John 2. 12, 13.

³ 1 Kings 8. 38; Ezra 9. 6; Job 40. 4-6; Ps. 73. 22; Dan. 10. 8.

⁴ John 3. 30; 1 Cor. 2. 2; Tit. 3. 3-8; Eph. 3. 8; 1 Tim. 1. 15.

ARTICLE 21

INDWELLING SIN

We reject the doctrine of perfection in the flesh, or that the believer ever becomes free from indwelling sin in this life, or whilst in the body. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

Scripture references:

1 John 1. 8; 1 Kings 8. 46; Job 9. 2; Job 15. 14; Ps.119. 96;
Prov. 20. 9; Ecc. 7. 20; Rom. 7. 18.

ARTICLE 22

BACKSLIDING AND CHASTENING

We reject the doctrines that the children of God cannot backslide, and that God does not chastise His people for sin¹. For, though we believe that a child of God is called from a death in sin to a life of righteousness, and would, according to the law of his mind, or new nature, in all respects obey God's holy will as declared in the Scriptures, yet through the temptations of Satan, the allurements of the world, and the power and deceitfulness of indwelling sin, he may fall for a season like David, Peter, and other Bible saints did². But we believe that when the children of God thus sin against God, and transgress His holy revealed will, God does in various ways and degrees chastise them for it³, not in vindictive anger, but in tender love, as a father does the son in whom he delighteth⁴. We believe, too, that in this matter of chastisement for sin God will deal in a most sovereign way, and as a God of judgment; so that, though the punished child shall be made to discern the reason of the rod⁵, it is seldom safe for others to judge according to the outward appearance. We further believe that no man living in habitual sin gives any proof that he is a child of God, and we cannot, therefore, have fellowship with him, be his profession what it may.

Scripture references:

¹ 1 Cor. 11. 32.

² Jer. 3. 14, 22; Hos. 14.

³ Ps. 89. 30-33; Prov. 3. 11, 12.

⁴ Job 5. 17; Ps. 94. 12; Ps. 119. 67; Isa. 54. 7, 8; Heb. 12. 5-11.

⁵ Mic. 6. 9.

ARTICLE 23

FINAL PERSEVERANCE

We believe, as expressed in Article 9, in the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, and that, however much the elect of God may be tried by sin, and opposed by Satan, they shall all eventually attain to everlasting glory. Not one of them shall perish, for none can pluck them out of the Father's hand.

Scripture references:

Isa. 51. 11; John 10. 28, 29.

ARTICLE 24

GOSPEL INVITATIONS

We believe that the invitations of the Gospel, being spirit and life*, are intended only for those who have been made by the blessed Spirit to feel their lost state as sinners and their need of Christ as their Saviour, and to repent of and forsake their sins.

Scripture references:

Isa. 55. 1; John 7. 37; Prov. 28. 13; Matt. 11. 28-30; John 6. 37.

* That is, under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE 25

UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION DENIED

We deny that Christ died for all mankind.

Scripture references:

Matt. 25. 31-46; John 10. 11, 15, 26.

(see also Article 6)

ARTICLE 26

DUTY FAITH AND DUTY REPENTANCE DENIED

We deny duty faith and duty repentance – these terms signifying that it is every man's duty to spiritually and savingly repent and believe¹. We deny also that there is any capability in man by nature to any spiritual good whatever. So that we reject the doctrine that men in a state of nature should be exhorted to believe in or turn to God².

Scripture references:

¹ Gen. 6. 5; Gen. 8. 21; Matt. 15. 19; Jer. 17. 9;
John 6. 44, 65.

² John 12. 39, 40; Eph. 2. 8; Rom. 8. 7, 8; 1 Cor. 4. 7.

ARTICLE 27

THE NON-ELECT INCAPABLE OF RECEIVING GRACE

We deny that the Holy Spirit ever enlightens the non-elect, to make them capable at all of receiving grace.

Scripture references:

Isa. 6. 9, 10; John 14. 17; Rom. 11. 7, 8; Mark 4. 11, 12; Luke 8. 10; John 12. 39, 40.

ARTICLE 28

BAXTERIANISM DENIED

We reject the doctrine called “Baxterianism”; that is to say, that while all the elect shall assuredly be saved, there is a residuum of grace in Christ for the rest, or any of the rest, if they will only accept it.

Scripture references:

John 3. 27; 1 Cor. 2. 14.

ARTICLE 29

INDISCRIMINATE OFFERS OF GRACE DENIED

While we believe that the Gospel is to be *preached* in or proclaimed to all the world, as in Mark 16. 15, we deny *offers* of grace; that is to say, that the gospel is to be *offered* indiscriminately to all.

Scripture references:

Mark 16. 15; 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

(see also Articles 24 and 26)

ARTICLE 30

CHRIST'S GLORIFIED BODY

We believe that the glorified body of the Lord Jesus Christ is the same flesh and bones now in heaven as that which hung upon the cross.

Scripture references:

1 Cor. 15. 16, 20; Luke 24. 39; Acts 1. 9, 11.

ARTICLE 31

ANNIHILATION OF THE WICKED DENIED

We reject the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked, and believe that all who die out of Christ shall be turned into hell, the fire of which shall never be quenched, the wicked there suffering for ever the torments of eternal fire.

Scripture references:

Matt. 25. 46; Rev. 19. last part of 20; Rev. 14. 10, 11; Rev. 20. 10, 15.

Note: It is the same word in the Greek which, in Matt. 25. 46, declares the eternity of life for the sheep which declares the eternity of punishment for the goats. So (Rev. 20. 15), those who are “not written in the book of life” are “cast into the lake of fire”, where they are “tormented for ever and ever” (Ver. 10). Now the same words which are there translated “for ever and ever” are also used in Rev. 10. 6, where the angel “sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever”. Therefore, if God is “to live for ever and ever”, the torment in the lake of fire is to be for ever and ever; for the words are exactly the same in both passages.

ARTICLE 32
PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL (APOSTOLIC
UNIQUENESS)

We believe that it would be unsafe, from the brief records we have of the way in which the apostles, under the immediate direction of the Lord, addressed their hearers in certain special cases and circumstances, to derive absolute and universal rules for ministerial addresses in the present day under widely-different circumstances. And we further believe that an assumption that others have been inspired as the apostles were has led to the grossest errors amongst both Romanists and professed Protestants.

Note: When Articles 32-35 were added to the original 31 Articles, no Scripture references were provided, except for Article 35. Readers are referred to pages 150-152 of the book, *What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe*, where several Scripture references are given. For details of this book, see Note at the end of the Preface on page 7.

ARTICLE 33

PREACHING TO THE UNCONVERTED

Therefore, that for ministers in the present day to address unconverted persons, or indiscriminately all in a mixed congregation, calling upon them to savingly repent, believe, and receive Christ, or perform any other acts dependent upon the new creative power of the Holy Ghost, is, on the one hand, to imply creature power, and, on the other, to deny the doctrine of special redemption.

Note: For Scripture references, see the Note which appears at the foot of Article 32.

ARTICLE 34

PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL (EXHORTING THE UNREGENERATE)

We believe that any such expressions as convey to the hearers the belief that they possess a certain power to flee to the Saviour, to close in with Christ, to receive Christ, while in an unregenerate state, so that unless they do thus close with Christ, etc., they shall perish, are untrue, and must, therefore, be rejected. And we further believe that we have no Scripture warrant to take the exhortations in the Old Testament intended for the Jews in national covenant with God, and apply them in a spiritual and saving sense to unregenerated men.

Note: For Scripture references, see the Note which appears at the foot of Article 32.

ARTICLE 35

DEGREES OF FAITH

We believe that there are various degrees of faith, as little faith and great faith¹; that when a man is quickened by the blessed Spirit, he has faith given him to know and feel that he is a sinner against God², and that without a Saviour he must sink in black despair. And we further believe that such a man will be made to cry for mercy, to mourn over and on account of his sins³, and, being made to feel that he has no righteousness of his own⁴, to hunger and thirst after Christ's righteousness; being led on by the Spirit until, in the full assurance of faith, he has the Spirit's witness in his heart that his sins are for ever put away⁵; but that the faith is the same in nature as is imparted in his first awakenings, though now grown to the full assurance thereof.

Scripture references:

¹ Matt. 6. 30; Matt. 15. 28.

² Luke 18. 13.

³ Matt. 5. 4.

⁴ Isa. 64. 6; Phil. 3. 9.

⁵ Rom. 8. 16; Eph. 4. 30; Heb. 9. 12, 26; Heb. 7. 27; Heb. 10. 14.

DECLARATION

(Especially for church members)

Now all and each of these doctrines and ordinances we can honestly say it is our desire to maintain and defend in one spirit and with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.

And we desire, by the grace of God, that our conversation, both in the world and in the church, may be such as becometh the gospel of Christ, and that we may live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.

And, as it regards each other in church communion, we desire to walk with each other in all humility and brotherly love; to watch over each other's conversation, to stir up one another to love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, but, as we have opportunity, to worship God according to His revealed will; and, when the case requires, to warn and admonish one another according to God's Word.

Moreover, we desire to sympathise with each other in all conditions, both inward and outward, into which God, in His providence, may bring us; as also to bear with one another's weaknesses, failings, and infirmities; and particularly to pray for one another, and for all saints, and that the gospel and the ordinances thereof may be blessed to the edification and

comfort of each other's souls, and for the gathering in of vessels of mercy unto Christ.

And for every blessing and favour, both temporal and spiritual, we, who are as deserving of hell as the vilest of the vile, desire to ascribe all the praise to the glory of the grace of a Triune God.

CHURCH RULES

The following note is reproduced from earlier booklets:

“Several of the Rules hitherto in circulation being found impracticable, the “Gospel Standard” Committee has formulated the following Rules, and issued them in the hope that they will be useful to the churches. Although it believes that these Rules will be generally acceptable, the Committee desires to make it quite clear that whereas the Articles of Faith are enrolled and binding upon all the churches of the “Gospel Standard” denomination, these Rules are not so, but are for guidance only, and each church will act independently in regard to adopting them or otherwise in regulating its own affairs.”

* * *

ADMITTANCE INTO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

1. Any person desiring to become a member of this church, must first be interviewed by the pastor (if there be one) and deacons, who, if in their judgment the candidate is suitable for membership, shall duly bring the matter before the church. A copy of the church's Articles of Faith and Rules to be given to each candidate for their instruction.

2. At a regularly constituted church meeting (see rules 13-15) the candidate (whether already a member of another church or not) shall make a verbal confession of faith, and declare what he or she believes God has done for his or her soul. If accepted by a vote of the majority of members present and voting, signature in the church book to the Articles of Faith and Rules will be required. Thereafter, at the earliest convenient opportunity, the person shall, unless previously baptised by immersion, be so baptised in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and be formally received into church fellowship at the next observance of the Lord's Supper.

3. Any person who, having been baptised while only in a carnal profession of religion, has since been called by the Spirit of God to a knowledge of his or her lost condition by nature and practice, and to living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, being desirous of uniting with this church, shall attend to the ordinance of believers' baptism, according to rule 2 (last clause), for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14. 23).

THE PASTORATE

4. No minister shall be appointed as pastor until he has supplied at least _____ months on probation, and unless there be in favour at least two-thirds (three-fifths) of the members present and voting at a church meeting duly convened for this particular purpose (see rules 13-15); nor shall any minister be invited to supply on probation without a like majority, also at a duly convened meeting.

5. If at any time where there is a pastor, the conduct of such pastor should be contrary to the precepts of the gospel, or if he should depart from the Articles of Faith or any one of them, or if his ministry should become unprofitable, a majority of the members present and voting at a properly convened church meeting (see rules 13-15) shall be competent to declare that he shall no longer be the pastor; and he shall be removed from the pastorate accordingly. And at such meeting the pastor shall not be present. Always presuming that adequate opportunity has been afforded the pastor to explain himself.

DISCIPLINE

NOTE. – The object of discipline in the Church of Christ is (1) The vindication of the truth; (2) The restoration of any offending brother.

6. Any member of this church knowingly receiving the ordinance of the Lord's Supper with any church not of the same faith and order with ourselves, shall be reprov'd; and

should the offence be repeated, be withdrawn from.

7. Any member knowing another to act disorderly, shall tell the offending brother or sister of his or her fault alone, in the spirit of meekness (Gal. 6. 1); and if not satisfied with the explanation, shall acquaint the pastor or deacons of the church with the matter; and if any member neglect to do so, and be found reporting it to others, such member shall be visited and reprov'd as acting contrary to Scripture rule.

8. Any member bringing, in any manner, an open reproach on the cause, shall be suspended; and no member suspended for any reason shall again be admitted to the Lord's Supper and to the privileges of membership, until godly sorrow and repentance are manifest, and satisfactory acknowledgement is made to the church.

9. Any member relating to any other person, not a member, what has been said or done at any church meeting, shall be liable, according to the judgment of the pastor and deacons, to be brought before the church to be dealt with.

10. If any member repeatedly neglect to attend the preaching of the Word, the Lord's Supper, and prayer meetings, unless from unavoidable causes known to the pastor and deacons and the church, a reason will be required for his or her absence; and if he or she shall be absent from the Lord's Supper upon more than three successive occasions, without being able to give the pastor or deacons who shall visit such member a satisfactory reason for such absence, they shall bring the

matter before the church to be dealt with as it shall determine, whether for reproof, suspension, or withdrawal from the offending party.

11. Members having private differences between themselves shall not bring the same before the church before the rule laid down in Matt. 18. 15, 16, has been first attended to by the offended party; and in the event of satisfaction not being given, that the peace of the church may if possible be preserved, the offended party shall first inform the pastor or deacons (assembled); but if not satisfied with his, or their mediation or decision, the member shall bring the case before the church, by giving one month's notice in writing to the minister or deacons.

CHURCH MEETINGS

12. A church meeting, at which the pastor or a minister agreed by the church shall preside, shall be held every months, and oftener if required; and it is expected that all the members who are able will attend. No person shall be present at our church meetings but regular members of this church, except by special consent of the church. No member who may be under church censure shall be present at any church meeting.

13. All church meetings shall be audibly announced from the pulpit or desk when the people are regularly assembled for

worship at least on the two Lord's Days immediately preceding the date of any such meeting.

14. The pastor or deacons shall have it in his or their power to call a church meeting whenever he or they consider it necessary; also he or they shall be required to do so when requested by not less than _____ of the members, in any case considered urgent; but in every case proper notice (rule 13) shall be given; and any meeting held, whether called by pastor or deacons, or both, not according to such rule, shall be of none effect.

15. No motion of any serious importance (e.g., cases of discipline, application for membership, call to the ministry, appointment of pastor, etc.) shall be brought forward at any church meeting, unless notice thereof shall have been given at a church meeting held at least one month previous thereto; except in such a case as (in the judgment of the pastor and deacons) the cause of truth would suffer prejudice by delay.

16. All propositions, whether for church membership or otherwise, and all motions, shall be seconded before being put from the chair; and in the event of the voting being equally divided on any subject to be decided, the chairman (president) shall be allowed a second (casting) vote. Any debate or difference that may arise shall be settled by the majority of the members present and voting.

17. When any question has been decided by the majority of the church, if any member shall attempt to set aside or oppose

the same decision within six months afterwards, such member shall be accounted as acting disorderly and contrary to rule 16 of this church.

18. Female members may ask questions through a male member, or may, if asked by the chairman (president), answer any question put from the chair; otherwise they are not permitted to speak at church meetings. Should any female member persistently violate this rule, she shall be liable to suspension from the privileges of membership for months.

19. A statement of the finances of the cause shall be laid before the church every months, when the vote of satisfaction or otherwise shall be recorded.

20. The number of the deacons of the church shall not be less than two where practicable; no deacon shall at any time be appointed unless at least two-thirds (three-fifths) of the members present and voting at a church meeting held for the appointment of such deacon, be in favour of such appointment.

VISITORS

21. Members of churches of the same faith and order may commune with this church by giving notice (naming their own church) to the pastor or deacons of their desire to do so not later than before the commencement of the service

immediately preceding the communion service; or where the communion service is held separately, not later than the close of the preceding service.

CESSATION OF MEMBERSHIP

22. The severance of any member from this church may be only effected by the church itself acting under its duly appointed officers (pastor and deacons), at a properly convened church meeting (see rules 12-15), in the following instances :-

(a) In respect of an orderly member for transfer to another church of the same faith and order, in which event an honourable dismissal should be granted; or,

(b) By disciplinary action of withdrawal AS A LAST RESORT in the case of any disorderly member neglecting to hear either

(1) An offended member's private remonstrance; or, after that,

(2) The additional exhortations of two or three other brethren; or still further,

(3) The admonition of the whole church, according to Matt. 18. 15-17.

SANCTIONING A MEMBER TO PREACH

23. Any member of the church considering that he has received the call of the Holy Spirit to the solemn work of the ministry of the Gospel, shall, before engaging to preach anywhere, relate to the pastor (or deacons where there is no pastor) his exercises relating thereto; who, if in his (or their) judgment the matter is indeed of the Lord, shall name the same to the church assembled according to rule 13. In the event of any question or reason entertained by any member or members (on grounds relating to walk or character) why the case should not proceed, the same must be raised and considered at this preliminary meeting; and no examination of the credentials of the member's call shall be undertaken until such question or reason shall have been satisfactorily disposed of by the church. If then agreed by not less than four-fifths (two-thirds) of the members present and voting, the church shall assemble, a month later (according to rule 15), to hear from the member a relation of the matter, and (either then or at a subsequent meeting, as agreed) to hear also an exercise of his gift in preaching. If approved by four-fifths (two-thirds) of the members present and voting, the member shall be given the church's sanction to preach.

Any member preaching contrary to or in neglect of this rule shall be dealt with as walking disorderly.

Should the member consider that his case has been prejudiced, or if through assumed prejudice the pastor or

deacons do not bring it forward, the matter may be dealt with according to rule 11. But except for very serious defection in the church, it is believed that when such a matter is truly of the Lord no such course will be needful.

Notes:

(1) In some cases where the majority stated is not quite reached, that there may be no precipitate conclusion in so solemn a concern, it may be considered advisable for the church to hear the member preach on some further occasion or occasions, before coming to a final decision. This course should only be adopted when the church agrees by a majority of four-fifths (two-thirds) voting in favour.

(2) In cases of pastorless churches, it may be proper for the church to agree to invite the pastor of another church of the same faith and order to preside at the meetings relating to this important subject.

(3) Bearing in mind the solemn importance of such cases, and the serious responsibility assumed by the church in deciding the same, much earnest prayer is required that the great Head of the church would so dispose each member to act under the spirit of the fear of the Lord, and in the spirit of discernment, and of love to His truth and cause, that the voting may be regulated thereby with a single eye to His glory, according to the will of God.

Note – The blanks in Rules 4, 12, 14, 18, 19 should be filled up, and the alternative majorities in rules 4, 20, 23, be defined, by each individual church.

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