

A GOODLY HERITAGE



**An Insight into The
Gospel Standard Articles of Faith**

J.A.Watts and G.D.Buss

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OR

AN INSIGHT INTO THE GOSPEL STANDARD ARTICLES OF FAITH

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Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg (1517)

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PREFACE

Solomon writing under direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost wrote: “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Prov. 23. 23). In a day when the truth of God is assailed on every hand both by the profane world, and the merely professing church, it is incumbent on those who fear God to take every opportunity, under God’s gracious influence and power, to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

The pages that follow are a simple attempt to highlight the truths which our forefathers held dear, contained in our Articles of Faith, and that are the foundation of the gospel preached in our churches. Also it is a sincere desire to help those who may, whilst genuinely seeking after the truth, find some of the precious doctrines we hold dear, hard to be understood or may misunderstand the emphasis which our godly forefathers put on some aspects of the doctrines of grace.

“A Goodly Heritage” (Psalm 16. 6) expresses our belief that these articles of faith are a gracious compendium of the doctrines of grace handed down from previous generations and firmly rooted in Scripture. In particular, their emphasis on the new birth as being the origin of all real gracious experience, and the necessity for the Holy Spirit’s continuing saving operations, are the vital truths of the religion for which our forefathers contended. A heritage not to be ashamed of!

Recognising that it is only as we are led by the Spirit, that any truth is rightly received into the heart of a born-again sinner, it is our desire that the Spirit of Truth may be pleased to own and bless this little attempt to further the cause of God and of Truth amongst our people and to God’s people in other parts of the true, visible church of Christ.

Our friend Mr. J.A. Watts has carried the burden of this work for many years and it has been a pleasure to assist him. We commend the following pages to all those who desire to fear God’s name.

G.D. Buss
January 2006

INTRODUCTION

The question may be asked, Why has this book been written? What is the purpose of it?

Some may say, There is no need for another book on our Articles of Faith: the Articles themselves are clear enough as they stand: they have stood the test of time and can well continue to stand on their own merit without further elucidation.

Others may say, We have J.H. Gosden's superb book, *What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe*, published as recently as 1993: what need is there to add to the gracious comments which he originally wrote in serial form in the *Gospel Standard* magazine in 1938-1944?

For all these, and similar, questions, we have much sympathy. Why indeed should it be thought necessary to give further explanations of our Articles of Faith?

The simple answer to these questions is that we live in a day when the prevailing spirit in the world and sadly in most parts of the professing church, is to emphasise love and unity at the expense of truth. People say it does not much matter what we believe: the essential thing is to be sincere in whatever we do believe and to appreciate and try to understand the beliefs of others whatever they may be.

This is indeed the spirit of the age (the essence of ecumenism) but it is not the voice of Holy Scripture. In Jude 3 we are exhorted to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and in numerous places, especially in the Epistles, reference is made to the vital need to maintain "sound doctrine" (Tit. 2. 1) and to "Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1. 13). Many are the warnings to resist error and in 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4, we are told that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" ... but "shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." How sadly true this is in the world today! Increasing numbers are being deluded by false religions of many different kinds. Others are just indifferent and unconcerned about doctrine.

Even where there remains the "form of sound doctrine," how few there are who are prepared to contend for it and to expose error when they find it!

More than sixty years ago, J.H. Gosden wrote:

“If the present-day comparative absence of doctrinal contention were the result of a gracious establishment of vital truths amongst us it would be matter for thanksgiving. It is to be feared, however, that the true cause is an overspreading of gross indifference. ‘The faith which was once delivered unto the saints’ is apparently, in the estimate of many, unworthy the trouble of contending for. A kind of ‘conspiracy of silence’ seems to have succeeded in stifling almost all earnest consideration of those gracious truths which formerly were the subject of serious contest. They are either entirely disregarded or held in a cold formal manner.”

If this was true sixty years ago, how much more so is it true today?

How many believers are there who are not well-established in the precious doctrines of the truth of God and who do not therefore find a gracious delight in meditating upon them? The Psalmist says of the “blessed man” that “his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.” Generally speaking, how far short we come in this!

If, by the grace of God, this book helps to stir up the godly and awaken the nominal professor, it will be a worthwhile publication. It has not been written as a theological treatise but is intended for the ‘ordinary’ reader in the hope that it will arouse more interest in the precious doctrines which form the basis of church fellowship.

Especially, it is hoped that this book will have a wide circulation among our young people and that they – as well as older ones – may be encouraged to search the Scriptures “comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor. 2. 13), so that in the increasingly dark and difficult days in which we live, they may be equipped when challenged at school, in University or in the workplace to meet such challenges by stating clearly not only what they believe but also why they believe as they do.

We believe that the truths contained in this book are in complete harmony with the Word of God and we hope our readers will refer to the Scripture references which are given.

It remains to mention a few interesting matters regarding our Articles of Faith:

1. THEIR ORIGIN Here we reproduce an extract from B.A. Ramsbottom’s Introduction to *What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe*:

“During the early part of the nineteenth century, there was a set of 17 Articles of Faith widely used in Strict Baptist churches. Many

copies of this set of Articles remain in existence today. The first sixteen of these Articles are the same as Articles 1 to 16 of the present Gospel Standard Articles and it is interesting to note that eleven of these are the same in substance, and in some instances identical in wording, as those drawn up and used by the renowned Dr. Gill (1697-1771). The 17th and concluding Article was different from the previous sixteen because it embraced, in several distinct paragraphs, a number of beliefs not closely related to one another. The various truths originally expressed in this single Article now appear in the separate Gospel Standard Articles Nos. 17, 18, 25, 26, 27 and 29. Other Articles (Nos. 19-24, 28 and 30-31) were added in 1872, these being, in the main, an embodiment of the beliefs enunciated in William Gadsby's Address to his readers in the first issue of the *Gospel Standard* magazine in 1835. Subsequently, Articles 32-35, the substance of which had previously appeared in the *Gospel Standard* of 1841, were formally added. The entire set of 35 Articles as we now have them was eventually enrolled in Chancery."

It will be seen from the above that we have an illustrious heritage rightly to be cherished and loyally to be safeguarded.

This heritage, indeed, takes us back much further than the days of William Gadsby. Especially, we think of Hanserd Knollys (1599-1691), William Kiffin (1616-1701) and Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) who is often referred to as the "Father of the Particular Baptists." Although there were differences in the way these gracious men presented the Gospel, we highly esteem them as our forerunners. O for grace to continue to tread in their well-trodden footsteps!

Mention should also be made of the great Confessions of Faith of the seventeenth century, some of our own Articles of Faith being taken from those of the Westminster Assembly of Divines 1640 and the Baptist Confession of Faith 1689.

It might be opportune at this point to mention by way of parenthesis, that the Church of England Articles of Religion "agreed upon" in the Convocation of 1562, agree in most of the essential doctrines such as Free Will, Election and Predestination, with our own beliefs. How solemn it is that the Church of England in our generation has so completely, in practice at least, denied its own heritage. May we never do the same with ours!

The brief history of our Articles outlined above also explains why our Articles cannot be altered or the wording modified – "They are enrolled in

Chancery to ensure their permanence.” As we look back, how thankful we should be that our forefathers took this precaution so that we still have, in our day, the valuable heritage of more prosperous times in the Church of God. Truth does not alter!

2. INTERDEPENDENCE OF ARTICLES One of the reasons for publishing this book is to emphasise to our young people – and to our critics – that Articles of Faith should never be viewed in isolation but rather as a cohesive body of beliefs. This is especially true of our “Added Articles” which were originally intended only to reinforce beliefs expressed in previous Articles. See particularly the cross-references in our comments under Article 32 – Pages 65-68.

3. ARTICLES OF FAITH BOOKLETS These were reprinted in 1998 in two formats, one with Church Rules and one without. These are available from Gospel Standard Trust Publications.

We wish to make a few further points of a general nature concerning the decision to publish this book.

We are exhorted by the Lord Jesus Christ in what is known as “The Sermon on the Mount,” not to “light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick” (Matt. 5. 15). Again in verse 14 we read, “a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid,” and in verse 16, “Let your light so shine before men.” Verse 13 also refers to the uselessness of salt that has lost its savour.

As a group of churches we confess that in recent years we have been guilty of doing just this: hiding our light under a bushel! We have a glorious and priceless heritage and should not be ashamed of it. The Apostle Paul declared, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1. 16) and neither should we be!

The Psalmist says, “Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah” (Psa. 60. 4).

These Scriptures show us our responsibility to make known as widely and openly as we can, the truth as we understand and love it. May we each be given wisdom to do so both within our own churches and the circles in which we move.

We conclude with an important quotation (slightly abbreviated) from J.C. Philpot:

“Oh! what beauty and blessedness shine forth in the Gospel, when we view it connected with the Person and work of the Son of God! Take the doctrines of grace isolated from the Person of Christ; they are scattered limbs, there is no beauty in them; but view the truths of the Gospel in connection with the Person and work of the Son of God, what a heavenly light, what a divine glory is cast upon every truth connected with His sacred Person, atoning blood, finished work, and dying love! This is the way to receive the Gospel; not as a mere collection or scheme of certain doctrines but as one harmonious Gospel, full of grace, mercy and truth, impregnated with divine blessedness, and all connected with, all springing out of, the Person of the God-Man.”

How this reminds us of Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones (Ezek. 37) and the vital need for the Holy Spirit to breathe upon the doctrines of grace which form the subject of this book and make them a living power in our hearts and lives!

May this be the experience of all who read this book!

Note: In this book, a green background has been used for the Articles of Faith to avoid any possible confusion between the Articles themselves and our comments upon them. To the best of our knowledge, the former are reproduced, complete with Scripture references, exactly as they were originally worded.

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

² 2 Tim. 3. 15-17.

Readers will understand that this Article of Faith was formulated at a time (1878) when the King James Authorised Version of the Bible was the only English version used by Protestant churches worldwide. For this obvious reason, no reference is made to modern versions of the Bible – the first major modern version, the Revised Version, was issued in 1881.

In more recent times, many new translations of the Bible, most of them based on a faulty text, have been produced. These have caused much confusion and division in some denominations.

Gospel Standard churches, however, stand firmly behind the King James Authorised Version of the Bible, believing this to be the most reliable, trustworthy and accurate translation available in the English language. They use no other in the services of God's house.

We believe in the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Holy Scriptures and that their divine origin is asserted in Scripture itself (see the various Scripture references which follow the Article). We endorse the words of Joseph Hart:

“If aught there dark appear,
Bewail thy want of sight;
No imperfection can be there,
For all God's words are right.

Psa. 119. 89
Isa. 40. 8
1 Pet. 1. 25
John 10. 35

“The Scriptures and the Lord
Bear one tremendous name;
The written and the incarnate Word
In all things are the same.”

Psa. 119. 140

We further believe in the providential preservation of the Word of God throughout all ages. By this we mean that God, in His infinite wisdom and power, has watched over His Word and providentially preserved its purity despite all the attacks which have been made upon it by men and devils throughout the ages of time.

Rev. 22. 18, 19

Therefore we consider it a very serious matter indeed to tamper with the Word of God to try to make it more acceptable to modern man.

We do, of course, recognise that some words have changed their meaning over the years and we are grateful to the Trinitarian Bible Society who have produced a glossary of such words, giving their Biblical meanings. Such a glossary is bound up with many Bibles in current use and is also available as a separate leaflet from the Trinitarian Bible Society¹ to which we refer our readers.

Psa. 119. 18
Rom. 15. 4
2 Tim. 3. 16

A final comment is that although the Article speaks of the Holy Scriptures being “a” gracious revelation of the mind and will of God, it is in fact, “the” gracious revelation of the mind and will of God, there being no other comparable unfolding of His mind and will.

Note: In addition to the Scripture references which follow the Article, we invite our readers to refer to the additional Scriptures shown in the left-hand margin of this and subsequent pages of the book. All Scripture references are, of course, from the Authorised (King James) Version.

¹ Trinitarian Bible Society, Tyndale House, Dorset Road, LONDON, SW19 3NN

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; Psa. 90. 2; Psa. 115. 3; Psa. 135. 5; Psa. 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.

1 John 5. 7, 8

This is a very plain and straightforward statement of our belief in the Eternal Trinity and of the equality and co-existence of the three Divine Persons in the Trinity – three distinct Persons in one indivisible God. This is a sublime truth which J.H. Gosden once described as a truth “*not a matter for philosophy but of revelation and faith.*”

John 3. 5-8
Deut. 32. 2

Although godly men in all ages have written and preached extensively upon the subject of the Trinity as it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, the doctrine is too profound for the human mind fully to comprehend. It is therefore doubtful whether it can be expressed or explained in more simple language than the wording of this precious Article of Faith.

In 1 Cor. 2. 14 we read that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Therefore when we are faced with truths such as the Trinity, which the greatest of men cannot comprehend with their finite understandings, we

need the Holy Spirit of God to give us spiritual discernment so that we are enabled by God-given faith to receive what we cannot fully explain.

“To comprehend the great THREE-ONE,
Is more than highest angels can:
Or what the Trinity has done
From death and hell to ransom man.”

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity of God is a vast subject but it is a blessed essential truth upon which every other truth of our most holy faith is founded.

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 Psa. 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.

This Article of Faith expresses in clear and unmistakable language several foundation truths of the glorious gospel of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For those who wish to be firmly established in these wonderful truths, it is recommended that the Scripture references given beneath the Article be carefully and prayerfully read.

Rom. 9. 19-24

Sadly, unregenerate man has, and always will, cavil and argue against the doctrines of divine sovereignty, predestination, personal election and against the covenant of grace which was made from all eternity between the three Persons in the Trinity. It is for this reason that the Apostle Paul asks the question in Romans 9. 14, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" Immediately he replies to his own question, "God forbid," and continues in verse 20, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

John 13. 1
John 16. 27
Rom. 8. 35-39
Gal. 2. 20
Eph. 2. 4-7
2 Thess. 2. 16
Rev. 1. 5

When the Holy Spirit is sovereignly pleased to reveal these doctrines to the soul which has first been truly convicted of its lost and ruined state through the Fall of man, these doctrines no longer appear as cold, arbitrary decrees of the Almighty. On the contrary, these doctrines are then seen by the eye of faith as exceedingly precious truths proceeding from the eternal love of God to His people. See the seven Scripture references on this subject in the margin opposite.

Acts 9. 15
Rom. 11. 5, 7
1 Pet. 2. 4, 9
Rev 17. 14

In John 17. 6, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His prayer to His Father, says, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me"; and then in verse 9, He adds, "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine."

How clearly this proves that God has a chosen people whom He has put into the hands of Christ to redeem!

We especially commend to our readers that they should read the 8th and 9th chapters of Romans and the 10th

and 17th chapters of John. It is true, however, to say that the comprehensive truths expressed in this Article No. 3 are also expounded in many other parts of Holy Scripture.

Indeed, it is difficult to see how anyone who has been enlightened by the Holy Spirit's operations on their heart can fail, not only to acknowledge the truths expressed so simply in this Article, but also to love these eternal decrees of God on which their everlasting salvation depends.

“Vast were the settlements of grace
On millions of the human race;
And every favour, richly given,
Flows from the high decree of heaven.”

This everlasting covenant, entered into by the three Persons of the undivided Trinity, provided for all the blessings, without exception, needed for the salvation of the church. To all these persons who were given by the Father to His Son to redeem, by His now finished work, the Holy Ghost undertook to impart all needful blessings.

Eph. 1. 3-7

So regeneration, repentance, faith, love, obedience and all other graces flow from this covenant as a free and sovereign gift, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” As the Puritans used to say, “It is all in the covenant.”

Eph. 2. 9
Rom. 8. 29, 30

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; Psa. 58. 3.

² Gen. 6. 5; Gen. 8. 21; Job 14. 4; Job 25. 4; Psa. 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.

Two momentous truths are set forth in this brief Article:

Gen. 3. 6-19
Rom. 5. 12-21

1. The completeness of the Fall of man, and

John 3. 3, 7

2. Man's utter inability to turn to or savingly believe in Christ unless or until he is divinely called and regenerated by the Holy Ghost.

In our fallen state it is impossible for us to conceive of the perfect innocence and uprightness of man as he originally came forth from the hand of his Creator. But having, through sin, lost that perfection, there is no way back.

John 3. 3-8

The only remedy is by the implantation in our souls of a new nature which we call "regeneration" or the "new birth." These doctrines are stated in other Articles in this book.

Rom. 5. 12

Because of the Fall of man, every human being is not only born into this world in a spiritually-dead state, incapable of finding his or her own way back to God: but also, because of the Fall, the sentence of death has been passed upon all the human race so that it is true of all of us that "we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again."

2 Sam. 14. 14

The hymnwriter expresses it well:

"When Adam by transgression fell,
And conscious, fled his Maker's face,
Linked in clandestine league with hell,
He ruined all his future race:
The seeds of evil once brought in,
Increased and filled the world with sin."

It is exceedingly solemn that because man's completely lost condition is not, for the most part, accepted by mankind, fruitless efforts are made by all kinds of

religious people either to placate God by so-called “good works” or to endeavour to find their own way back to God by the exercise of their own presumptuous faith in God’s willingness to save them.

The latter need to be reminded that the Scriptures tell us that “faith is the gift of God.” Natural faith, by which we believe many things in this world, is not the same as God-given faith which can only be possessed by those who are “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

Eph. 2. 8
1 Pet. 1. 23

Further comments on this subject appear on the pages following Articles 32 - 35. How true are the lines of the hymn:

Psa. 51. 5
Jer. 17. 9

“Lord, I am vile, conceived in sin,
And born unholy and unclean;
Sprung from the man whose guilty fall
Corrupts the race, and taints us all.

“Behold, I fall before Thy face,
My only refuge is Thy grace;
Not outward forms can make me clean –
The leprosy lies deep within.”

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 Psa. 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.

This Article is longer than all the other articles and deals with the sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

J.H. Gosden, in commenting on this Article said, “The incarnation is at once a profound mystery and precious reality. The Person of Immanuel is the greatest display of divine wisdom the world has ever witnessed.”

Without wishing to amend the beautiful language of the wording of this Article it is helpful to note the following points:

John 1. 1-3

1. As the Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, He existed from all eternity. This nature did not change in any way when the Incarnation took place.

Luke 1. 35

2. His sacred and holy human nature from the moment of its miraculous conception was indissolubly united to His divine Person.

3. Thus Christ is not two Persons, but rather one Person, having two natures; one divine, the other human. He who is the Son of God, is also the Son of Man.

“He is what He has been and ever will be,
He became what He was not, for sinners like me.”

Heb. 2. 16, 17

4. The sacred humanity of Christ consists of body and soul, both of which were created by the Holy Ghost. As John Bunyan puts it: “To redeem man, who has both body and soul, the Saviour was made like unto His brethren that He might give, ‘body for body and soul for soul’ in their behalf.”

John 10. 17, 18

5. This humanity being holy, is free from original sin, and the Saviour could only die by a voluntary act on His own part, by the laying down of His life, which none could take from Him.

2 Cor. 5. 21

6. Because of the sacred union between the divine and human natures of Christ, in His glorious Person, all that He did in His human nature has the virtue of His divine nature upon it. Only such a righteousness could satisfy the claims of the offended justice of Almighty God, and only such sufferings could cancel the debt owed by His Church to that offended justice.

Heb. 1. 1-3

7. Now at the right hand of the Father, the Saviour sits as both God and Man, His humanity now glorified beyond our comprehension. It is, however, the same body that was formed in the womb of the virgin, and that suffered on the cross and was laid in the tomb. It bears

1 Pet. 2. 24

the marks of His sufferings still. He is still the Man Christ Jesus, as well as the Son of God. In heaven, where “adoring saints around Him stand,”

“The God shines gracious through the Man,
And sheds sweet glories on them all.”

The first sentence of this Article also expresses our belief in the mediatorial office and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gal. 3. 19, 20
Heb. 12. 24

By the phrase “Mediator of the New Covenant,” we distinguish between the old covenant of works given by Moses on Mount Sinai and the new covenant of grace of which the Apostle writes so fully in Hebrews 8 – see particularly verses 6 to 13: also throughout the whole of chapter 9.

Job 33. 24
Heb. 7. 22-28

Embraced in this mediatorial work, is the Lord’s sovereign engagement to be the “Surety of His people” (quoting from the Article) and to suffer, bleed and die as their Substitute.

1 Tim. 2. 5
Heb. 5. 6
Heb. 7. 11-28
Eph. 2. 18

Also embraced in this precious mediation of Christ, is His Priesthood, concerning which we read in Hebrews 9. 14, 15, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament....”

These are great and wonderful truths and they lie at the root of our great salvation. And they become even more wonderful when by experience a convicted sinner is enabled to say with John Newton:

“But since my Saviour stands between,
In garments dyed in blood,
‘Tis He, instead of me, is seen,
When I approach to God.

“Thus, though a sinner, I am safe;
He pleads before the throne,
His life and death on my behalf,
And calls my sins His own.”

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.

Rom. 8. 29, 30
Rom. 11. 5-7
2 Thess. 2. 13

This Article expresses in a few words our belief in Particular Redemption, by which we mean that Christ died only for those who were chosen from all eternity in the Covenant of Grace made between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Gospel Standard Strict Baptists are still sometimes known as “Particular Baptists” or “Strict and Particular Baptists.” In former days, these titles used to appear more frequently than now, on chapel notice boards. The reason for this was that godly men of a past generation wished to make it quite clear that they were not “General” Baptists, who believed that Christ died for all men. Incidentally, by the word “Strict” we mean that communion at the Lord’s Table is restricted to baptised members of churches of the same faith and order – see also Article 15.

Deut. 7. 7, 8
Eph. 1. 5

Although the seventeenth chapter of John is not included in the Scripture references which follow the Article, there are several references in that chapter which prove particular redemption to be true. In verse 6, Christ refers to “the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world,” and in verse 9, He says, “I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me.” Solemnly, Christ also said to the Jews in John 10. 26, “Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep,” plainly showing that He

John 15. 16

did not die for all men but only for His own chosen people.

One writer has expressed particular redemption in this way: “The will to believe does not regulate the extent of redemption, but the extent of redemption (fixed by the will of God) governs the will to believe.”

The doctrine of particular redemption is closely linked with the doctrine of election, “the Elect of God” being specifically mentioned in the Article. The hymnwriter beautifully links these two doctrines when he says:

“In vast eternity He chose
A people for His praise;
And saves them from their guilt and woes,
By His almighty grace.

“Redeemed, with Jesus’ blood redeemed,
His beauties called to trace,
No angel can be more esteemed
Than sinners saved by grace.”

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.

The glorious doctrines of Imputed Righteousness, Justification and Pardon are very simply expressed in this Article of Faith.

Job 9. 2

In the early days of man upon earth, Job asked the question, "How should man be just with God?" A tremendous question!

We believe there is only one way in which fallen, sinful man can be just with God and that is by the imputed righteousness of Christ. There is not the remotest possibility of sinful man being just with God in any other way: certainly not by any works of righteousness which he himself might do.

Isa. 61. 10

The imputed righteousness of God is sometimes referred to as the "robe of righteousness" and in Zechariah chapter 3 we are given a beautiful account of Joshua the high priest being clothed with "filthy garments" and having these taken from him to be clothed with "change of raiment."

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head."

Pardon and justification, although closely connected, are separate blessings. Both are the effect of divine grace flowing through the obedience and death of the Redeemer. To have our sins forgiven is a great thing, but to be reckoned as if we had never sinned is greater still.

Rom. 8. 33

Therefore the Apostle Paul says, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

Eph. 1. 4-6
Rom. 5. 9
Rom. 6. 11

So the Church of Christ is justified firstly in the eternal decree of God, secondly by the blood of Christ and thirdly by the Holy Spirit when He sovereignly imparts faith in the Lord Jesus.

The third point in the above paragraph reminds us of the wonderful revelation given to Martin Luther nearly

500 years ago when as a popish monk he climbed the marble steps of the so-called Holy Stairs in Rome. To quote from J.A. Wylie's *History of Protestantism*,

“He was climbing the steps in the appointed way (on his knees), when he was startled by a sudden voice, which seemed as if it spoke from heaven and said, **The just shall live by faith.** Luther started to his feet in amazement ... it was as if a voice of thunder had uttered the words.”

It was this revelation that completely delivered Luther from looking to works for justification. The words “**the just shall live by faith**” proved to be the corner-stone of the Reformation, the benefits of which we still enjoy today.

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; Psa. 110. 3; John 1. 13; John 6. 29, 63, 65; John 16. 8; Rom. 8. 16; Rom. 11. 4, 6; James 1. 18.

This Article, although brief, is so clear that further comment is scarcely necessary.

It is, however, a little surprising that those who framed this Article did not include the third chapter of John in their list of Scripture references.

In Christ's conversation with Nicodemus, He clearly taught that the New Birth (or Regeneration), is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit. In verses 6 to 8, He says:

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto

John 3. 3
John 3. 6-8

thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

In the same way as every human being born into this world had no say in the time or circumstances of his or her own birth – not even to consent to it – so the New Birth is a sovereign and irresistible act of the Spirit of God. Well might the Apostle Peter exclaim:

1 Pet. 1. 3

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

“No, it was not the will of man,
My soul’s new heavenly birth began;
Nor will nor power of flesh and blood,
That turned my heart from sin to God.”

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.

This Article condenses several different, but very important, truths into one long sentence. It needs to be read carefully. Also the Scripture references need to be looked up and prayerfully pondered.

1 Pet. 2. 4, 9 First, the Article re-affirms the doctrine of Election by referring to “those who were chosen by the Father.”

Isa. 6. 5 Second, it expresses our beliefs concerning conviction of sin; that when the New Birth takes place, a person is brought to see his lost and ruined state by nature; and that he has broken the law of God and lies under the condemnation of God.

Psa. 102. 13
Ezek. 34. 11-16
Phil. 1. 6 Third, it states our belief that those who are the subjects of the New Birth shall assuredly, at “the appointed time” be drawn to Christ by the power of the Father and be brought to believe savingly in Him.

“The appointed time rolls on apace.
Not to propose, but call by grace;
To change the heart, renew the will,
And turn the feet to Zion’s hill.”

John 17. 2
Rom. 8. 18
Rom. 9. 23
Col. 3. 4
1 Pet. 5. 10 Fourth, the Article expresses our belief in the final perseverance of the saints and the impossibility of any of the elect being eternally lost.

Finally, the Article expresses our belief that all those who are effectually called by the Spirit of God, convinced of their sin, “brought in guilty before God,” and drawn to Christ by the Father to believe in Him for salvation, shall without fail “arrive safely in glory” when they die.

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.

To quote from the book, *What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe*, “this Article emphasises the utter helplessness of an unregenerate soul, thereby refuting all fleshly pretensions of ability in a sinner to contribute one iota (i.e. the smallest thing) towards acceptance with God.”

This doctrine of the complete inability of man to contribute anything to his own salvation, is contested by many religious people who maintain that man has the power – and a duty – to savingly respond to the invitations and commands of Scripture concerning “coming to Christ.”

Our belief, however, is that spiritual life, which can only be imparted by the Spirit of God when He sovereignly

John 3. 3-8
Rom. 5. 6-10

regenerates a person in the New Birth, must precede any acceptable approach unto God.

John 1. 13
Eph. 2. 5

Viewed naturally, it is pointless to exhort dead people in a cemetery to perform any actions which require life to perform – they are quite unable to respond. So in spiritual things a person cannot move, much less come to Christ, without life. He cannot even will to come, without life being previously imparted.

Eph. 2. 1

This is what we mean by the phrase “dead in trespasses and sins,” which is a Scriptural phrase.

John 5. 21
John 6. 63

The remainder of the Article expresses our belief in the quickening operations of the Holy Spirit in bringing sinners to depend entirely upon Christ for salvation; and our belief that the teaching of the Holy Spirit will not lead to an attitude of “shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” The Apostle adds, “God forbid.”

Rom. 6. 1

James 2. 18
Titus 2. 10

As stated in our Article, we believe that all the elect people of God will be constrained, despite the workings of indwelling sin, to “walk in good works” by the enabling of the Spirit of God. Thus they will, as James says, show their faith by their works and so “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

2 Thess. 2. 16

The language of a sinner quickened by the Holy Spirit and raised up from “spiritual death” (see the Article), to a “good hope through grace,” will be:

“What glad returns can I impart
For favours so divine?
O take my all, this worthless heart,
And make it wholly Thine.”

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.

The key phrase in this Article is “properly so called.”

The Article states positively that “we believe that man can never do a good work until the grace of God is implanted in his heart,” but those who formulated the Article wisely interposed this phrase “properly so called” to distinguish between good works performed by unregenerate men and women; and good works which are the fruit of grace in the hearts of God's elect people.

We believe that although many men and women, in the Providence of God, possess by nature excellent moral characters and pleasant dispositions; and although they may dedicate their whole lives to the good of their fellow men; and even do all these things in the name and for the cause of Christianity, yet Scripturally all these “good works” are “dead works” unless they are performed by people who have been called and quickened by the Holy Spirit and are under His divine influence and power.

In 1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul takes up this theme and goes so far as to say that “though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (i.e. spiritual love), it profiteth me nothing.”

The point is that it is impossible for an unregenerate person to act from spiritual principles, simply because he does not possess them. Therefore the highest acts of

Heb. 6. 1
Heb. 9. 14

1 Cor. 13. 3

human goodness, benevolence and self-sacrifice are not “good works, properly so called.”

The other important point in this Article is our belief that when God, in eternity, chose His people, His choice was absolutely irrespective of any pre-known good quality which would appear in them in this life. Similarly, no foreknowledge of sin in any way deterred divine election.

“No goodness God foresaw in His,
But what His grace decreed to give,
No comeliness in them there is
Which they did not from Him receive.”

Rom. 9. 10-23

One of the greatest glories of the Gospel – although repugnant to the carnal reason of unregenerate mankind – is that God eternally chose some of the worst people who ever lived upon this earth to be His people; and left some of the naturally “nicest” people to be lost.

In this we seek to bow before the sovereignty of Almighty God, recognising that He has an absolute right to choose whom He will.

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

This is a comprehensive Article of Faith which covers several different aspects of divine truth.

The first part is already stated in slightly different terms in Articles 8 and 9 (see comments following those Articles).

The latter part expresses our beliefs concerning the application of the holy law of God to the consciences of all those who are quickened by the Holy Spirit.

Conviction of sin always accompanies regeneration: and as “sin is the transgression of the law,” every convicted sinner is brought to confess that he stands guilty of breaking God’s righteous law. Condemnation follows because the Scripture says that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

This solemn work of the application of the Law varies in depth and degree according to the individual, but we believe that the power of divine grace will bring every convicted sinner in some measure to submit to divine justice as a law-breaker and to sue for mercy. “He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.”

The final part of the Article expresses our belief that “through Christ alone” (by which we mean His sin-atoning sacrifice and death), mercy and pardon are freely bestowed upon all those who cry for mercy under a sense of their sins and condemnation.

“By Christ he finds his sins forgiven,
And Christ has made him heir of heaven.”

Psa. 51. 4
Ezek. 18. 4
Rom. 3. 20
1 John 3. 4

1 Cor. 14. 25
2 Cor. 1. 9
Heb. 4. 12, 13

Lam. 3. 29

John 8. 36
Rom. 4. 6-8
Rom. 7. 4
Rom. 8. 1, 2

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.

Heb. 11. 1-40

This Article deals with the nature of true and living faith, which is here declared to be “the gift of God” in accordance with Ephesians 2. 8.

“Faith! ’tis a precious grace,
Where’er it is bestowed;
It boasts of a celestial birth,
And is the gift of God.”

Eph. 2. 8

Because faith is the gift of God, it is not possible for unregenerate people (even although they may be religiously inclined) to “exercise it” as some claim they can.

It is true that we can all exercise our natural faith, by which we believe many things in this world. For example, in the same way as we believe that the world is round, or that there are millions of stars in the sky, so we may believe with our natural faith that the Bible is true and that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. So may we believe many other good and right things.

Psa. 51. 1-10
Rom. 7. 23

But when a sinner is convinced not only of his sin, but also of his *unbelief* (which is the chief of sins), he then perceives that he cannot savingly believe of himself. One writer has expressed it as a man finding that he is just as unable to believe on Christ, as a man's arms without hands can lay hold upon a rope to save him.

In *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, John Bunyan, when referring to some who pitied him, says, "But they had as good have told me that I must reach the sun with my finger, as have bidden me to receive or rely upon the promises." This accords with the experiences of many of God's people, especially in their spiritual beginnings and accords also with dear John Newton when he complains:

Luke 9. 37-42

"O could I but believe,
Then all would easy be;
I would, but cannot; Lord, relieve!
My help must come from Thee."

Mark 9. 24

How many of the Lord's people have sympathised with the father of the child with a dumb spirit, recorded in Mark 9. 17-29, when he said, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." It is then proved in experience that

Eph. 2. 8

"Faith owes its birth to sovereign grace."

Acts 5. 31
Rom. 5. 4, 5
1 John 4. 19

The Article also states our belief that all other graces of the Spirit are the gifts of God. We therefore believe that they cannot be exercised, at will, by ourselves. As J.H. Gosden so succinctly puts it, "Though the sinner believes, and hopes, and loves, and repents, all the power to do so is from inwrought grace by the Holy Ghost and His vital renewings from time to time."

The final part of the Article expresses our belief that "good works, and a walk and conversation (or behaviour) becoming the Gospel," is the fruit of the Spirit's work within the soul, the motive being that of gratitude and love to the Lord.

Col. 2. 6.

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."

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.

John 11. 24, 25
Acts 24. 15, 21
Phil. 3. 11

The doctrine of the resurrection is clearly stated in this Article. It is one of our fundamental beliefs that the bodies of both the elect and the non-elect will be raised on the resurrection morning and that their bodies will then be re-united with their souls.

We believe that both the elect and the non-elect will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the sentence of Christ; and that eternity will follow, the elect being taken to everlasting glory in heaven and the non-elect being sent to hell.

We wholly refute the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked.

In 1 Cor. 15. 12-58, we are given a very clear account of the resurrection of the body of Christ and the bodies of all His people. From this passage it is clear that at the resurrection, it will be a spiritual body which will be raised from the dead, that is, a body which can never die.

See especially verses 37 and 38 of that chapter and verses 43 and 44.

1 John 3. 2

David said in Psalm 17. 15, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness,” and the Apostle Paul says in Phil. 3. 21 that our “vile body” will be changed “that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.” John also says, “We shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is.”

The doctrine of the resurrection, so clearly stated in our Article, has been described as “the keystone of the church” and is the solid hope of every child of God.

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.

This Article makes plain our beliefs in the ordinances of Baptism by immersion and the Lord’s Supper. It does not, however, explain what is meant by the term “Mixed Communion,” this being a phrase which is not now in common usage.

In former years, there were many independent churches where baptism was considered to be a matter of choice for the believer. This meant that church members, some of whom were baptised and some who were not, were partaking together of the Lord's Supper. Such churches became known as "Mixed Communion" churches. The same situation prevails today but the term "Mixed Communion" has largely dropped into disuse.

1 Cor. 11. 2, 26
Gal. 3. 27

We repudiate the theory that any gospel ordinance is essential to salvation but, at the same time, we believe it is wrong in the sight of God to disregard or to treat as of small importance, any commandment which the Lord Jesus Christ has given us in His Word.

Acts 2. 41, 42

We believe that baptism by immersion has for its authority the positive command of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Scriptures quoted beneath the Article and that the Lord's Supper can only scripturally be administered to those who have been baptised.

Matt. 26. 26-28
Mark 14. 22-24
Luke 22. 19, 20
1 Cor. 10. 16
1 Cor. 11. 23-26

We also believe that all persons who have been baptised should unite with a local church and partake of the Lord's Supper, which we believe to be a church ordinance.

The way in which the Lord's Supper is to be administered is clearly laid down in the Scripture. In *Gospel Standard* chapels this ordinance is usually administered by a minister of the Gospel.

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.

The question as to whether the Law or the Gospel is the Believer's Rule of Life has provoked endless controversy in the religious world, but in the few lines of this Article, our belief is clearly expressed.

2 Cor. 3. 9-11

William Gadsby dealt with this matter thoroughly in his book, *The Perfect Law of Liberty*. He also said to a controversialist who opposed him, "This blessed Gospel does in its own nature contain all the holiness and beauty of all the laws that ever were promulgated from the throne of God – and yet excels in glory."

A telling illustration is that of a loyal and dedicated employee who seeks diligently to obey all her employer's commands. Later she marries her employer and is asked whether she still obeys the same commands. She replies, "O, yes, but now in an altogether different and better way. I now obey because of love."

This agrees with the hymnwriter, who said:

"To see the law by Christ fulfilled,
And hear His pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child,
And duty into choice."

Phil. 3. 9

It needs to be clearly understood that in stating that the Gospel, and not the Law, is the believer's rule of conduct, we do *not* intend to countenance the slightest relaxation from the strictest moral uprightness. We are aware that in recent years, some professing Christians have taken the view that because they are not under the Law, they are at liberty, for example, to spend the Lord's

Rom. 7. 4; 8. 2
1 Cor. 9. 21
James 1. 25

Eph. 4. 30

Rom. 7. 6
Rom. 8. 1-3

Exod. 34. 30

Day as they choose. Although freed from the Law as a covenant of works, yet the believer is not lawless, because he is now under the law to Christ. This law is the perfect law of liberty (the gospel) which the Spirit of Christ within a believer brings him under willing and loving obedience to. Such is the nature of the spirit now in the child of God that he desires to do nothing that would grieve the Holy Spirit and thus all the commandments of his Master are his delight. We very simply maintain that the Gospel is a higher standard than the Law, operating as it does by love. As J.H. Gosden says, "Love is definitely a stricter rule and a mightier motive than fear."

In 2 Corinthians 3. 10, Paul compares and contrasts the Law and the Gospel and beautifully shows that though the glory of the Law was so dazzling that Moses' face shone, it was a forbidding rather than an attractive glory. Comparatively he declares that it had "no glory" by reason of the glory that excelleth in the Gospel.

To see by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Law-fulfiller is to be freed from the bondage of the Law and to walk in "newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."

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.

Acts 8. 35-38
Acts 16. 31-33

This Article is so plain and definite that it needs no comment except to say that *Gospel Standard* churches cannot and do not accept as church members any person who has only been baptised as an infant. They insist on re-baptism by immersion.

Acts 2. 41 (1st clause)

We hold that baptism can rightly be administered only to persons who have believed in and confessed the Lord Jesus – something which an infant cannot do. We maintain that repentance and a profession of faith must always precede baptism.

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.

As with Article 17, this Article also is so plain and definite that it needs no comment.

Lest it be thought that in many of our Articles of Faith we are too negative, emphasising overmuch what we do NOT believe, we mention that in doing so we follow the pattern of Scripture where we read so often, “not of works,” “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,” “not in word only” etc. Also the Ten Commandments – “Thou shalt not ...”

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.

The word sanctification means to set apart. Our Article rightly states that sanctification, like justification, is three-fold, each of the Persons of the sacred Trinity having a part therein.

The electing love of God the Father set His people apart in Christ from the rest of the race of Adam before the foundation of the world. This is the foundation of sanctification and every member of the Church of Christ has an equal interest in it.

Psa. 4. 3
1 Cor. 1. 2
Eph. 1. 4
Jude 1