

A Declaration of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ

by John Gill

This sermon is a declaration of the faith and practice of the Church of Christ, outlining the core doctrines and ordinances of the church.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, John 3:16, Acts 24:15, Romans 10:10, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Ephesians 1:4, Philippians 1:27, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Hebrews 9:28, 1 John 5:7

Topics: "Church Unity", "Faith and Practice"

Description

John Gill presents a comprehensive declaration of the faith and practice of the Church of Christ, emphasizing the authority of Scripture, the nature of God as a Trinity, and the doctrines of salvation through Christ. He outlines the church's beliefs regarding election, the fall of man, and the necessity of Christ's atoning sacrifice for redemption. Gill stresses the importance of baptism and the Lord's Supper as ordinances of the church, alongside the call for believers to live in accordance with the Gospel. The declaration serves as a commitment to uphold these truths and to foster unity and love within the church community.

Transcript

A

DECLARATION

of the

FAITH AND PRACTICE

OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,

IN CARTER LANE, SOUTHWARK,

UNDER THE PASTORAL CARE OF Dr. JOHN GILL,

Read and assented to at the Admission of Members.

Having been enabled, through divine grace, to give up ourselves to the Lord, and likewise to one another by the will of God, we account it a duty incumbent upon us, to make a declaration of our faith and practice, to the honour of Christ, and the glory of his name; knowing, that as with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation; (Rom. 10:10) a which declaration is as follows, namely, I. We believe, That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, are (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:21) the word of God, and the only (John 5:39; Acts 17:11; 2 Peter 1:19, 20) rule of faith and practice.

II. We believe, That there is but one (Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Jer. 10:10) only living and true God: that there are (1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19) three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are equal in nature, power, and glory; and that the Son ((John 10:30; Phil. 2:6; Rom. 9:5; 1 John 5:20) and the Holy Ghost (Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18) are as truly and properly God as the Father. These three divine persons are distinguished from each other, by peculiar relative properties: The distinguishing character and relative property of the first person is begetting; he has begotten a Son of the same nature with him, and who is the express image of his person; (Ps. 2:7; Heb. 1:3) and therefore is with great propriety called the Father: The distinguishing character and relative property of the second person is that he is begotten; and he is called the only begotten of the Father, and his own proper Son; (John 1:14; Rom. 8:3, 32) not a Son by creation, as angels and men are, nor by adoption, as saints are, nor by office, as civil magistrates; but by nature, by the Father's eternal generation (Ps. 2:7) of him in the divine nature; and therefore he is truly called the Son: The distinguishing character and relative property of the third person is to be breathed by the Father and the Son, and to proceed from both, (Job 33:4; Ps. 33:6; John 15:26 and 20:26 and 20:22; Gal. 4:6) and is very Properly called the Spirit, or breath of both.

These three distinct divine persons, we profess to reverence, serve, and worship as the one true God. (1 John 5:7; Matthew 4:10) III. We believe, That before the world began God did elect (Eph. 1:4; 1 Thess. 1:4 and 5:9; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:5; 1 John 3:1; Gal. 4:4, 5; John 1:12) a certain number of men unto everlasting salvation whom he did predestinate to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ of his own free grace, and according to the good pleasure of his will; and that in pursuance of this gracious design, he did contrive and make a covenant (2 Sam. 23:5; Ps. 89:2, 28, 34; Isa. 42:6) of grace and peace with his son Jesus Christ, on the behalf of those persons; wherein a Saviour (Ps. 89:19; Isa. 49:6) was appointed, and all spiritual (2 Sam. 23:5; Isa. 55:3; Eph. 1:3) blessings provided for them; as also that their (Deut. 33:3; John 6:37, 39 and 10:28, 29; Jude 1) persons, with all their grace (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3; Col. 3:3, 4) and glory, were put into the hands of Christ, and made his care and charge.

IV. We believe, That God created the first man, Adam, after his image, and in his likeness, an upright, holy, and innocent creature, capable of serving and glorifying him: (Gen. 1:26, 27; Eccl. 7:29; Ps. 8:5) but he sinning, all his posterity sinned in him, and came short of the glory of God; (Rom. 5:12 and 3:23) the guilt of whose sin is imputed; (Rom. 5:12, 14, 18, 19; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:3) and a corrupt nature derived to all his offspring descending from him by ordinary and natural generation: (Job 14:4; Ps. 51:5; John 3:6; Ezek. 16:4-6) that they are by their first birth carnal and unclean; averse to all that is good, incapable of doing any, and prone to every (Rom. 8:7, 8 and 3:10-12; Gem 6:5) sin: and are also by nature children of wrath, and under a sentence of condemnation; (Eph. 2:3; Rom. 5:12, 18) and so are subject, not only to a corporal death, (Gen. 2:7; Rom. 5:12, 14; Heb. 9:27) and involved in a moral one, commonly called spiritual; (Matthew 8:21; Luke 15:24, 32; John 5:25; Eph. 3:1) but are also liable to an eternal death, (Rom. 5:18 and 6:23; Eph. 2:3) as considered in the first Adam, fallen and sinners; from all which there is no

deliverance, but by Christ, the second Adam. (Rom. 6:23 and 7:24, 25 and 8:2; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:45, 47) V.

We believe, That the Lord Jesus Christ, being set up from (Prov. 8:22, 23; Heb. 12:24) everlasting as the Mediator of the covenant, and he having engaged to be the (Ps. 49:6-8; Heb. 7:22) Surety of his people, did In al. 4:4; Heb. 2:14, 16, 17) human nature, and not before, neither in whole, nor in part; his human soul being a creature, existed not from eternity, but was created and formed in his body by him that forms the spirit of man within him, when that was conceived in the womb of the virgin; and so his human nature consists of a true body and a reasonable soul: both which, together and at once the Son of God assumed into union with his divine person, when made of a woman, and not before; in which nature he really suffered, and died (Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3; Eph. 5:2; 1 Peter 3:18) as the substitute of his people, in their room and stead; whereby he made all that satisfaction (Rom. 8:3, 4 and 10:4; Isa. 42:21; Rom. 8:1, 33, 34) for heir sins, which the law and justice of God could require; as well as made way for all those blessings (1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7) which are needful for them both for time and eternity.

VI. We believe, That eternal Redemption which Christ has obtained by the shedding of his blood (Matthew 20:28; John 10:11, 15; Rev. 5:9; Rom. 8:30) is special and particular: that is to say, that it was only intentionally designed for the elect of God, and sheep of Christ, who only share the special and peculiar blessings of it. VII. We believe, That the justification of God's elect, is only by the righteousness (Rom. 3:28 and 4:6 and 5:16-19) of Christ imputed to them, without the consideration of any works of righteousness done by them; and that the full and free pardon of all their sins and transgressions, past, present, and to come, is only through the blood of Christ, (Rom. 3:25; Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:13; 1 John 1:7, 9) according to the riches of his grace.

VIII. We believe, That the work of regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and faith, is not an act of (John 1:13; Rom. 9:16 and 8:7) man's free will and power, but of the mighty, efficacious, and irresistible grace (Phil. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3; Eph. 1:19; Isa. 43:13) of God. IX. We believe, that all those, who are chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sanctified by the Spirit, shall certainly and finally (Matthew 24:24; John 6:39, 40 and 10:28, 29; Matthew 16:18; Ps. 125:1, 2; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24; Heb. 2:13; Rom. 8:30) persevere; so that not one of them shall ever perish, but shall have everlasting life.

X. We believe, That there will be a resurrection of the dead; (Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; Dan. 12:2) both of the just and unjust; and that Christ will come a second time to judge (Heb. 9:28; Acts 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 1 Thess. 4:15-17) both quick and dead; when he will take vengeance on the wicked, and introduce his own people into his kingdom and glory, where they shall be for ever with him. XI. We believe, That Baptism (Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26) and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Christ, to be continued until his second coming; and that the former is absolutely requisite to the latter; that is to say, that those (Acts 2:41 and 9:18, 26) only are to be admitted into the communion of the church, and to participate of all ordinances in it, (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12, 36, 37 and 16:31-34 and 8:8) who upon profession of their faith, have been baptized, (Matthew 3:6, 16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38, 39; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12) by immersion, in the name of the Father, (Matthew 28:19) and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

XII. We also believe, That singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs vocally, (Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:15, 26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) is an ordinance of the Gospel, to be performed by believers; but that as to time, place, and manner, every one ought to be left to their (James 5:13) liberty in using it. Now all, and each of these doctrines and ordinances, we look upon ourselves under the greatest

obligation to embrace, maintain, and defend; believing it to be our duty (Phil. 1:27; Jude 3) to stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.

And whereas we are very sensible, that our conversation, both in the world and in the church, ought to be as becometh the Gospel of Christ; (Phil. 1:27) we judge it our incumbent duty, to (Col. 4:5) walk in wisdom towards them that are without, to exercise a conscience (Acts 24:16) void of offence towards God and men, by living (Titus 2:12) soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. And as to our regards to each other, in our church-communion; we esteem it our duty to (Eph. 4:1-3; Rom. 12:9, 10, 16; Phil. 2:2, 3) walk with, each other in all humility and brotherly love; to watch (Lev. 19:17; Phil. 2:4) over each other's conversation; to stir up one (Heb. 10:24, 25) another to love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as we have opportunity, to worship God according to his revealed will; and, when the case requires, to warn, (1 Thess. 5:14; Rom. 15:14; Lev. 19:17; Matthew 18:15-17) rebuke, and admonish one another, according to the rules of the Gospel.

Moreover, we think ourselves obliged (Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 12:26) to sympathize with each other, in all conditions, both inward and outward, which God, in his providence, may bring its into; as also to (Rom. 15:1; Eph. 4:12; Col. 3:13) bear with one another's weaknesses, failings and infirmities; and particularly to pray for one another, (Eph. 6:18, 19; 2 Thess. 3:1) and that the Gospel, and the ordinances thereof, might be blessed to the edification and comfort of each others souls, and for the gathering in of others to Christ, besides those who are already gathered.

All which duties we desire to be found in the performance of, through the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit whilst we both admire and adore the grace, which has given us a place, and a name in God's house, better than that of sons and daughters. (Isa. 56:5)

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-gill/a-declaration-of-the-faith-and-practice-of-the-church-of-christ/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net