

A SHORT CONFESSION OF FAITH

— BENJAMIN KEACH —



THEOLOGY
SERIES

A
SHORT CONFSSION
OF FAITH

CONTAINING THE SUBSTANCE OF ALL THE FUNDAMENTAL
ARTICLES IN THE LARGER CONFSSION PUT FORTH BY THE
ELDERS OF THE BAPTIST CHURCHES, OWNING PERSONAL
ELECTION AND FINAL PERSEVERANCE

BY BENJAMIN KEACH

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Edited and formatted by Aaron Sturgill

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TO THE READER

To the congregation with whom I am a member (and the unworthy overseer) who are in God the Father, and in our Lord Jesus Christ; grace, mercy and peace be multiplied.

Most Dear and Beloved in Christ:

I hope I can say (with the holy apostle) that you are by me dearly beloved, my joy, and my crown; yea you are my honor, and in you I would rejoice, being the ornament of my poor ministry, by which the most of you have (through the blessing of God) been converted to Jesus Christ: and if you stand fast in the faith in one Spirit, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and do adorn your profession, living in Love, and endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, you will cause my latter days to be most sweet and comfortable to me, after all those troubles, sorrows, and reproaches I have met with, both from within and from without. evident it is God hath most eminently appeared to strengthen your hands: though the archers have sorely grieved you, and shot at you, yet your Bow abides in strength; and that the arms of your hands may still abide strong by the arm of the mighty God of Jacob, shall be my continual prayers.

My Brethren, I here present you with that which you have so long waited for, and desired me to endeavor to do, viz. to state an account of the most concerning articles of your faith, which you have heard read, and have approved of, and which I thought good

no longer to delay the doing of. (1.) Not knowing how soon I may put off this Tabernacle, and therefore would leave behind me an account of that holy doctrine and order, in which through grace you are established (for at your desire also I have drawn up the whole rules of your holy discipline, which you may have added unto this, and bound up together). (2.) And the rather I have done this, because the general and more large confession of the Faith of our churches, is now out of print; but that is not all, for that being 12 d. price, some cannot well purchase it. (3.) And also that all men may see what our faith is, and that we differ not from our brethren who bear other names in any fundamental point or article of faith; and that they may discern the difference between you and some that bear the same name with you. (4.) Tho you agree in the general with all other churches of the same faith, in all those articles there inserted, yet therein your whole faith is not comprehended, viz. that of imposition of hands upon baptized believers as such, and singing of God's praise, &c. because some of our churches dissent from us therein: yet my desire is you would nevertheless show all tenderness, charity and moderation to such as differ from you in those cases, and not refuse communion with them; and indeed your late sweet temper appears to be such, that I need not press you to this. All that I shall say more, is to entreat you to labor after holiness, and to awake out of sleep, that you may adorn your sacred profession, and prepare to meet the Lord; that as you have a good doctrine, you may also have a holy and good conversation; and then we need not fear who can harm us, whilst we are followers of that which is good, O let us bear one with another. and if in anything

we differ, let us avoid all animosities. Brethren, great things are near, watch and pray, look out and be ready. But at present I shall conclude with the words of the apostle, finally, brethren, farewell; be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

So prays your unworthy Brother, Pastor, Overseer, and Servant, who earnestly desires your Prayers also,

From my House in Freemans-lane by
Horsley-down, Southwark. Aug. 16. 1697.

B. Keach.

That the following Articles contain what the foresaid Church believes concerning those Truths asserted therein, we whose Names are hereunto subscribed, do testify in the Name and by the Appointment of the whole Congregation, the 10th day of the 6th Month, commonly called August, 1697.

- Benjamin Keach, Pastor.
 - Benjamin Stinton,
Teacher.
- Deacons**
- John Roberts,
 - Edward Foley,
 - Joshua Farrow,
 - Tho. Stinton,
 - John Valley,
 - Isaac Ballard,
 - John Hoar, Sen.
 - Edward Newbury,
 - Tho. Turner,
 - John Seamor,
 - Ephraim Wilcocks,
 - James Wilmott,
 - Daniel Dines,
 - Richard Thoubals,
 - John Weston,
 - John Clark,
 - Tho. Ayers,
 - John York,
 - George Starkey, Sen.
 - Benj. Harris,
 - George Starkey, Jun.
 - John Beavis,
 - Tho. Hill,
 - Joseph Berry,
 - William Farmworth,
 - Joseph Jennings,
 - John Fowl, Sen.
 - Tho. Fowl,

- John Fowl, jun.
- Henry Skeer,
- John Greensmith,
- Jeremiah Lions,
- William Putman,
- Nath. Holden,
- William Cattrel,
- Tho. Harvey,
- Tho. Richford,
- Joseph Worley,
- Peter Carter,
- William Forister,
- Sam. Cox.
- John Sparke,
- James King,
- William Deale,
- Simon Agars,
- John Hoar, jun.
- Tho. Gunning,
- William Mais.

THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

of the Church of Christ meeting at Horsley-Down.

OF GOD, AND OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

I We do believe, declare and testify, that there is but One Only Living and True God, who is a Spirit Infinite, Eternal, Immense and Unchangeable in his Being, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness, Truth and Faithfulness.

I That there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit; and that these three are One God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory.

OF THE DECREES OF GOD.

I That the Decrees of God are his Eternal Purpose according to the Counsel of his Will, whereby for his own Glory he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, even those evils that his wisdom and justice permits for the manifestation of the glory of those his attributes: And that God executes his decrees in the works of Creation and Providence.

OF CREATION.

4 That the works of creation are God's creating all things of nothing by his word of power, in six days, and all very good. That God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with power and dominion over the creatures.

OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

5 We believe that God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving, and governing all his creatures, and their actions.

OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

6 We believe the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, and are the only rule of faith, and practice; all things being contained therein that are necessary for us to know concerning God, and our duty unto him, and also unto all men. That all persons ought to read, hear, and understand the holy Scriptures. That the light of nature, and works of providence, though they declare plainly there is a God, yet not so effectually as the holy Scriptures; nor can we know without them how, and in what space of time God created all things. Neither came we any other ways but by the holy Scriptures to the knowledge of Christ the blessed Mediator, which indeed none can savingly know but by the Word and Spirit of God.

OF ORIGINAL SIN.

7 We do believe, that God having created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon the condition of perfect obedience; making the first Adam a common head to all his seed: and that our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by eating of the forbidden fruit: and that Adam being set up as a public person, we all sinned in him, and fell with him into a state of sin, of wrath and misery; the sinfulness of which state consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of our whole nature: from whence all actual sins proceed, as water out of a filthy and an unclean fountain. So that not only by imputation all men became sinners in the first Adam, but also as the same corrupt nature is conveyed to all his posterity, who descend from him in ordinary generation.

By this sin all mankind lost the image of God, and communion with him, being liable to all the miseries of this life, and to death itself; and also are dead in sins and trespasses, and obnoxious to the Wrath of God, and the eternal pains of Hell forever. Hence, we say that all are conceived and born in sin, and are the children of wrath, even the elect as well as others, being wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and Body, and utterly indisposed and disabled to do anything that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined with a strong propensity to all things that are evil.

OF MAN'S FREE-WILL.

We believe man in his state of innocency had freedom of will to do good; but by the Fall he hath utterly lost all that power and ability, being woefully depraved in all the faculties of his soul; there being in the will and mind of all naturally much enmity against God, and a total aversion to him, and to everything that is spiritually good; loving darkness, and rebelling against the light.

But when a man is renewed by divine grace, though there is no force put upon the will, yet it is made willing, and acts freely, in the day of God's power: though the work is not perfect in any faculty in the regenerate, nor will be in this life.

OF CHRIST THE MEDIATOR.

We believe that God having, out of his own mere good pleasure, and infinite love, elected some persons of the lost seed of the first Adam unto everlasting life, from all eternity, did enter into a covenant of grace with the second person of the Trinity, (who was set up as the common head of all the elect) to deliver them out of the state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation and eternal happiness.

That the second person in the godhead, (being the eternal Son of God, coessential, and coequal with the Father) according to that holy covenant and compact that was between them both, became man, or assumed our nature, and so was, and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures, in one person forever. And that he the Son of God by his becoming man, did take unto him a true

body, and reasonable soul, being conceived by the holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin, and was born of her, yet without sin.

OF THE OFFICES OF CHRIST.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Redeemer, and the one blessed Mediator between God and man, executes a threefold office, both the office of a priest, the office of a king, and the office of a prophet.

First, that he executes the office of a priest, (1.) In his once offering up himself a sacrifice, to satisfy divine justice, and to reconcile God to us, and us to God. (2.) And in making continual intercession for us, that the merits of his blood may be made effectual unto us.

Secondly, that he executes the office of a king in subduing us unto himself, and in giving us laws and holy precepts, by which we ought to walk; and also in his restraining and conquering all his, and our enemies.

Thirdly, that he executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us by his Word and Spirit, the whole will of God concerning all things that appertain to faith and practice.

OF CHRIST'S HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION.

We believe that Christ's humiliation consisted in that great condescension of his in assuming our nature, and being born in a low condition, made under the Law, undergoing the many miseries of this life, the wrath of God, the curse of the

Law, and the ignominious death of the cross, continuing under death for a time.

And that his exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead the third day, and in his ascending up into Heaven, in sitting at the right-hand of God; angels, powers, and principalities being made subject unto him; and in his being made Judge of the quick and dead.

OF EFFECTUAL CALLING.

12 We do believe that we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of his merits, &c. unto us by the Holy Spirit, thereby uniting us to Christ in effectual calling; and that effectual calling is the work of God's free grace, who by his Spirit works faith in us, who are altogether passive therein; and convincing us of sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, and changing our whole hearts, he does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely, as he is offered in the Gospel.

OF JUSTIFICATION.

13 We do believe justification is a free act of God's grace, through that redemption which is in Christ, (who, as our head, was acquitted, justified, and discharged, and we in him, when he rose from the dead) and when applied to us, we in our own persons are actually justified, in being made and pronounced

righteous, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to us; and all our sins, past, present, and to come, forever pardoned; which is received by faith alone. And that our sanctification, nor faith itself, is any part of our justification before God; it not being either the habit, or act of believing, or any act of evangelical obedience imputed to us, but Christ, and his active and passive obedience only, apprehended by faith: and that faith in no sense tends to make Christ's merits more satisfactory unto God; but that he was as fully reconciled and satisfied for his elect in Christ by his death before faith as after. Otherwise, it would render God only reconcilable, (not reconciled) and make faith part of the payment or satisfaction unto God, and so lessen the merits of Christ, as if they were defective or insufficient. Yet we say, it is by faith that we receive the atonement, or by which means (as an instrument) we come to apprehend and receive him, and to have personal interest in him, and to have our free justification evidenced to our own consciences.

OF ADOPTION.

14 We believe adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby such who were the children of wrath by nature, are received into the number, and have right to all the privileges of the sons of God; and that such who are adopted, are also by the Spirit regenerated, and hence said to be born of God.

OF SANCTIFICATION.

15 That sanctification is the work of God's free grace also, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. And that the benefits we receive, and which flow from or accompany justification, are adoption, sanctification, peace of conscience, manifestations of God's love, joy in the Holy Ghost, an increase of grace, an assurance of eternal life, and final perseverance unto the end.

OF THE SOULS OF MEN AT DEATH.

16 We believe, that at death the souls of believers are made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies dying in union with Christ, or dying in the Lord, do rest in their graves till the resurrection, when they shall be raised up in glory. And that their souls being reunited to their bodies, they shall be openly acknowledged, and acquitted, and made completely blessed, both in soul and body, and shall have the full enjoyment of God to all eternity. And that the souls of the wicked at their death are cast into hell, or are in torment: and that their bodies lie in the grave under wrath, and shall by virtue of the power of Christ be raised from the dead; and their souls being re-united to their bodies, shall be judged and condemned, and cast into a furnace of fire, or into unspeakable torment, with the Devil and his angels, forever and ever.

OF THE LAW.

17 We believe God requires obedience of man, and that the rule of that obedience is the moral law as it is in the hands of Christ; which teaches all persons their duty to God, and to man; the sum of all being this, to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves. And that though the law is abolished as a covenant of works, and as so considered, we are dead to it, and that dead to us; yet it remains as a rule of life and righteousness forever.

18 We believe no mere man, since the Fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the Holy Law of God; and that every offence against the Law deserves eternal death, though some sins are more heinous in God's sight than others.

And that God, as a simple act of mercy, will not, does not, pardon any Man; neither does it seem consistent with his holiness and justice so to do, without a full satisfaction: wherefore he substituted Christ in our room and stead, perfectly to keep the whole Law, and to die, or bear that wrath which we deserved for our breaking of it; he being pleased in his infinite love and grace to transfer our sins, guilt and punishment, upon his own Son, (who took our nature upon him, as our blessed head and representative) that his active obedience and righteousness might be our just title unto eternal life; and his death (who bore our Hell-Torments) be our full discharge from the wrath of God, and eternal condemnation.

And that all who would receive this title, and have this discharge so as to escape God's wrath, and the curse of the Law, must fly to

Christ, and lay hold on him by faith; which faith is known by its fruits, having lively, sin-killing, soul-humbling, self-abasing, Christ-exalting, and heart-purifying operations, always attending it.

OF FAITH AND REPENTANCE.

19 We believe that faith is a saving grace, or the most precious gift of God; and that it is an instrument whereby we receive, take hold of, and wholly rest upon Jesus Christ, as offered to us in the Gospel. That repentance unto life is also a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of sin, and apprehension of God's mercy in Christ, does with grief and hatred of his sins, turn from them. And that though repentance is in order of nature called the first principle of the doctrine of Christ, yet we believe no man can savingly repent, unless he believes in Jesus Christ, and apprehends the free pardon and forgiveness of all his sins through the blood of the everlasting covenant, and the sight and sense of God's love in a bleeding Savior; being that only thing that melts and breaks the stony heart of a poor sinner, as the sight of a free pardon from a prince humbles the stout heart of a rebellious malefactor.

OF THE MEANS OF GRACE.

20 We believe that the outward and more ordinary means, whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, are his holy ordinances, as prayer, the Word of God, and preaching, with baptism, and the lord's supper, &c. and yet

notwithstanding it is the Spirit of God that maketh prayer, reading, &c. and specially the preaching of the Word, effectual to the convincing, converting, building up, and comforting, through faith, all the elect of God unto salvation.

And that it is the duty of all, that the Word may become effectual to their salvation, to attend upon it with all diligence, preparation, and prayer, that they may receive it with faith and love, and lay it up in their hearts, and practice it in their lives.

OF BAPTISM.

We believe that baptism is a holy ordinance of Christ, or a pure Gospel-institution; and to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection, and of his being grafted into him, and of remission of sins, and of his giving himself up to God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.

We also believe that baptism ought not to be administered to any but to those who actually profess repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

That the infants of believers ought not to be baptized, because there is neither precept, or example, or any certain consequence in the Holy Scripture for any such practice: And we ought not to be wise above what is written. And that a human tradition or custom ought not to be regarded, but that it is sinful, and abominable.

We believe also that baptism is only rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body in water, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; according to Christ's institution, and the practice of the apostles; and not by sprinkling, or pouring of water, or dipping some part of the body in water, after the tradition of men.

And that it is the indispensable duty of such who are baptized, to give up themselves to some particular orderly Church of Jesus Christ, and to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless: Baptism being an initiating ordinance.

OF A TRUE CHURCH.

22 We believe a true Church of Christ is not National, nor Parochial, but does consist of a number of godly Persons, who upon the Profession of their Faith and Repentance have been baptized, and in a solemn manner have in a Holy Covenant given themselves up to the Lord, and to one another, to live in Love, and to endeavor to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace: Among whom the Word of God is duly and truly preached; and Holy Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and all other Ordinances are duly administered, according to the Word of God, and the Institution of Christ in the Primitive Church: watching over one another, and communicating to each other's Necessities, as becometh Saints; living Holy Lives, as becomes their sacred Profession; and not to forsake the assembling themselves, as the manner of some is; or to take leave to hear where they please in

other Places when the Church is assembled, but to worship God, and feed in that Pasture, or with that Church, with whom they have covenanted, and given up themselves as particular Members thereof.

OF LAYING ON OF HANDS.

We believe that laying on of hands (with prayer) upon baptized believers, as such, is an ordinance of Christ, and ought to be submitted unto by all such persons that are admitted to partake of the Lord's Supper; and that the end of this ordinance is not for the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, but for a farther reception of the Holy Spirit of promise, or for the addition of the graces of the Spirit, and the influences thereof; to confirm, strengthen, and comfort them in Christ Jesus; it being ratified and established by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit in the primitive times, to abide in the Church, as meeting together on the first day of the week was, Act. 2. 1. that being the day of worship, or Christian sabbath, under the Gospel; and as preaching the word was, Acts 10. 44. and as baptism was, Mat. 3. 16. and prayer was, Acts 4. 31. and singing psalms, &c. was, Acts 16. 25, 26. so this of laying on of hands was, Acts 8. & ch. 19. For as the whole Gospel was confirmed by signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost in general, so was every ordinance in like manner confirmed in particular.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

24 We believe that the holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which he instituted the night before he was betrayed, ought to be observed to the end of the world; and that it consists only in breaking of bread, and drinking of wine, in remembrance of Christ's death; it being appointed for our spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace, and as a farther engagement in, and to all duties we owe to Jesus Christ, and as a pledge of his eternal love to us, and as a token of our communion with him, and one with another. And that due preparation and examination is required of all that ought to partake thereof; and that it cannot be neglected by any approved and orderly member without sin.

OF CHURCH-OFFICERS.

25 We do believe that every particular church of Christ is independent; and that no one church hath any priority or super-intendency above or over another: and that every church ought to be organical: that an elder, or elders, a deacon, or deacons, ought to be elected in every congregation, according to those holy qualifications laid down in the Word of God: and that the said elders and deacons so chosen, ought solemnly to be ordained with prayer, and laying on of hands of the eldership. That such churches as have not officers so ordained, are disorderly, there being something still wanting.

OF PRAYER.

26 We believe prayer is a holy ordinance of God, and that it ought to be performed by the help and assistance of the Holy Spirit; and that not only the prayer Christ taught his disciples, but the whole Word of God is to be our rule how to pray, and pour forth our souls unto God: and that it is the indispensable duty of all godly families (and others also) as well as private Christians, daily to pray for all things they need, and to give thanks every day for all good things they receive: and that the omission of this duty is a great scandal to religion, and a great evil when it is carelessly or negligently performed.

OF SINGING OF PSALMS, &C.

27 We believe that singing the praises of God, is a holy ordinance of Christ, and not a part of natural religion, or a moral duty only; but that it is brought under divine institution, it being enjoined on the churches of Christ to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; and that the whole church in their public assemblies (as well as private Christians) ought to sing God's praises, according to the best light they have received. Moreover, it was practiced in the great representative Church, by our Lord Jesus Christ with his disciples, after he had instituted and celebrated the sacred ordinance of his holy supper, as a commemorative token of redeeming love.

OF THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

28 We believe that one day in seven, ought to be solemnly observed in the worship of God; and that by Moses 's Law the Jews and proselyted strangers were to keep the seventh day: but from the resurrection of Christ the first day of the week ought by all Christians to be observed holy to the Lord, that being called the Lord's Day; and the first time the Church met together after Christ's ascension was on the Day of Pentecost, which was the first day of the week, as tradition hath handed it down: and on that day the Church also met together to break bread, and make collections for the poor saints: and no mention is made that any one Gospel-Church kept the Jewish sabbath in all the New Testament. And we believe that an apostolical precedent is equivalent to an apostolical precept in this case.

OF MINISTERS, AND THEIR MAINTENANCE.

29 We do believe that every brother that hath received a gift to preach, having first passed the probation of the Church, and being regularly called by the same, ought to exercise the said gift to the edification of the Church when desired; and that no brother ought to take upon him to preach, until he has a lawful call so to do.

Moreover, we believe that it is the indispensable duty of every Church, according to their ability, to provide their pastor, or elders, a comfortable maintenance; as God hath ordained, that he that preaches the Gospel, should live of the Gospel, and not of his own

labor; but that he should wholly give himself up to the work of the ministry, and to watch over the flock, being to be freed from all secular business, and encumbrances of the world: and yet that it is abominable evil for any man to preach the Gospel for filthy lucre sake, but he must do it of a ready mind.

OF THE FIRST COVENANT.

We believe that the first covenant, or covenant of works, was primarily made with Adam, and with all mankind in him, by virtue of which he stood in a justified state before the Fall, upon the condition of his own perfect and personal obedience. But by the Fall he made himself incapable of life by that covenant.

That the Law God gave by Moses to Israel, was of the same nature of that given to Adam, being a second ministration of it; but not given for life, but to make sin exceeding sinful, and to show how unable man was in his fallen state to fulfil the Righteousness of God; and so (with the Ceremonial Law) it was given in subserviency to the Gospel, as a schoolmaster to bring sinners to Christ.

OF THE NEW AND SECOND COVENANT.

In We believe the covenant of grace was primarily made with the second Adam, and in him with all the elect, who as God-man, or mediator, was set up from everlasting as a common person, or as their head and representative; who freely obliged or engaged himself to the Father for them, perfectly to keep the whole

law in their nature that had sinned, and to satisfy divine justice by bearing their sins upon his own body, i. e. the guilt of all their sins, which were laid upon him: and that he sustained that wrath and curse in his body and soul, that was due to them for all their transgressions: and having received their discharge from wrath and condemnation, he gives it out to all that believe in him, and obtain union with him, who are thereby brought actually into the said New Covenant, and have a personal right to all the blessings thereof.

OF ELECTION.

I We do believe that God from all eternity, according unto the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably decreed and ordained, for the manifestation of his own glory, some Angels, and some of the lost sons and daughters of Adam, unto eternal life; and that their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished: and that others are left or passed by under a decree of preterition. And that those of mankind that are predestinated and fore-ordained, are particularly and personally designed unto eternal life: and these God, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and good pleasure of his will, did choose in Christ (the head of this election) unto everlasting glory, of his mere free grace, without any foreseen faith or obedience and perseverance therein, or anything in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto; and all this only to the praise of his own glorious grace.

OF FINAL PERSEVERANCE.

11 We believe all those whom God hath chosen, and who are effectually called, justified, and sanctified in Jesus Christ, can neither totally, nor finally fall away from a state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein unto the end, and eternally be saved; and this by virtue of their election, or the immutable decree of God, and the unchangeable love of God the Father; and by virtue of their union with Christ, together with his death, resurrection, and intercession; as also from the nature of the covenant of grace, and suretyship of Christ; and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who abides in them forever.

OF THE RESURRECTION.

14 We believe that the bodies of all men, both the just and unjust, shall rise again at the last day, even the same numerical bodies that die; though the bodies of the saints shall be raised immortal and incorruptible, and be made like Christ's glorious body: and that the dead in Christ shall rise first.

OF ETERNAL JUDGMENT.

15 We believe that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, or that there shall be a general day of judgment, when all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and give an account to him for all things done in this body: and that he will pass an eternal sentence upon all, according as their works shall be.

OF MARRIAGES.

16 We believe marriage is God's holy ordinance, that is to say between one man and one woman: and that no man ought to have more than one wife at once: and that believers that marry, should marry in the Lord, or such that are believers, or godly persons; and that those who do otherwise, sin greatly, in violating God's holy precept: and that ministers as well as others may marry; for marriage is honorable in all.

OF CIVIL MAGISTRATES.

17 We do believe the supreme Lord of heaven and earth hath ordained magistrates for the good of mankind: and that it is our duty in all civil and lawful things to obey them for conscience sake; nay, and to pray for all that are in authority, that under them we may live a godly and peaceable life: and that we ought to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

OF LAWFUL OATHS.

18 We do believe it is lawful to take some oaths before the civil magistrate; an oath of confirmation being to put an end to all strife: nay, and that it is our duty so to do when lawfully called thereunto: and that those that swear, ought to swear in truth, in righteousness, and in judgment.

OF PERSONAL PROPRIETY.

39 We do believe that every man hath a just and peculiar right and propriety in his own goods, and that they are not common to others; yet we believe that every man is obliged to administer to the poor saints, and to the public interest of God, according to his ability, or as God hath blessed him.

FINIS.

POSTSCRIPT

There is something contained in the 13th Article that may seem to want some explication, in these words (speaking of a man actually and personally justified) that his sins past, present, and to come, are all forgiven: We believing that if any sins of a justified person were afterwards charged upon him, it must of necessity make a breach in his unalterable and everlasting justification, which is but one act in God; hence there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus: yet I find an able and worthy writer distinguishes pardon of sin thus, viz.

1. Fundamentally in Christ, as a common person of all the elect before faith, which lieth in Christ making full satisfaction for all their sins, meriting faith for them, &c.

2. Actual, of all the elect in Christ on believing; this actual pardon being nothing else but the actual possession in their own persons of their fundamental pardon in the person of Christ: And Dr. Tho. Goodwin speaks to the same purpose, to which I agree. And that this actual pardon of the legal guilt is twofold.

1. Formal, of all their sins past, removing their legal guilt.

2. Virtual, of all their sins to come, preventing their legal Guilt. Dr. Ames speaks to the same purpose, and many others. I cannot see how a believer should be forever formally justified from all sins past, present, and to come, and yet not formally pardoned.

This author which I have lately met with, distinguishes well between legal guilt and gospel guilt; the first obliging to divine wrath, or eternal punishment; the latter, i. e. gospel guilt, obliging to Gospel, or fatherly chastisement for gospel-sins. Now I see not but that as soon as a believer is personally justified, all his sins, though not yet committed, as to legal guilt, or vindictive wrath, i. e. that guilt that obliges to eternal condemnation, are pardoned, for the reason before.

Saith he, virtual pardon keeps off legal guilt where it would be. To which I reply, if it be kept off, so that it never comes upon believers, then it follows they were actually pardoned before in that respect: yet he says, sins cannot be said to be formally pardoned before formally committed; but says, no guilt can come upon them to condemnation, though new guilt; yet no new legal guilt, because always justified. We see no hurt if his terms be admitted.

Object. What do believers then pray for, when they pray for the pardon of sin?

Answ. 1. That God would not chastise them sorely, or afflict them as a Father, according to the greatness of their offences.

2. That if his chastening hand is upon us, he would be pleased graciously to remove it.

3. That he would be pleased to clear up to our consciences, or give us the evidence of our pardon through Christ's merits, and that we may know we are complete in Christ, or without spot before the throne in our free justification.

4. Nay, believers are to pray to God to remove that sin from them (saith this worthy author) whose desert of punishment cannot be removed from it; and to spread their sins before the Lord in the highest sense of the deepest demerit of all legal punishment, so that they may put the higher accent upon the free grace of God, and estimate upon the full Satisfaction of Christ, whereby their persons are so fully freed from all actual obligation to any legal punishment, the whole and utmost whereof their sins deserve.

5. Moreover, that God would continue, and never revoke his most gracious pardon, till he pronounces the final sentence of it at the day of judgment, (as well this author notes) for a renewed sense and assurance of its grant and continuance: and thus to pray, saith he, there are both precepts and promises.

FINIS.