

ARTICLES OF FAITH,
AND
DUTIES OF MEMBERSHIP
OF THE
ENGLISH CONFERENCE
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL OLD BAPTIST UNION

*Organized in London, August 18th, 1880, after the
Principles of the General Baptist Confessions of Faith of
1611 and 1660.*

By THE REV. H. AUGUSTUS SQUIRE, PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE
INTERNATIONAL UNION.

Fifth Edition.

Price 2d. Post Free 2½d.

Published by the OLD BAPTIST UNION BOOK AND TRACT SOCIETY.
English Depôt: Wordsworth Road, Stoke Newington, London, N.
American Depôt: Rev. F. J. CATERER, Washington, Rhode Island, U.S.A.
And may be had at any Branch of the Old Baptist Union.

THE ENGLISH CONFERENCE

— OF —

The International Old Baptist Union.

Certificate of Membership.



This is to certify that

was received as a Member of the

Branch of the Old Baptist Union, on

Signed.

James Wickes

Pastor

The following are the rules, or brief Articles of Faith, of the English Churches of the International Old Baptist Union, which were submitted to the ministers and members and approved when the Conference was organised, in London, August 18th, 1880, after the Scriptural principles of the General Baptists of 1611 and 1660; from which derivation—we being their true representatives—and from our union with the Old Baptists of America, founded in 1638, we justly claim to be known as *Old Baptists* :—

1st.—That we believe with all our hearts in the only true and living God, the Creator and Preserver of all things visible and invisible; and in unity of this Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

“Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (Matt. xxviii. 19).

“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost” (1 John v, 7).

“Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me” (Exod. xx. 8).

2nd.—That we believe in the Bible as a revelation from God for man’s continual guidance in connection with the Holy Ghost: and the Bible shall be our rule of Faith.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

“Holy men of God spake (and wrote) as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. i. 21).

“To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. viii. 20).

3rd.—That we should love God with all our hearts and with all our souls, and with all our strength; and our neighbours, brothers, and sisters as ourselves.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. xxii. 37, 39).

“This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you” (John xv. 12).

4th.—That we believe in true sanctification, and walking with God, and that man should live “By every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. iv. 4), required of him in the Prophets, and in the Gospel dispensation. And we believe that without complete obedience to the word and will of God it is impossible to be perfectly holy, our growth in holiness being proportionate to our obedience.

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification” (1 Thess. iv. 3).

“And Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. xii. 14)

“Let us go on unto perfection” (Heb. vi. 1).

“Perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. vii. 1).

“That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Col. iv. 12).

“Now the God of peace . . . make you perfect in every good work to do His will” (Heb. xiii. 21).

5th.—That we believe all believers are saved by the grace of God and merits of Jesus Christ, and that salvation, from first to last, is the gift of God to fallen man, without merit, and that we are complete in Christ—through faith in the atonement—Who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. And we believe that God is “Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”

(2 Pet. iii. 9), for which end Christ hath commanded that the Gospel should be preached to every creature.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8.)

"And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 8).

6th.—That we contend for the One Faith of God, of which Christ is the Author and Finisher, the faith once delivered to the saints, which honours God and is perfected by works.

"One Lord, one faith" (Eph. iv. 5).

"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

"Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (Jas. ii. 22).

"Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6).

7th.—That we believe in, and obey, *all the doctrines of our Lord Jesus Christ*, as revealed in the **NEW TESTAMENT**.

And that we believe in and contend for, all the blessings and promises of God unto His people, both in the Prophets, and in the Gospel.

"Repentance from dead works, and of Faith towards God, of the doctrine of Baptisms, and of Laying on of Hands, and of Resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Heb. vi. 1, 2).

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it and said, Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 23-26).

"There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises" (2 Pet. i. 4).

"All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen" (2 Cor. i. 20).

8th.—That we believe it to be necessary that all who desire to enter the ministry, and administer the ordinances of the Gospel, should feel themselves called by the Holy Ghost to the work; and with the consent of the church, should be set apart by fasting and prayer, and by the laying on of the hands of those previously called by the Holy Spirit, who have themselves been set apart to the work of God according to the Scriptures.

"The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts xiii. 2, 3).

"And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord" (Acts xiv. 23).

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 14).

9th.—That we believe God is with all men as far as they are honestly with Him, but those who wish to be united with us *in full fellowship*, must

have given evidence of conversion to Christ, and have been obedient to the ordinances of baptism and the laying-on-of-hands, in accordance with the doctrine of Christ and Apostolical practice, as set forth in Hebrews vi. 1, 2. Nevertheless, those who have professed conversion to Christ may be received by us as probationary members if desired.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).

"Grace be with all them that love Our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." (Eph. vi. 24).

10th.—That we believe there ought to be no schism or division in the Church of Christ, all division being contrary to the Spirit and Word of God.

"By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13).

"There shall be one fold, one Shepherd" (John x. 17).

"Is Christ divided? Now I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you" (1 Cor. i. 10, 11).

"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us" (John xvii. 21.).

11th.—That all Meetings should be presided over by the Pastor (or Elder) of each Church, or by those appointed by him, unless the President of the Union, or District Overseer, is present, when he shall preside if he wish to do so.

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves" (Heb. xiii. 17).

"And He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"* (Eph. iv. 11, 12).

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 4).

12th.—That we do not object to females praying or speaking, when they feel moved by the Holy Spirit to do so, under the direction of the Minister of the Church.

"And there was one Anna, a prophetess, which departed not from the Temple, but served God with prayer night and day" (Luke ii. 36, 37).

"The same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts xxi. 9).

"And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Acts ii. 17).

13th.—That no Church of the Union shall be organised with less than ten Members, and a Committee of Management shall be appointed in each Church composed of not less than three Elders, Deacons, or Members, who, in conjunction with the Pastor, shall have power to act for the said Church in all matters of minor importance which may arise between each Local Conference. The said Committee shall from time to time be appointed by a majority of votes at the Local Conferences.

*The meaning of the Greek word "Apostolos" is simply—one sent, of Christ.

"That in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. Again I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 16, 19).

"And God hath set some in the Church . . . helps, governments" (1 Cor. xii. 28).

14th.—That Churches of the Union shall be divided into Districts, as occasion may require; and all District Overseers and Pastors of Churches shall be required to report their several Districts and Churches to Headquarters at the General Four-monthly Conferences, that the Churches may move on in the unity of the faith, guided and guarded at all times by the Holy Ghost.

"And when they were come to Jerusalem they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them" (Acts xv. 4).

"Submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility" (1 Pet. v. 5).

15th.—That no person should be ordained to the office of Elder, Pastor or Bishop (which calling is the same), without the sanction of the Headquarters' Committee of Representatives at a General Conference—and then he must previously have been chosen to that office by a majority of the members of his Church (when the Pastor of the Church or District Overseer was presiding), and have faithfully filled the office upon probation. The same rule must be observed in calling persons to the office of Deacon, to assist in all the minor duties of the Church.

"Lay hands suddenly on no man" (1 Tim. v. 22).

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28).

"And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless" (1 Tim. iii. 10).

16th.—That a Secretary, Treasurer, and all other necessary officers, shall be appointed in each Church, who shall give an account of the finances and all other matters which concern the Church, to the Members, once a quarter at the Local Conference, when the Pastor of the Church shall preside; and all Members shall be at liberty to speak and vote, for or against, any motion that may be brought forward concerning their Church; and the decision of the majority shall end all controversy that may arise.

"Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you, men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts v. 3).

"Who shall give account to Him, that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" (1 Pet. iv. 5).

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12).

17th.—That a Church Book shall be kept in each Church, containing the names and addresses of the Members, with space left against each name for general remarks, and a Record of Dedications, Baptisms, Ordinations, Deaths, &c.; and a Minute Book shall also be kept for the entry of all matters of importance that concern the Church.

"For God is not the author of confusion. Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. xiv. 33, 40).

18th.—That the Union shall be governed—under the Lord—by a President and the Headquarters' Committee of Representatives. The said Committee shall consist of *all ordained officers* of the Union—every Member being thus fully represented and considered through these delegates—and shall meet at the General Conferences held three times a year. But in case of a division upon any very important matter, only delegates chosen by the Churches shall vote, in the proportion of one delegate to a Church of fifty Members (or less), and afterwards one delegate to every fifty (or more) Members. The Headquarters' Committee shall appoint the President of the Conference, Secretary, District Overseers, Pastors of Churches, and other General officers at each General Four-monthly Conference.

"And the Apostles and elders came together to consider of this matter" (Acts xv. 6).

"And when they had come and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done" (Acts xiv. 27).

19th.—That no appointments, decisions, or resolutions made by the Union at a General Conference in the manner aforesaid, shall afterwards be set aside by any Church, Society, Institution, Officer, or Member connected with the Union, but these shall be binding upon all, as proceeding from them through their Representatives.

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii. 1).

"Now I beseech you brethren by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10).

20th.—That any Church or Mission which administers the ordinances of BAPTISM by immersion to believers, and the Lord's Supper, and is willing to take the Bible as its rule of faith, shall be permitted to join this Union..

"Till we all come in the unity of the Faith" (Eph. iv. 13).

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body and one Spirit" (Eph. iv. 3, 4).

May God add His blessing for Christ's sake.

Suggestions on the Duties of Membership.

BELoved IN CHRIST.—In drawing up these Rules, for the sake of order and the protection of every Member, we have striven to be understood by all, therefore they are few and simple. We are one in sympathy and interest with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that a Church may have faith without superstition, freedom without caprice, cohesion without coercion, and width and extension without disorder.

Members of every section of Christ's Church have responsibilities and duties in their Church life, for which they are accountable to the Great Head of the Church—our Lord Jesus—therefore the following suggestions demand your earnest attention:—

SERVICE FOR GOD.—Every Member is under solemn obligation to do something for the honour of the Lord and welfare of His cause. All are expected, as far as possible, to take an active part in some of the various departments of Church work, such as the Sunday School, Children's Mission, Tract Distribution, Christian Endeavour Society, Open-Air Work, Sick Visitation, Dorcas and Mothers' Meetings, &c. If you will apply to your Pastor he will be glad of your aid in one or more of these organisations.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS.—Let us urge upon your attention the necessity of regular and punctual attendance at the House of God; not only on the Sunday, but during the week also. To be in good time is the way to get a blessing, to be late is often to be a hindrance to ourselves and others.

VISITATION.—When a Member is unable to attend the House of Prayer through sickness or affliction, communication to that effect should at once be made to the Pastor. Members will be kind enough not to expect a visit until this has been done.

SITTINGS.—In our chapels where sittings are let, every Member is expected to hold a seat. In such cases sittings are, if possible, reserved for seat-holders until the beginning of the service, but afterwards all unoccupied sittings are to be considered free to strangers.

EXPENSES.—It is sometimes forgotten that every Member is to be a fellow-helper of the truth by proportionate pecuniary co-operation. "Honour the Lord with thy substance" (Prov. iii. 9). "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him" or her (1 Cor. xvi. 2). A definite portion of your weekly income should first be devoted to the service of God. Free-will offerings of the people are the proper means of the Minister's support (1 Cor. ix. 14, GAL. vi. 6), who watches over your soul as one who must give account to Christ. Provide for his temporal needs as unto Christ, for He hath said, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye do it unto Me." The promise of God is, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you."

DEDICATION OF CHILDREN.—Christian parents desiring to acknowledge the Lord in all their ways, and publicly to name and dedicate their children to God by prayer in the presence of their fellow-believers, are invited to bring them for this purpose at the earliest suitable opportunity. The names of those dedicated will be duly entered into a Register kept for the purpose, and a Dedication Card presented to the parents. The Pastor will be pleased to return thanks after child-birth, either in the Chapel or at the homes of Members.

MARRIAGES.—In all our chapels licensed for this purpose, the ceremony will be performed by the Pastor, if due notice is given.

HOME AND FOREIGN MISSION FUND.—Boxes on behalf of this fund,—for the purpose of collecting not less than One Shilling a term (four months)—which is to assist our Ministers labouring in poor districts, or opening new fields of labour, may be obtained of the Pastor.

POOR FUND.—Collections for the poor are made at the Communion Services, but in all cases the General Expenses must first be met, as we do not consider it justifiable to give away what we owe to others.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE UNION.—We trust that all our Members will assist in the dissemination of the truth by purchasing and distributing the Magazine, "New Testament Christianity," and other publications of the Union.

REMOVAL OF MEMBERS.—Should any Members remove from the district, it is desirable that they should acquaint the Pastor with their new addresses, that they may be transferred to another Branch of the Union, or kept in communication by letter.

MODE OF ADMISSION INTO FELLOWSHIP.—Those desirous of joining the Church must make application to the Pastor, who, upon their giving satisfactory evidence of their conversion to Christ, and Baptism, will bring forward their names at the next meeting of the Church, when the Members will vote upon their being received, and the Pastor will give them the right hand of fellowship.

TRUSTEES.—Responsible Trustees have been appointed to take charge of all property belonging to each Church or Mission of the Union, for the protection of the Members.

No collection must be taken up or made among the Members or outsiders in any Branch of the Union, *for any purpose*, without the consent of the Pastor.

Remember that "Ye are the Body of Christ, and Members in particular." "Be, therefore, examples to the Flock." As Members of Christ, be not ashamed to confess before the world your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ your Saviour, and let your light shine before men. Every Member should set apart a portion of each day for the reading and study of God's Word, and should pray to God not less than twice a day, morning and evening, for him or herself, and all the Members of the Church, and for all Christians everywhere.

Be patient, prayerful, watchful, temperate, gentle, loving and holy; growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Body, Soul and Spirit consecrate to God for His service that you may always be in communion with the Father and the Son by the Holy Ghost. Jesus said: "Go, work in My vineyard." The Master hath work in His vineyard for everyone, and whether your part be little or great, "do it heartily as unto the Lord." Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles in his faithful exhortation to believers, says: "I therefore . . . beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. But, speaking the truth in love may grow up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. For we are members one of another" (EPH. iv. 1, 2, 3, 15, 24, 25). "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us" (EPH. v. 1, 2). "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. That there should be no schism in the body, but the members should have the same care one for another" (I. Cor. xii. 12, 25). Jesus said: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." "Feed My sheep . . . feed My lambs."