

1729 Goat Yard Declaration of Faith

A Declaration of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ at
Horsely-down,
under the Pastoral Care of Mr. John Gill, &c.

Having been enabled, through divine grace, to give up ourselves to the Lord, and likewise to one another by the will of God; we account it a duty incumbent upon us to make a declaration of our faith and practice, to the honour of Christ, and the glory of his name; knowing, that as with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation--our declaration is as follows:

I. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

II. We believe that there is but one only living and true God; that there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are equal in nature, power, and glory; and that the Son and the Holy Ghost are as truly and as properly God as the Father.

III. We believe that, before the world began, God did elect a certain number of men unto everlasting salvation, whom he did predestinate to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, of his own free grace, and according to the good pleasure of his will: and that, in pursuance of this gracious design, he did contrive and make a covenant of grace and peace with his Son Jesus Christ, on the behalf of those persons, wherein a Saviour was appointed, and all spiritual blessings provided for them; as also that their persons, with all their grace and glory, were put into the hands of Christ, and made his care and charge.

IV. We believe that God created the first man, Adam, after his own image, and in his likeness; an upright, holy, and innocent creature, capable of serving and glorifying him; but, he sinning, all his posterity sinned in him, and came short of the glory of God: the guilt of whose sin is imputed, and a corrupt nature derived, to all his offspring, descending from him by ordinary and natural generation: that they are by their first birth carnal and unclean, averse to all that is good, incapable of doing any and prone to every sin; and are also by nature children of wrath, and under a sentence of condemnation, and so are subject not only to a corporal death, and involved in a moral one, commonly called spiritual, but are

also liable to an eternal death, as considered in the first Adam, fallen and sinners; from all which there is no deliverance but by Christ, the second Adam.

V. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, being set up from everlasting as the Mediator of the new covenant, and he, having engaged to be the surety of his people, did, in the fulness of time, really assume human nature, and not before, neither in whole nor in part; his human soul, being a creature, existed not from eternity, but was created and formed in his body by him that forms the spirit of man within him, when that was conceived in the womb of the virgin; and so his human nature consists of a true body and a reasonable soul; both which, together, and at once, the Son of God assumed into union with his divine Person, when made of a woman, and not before; in which nature he really suffered and died as their substitute, in their room and stead, whereby he made all that satisfaction for their sins, which the law and justice of God could require, as well as made way for all those blessings, which are needful for them both for time and eternity.

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

VII. We believe that the justification of God's elect is only by the 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 of Christ, according to the riches of his grace.

VIII. We believe that the work of regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and faith, is not an act of man's free will and power, but of the mighty, efficacious, and irresistible grace of God.

IX. We believe that all those who are chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sanctified by the Spirit, shall certainly and finally persevere, so that not one of them shall ever perish, but shall have everlasting life.

X. We believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; and that Christ will come a second time to judge both quick and dead, when he will take vengeance on the wicked, and introduce his own people into his kingdom and glory, where they shall be for ever with him.

XI. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Christ, to be continued until his second coming; and that the former is absolutely requisite to the latter; that is to say, that those only are to be admitted into the communion of the church, and to participate of all ordinances in it, who upon profession of their faith, have been baptized by immersion, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

XII. We also believe that singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, vocally, is an ordinance of the Gospel to be performed by believers; but that as to time, place, and manner, every one ought to be left to their liberty in using it.

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

And whereas we are very sensible, that our conversation, both in the world and in the church, ought to be as becometh the Gospel of Christ, we judge it our incumbent duty to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men, by living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

And as to our regards to each other, in our church-communion, we esteem it our duty 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, as we have opportunity, to worship God according to his revealed will; and, when the case requires, to warn, rebuke, and admonish one another, according to the rules of the Gospel.

Moreover, we think ourselves obliged to sympathize with each other, in all conditions, both inward and outward, which God, in his providence, may bring us into; as also to bear with one another's weaknesses, failings, and infirmities, and particularly to pray for one another, and that the Gospel and the ordinances thereof might be blessed to the edification and comfort of each other's souls, and for the gathering in of others to Christ, besides those who are already gathered—all which duties we desire to be found in the performance of, through the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit, whilst we both admire and adore the grace which has given us a place and a name in God's house, better than that of sons and daughters.