

A BRIEF
CONFESSION
OR
DECLARATION
OF
FAITH

Set forth by many of us, who are (falsely) called Ana-Baptists, to inform all Men (in these days of scandal and reproach) of our innocent Belief and Practise; for which we are not only resolved to suffer Persecution, to the loss of our Goods, but also Life itself, rather than to decline the same.

Subscribed to by certain Elders, Deacons, and Brethren, met at London, in the first month (called March, 1660.) in the behalf of themselves, and many others unto whom they belong, in London, and in several Counties of this Nation, who are of the same Faith with us.

After the Way which men call Heresie, so Worship we the God of our Fathers; Believing all things which are written in the Law, and in the Prophets, Acts 24, 4.

LONDON

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Castle, near Temple-Barr, 1660.

I. We Believe and are verily confident, that there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, from everlasting to everlasting, glorious, and unwordable in all his attributes, 1 Cor. 8, 6. Isa. 40. 28.

II. That God in the beginning made Man Upright, and put him into a state and condition of Glory, without the least mixture of misery, from which he by transgression fell, and so came into a miserable and mortal estate, subject unto the first death, Gen. 1. 31. Eccles. 7. 29. Gen. 2. 17. 3. 17, 18, 19.

III. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, who is the only begotten Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary; yet as truly David's Lord, and David's root, as David's Son, and David's Offspring, Luke 20. 44. Revel. 22. 16. whom God freely sent into the World (because of his great love unto the World) who as freely gave himself a ransom for all, 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. tasting death for every man, Heb. 2. 9. a propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole World, 1 John 2. 2.

IV. That God is not willing that any should Perish, but that all should come to repentance, 2 Pet. 3. 9. and the knowledge of the truth, that they might be saved, 1 Tim. 2. 4. For which end Christ hath commanded, that the Gospel (to wit, the glad tidings of remission of sins) should be preached to every creature, Mark 16. 15. So that no man shall eternally suffer in Hell (that is, the second death) for want of a Christ that dyed for them, but as the Scripture saith, for denying the Lord that bought them, 2 Pet. 2. 1. or because they believe not in the name of the only begotten Son of God, John 3. 18. Unbelief therefore being the cause why the just and righteous God, will condemn the children of men; it follows against all contradiction, that all men at one time or other, are put into such a capacity, as that (through the grace of God) they may be eternally saved, John 1. 7. Acts 17. 30. Mark 6. 6. Heb. 3. 10, 18, 19. 1 John 5. 10. John 3. 17.

V. That such who first orderly comes into, and are brought up in the School of Christ's Church, and waiting there, comes to degrees of Christianity, rightly qualified and considerably gifted by Gods Spirit; ought to exercise their gifts not only in the Church, but also (as occasion serves) to preach to the World (they being approved of by the Church so to do) Acts 11. 22, 23, 24. Acts 11. 19. 20. and that among such some are to be chosen by the Church, and ordained by Fasting, Prayer, and Laying on of Hands, for the work of the Ministry, Acts 13. 2, 3. Acts 1. 23. Such so ordained, (and abiding faithful in their work) we own as Ministers of the Gospel; but all such who come not first to repent of their sins, believe on the Lord Jesus, and so Baptizes in his name for the remission of Sins, but are only brought up in the Schools of humane learning, to the attaining humane arts, and variety of languages, with many vain curiosities of speech, 1 Cor. 1. 19, 21. 2. 1, 4, 5. seeking rather the gain of large revenues, then the gain of souls to God: such (we say) we utterly deny, being such as have need rather to be taught themselves, than fit to teach others, Rom. 2. 21.

VI. That the way set forth by God for men to be justified in, is by faith in Christ, Rom. 5. 1.

That is to say, when men shall assent to the truth of the Gospel, believing with all their hearts, that there is remission of sins, and eternal life to be had in Christ.

And that Christ therefore is most worthy their constant affections, and subjection to all his Commandments, and therefore resolve with purpose of heart so to subject unto him in all things, and no longer unto themselves, 2 Cor. 5. 15.

And so, shall (with godly sorrow for the sins past) commit themselves to his grace, confidently depending upon him for that which they believe is to be had in him: such so believing are justified from all their sins, their faith shall be accounted unto them for righteousness, Rom. 4. 22, 23, 24. Rom. 3. 25, 26.

VII. That there is one holy Spirit, the precious gift of God, freely given to such as obey him, Ephes. 4. 4. Acts 5. 32. that there by they may be thoroughly sanctified, and made able (without which they are altogether unable) to abide stedfast in the faith, and to honour the Father, and his Son Christ, the Author and finisher of their faith; 1 Cor. 6. 11. There are three that bear record in Heayen, the Father, the Word, the holy Spirit, and these three are one; which Spirit of promise such have not yet received, (though they speak much of him) that are so far out of Love, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, and Temperance, (the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. 5. 22, 23.) as that they breath out much cruelty, and great envy against the Liberties, and peaceable living of such, as are not of their judgment, Though holy as to their conversations.

VIII. That God hath even before the foundation of the world chosen, (or elected) to eternal life, such as believe, and so are in Christ, John 3. 16. Ephes. 1. 4, 2 Thes. 2. 13. yet confident we are, that the purpose of God according to election, was not in the least arising from fore-seen faith in, or works of righteousness done by the creature, but only from the mercy, goodness, and compassion dwelling in God, and so it is of him that calleth, Rom. 9. ii. whose purity and unwordable holiness, cannot admit of any unclean person (or thing) to be in his presence, therefore his decree of mercy reaches only the godly man, whom (saith David) God hath set apart for himself, Psal. 4. 3.

IX. That men not considered simply as men, but ungodly men, were of old ordained to condemnation, considered as such, who turn the grace of God unto wantonness, and deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, Jude 4. God indeed sends a strong delusion to men, that they might be damned; but we observe that they are such (as saith the Apostle) that received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, 2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12. and so the indignation and wrath of God, is upon every soul of man that doth evil, (living and dying therein,) for there is no respect of persons with God. Rom. 2. 9, 10, 11.

X. That all Children dying in Infancy, having not actually transgressed against the Law of God in their own persons, are only subject to the first death, which comes upon them by the sin of the first Adam, from whence they shall be all raised by the second Adam; and not that any one of them (dying in that estate) shall suffer for Adams sin, eternal punishment in Hell. (which is the second death) for of such belongs the Kingdome of Heaven, 1 Cor. 15. 22. Mat. 19. 14. not daring to conclude with that uncharitable opinion of others, who though they plead much for the bringing of children into the visible Church here on earth by Baptism, yet nevertheless by their Doctrine that Christ dyed but for some, shut a great part of them out of the Kingdome of Heaven for ever.

XI. That the right and only way, of gathering Churches, (according to Christ's appointment, Mat. 28. 19, 20.) is first to teach, or preach the Gospel, Mark 16. 16. to the Sons and Daughters of men; and then to Baptise (that is in English to Dip) in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Spirit, or in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; such only of them, as profess repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts. 2. 38. Acts 8. 12. Acts 18. 8. And as for all such who preach not this Doctrine, but instead thereof, that Scriptureless thing of Sprinkling of Infants (falsly called Baptisme) whereby the pure word of God is made of no effect, and the new Testament-way of bringing in Members, into the Church by regeneration, cast out; when as the bond-woman & her son, that is to say, the old Testament-way of bringing in Children into the Church by generation, is cast out, as saith the Scripture, Gal. 4. 30, 22, 23, 24. Mat. 3. 8, 9. all such we utterly deny, forasmuch as we are commanded to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them, Ephes. 5. 11.

XII. That it is the duty of all such who are believers Baptized, to draw nigh unto God in submission to that principle of Christ's Doctrine, to wit, Prayer and Laying on of Hands, that they may receive the promise of the holy Spirit, Heb. 6. 1. 2. Acts 8. 12, 15, 17. Acts 19. 6. 2 Tim. 1. 6. whereby they may mortife the deeds of the body, Rom. 8. 13. and live in all things answerable to their professed intentions, and desires, even to the honour of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.

XIII. That it is the duty of such who are constituted as aforesaid, to continue stedfastly in Christ's and the Apostles Doctrine, and assembling together, in fellowship, in breaking of Bread, and Prayer, Acts 2. 42.

XIV. That although we thus declare the primitive way, and order of constituting Churches, yet we verily believe, and also de dare, that unless men so professing, and practising the forme and order of Christ's Doctrine, shall also beautifie the same with a holy and wise conversation, in all godliness and honesty; the profession of the visible form will be rendered to them of no effect; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12. 14. Isa. 1. 11, 12, 15, 16.

XV. That the Elders or Pastors which God hath appointed to oversee, and feed his Church (constituted as aforesaid) are such, who first being of the number of Disciples, shall in time appear to be vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, &c. not greedy of filthy lucre (as too many National Ministers are) but patient; not a brawler, not covetuous, &c. and as such chose, and ordained to office (according to the order of Scripture, Acts 14. 1 23.) who are to feed the flock with meat in due season, and in much love to rule over them, with all care, seeking after such as go astray; but as for all such who labour to feed themselves with the fat, more than to feed the flock, Ezek. 34. 2, 3. seeking more after theirs, than them, expressly contrary to the practise of the Ministers of old, who said, we seek not yours, but you, 2 Cor. 12. 14. All such we utterly deny, and hereby bear our continued Testimony against, Ezek. 34.

XVI. That the Ministers of Christ, that have freely received from God, ought freely to Minister to others, 1 Cor. 9. 17. and that such who have spiritual things, freely Ministered unto them, ought freely to communicate necessary things to the Ministers, (upon the account of their charge) 1 Cor. 9. 11. Gal. 6. 6. And as for Tyths, or any forced Maintenance, we utterly deny to be the Maintenance of Gospel Ministers.

XVII. That the true Church of Christ, ought after the first and second admonition, to reject all Hereticks, Tit. 3. 10, 11. and in the name of the Lord to withdraw from all such, as profess the way of the Lord, but walks disorderly in their conversations, 2 Thes. 3. 6. or any wayes causes divisions or offences, contrary to the Doctrine (of Christ) which they have learned, Rom. 16. 17.

XVIII. That such who are true Believers, even Branches in Christ the Vine, (and that in his account, whom he exhorts to abide in him, John 15. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.) or such who have charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of Faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. 1. 5. may nevertheless for want of watchfulness, swerve and I turn aside from the same, vers. 6, 7. and

become as withered Branches, cast into the fire and burned, John. 15. 6. But such who add un to their Faith Vertue, and unto .Vertue Knowledge, and unto Know ledge Temperance, &c. 2 Pet. 1 5, 6, 7. such shall never fall, vers. 8, 9, 10. 'tis impossible for all the false Christ's, and false Prophets, that are, and are to come, to deceive such, for they are kept by the power of God, through Faith unto Salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 5.

XIX. That the poor Saints belonging to the Church of Christ, are to be sufficiently provided for by the Churches, that they neither want food or rayment, and this by a, free and voluntary contribution, (and not of necessity, or by the constraint or power of the Magistrate) 2 Cor. 9. 7. 1 Cor. 8. 11, 12, and this through the free and voluntary help of the Deacons, (called Overseers of the poor) being faithful men, chosen by the Church, and ordained by Prayer and Laying on of Hands, to that Work, Acts 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. So that there is no need in the Church of Christ, of a Magesterial compulsion in this case, as there is among others, who being constituted in a fleshly and generational way, are necessitated to make use of a carnal sword, to compel even a small, mean, and short Maintenance for their poor; when as many other Members of their Churches, can and do part with great and large Sums of Money, to maintain their vain fashions, Gold, Pearls, and costly Array, which is expressly contrary to the Word of God. 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10. 1 Pet. 3. 3. Alas, what will such do when God riseth up, and when he visiteth, what will they answer him? Job 31. 14.

XX. That there shall be (through Christ who was dead, but is a live again from the dead) a Resurrection of all men from the graves of the Earth, Isa. 26. 19. both the just and the unjust, Acts 24. 15. that is, the fleshy bodies of men, sown into the graves of the earth, corruptable, dishonourable, weak, natural, (which so considered cannot inherit the Kingdome of God) shall be raised again, incorruptable, in glory, in power, spiritual, and so considered, the bodies of the Saints, (united again to their spirits) which here suffer for Christ, shall inherit the Kingdome, raining together with Christ, 1 Cor. 15. 21, 22, 42, 43, 44, 49.

XXI. That there shall be after the Resurrection from the graves of the Earth, An eternal Judgment, at the appearing of Christ, and his Kingdome, 2 Tim. 4. 1. Heb. 9. 27. at which time of judgment which is unalterable, and irrevocable, every man shall receive according to the things done in his body, 2 Cor. 5. 10.

XXII. That the same Lord Jesus who shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, Acts 1. 3. which was taken up from the Disciples, and carried up into Heaven, Luke 24. 51. Shall so come in like manner as he was seen go into Heaven, Acts. 1. 9, 10.

II. And when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory, Col. 3. 4. For then shall he be King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Rev. 19. 16. for the Kingdome is his, and he is the Governour among the Nations, Psal. 22. 28. and King over all the earth, Zech. 14. 9. and we shall reign (with him) on the Earth, Rev. 5. 10. the Kingdomes of this World, (which men so mightily strive after here to enjoy) shall become the Kingdomes of our Lord, and his Christ, Rev. 11. 15. for all is yours, (O ye that overcome this world) for ye are Christ's, and Christ is Gods, 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. For unto the Saints shall be given the Kingdome, and the greatness of the Kingdome, under (mark that) the whole Heaven, Dan. 7. 27. Though (alas) now many men be scarce content that the Saints should have so much as being among them; but when Christ shall appear, then shall be their day, then shall be given unto them power over the Nations, to rule them with a Rod of Iron, Rev. 2. 26, 27. then shall they receive a Crown of life, which no man shall take from them, nor they by any means turned, or overturned from it, for the oppressor shall be broken in pieces, Psal. 72. 4. and their now vain, rejoycings turned into mourning, and bitter Lamentations, as 'tis written, Job 20. 5, 6, 7. The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the Hypocrite but for a moment; though his excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet shall he perish for ever, like his own dung; they which have seen him, shall say, where is he?

XXIII. That the holy Scriptures is the rule whereby Saints both in matters of Faith, and conversation are to be regulated, they being able to make men wise unto salvation, through Faith in Christ Jesus, profitable for Doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works, 2 Tim. 3. 15, 16, 17. John 20. 31. Isa. 8. 20.

XXIV. That it is the will, and mind of God (in these Gospel times) that all men should have the free liberty of their own Consciences in matters of Religion, or Worship, without the least oppression, or persecution, as simply upon that account; and that for any in Authority otherwise to act, we confidently believe is expressly contrary to the mind of Christ, who requires that whatsoever men would that others should do unto them, they should even so do unto others, Mat. 7. 12. and

that the Tares, and the Wheat should grow together in the field, (which is the world) until the harvest (which is the end of the world,) Mat. 13. 29, 30, 38, 39.

XXV. We believe that there ought to be civil Magistrates in all Nations, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well, 1 Pet. 2. 14. And that all wicked lewdness, and fleshly filthiness, contrary to just and wholesome (Civil) Laws, ought to be punished according to the nature of the offences; and this without respect of any Persons, Religion, or profession whatsoever; and that we and all men are obliged by Gospel rules, to be subject to the higher Powers, to obey Magistrates, Tit. 3. 1. and to submit to every Ordinance of man, for the Lords sake, as saith Peter 2. 13. But in case the Civil Powers do, or shall at any time impose things about matters of Religion, which we through conscience to God cannot actually obey, then we with Peter also do say, that we ought (in such cases) to obey God rather than men; Acts 5. 29. and accordingly do hereby declare our whole, and holy intent and purpose, that (through the help of grace) we will not yield, nor (in such cases) in the least actually obey them; yet humbly purposing (in the Lords strength) patiently to suffer whatsoever shall be inflicted upon us, for our conscionable forbearance.

These things (O ye Sons and Daughters of Men) we verily believe to be the Lords will and mind, and therefore cannot but speak, and if herein we differ front many, yea from multitudes, from the learned, the wise and prudent of this World, we (with Peter and John) do herein make our solemne, and serious appeale, namely, whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto men, (of a contrary perswasion) more than unto God? Oh let the judicious, judge righteous judgment! Acts 4. 19, 20.

And in the beleife, and practise of these things, (it being the good old Apostolical way) our souls have found that rest, and soul peace, which the world knows not, and which they cannot take from us; of whom then should we be afraid? God is become our strength, our light, our salvation; therefore, we are resolved (through grace) to seal the truth or these things in way of suffering persecution, not only to the loss of our goods, freedomes, or liberties, but with our lives also (if called thereunto.)

Moreover we do utterly, and from our very hearts, in the Lords fear, declare against all those wicked, and divillish reports, and reproaches, falsly cast upon us, as though some of us (in & about the City of London) had lately *gotten knives, booked knives*, & the like, & great store of Arms besides what was given forth by order of Parliament, intending to cut the throats of such as were contrary minded to us in matters of Religion, and that many such *knivez*, and Armies, for the carrying on some secret design, hath been found in some of our houses by search; we say, from truth of heart, in the Lords fear, that we do utterly abhor and abominate the thoughts thereof, and much more the actions; and do hereby challenge both City, and Country (in our innocency herein) as being not able to prove the things whereof they accuse us; and do for evermore declare the Inventors of such reports, to be lyers, and wicked devisers of mischeife, and corrupt designs: . God that is above all will justifie our innocency herein, who well knows our integrity, in what we here declare, the Lord lay it not to their charge.

In the time of building the decayed House of God, Samballet, & Tobiah, (wicked Counsellors) hired Shemaiah to make good Nehemiah afraid; and Laboured against him, that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach him, & hinder the building of the house of God. Neh. 6. 12. For I have heard (saith the Prophet) the defaming of many; report, say they, and we will report it, Jer. 20. 10.

Suscribed by certain Elders, Deacons, and Brathren met at London, in the first Month (called March, 1660.) in the behalf of themselves, and many others unto whom they be long, in London, and in several Counties of this Nation, who are of the same Faith with Us.

*Joseph Wright,
William Jeffery,
Thomas Monck,
John Hartnoll,
Benjamine Morley,
Francis Stanley,
George Hammon,
William Smart,*

*John Hammersly,
William Russet,
Joseph Keeich,
Nicholas Newberry,
Samuel Lover,
George Wright,
John Parsons, Junior,
John Claton,*

*John Reebe,
Thomas Parrot,
John Wood,
Francis Smith,
Edward Jones,
Humphrey Jones,
Matthew Caffen,
Samuel Loveday,
John Parsons, Senior
Thomas Stacy,
Edward Stanley,
Jonathan Gennings,*

*Thomas Seele,
Michael Whitar,
Giles Browne,
John Wells,
Stephen Tone,
Thomas Lathwel,
William Chadwell,
William Raph,
Henry Browne,
William Paine,
Richard Bowin,
Thomas Smith,*

THE END