

Declaration of Faith

Issued by the Richmond Conference in 1887

(N.B. It should be understood that the quotations from Scripture are made from the Authorized Version unless stated to be from the Revised Version.)

It is under a deep sense of what we owe to Him who has loved us that we feel called upon to offer a declaration of those fundamental doctrines of Christian truth that have always been professed by our branch of the Church of Christ.

Of God

We believe in one holy, (Isa. 6:3, 58:15) almighty, (Gen. 17:1) all-wise, (Rom. 11:33, 16:27) and everlasting (Ps 90:1-2) God, the Father, (Matt 11:25-27) the Creator (Gen 1:1) and Preserver (Job 7:20) of all things; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, by whom all things were made, (John 1:30) and by whom all things consist; (Col 1:17) and in one Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, (John 15:26, 16:7) the Reprover (John 16:8) of the world, the Witness for Christ, (John 15:26) and the Teacher, (John 14:26) Guide, (John 16:13) and Sanctifier (2 Thess 2:13) of the people of God; and that these three are one in the eternal Godhead; (Matt 28:19, John 10:30, 17:21) to whom be honor, praise, and thanksgiving, now and forever. Amen.

The Lord Jesus Christ

It is with reverence and thanksgiving that we profess our unwavering allegiance to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. (John 1:18). In Him was life, (John 1:4) and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4) He is the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; (John 1:9) through whom the light of truth in all ages has proceeded from the Father of lights. (James 1:17) He is the eternal Word (John 1:1) who was with God and was God, revealing Himself in infinite wisdom and love, both as man's Creator (Col 1:13-16) and Redeemer; (Col 1:14) for by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible. Conceived of the Holy Ghost (Matt 1:20) born of the virgin Mary, (Matt 1:23-25, Luke 1:35) the word was made flesh, (John 1:14) and dwelt amongst men. He came in the fulness (Gal 4:4) of the appointed time, being verily foreordained before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20) that He might fulfill (Isa 11:1-5, Isa 52:13-15) the eternal counsel of the righteousness and love of God for the redemption of man (Isa 53). In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. (Col 2:9). Though He was rich, yet for our sakes, He became poor, veiling in the form of a servant (Phil 2:7) the brightness of His glory, that, through Him the kindness and love of God (Titus 3:4) toward man might appear in a manner every way suited to our wants and finite capacities. He went about doing good; (Acts 10:38) for us He endured (Isa 53:4, Luke 12:50, Luke 19:41, 22:44) sorrow, hunger, thirst, weariness, (John 4:6) pain, unutterable anguish (Luke 22:43,44) of body and of soul, being in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb 4:15). Thus humbling himself that we might be exalted, He emphatically recognized the duties and the sufferings of humanity as among the means whereby, through the obedience of faith, we are to be disciplined for heaven, sanctifying them to us, by Himself performing and enduring them, leaving us the one perfect example (1 Peter 2:21) of all righteousness (Matt 3:15) in self-sacrificing love.

But not only in these blessed relations must the Lord Jesus be ever precious to His people. In Him is revealed as true God and Perfect man (Eph 4:13) a Redeemer, at once able to suffer and almighty to save. He became obedient (Phil 2:8) unto death, even the death of the cross, and is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world; (1 John 2:2) in whom we have redemption through His blood (Eph 1:7) the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. It is our joy to confess that the remission of sins which any partake of is only in and by virtue of His most satisfactory sacrifice and no otherwise. (Barclay's *Apology*, Prop. 5 and 6 par. 15, p.141). He was buried and rose again the third day (1 Cor 15:4) according to the Scriptures, becoming the first fruits (1 Cor 15:23) of them that sleep, and having shown Himself alive after His passion, by many infallible proofs, (Acts

1:3) He ascended into heaven, and hath sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, now to appear in the presence of God for us. (Heb 1:3, 9:24). With the apostles who beheld His ascension, we rest in the assurance of the angelic messengers, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11, and see 5:7). With the apostle John, we would desire to unite in the words, "Amen; even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev 22:20). And now, whilst thus watching and waiting, we rejoice to believe that He is our King and Savior. He is the one Mediator of the new and everlasting covenant (1 Tim 2:5, Heb 9:15) who makes peace and reconciliation between God offended and man offending; (George Fox's Epistle to the Governor of Barbados) the great High Priest whose priesthood is unchangeable. (Heb 4:14, 7:24). He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb 7:25). All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. (Matt 28:18). By Him the world shall be judged in righteousness; (Acts 17:31) for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father (John 5:22,23). All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil until the resurrection of judgment (John 5:2,29 RV).

We reverently confess and believe that divine honor and worship are due to the son of God, and that He is in true faith to be prayed unto, and His name to be called upon, as the Primitive Christians did because of the glorious oneness of the father and the Son; and that we cannot acceptably offer prayers and praises to God, nor receive from Him a gracious answer or blessing, but in and through his dear Son. (Declaration of 1693, in Sewell's Hist., vol. 2, 379).

We would, with humble thanksgiving, bear an especial testimony to our Lord's perpetual dominion and power in His church. Through Him the redeemed in all generations have derived their light, their forgiveness, and their joy. All are members of this church, by whatsoever name they may be called among men, who have been baptized by the one Spirit into the one body; who are builded as living stones upon Christ, the Eternal Foundation, and are united in faith and love in that fellowship which is with the Father and with the Son. Of this church the Lord Jesus Christ is the alone Head. (Eph 1:22). All its true members are made one in Him. They have washed their robes and made them white in His precious blood, (Rev 7:14) and He has made them priests unto God and His Father (Rev 1:6). He dwells in their hearts by faith, and gives them of his peace. His will is their law, and in Him they enjoy the true liberty, a freedom from the bondage of sin.

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is, in the unity of the eternal Godhead, one with the Father and with the Son. (Matt 28:19, 2 Cor 13:14). He is the comforter "Whom," saith Christ, "the Father will send in my name." (John 14:26). He convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. (John 16:8). He testifies of and glorifies Jesus (John 16:14). It is the Holy Spirit who makes the evil manifest. He quickens them that are dead in trespasses and sins, and opens the inward eye to behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (Eph 2:1). Coming in the name and with the authority of the risen and ascended Savior, He is the precious pledge of the continued love and care of our exalted King. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them, as a realized possession, to the believing soul, (John 16:14). Dwelling in the hearts of believers, (John 14:17) He opens their understandings that they may understand the Scriptures, and becomes, to the humbled and surrendered heart, the Guide, Comforter, Support, and Sanctifier.

We believe that the essential qualification of the Lord's service is bestowed upon His children through the reception and baptism of the Holy Ghost. This Holy Spirit is the seal of reconciliation to the believer in Jesus (Eph 1:13,14), the witness to his adoption into the family of the redeemed; (Rom 8:15,16) and the foretaste of the full communion and perfect joy which are reserved for them that endure unto the end. We own no principle of spiritual light, life or holiness, inherent by nature in the mind or heart of man.

We own no principle of spiritual light, life or holiness, but the influence of the Holy Spirit of God, bestowed on mankind, in various measures and degrees, through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is the capacity to receive this blessed influence, which in an especial manner, gives man pre-eminence above the beasts that perish; which distinguishes him in every nation and in every clime, as an object of the redeeming love of God; as a being not only intelligent but

responsible; for whom the message of salvation through our crucified Redeemer is, under all possible circumstances, designed to be a joyful sound. The Holy Spirit must ever be distinguished, both from the conscience which He enlightens, and from the natural faculty of reason, which when unsubjected to His Holy influence, is, in the things of God, very foolishness. As the eye is to the body, so is the conscience to our inner being, the organ by which we see; and as both light and life are essential to the eye, so conscience, as the inward eye, cannot see aright, without the quickening and illumination of the Spirit of God. One with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit can never disown or dishonor our once crucified and now risen and glorified Redeemer. We disavow all professed illumination or spirituality that is divorced from faith in Jesus Christ of Nazareth, crucified for us without the gates of Jerusalem.

The Holy Scriptures

It has ever been, and still is, the belief of the Society of Friends that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God; that, therefore, there can be no appeal from them to any other authority whatsoever; that they are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ. "These are written so that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." (John 20:31). The Scriptures are the only divinely authorized record of the doctrines which we are bound, as Christians, to accept, and of the moral principles which are to regulate our actions. No one can be required to believe, as an article of faith, any doctrine which is not contained in them; and whatsoever anyone says or does, contrary to the Scriptures, though under profession of the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, must be reckoned and accounted a mere delusion. To the Christian, the Old Testament comes with the solemn and repeated attestation of his Lord. It is to be read in the light and completeness of the New; thus will its meaning be unveiled, and the humble disciple will be taught to discern the unity and mutual adaptation of the whole, and the many-sidedness and harmony of its testimony to Christ. The great Inspirer of Scripture is ever its true Interpreter. He performs this office in condescending love, not by superseding our understandings, but by renewing and enlightening them. Where Christ presides, idle speculation is hushed; His doctrine is learned in the doing of His will, and all knowledge ripens into a deeper and richer experience of His truth and love.

Man's Creation and Fall

It pleased God, in His wisdom and goodness, to create man out of the dust of the earth, and to breathe into his nostrils the breath of life, so that man became a living soul; formed after the image and likeness of God, capable of fulfilling the divine law, and of holding communion with his Maker. (Gen 2:7, 1:26,27). Being free to obey, or to disobey, he fell into transgression, through unbelief, under the temptation of Satan, (Gen 3:1-7) and, thereby, lost that spiritual life of righteousness in which he was created; and, so, death passed upon him, as the inevitable consequence of his sin. (Rom 5:12). As the children of fallen Adam, all mankind bear his image. They partake of his nature, and are involved in the consequences of his fall. To every member of every successive generation, the words of the Redeemer are alike applicable, "Ye must be born again." (John 3:7). But while we hold these views of the lost condition of man in the fall, we rejoice to believe that sin is not imputed to any, until they transgress the divine law, after sufficient capacity has been given to understand it; and that infants, though inheriting this fallen nature, are saved in the infinite mercy of God through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Justification and Sanctification

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) We believe that justification is of God's free grace, through which, upon repentance and faith, He pardons our sins, and imparts to us a new life. It is received, not for any works of righteousness that we have done, (Titus 3:5) but in the unmerited mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Through faith in Him, and the shedding of His precious blood, the guilt of sin is taken away, and we stand reconciled to God. The offering up of Christ as the propitiation for the sins of the whole world is the appointed manifestation both of the righteousness and of the love of God. In this propitiation the pardon of sin involves no abrogation or relaxation of the law of holiness. It is the vindication and establishment of that law, (Rom 3:31) in virtue of the free and righteous

submission of the Son of God himself to all its requirements. He, the unchangeably just, proclaims Himself the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. (Rom 3:26). From age to age, the sufferings and death of Christ have been a hidden mystery, and a rock of offense to the unbelief and pride of man's fallen nature; yet, to the humble penitent whose heart is broken under the convicting power of the Spirit, life is revealed in that death. As he looks upon Him who was wounded for our transgressions, (Isa 53:5) and upon whom the Lord was pleased to lay the iniquity of us all, (Isa 53:6) his eye is more and more opened to see, and his heart to understand, the exceeding sinfulness of sin for which the Savior died; whilst, in the sense of pardoning grace, he will have joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (Rom 5:11).

We believe that in connection with Justification is Regeneration: that they who come to this experience know that they are not their own (1 Cor 6:19) that being reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we are saved by His life; (Rom 5:10) a new heart is given and new desires; old things are passed away, and we become new creatures, (2 Cor 5:17) through faith in Christ Jesus; our wills being surrendered to His holy will, grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 5:21)

Sanctification is experienced in the acceptance of Christ in living faith for justification, in so far as the pardoned sinner, through faith in Christ, is clothed with a measure of His righteousness and receives the Spirit of promise; for, as saith the Apostle, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor 6:11) We rejoice to believe that the provisions of God's grace are sufficient to deliver from the power, as well as from the guilt, of sin, and to enable His believing children always to triumph in Christ. (2 Cor 2:14) How full of encouragement is the declaration, "According to your faith be it unto you." (Matt 9:29) Whosoever submits himself wholly to God, believing and appropriating His promises, and exercising faith in Christ Jesus, will have his heart continually cleansed from all sin, by His precious blood, and, through the renewing, refining power of the Holy Spirit, be kept in conformity to the will of God, will love Him with all his heart, mind, soul and strength, and be able to say, with the Apostle Paul, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom 8:2) Thus, in its full experience, Sanctification is deliverance from the pollution, nature, and love of sin. To this we are every one called, that we may serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life. (Luke 1:74,75) It was the prayer of the apostle for the believers, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it." (1 Thes 5:23, 24) Yet the most holy Christian is still liable to temptation, is exposed to the subtle assaults of Satan, and can only continue to follow holiness as he humbly watches unto prayer, and is kept in constant dependence upon his Savior, walking in the light (1 John 1:7) in the loving obedience of faith.

The Resurrection and Final Judgment

We believe, according to the Scriptures, that there shall be a resurrection from the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, (Acts 24:15) and that God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ whom He hath ordained. (Acts 17:31) For, as saith the apostle, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor 5:10).

We sincerely believe, not only a resurrection in Christ from the fallen and sinful state here, but a rising and ascending into glory with Him hereafter; that when He at last appears we may appear with Him in glory. But that all the wicked, who live in rebellion against the light of grace, and die finally impenitent, shall come forth to the resurrection of condemnation. And that the soul of every man and woman shall be reserved, in its own distinct and proper being, and shall have its proper body as God is pleased to give it. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body; (1 Cor 15:44) that being first which is natural and afterward that which is spiritual. And though it is said, "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality," (1 Cor 15:53) the change shall be such as will accord with the declaration, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." (1 Cor 15:50). We shall be raised out of all corruption and corruptibility, out of all mortality, and shall be the children of God, being the children of resurrection. (Luke 20:36) (See also Declaration of 1693, *Sewell's History*, vol. II, 383-384)

"Our citizenship is in heaven" (RV), from whence also we look for the Savior the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. (Phil 3:20-21)

We believe that the punishment of the wicked and the blessedness of the righteousness shall be everlasting, according to the declaration of our compassionate Redeemer, to whom the judgment is committed, "These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (RV, Matt 25:46)

Baptism

We would express our continued conviction that our Lord appointed no outward rite our ceremony for observance in His church. We accept every command of our Lord in what we believe to be its genuine import, as absolutely conclusive. The question of the use of outward ordinances is with us a question, not as to the authority of Christ, but as to his real meaning. We reverently believe that, as there is one Lord and one faith, so there is, under the Christian dispensation, but one baptism, (Eph 4:4,5) even that whereby all believers are baptized in the one Spirit into the one body. (1 Cor 12:13 RV) This is not an outward baptism with water, but a spiritual experience; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, (1 Pet 3:21) but that inward work which, by transforming the heart and settling the soul upon Christ, brings forth the answer of a good conscience towards God, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in the experience of His love and power, as the risen and ascended Savior. No baptism in outward water can satisfy the description of the apostle, of being buried with Christ by baptism unto death. (Rom 6:4) It is with the Spirit alone that any can thus be baptized. In this experience the announcement of the Forerunner of our Lord is fulfilled, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Matt 3:11) In this view we accept the commission of our blessed Lord as given in Matthew 28:18, 19 and 20th verses: "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you, and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (RV) This commission, as we believe, was not designed to set up a new ritual under the new covenant, or to connect the initiation into a membership, in its nature essentially spiritual, with a mere ceremony of a typical character. Otherwise it was not possible for the Apostle Paul, who was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostle, (2 Cor 11:5) to have disclaimed that which would, in that case, have been of the essence of his commission when he wrote, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." (1 Cor 1:17) Whenever an external ceremony is commanded, the particulars, the mode and incidents of that ceremony, become of its essence. There is an utter absence of these particulars in the text before us. Which confirms our persuasion that the commission must be construed in connection with the spiritual power which the risen Lord promised should attend the witness of his apostles and of the church to Him, and which, after Pentecost, so mightily accompanied their ministry of the word and prayer, that those to whom they were sent were introduced into an experience wherein they had a saving knowledge of, and living fellowship with, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Supper of the Lord

Intimately connected with the conviction already expressed is the view that we have ever maintained as to the true supper of the Lord. We are well aware that our Lord was pleased to make use of a variety of symbolical utterances, but he often gently upbraided His disciples for accepting literally what He had intended only in its spiritual meaning. His teaching, as in His parables or in the command to wash one another's feet, was often in symbols, and ought ever to be received in the light of His own emphatic declaration, "The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63) The old covenant was full of ceremonial symbols; the new covenant, to which our Savior alluded at the last supper, is expressly declared by the prophet to be "not according to the old." (Jer 31:32, Heb 8:9) We cannot believe that in setting up this new covenant the Lord Jesus intended an institution out of harmony with the spirit of this prophecy. The eating of His body and the drinking of His blood cannot be an outward act. They truly partake of them who habitually rest upon the sufferings and death of their Lord as their only hope, and to whom the indwelling Spirit gives to drink of the fullness that is in Christ. It is this inward and spiritual partaking that is the true supper of the Lord.

The presence of Christ with His church is not designed to be by symbol or representation, but in the real communication of His own Spirit. "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, who shall abide with you forever," (John 14:16) convincing of sin, testifying of Jesus, taking of the things of Christ, this blessed Comforter communicates to the believer and to the church, in a gracious, abiding manifestation, the *real presence* of the Lord. As the great remembrancer, through whom the promise is fulfilled, He needs no ritual or priestly intervention in bringing to the experience of the true commemoration and communion. "Behold," saith the risen Redeemer, "I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me." (Rev 3:20) In an especial manner, when assembled for congregational worship, are believers invited to the festival of the Savior's peace, and in a united act of faith and love, unfettered by any outward rite or ceremonial, to partake together of the body that was broken and of the blood that was shed for them, without the gates of Jerusalem. In such a worship they are enabled to understand the words of the apostle as expressive of a sweet and most real experience: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Cor 10:16,17)

Public Worship

Worship is the adoring response of the heart and mind to the influence of the Spirit of God. It stands neither in forms nor in the formal disuse of forms: it may be without words as well as with them, but it must be in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24) We recognize the value of silence, not as an end, but as a means toward the attainment of the end; a silence, not of listlessness or of vacant musing, but of holy expectation before the Lord. Having become His adopted children through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is our privilege to meet together and unite in the worship of Almighty God, to wait upon Him for the renewal of our strength, for communion one with another, for the edification of believers in the exercise of various spiritual gifts, and for the declaration of the glad tidings of salvation to the unconverted who may gather with us. This worship depends not upon numbers. Where two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ there is a church, and Christ, the living Head, in the midst of them. Through His mediation without the necessity for any inferior instrumentality, is the Father to be approached and reverently worshiped. The Lord Jesus has forever fulfilled and ended the typical and sacrificial worship under the law, by the offering up of Himself upon the cross for us, once for all. He has opened the door of access into the inner sanctuary, and graciously provided spiritual offerings of the service of his temple, suited to the several conditions of all who worship in spirit and in truth. The broken and the contrite heart, the confession of the soul prostrate before God, the prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, the earnest wrestling of the spirit, the outpouring of humble thanksgiving, the spiritual song and melody of the heart, (Eph 5:19) the simple exercise of faith, the self-denying service of love, these are among the sacrifices which He, our merciful and faithful High Priest, is pleased to prepare, by His Spirit, in the hearts of them that receive Him, and to present with acceptance unto God.

By the immediate operations of the Holy spirit, He as the Head of the church, alone selects and qualifies those who are to present His messages or engage in other service for Him; and, hence, we cannot commit any formal arrangement to any one in our regular meetings for worship. We are well aware that the Lord has provided a diversity of gifts (1 Cor 12:4-6) for the needs both of the church and of the world, and we desire that the church and of the world, and we desire that the church may feel her responsibility, under the government of her Great Head, in doing her part to foster these gifts, and in making arrangements for their proper exercise. It is not for individual exaltation, but for mutual profit, that the gifts are bestowed; (1 Cor 12:7) and every living church, abiding under the government of Christ, is humbly and thankfully to receive and exercise them, in subjection to her Holy Head. The church that quenches the Spirit and lives to itself alone must die.

We believe the preaching of the Gospel to be one of the chief means, divinely appointed, for the spreading of the glad tidings of life and salvation through our crucified Redeemer, for the awakening and conversion of sinners, and for the comfort and edification of believers. As it is the prerogative of the Great Head of the church alone to select and call the ministers of His Gospel, so we believe that both the gift and the qualification to exercise it must be derived immediately from Him; and that, as in the primitive church, so now also, He confers spiritual gifts upon women as well as upon men, agreeably to the prophecy recited by the apostle Peter, "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," (Acts 2:17) respecting which the apostle declares, "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar

off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:39) As the gift is freely received so it is to be freely exercised. (Matt 10:8 See Also Acts 20:33-35) in simple obedience to the will of God.

Spiritual gifts, precious as they are, must not be mistaken for grace; they add to our responsibility, but do not raise the minister above his brethren or sisters. They must be exercised in continued dependence upon our Lord and blessed is that ministry in which man is humbled, and Christ and His grace exalted. "He that is greatest among you," said our Lord and Master, "let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve. I am among you as he that serveth." (Luke 22:26,27)

While the church cannot confer spiritual gifts, it is its duty to recognize and foster them, and to promote their efficiency by all the means in its power. And while, on the one hand, the Gospel should never be preached for money, (Acts 8:20, 20:33-35) on the other, it is the duty of the church to make such provision that it shall never be hindered for want of it.

The church, if true to her allegiance, cannot forget her part in the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15) Knowing that it is the Spirit of God that can alone prepare and qualify the instruments who fulfill this command, the true disciple will be found still sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening that he may learn, and learning that he may obey. He humbly places himself at his Lord's disposal, and when he hears the call, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" is prepared to respond, in childlike reverence and love, "Here am I, send me." (Isa 6:8)

Prayer and Praise

Prayer is the outcome of our sense of need, and of our continual dependence upon God. He who uttered the invitation, "Ask and it shall be given you," (Matt 7:7) is himself the Mediator and High Priest who, by His Spirit, prompts the petition, and who presents it with the acceptance before God. With such an invitation, prayer becomes the duty and the privilege of all who are called by His name. Prayer is, in the awakened soul, the utterance of the cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," (Luke 18:13) and, at every stage of the believer's course, prayer is essential to his spiritual life. A life without prayer is a life practically without God. The Christian's life is a continual asking. The thirst that prompts the petition produces, as it is satisfied, still deeper longings, which prepare for yet more bounteous supplies, from Him who delights to bless. Prayer is not confined to the closet. When uttered in response to the prompts of the Holy Spirit, it becomes an important part of public worship, and, whenever the Lord's people meet together in His name, it is their privilege to wait upon Him for the spirit of grace and supplications. (Zech. 12:10) A life of prayer cannot be other than a life of praise. As the peace of Christ reigns in the church, her living members accept all that they receive, as from His pure bounty, and each day brings them fresh pledges of their Father's love. Satisfied with the goodness of His house, whether as individuals, in families, or in congregations, they will be still praising Him, (Ps 84:4) heart answering to heart, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name." (Ps 103.1)

Liberty of Conscience in Its Relationship to Civil Government

That conscience should be free, and that in matters of religious doctrine and worship man is accountable only to God, are truths which are plainly declared in the New Testament; and which are confirmed by the whole scope of the Gospel, and by the example of our Lord and His disciples. To rule over the conscience, and to command the spiritual allegiance of his creature man, is the high and sacred prerogative of God alone. In religion every act ought to be free. A forced worship is plainly a contradiction in terms, under that dispensation in which the worship of the Father must be in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)

We have ever maintained that it is the duty of Christians to obey the enactments of civil government, except those which interfere with our allegiance to God. We owe much to its blessings. Through it we enjoy liberty and protection, in connection with law and order. Civil government is a divine ordinance, (Rom 13:1, 1 Pet 2:13-16) instituted to promote the best welfare of man, hence magistrates are to be regarded as God's ministers who should be

a terror to evildoers and a praise to them that do well. Therefore, it is with us a matter of conscience to render them respect and obedience in the exercise of their proper functions.

Marriage

Marriage is an institution graciously ordained by the Creator Himself, for the help and continuance of the human family. It is not a mere civil contract, and ought never to be entered upon without a reference to the sanction and blessing of Him who ordained it. It is a solemn engagement for the term of life, (Matt 19:5,6) designed for the mutual assistance and comfort of both sexes, that they may be helpmeets to each other in things temporal and spiritual. To this end it should imply concurrence in spiritual as well as temporal concerns, and should be entered upon discreetly, soberly, and in the fear of the Lord.

Peace

We feel bound explicitly to avow our unshaken persuasion that all war is utterly incompatible with the plain precepts of our divine Lord and Law-giver, and the whole spirit of His Gospel, and that no plea of necessity or policy, however urgent or peculiar, can avail to release either individuals or nations from the paramount allegiance which they owe to Him who hath said, "Love your enemies." (Matt 5:44, Luke 6:27) In enjoining this love, and the forgiveness of injuries, He who has brought us to Himself has not prescribed for man precepts which are incapable of being carried into practice, or of which the practice is to be postponed until all shall be persuaded to act upon them. We cannot doubt that they are incumbent now, and that we have in the prophetic Scriptures the distinct intimation of their direct application not only to individuals, but to nations also. (Isa 2:4, Micah 4:1) When nations conform their laws to this divine teaching, wars must necessarily cease.

We would, in humility, but in faithfulness to our Lord, express our firm persuasion that all the exigencies of civil government and social order may be met under the banner of the Prince of Peace, in strict conformity with His commands.

Oaths

We hold it to be the inalienable privilege of the disciple of the Lord Jesus that his statements concerning matters of fact within his knowledge should be accepted, under all circumstances, as expressing his belief as to the fact asserted. We rest upon the plain command of our Lord and Master, "Swear not at all;" (Matt 5:34) and we believe any departure from this standard to be prejudicial to the cause of truth and to that confidence between man and man, the maintenance of which is indispensable to our mutual well being. This command, in our persuasion, applies not to profane swearing only, but to judicial oaths also. It abrogates and previous permission to the contrary, and is, for the Christian, absolutely conclusive.

The First Day of the Week

Whilst the remembrance of our Creator ought to be at all times present with the Christian, we would express our thankfulness to our Heavenly Father that He has been pleased to honor the setting apart of one day in seven for the purposes of holy rest, religious duties, and public worship; and we desire that all under our name may avail themselves of this great privilege as those who are called to be risen with Christ, and to seek those things that are above where He sitteth at the right hand of God. (Col 3:1) May the release thus granted from other occupations be diligently improved. On this day of the week especially ought the households of Friends to be assembled for the reading of the Scriptures and for waiting upon the Lord; and we trust that, in a Christianly wise economy of our time and strength, the engagements of the day may be so ordered as not to frustrate the gracious provision thus made for us by our Heavenly Father, or to shut out the opportunity either for public worship or for private retirement and devotional reading.

In presenting this declaration of our Christian faith, we desire that all our members may be afresh encouraged, in humility and devotedness, to renewed faithfulness in fulfilling their part in the great mission of the Church, and through the Church to the world around us, in the name of our Crucified Redeemer. Life from Christ, life in Christ, must ever be the basis of life for Christ. For this we have been created and redeemed, and, by this alone, can the longings of our immortal souls be satisfied.