

**Let
Christian Men
Be Men 2nd Ed.**

**I Corinthians 16:13
Quit Ye Like Men**

By David Clarke

All things work together for good to them that love God and are called
according to His purposes Rom. 8. 28

**Published By
CTM Publishers
206 West 8th Street
STE 509
Coffeyville,
KS 67337**

ctm.publishers@gmail.com

AUTHORS INTRODUCTION

The following pages contain a collection of recorded events, which seek to explain the reason for my secession¹ from the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church in 1984. And seeks to demonstrate that christian men should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints in order to further the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is written with a view to help any person called to the ministry of preaching the gospel, elders or deacons, or for any one wishing to preserve the doctrines of grace. I would value anyone who understands the nature of the serious issues that I write about to contact me as I believe those things I have written will serve and turn out for the good and furtherance of the gospel. If I can be of any help to any one, or if you feel you are able to offer any help, or advise to me, please feel free to contact me. I have included a list Further Publications listed at the end of this book for recommended reading.

Bierton is a village near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. The Bierton Church was a society, in law, called Strict and Particular Baptists, formed in 1831 at a meeting presided by the son of John Warburton of Trowbridge, Wiltshire. It and became a Gospel Standard listed church on 16th January, 1981. My secession from this church was not a separation from any other Strict Baptist church just the Bierton Church. I was not the subject of church discipline but rather I withdrew from the communion as a matter of conscience. And according to our strict church rules of practice I am still a member.

Conscience Free

My voluntary leaving of this society leaves me free in conscience to relate my experience, being bound only by the Law of Christ and not the rules of that society. The date of my secession was the **26th of June 1984**.

Authors note: Please excuse the incorrect grammar, spelling² and typos as I was virtually illiterate when leaving school and only learned to read once I became a Christian. I am in need of a proof reader.

Authors email: Biertoncorrespondent@gmail.com

1 Philippians. 12:13-19.

2 *Verum res non est, quae in recte spelling of verbis, sed in animo dicentis*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Clarke remains the sole member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist as all its members died, the former penultimate member died, and the chapel was close for worship on 22nd December 2002.

David tells of his conversion from crime to Christ, on 16th January 1970, in his book *[Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists](#)* and him joining the Bierton Church, in 1976. This book *[The Bierton Crisis 1984](#)* deals with his secession from the Bierton Church, in 1984 due to serious matters of conscience.

The Bierton Church became a Gospel Standard cause in 1981, whose Articles of Religion are a clearer distillation of the *[1646 Particular Baptists First London Confession 2nd Edition](#)*³, And so were not inconsistent with the beliefs and practice of the Bierton Church. However this caused serious opposition from various quarters from within and without the church resulting in a dilemma and problems that David had to deal with. This was because he was the secretary of the church and felt those issues that were raised were important and it was necessary to resolve them.

David tells of his call to preach the gospel that involved a church process in sending him to go wherever the lord opened the door to preach, in January 1982. Both Mr Hill, and pastor of Ebenezer, Luton and Mr Hope, Pastor of Zoar, Reading both Gospel Standard ministers, recommended David's application to preach to the Church and it was accepted.

The story relates his experience as a sent minister of the church, preaching in many churches in England, during which time he learned of the many difficulties that churches were experiencing and the issues believers were struggling with. David believed these issues needed to be addressed. He says he became aware that the people of God were suffering and were in need of help as expressed by Isaiah 5 : 13.

Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

David began to contend for gospel truth when the church fell into error by using hymns teaching general redemption and supporting views with respect to the Law of Moses that were contrary to their articles of religion and false views relating to giving reverence to holy tables and buildings.

As a matter of conscience David seceded from the church in 1984 and wrote

3 In my opinion this is one of the best confessions as it is free of all hints of legal views that most Reformed Articles maintain. Please see *[Difficulties Associated With Articles of Religion Among Particular Baptists](#)*, by David Clarke, listed under Further Publications at the end of this book.

his privately published book, “**The Bierton Crisis**”, which he circulated to all the Trustees and all concerned. The church did not terminate his membership as they wished him to return.

It was David’s argument that when men look to tradition, and were not governed by scripture, then there is a cessation of truth among them because truth is no longer of prime concern, only in so far that it keeps or preserves their traditions and order that they have become use too. Whether that order, or way of life, be according to the word of God or not.

David realized that men might begin well, according to the faith of Christ, but fall from grace and turn aside to vain jangling following the traditions of men and false notions regarding the Law of Moses. By falling from grace he means a lapse from teaching the way of grace.

Bierton Church was a Gospel Standard cause and as such was governed by strict rules relating to membership, only the church can terminate the membership of its members and this is a very important rule. See Gospel Standard Rule 22, Severance of any member from the church.

During David’s time in the Bierton Church he had to deal with a range of contentious issues that plagued the professing Christian church in that day.

These contentions ranged from Arminianism and whether the Law of Moses be the rule of life for the believer or the Gospel as the believers rule of life. The preaching of the gospel as opposed to offering the gospel, referred to as Fullerism. Problems relating to the added articles of the Gospel Standard trust. Hyper Calvinism so called and Antinomianism. The role of women in the church, head coverings, and holy tables the use or none use of a television set or cassette recorder to record meetings.

David also discovered a great divide that existed between Gospel Standard Baptists, and other Baptists due to differences in doctrinal matters. David noted this distinction in his day and that many were falling into the lapsed position of making free offers of grace and teaching duty faith and duty repentance all of which matters, as the Gospel Standard Articles or religion deny. Whilst Grace Baptists and others of the Reformed faith teach otherwise. This divide became further apparent when the London Grace Baptists Association LTD became the unelected trustees of the Bierton chapel and took possession of the Chapel when it was closed for worship. They then prevented David from making lawful use of the Churches chapel. Denying that he was a member of the church and they were against the Gospel Standard Baptists.

David maintained particular redemption was a truth taught in scripture and the hymns should reflect the truth of scripture and not general redemption.

He taught the Gospel or Royal Law of liberty is the rule of life for the believer and not the Law of Moses.

The gospel is to be preached with no “free offers” of grace to men.

The added articles of the Gospel Standard need clarification as they have caused some to stumble. They are essentially correct and are saying that it is not right to offer Christ to men because the atonement is limited, and denies the doctrine of election, unless a man be regenerated he cannot believe in, or lay hold of Christ by faith. That such faith is a gift of God and not a legal duty of the natural man, and a spiritual blessing of the covenant of grace.

Women have their place in the Church but not as elders, or ruling the men. That head coverings for ladies is a custom taught in scripture.

There is no place in the Christian faith to hold views that relate to holy tables and buildings or relics.

The use of television sets, radio, reading of newspapers, recording equipment and other electronic means of communication, such as the cell phone and Internet, are not to be dictated by a churches or another person’s conscience.

The Bierton Crisis treats these subjects very seriously and David believes that he has been called by the Lord Jesus to share his experience to all who are concerned and are seeking to honour and follow the lord Jesus Christ. It is David’s desire that it may prove a very helpful read as it has been written as it were, with a pen of iron on a lead table. Oh, that my words were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever! Job 19:24

When David first published, “The Bierton Crisis”, it was sent only to those who were directly involved out of courtesy. In that edition he informed the reader that his secession left him free in conscience and not governed by the church rules, but rather for truths sake, being governed only by the law of Christ.

The Church did not terminate David’s membership, as they wanted him to return, as can be confirmed by Mr Crane of Lakenheath. Mr Crane was the churches over sear and is able to confirm that it was the Churches wish that David return to Bierton. And also when David returned from mission work in the Philippines in 2003, he suggested he reopen the Bierton chapel that had been closed for worship in December 2002.

David has written this account out of conscience, conviction and principle believing it will be of great help to some. He does not wish to high light personal issues.

PRELUDE

Love Covers A Multitude of Sins

I am certain I shall make more enemies through this publication, for they will say it is all wrong, names ought not to be mentioned nor letters published without prior consent from their writers. Even if this be the case, for the truths sake I will not remain silent, knowing this there was a day coming referred to by the apostle when there would be an appearance before the Judgment seat of Christ when all shall be revealed. I apologize if I cause unjust offence for this is not my aim.

It is hope many may learn from my sad experience and that my treatment of the serious matters that I write about able will be helpful for any who find them selves having to deal with the issues that I have spoken of.

Let them that have ears to hear, hear what I say and judge for themselves, bearing in mind charity covereth the multitude of sins (1 Peter 4 ⁸). All the members of the church have now passed away. Only I am left alive.

A Common Problem

I hope this will help others to avoid similar pitfalls and that this record will be of aid to recover the fallen (Deut. 22 ⁴).

Pastor less churches and churches not run on biblical lines must surely fall by the same means unless the be helped by God and they be faithful to the word of God and obey the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14 ¹⁵).

The issues spoken about range from Particular Redemption, dealing with offences, the Law of Moses and the rule of the gospel. I speak about Gospel invitations rather than offers. I speak about the Gospel Standard Articles, the Sabbath day and gospel rest. I believe what is recorded reflects similar situations throughout the land in these days where men have lost sight of the cause of Christ and the purpose of His Gospel Church (Hos.4 ⁶, Isa 5 ¹³).

A Testimony For The Elect Of God

My prayer is that the Gospel of God will be declared to this generation and the elect of Christ be gathered and called unto him. That my testimony may serve to the glory of God.

General Letter To Persons Listed Below

Please find enclosed a copy of an article written by my own hand called the 'Bierton Crisis.' I have sent a copy to each of the persons mentioned below for they are all in some way connected with these things related in my article. Some names are mentioned others have their letters reproduced in this account. Others are trustees and some are Churches were I am engaged to preach.

It has been suggested I should have asked permission to mention people's names or reproduce their letters sent to others or me. But for the cause of truth

such is not the way I am lead to act. I see in the New Testament letters sent and read publicly, many containing named persons of saints and enemies to truth. Ought we to let any differently?

I do hope my readers will seek the Lord that he gives them wisdom to judge and discern between good and evil. My prayer is that this testimony of mine may be of help to all concerned.

I would ask the reader to pray for me and my family and the folk at Bierton; I have a fond love for my friends their. Who can tell what the God of all grace may do for us.

I would value help, advice, reproof or correction from them that are moved with a concern and love for the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus the Lord.

This Letter General is Sent To:

Mr Sayers, minister, Watford.

Mr Crane , **overseer** of the Bierton cause, Lakenheath.

Mr Baumber, **trustee** and minister of the gospel, Bedford.

Mr Janes, **trustee** and deacon (Eaton Bray), Eddlesborough.

Mr Dix, minister of the gospel, Dunstable.

Mr Levey, deacon of the Baptist Church, Dunstable

Mr John Just, Dunstable.

Mr J Gosden, minister of the gospel, Southborough.

Mr Ramsbottom, minister of the gospel, Luton.

Mr Wood, minister of the gospel Croydon.

Mr Howe Aylesbury, former minister of the gospel, Ivanhoe.

Mr C. Lawrence, minister of the gospel, Harold.

Mr S. Scott – Pearson, minister of the gospel, Maulden.

Mr Royce of Luton

Mr Hope, minister of the gospel, Reading.

Mr Martin, **trustee**, minister Blunham Strict and Particular Baptist

The churches at: Evington, Oakington, Attleborough, Bierton, Blackheath and Stamford.

Yours in the Name of The Lord Jesus Christ.

David Clarke

Church Rules And Church Business.

It is normal courtesy for all church matters, that are spoken in private, should not be discussed out side of the church with out the churches permission, in just the same way as personal matters within a family are private and not to be spoken about without permission of the parties concerned. How ever this rule is the ordinary rule and matters of a serious nature can be spoken about in an appropriate way. In the same way the law of the land states that if a person witnesses and is privy to a crime they are legally bound to report the matter to the police. David believes in this case and cause of truth the Lord Jesus has addressed this issue.

What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the housetops. Matth. 10:11. David is the soul remaining church member and has the right to speak of all those issue affecting the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

David is the sole remaining member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Society and now responsible for all the Church affairs. And in David's first edition of, "The Bierton Crisis", he said that his secession left him free in conscience, not bound by the rules of that society, being bound only by the Law of Christ, to tell of his experience. This left him free to make a stand for truth, which is what he did. The church was a liberty to terminate his membership but they did not do so as they wanted him to return.

Churches Connected.

Churches: Dunstable, Evington, Oakington, Matfield, Stamford, Leicester, Nottingham, Bradford, Ebenezer Luton, Oxford, Reading, Attleborough, Linslaid, Colnebrook, Dunstable, Bedford, Attleborough, Rowley Regis, Prestwood, Linslaid, Blackheath, Evington, Walgrave, Fenstanton, Uffington, Colnebrook, Grove, Ebenezer Luton, Tamworth Road.

In this publication (1984 edition) personal names have been removed in the interest of privacy.

1. TRUTH CAUSES A DIVISION (LUKE 2⁵¹).

The following sermon notes were made before and after I preached at the weeknight meeting at the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Chapel on **Wednesday the 20th of April 1983**. I believe that sermon was the instrument laid at the root of the error, which caused the division, and parting of the way between myself and the Church at Bierton. I seceded from the Church on the 26th of June 1984.

Our church had run a Sunday school for many years and each anniversary Mr

King, one of our members and a sent minister from the church, would conduct the service. I was surprised to observe the Mr King had selected, for the second year running, two children's hymns for the children and their unconverted parents to sing. The hymns were "**Jesus loves me this I know, co's the bible tells me so**" also "**There is a green hill far away**". In his comment he stated that Jesus loved them each one. It was a matter that caused me great concern for how could Mr King know or say all the children and their unconverted parents were loved of God when none expressed faith or gave evidence of being called. **Mr King was a sent minister from the Bierton Church** who had become a Gospel Standard cause and he was teaching general redemption rather than particular redemption⁴.

Attempt To Resolve The Difficulty.

On Wednesday, the 20th of April 1983, I preached a sermon, during our week evening meeting, at the Bierton Baptist Chapel. The text being, this is a faithful saying and these things I will that thou affirm constantly. That they, which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works' (Titus 3 ⁸). In my attempt to apply the truth of this text, bearing in mind the current needs and position of our church at Bierton, I gave examples, by way of direct application. I stated how we might be found to take heed to this exhortation if we restored a suitable children's hymn book which did not contain hymns expressing general redemption & universal redeeming love to all children. I stated also it would be a good work to set our church in order even though some would not credit this to be a good work. That in this pursuit there may be things not acceptable to our natural carnal desires and us as individuals.

Examples Given In Order.

We had no ruling authority and needed a pastor or minister for teaching and ruling well.

We should teach truth in our Sunday school and not error such as 'universal redeeming love' for all children. I asserted it was wrong to teach the children or lead them to believe in general redemption and that a step to avoid this would be to restore a suitable hymn-book, which was in accordance with our own Confession of Faith.

Effects Of This Address.

4 Gospel Standard Article 6. Particular Redemption

We believe that the eternal redemption which Christ has obtained by the shedding of His blood is special and particular; that is to say, that it was intentionally designed only for the Elect of God, the Sheep of Christ, who therefore alone share in the special and peculiar blessings thereof.

During this address I observed the countenance of Mr King who shook his head from side to side. This was at the point I said it was heresy to teach the children Jesus died for them each one. He said, at another time, he knew not by what spirit I spoke that evening.

Church Meeting Called For.

Mrs. Gurney, after the meeting, asked when we could have a church meeting to discuss these matters. Our quarterly meeting was due to be held that April so we booked the 27th day of April at 2:30 p.m. At this meeting Mr King was the chairman and read from the 23rd Psalm.

Transcript From The Minutes.

At this meeting Mr King was the chairman and the minutes read as follows:

The chairman made introductory comments regarding his position as chairman and that by the next church meeting he would have fulfilled that office for one year and that he wished the church to seek a chairman to succeed him. This was because he could not conduct church affairs whilst there were disagreements amongst the members.

Chairman Forbids Discussion.

The chairman informed the church that our rules relating to matters of serious Importance could not be brought forward at any church meeting unless notice is given at A church meeting one-month previous thereto (according to rule 15 of the Gospel Standard rules). Therefore any matters arising from the sermon preached by Mr D. Clarke could not be raised or dealt with at that meeting.

Chairman Comments Upon The Sermon.

The chairman stated that I had made serious charges against the Berton church and that he wished the ‘ chair ‘ to be respected and honoured by this ruling authority

Chair Opposed.

After general matters had been discussed and church business had finished Mr D. Clarke opposed the Chairman regarding the sermon preached explaining he wished the church to give their opinion as to their belief in respect of teaching the children and their unconverted Parents, at the Sunday school Good Friday meetings, general redemption in opposition to particular redemption. I said my charge of them teaching heresy was justifiable for Mr King had said himself, at the Good Friday service both last year and this year, **Jesus had died for each one of the children.** Also they were teaching the children to sing Jesus had died for them and he loves them all.

Chairman's Disapproval.

The chairman expressed his disapproval since he said this matter could not be raised since it was contrary to the rule 15 of the Gospel Standard rule book. Also Mr D Clarke was out of order and must have permission of the church to discuss this matter.

Mr. D Clarke expressed his view that since it was a case of serious disorder and the cause of truth would suffer prejudice if left for one month, **rule 15 allowed for his action.** Also that it would be wrong to leave for a whole month such a charge being unanswered. (P.S. Mr. Clarke Believed this delay was a tactic of Satan and so the Devil was resisted in the same way as Cromwell deposed the King of England who maintained "the divine right of a King to rule in unrighteousness".

Help Called For.

I put to the church that they call independent witnesses, such as a minister of another Cause and one of the trustees. I suggested Mr. Hill of Luton, or Mr. Hope of Reading, but Miss G Ellis expressed a minister who was not so well known to them might be better. I suggested Mr. Ramsbottom, of Luton, and Miss B Ellis suggested Mr. Philip Janes (Trustee) of Eaton Bray. This motion was put to the church seconded by Mrs.. M. Clarke and carried by vote, 5 to 2.

Chairman Re-Instated.

Since I had assumed the office of chairman to deal with the above I then asked Mr King to close the meeting; with he did leading in prayer.

Post Script To The Church Minutes.

There is a postscript to the above church minutes and they read as follows:

During the debate Mr King asked the church if he could have an honourable dismissal to seek membership elsewhere and that in his view it was wrong for Mr D Clarke to join the church knowing these hymns were taught the children; therefore he ought not to seek such changes. The church gave no reply to Mr. King except Mr D Clarke who explained the church could not give him honourable dismissal but for a justifiable reason and that this issue could not be considered justifiable, but rather if he taught these views (of general redemption to children) the church could not license him to preach.

After the postscript a note explains the church could not recall the last paragraph of the postscript and would note adopt it as part of their minutes.

My Observations.

At this meeting I saw something of sanctimonious religion wriggling like a snake; my conscience would not allow me to remain silent but rather stamp on

the serpent.

Leaving The Meeting.

Coming with grief from the chapel both my wife and I meet to our joy and delight Mr Hill, of Luton, He was standing on the corner of Bierton cross roads outside the Pentecostal Chapel. I had left the church some 10 years ago because of their Arminianism. Mr Hill had come by us from Luton and walked some two miles along Bircott Lane, having mistakenly come to preach at Bierton that evening. We believe he was sent of God to our aid and comfort for after we embraced him and poured our hearts out unto him he encouraged us by words of exhortation saying we should honour the Lord, for they that honour me I will honour (I Sam 2³⁰).

After tea Mr Hill and I attended the evening meeting and heard Mr Goode preach the word of God.

2 MY METHOD AND THE PROBLEM.

I wrote the following letter to Mr King and gave it to him by hand at the weeknight meeting of 2nd. May 1983. No one in the church knew the contents of this letter until Mr King read parts of it at Church meeting. (See Church minutes. Unofficial Church meeting 19/10/83). It was difficult to approach.

Letter To Mr King the 2nd May 1983.

Dear Mr King;

It would seem your conduct and policy, as displayed at our recent church meeting amounts to shameful behaviour and I wish you to know not only have you caused me offence but also my wife who also is a church member and could only serve to harm the church at Bierton. But thanks be to God who gives more grace is careful and watchful over his little ones and will not suffer this harm to destroy his own work in the people of God. But through this disorder my God will turn these evils to their good.

In the first instance your opening comments, to the church, you expressed your doubt as to **the spirit by which I preached**, at the chapel on Wednesday last.

Then you attempted to prohibit any matters arising from my exhortation, to the people of God, to be diligent in all good works, by informing them there were standing orders which forbid any matter of serious concern from rising unless one month had elapsed and a meeting ordered for that expressed purpose . Even Mrs. Gurney expressed her frustration saying that it would be wrong to prohibit any member of the church from expressing their views for a whole month.

The rule 15 in question⁵, Mr King, is connected with motions being put to the church and not discussing matters of serious concern. You cannot make a rule saying these matters are not to be discussed simply because you are averse to them.

A correct understanding of rule 15 is this: any matter which is of a serious nature, requiring church approval, must not be put forward as a motion for the church to decide unless it has been given due consideration, and one month has been allowed to elapse before the matter be put as a motion to the church to be carried or rejected by a vote of the church.

Now after this you then claimed that I was out of order when bringing these serious matters rightly to the church. You then proceeded to charge me and others with joining the church to cause disorder and disturb the peace. And also since I was not baptised as a strict baptist in the Bierton Church, and referred to my baptism as a **Free Will Baptism** as I had not been baptised, in water, at the Bierton Church that we ought to have remained in the churches from where we came. All of which conduct serves to show your conduct as a Christian, a minister and member of the church is unacceptable.

My suspicions are, you are an enemy to those doctrines I seek to preserve, or you see no need to be careful of your choice of words when teaching the children and unconverted parents. Both of which attitudes are contrary to the church at Bierton of which I joined.

It is on this basis I contend with you Mr King, that I was perfectly in order and disclaim your accusations of bulldozing methods in the church meeting. It was necessary for the cause of truth and decency to take charge of a runaway horse. Now what would you say of Phinehas (Numbers 25 – verses 7-8). It was you who gave me the ‘chair’ and I gave it back to you after the matter had been rightly put to the church. And those who may claim lawful membership. And the distinguishing love of God.

We hold that the Lord God does not love all individuals the same nor does he love all infants and children as you put forward in public meetings. But he has distinguishing love, which was set upon his people, who are styled in scripture as the little ones, having set this love upon them before the foundations of the

5 Gospel Standard Church Rules 15. No motion of any serious importance (e.g., cases of discipline, application for membership, call to the ministry, appointment of pastor, etc.) Shall be brought forward at any church meeting, unless notice thereof shall have been given at a church meeting held at least one month previous thereto; except in such a case as (in the judgment of the pastor and deacons) the cause of truth would suffer prejudice by delay.

world. These are the elect the body of Christ, those for whom the Lord died and of the rest, children included, they are hated with the hatred he had towards Esau. For as it is written Jacob have I loved Esau have I hated. Being said of them before they were born that the purpose of God according to election might stand. We ought therefore to be careful when selecting Hymns for the children to sing and in front of their unconverted parents. For the children's Hymn-book contains doctrines contrary to the scriptures and our articles of faith. This, Mr King, is not what you call changing things at Bierton, but rather doing a good work and putting things right in our own church and returning to the old paths, in the spirit of true Christian charity and love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

There were several other issues, which came to light in that meeting which I now seek to examine and call your attention too, apart from the spirit by which I preached and you were in doubt of.

You charged the Rev. Stephen Scott – Pearson with wearing a Romanising Clerical collar and by your inference smeared his character. Now while this is true, he wears, such a collar on certain occasions, it is not true to say from that inference that he advanced Roman Catholicism.

For the record, which you know to be true, the magazine in question shows Mr Scott-Pearson at a public protest meeting against the visit of the Roman Pontiff. It can be said of the Rev. Stephen Scott-Pearson, he is a faithful contender for the Christian faith.

Can this be said of you? For it was you who stated you did not wish a meeting held at the Bierton Chapel to inform of the repercussions of the Papal visit as you did not wish to offend your Roman Catholic friends.

Secondly, you accuse myself and others of having what you call a **free will Baptism** (what ever that means) and we ought to have remained in the churches from whence we came. You say we came to disrupt the church for we knew of all the conduct and matters at the Sunday school before we came. Bertha actually testified it was only of recent days these Hymns in question have been sung by the children. And my testimony is this; I questioned you last year on the same issue, the first time I heard such matters being put to the children.

Now let me remind you again, it was you who put the motion to the chair, contrary to the rule you accuse me of violating, when the church voted to join the Gospel Standard causes. Therefore, who has been seeking changes and affecting them, and who is in breach of the rules?

I remind you again, you are a trustee and have public ally acknowledged, before God, the Church and the world, to carefully promote, preserve and keep watch over the doctrines are those stated in our articles of faith. Now if you

do not believe them nor seek to preserve them, not only as a trustee but also a minister, you have lied, or unfaithful, on oath, and in court of law is criminal.

Your concern, Mr King, ought not to be am I being personally attached and under an inquisition? But rather, do I advance views contrary to the scripture and dishonour Christ, and are my views in conflict with his word and the articles of the Church I have joined? You ought not to fall back upon your age to justify your activity for as Elihu says (Job 32 – Verse 9) Great men are not always wise neither do the aged understand judgement. Also we are instructed to despise not prophesying. But to prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil (2 Thess. 5 – Verse 22). My charge being it was not just an appearance of evil but an actual evil doctrine being advanced at the children's school. This doctrine being contrary to your own church and confession of faith.

See supplement: Bierton Articles of faith and trustees responsibilities

Now I read the situation like this: - you being Baptised with a Free Grace Baptism at the Bierton Church, (whatever that baptism means, for that can only be the counter part to a free will baptism), are the lawful son of the household of faith at the Church at Bierton. That I and others having a free will Baptism, not being baptised at Bierton are not the lawful children. That you have the right to hold views and conduct yourselves contrary to the scriptures and the articles of the church which you joined by reason of the lawful Baptism. This, Mr King, is not Christian doctrine but rather the opposite. For they that do and hold the practice and believe the articles having given themselves up to membership and been received into membership are the lawful children and not they who speak with the mouth and act contrary to their affirmations.

You say you are under inquisition. Pray let me know how can you be given an honourable discharge to join another church if you will not subject yourself to the lawful enquiry of the church you are in membership of. You are a Minister of the Bierton Church and therefore have professed a calling to it, now where are those Graces accompanying this call to assist and support you in such diligent enquiries as to the doctrines you preach. You cannot advance views contrary to the scripture and fall back and hide behind a cloud of weakness when the church, or congregation or private member questions your advances, Now, Mr King, I as a lawful member of the Bierton Church protest to you. You have before the church stated by inference that I spoke by an **evil spirit** when preaching at the church on Wednesday last and by your conduct lately pointed out in this letter oppose my actions. Now where is your charity here to the little ones of Christ's fold and his ministers? My great consolation is this, they said the same of My

Lord Jesus Christ and that he had a devil. It is you, Mr King, by your traditions do violate the Gospel of Christ and make it void. For you say, being a lawful son of the church you can act as you feel and believe even when in conflict with the articles of the Church, objecting when questioned with these words; **the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life**. Hence you misquote scripture to support your conduct. Therefore you by your traditions (that is unwritten beliefs and current behaviour in the Church) seek to prevent and resist the lawful children from exercising their privileges by smearing their profession and opposing their Christian stand against error and falsehood. You charge me with being out of order by not respecting the 'chair'. Mr King, the 'chair' was out of order when seeking to administer a ruling contrary to the rule. We have no such view of the '**Divine Right of the Chair**', for if the 'chair' acts contrary to the rules. But I do realize you may have been ignorant of this matter but you had one whole week to consider and deliberate your actions.

From the outcome of that meeting it appears you deliberately attempted to oppose the cause of truth and frustrate the children of God seeking to continue in your traditions and false ways.

My charge to the church still stands and you as a member of that church must also answer. The Charge is as follows:

Of The Love of God.

To say to the children God loves them each one and that Jesus died for them all each one is contrary to the Scripture, is false doctrine and is opposed to the articles of our church⁶.

To teach the children and their unconverted parents by encouraging the children to sing the Hymns, such as 'Jesus loves me this I know, for the bible tells me so', etc. Is not a good work. -Nor should we put words in their mouths

⁶ See also Gospel Standard Article 3. The Everlasting Love

We believe in the everlasting and unchangeable love of God; and that before the foundation of the world the Father did elect a certain number of the human race unto everlasting salvation, whom He did predestinate unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will; and we believe that in fulfilling this gracious design, He did make a covenant of grace and peace with the Son and with the Holy Ghost on behalf of those persons thus chosen, and that in this covenant the Son was appointed a Saviour, and all spiritual blessings provided for the elect, and also that their persons, with all the grace and glory designed for them, were put into the hands of the Son as their Covenant Head, and made His care and charge.

expressing faith, hope and love, and teach them to call God their Father and Christ their Saviour, when they will most likely find one day to their confusion, that Satan is their father, and Christ their Judge.

This is not a good work but rather an evil one, for it serves to delude their minds as to the nature of the love of God in Jesus Christ to the elect children of God.

Now listen, it was the whole Church at Bierton who recently gave assent to the truth of these articles of faith that I seek to preserve, maintain and promote, for I believe them and preach them. These truths of the distinguishing love of God and particular redemption have always been the doctrines of the Church at Bierton, ask those who were there before you.

I am seeking to preserve and maintain these doctrines of the faith once delivered unto the Saints and my question to the Church at Bierton is this their objective: **And my question to you, Mr King, is, are you?**

Now King, Christian Charity covers a multitude of sins, but only those sins which are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ, and if you review what has transpired I will forgive and receive you as a Christian brother if you show the evidences of grace and obey the scriptures. For I exhort you with the words of the Apostles, ' be ye reconciled to God ' . I come to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and say may we be reconciled through Christ and be united by His Spirit in the common cause of truth and grace.

Yours in the name of Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God the Father, seeking the good and peace of Zion,

David Clarke.

P.S.. For your own good and those involved I am willing To submit what I have said to the judgment of any Christian and Minister being in membership of a Strict Baptist cause to judge the spirit by which I Act and the matters in question.

Mr Kings Reaction To My Letter.

In order to resolve the conflict I sought to speak to Mr King personally but he was out when I called to I left him a note.

I called and left a note to Mr King, which read as follows: -

Dear Mr King,

Sorry you were out when I called this evening.

I wonder if you would be willing to discuss some of the matters I mentioned in my letter to you in the presence of Mr Hope and Mr Hill or some

other ministers or brethren in order to correct our differences according to the scriptures. Math. 18 Verses 15-17.

David Clarke.

28th May 1983.

Mr Kings Response,

The following is a copy of the reply of Mr King to my note of 28th May 1983

Dear David,

Thank you for your note of Thursday last. I'm sorry that we were out.

'THEN CAME JESUS'

I am quite willing to meet Mr P. Hope at some convenient Prearranged time.

My heart sorrow, grief and contrition with solemn humbleness Is before God.

' MAY HE FORGIVE ME MY EVERY SIN '

' THE DOORS BEING SHUT '

Sincerely in Christ Jesus My Lord.

Amen.

Arthur

My Response Mr King

I responded to Mr King's letter as follows: -

Dear Mr King,

Thank you for your note of Saturday, I note you do not mention Mr Hill. If Mr Collier (Mr Collier was the minister of Linslaid Strict Baptists) will be willing to come with Mr Hope, would you be willing to discuss the matters I have raised with them present.

Math. 18 Verses 15-17 and Math. 5 Verses 23

Yours Sincerely,

David Clarke.

P.S. The reference to the door being shut, it felt was rather manipulative.

Mr Kings Response Was As Follows: -

Monday, 6th June 1983.

Dear David,

I am sorry for this delay since your last note regarding TWO ministers to carry out some enquiry. I did not realize you were enforcing TWO ministers when the scripture suggests and states ONE OR TWO witnesses.

Never the less, if you feel that two ministers would be more satisfactory for your conscience sake, you may do as you feel.

Mr Collier is not very well and I do not think it would be kind to ask him to become involved.

Perhaps you would be kind enough to let me know your further arrangements. My heart before GOD is to forgive even as I pray I have been forgiven.

MY MANNER BEFORE ALL MEN IS TO APOLOGISE. IN ONE WORD-SORRY!!!

IN LOVE, Author King.

My Response To Mr King's Second Note.

Because of the serious nature of the problem I thought Mr Collier was ideally suited to discuss and judge in these affairs since he was a Pastor and Minister of the Gospel and his personal knowledge of our church would be very helpful. I believed that if he knew the natures of my charge against Mr King he would be able to show that I was not making an issue out of nothing.

Requested Help from Mr Hope.

I telephoned Mr Hope and briefly explained the problem

And Mr Hope said he would come only if Mr King was in agreement.

Request Help From Mr Collier.

I then called to see Mr Collier and asked his advice. In his View the matter was clear, **particular redemption is the truth of the Bible, Therefore, the Hymn-book must be changed.**

He then suggested I try to speak again to Mr King before any such meeting with him.

I Speak To Mr King.

I called again to speak to Mr King very fearfully under much pressure. I explained firstly, that I had sought an apology from him as he had offended me, as I had already indicated in my letter. I then apologized to him for any unjust offence I may have caused him.

Mutual terms expressing sorrow were exchanged and we left After an embrace, scripture reading and prayer.

I thought the matter was now really resolved and that Mr King understood the issues that I had raised but he did not really see my concerns. It was not a matter of personal offence but rather it was a call to defend the truth of the Gospel. Particular Redemption was being denied. But to my disappointment the matter was still unresolved

3 JOINING THE BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS.

At this stage I feel it is important to explain my joining the church at Berton. I felt it right to leave the Pentecostal Church that I had associated with and attend the Berton Strict and Particular Baptist Church in 1973. I felt I could no longer in conscience stay or continue at the church even though I had affection for all the people there when there was a company of people across the road at the Berton Strict and Particular Baptist Church. They held to and professed the very gospel I had received. From that time I commenced to attend as a member of the congregation at this cause of truth.

Distinguishing Doctrines of Grace.

I began to attend the Berton church in 1973. A friend, who lived in Wendover, Mr Alan Benning, informed me that the Strict and Particular Baptist Church, at Berton, believed the doctrines of grace and that a Mr J Hill, a Gospel Standard minister (of Luton Ebenezer Church) was engaged to preach on an anniversary service in the near future. I was keen to hear him preach. So I began to attend their week night prayer meeting.

My hopes had been raised that I would hear the truth about God's free sovereign grace for it was reported that Mr. Hill was a Gospel Standard minister. I was given to believe I would hear those truths preached by William Huntington, William Gadsby and John Kershaw.⁷

I had read their autobiographies and found their writings very helpful and was encouraged by them as they gave all the praise and glory to Jesus Christ the Lord in man's salvation and not to man.

I started to go to the Berton church just before Mr Hill preached that anniversary year on the Wednesday night prayer meeting, and sat at the back of the chapel. At that time I had no idea of the manor of service or church government nor of any other ministers engaged to preach on a Lords Day or weeknight services.

The Doctrines of the Gospel

I was convinced that the Word of God was infallible and true and the only rule of conduct for religious practice and belief. I believed the scripture taught us of a sovereign true and living God. That though God be one God, in essence, and the only self existent being, there existed three divine persons that subsisted in the divine essence, the Father, The Son and The Holy Ghost. That these three were the one God that the divine nature was not divided. I believed the Son had become truly man at his incarnation being born of the virgin.

I believed the scripture taught that the Lord Jesus Christ is that only begotten son of the Father full of grace and truth, the only saviour of (Gods elect) lost

⁷ See our Further Publications list at the end of this book

sinner. He being one person yet having two natures. Being God from all eternity the divine Son of the Father and by nature truly God. Yet at the incarnation he took to himself that which he was not; our human nature and so was truly man and without sin, he was impeccable. Hence the glorious complex person of Jesus Christ is the Christ that should come into the world to save sinners. I believed that His glory was veiled during his time of humiliation.

It was this same Jesus that had called me by his grace directly and made himself-known to me, outside of the circles of any Christian church. It was he whom I sought and believed in when I went and heard Mr. Hill preach at the Berton Anniversary Service. He preached the distinguishing doctrines of grace very clearly. At that time I did not know many preachers who preached these things except, I had heard Dr. Ian Paisley, preach on a record and that sermon was called "Second mile religion".

I had also heard Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones preach but he seemed not to emphasize the distinguishing doctrines of Grace, although it was evident that he believed in the sovereignty of God.

The churches I had attended, until this time, around Aylesbury and district appeared to only know of Arminian doctrine and held to a the false doctrine of universal love towards all mankind and a general atonement, as distinct to particular redemption.

Alan Benning and I went to hear Mr Hill preach and we got on very well and made our selves known to him and he was very kind and invited us to his home in Luton.

Mr Benning also informed me of another Strict Baptists church at Linslade where Mr Collier was the paster, another Gospel Standard minister and we attended an anniversary service where a Mr Andrew Randall was preaching. We learned he had once been among the Brethren I could tell from our conversations that he was aware of doctrinal issues of the day, and he had a very serious disposition.

We began to attend other church anniversaries and one of my favourite anniversary was at Waddesdon Hill, where Mr James Hill was the preacher. This was a Gospel Standard cause and was founded as a Particular Baptist church, in 1752. I use to take Bertha and Ruth Ellis, Alan Benning and Grace knight to these meetings. I remember these meetings with fondness.

I Join the Berton Church.

After a short while I wrote to the church expressing my wish to join the church at Berton, as I believed that I had that responsibility having experience the new birth and being baptized. I reasoned that I ought to support the cause

of Christ at Bierton.

I was received into church membership at the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, on 8th January 1976 but this was not without a problem. This was because the articles of Religion that were given to me to subscribe too were not those listed in the trust deed of 1831, and I could not subscribe to them. There were two articles that I could not subscribe too as they were in error.

Mr Hill of Luton Ebenezer Helps.

I discussed my concerns and misgivings with Mr Hill, the Pastor of Luton Ebenezer church, who fully understood my concerns and after looking at the original articles of Religion, for the Bierton Church, it was realized that there was no record as to how these articles had come into existence. So the church was bound to be subject to their original articles of religion. These were listed in their trust deed of 1831, and these did not contain these items I could not, in conscience subscribe too.

The church was please to allow me to join them upon my confession of faith and my acceptance of the original Articles of Religion, and not the spurious ones. There was in fact no record of how these other articles of faith came to be in use.

Articles of Religion: The problem

The two Articles in question are as follows Article XII and XVI.

Article XII reads. We believe that Christ has set apart a day of rest, to be kept holy and for His honour and glory, which is the first day of the week commonly, called Sunday. - Mark 2. 27, Acts 16 13, and Heb. 4 9,

Article XVI reads. We believe that all who die in their infancy go to heaven by virtue of the death of Christ. - Matth. 19 13,14 and 15.

My objections Article XII was that the scripture quotations do not support the statement and the text of Hebrews 4 does not apply to the seventh day Sabbath but the rest which is in Christ Jesus. (As I found latter to be expressed in Gadsby hymn 636). It seemed the compilers of this articles sought to establish a false notion of gospel rest and were not clear as to the believer's rule of life. A matter that the Gospel Standard articles 26 treats. The scriptures maintain the gospel of Christ is the believer's rule and not the Law of Moses commonly called the moral law⁸. This gospel is that royal and perfect Law of liberty.

8 See Gospel Standard Article 16. We believe that the Believer's Rule of conduct is the gospel, and not the law, commonly called the Moral Law, issued on Mount Sinai, which hath no glory in it by reason of the glory that excelleth, that is to say, the Gospel⁵⁴; the Gospel containing the sum and substance and glory of all the laws which God ever promulgated from His throne, and the

This is discuss in further details in **Chapter 16 Mr Crane's Response** and under, heading -I Join the Bierton Church.

As for the Bierton articles XVI; again the scripture quotation has nothing to do with infants dying in infancy and so not applicable.

This belief I thought attacked the doctrine of the fall of the human race in Adam⁹ and the sovereign prerogative of God to show mercy to which he will. Not all infants are loved of God for Esau was hated before he was born.

Granted if God hath chosen infants that die to be in Christ, then they shall go to heaven by virtue of the blood and righteousness of Christ. But I see no scriptures that teach these articles of religion and I could not say I believed it to be true. I could equally believe all infants dying are dammed by virtue of the imputed guilt of Adam.

I Am Appointed Secretary

Having been received into membership the came a time when we needed a correspondent and Secretary and I agree to take on this role and had the responsibility of engaging ministers for the coming year. It was all-new to me and found it very difficult and a real sense of responsibility.

I had to deal with a request expressed in a letter from Colnebrook Strict and Particular Baptist Church who had informed the church (via me the secretary) that one of their members, Mr Martin Hunt was under censorship. Martin Hunt was one of our visiting ministers, who I found to be a very nice and polite man and had a good understanding of scripture. How ever Mr King and I were asked by the church to speak to Martin about this issue being raised and it was difficult to understand the problem. It was to do with particular redemption so in the end I asked Martin if he could subscribe to our Bierton Articles of Religion of 1831. His reply was no he could not. This resolved the matter and the Church decided not to invite Martin to preach again. This helped us not to judge this Jews, because of the hardness of their hearts, being permitted some things which the Gospel forbids.

9 See Gospel Standard Article 4.

We believe in the Fall of our first parents, and that by it the whole of the human race became involved in, and guilty of, Original Sin; and that as they are born into the world, the whole of their posterity are, in consequence, actual transgressors against God¹³. And we believe that by the Fall all men were rendered both unable and unwilling spiritually to believe in, seek after, or love God until called and regenerated by the Holy Ghost.

issue he had with his church but rather enabled us to respond to the concerns of the Colnebrook Church in the correct way.

Not All Preaching at Bierton Good.

We had a range of visiting preachers at Bierton. Ministers from various parts of the country. But not all were Gospel Standard ministers.

A Range Of Doctrinal Differences.

It became apparent to me, through listening to the various visiting preachers and my conversations with them, that we had a range of ministers with differing degrees of understanding of scripture. We had some Gospel Standard ministers, some held to the 1689 confession of faith some the 1966 Grace Baptist confession, some who were convinced of the Presbyterian position. Some holding to “duty faith and duty repentance” and one who could not accept the Bierton Articles of Religion, of 1831.

A Call to Preach the Gospel.

I began to feel uncomfortable when I heard some doctrines preached which were not scriptural and not very well expressed.

I felt the need to express the word more clearly. It was this desire that led me to believe it was a call to preach. This desire was placed in my heart the day Jesus called me to hear him and I had believed in him. I had preached to the church on a number of occasions at Bierton Church during the weeknight prayer meeting from the table not the pulpit. Gradually however I felt more and more uncomfortable when sitting in the pew just listening to sermons when things were not very well expressed.

When I first became a Christian I learned there were Bible Colleges but I wasn't impressed by those who had attended them and I did not believe in Bible Colleges. I wanted God to teach me. From what little I had seen of vicars and so called trained men I felt Bible Colleges were of no use because it seemed so of these people are not even born again.

So I dismissed the idea of Bible college for me, never the less I wanted to learn all about God and speak his word in clarity and truth. This desire turned me to read about the lives of men of God. I went from reading the Beano and Dandy comics and James Bond books to the Bible and then on to the writings of John Bunyan, Dr. John Gill, John Owen and Calvin in a matter of two or three years. It was when I met my wife to be that she encourage train me to be a teacher and that is why I attended the Technical Training College in Wolverhampton, to learn how to teach technical subjects.

My motive was to learn how to teach so that I could then teach the gospel.

I took one year out from work and studied at Wolverhampton Polytechnic and finally graduated with a teaching Certificate in Education. This was awarded by Birmingham University in 1978.

Wolverhampton Teacher Training Group



David (B Centre Right) at Wolverhampton Polytechnic

I believed that I could learn from secular professional teachers how to teach and then would then be able to take the substance of what God was showing me and then present it to men in a way they could understand. This was my desire.

I took my first teaching post at Luton College of Higher Education commencing teaching, in 1978

I inform the Church at Bierton of my felt call to preach.

It was during this time at Luton College and at Bierton Church that I felt it right to make known my desire to the church as I believed I was being called by God to preach the word of Jesus Christ.

The church asked Mr. Hill of Luton and minister of the Gospel and Mr. Hope of Reading, both Gospel Standard ministers invited me to share with them my calling.

Questioned about the Law of Moses.

Mr Hill questioned my belief regarding the Law of Moses and both he and Mr Hope listened. I expressed my understanding of the believers relationship to the Law of Moses¹⁰ and concluded that the Law of Moses did not make the Lord Jesus righteous as he was always righteous. He had an essential righteousness independent of the Law. He did not have to fulfil the Law to become righteous. He always was righteous. Had he been judged according to the law he would have been declared righteous and so he was.

10 See a fuller treatment of the subject in Appendix 25 listed towards the end of this publication

That imputed righteousness is the righteousness of God, given to all who believe, that Christ's Righteousness imputed justifies us, without our works according to the Law. The the rule of life and conduct of believers was the gospel of Christ.

Mr Hill's Conclusion

Mr Hill concluded that my leading was right and Mr Hope agreed. It was then put to the church that I should preach and exercise any gift I had. This was duly done and people came from Albert Street Strict Baptists Church, Oxford and Eaton Bray Strict Baptist Churches, to hear me preach the word of God that weeknight meeting at Bierton.

Sent by the Church to Preach.

It was agreed without question that I should preach, as the Lord opened up the way, and from that day in 1982, letters came from different churches asking me to preach at various Strict Baptist Chapels throughout the country. This was my call by the Lord and being sent by the church to preach the gospel, as the Lord open up the door for me to speak. This came with the blessing of the church believing that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.

I Preach At Various Churches.

In fact I was so overwhelmed with being asked to preach at so many places, I could have been preaching three times on a Sunday every week of the year and during the week on week night services. This was on top of my full time work, which involved teaching two nights a week at Luton College as well as continuing my studies with the Open University.

In a very short period of time I was engaged to preach and fulfilled preaching engagements in 15 Gospel Standard Churches throughout the country.

4 VISITORS AND STRICT COMMUNION.

Having now explained and given the history as to my joining the Bierton church, my role as Secretary, my call to preach, I would like to continue to relate the problems that followed that notable church meeting mentioned in Chapter 1, Truth Causes A Division, of the 27th April 1983. Immediately following that meeting another wave of trouble hit us at Bierton in connection with Mr. King and particular redemption. I was at the forefront of another problem and held in derision of them that are quick and hasty in judgment.

Mr Levey Preaches At Bierton.

We had engaged to preach for us at Bierton the Deacon of the Baptist Church at Dunstable, Mr Levey. This day was the 1st May 1983. And after the evening meeting and according to our usual custom the Bierton Church had

their communion. It is normal for the minister who preaches that day should conduct that meeting.

However, I was confronted that evening after our normal preaching service with a problem.

Mr Levey was perplexed, he had asked me what I wanted him to do for we had **now become a Gospel Standard listed church** and he was not in membership of such a church. Also the communion of the church at Dunstable was not restricted in the same way as expressed in the Gospel Standard articles of religion, which meant things would be out of order for him to conduct the communion service. Herein was a problem to me.

At the same time I had Mrs. Evered come to me and instruct me saying I was to conduct the proceeding of the communion that night myself.

At this point I was vexed in spirit. The church had enlisted as a Gospel Standard cause without due consideration given to what they were doing. Things were very out of order when women issue instructions to men and, after my charge to the church regarding allowing general redemption being taught in the Sunday school and their unrepentant concern; I realized what I must do.

I briefly explained to Mr Levey he must do as I say, there were things going on which require I must act, as I am to do.

We proceeded and entered the chapel from the vestry. I said to the church Mr Levey was not in membership of a strict communion Baptist Church and I asked Mr Levey to confirm this before them. After which I said Mr Levey could not sit down with us since our rules and order forbid it. At this the faces of some of the members showed their disapproval, but I was determined, if they trifle with joining league with a body or denomination they will go by the rule book of that association and hence avoid disorder. After all they had joined the Gospel Standard and not me, not that I was against it.

I suggested Mr Levey remain with us and sit in the Chapel while we partake of the communion.

This caused me much grief; nevertheless, one must do what one must do at times like this. Having apologized to Mr Levey he said he quite understood.

Letter From Mr Levey.

After 10 days I received a letter from Mr Levey and this following is a transcript.

10TH May 1983.

Dear David,

This is just a brief hurried note, which John has kindly offered to pass on to

you on Thursday.

You will I believe have by now received a letter from Pastor Dix relating to the Communion Service when I was with you recently.

This was just mentioned by me to the Pastor casually when I went on a recent car journey with him. I was very surprised at the hostile attitude he took and told him that I could see no reason for him to write you in the manner he has.

Mr Dix of Dunstable Baptist Objects

Mr Dix's letter of objection

DUNSTABLE BAPTIST CHAPEL

10th May 1983.

Mr David Clarke

Dear David,

I am very, very distressed at the way in which Douglas Levy was treated during his visit to Bierton on the first Sunday in May. As I understand it, he preached at both morning and evening services as had been arranged. He then tells me that prior to the evening service you indicated your intention of personally conducting the Lord's Supper. Then, when this was about to commence, with Douglas actually sitting in one of the chairs at the Tables, you raised a point of order saying that according to the rules now adopted by the Church Douglas was not entitled to join with you at the Table. I gather that in spite of verbal protest from one of the members present, you then asked Douglas either to withdraw, or alternatively to take a seat at the back, which in fact he did. Douglas tells me he had no notion of what your intentions were, and from what happened it appears the members had no indication either.

It is not my practice to interfere in any way with the affairs of another church, unless of course I am asked, but on this occasion conscience demands that I write to you. Douglas is a member and a deacon here, and I believe he has been shamefully treated. As his pastor I would be utterly failing in my responsibility if I did not express to you, and to the friends at Bierton, my deep sorrow and concern that he should have been subjected to such a humiliating experience. I would also like to make the point that by coming to Bierton on that day Douglas was obviously unable to join at the Lord's Table in his own church; through what happened he was kept from it altogether.

Sadly, through events of this kind, through this lack of sensitivity and the rigid application of what after all are man made rules, all too many have been driven away from S.B.. Chapels. It has caused untold sorrow and heartache, as

I know through accounts heard from my childhood onwards. Honestly, David, I cannot believe we can look for the blessing of God, either at Bierton or elsewhere, when we are prepared to treat fellow believers for whom the Saviour died, in this unkind and ungracious way.

There are, of course, other issues involved. Douglas came as a minister of God' Word to your souls, but was then debarred from joining with you at the Table of the Lord whose Word he had preached. If you think this through you will see this can only undermine the word he had preached. If there is some reason why he may not sit at the Table, is there also some reason why his ministry may not be received? I also believe that what happened is coming dangerously near to sacramentalism by giving a higher place to the Table than to the Word. This has always been the sacramentalists position, whether high Anglican or Roman Catholic.

Believe me, I have no desire to cause any kind of upset or strife, particularly among those whom I have know and loved in the Lord for almost 25 years. Neither would I wish to see you change from that rule of you sincerely believe it is according to the Word of God. But I do feel that if this upheld, then you ought not to invite Douglas, or others in the same position, to come and preach for you. If you have Particular Baptists to preach for you, who are not allowed to commune with you, then it does seem to me that the sacrament is being exalted above the Word.

With all best wishes,

You're sincerely

Kenneth Dix.

Copy to Mr King

Let the spiritual judge

Now again, for the spiritual, for them that have been tried and exercised in these things, let them judge. Are there any wise amongst the people of God?

What should I do?

I put pen to paper and wrote to Mr Levey.

The following is that transcript: -

12th May 1983

Dear Douglas,

Re: your letter of the 10th May 1983. Thank you for your letter and explanation of the circumstances following your visit with us at Bierton. I have received a letter from Mr Dix and shall write in due course.

I am sorry I am unable to elaborate in detail the reasons for my actions at this stage, but I believe you have sufficient understanding in these matters and

are neither offended nor humiliated over the events, which transpired during the communion service.

This whole matter I wish to bring before our coming church meeting because of the serious repercussions, which must inevitably take place.

My view as to ought or may preach in our church, are those who are sound in the faith and have a gift and are also in church membership of a church where there is a structure for discipline for obvious reasons.

Now whether they are of the same order (Strict Communion) it matters not in so far as they preach the faith once delivered unto the Saints. But this rule for preaching does not apply to the Communion if the articles of the church stipulate the order of Communion is limited to Strict Communion Baptists. However, our position at Bierton is slightly different for whilst the Church endorse the G. S. Articles of faith they do have their own articles set out in the Trust Deed and these I believe allow for the Pastor of the Church to exercise His own Judgment in the name (authority) of the Church to admit or bar from the communion those who he has scriptural reasons for so doing. However, at Bierton this flexibility cannot easily function for we have no Pastor (elder) to regulate these affairs and as a private member I acted on Sunday last with reasons not yet fully disclosed to you, but gave sufficient reasons for you to understand and agree. In the fear of God, I believe I acted and look to Him to justify my actions in the court of your conscience.

In no way did my action call into question your standing in Christ and no way can it be said you ought not to preach at the cause of Bierton, for the previous mentioned reasons and for the same reasons why William, Huntington, Toplady or Newton ought to be allowed to preach in a Strict Baptist Chapel.

I am sorry, however, you missed your own Church Communion but I do trust this incident will prove to be of God and turn out for the good of the cause at Bierton.

In the absence of a Pastor and having no authority except as a Private member I was unable to act lawfully in allowing you to sit at the communion. But had we a pastor no doubt you would have been permitted.

The problems arising from a pastor less church have proved to me that unless the Articles of Faith and Order have rule not only does practice and order fail but also truth and doctrine falls and error creeps in which is very difficult to put right.

Yours with Christian Regard

David Clarke

Jude Verse 3

Letter to Mr Dix

After delivering my letter to Mr Levey by and hand I wrote to Mr Dix believing he had really stepped out of place.

1st July 1983

Dear Mr Dix,

Thank you for your letter of the 10th May 1983, I am sorry not to have written sooner but I had hoped to bring the matter to our church meeting, but matters have been delayed.

I cannot as yet write on behalf of the church for we have not yet been able to discuss the matter to settle such affairs, but hope to at the next church meeting.

I have written to Douglas regarding the incident and expressed my personal views, which I believe would be as the founders of the Church at Bierton. However, we are without a Pastor and the Church have recently aligned with Gospel Standard Churches and are in agreement with their ‘ Articles of Faith ‘ which express the doctrinal views of the Church at Bierton in greater detail than those expressed in our Trust Deed.

In order to ascertain the legitimacy of the Church at Bierton in so joining and aligning with Gospel Standard causes I wrote to Mr Secretary (the secretary of the committee) in respect of our association, also Mr Hill of Luton. I questioned the matters of our own Trust Deeds and it’s written Articles and Practice believing any deviation from their expressed tenets would be in fact unlawful and immoral. Now whether or not our people at Bierton are aware of the issues involved I cannot really say, although I have reason to believe they are not. The actual position of the Church at Bierton is as follows:

We have our own articles of faith and rules of practice expressed in our Trust Deeds and cannot deviate from them in matters of faith or practice.

Our alliance with the Gospel Standard cause is by mutual agreement and the articles of faith and practice set out in ‘ these Articles ‘, so long as they are not inconsistent with our own articles already mentioned.

Our order as set out in the trust deeds is clear, we are a Strict Communion Baptist Church and so membership and Communion of the Lords Supper is restricted to Strict Communion Baptists. Although I believe our articles allow for the Pastor or elders to admit or bar from the communion to they whom they have scriptural reasons for so doing. But we are without a Pastor or means of flexible Church Government, which such officers could allow. Therefore the articles of faith and practice must bear rule in such absence.

For the record Mr Howe and his wife recently sought to partake with us at the communion, but were prevented by myself (I believe with the churches

agreement) for their non –membership of a church of the same faith and order (but again without a pastor or elder who should decide these policies?). I wrote immediately to him and his wife and he assured me there was no offence made.

Concerning the event causing concern; we had at the evening service before the communion service, none church members, those who felt they ought to be allowed to commune with us (who are in membership with no church, nor believe they need to be), John Just (name with held), and his friend, who I don't believe would expect to commune with us but these would be discriminated against had Douglas been admitted to the communion.

I would maintain that since our Articles restrict the “Communion” to Strict Communion Baptists¹¹, the church ought to preserve their order during the absence of Pastor and seek God earnestly and by all means seek a Pastor. In effect a gracious and Lawful means of church government.

I expressed to Douglas there were certain reasons why I acted but could not elaborate to him since it involved discussing church business, which was causing some concern amongst some of the matters.

In respect of who may preach in a Strict Baptist Church, I maintained thus to Douglas, that my view is, faith comes before order and I see no biblical reason for excluding a particular Baptist or Presbyterian from preaching in a Strict Baptist Church provide they were of the same faith. Otherwise it would be equally inconsistent for hymns and read sermons by none Strict Baptists being publically read and voices in our meetings. This I believe has always been the view of Strict Baptist in the past: (I cannot say of today, but each church is responsible for their own judgments in these matters). And held responsible by the Lord for their judgments.

Now surely a particular Baptist Minister would not be offended at Strict Communion and would respect the order of the church he be engaged to preach at. (He may not agree).

This practice, I believe, do not make the ordinance sacramental nor points to it for the preached word is held above the communion in every case.

11 Gospel Standard Article 15.

We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Christ, to be continued till His Second Coming; and that the former is requisite to the latter; that is to say, that those only can scripturally sit down to the Lord's Supper who, upon their profession of faith, have been baptized, by immersion, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and that, therefore, what is called “Mixed Communion” is unscriptural, improper, and not to be allowed in the churches of Christ.

This view I would argue is perfectly in according to Christian unity and liberty and in bonds of the Gospel of Christ. To say Douglas ought not to preach if he cannot partake of the ordinance surely makes or points to a sacramental view of the Supper for that view makes to supper equal to the preached word, which it is not and neither is Baptism. See G. S. 1862 enquires w.r.t. Ministers preaching J.C. Philpot?

I maintain Faith and the Word by which it comes is before all of these things.

I am sorry if I have caused any grief. I am equally opposed to man made traditions particularly when they oppose the Gospel and truth. We have common enemies, our carnal self, natural man's wisdom, anti-Christian principles, and apostasy in the professed churches all to contend against. Not forgetting the great enemy of the church, the Devil and his spirit and ministers.

I expect the church will send word when we have discussed the matter you have raised.

Yours with Christian Regards in the fear of God

David Clarke

Visitors and Strict Communion

This series of events and letters were submitted to the judgment of the church and are recorded in the minutes of the 6th July 1983, meeting.

Mr Peter Howe, Ivanhoe Particular Baptist.

Former minister of the Ivanhoe Particular Baptist

In my letter to Mr Dix I mentioned an incident, which occurred at the Berton Chapel with Mr. Peter Howe. Both he and his wife attended the Berton Chapel on the first Lord's Day in November 1982, and requested to partake of the Lord's Supper.

Mr Dawson, from Kent, was the minister engaged to preach on that day and since did not know our two visitors. I spoke to Mr Howe and his wife explaining our communion was restricted to they of the same faith and orders.

Mr Howe's circumstances were such that the Church at Ivanhoe had closed down and hence Mr Howe and his wife were not now in membership anywhere. I also knew Mr Howe held to duty faith and duty repentance. He had also recommended I read Andrew Fuller's book titled "**The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation**" which supported his views. He also held that the Ten Commandments were the rule of life for the Believer. All such views were in conflict with my views and the Berton Church (or so I thought). Knowing these things I was not at liberty to invite Mr Howe and his wife to

the communion. I said to them in much fear and tender consideration that they would not be permitted to partake of the communion. I wrote to them immediately, the next day to explain the Churches order of communion and apologized for any offence caused.

Transcript Sent To Mr Howe.

7.11 .82

Dear Peter and Pauline,

I do hope we did not offend you on the Lord's Day evening, we do not wish to offend in any way. I call to mind those scriptures as, Matthew 18 v 6, and I Chr... 16 verses 21 – 22. May I explain our position in respect to the matter of Church communion? We hold the administration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to be in the hands and authority of the local Church (it's self being subject to Christ Jesus and His Laws) and our order is such that we restrict the communion to. Baptised believers (by immersion)

Who have given themselves to Church membership of the same faith as ourselves?

That they are actually in communion with his or her own Church.

Therefore in respect to yourselves it would be viewed you are not in membership anywhere, but would hope you be graciously helped and directed as to what you should do.

Please do not think we wish to hold ourselves aloof more orderly than others but rather seeking to hold to those things once given unto the saints and aiming at a defence of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In pursuit of these things decisions have to be made which often are against our natural inclinations.

Trusting you are well,

Yours with Christian regards,

David Clarke.

Church Approved Of My Letter

At the next church meeting I informed the members of this letter sent and also the reply Mr Howe had sent to me. The churches approved of my actions and were in agreement with my judgments.

Mr Howe's Reply

The following is a photocopy of Mr Howe's reply: -
David Clarke Esq.
187 Aylesbury Road

PWH/MH

7th January 1983

Dear David

I do apologized most sincerely for the delay in replying to your letter of 7th November. This is a busy time of year for me and December particularly is a difficult month because virtually nothing can be done in the week leading up Christmas.

It was kind of you to write to me setting out the position with regard to the Lord's Table, and may I say at once that my wife and I were not in any way annoyed at what transpired when we were last at Bierton. Indeed it is good to know that some churches exercises some measure of discipline with regard to the Lord's Table.

However, having said that, clearly you were uncomfortable at what took place and I can well understand your grounds for discomfort. It is one thing to say that those coming to the Table should actually be in communion with their own church, but you are well aware that we were brought to the position of closing the Chapel at Ivanhoe for reasons beyond our control and which I trust do not reflect on us after having put in nine years' service there. As things stand, I concluded to myself rather wistfully as I left your church that evening that we would have been in exactly the same position had we been forced to leave a church having run off with the collection! Had the positions been reversed and you had been approaching me as to whether in those circumstances you could have participated in the communion service, without doubt I would have replied in the affirmative. As to your penultimate paragraph about church membership, we hope indeed to be "graciously helped and directed as to what (we) should do". We find ourselves in the difficult position however where no church has given any indication that an approach by us about membership would be welcome. Regrettably I have to say that, spending as I do much time on the road each year, I find when I go to a pub for a meal (which I do from time to time when I am not quite sure where to eat) I receive a far more friendly welcome than I do in some churches. I hope indeed that we will receive the help to which you have referred, but it is a matter of great sadness to me that, having been involved in active Christian service for over 30 years I have never

felt at such a loose end.

May I conclude more positively in wishing you and Irene and your children every blessing for 1983?

Yours very sincerely

PP. Peter Howe

5 EVANGELICAL REPENTANCE.

I believe I am now in a better position to speak to Mr. Howe about this matter and feel I should do so. At that time I acted as a private Church member and not with the authority of the Church because I was neither a deacon nor an elder. Had I public office to act, for on and behalf of the Church, then I could have asserted the churches doctrinal position and taken the matter up with Mr Howe as far as it was necessary. In order to show our differences, for the truths sake and Mr Howe's good.

I now feel I should have been even more open with Mr Howe over his position and doctrinal statements. We were a Gospel Standard cause and in that light it was only right to explain and discuss differences in doctrine with any visitor.

Erroneous Views Of Mrs. Evered.

At that time I knew that Mrs. Evered prominent member of the Bierton Church, had erroneous views as to the doctrine of repentance toward God, and that since we were now a Gospel Standard cause as a church we had committed ourselves to defend those articles set out in the Gospel Standard articles of religion.

Mrs. Evered false views came to light when she rejected the use of the term 'evangelical repentance' used by Mr J Tanton who preached at Bierton, earlier that year of 1982. The matter she raised at the church meeting of October 13th 1982.

A Transcript Of That Meeting.

Mrs. Evered also made mention of the fact the Mr Tanton had used the words '**Evangelical Repentance**' to which she objected. Since there was no such mention in the scripture. What action the Church ought to take was not specified; however no response from the remaining members by way of objection was made.

The secretary (myself) reminded the Church of Article 26 of the Gospel Standard causes where our position was specified¹² as to our responsibilities or

12 Gospel Standard Article 26.

We deny duty faith and duty repentance – these terms signifying that it is

otherwise of men towards God in this matter.

I wrote immediately to Mrs. Evered to help sort out some of her views in respect of the subject.

Letter to Mrs. Evered.

13th October 1982

Dear Mrs. Evered,

Re: The terms Evangelical Repentance used by Mr Tantum during his preaching engagement on the Lord's Day evening 19th September 1982.

May I offer for your consideration the following thoughts on the subject above? The term evangelist as used in the scriptural, means: One who announces good tidings; see Acts 21 verse 8, Ephesians 4 verse II and Timothy verse 4 & 5. All protestant churches since the reformation were known as Evangelical Churches. The term repentance is another scripture word; see acts 22 verse 21, Acts 3 verse 19, John 16 verse 7 & 8 Matthew 5 verse 4 and many other places mentioned. The nature and kinds of repentance the scripture mentions are various¹³.

There is a natural repentance which the light of nature and natural conscience dictates. Romans 2 verse 4 & 5.

There is a national repentance an outward humiliation for sin. Such as Ahab exercised. 1 King 21, verse 29, and such had Tyre & Sidon exercised would have remained had they repented and had they privilege, that the Jews in Hid day had, by the preaching and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a hypercritical repentance, which the children of Israel exercised when in the wilderness. See Psalm 78 verse 34 – 37 and Hosea chapter 7 verses 16.

There is a legal repentance, which is a mere work of the law, which in time wears off and comes to nothing. Both of which Pharaoh and Judas exercised. Exodus 9 verse 27 and Matthew 27 verse 4, and Cain, Genesis 4 verse 3. All of which may be experienced by reprobates and is none other than the sorrow of the world, which worketh death. 2 Corinthian 7 verse 10.

There is an evangelical repentance to which Mr Tantum referred too in his ministry, although he did not draw the distinctions just mentioned. This every man's duty to spiritually and savingly repent and believe. We deny also that there is any capability in man by nature to any spiritual good whatever. So that we reject the doctrine that men in a state of nature should be exhorted to believe in or turn to God.

13 A full treatment on the various kinds of repentance is given in Dr. John Gill's Body of Practical Divinity, Book 1 Chapter 4, Of Repentance Towards God. See Our Further Publications at the end of this book.

evangelical repentance is not a duty but a Free Grace Blessing and a Gift of God for which our article 26 contends is not the duty of all men. It may be called evangelical repentance for such penitent sinners derive comfort and consolation by the gospel. Since through the blessings of the blood of Christ which when applied to the conscience it cleanses from all unrighteousness. It flows from the free grace of God. His Spirit who reproves of sin and enlightens the eyes to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin and to which the gospel invites such men to rest in Christ Jesus, and of which there are many references. Proverbs 28 verse 13. I John chapter I verse 6-9, Isaiah 4 verse 7, Jeremiah 3 verse 12-13, Luke 24 verse 47, Acts 5 verse 31. Those who experience this Blessing are the elect only, and it is a gracious privilege and the gospel exhorts them to exercise. A full treatment of this subject may be found in Dr Gill's body of Divinity, under the subject **repentance toward** God. Dr Gill is held in very high regard by the Gospel Standard ministers to which both Mr Gadsby, William Huntington, John Warburton, John Kershaw and Mr Philpot, paid particular respect. A further exposition has appeared in the Gospel Standard magazine September 1967 to which I would refer you to for further explanation.

Trusting this will be of some help. Before and since joining Our Church I have been much exercised over this matter and am persuaded that our article 26 expresses a scriptural view, although the wording of it needs clarification.

Yours with Christian regards

David Clarke.

Mrs. Evered's Response

To my letter Mrs. Evered stated that my points were not relevant to her rejecting the term evangelical repentance and she had spoken to another minister and he too agreed with her; there was no such thing as evangelical repentance.

I never did find out the underlying reason for anyone rejecting the term evangelical repentance nor would Mrs. Evered state whom the minister was whom she had asked about this matter.

Mr Howe And The Added Articles

This problem was directly connected with Mr Howe, for he had now approached the church at Bierton to partake of her communion. Connected because we had recently become a Gospel Standard Cause no scriptural references to the added articles (1878) of the Gospel Standard Strict Baptists¹⁴.

14 Please see our section on The Added Articles, which Mr Howe refers

Also, in his view, that stand mentioned in these articles of religion could not be supported from the scriptures. This matter Mr Howe mentioned to me sometime during 1972 to 1976. At that time I had not closely studied the Gospel Standard position but I did reject the notions of duty faith and duty repentance of which Mr Howe maintained. I was obliged to support my view¹⁵ entirely from the scripture and answer his objections from first principles without reference to any articles of faith. I had read of Mr Howe's views in a book written by Mr A.W. Pink but I did not agree with him on this matter. The book entitled 'The Total Depravity of Man.'

My concern, when Mr Howe asked to partake of the communion at Bierton, was that we were in disagreement over these issues and the church was now a Gospel Standard cause; so how could Mr Howe now wish to join with us in our communion? The concerns that I had were those if the views of Mrs. Evered were held and taught by others in the church and I taught the truth of the scripture then it would appear to our visitors we were not of one mind and at variance.

At that time I realized there was a difficulty if I spoke to Mr Howe over his views on repentance and saving faith. Because had I advanced, what I considered to be, a biblical position as specified in our articles of religion and acted on that occasion as a church representative, whilst some of our members advance different views and denied evangelical repentance then we would be out of order as a church.

I began to realize folk were not clear in their thinking and in error in their doctrine as regards repentance towards God, and their understanding of our articles of religion. The matter had to be put right but the way to do it was not clear to me. People were generally of the opinion that if you left the matter alone it would all clear up in the end. I am not of that opinion. Nevertheless the matter never was settled in a biblical way.

6 THE CHILDREN'S HYMN BOOK

In this chapter I relate how an attempt was made to resolve the issue connected with the children being taught to sing hymns containing doctrines contrary to our articles of religion and scripture.

The Church Meeting

I do not think it possible for anyone to know the anxiety and stress, which such matters cause unless they have gone through similar paths.

Nevertheless they had to be faced. Who is sufficient for these things?

to in Chapter 23 of this book,

15 Ibid Gospel Standard Auricles 26.

Truth was at stake and must be preserved. I was certainly alone, for none of the church appeared to stand with me save my wife.

Church meeting 15th of June 1983

Scripture reading I Cor. II ²⁰⁻³⁰

This was an interim church meeting seeking to bring to the church the correspondence from Mr P. Jane (trustee) and Mr B. Ramsbottom, minister of the gospel, Luton.

After reading the minutes of the last meeting a matter of the 27th April, clarification was raised by Miss G Ellis regarding the postscript of these minutes. (This postscript has been quoted on page under this heading). It was asked, "What views were meant. When stating they would prohibit Mr King from preaching? I explained, 'the views which prohibit any preacher from teaching at Bierton were that of teaching children God loves them all and the Lord Jesus died for each of them.

Minutes Cause Embarrassment

It was felt the paragraph ought to be removed for the sake of future generations and so avoid conveying wrong information.

The secretary expressed the purpose of the minutes were to convey a true and accurate account of what actually took place in the meetings whether the church were in agreement of what transpired or not.

It was suggested that since some members could not recall the events, related in the postscript, taking place then a clarifying note to be made. This was agreed by the vote.

It was further motioned the whole postscript be removed but could not be carried by vote.

The chairman resolved the impasse by signing the minutes under the end of the minutes before the postscript. This was done to the satisfaction of the members.

It seems evident from these notes that the church did not like what was recorded and sought to clear Mr King of all possible blame. Some wanted the minutes to be tampered with and hide the truth, an evident sign of the natural man and his ways.

If they wished to clear Mr King of the charge I had made, then they could have asked him what were his views and doctrines. Mr King to this day has never denied my charge of teaching "Universal" love to all children and has never expressed he thought himself wrong when saying to all the children that Jesus had died for them each one.

I realized again that this business about voting and women dictating that

was, or was, to be was wrong.

However, back to the minutes: -

The secretary informed that church the reason for the gathering was on two accounts: -

A. Letters from Mr. Ramsbottom, minister of the Gospel (Luton Bethel) and Mr. P. Janes (Trustee) was to be read to the church respecting the question of teaching methods used in teaching children.

B. That a letter from Mr. Dix, minister of the Gospel (Dunstable) was to be read to the church.

The two letters from Mr. Ramsbottom and Mr. P. Janes trustee) were read and the secretary expressed that they both conveyed and supported he views expressed in the Bierton "articles of faith". After some discussion the possibility of changing the Hymn book used by the children was raised but the teachers said those hymns which appeared to some as teaching general redemption were always viewed by them as scripture, which contains the word 'all' as in Isa. 53 Verse 6, and so on; but in a limited sense.

The Hymns In Particular Were: -

There is a green hill far away.

Jesus loves me this I know for the bible tells me so.

Mrs.. G. Ellis suggested that the Hymns ought to be carefully selected.

Mrs.. Gurney motioned that the church retained the hymn-book, **and the motion was carried by the vote of the church.**

Letter from Mr Ramsbottom

The following are the letters sent to us from Mr. Ramsbottom And Mr. P. Janes.

To The Church Of God At Bierton

2.5.83

Beloved friends,

Mr. David Clarke has visited me and brought your church's request. In the fear of God I have tried to put down a few thoughts on Sunday Schools, which I hope will be helpful. I have sought to avoid personalities and keep to principles.

Desiring your real spiritual welfare.

With Christian love,

Yours sincerely,
Mr Ramsbottom

To the church of God at Bierton

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE PURPOSE AND RUNNING OF SUNDAY SCHOOL

The purpose of a Sunday school is to teach the Word of God to our children.

With the Lord's help an attempt will be made to put things as simply and clearly as possible; otherwise there is no point in having a Sunday school.

Though the teaching must be simple, it must be in absolute agreement with the doctrines we believe: those set out in the trust deed and the articles of faith, preached in the pulpit, and, above all, revealed in the Word of God.

Great care is needed in the choices of the teachers. Obviously they must be gracious; in complete agreement with the truths we profess: and, in my opinion, church members.

These four points would seem to be clear.

It is on points 3 and 4 where there has been deviation in recent years. Yet even a hundred years ago one or two eminent ministers had to raise their voice against "another gospel" being preached to children. Though simple, it must be the same truth: the vital necessity for the new birth; the sinner's complete helplessness. We must beware against lowering standards in our desire to simplify. It is the same way to heaven for a child as an adult. (NOT: if you love Jesus you will get to heaven.)

Thus, it should be evident that the Sunday school hymns are in complete agreement with the truth, though in simple language. Some of the popular children's hymns are very beautiful: some are erroneous. Care must be taken. Our great concern must be for the honour of the Lord Jesus out of love to him. (I do not see how, believing in particular redemption, we can teach children, "Jesus loves me, and this I know"). Also some children's hymns speak as if all children are "lambs" – a lamb is a new believer, however young or old.

Above all it is wrong to teach children that Jesus loved them and died for them.

Finally, great weakness has crept in some Sunday schools in the loose appointment of teachers. We hear (concerning some girl who shows no signs of grace): "Well, she just takes the little ones!" To be a Sunday school teacher is a solemn thing, a weighty responsibility.

May we not deviate from the standard of truth with sentimental views of being loving and kind?

Letter From Mr Janes (Trustee)

To the church worshipping at Bierton Strict Baptist Chapel

Dear Friends,

As a trustee of your chapel I concede to your request to comment on certain teaching practices in the Sunday school.

My wish is to avoid confrontation, which often results in division, and seek wisdom to write in such a way that may be helpful in resolving your differences.

It is very easy for all of us who profess the Lord's name to continue in certain practices and adhere to modes of worship without realizing that we may be wide of the mark.

On the one hand it can be argued that God's people will not be ultimately deceived by teaching, which suggests a general atonement, because many who have listened to have proved this that doctrine and their eyes have been opened to see otherwise.

On the hand to give anyone whether it is believers in an unregenerate state or worldling a false sense of security must of necessity be wrong.

Many religious bodies are guilty of giving a false hope to people so we must be careful not to do the same.

I don't think there can be any doubt that the hymn ' Jesus loves me this I know' etc. Is not a suitable hymn for one our Sunday school because it gives this false sense of security and is not doctrinally correct.

I suppose that one of the other hymns in question i.e. " There is a green hill far away" could be sung by a group of true believers and be applicable language, but if believe the generally accepted interpretation of this is that Christ died for all men, which is not what the word of God teaches.

It is often quiet difficult not to put words unto people's lips. A mixed congregation cannot with all honestly sing certain hymns, but I say again it is very difficult.

I often fear that my hope is false, but I feel I can say to the honour of my God that through the spirit's teaching

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

My prayer and desire is, that all who enter the door of Bierton Chapel,

including the Sunday school children might know this true foundation.

With Christian love,

Philip Janes

My Response to the Church Meeting.

From the last section of the minutes and the response, or lack of it from the church. Even after I had called my two witnesses to confirm my views. Not to myself, but for the benefit of the women. I realized the voting system falls down and that these women ought not to determine doctrine or practice of the church.

Now what was I to do?

7 I CONSIDER LEAVING THE CHURCH.

From this time I thought seriously that I must leave the Church of Bierton for truth was not now a prime mover of our faith and practice. I had sought my God in prayer much engaged in contention for the faith, and now the people of Bierton are holding on to what they are used to. I could not see that truth could be restored whilst things remained as they had been.

I had two children now and twins on the way, and wished my children to be brought up where truth would be taught and not from a sentimental point of view. If God hated some men then let the children know. If God loved some men let the children know. But I could not remain among those who teach a sentimental, universal love for all. That was how it appeared to me. I had enough of that whilst touring the wilderness of the Arminian Churches of Aylesbury, in which Mr King had said I should have remained. I announced to the church shortly after, my intention to leave and then I placed the house on the market 'for sale'. We had thought we could move closer to my work and perhaps go to the Church at Eaton Bray.

Circumstance

My wife was with child at the time and due to give birth in November, and if we were to move, then if it be of God then we concluded we must sell our house without delay.

The house was sold 'Subject to Contract' to our first customer, After looking at properties at Eaton Bray and Eddlesborough, and sounding out the folk at the Eaton Bray chapel we began to doubt what we were about. Sale falls through

After two or three weeks we had word our prospective buyer could not go ahead with the purchase, and so withdraw from the procedure of buying.

The effects of our doubts regarding Eaton Bray and the imminent birth of our twins, we concluded we could not go ahead with the sale of our house at present, and hence whilst at the Bierton Church must continue and fight the cause of truth even though the people hated the contention.

Next Church Meeting 6th July 1983 2.30 p.m.

Our next church meeting was held on the 6th July 1983 at 2.30 p.m. At this meeting the letter from Mr. Dix was read to the church. The secretary then informed the church of the letter received by Mr. Levy, for he had written to say he did not agree with Mr. Dix's response to the event mentioned. To the contrary he was not humiliated but approved of the action taken by myself.

The secretary explained in greater detail the circumstances relating to that accusation, and Mrs.. Evered, had suggested that I on that occasion was to conduct the communion service. Further to this the secretary reminded the church of their recent approval of the Gospel Standard Articles of religion. They express that the communion was restricted to those in membership of a church practicing strict communion.

Mr. D. Clarke then explained he had written to both Mr. Levy and Mr. Dix apologizing for any offence wrongly caused, also explaining the whole matter to them both.

It was also expressed by some members that the incident had upset them and they disapproved of it. Also that since Mr. Clarke had written it was not necessary for a further letter of apology, explanation, or otherwise to Mr. Dix.

After consideration of the above issue it was mentioned that on future Lords Days when the communion service was to be held, only ministers of Strict Communion Baptist's are engaged to preach.

This is done to avoid a similar upset. Also, so that open Communion Baptists be free to commune in their own Churches on that day, since this was the general custom. This motion was approved and carried by vote.

Mr King Can't Remain In Fellowship

It was later on in the meeting that Mr King asked to be excused while the church dealt with the contents of two letters written to the church by him. Upon which he left the meeting.

The following is a transcript of these letters: -

Bierton,

Wed. 15.6.83

My Dear Friends,

God who knows me through and through prompts me to have this little note

ready to leave with you.

My failings are many. The ability to be composed in argument or debate is not among my virtues.

Rather than be led into saying other things we would regret I feel it wiser to deal with it in this way.

As a preliminary ‘step’ and after much earnest prayerful sorrowing consideration, for the sake of my mind, conscience, health and faith before God, for a period, at least, I am persuaded, fully persuaded, I cannot remain in fellowship with the Church at Bierton.

Only the lord knows the state of my mind at this time and the end from the beginning whether this will be temporary or permanent.

Pray for me.

God bless you all. Deeply sorrowing, forgive me.

Christian Love

Arthur

173 Aylesbury Road, Bierton

Wed. 6. 7. 83

My Dear Friends,

The Lord knowing my feeling of weakness in body, mind and spirit, I know I must have this letter ready to leave with you.

I agreed ‘to chair’ the Church Meetings here for one year, that time has now expired.

David has letters from me regarding current engagements with you to speak and also that I have declined any future engagements for 1984.

While I remain in membership with you I feel it is in ‘name’ only. My prayers before God continue constant, that he will show me (painfully perhaps) his way out from such pressure and concerns over these past months.

Enclosed letter 15.6.83. May show something of my concern at that time. “I waited patiently for the Lord”.

May God bless you all and forgive me.

Author King

Secretary’s Response

The secretary explained he had letters expressing that Mr King requested to be relieved of his preaching engagement in December 25th, 1983 and that on

future week night services, if the secretary be present then they hold a prayer meeting only, shared by them both.

Also consideration of these matters it was mentioned and agreed, Mr. Clarke and Miss G Ellis speak to Mr King and ask him to explain his thoughts and actions (subject to Mr King's agreement).

After treating the above matters I read the following letter to the church: -

5th July 1983

To the Church at Bierton,

May I explain the reasons for my recent announcement to leave the church at Bierton and disclose to you my mind? There are two main reasons for concluding we are being called away, by God, and they are follows: -

Church Not Governed By The Bible.

On several issues it appears the mind of the church in general is governed by a different set of principles from what I have learned of the scriptures. And since every man is accountable to God for the judgments he makes, and governed by his own conscience, then in answer to a good conscience. I cannot stay in a church where the governing principles are contrary to the bible.

Example 1

Rejecting the ministry of Mr Scott-Pearson

Un-scriptural

The recent principles which dictated whether Mr. Scott – Pearson should preach at the chapel on the Lord's day were as follows: -

A. He wore a clerical collar on certain occasions.

B. His name appears in print with the term rev.

Prefixing his name

C. He is a particular Baptist and not Strict.

None of the reasons given had a doctrinal biblical basis as to why he ought not to preach at Bierton on any day, Lord's Day or not. The reasons given were rather a traditional prejudice. As far as church order goes Mr. Scott – Pearson is in the same position as Mr. Levy of Dunstable.

Example 2

Miss Treatment Of Mr Lawrence.

This was the treatment of Mr. Lawrence. If the church believed Mr Lawrence be overtaken in a fault then, according to the scripture Gal.. 6 verse 1, then they which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness: for according to

James 5 verse 20 ‘ Let him know that he which recovereth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death.

Both of these men were not judge according to biblical principles had they been preaching false doctrine and continued to do so then they would rightly not be asked to preach again. However they were rejected upon another footing not according to the bible.

A church not governed by biblical principles is not church for a Christian to be in membership. It seems a dreadful shame when a church can be so concerned about issues not biblical and be so slow to stand for real important biblical gospel truths.

Last year when the Anti- Christian Pope came and polluted this land again the general mind of the church was that the chapel building was not the place to hold a protest against the Anti-Christ for it may offend some friends.

My last example:

Church Teaches General Redemption.

After I challenged the church with not being careful in the selection of suitable children hymns and the appearance of teaching a general atonement, you were far from being concerned whether my charge had any weight but rather felt you knew better. It could not be said of you which was said of the Corinthians (2 Cor. 7-11), what carefulness it wrought in you, what clearing of yourselves etc. In all things ye have approved yourselves clear in this matter.

However I do realize and make allowance, you are without a pastor to watch over you in these things, and I must take this into account.

Second Reason

The second reason is that of a domestic and family nature. It may be better for my wife and inevitably my family if we moved to a community where there are younger families. It is very difficult for my wife to cope with the Church's difficulties and the children, especially when I am away preaching and should I not provide for my own household I am worse than an infidel and have denied the faith (1 Tim. 5 v. 8).

I do not know what the future holds excepts my God determines only that which will turn out for the good of His dear people and we must earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints – Jude v. 3.

D. Clarke.

The Church's Response To My Letter

It was expressed by Miss G Ellis that there would be many people very sorry

should the church at Bierton be Closed, and it would be a very sad day should that occur. Also could not the church continue according to right principles for God is the same where ere we be.

This was the general view of the remaining members of the church.

8 A DECISION TO STAY

Realizing we could not leave without a way being opened up for us to go, I concluded I was to continue at Bierton and continue my defence of Gospel truths, even though I was to upset the whole church. The next battle was with Mrs. Evered who was the moving person for us to become a Gospel Standard cause and so one would have thought she would have known better. Sadly not so.

Battle Number Three

With this resolve battle number three was to begin and through the following pages, which I pen for the benefit of any persons in a similar position, **I realized the** “inhabitants abiding in the land” are indeed sly, hidden, crafty, Wiley and appear as harmless lovers of outward morality, being very strict in their discipline, in particular the observance of the Sabbath day, the avoidance of worldly influences such as the tape recorder or even the television set and so called “evangelical news papers”.

The incident occurred as follows: -

Before the morning meeting at Bierton I was dressing my niece ready for the service; whereupon I was instructed by Mrs. Evered to remove from the desk my niece’s cardigan, for the table was a “**holy vessel set apart unto God**”, and to be revered not being put to a secular use “.

I was dumbfounded, never having heard of any such notions. I held my peace until I visited Mrs. Evered the next day, on the Monday evening.

Heresy or Holy Table

Realizing she held heretical notions regarding the chapel building and the communion tables I reproved her as a heretic stating she was as a Roman Catholic who reverences building and the like. Due to the serious nature of the errors I was constrained to write to her, for such notions could not go unchecked. The following is the transcript of my letter to her.

Letter to Mrs. Evered

Dear Mrs.. Evered

As a minister of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, I write in concern, not only for your own soul’s good, but also for the good of the Gospel and cause of truth at Bierton.

The last Lord's Day morning you told me to remove from the desk, at the front of the Chapel building, my niece's cardigan, as I was about to dress her ready for the service. This was done before the commencement of the morning meeting. The reason you gave to quote "**The table was a Holy vessel unto the Lord.**"

Upon questioning you, on Monday, about this matter you informed me that you did not expect me to know about that, but since you were a girl, and since you have always been taught these things and knew this to be true from scriptures. You also said the Chapel was the "**House of God**"; therefore to put a child's item of clothing upon the Holy communion table was sacrilege, for this was putting it for a secular use.

You further expressed you did not wish me to write to you, after my admonition, upon this subject for you knew the truth of it and would never think any different.

I expressed to you your views were heretical and therefore an Heretic in this matter; for there are no such 'vessels' sanctified for holy use to be held in such reverence in Christian worship, whether they be buildings, tables, chairs, pulpits, tablecloths, cups or plates or any other such item for "we have no worldly sanctuary" (Heb.. 9 verse 11).

All such vessels used in the Old Testament, to which you referred, were those directed of God for a specific end and were sprinkled with blood (Heb.. 9 verse 21). They were but a shadow of the things to come, to be used only whilst the Levitical priesthood stood, until the time of Reformation (Heb.. 9 verse 10). This time has now come and has been since our Lord Jesus was raised from the dead and has ascended into heaven.

Also the chapel building is not the "House of God" for it is just bricks and mortar; the Almighty God does not dwell in temples made with hands (Acts 7 verse 45, 17 verse 24). But now the temple of God is with men, the church, the body of Christ, the called out elect vessels are the temple of God and the House of God. (1 Tim 3 verse 15) and not the building as natural men think and many Roman Catholics.

In view of the serious nature of the case, it has been necessary for me to approach you for should your thinking be affected by superstition and not taught of the spirit of God, you cannot be preserved from being an instrument in the hand of Satan when called upon to make church decisions.

I trust you realize the concern I have. Therefore as a minister I admonished you and now warn you if you persist in this heresy and cause strife turning aside to vain jangling (1 Tim. 1 verse 6) it will be necessary for the church to discipline

you in this issue. For if you are will fully ignorant and will not be admonished and insist on issuing directives to Church members and congregation on matters like this you will be rejected by the Church as an Heretic, for your mouth must be stopped lest the whole house be subverted (Titus 1 verse 11). I suggest you speak to another minister over this issue and show them this letter for there are no Christian ministers in the Gospel Standard denominations who holds the views and beliefs you do. It is certain the Gospel Standard Committee would not own such a minister.

I repeat again, as I said to you, if the spirit by which you have been taught these things is from God then it is an spirit of the Lord, even as Saul was troubled by an evil spirit of the Lord. (That is to say a devil has influenced your thinking and the light of the Gospel must dispel that darkness of mind).

I commit you to God and the word of His Grace, which is able to build you up and direct you. May God enlighten your mind and open your eyes to receive the truth of the gospel.

You're in concern,

David Clarke.

Minister of the Gospel.

Ps. Until this matter is resolved I will not have your assistance in the secretarial work.

Mrs. Evered who had refused to read my letter and returned it to me. This reminds me of Zech. 7 verse 11.

Response to my letter regarding Heresy and Holy Table

Shortly after my giving the letter to Mrs.. Evered, she returned it stating she had not read it for she knew the truth and would never think any different. **I was told that all the folk at the Chapel thought the same things as she.** This was said in private, in the schoolroom, while the remaining members were in the chapel building.

I immediately, called these church members together and stated exactly what Mrs. Evered had said? To my surprise some of the folk seemed to be sympathetic with Mrs.. Evered's point of view. Whereupon I stated whilst I remained a member, I would not countenance such views to be held or promulgated in the church or otherwise, and at this point Miss Gwen Ellis left in anger at my determination expressing she was fed up with people saying what they were, or were not, going to do. The remaining members departed. So the heresy manifested it self.

The Matter Unresolved

Now I asked what more must I do?

The members present were: Mrs.. G. Evered,

Miss B. Ellis, Mrs. C Gurney, Mr. D. Clarke and Miss G Ellis.

Who was I ? I felt so inadequate.

I had no office or authority in the church we had no pastor, no elder – in fact my question was – **were a church?**

No Church Order

It was evident we had no church order and with Mr King having resigned from office as chairman and no church meeting set it was evident we needed to put these matters right.

More Uncommon Ground

The next series of events highlights another area of uncommon ground between the Bierton folk and myself, which I considered detrimental.

There were plans being made in Aylesbury to launch what was called Mission Aylesbury. This was a so-called united evangelical effort of all churches to take place the following year. It was to run in conjunction with the proposed visit of Billy Graham who was to speak at the Mission England gatherings.

Concern Over Ecumenicalism

I put to the church a request to use the chapel buildings for lectures. I explained the need to remind this generation of Christians of the history of the reformation. I suggested I would raise this request at our next church meeting and left it at that.

However one or two commented on this proposal by saying: No other chapels are used for this purpose. Dare we do this? Would our trustees be in favour?

In order to ascertain the trustees mind on this matter I wrote to Mr Baumber of Bedford, Mr. Hill of Luton and Mr. P. Janes of Eaton Bray.

Lectures On The Reformation

The following is a transcript of the letter sent to Mr Baumber and exactly the same letter was sent to Mr. P. Janes: -

5th May 1983.

Dear Mr Baumber,

I have recently put forward a request to the church at Bierton for permission to organize a series of lectures on the subject the ‘ History of the Reformation’ using the Chapel Building to conduct these meetings. Mr. G. Ashdown of the

Protestant Alliance would be asked to conduct these meetings.

It has been questioned whether our trustees would be in favour of such meetings being held at the Bierton Chapel, for this reason I write for your views, comments or suggestions.

As a member of the church and a Minister I am aware of the arrangements being made by some of the other churches in the area of Bierton and Aylesbury for a united evangelistic effort. This being in a direct response to the planned Billy Graham crusades to be held in Britain next year.

Believing it being part of our duty as a church and a privilege to bare testimony to this current generation of the kindness and goodness of God to us in the past. We ought to do all that is in our power to bring remembrance and remind fellow believers of the Great Reformation God wrought for us in the 16th Century and since. Realizing unless we do they may fall foul by Satan's snare during future days. It would seem right to teach and remind believers and those seeking God by such means. To bring them back to, and through the historic milestones of our reformation history, may be a means of redressing the balance of contemporary ecumenical evangelism of our day.

I would value your comments, reactions and seek your support.

Yours with Christian Regard,

David Clarke

Response to my letter

Mr. Baumber telephoned to say he would have no objection provided it was not causing any breach or division in the church.

Mr. P. Janes wrote and his reply was as follows: -

25. 8. 83

Dear David,

In direct answer to your letter received yesterday I see no reason why any trustees should object to your proposed series of lectures on the reformation.

I cannot go along with noisy demonstrations, but in Joshua 4th chapter we read of the twelve stones taken from the midst of Jordan to remind the people of past deliverances and they were to tell their children.

Mr. Ashdown is, no doubt, a Godly man and very gifted at memorizing and retelling past events, hence very suitable for such meetings.

It would be a good reason for the trustees to object if you were inviting someone into the pulpit to preach knowing that he would advance things contrary to the teaching of the word of God, but this is not the case.

I wish I had a retentive memory so that when I hear these things I could

remember. However, if you do make arrangements and I can possibly come, I will, and endeavour to bring others.

Mr. Ashdown would have to be suitably paid for his journey and time, so perhaps you would intimate to me your thoughts about this side of the matter. Collections at the meetings would probably be the best way.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Janes

My response

Due to the disorder amongst the church already mentioned, it seemed inappropriate at this stage to pursue this matter further. However, it seemed a shame that the church could not rise to the occasion and be, as it were, as a light set upon a hill.

9 A DREAM

Background To The Dream

The following chapter relates a dream that I had and then leads up to the next attempt to resolve our disorder at Bierton.

A Dream And Its Effects

On Sunday the 29th September, I was preaching at Oakington, Cambridgeshire and that night I dreamed a dream. To relate the dream I need to explain a few things.

Ruth Ellis was a member of the church at Bierton and was now in the Bethesda Home at Harpendon.

She had suffered lately and her actions, ways and reason were at some times strange and often inconvenient to her relatives but also she could not be sensibly communicated with. She often caused a great deal of trouble to the people concerned.

Ruth had been a great help to me in the past and always our conversation was concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, his truth and our experience. She was able to quote from memory virtually all the hymns of the Denham's collection and Harts hymns. Even in her poorly mental state she was able to quote from hymns to any that asked.

In company she would often say things which could not be understood and as a results some folks would ignore her and say virtually oh, you know Ruth, she speaks nonsense,' and so she was ignored.

I often tried to communicate with her poorly state and I am sure her problem was only in that she selected the wrong words to express what she

wanted to convey. Yet in all this we still were able to speak and have choice experience when considering some of the substance of the Hymns she would quote.

I felt for Ruth particularly when folk ignored her and as though she were insane.

Now to the dream: -

I was in company of they who I had believed to be my friends.

Were gathered together in a reception room like that of a hotel and I had occasion to speak and express my views about a matter I couldn't recall. However, these folk all turned on me, not in a physical way, but in a mental way. They said, in effect, although not verbally, "Oh no! You are wrong, not only wrong but you have gone beyond the point of no return in your thinking." "We all know the scriptures by virtue of who we are, but no, you are completely wrong."

They concluded that they should ignore me for I was lost and they could not come to my aid. They concluded the best way to treat me was to ignore me and not take any more notice of me. Just in reality like they treated Ruth. To politely smile at my words but take no notice of me whatever I said.

The loneliness and isolation that I felt was just as I believed Ruth Ellis must have felt when she was ignored. I cannot find words to express the depth of grief I experienced when I realized I was so alone.

I awoke and spoke my mind to my wife weeping. I was resolved to speak the word of God even though I be counted a madman, the truth to me was more important than those so-called friends.

Who these folk were in my dream it matters not for I did not think it relevant. However, for they who can interpret dreams, one was a member of a church near to us at Bierton.

Further Attempts To Resolve Disorder

Following all these events it was necessary to do something. I called a church meeting, for the 19th October 1983. Not that I had the authority, but something had to be done. The following members were present: Mr. A. King, Miss B Ellis, Mr C Member, and Mrs. Evered. D. Clarke, Miss G Ellis.

Mr King opened in prayer and a reading from the scripture 1 Cor. 13.

Mr King then expressed he felt constrained to give a reason for his action and decisions of recent months to the church; explaining he had a nervous complaint which had severely affected his body. The affairs of the church had been by no means helpful.

Mr King explained he was in receipt of a letter written to him by Mr. D. Clarke dated 2nd May 1983, and he had shown the contents to the deacon of the

church at Linslaid. Although Mr. Collier was the pastor, due to his age, it was thought he ought not be engaged in any controversy or disagreement between Mr. D. Clarke and himself. Although Mr. D. Clarke had suggested it that Mr. Collier might be called upon to help settle any offences or controversies affecting the church.

Mr King removed himself from the table and sat upon a chair (previously placed by himself) away from the desk stating he did not feel he could read quotes from this letter to the church standing at “The Table of God”.

Parts of that letter were read and afterwards Mr King stated he had hoped the church by now had obtained the help of a chairman to conduct this meeting, since on several occasions he had requested the church should do so. Mr King then reminded the church of his earlier request to be relieved of his preaching engagement at the Bierton Church in December of that year. After this he left the meeting.

The secretary (myself) explained church business could not be conducted unless we had some means of regulating church affairs; we each had responsibilities to each other and Mr King whilst in church membership.

The secretary put a motion to the church that since a serious disorder existed in the church it was necessary for them to seek someone to act as an overseer without delay, until such time as we were settled and able to function as a body.

Mr J Gosden, Minister of the Gospel, Kent, was proposed by the secretary, (me) that in his prayerful and considered opinion he was the only person, known to himself, able to act in this capacity. The secretary also proposed one of our trustees be asked and named Mr. P. Janes of Eaton Bray, to help set in order things which were wanting.

Mr John Gosden was the son of Frank Gosden the minister of Galeed Chapel, at Brighton. I had spent the afternoon with him at his home whilst considering Joining the Bierton Church. At this time I shared with him my call by grace and he gave me his personal set of Dr. John Gill’s commentaries.



The whole set of Dr John Gill’s Exposition of the whole bible in six volumes

for which I was really grateful.

Consideration was given to the seriousness of our affairs and viewed it harmful to leave such a decision for a further month (even though the Gospel Standard articles of faith rule 15, stipulated one month notice should be given to such a decision).

The matter was agreeable to although Mrs.. Evered suggested we ask Mr Ramsbottom of Luton, Bethel Chapel, to act in the above-mentioned capacity.

The motion was put to the church and carried by vote.

Comments on that meeting

Mr King speaks of The Table of God

I was surprised that Mr King read from the letter I had sent to him, for I understood this personal matter had been resolved between us but now he opened up the whole issue again. I was offended that only parts of the letter were read and not the whole because the parts he read cast sinister shadow upon the whole letter.

The other point which was a surprise to me was that Mr King spoke of the “**Table of God**”, now what did he mean? What connection had he with Mrs.. Evered?

Again I realized this could not go on without a check. What was I to do?

Help from Mr J Gosden, Church Order

I wrote immediately to Mr J Gosden with our request to help us, but sadly for us he was not in the position to do so.

Here is his letter in response to our request: -

Reaction to the letter

I understood clearly Mr J Gosden's reply and wondered what we could do. I gave the letter to Mr King and asked him to read it.

Tunbridge Wells
Mr. David Clarke,

24th October 1983

Dear David,

Church at Bierton

Thank you for your letter of 19th October. After prayerful thought and consideration I have my initial opinion confirmed, that as much as I should like to be of help to you all, the distance involved (about 100 miles) and the very

heavy commitments here make my involvement a physical impossibility.

I have felt with sorrow the evident lack of respected leadership and lack of unity in the fellowship of late, and my heart aches for you as I remember the situation when it was so very different. May I therefore make the suggestion that you make a new approach to the problem by considering carefully the character of a true Christian Church.

A church is a gathering of God's people, those who through grace have known the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Christ, and in whose midst there is: -

Church Government by Men

A. Government and discipline administered by MEN called, equipped and qualified by God to lead and rule on his behalf. Eph. 4. V11-16. Only matters previously agreed and considered by these men should be put to the church meeting.

B. Preaching of the whole counsel of God by those called of God to do so. Rom. 10. v13-15

C. The administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as an outward and public avowal of union with Christ and, in him, UNITY WITH EACH OTHER AT THE TABLE. I.e. All to be done with "one accord" Acts 2 v 41.

Wherever any one of these elements is seriously or entirely lacking, it is very doubtful whether, in God's sight, there any longer exists a gospel church. If you feel this to be your situation, only two courses are possible.

For the church to unanimously appoint from its own MALE members those qualified in accord with 1 Timothy 3, in whom there be complete confidence, and for whom all would have respect.

Or

If the above is impossible then to seek to place your selves under the discipline and oversight of a properly constituted gospel church as near to Berton as possible, and to remain under their discipline until such time as God may raise up men from your own numbers who could undertake the responsibility.

I trust these thought may be helpful. My inability to become further involved is no indication of lack of love or concern, but the sheer impossibility of being useful at so great a distance.

My Christian love to you all,

Yours sincerely,

John Gosden

10 EVENTS TURN FOR THE WORST

One could hardly think such a few people who profess the fear of God could act and react in the way they have done, as I am to show through the following events.

The following is a summary of those events, which caused me to see how things at Bierton were going from bad to worse.

Prayer meeting 26th October 1983

Week night meeting

Mr King read from the 33rd Chapter of Jeremiah's prophesy and emphasized verse 3 after a few comments on the reading.

Four Members Of The Church Walk Out

Following this I was to read from Ezekiel 's prophesying Chapter 14.

However, this is what happened. I made introductory remarks before my selected reading and the effect of my words were such that four of the seven gathered got up and walked out of the meeting.

I was astonished and so were the remaining church members who were Mrs.. Gurney and Miss B Ellis. This had never been known to happen in the history of the Bierton Strict Baptist Church.

The following is a recollection of the words spoken at that time, none of which were designed to hurt or cause any such effects as has been mentioned. They were spoken from the heart and with all honesty and truth as the subject lay heavily upon my spirit. Particularly after recent events at the church at Bierton and after receiving the letter from Mr J Gosden (which at that time none of the church members had read save Mr King).

The Scripture Speaks

The Chapter 14 of Ezekiel seemed to speak to us at Bierton and I as a minister of the Gospel felt responsible to convey these things which I believe the living God would have us take note of. Before the appointed reading took place, I took the liberty to make the following introductory comments:

Ezekiel 14, "The text of scripture which Mr King had emphasized was a very good word to the people of God and to any seeking him. ' **Call unto me and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not**".

I too could testify of the truth of these words having experienced the truth of these words in my own case for when the Lord Jesus called me by his grace 14 years ago. I was in no church nor was brought up in things, which were known to

others who from a child had known the scriptures. But the truth of the words, “ call upon me and I will answer thee”, was true in my case for I called upon the name of the Lord and he heard my cry and saved me, separated me from my former ways and manner of living. Being once a drug seller, drug taker, criminal and wicked person. Only the power of the gospel and constraining grace of the Lord Jesus could work in such a way overnight.

Being called in no church nor brought up in any church my knowledge of Jesus Christ came as I read the bible.

I met in those days after touring the churches here and there I was unable to settle into any of the churches. The reason being, I could not find that concern to know God and his grace in the way taught through the doctrines of Grace as they are in Jesus Christ and as I had come to receive. They neither taught them nor believed as I had come to know myself. I had read in those days accounts of John Kershaw’s life, John Warburton, William Huntington and later William Gadsby, all men with whom I believed I had something in common. We had experience the same things in measure, believed the same truths of God’s word, but I knew of no church in those days who knew these things as I had received.

That is until the Bierton Church was made known to me. As you know I crept in and sat at the back and continued with you until this day.

At that time the reverence for the things of God and manner of worship was well pleasing and pleasant. The singing of the hymns were savoury, their theme always being that of Christ Jesus and his gospel of grace. The hymns spoke of free grace, justification by faith, of imputed righteousness and the sovereignty of God in all things. Those doctrines I had come to receive before coming amongst you.

Now believing I have been called of Jesus Christ to preach his gospel, and given leave of the Church I must speak and can only speak of those great things God hath shown me from his word. My responsibilities to you and your responsibilities to me as a preacher and also our responsibilities to Mr King as a preacher are the same. I ask you if I speak not according to the word of God you must take me aside and show me, and I appeal to you to do so. Nevertheless since it is a truth in general a prophet is not received amongst his own people, the prophet Ezekiel needs no commendation, let him speak the words applicable to us and may his word be believed and the ‘ Spirit’ who dictated the word speak to our hearts as appropriate.

Having now been amongst you these several years I am now discovering not only here but as I travel the churches, things that I must make known.

Recently it has been brought to my attention when a minister or you

people refer to the **'House of God'** you actually mean the building. I have never understood our ministers to actually mean the building, for they mean the church, the elect called out body of Christ.

As I read the scripture I find the 'House of God', the place or seat of worship, according to the 1st. Testament was destroyed by the hand of God as foretold by Jesus when speaking of the temple, saying not one stone shall be left upon another. God is no longer worshipped in one place or temple. That all of those forms and the ordinances of worship under the first testament were all but types of the substance of true gospel worship and true church order now revealed in the New Testament.

Now the temple of God is the people of God, living stones and not by man's doing, but by the regenerating work of God the spirit. The elect body of Christ, called to be Saints are the true building of God; the house of God and not this chapel building, which I discover, is believed to be the case today.

All the vessels of the Old Testament were typical of the elect people of God set apart for divine use. Types of officers, helps and functioning members of Christ's Gospel Church.

We are the temple of God. New Testament worshippers have no 'holy tables' or tables of God' or 'holy temples' as have been recently told me.

I am told the communion table must be 'reverenced' for it is a 'holy table' set apart unto God.

The building I am told is to be 'reverenced' for it is the 'House of God'. All of which I discover to be not found in the word of God.

Speaker From The Congregation.

At this point, a member of the Church called out and asked well is not this the 'House of God' pointing to the building. Then another rose to their feet saying this is more like a church meeting and walked out. This was followed by three other persons leaving. They were Miss. G. Ellis, Mr. A. King and Mrs.. G. Evered. The other person was a member of the congregation. This left myself and two members behind.

I was amazed and alarmed for I had not raised my voice nor spoken in a severe way, or a hard way, nevertheless I had provoked this reaction by speaking the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

I beckoned to the remaining few that I should close the meeting in prayer and asked the Father of our Lord Jesus to save his people from these troubles and give us wisdom in these days, and how we should conduct ourselves.

I then spoke to the two remaining, asking them to do what they believe to be right. They need not trouble themselves over me but rather themselves. If they

feel I should leave, then I would do so, if this would bring them peace. Or if they felt a minister or ministers should speak to me to show me any errors in my ways, then they must do so.

Then indicated to them from the word of God the scripture that clearly shows the ' House of God ' to be the Church. 1 Tim. 3 verse 15.

We left Bierton Chapel heavy in heart but I trust with our eyes towards heaven that God would be gracious and appear for the people of God.

Dream Recalled

I then recalled my dream and wondered were these people them in my dream, and after all was there anything in the dream?

11 COMMUNION REFUSED

Having no pastor and having no authority from the church I knew not what to do. It seemed no one understood these issues involved and that it were I that was the cause of these disorders.

Withdrawal From The Communion

With all these disorders I could not, in conscience, sit down and partake of the communion that month. I therefore withdrew asking Mr. Crane, of Lakenheath, to excuse me. I gave no explanation to him at that time for he was A Visiting Minister Unacquainted With Our Affairs.

Refusal To Conduct The Communion

Because our disorders were unresolved I believed it wrong to continue as a church holding the communion whilst our differences prevailed. I therefore prepared a statement for the church and read it to them at our weeknight meeting. The following is that statement read in November 1983.

It is the custom of the Bierton Church, to hold the communion service on the first Lords day of each month, and that service to be officiated and conducted by the Minister engaged to preach on that day. I am engaged to preach on the first Lords day in December 1983, but I must express my concern to the Church at Bierton.

I abstained from the communion on the first Lords day in October and the reasons for doing so were manifold, however, they may be summed up in the following way.

The church are not united in the cause of truth and at are variance one with another; to act outwardly as though one was in harmony when not inwardly is to pay lip service to a principle. Such practice is hypocrisy and dishonours the communion of Christ's body.

To illustrate this disunity I must point out six recent issues of disorder,

none of which have been resolved to the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr King considers himself to be in membership in name only and has asked to be relieved of his preaching engagements at Bierton during 1983. He has also not declined to fulfil preach elsewhere. It was only at our last unofficiated church meeting that he gave any formal indication for his actions.

We are out of order as church if we do not resolve this matter and put right any wrong done.

When I brought to the attention of the church the inconsistency of teaching general redemption, to the children and their unconverted parents, when in fact scripture teaches particular redemption; the church were not concerned, but rather upset that it should be mentioned.

The resulting confusion and variance over this issue gave witness to the real beliefs of the church. Therefore, we are out of order unless we are one mind in such matters.

Both Mr King and I are given license at the church to preach and yet over the issue of General and Particular redemption and the Love of God to the elect and hatred to the reprobate we are at variance.

Particular Redemption

I maintain the scripture teaches particular redemption¹⁶ and the Love of God is Eternal, unchangeable towards his elect and the rest of mankind are hated with the same hatred mentioned towards Esau (Rom. 9). That Christ died only for the elect.

In this matter we, as male members must be in agreement to walk together for otherwise we cannot serve the needs of the church at Bierton.

Mrs. Evered will seek to establish her religious practices and ways, believing them to be right, when in fact they are wrong, upon other members of the church and congregation. When I opposed her privately, and then before other members trouble arose and the rest of the church wonders why?

At a recent prayer meeting three of our members walked out of the service, Miss G Ellis, Mrs. Evered and Mr King. It appears they took offence over some things, which I had spoken in sincerity, honesty and in no bitter spirit, when making introductory comments before the reading of the scriptures.

16 Bierton Articles of Faith 1831. That the Lord Jesus Christ in the fullness of time became incarnate and that he really suffered and died as the substitute for the elect of God only and in their stead whereby he made all the satisfaction for their sins which the law and justice of God could require as well as made a way for the bestowments of all those blessings which are needful for them for time and eternity.

The comments were related to the communion table, the Church building and current heresies connecting them with the Old Testament modes of worship.

I say while such heresies are allowed to go unchecked, the church is out of order.

In the past the church has made governing decisions contrary to the spirit of the Gospel and continues to do so. The reason appears to be because it is believed that should we strive for peace at all costs, even at the cost of truth, honesty, justice an example of this bad practice is in connection with Mr Lawrence. Mrs. Evered expressed that he ought not to be asked to preach at Bierton again and gave her reasons. However, another member mentioned that since this matter had caused so much trouble, it would be prudent not to ask him again, at least not for another year. To this the church agreed. This is not honourable.

I maintain that this was dishonourable, practice as a church we have responsibilities to each other and visiting ministers and, had there been a cause of serious error on Mr Lawrence's part we should at least act rightly and put it right in a biblical manner.

This has happened in the past and is of course out of order, and must be put right.

From these six issues it is evident that we have no effective means of Church government, and since we have no officers to affect a remedy we are out of order.

Therefore, since there are matters unresolved amongst the Church and there is not that harmony required before the Communion service it would be wrong to symbolize the Lord's death for us, by means of the communion, until we put these matters right. To do so I say would be to have 'no respect for the Table' which of course is a metaphoric expression relating to the communion of the Body of Christ.

Therefore, in conscience, in the fear of God, I abstain and believe it wrong to conduct this service until we put these matters right. We are responsible before God to do so!

David Clark
Minister of the Gospel

Churches Response To My Actions

This caused some of the members to ask, 'Well can we not have this

service on another Lords Day when another visiting minister could conduct the ordinance.' They did not think I was right to do what I had done.

Due to the difficulties in obtaining suitable ministers we had no ministers to preach on any of the 1st. Lords Days in the following months of January, February or March. Nevertheless I was available to preach and to officiate the communion if the church resolved their differences.

Attempts To Remedy Our Disorders

By this time our disorders were accumulating and so I called another church meeting in order to set in order or effect a remedy. The following is a transcript of the minutes of that meeting:

Church meeting 14th. December 1983

Members present: Miss B Ellis, Mrs. C Gurney, and Miss G Ellis Mrs. Evered and Mr D Clarke.

Acting Chairman Mr D Clarke

Reading: 1 Cor. Chapter 2 followed by prayer.

The chairman explained the meeting was not a properly convened meeting since as we had no duly appointed chairman for which reason he thought Mr King was absent

However we were gathered in order to set in order those things which were wanting since we had now serious things and matters of disorder amongst us. That it was necessary to establish a means of regulating and governing the church affairs.

Each church member had read the letter from Mr Gosden and so we were aware of his inability to help.

The secretary read a letter received from Mr King explaining his absence and his intention not to attend the meeting expressing he was sure he had made it clear, to the church, he would not attend the meetings when he was with us at the last meeting.

Miss G Ellis express she did not think Mr King had made the matter clear at all and that surely we could not make decisions affecting the church without him.

The chairman expressed that whilst he felt Mr King had not made the matter clear at the last church meeting he had made himself plain he was not attending this meeting. However it was thought perhaps this was because we had no chairman duly appointed and that we had obtained such help he would have attended.

To this Miss G Ellis expressed she had hoped this was the case. Likewise all

the members.

The chairman further explained we had accumulated church business, which had to be attended to, but we had no means of affecting and ruling on issues, which had arisen and was at hand.

After the discussion it was agreed we needed someone to act as an overseer and it was suggested we ask Mr Ramsbottom. The secretary mentioned Mr Ramsbottom had already indicated he was very busy in previous correspondence with the church and perhaps we should ask our trustees.

The chairman suggested it would be a very heavy responsibility to ask one person to act in this matter at this stage and perhaps two or three persons ought to act and be involved to set things in order. The chairman suggested we could ask Mr C A Wood, of Croydon, that he act as an overseer and that if he felt the help of trustees were needful he could say so. This was agreeable to the members. The chairman then pointed out that the help we had in the past was only of the chairman and not oversight. We are now seeking the aid of an overseer or elder since our church affairs had proved the need of such an officer. To this the church agreed and understood.

Mrs. Evered expressed we ought to solve our difficulties before we ask someone like Mr Wood to help in this way. The chairman explained we had no means of doing so for the nature of our disorders and disagreements were very serious and required a biblical ruling and enforced church authority to settle these matters.

Mrs. Evered expressed at this point she objected to being charged with heresy, by Mr D Clarke. That her practice of reverencing the communion table, vestry and building was right. She denied the charge also of behaving like a Pharisee and a Roman Catholic. All of which charges had been made against her at her home by Mr D Clarke.

She said, 'A heretic was one that had departed from the traditional church view and held self-opinionated views' and she did none of these things. All her views were right for she had been taught them from a child. To which the chairman said, 'This matter could only be settled in a biblical manner but at present we were without the means of settling such a disagreement and since she had initially sought to press her views upon Mr D Clarke, in public, he was obliged to resist her and so this matter would require a church ruling.

The chairman explained he had not the authority of the church to act in this matter on their behalf even though he believed Mrs. Evered was wrong. But for this reason we were seeking to give such authority to an elder or overseer.

The House Of God

The chairman asked Mrs. Evered to give one scriptural reference to support her views and mode of religious practice when reverencing the communion table, vestry and chapel. Also what scripture reference had she for maintaining the building was 'The house of God'. To which she quoted the introductory comments made by Mr G Collier, when describing the atmosphere of entering the meetinghouse of Benjamin Keach's chapel at Winslow.

The chairman asked would she reverence the Anglican Church buildings, to which she replied, 'Yes'. It was then asked would she reverence the Roman Catholic buildings, to which she replied she would but not their religion. To which the chairman replied such reverence should not be given to any such buildings, let alone that of an Idol temple such as a Roman Catholic place of worship. To this last statement of the chairman the church seemed to agree.

The chairman expressed since no scripture could be given he would read the scripture which clearly defines the 'The House of God' (I Tim 3¹⁵).

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou aughtest to behave thyself in the 'House of God', which is the church Of the living God, the ground and pillar of truth.

He further stated that God seeketh such to worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4²³), that there are no holy buildings, tables vessels or such things which we should give reverence. That the new Testament churches are the people, the elect body of Christ, called by grace; these are lively stones built up into a spiritual house and building for an habitation of God through the Spirit. All of which Pharisees could not see or understand or receive.

The chairman was then pressed by Miss G Ellis to explain the text the Lord Loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

The Gates of Zion

The chairman replied saying, 'saying The gates of Zion are not the doors of the chapel building but the public ordinances of the Gospel ministry; reading, prayer, preaching etc. All of which are Christ's ministries in the church. Thess.

To which Mrs. Evered replied she could not make the chairman see. To which was replied he saw perfectly well that her views were heretical, superstitious and leading to the will worship or the Roman Catholic Church. And that just as Pope John Paul the II denies idolatry when reverencing the statue of the Black Madonna, so would she when reverencing a wooden table, building and vestry all of which are made by man and men cannot put holiness into things that are made.

The chairman warned then of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D. and that we should take note of what happened to Shiloh (Jer. 7¹⁴).

That he would not be surprised to find the building burned down if such superstition prevailed at the Bierton church. At this it was exclaimed 'oh never'.

The chairman explained it is self evident we cannot settle these or any other matters without a biblical basis and properly established church government.

The chairman explained he felt he would benefit from the help of such an overseer in order to discuss such matters as they arose. That the church were responsible to settle and resolve these matters honourably and not brush them aside.

It was agreed that both Mr King and Mr D Clarke should discuss these affairs with Mr C A Wood, in detail and go back as far as needed through the church affairs to settle these disagreements.

Mrs. Evered then raised a point of disagreement with a statement made by Mr D Clarke (chairman) in a sermon whereby he said the devil reigns over men in the world. She denied this and that the devil was not chained as Mr D Clarke had said in previous explanation for that would only occur in the millennium reign of Christ. To which the chairman replied; God is sovereign and overall but Satan rules in the kingdom of darkness over the minds of the ungodly and he being bound signifies him being bound metaphorically by a chain. Meaning Satan can do no more that he be given leave to do.

Naming People

Miss G Ellis then said a minister ought not to name people from the pulpit or in letters for this did not seem right and was surely diplomatic. Mrs. Evered also said a Gospel Standard minister never did this nor would do. To which the chairman replied, 'whatever other ministers did or did not do the rule of them being sent by God is scripture. Since the apostle Paul named men that opposed him in the ministry such a Demas (2 Tim. 4¹⁰) or Alexander the copper smith, also Luke informs us of Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5¹) all of which were named persons so too was it right to name persons, as need be, whether publicly or in private. That it was only the wisdom of this world, which dictated otherwise. That of course diplomacy be employed when, needed but it is only a tradition of men, which forbids names being mentioned publicly or in letters.

Don't Speak of things that offend

The chairman was asked by Mrs. Evered not to speak from the pulpit about these things, which have caused offence since she disagreed with him. To which was replied, 'He did his best not to offend or say things to upset but in faithfulness to men he could only speak of those things which he believed to be of God, appropriate and according to the scriptures, then the church must show him from the scripture and obey the biblical principle of judging

prophecy (I Thess. 5²⁰⁻²¹) and hold fast that which was good. Now in this case we had no means of effecting government in the church in order to put right our disagreements.

Mrs. Evered then asked the chairman if he believed in keeping the Sabbath day holy, or the moral law. To which he replied she did well if she did so. To which Mrs. Evered said she did so.

The chairman explained the Sabbath Day¹⁷ according to the Law of Moses was Saturday (the 7th. Day) and cannot be changed (Gal. 3¹⁵) for it was part and a term of the covenant given and made at Mount Sinai. That this is done away and fulfilled in Chris. That the Lords Day was the 1st day of the week when he rose from the dead and that this day is not the Jewish Sabbath Day. Hence we are informed men cannot (or should not) judge in respect of holy days, new moon of the Sabbath (Col.. 2¹⁶) for the law was and has a fulfilling end for the believer in Christ Jesus. To which Mrs. Evered said Lords Day or Sabbath Day it's just the same. To which the chairman replied, 'He believed the Gospel was the rule of life for the believer and not the 10 commandments commonly called the moral law, of which she was advancing and his views were scriptural and are expressed in article 16 of the Gospel Standard Articles of Religion.

Teaching Electronics Wrong

Mrs. Evered then asked the chairman if he felt his job as a lecturer teaching electronics was in keeping with that of a minister of the Gospel. For this work involved teaching the maintenance of television and video recording equipment which are all of the world.

To which the chairman replied he thought his work was quite in order.

The meeting was concluded with a resolve to ask Mr C A Wood, of Croydon to help us at Berton.

The meeting was then closed in prayer.

My conclusion to this whole affair was that the beliefs of the majority members of Berton were so much in error that any other believer, minister or pastor who truly believed the Gospel Standard Article of Religion would be ashamed to own these as beliefs.

Letter sent to Mr Wood

I contacted Mr. Wood immediately but he was not in the position to help so I called a church meeting, which met in December 1983. The minutes for that meeting are as follows:

17 See. 'The Doctrine of The Sabbath', by David Clarke listed as Further Publications at the end of this book

Church Minutes Meeting In December 1983.

Mr. Wood had declined our request to act as an overseer due to practical considerations and his commitments already. However he was prepared to help at a first meeting if we obtain help from another minister to act as an overseer. That we could ask Mr. Ramsbottom if he knew of any who may be able to help us who was living closer to Bierton, or he might have some suggestions.

To this he suggested we ask one of the ministers we had to preach and because he did not know all the ministers we had it was very difficult to say.

After explaining all our ministers were not Gospel Standard listed men and he suggested this need not necessarily matter. After explaining not all our ministers were in agreement over the added articles and this might prove awkward, Mr Ramsbottom suggested we could ask Mr Haddow, of Prestwood or perhaps Mr C Dawson, of Westoning or Mr J Buss.

Mr Paul Crane Our Overseer

Mrs. C Gurney, Miss B. Ellis, Miss G Ellis And I Clarke. At our weeknight meeting it was suggested we ask Mr Crane of Lakenheath to act as overseer for he was one of our regular ministers. To this the church agreed and the Secretary was to make the appropriate arrangements. Also Mr King and Mr D Clarke were to discuss those matters with Mr Crane before such a church meeting. Also if need be Mr Wood could be called and asked to attend a first meeting.

I contacted Mr Crane immediately and he kindly offered help. I made arrangements to visit him and make him aware of these affairs. Mr King did not wish to be involved.

After this we called a church meeting, which meet on the 18th. Of February
Church Meeting 18th February 1984,

2:30 P.m.

Members present: Mrs. I Clarke, Miss B. Ellis, Miss G Elliss, Mrs. C Gurney, Mrs. Evered, Mr D Clarke.

Chairman: Mr Crane (of Lakenheath)

The singing of a hymn followed by a reading from the Scripture I Cor. II and prayer opened the meeting.

The secretary introduced the meeting expressing the purpose and summarized the events leading up to the meeting. Particular notice was made concerning the fact the church had not observed the communion service since November 1983 and that the church were gathered to set in order those things which are wanting (by the grace of God)

The secretary explained to the church Mr King would not attend the meeting and that he said if they wished to sack him well they would have to do so. He felt better in himself. He was at home if any one wished to discuss matters with him and his wife would be present.

Mr Crane explained he had a letter from Mr King explaining to some degree the nature of his nervous complaint and the church affairs had proved to be not at all helpful.

The church was reminded of her responsibilities as a body and as individuals, to act and put right any wrong for the good and cause of truth at Bierton.

The secretary explained, Mr Crane had agreed to act as an overseer (elder) if the church were unanimous in this request.

The secretary also explained the authority invested, by the church, to such an elder and was as follows:

- 1 To govern the church of God at Bierton according to the scriptures.
- 2 To have access to the church minutes and documents relating to church affairs.
- 3 To be able to visit and enquire of all members about matters of the church affairs.
- 4 Each member may resort to him and enquire for help and advice regarding church matters.

The minutes of the previous unofficial church meeting held on the 19th. Of October were read and the 14th December and of January. Before approval, that these minutes were correct, Mr Crane requested we settle the matter of him taking oversight.

Before accepting the office as overseer Mr Crane explained the church could ignore his observations and invite another minister to conduct the service but he believed that would be wrong to do so and after all the meeting was called to settle this points of order.

It was said by Mrs. Evered that the church have always revered ‘The House of God’ and ‘The Table.’ For the Bible taught somewhere that the vessels of Gods house were holy.

The secretary said that there were several matters to be dealt with and we now had a church prepared to settle these affairs in a biblical manner. There were however matters which could not be treated at this meeting since Mr King was not present but if the church agree to settle these matters in due course there was no reason for him to abstain from the communion or take the service.

Mr Crane made reference to the nature of different persons upbringing; and that from a child his background was such that he and all the children of his day

were very quiet in chapel and not one would make a murmur. That whilst this was not so with all the Bierton Sunday School children he had taken that into account that the children came from different backgrounds and none Christian homes which made a great deal of difference.

In like manor we must take into account our own backgrounds some need to be less censorious whilst others more sensitive when differences arise in the church.

No Changing or Rinsing Nappies on The Sabbath

Mrs. Clarke expressed she had been made to feel she did not fit into the ways of the church of Bierton so she thought it best to leave, explaining when other peoples ways are forced upon you then it was necessary to resist such oppression. An example of this occurred when the twins' nappies needed changing after a meal at Berth Ellis's home one Sunday. Ruth in her helpful way took them away and rinsed them for her, however this met with the disapproval of Mrs. Evered who felt this was wrong to do on the Sabbath. This typical legal spirit that she found so difficult to cope with.

Mr Crane expressed he hoped these matters would not result in her leaving and that hopefully matters would be resolved.

Mr Crane commented he found the expression to reverence the table to be inordinate but could understand the phrase respect and that 'The House of God' was surely where God meets with his people and that may be in many different places.

Mr Crane mentioned also that each day should be as Lords Day to us for Jesus is the true Sabbath for the people of God.

The secretary made mention there were several matters he wished to speak to Mr Crane about. All which were related to church affairs. The natural reaction was to shrink from such a task. And that he did not profess to be a fount of all wisdom and realised discussion could help resolve our difficulties. This however may prove to be help to himself and the churches of God.

Mr Crane expressed he would take office if the church were unanimous in the matter. The matter was put to the church and all agreed; thus the church requested he take office.

Mr Crane accepted the office and then consideration was given to the matters of the minutes.

Mr Crane and The Church Minutes

Approval of the minutes was sought but Mrs. Evered brought some of the matters arising from the matters mentioned in the minutes forward.

Mrs. Evered commented that these differences which had arisen in the

church had occurred since Easter of 1983 and after a letter sent to Mr King by D. Clarke; that letter containing nothing but condemnation. To which the secretary confirmed this to be so and that all these matters were contained in the previous church minutes of which Mr Crane had been acquainted. Also these matters were to be dealt with now we had a means of order.

The secretary confirmed he had written to Mr King and reminded the church this was after he church meeting of the 27th of April 1983. The contents of the letter were only part read to the church, by Mr King, at a church meeting on the 19th of October 1983.

We were reminded however the business at hand was only to approve the minutes of the previous meetings and then matters arising from them could be dealt with.

Mr Crane mentioned there was a lot of matters related in the minutes and explained they could not all be dealt with at that meeting but would treat them in due course.

There was no objection or amendments required of the minutes and no proposal of correctness was forthcoming.

The secretary then referred to the recent statement he had made to the church, which had also been, circulated to them in which was stated the reasons why he had refused to partake and conduct the communion services since October 1983.

The statement was not read again and this meeting, due to time considerations, however matters in that statement were to be considered at the meeting by the church.

It was asked by Mrs. Gurney, 'Why they could not partake of the communion' and she was reminded this could not be treated at this meeting.

The secretary mentioned he wished to bring the matter of the children being taught hymns which taught general redemption explaining the children were being taught to sing hymn I69 of the Young Peoples Hymn-book (S.B.S.S.A.) And at the Easter period this would be sung publicly with many none Christians present. This taking place even after he had repeatedly said it was contrary to scripture and the doctrinal beliefs of the church. The final verse of that hymn reading:

Show me the scene in the garden
Of bitter pain,
And the cross where my saviour,
For me was slain

Sad ones for bright ones
 So that they be stories of Jesus
 Tell them to me

Published by the National Strict Baptist Sunday school Association

The secretary objected that this hymn was teaching general redemption and the children that Jesus had died for them. Which was contrary to the doctrine of particular redemption. That is not possible to know if the children were saved or the Lord had died for them until they were called by grace. The matter was raised last year and was currently related to the disorder amongst us and with Mr King and himself.

Another matter had also arisen that related to Mr H Sayers , of Watford, a visiting minister. This needed to be discussed with Mr Crane.

Mr Crane signed the church minutes and asked if there were any other matters that needed treated . Also if any members wished to contact him they were free to do so and make mention of anything which needed to be raised at the next meeting.

The next church meeting was booked provisionally for the last week of March or the first week in April.

Mr Crane closed the church meeting with prayer.

12 MR SAYERS GOSPEL STANDARD ARTICLES

At this time a mutual friend brought to my attention that Mr Sayers of Watford Strict Baptist cause, disagreed with the Gospel Standard Articles. Mr Sayers was engaged to preach at the Bierton chapel and since I was the secretary and was concerned I telephoned him and enquired of this matter. Mr Sayers did not volunteer much information so I spoke to Mr D. Crowther, deacon of the cause meeting at Attleborough, wishing to ascertain what disagreement had actually taken place between Mr Sayers and the church at Attleborough. Mr D. Crowther was very helpful and forwarded a letter sent to him from Mr Sayers wherein he sets forth his views in respect of the 'duty faith and duty repentance' article. From this letter it is clear Mr Sayers opposes the Gospel Standard doctrinal position in respect of these matters.

Mr Sayers and Attleborough

Watford

Mr D. Crowther,

25th February 1983

Dear Mr Crowther

I refer to your letter of 15th February and as promised in my letter of 21st will seek to answer the points raised. May the Holy Spirit guide in what I reply and may the honour and glory of God be paramount in this matter.

If I may I will take each question in turn and seek to turn to scripture in support of what I write.

Firstly, who is referred to as 'all' in 1 Tim 2 v 4 - 'who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth' - and in II 3 v 9- 'not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance'. To my understanding the tenor of these words is the same as of those found in Ezekiel's prophecy Ch. 33 v 11 where we read that God has 'no pleasure in the death of the wicked turn from his way and live'? To me that whole chapter shows clearly the responsibilities laid upon both preacher and hearer, whether the hearer be lost or saved by God's grace. In connection with this point, and indeed each raised in your letter, the words of Deut. 29 v 29 seem relevant that 'the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this Law! To me the revealed will of God is that all men should repent and believe and His secret will is that only those who constitute the election of grace will do so. I am aware that the doctrine of election is clearly set forth but we do not know who constitutes that number that no man can number. If it is not the will of God that men should repent, how can he be just in condemning men for not doing so? That man, in and of him, is quite unable to fulfil those conditions of salvation I do not deny, but that is his sin and God is not responsible for it. Did not Christ Himself lament over Jerusalem, Matt 23 v 37 & Luke 13 v 34, declaring that he would have gathered the Jews, but they would not. -

This is not to say that he could not but that His desire as a man was toward them and they would not be gathered because of their depraved will.

Secondly, to whom is the Gospel exhortations, invitations and commands addressed? It is my firm belief that they are addressed to the whole of the human race without exception. That is not to say that they are effectual to every man. When I was first led into the solemn work of the ministry that command was most clearly given to me' and he (that is Jesus) said unto them, go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned' Mark 16v15&16. If the servants of God can only go forth calling upon the elect to repent and believe, then they would never go on for we do not know who constitute the election

of Grace. Surely we see here the goodness and mercy of God in proclaiming salvation to all (a revealed thing) while reserving the power of salvation to Himself (the secret thing). Did not our Lord Himself utter that great cry on the last day of the feast of tabernacles less 'any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of water'. John 7.v.37&38. There were those who heard and believed, v.40 & 41, and also those that believed not. Thus the gospel invitation divided them. You mention specifically my discourse on Isaiah 55 v 6 & 7. It is most clear from the Word of God that verse 7 is addressed to the wicked in person. We are to exhort the wicked to repent, and if I may refer again to delivered our soul. Turning again to Deut. 29.v.29, the revealed 'thing' of God is that he who turns from his way to God will receive pardon and mercy, but he who turns not shall be lost. Before finishing with this point I recall a quotation that I heard some years ago and has remained with me, that if the gospel invitations were as limited in their presentation as they are in their application, what a miserable gospel it would be! I feel that we need to keep in view the boundless love of God as set forth in the Gospel as well as the glories of the doctrine of election, which I most firmly adhere to. The gospel invitations reach out to all men but are only effectual to the children of God' those that are called according to His purpose. Rom. 8.v.28. The servants of God sow the seed, but God causes the seed to fall into the ground prepared of Him and bear fruit.

Thirdly, Gods common love to all mankind. That sin is loathsome and hateful to God we cannot and dare not deny and this must ever be set before the sons of men by God' servants. You quotes those words that God is angry with wicked every day' Psalm... 7.v.11, but here we see the goodness and mercy of God and His love to the world made manifest in that he does not cut man off as he deserves. Their life is yet lengthened that they might hear and believe the Gospel. That they will not come unto Him that they might have life and not add sin to sin. If we turn again to Matt 23 & Luke 13 we read of solemn judgments pronounced by the Lord Jesus over the Pharisees and those that trusted in their own righteousness, but we also read of Christ' s lamentation over Jerusalem. Sure this is the language of love and not hatred. It is as if Jesus pleads with Jerusalem, with those that hate his name to return. Here again we must be careful for we are speaking of the revelations belonging to man and the secret things belonging to God. Also when considering this point I cannot see how else those beautiful verses in John 3.v.14 & 18 can be interpreted. It is clear, at least to me, that God, out of His love to mankind, sent his Son Jesus to

die. Again the revealed will of God – that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish etc. – And - that the world through him might (not will) be saved and he that believeth is not condemned - the will of God that only some people will ever do so is made clear in John 6.v.37 – 40, but even there the doctrine of election is tempered with mercy by a promise that him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.

I feel that in the preceding three points we are dealing with the extent of the Gospel and the extent of the Gospel Ministry. I believe that it is addressed to all mankind, is to be proclaimed to all mankind and that the outcome of that proclamation is to be left with God, knowing that it will be effectual to His own dear people. – ‘In the morning sow thy seed and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether both shall be alike good’ Eccl.. 11v6. – ‘So shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it’ Isaiah 55 v 11. -

Fourthly baptism. That there is no saving grace in the ordinance I most heartily endorse and if I may say so believe that whenever I have been led to speak of the ordinances have always stated so. It is an ordinance that has the blessing of the Trinity resting upon it (Matt 3v16 & 17 Mark 1 v 10 & 11, Luke 3 v 22). And is essential in obedience to Jesus Christ. Jesus has also joined it with salvation and I dare not separate the two. However this is not the point raised by you. As regards the qualifications (for want of a better word) of the candidate coming to be baptised, there are but two requisites – repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I think of the words usually spoken in the water ‘upon a profession of your repentance etc. ‘ We are not to sit in judgment upon any who come before us. The matter of possession rests between their soul and God. We can only act as the apostles did, on a profession. This is all that Philip acted upon when he baptised the eunuch. Is this not one of the reasons why we are left instructions in the Word of God as to how to deal with those who after their profession turn back and walk no more with him. My thoughts go to Simon Magus. Remember the words of Christ in the sermon of the mount, ‘ Judge not in order that ye be not judged ‘ Matt 7 . 1. Having said that we cannot lightly receive others into church fellowship. The walk must be consistent with the profession made but this in and of itself is no proof of reality. I do not feel that the churches dare sit in judgment as to the reality of the work of grace. We may be sadly mistaken. If this ordinance was attended to in our churches as it ought to be, that is in the very beginning of a believer’s experience and the Holy Scripture shows this to be the case – see the book of the Acts – there will

not have been the opportunity to examine the candidates reality and depth of experience. This should be the first step after believing. Having entered the church of Christ the young Christian then grows. I feel that as churches we expect too much from fresh converts and this is very often a stumbling block to them, by probing into the reality of the work of grace (the secret things of God?) We prevent them from giving an evidence of that reality.

Finally you ask what I meant by the expression ‘ Tomorrow it may be too late’ in relation to baptism. Frankly I do not see the inferences that you say are there. We know not what a day or an hour may bring forth, and hence there is urgency in the Gospel and it’s commands, including that before us. I feel that very often when baptism is set before the congregations as a needful rite, which is to satisfy the obedience called for by the Gospel, that Satan immediately raises all possible objections in an attempt to prevent believers from following their Lord and especially because of the public nature of this ordinance. Nowhere in the Word of God we find any license given to delay in following in this step. Indeed we profess to be Baptists but seem intent on raising reasons, or rather excuses, as to why believers should not be baptised. I realized that I have written perhaps bluntly here but it is a great exercise with me that there are those who willingly and knowingly refuse to honour the Lord in this way. It may be called threats and pressures from the pulpit but God has commanded that whosoever believeth and is baptised shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned. Again I repeat that there is no salvation in being baptised. And here we bow to the sovereignty of our God, but he has still plainly commanded it and he people are to be told so.

I trust I have answered your questions and pray that you will receive this letter in the spirit in which it has been written, seeking the honour and glory of God. Please forgive my writing at such length.

Wishing the blessing of God upon you and upon the church and congregation at Attleborough,

With Christian love

Yours very sincerely,

Howard R. Sayers.

Bierton Church Unable To Cope

It was evident to me, from reading Mr. Sayers letter, he did not agree with the Gospel Standard Articles of religion. I had spoken to Mr. Sayers on the

telephone and asked whether he subscribed to the Gospel Standard Articles when joined the Watford church. He explained he had never been asked to do so. This surprised me since he was engaged to preach in Gospel Standard causes and the church at Watford is a Gospel Standard listed church.

What was I to do? If our church cannot put right matters respecting **Particular Redemption**, ‘**Holy Tables**’ and **disorderly members** how could this matter be now taken in hand? I knew this matter would have to be resolved in the fear of God and that the church must be in a position to judge these issues. But they were not. The matters of ‘**duty faith**’ and ‘**duty repentance**’ were involved; both of which I had already met at Eaton Bray church where some had actually opposed my doctrinal stand over this issue. At this church I preached from the text in Acts 17 and defended article 26 of the Gospel Standard articles. I was judged as being wrong, both in the substance and my method of preaching and at a later date gently reproved by Mr Godly, who is a minister now in membership of the cause at Eaton Bray. The church at Eaton Bray is a Gospel Standard listed church.

I had also written to the Gospel Standard committee over this issue and received a satisfactory reply. I had cause to look into this matter before the Bierton church joined the Gospel Standard denomination. Both of these letters may be read in the supplement under the heading

Letter Gospel Standard Committee

The circumstances relating to my concern over this issue are also found in the same supplement under the heading, Letter to Mr. Peter Howe, former minister of the Ivanhoe Particular Baptist church (pages 33 – 40) in this supplement I have shown one of our members was not clear over these matters and knew the church were in no better position now to deal with this matter in a correct way.

Matter Brought To The Church.

This matter would have to be brought to the church but now and when? Look at what we were already in? The matter was brought forward at our church meeting in February 1984 (see page 86).

13 LEPROSY DISCOVERED

My metaphor for an incurable disease

In this chapter I relate how the communion of the church was restored but this lead onto another more serious problem, which has yet to be resolved. That being the distinction between the Law of Moses being a rule of life for the believer, which is the gospel. Sadly to say the truth of this matter lies under much debris today, but I believe will surely shine when God fulfils His word as

spoken in Act 15:16.

Restoration Of The Communion

After our church meeting in February my conscience gave me leave to conduct the communion service with the Bierton church that following March. I preached from the text Acts 15:16 during that day: **'After this will I return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:'**

Mrs. Evered was not present at those meetings but we partook of the communion that evening with myself presiding.

Leprosy Cannot Be Cured

At the next church meeting it was evident to me that the deeper one probed to discover the nature of a disorder the worse things became. I say the disease became apparent to all who have eyes to see, and I will say unto them that give a glib answer to the question as to whether the law of Moses be our rule of life or the gospel, it is a serious question. I will remain silent and let them speak only of those things they know from scripture and experience and according to the oracles of God. For this I say is the root of the matter; Mrs. Evered had Moses as her rule while I have the rule of the Lord Jesus. That is to say his gospel.

Church Meeting Reveals The Disease

April 21st 1984 2:30 p.m.

Members present: Miss B. Ellis, Mrs. C Gurney, and Miss G Elliss Mrs. Evered, Mr D Clarke.

Chairman: Mr Crane of Lakenheath

The meeting was opened with the singing of an hymn followed by a reading of the scriptures Gal. 5:5 and prayer.

The chairman made comments upon the scripture reading before the minutes of the previous meeting were read.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved and adopted as correct.

There were 3 matters raised: Mrs.. Gurney wondered why Mr King was not present and Mrs. Evered felt the church ought to know the contents of a letter sent from Mr. D Clarke to Mr King. Also Mrs. Evered requested Mr D Clarke express his beliefs regarding baptism, sin and the commandments, since this affected her and the ordinance (communion).

Mr Crane said this could be dealt with in due course.

To Mrs. Gurneys question as to why Mr King was not present; Mr Crane

felt given time the matter would be resolved when the wound was healed and it would seem the letter written by Mr D. Clarke to Mr King had caused this reaction. Mrs. Gurney expressed she too had suffered severely through the whole affair and why should Mr King be allowed to be excused; for surely this cannot go on.

Mr Crane mentioned that whilst Mr King feels free to preach elsewhere he does not feel free so at Bierton because he did not think it right that he should be 'looked over' by the church at Bierton.

Miss G Ellis wanted to make sure that Mr King was not under the impression that the private letter sent by Mr D Clarke as in any way from the church. This Mr Crane expressed the letter was known to Mr King as a private letter from Mr D Clarke and for that reason it should remain private. Also the problem between Mr King and Mr Clarke should be resolved between them.

Mrs. Evered felt the letter should be read to the church but Mr Crane said that he did not think it necessary.

Mr. D Clarke expressed he would be willing to read the letter since Mr King has already read parts of it to the church already even though he had thought the matter had been resolved. Nevertheless since Mr. Crane himself had not known the contents it would be better first that he do so in private and if he felt it appropriate he could read it to the church. To which Mr. Crane expressed he did not think it necessary for this would not resolve anything.

At the same meeting I raised a question relating to ministers engaged to preach at Bierton and Mr Crane expressed: the church at Bierton was established in 1831 and had her own articles of faith, which were free grace articles. That the ministers we engaged must agree with the doctrines contained in the trust deed. But as a church they had now tied themselves, by their association with the Gospel Standard and because many our ministers did not actually agree with all the articles of this cause this should be considered.

It was mentioned by Miss G Elliss that Mr Hope had said we could have our existing ministers. To which Mr Crane replied he did not think Mr Hope would have been aware that we had so many who would not actually agree with the Gospel Standard articles.

Mr Crane said he felt it wrong morally to engage these ministers now, only to reject them at some future date when we could get help from the ministers of the Gospels Standard. This was a problem, which should be born in mind, and no doubt the secretary would seek to engage those ministers from Gospel Standard causes.

Mr Crane mentioned that the church ought to consider resolving a difficulty

in the Sunday school of which there were two:

At the last church meeting the singing of the 169, by the children, was mentioned by Mr D Clarke. To which he asserted it was wrong and inconsistent for the church at Bierton to teach the children a hymn, which reads, (last verse)

Show me the scene in the garden, of bitter pain;
 Show me the cross where my Saviour
 For me was slain-
 Sad one for bright ones,
 So that they be
 Stories of Jesus,
 Tell them to me.

In this hymn I maintained it was wrong to put these words into the children minds, for it cannot be said Jesus has died for them and was their Saviour until they be called by grace and are in possession saving faith.

Mr. Crane added that there were also many such hymns in that book (a Sunday School Strict Baptist Mission Book) which were not suitable being in conflict with the doctrinal position and practice set out in the churches trust deed. No proposal to resolve any such conflict was put forward.

Baptism, Sin, The Commandments

Regarding the questions of Mrs. Evered relating to Baptism, sin and the commandments, Mr Crane expressed the doctrinal position and practice set out of the church in respect of these points which were all set out in the articles of faith. To which Mrs. Evered asked Mr Crane to read from the scripture the answer the Lord Jesus gave to a young man seeking eternal life. Luke 18 18 and Mark 10.

The Lord Jesus answered saying he should keep the commandments and in spite of the fact this young man had kept them and knew the 10 commandments from his youth upwards; Mrs. Evered was asserting we should likewise be governed by the same rule.

After Mr Crane commented upon these passages and explained the scripture I requested I give answer to the question raised. My answer was as follows.

My answer

References To Baptism

Only those who are regenerated unto God, being born again were to be

baptised upon the profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Only those who can testify of a saving work done in them could be baptised. That baptism did nothing to the subject. It did not remove sin nor give grace, for it was only a sign and symbol of something, which had already taken place. Namely they're union to Christ in his death and burial and resurrection. Hence the old man is buried with him in baptism and to be reckoned dead with him, even to the law. Whilst the raising up out of the water (being by immersion) signified the life of the new man of grace and the believers union with the risen Lord Jesus Christ. By this death and resurrection the believer is dead with Christ to the law and to sin and now alive unto God under the rule of the Gospel. For the new man of grace is governed not by the 10 commandments commonly called the moral law or Law of Moses but by the law of Christ.

For The Record Regarding Sin

As for sin: every believer is not free from in experience and that even the sins of thought of them present, would be sufficient to damn them for all eternity. That sin was in everything we do, in thought deed and action, to which the believer should wage war against.

Sin was in the world before Moses gave the 10 commandments from Mount Sinai. This being evident by the scripture referring to every one of those sins mentioned in the law, except the breach of the Sabbath, in the book of Genesis. That the **Sabbath was broken soon** after it was enjoined upon Israel (Exodus 16,²⁷)

For The Record

Regarding The Law Of Moses

As for the commandments given by Moses these were not the rule of life for the believer for the apostles never taught so. The Law being given to the Jews alone as a legal covenant and by which that law excluded the gentiles from the covenants of promise (Eph. 2 12).

The Apostles when considering this question of the Law of Moses in Acts 15 5 and Acts 15 29-21 gave no such commandments to the gentiles, that they were under it to keep it¹⁸.

I said this point of doctrine is expressed in article 16 of the Gospel Standard Articles. That is the believers rule of life is the gospel and not the 10 commandments as Mrs. Evered was contending.

See APPENDICES at the rear of this book.

Appendix 1 The Law and Gospel By F. L. Gosden

Appendix 2 The Law and Gospel, by J.C. Philpot

18 John Calvin. Institutes on the forth Commandment

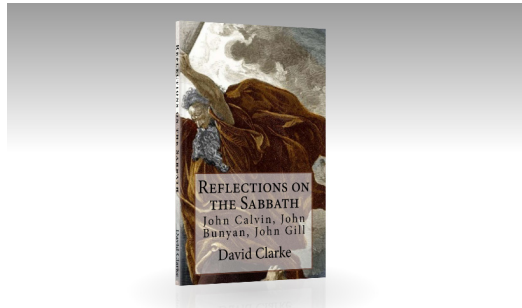
Appendix 3 The Christian Relationship To Mosaic Law

Appendix 4 The Sabbath By Gilbert Beebe

Appendix 5 John Calvin: the fourth commandment and
William Tyndale and John Firth (Both Martyrs)

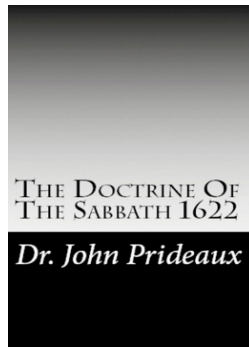
As a result of this conflict and I published my understanding on this subject in *Reflections on The Sabbath*.

Reflections on The Sabbath



Reflections on The Sabbath by David Clarke
And for further clarification.

The Doctrine Of The Sabbath



By Dr. John Prideaux

In which I treat the various issues involved in this subject. Please see the Further Publications listed at the end of this book.

Reaction To The Church Meeting

I realized even more so that unless the mouths of those who contended for the rule of Moses are stopped the whole house will be subverted.

But sadly I knew not where to begin for some of these views expressed by Mrs. Evered appeared to be rampant throughout the churches of the Gospel

Standard and other Strict Baptist denominations. It should never be the case but I feel the lapsed position and legal spirit dominates a great many.

I concluded I could not remain amongst those who could not walk with me in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our liberty in Christ being more precious than any chapel building, friend, family, yea the whole world. I could see no other path for me to take; I must leave this church. Leprosy cannot be cured except by the Lord.

13 ANNOUNCEMENT OF REGISTRATION

I announced to the few gathered at Bierton; Mrs. Evered had ceased to appear when I took the prayer meeting or was preaching and so only Mrs.. Gurney, Miss B. Ellis and Miss G Ellis were present when I announced my resignation in the first week in June 1984.

Mr Crane Makes A Special Visit

Mr. Crane made a special visit to see me in order to discuss these affairs but we were not able to get much further than I ought to remain, since there was no where else for me to go. For I would find the same if not worse in other churches or another denomination.

I Am Persuaded To Stay

Thinking Mr. Crane may be right I went to the next weeknight meeting intending to speak my mind. I asked Mr King if he would remain behind after the prayer meeting in order to hear what I had to say. Mrs. Evered was not present and Mr King would not stay behind.

An address given

The following is a full account of the address given that evening and was delivered on Wednesday the 12th of June 1984 at 8: 15 p.m.

Commencing prayer

Our Dear Lord God thou hast promised to hear when thy people call upon thee; and we do call in Jesus' name. Please come to our aid for his sake we ask. Amen.

An Address Given

What I have to say tonight is very important, since the reaction, which must take place, will have far reaching effects. It is so important to you all that I am constrained to record (cassette) what lays heavily upon my mind, for the benefit of all concerned and may afterwards be used and freely available by any who are concerned to maintain the cause of truth here at Bierton or elsewhere.

You may find what I say will move you to say, we have had enough. We do

not understand the bible the way you do. We believe you are wrong and cannot walk with you any longer and it would be best if you depart and trouble us no more. If that were your hearts response I charge you before God and the elect angels to accept my resignation as already given and for you to give me leave to do what I must.

Whatever other response we get my prayer and hope is that it will turn out for the good of all concerned and the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am certain of this that where God is at work the enemies of truth will speak evil of all the good which I hope will come as a result of these proceedings.

I apologize for the unorthodox, or un-traditional, or the in etiquette manner I may have, but realize this: the Lord God is not bound or tied to work by the rules and traditions etiquette of man. I act as I do for we are at a crisis point. Satan has wrought havoc and provoked trouble and made the people of God ill at ease. It cannot go on. We must not let it go on. Enough is enough.

Dire straits require dire measures for correction. Epidemic, sickness, epidemic measures for rectification. Times of war are not as times of peace. Cheeseparing manors have no place in the battlefield, so I beg the pardon of any who judge me out of order.

I have spoken to Mr Crane and informed him of my recent announcement of Wednesday last, to resign from both the office of secretary and membership. He made a special visit to discuss with me my points of discord and reasons for my actions but we were unable to conclude or settle the matters I raised. Mr. Crane left with a note of caution to not act in haste, to maintain sound doctrine.

Now since my announcement to you and in much prayer, I am persuaded I must put forward to you all the actions we must take, as a people professing godliness, given the constraints we all have and are faced with. By constrains I mean the following:

Our relative ages and abilities. Our current membership and geographic locations; of us all including Mr Crane. Our constitution set out in the trust deed and relationship with the Gospel Standard group of Strict Baptists.

Now I say way forward and actions for things cannot remain as they are. A remedy must be sought and that remedy which will do us good must come from the Lord, whom I trust we seek. Therefore we must appeal to the God of heaven, seek directions from the word of the Lord and put in action the principle taught us in the word. This must be the way and is the only way.

Let me remind you of my announcement and reasons for action in May/June of this year. I said then, I have two immediate matters of importance which effect the church at Berton which must be dealt with:

My Resignation From Office

As Secretary

This being important and must be dealt with immediately for this month must be spent in engaging ministers for 1985. It being common practice for ministers to give their dates for preaching after the end of this month for the period January to December 1985.

This is of prime importance for the remaining members.

Resignation From Office

This being a mere formality but having repercussions must be treated as soon as possible.

Resignation from membership

It has been necessary for me to examine my reasons for faith and religious practice and find my ever-increasing compromise inconsistent with those possessed of a true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the fear of God. This rendering my activities of preaching and teaching in the church at Bierton and elsewhere ineffectual having not the approbation of God though I have spoken truth in the fear of God in and amongst you, by me remaining silent and holding my peace for the sake of peace and unity, afterwards this has removed any base and ground of faith towards God in this matter and hence I can no longer exercise faith expecting God to appear by the way of building again that which is fallen down, here at Bierton.

Areas of Compromise

(Secretaries responsibilities)

I) As secretary I have to engage only those ministers which the church wish to engage. The church consisting effectively only of women. In this matter then the women exercise authority and power over the man, which the scripture forbids.

Example 1

Ministers Rejected The Wrong Reasons

Ministers have on several occasions, by the will, wish and desire of the women: and in my view to the detriment, harm and hurt of the cause of truth. The rejection of these men being based upon the maxim peace must be kept at all cost, even at the expense of truth and righteousness. In this practice I will no longer continue. For example, Mr. C Lawrence, ministers at Harold. Mr. S. Scott – Pearson, minister at Maulden. Mr. Redhead, Mr. Payne and a Mr. Butler (of Chelmsford), were all rejected by the women voting.

This matter came to a head after my visit to the chapel at Winslow where I

was engaged to preach. I was shocked and surprise to find they had a woman pastor and I was lead to believe they were to hold a united service that evening with the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

After preaching in the morning the need to earnestly contend for the faith and for the scripture to be our only rule of faith and practice I felt constrained to write to the Deacon, Mr. Paul Duffet, and express my shock in respect of a woman having such authority and the so called united service with the Roman Catholic church, thus making no distinction between the false church of Rome and the church of Christ. At this my conscience accused me in this way: but look at you at Bierton, the women are they that rule. How can you write to a man and justly point out the error and unbiblical practice of the Winslow Baptist church when you at Bierton are equally guilty of the same charges. Hence I was powerless to act, as I should do.

Example 2

Women and General Redemption Hymns

Contention for truth: My recent contention with the church regarding the singing Hymns by the children, is judged by the women as not an important point of concern. Yea rather, we know better. I maintain children must not be taught that Jesus died for them each one.

(Hymn 169). In this matter the church or women disagree and so the women have their say.

Example 3

Reverence Of Buildings, Fear Of Man

I have plainly taught and openly rejected the notion the chapel is a Holy Place, to be revered and that the table is not in any way to be revered. Both matters caused contention. My belief being that unless this is stamped out the Lord will not appear to repair the ruins at Bierton. Hence I cannot exercise faith nor hope in God to bless us as a people in church while such notions go unchecked. On a number of occasions I have listened and heard our ministers refer to the House of God etc., Terms very loosely used. In each case I believe the ministers ought to be acquainted with the views of Mrs. Evered for they would then be very careful not to use such loose expressions and rightly refer to the church of Christ as the house of God and not the building.

Hence I cannot expect nor exercise faith in God to appear for us unless these affairs are set in order.

Call of Abraham

I must obey God rather than man. I do not know what lies ahead for my family, and me but I must teach my friends and family the ways of the Lord

Jesus Christ. To do so I must not remain in a compromised stifled position, for every man must give an account unto God and we must each act and walk according to the measure of faith given. I have a family to bring up and I must do free from false religion.

Whilst I am bound and tied by my membership here and the church pulls one way and that being the opposite way to the way I must walk, I am not free to walk by faith nor am I true to the " Faith ". Hence truth would cease to be a governing principle in my life.

My experience having lead me to the belief that the structure and government of the Bierton Church (like many churches) inhibits truth: that truth is not able to flourish once the primary purpose of our activity is to protect our traditions in order to preserve the Status Quo. Truth becomes subservient to this end and so ceases to be truth and exist in its own right and so ceases to be true. Truth cannot then be said to have set free in this case.

Recommendation

At this point in the meeting. I went on to give my recommendation, but I would like to stop here and explain my last concluding statement relating to truth. This I did mention to Mr. Crane but not to you at that meeting.

Cessation Of Truth

By this I mean truth is not a prime concern only in so far that it keeps or preserves the traditions and order, which you have become used to. Whether that order or way of life be according to the word of God or not.

For example:

If I speak of a Strict Baptist or the denomination in general say the Gospel Standard churches, I think a picture, which may present itself to many, may be as follows:

A particular stile of chapel building. The forms of worship were an opening hymn is sung followed by a reading from the scripture and prayer (20 minutes) then notices. A second hymn followed by preaching. A final hymn closing with a benediction (1 hours)

All ladies being expected to cover their heads in worship.

The preacher engaged to preach often having come a long distance and in membership of a similar Strict Baptist cause. His ministry being expectable provided: He is suitably dressed (generally a dark suit and tie). His speech is that familiar to the people, i.e. Uses phrases like free grace and denies free will and has a standard range of terms for speech. This being whether he be intelligible or not provided what is said does not disturb the people and gives assurance that all is well, if not God will appear for them if they continue just as they are. If

this were the case he will generally be asked to preach again the next year, and so the cause goes on.

The general picture one may gather is that to read the Gospel Standard and to support the other chapels at their anniversaries and follow the general trend of the majority of the chapel people, and then this is being faithful to the cause of Christ.

Because this is the common and hence normal conduct of the majority one might be lead and expected to think is the way spoken of in the scripture. That such order in the church is the way of life we should preserve and contend for. That any deviation from this is to fall away and become wide of the mark and so fallen from truth. Hence the people gear themselves up to serve this way of life. To promote it. It becomes the habitual norm, a way we expect our children to follow. That the grace of God tempers us to serve this way, for after all it is the way, the truth and the life.

Now when this happens I say the people like Samson have their eyes gouged out and are made to tread the mill.

The evidence I have to support my assertions that truth ceases to be truth for such a people is as follows:

When I charged the church at Bierton, which is a Strict and Particular Baptist, Gospel Standard cause with teaching general redemption or suffering it to be taught by means of the hymns or otherwise, the church were offended and not at all repentant. It appears to me the general consensus of opinion is what can be wrong in using the phrases, when speaking to the children, the Lord Jesus has died for them each one and the Lord Jesus loves them all?

It is also argued because the scripture uses the phrases all the world etc. Then we cannot be wrong in this matter of using hymns expressing redemption for all, even though we know it cannot mean all.

I say here truth does not govern the people but rather an unguarded sentiment for the children and a pattern, which has been adopted over periods of years. If the people cannot see the error here then they have no eyes to see in this matter.

The same may be said over the affair of the Holy Table and the chapel building. I maintain truth has not been the guiding principle in the minds of the people but rather a carnal view and long-term acceptance of untrue sentiments relating to a place of worship and the church of Christ. That some of our ministers are responsible for using loose phrases of speech in this matter and Satan has used this to seduce people. My question is this: Do the people love the chapel more than the truth? I know it brings back memories etc. But

will we forsake it for truth? If not seduction has taken place and so truth ceases to be a prime mover in our lives. Just as the church of Rome relies upon its historic background also tradition and structure and has come to view the primary purposes for its existence is to extend its territory, preserve its identity and use all means to maintain its cause believing it peruses a God honouring and God blessed end. Seeks to resolve difficulties by compromising truth for peace sake, such a church has left the foundation upon which the church of Christ is built. The end thereof is death.

How then can I be at peace or rest where this takes place? I seek a city whose builder and maker is God, not a chapel or people that will not forsake all for Christ, yea even the chapel, family and life long friends. I think in the whole affair we are learning the truth, by experience, of what the Lord Jesus said he came not to bring peace to the earth but a sword, that they that shall be our enemies shall be they of our own households.

15 MY CONCLUSION

I concluded by giving a recommendation that Gwen should act as secretary and by no means Mrs. Evered. I continued by saying I commend you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

I Further explained, I would write to the churches where I was engaged to preach, to avoid them embarrassment, for they could not have me preach being out of membership with you, or any one.

Where Does This Leave Us?

The question you should now ask is where does this leave us and what are we to do?

During my conversation with Mr Crane I expressed my dilemma in that as secretary I was now due to correspond with those ministers who were to engage to preach next year and due to the recent controversies being always upon mind I had a draft of a letter that I had prepared to send to all our ministers next year. But I thought surely I have enough to do in tending to my family and setting my own home in order, let alone any church or recommendation to other ministers and felt would it be better left and save all the agonies of such a problem. Let me read you the draft

Letter To Our Visiting Ministers

Some of our ministers have referred frequently to the chapel at Bierton as the 'House of God', both in their preaching and in prayer. The result being to allow some our hearers to court notions that the chapel building is where God

dwells and is a 'Holy Sanctuary'. That the communion table and vestry are all 'Holy vessels' unto God. That they are to be revered.

As a member and being called to preach I have had cause to consider this matter in my preaching and at the church meetings. I have taught that the church of the living God is the 'House of God', that God does not dwell in temples made with hands (Acts 17 34). That all the Old Testament shadows are all fulfilled in Christ and his church. That the Lord Jesus Christ is the true tabernacle of God. That the union of the divine nature at the incarnation in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God constitutes the true unique temple of God. Further to this according to the promise the whole church, being united to Christ at regeneration and effectual calling, these are in dwelt of God the Holy Ghost. (Rev 21 3, I Tim. 3 15, John 4 33, John 2 19-21, I Cor. 3 16.)

Some have opposed me in this matter and resisted the truth. I would appreciate you bare this in mind should you ever refer to the 'House of God' when preaching to the congregation gathered at Berton.

Yours in concern for the truth of Christ,
David Clarke 1984

Possible Effects Of Such A Letter

I asked Mr. Crane what he thought of such a letter and he expressed that it may have the following repercussions:

The ministers may think you are criticizing him personally. But Mr. Crane said, the whole affair had caused him to consider such phrases because he himself had used the terms and was now very careful himself.

The minister may react and say, whom do I think I am to write in such a way. But surely that would be wrong and he could see the concern expressed. He may fell there is nothing wrong with the letter and take thought of the matter as requested

Mr. Crane thought there was nothing wrong with the letter and it would be in order to send it.

Now where does this leave us?

Mr. Crane expressed to me he knew to some degree the minds of the church and that the church did not wish any leave because we were so few.

Let me say this, neither do I wish to leave because the whole affair would be very painful.

I have children to consider and also my wife etc. And I realize should I leave

you there must come a strain of relationship, not only with us in the village but also throughout the churches. I could not join any other church without them judging this affair amongst us. Nor could I be involved in any other church, being not in membership anywhere and so this would affect family and myself. I would be looked upon with suspicion and so to bring my family up amongst them that fear God would prove difficult. I think possibly I would have to remain alone. But if that is the path I am to go and that is the way ordained of God for me then by the grace of God I shall take it. But I do not welcome that path with open arms nevertheless for the sake of truth I may have to take and walk that path.

What are the alternatives? What can we do? How can we resolve the problem?

Let me say first of all there is a great question mark raised in my mind regarding Mr King.

After my letter to him (in May 1983, see chapter) Mr King has relinquished his responsibilities of church membership.

He will not attend the church meetings and has declined any request to partake in the meetings except the prayer meeting.

Now why is this? Am I the cause of this evil? Have I acted with an evil mind in this matter? What am I to do? Who will give me good council?

The church have been grieved that Mr King takes leave of this church responsibilities and preaches in other churches. Mr King has expressed his health is not too good and has a nervous complaint and no doubt my letter and its contents has been no means helpful to him. But what should I have done in light of the circumstances?

The church does not understand nor do they agree with my actions of beliefs, but they still say why doesn't Mr King and I get on together? The church want, or it appears, my services as being the only male member but it appears not the doctrines I preach and defend.

Oh! That I could find good council. My experience is such that I believe I am being proved (tried) and the question being asked me is, 'Am I a faithful servant of Jesus Christ or no?' I tend to feel that those onlookers would say 'lay down your weapons of war and be at peace. What you are doing is not good. Do you really think these affairs are important? Should not love for these people prevail? How can you do this to these ladies? What will become of them and what will become of you and your family?'

Conscience Speaks

I have to do what any faithful Christian would do in light of the circumstances. In this matter I look to the Lord God to vindicate my works.

Mrs. Evered Refuses To Attend Meeting

This woman will not attend the weeknight meetings if I take neither them nor the communion service if I am officiating. This stemming from my stand against her insisting I reverence the communion table, the building and vestry. It has now developed into views in respect of the Law and the Gospel.

What Should I Do?

In both cases I believe Mr King and Mrs. Evered are wrong and out of order as church members but had it not been for my contending for the truth of the gospel I would never have met nor caused these ills and trouble. Some people say it is my manner which upsets etc.

My views regarding disorderly members

I believe both Mr King and Mrs. Evered should be brought under the discipline of the church, for this is the correct procedure. However, this does not seem to be the view of the church so what should I do?

Am I he that troubleth Israel? Oh! That help should be given. May the Lord Jesus Christ appear to be our saviour and cause us to be obedient to him and may his grace be sufficient for us.

If I am to stay, then may we set in order those things, which are out of order, and I'm sure that is what you all want.

May I then outline the areas that are out of order?

The relationship between Mr King and myself.

Matters relating to Mrs.. Evered.

In both these matters, if I am to remain, we must apply the scriptural principles and follow the pattern given by God to put them right. Mr. Crane and I must work together. What must be done must be done. Any church discipline must be enforced.

Mrs. Evered's recent assertions relating to the Law of Moses and the Gospel must be opposed as this is contrary to the gospel and the Gospel Standard article (16) and our own confession of faith. She maintains the Law of Moses is the rule of life for the believer. That the Lord Jesus directs believers to use it as a pattern for their conduct.

In this matter she errs and sadly to say many do. But when you joined the Gospel Standard cause I wrote to you expressing my agreement with article 16 of the Gospel Standard articles.

Endorsement Gospel Standard

Here is the letter, which I wrote to the church dated The 12th of February 1981, and my address was Wigston Magna, Leicestershire.

Dear Mrs. Evered,

Thank you for your letter dated the 24th of January 1981, informing me of the outcome of the recent church meeting. May I confirm my approval and desire to help the cause at Bierton, been though my present circumstances are not helpful.

I believe the Gospel Standard association is a means by which God is preserving his truth in the world; in particular the articles of faith which treat our relationship to the Law as believers¹⁹, particular redemption and the declaration of the gospel as opposed to offering the gospel. All doctrines, which the majority of churches of our day deny. I believe also that a right understanding of these truths is the means of preserving a true godly fear and reverence in our worship of God. (As has been in the past and can be seen by looking at the history of former Gospel Standard baptists before this century).

Believers Rule Of Life Not Moses

Not The Law Of Moses

If the Law were the believer's rule then the Sabbath day being the 7th day of the week must be observed according to the Law²⁰. It is precisely these articles of faith, which distinguishes the Particular Baptists such as J.C. Philpot, of the last century (See the Gospel Standard 1861 where he argues the case with a Presbyterian minister). Also William Gadsby's Works, Vol. I, also 'the perfect law of liberty'. Also John Bunyan concerning the 7th day Sabbath where he denies the Sabbath is moral. Also Dr. J Gill, in his 'Body of Divinity' under; the day of worship for the Christian'. Also read Huntington's works, '40 Stripes for Satan save one'. His writing are full of the doctrine of the Christians liberty. The Christian is neither under Moses rod nor rule; we are saved from that bondage. (See also J. Calvin or the Fourth commandment in 'the institutes!) I know the present day Strict Baptist have got the Sabbath and the first day of the week mixed up and wrongly express the biblical position in there zeal for righteousness, which needs to be addressed in the next generation of men who stand for Christ.

Gospel Standard Articles

Now here is the Gospel Standard Article of faith which I believe to be true and which as a Gospel Standard Church you recently affirmed was you position:

XVI) We believe the believer's rule of life is the gospel and not the 'Moral Law' issued upon Mount Sinai, which has no glory in it by reason of the glory, which excelleth it, that is the gospel. (See the article and scripture reference your selves).

19 Article 26, Article 6, Article 24.

20 See Appendix 25. 1,2,3,4 and 5.

Now in this matter Mrs Evered ought not to meddle with things too high for her, however, I know very few men amongst the Gospel Standard today have clear understanding of these matters. Nevertheless they have responsibilities to do so since they have all subscribed to them.

A Course Of Action

Since this is the case what course of action must I take? On my part, to walk honestly in and amongst the churches, I know where I stand doctrinally in respect of these issues and teach the same but I find divisions and people hold other opinions even amongst they that have professed to believe these articles when joining their respective churches. In one Gospel Standard church I defended another of these articles, article 26, which was concerning a denial of duty faith and duty repentance, I was criticized by a minister and some of their members because it would seem they opposed me. We also have men who come to preach here at Bierton that are in Gospel Standard causes who deny this article 26 and others. (Mr. P Rowland's and Mr. H Sayers)

How Does This Concern Us

You may say how does this concern us. I say in every way it should because you solemnly subscribed to the Gospel Standard Articles when you joined in 1981. As a church we have responsibilities.

Here is that letter from Mrs Evered informing me of this act of the church:

Dear David,

Just a line to let you know the result of our church meeting of the 16th of January 1981. It was decided (taken by ballot) unanimously that we join the Gospel Standard causes. It was a wonderful meeting. I am sure led by the Holy Spirit. Mr. Hope (chairman) kindly consented to deal with the correspondence. Etc.

Signed

Mrs. G Evered, Hon. Sec.

I replied to this letter as you know and I have already referred to it. Mr Sayers and Mr Rowland agree to our articles set out in our trust deed 1831 but not the Gospel Standard articles. As you know, as a Gospel Standard cause we are required to not have them preach, since they deny and do not accept the Gospel Standard Articles. This is not my opinion but what we agreed to when becoming a Gospel Standard cause.

Solution

This matter needs to be resolved if we are to walk honestly as a church.

Two alternatives

Cease to be a Gospel Standard cause and then we don't have to answer to others.

Prepare a written statement expressing the doctrinal beliefs of this church in respect of the disputed articles and then submit them to our visiting ministers and the same to the Gospel Standard committee.

Ensure visiting ministers do not teach contrary to the doctrines we hold to and invite those ministers who we feel in conscience to invite. That the secretary be given leave to invite ministers who agree with our confession. We have already spoken in the past about Open and Strict Communion Baptists. That matter should be left with the governing men of the church.

My preference

I would suggest to you that we adopt the second alternative.

That is to say we prepare a written statement as to our own position, it would be helpful for the cause of truth and myself. I say this because I believe what was intended by the original formers of these articles of the Gospel Standard are in accordance with the word of God. But in our day, and I must speak there are very few men that have a clear understanding of these disputed doctrines. When I ask here and there they have their own views and there seems, there are none who can stand and say this is where we stand. They seem to follow one another.

My recommendation would be to write your own statement of belief in respect of the disputed articles.

The Disputed Articles

The one already mentioned in respect of the Law and Gospel and article 26. We have a minister coming (Mr. H Sayers) who denies this article. It reads: we deny duty faith and duty repentance. I must read it to you because it concern us all and for the benefit of any ministers who hears this recording. These terms signify that it is man's duty to spiritually savingly repent and believe. We also deny that there is any capability in man by nature to do any spiritual good whatever, so that we reject the doctrine that man in a state of nature should be exhorted to believe in or turn to God.

This articles cause controversy because it is badly written. This is how it should be rendered (having considered the objections against it):

My Version Of Articles 26

I wrote this when vexed in spirit and was to preach on this subject we deny duty faith and duty repentance terms which signify it is every man's duty to live by faith upon the benefits and merits of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So we reject the doctrine and practice of calling upon man whilst in a state of nature to believe in or turn to God in this saving way. For these graces and blessings are wrought in the elect by the Spirit of God according to the terms of the Covenant of Grace and are not legal duties. But we believe all men in a state of nature should repent of their ungodly deeds and believe the gospel report concerning Jesus Christ the Lord. All men must be exhorted to these duties. (Act 17 ³⁰, Acts 8 ²², Acts 26 ²⁰). By this article we confirm our belief there is no spiritual power or good whatever in the natural man to please God.

I say this is a better rendering and would solve some of the difficulties, which have been cause, these past 100 years.

Articles 31 34

This reads, we believe that it would be unsafe; from the brief records we have of the way in which the apostles, under the immediate direction of the Lord, addressed their hearers in certain special cases and circumstances, to derive absolute and universal rules for ministerial addresses in the present day under widely different circumstances. And we further believe that the assumption that others have been inspired as the apostles has led to grossest amongst both Romanist and professed Protestants therefore, that for ministers in the present day to address unconverted persons, or indiscriminately all in a mixed congregation calling upon them to savingly repent, believe and receive Christ, or perform any other acts dependent upon the new creative power of the Holy Ghost, is, on the one hand, to imply creature power, and, on the other, to deny the doctrine of special redemption.

34 we believe that any such expression as to convey to the hearers the belief that they poses a certain power to flee to Christ, while in an unregenerate state, so that unless they do thus close with Christ, etc., They shall perish, are untrue, and must, therefore be rejected. And we further believe that we have no scripture warrant taking the exhortation in the Old Testament intended for the Jews in national covenant with God, and apply them in a spiritual and saving sense to unregenerate men.

Need For Clarification

I say these needs to be clarified for the benefit of our generation.

We have lost the men that fully understood and will teach these things from first principles. We have lost them I say. But I believe the substance of what is being said here is correct but badly treated. It needs to be clarified in light of the history of the Added Articles. Articles 34, I agree with and must be taught for this also deals with the whole relationship between the Law and Gospel. The Jews were under the law in covenant. Therefore you cannot

apply the exhortations for them to live as a people separated and have natural blessings and bring them to a gospel sense to unconverted gentiles and so on. This must be taught and needs to be explained. We ought to do so as a church for the benefit of the next generation: I need to know where you stand, where the so-called committee stands. I believe many of the men do not fully understand themselves. Let them speak if they can.

Defend The Truth I Must!

Suggestions

So I suggest we adopt the latter alternative

Let me press on

I have two more points: -

The singing of the hymns by the children, such as you have mentioned.

This has grieved you, it has me and I am sorry if I have caused you undue hardship or concern. If Author were here I would apologize to him if I have offended him wrongly and embrace him in the bonds of Gospel love.

The Hymn 169 reads:

Show me the scene in the garden of bitter pain
And of the cross where my saviour for me was slain.
Sad ones for bright ones so that be stories of
Jesus tells them to me.

I maintain you must not put these words in the children's mouths for in the end it may turn out to their confusion they are not the children of God at all.

Another Hymn: I do not want to pick things to pieces; it's a dreadful task.

Hymn 108.

God loves the little children

We know the Lord Jesus came into the world to save his elect who are styled as little children. The love of God knows no change these hymns are teaching Arminianism. It cannot go on. They deny the sovereign free grace and love of God to his elect. You must be selective when choosing hymns for the children. If you cannot then let us produce a Sunday school hymn-book, which is according to our confession of faith.

Now I am not seeking to control any one. Perhaps Mr. Crane could speak to the Sunday school teachers including Mrs. Watson regarding this matter, stating our doctrinal position. Just as I suggest with our ministers. We have a responsibility.

Now My Last Point

I have mentioned in the past perhaps we ought to have occasional meetings; special meetings. Which are important currently in our day. For instance I mentioned during the time the Pope was to visit Britain that we should hold the meeting, at the chapel, inviting a minister or such to give us some instruction as believers as to our responsibilities. How we are to act during this time and climate and time of history in which we live. I also suggested; by the way, you remember the church declined my request to use the chapel building for such a meeting, or the Sunday school room. That it would be all right to hold such a meeting in the hall down the road but not the chapel. The words were, we have some Roman Catholic friends and we would not want to offend them. Mr King said this. (I subsequently held a meeting at my home and asked the National organizer of the British Council of Protestant Christian Churches to give and Address; the Rev. G Ferguson).

I also mentioned at a later date lecture concerning the Reformation.

We perhaps ought to have them and invite men such as Mr. G. Ashdown of the Protestant Alliance, who could faithfully teach the History of reformation. We perhaps could invite the local churches and churches from a distance. They need to be taught these things. Our children are not taught these things in the schools now. At one time, in the protestant school, when the Church of England had religious education these things was taught in schools. They are no longer taught; other religions are being taught.

We as a people that fear the living God, knowing history, must teach our children. What I Put it to the church, that was a reasonable request and part of our duty. What happened? It was asked, would the trustees be in favour? Dare we do this; no other churches are doing this.

The Church Aught To Be A Guide

Now dear friends we are living in Server times and as a church we should be awake. The church ought to be guided by those that see the times and know the times and read the times.

Let me give you an illustration: I have spoken to you a half year ago about such things now look what appears in print.

Britain Protestant face a sell out (I do not think this is Christian group writing)

Britain Protestants are likely to face a major test of their loyalty and faith during the next four years.

Reason

A decision by the Church of England to unite with the Roman Catholic

Church and to restore Papal authority once more in England.

Such move however would have far reaching consequences both in the United Kingdom and the Monarchy. For union with Rome will mean constitutional changes involving the Bill of Rights and the Acts of Settlement

Evidences that the English and Roman Churches will close an agreement on unity was made clear last February when a joint statement of the two churches announced that if they were re-united the Pope at the time would be Universal Primate.

The Activity Of Ecumenicalism

At the present time our Monarch on the throne has sworn allegiance to the Protestant faith.

The mechanisms and machinery, of the hierarchy and officials of the Church of Rome are working behind the scene to cause our Queen to abdicate from the throne and Prince Charles to ascend. He will not be required to give his allegiance to the Protestant faith, for the coronation oath will be altered to enable this to take place . How do I know? I read the scripture and see history unfold and look at the books. And where will she be the church? In the wilderness!

Now where are our ministers that tell us these things? Let them that see speak from the housetops those things that are seen. Let them be faithful to the people.

Measure Of Light Comes Responsibility

I believe I have a measure of light given. Where does it come from?

The grace of God. Sinful man! Who deserves it? Look at my friends in Aylesbury: drug takers, addicted, and broken homes, marriages failed. Why did God select me from these people? The grace of God makes man to differ, nothing more. There is no boasting here. I had no education. The grace of God gives wisdom. All by free grace, all by Christ Jesus.

I suggest then in conjunction with Mr. Crane we should hold such meeting without seeking for permission of the whole church, which cannot see. This should be attended too. It must be attended too. It aught to be put right.

Conclusion

I have said a lot. My position to the church is as follows:

If you can go along with my recommendation and they are acceptable then let us call upon the name of the Lord that he appear for us and continue according to the Word of the Lord.

If you find you do not agree with my doctrine and are opposed to my suggestions then give me leave to go and free me of my responsibilities to go where the Lord I trust will direct me.

Please loan this tape to any you feel can give you direction. You have permission. I shall ask Mr King to listen and Mrs. Evered. Make your decision.

After you have discussed these matters amongst your selves, at our next church meeting I want you to tell me what you would have me do.

Now I have said an awful lot, at times like these we know our absolute dependence upon the Lord God. But I know this: I believe this to be true; if there be but one believer or two, thousands are put to flight as God uses them for the furtherance of the Gospel.

Will you walk with me, or do I walk alone?

I would ask you please consider this matter Please talk it amongst your selves. You know me. I may seem unapproachable but please believe me I try to be. Could I give my all for you? I have a family to bring up. I have a love for you folk here.

My desire is that the truth of the Lord Jesus should be preserved here.

The churches in Aylesbury do not see. They need to be enlightened.

If God will appear for us then may we be a light to the gentiles around.

But we must talk according to the bible, be governed by the gospel ordinances and according to the rule and pattern set for the churches. I would ask you then; we have a church meeting shortly, I think it is July. In the mean time I will do my best to engage our ministers for you whilst in membership I will discharge my responsibilities, I must do so. I have a concern for you. I would not go to this extreme; I would not do this if I did not have concern for you.

Can we then close and may God have the glory.

Amen.

Ignored by Mr King and Mrs Evered

I gave the tape recording of my address given to the church Both To Mr King And Mrs Evered.

Recorded Cassette Abhorrent

Mr King said he would not listen to a tape recording nor read any letter sent from me and there was 'one above who knows all'.

Mrs Evered also returned the tape enclosing a letter expressing she would not listen to the tape recording; the following is a copy of her letter:

Dear David

19th

June 1984

I return the cassette. I have not heard it.

It is abhorrent to me that the business of the church should be mechanically

recorded and that on a cassette. There should have been a proper church meeting, as all things should be done dealt with in order and confidential.

‘Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way and walk therein and ye shall find rest for your souls (Jer. 6⁶). ‘ Touch not, taste not; handle not (Col.. 2¹³).

‘And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds. That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12²).

To him be the glory

Your sincerely,
Gladys Evered

Response To Mrs Evered Objections

At the time I groaned within, as it was such a serious error. My wife however saw the funny side as the matter and found it laughable. Mrs Evered had no idea of the spirituality of gospel truth and goes to show that unless a person be born again they cannot see, let alone enter, into the kingdom of God. At that time it almost appeared as though a hand was writing on the wall

ויסרפו, לקת, אנמ, אנמ

Mene, Mene, Tekel u-Pharsin.

I wondered how many people in our churches were like this? What had happened? How could it happen?

14 MR CRANES RESPONSE

I gave a copy of the tape recording to Mr Crane and he replied very quickly by means of a letter, which reads as follows:

Dear David,

You did say a lot. The age in which we live is full of deception. Since the time of Jesus on the earth, vital religion has never been confined to just one nation, yet England without a doubt has been greatly favoured. The candle was lit in this country and has burned very brightly, whether it is removed, we cannot tell. Was it ‘play the man Ridley for we shall light a candle in England this day which shall never be put out? We should not be complacent to see our Protestant heritage taken away by the craft of men we do need a voice to sound an alarm. But in the last days shall we find faith on the earth?

Decline, falling way, love of many gone cold etc., Set forth the last days,

except the Lord revive the work in the midst of the years. We could say time would have been terminated many times. But his patience is lengthened out. The end could have come with Adam, Noah the last war. But the Lord has brought a reviving. It will not always be so, there will be an end and then there will probably be very few faithful left on the earth. The Romeward movement is ancient. It has to do with man's natural religious instinct, which needs something. Rome is fallen but she is religious, and how amazing, has lasted centuries. Unenlightened religious aspirations go towards Rome, but also all that is not of God is sin, religious sin,

Strict Baptists notions or other denominational notions, which are not of God, are sin. It is possible to have an idol Christ, not known in the power. Only the Spirit of God enlightens and leads to Christ the new and living way. The perfect law of liberty. Doubtless a voice is needed in the nation. Similar to Luther, Wickliffe and all the reformers. We do not need another reformation, only the Spirit of God to enlighten, kings, Queens, Prime ministers etc., All across the nation. We wonder if the Lord will rise up such a voice, perhaps has already done so, doing so.

We fell impatient, not able to reach the people, the media all against truth. Yet God is able in an instant to show a man, Archbishop, the truth, just as Saul of Tarsus. Done very quickly and effectively. Not all the C & E is Romeward, but they are not very clear on vital matters, not much free grace about, much free will, and much lightness. Always error will run opposite to truth, it always has done so, Dathan and Abiram for instance with the strange fire (if my memory serves me right). We need the Lord to still appear in Israel, she is a little people, a remnant, surrounded by enemies. Sometimes she enjoys a measure of prosperity and liberty, at other times struggling and the lamp almost put out, then revived again. The Lord in old days rose up Judges over the people, then they fought and were brought off victorious. We must see it all in a spiritual light. History finds the church waxing and waning. We may never have persecution again, but we do fear a spiritual wilderness.

We are not to fight with our hands. But we may loose all with our lethargy. The Lord may see our sleeping and turn from us both as little churches and nationally. A voice in the midst may be the Lords way to keep the candle with us. We do believe in election and the will of God, nonetheless, Hezekiah prayed and the sickness departed and 15 years was added, we cannot understand these things, for God has said thou shalt surely die, but of course he did not say when he should die, it was a warning and it was heeded and the Lord revived him. We are to go to God with impossibilities and wait for God to work miracles.

Such prayer is hard work.

David if God has raised you up to preach and has given you clear views of his will and His word then it is because there is a need. You should not complain when you go from place to place when they argue with you and find fault with what you say. Surely you are given light for the purpose that they might see light. You want to go and shed your light where there is light already, but God has prepared you to shed light where they do not have light, the fact that they are established Churches has nothing to do with it. We all come to truth gradually, some more quickly than others, many over very many years Learn of me (Mat).

Don't find fault with the people because they are full of error, preach the truth with a desire that they might come to the truth as you have been shown it. Do not presume that any of them know very much, don't say you ought to have known better at your age in your capacity as a member or even as a Deacon. We all need teaching even you. Eternity will be needed to explore the love of God in Christ Jesus. Go on to preach faithfully, feelingly, tenderly, lovingly. Do not shout at a people; reason with them, like Paul at his trial. But remember to some it will be life unto life and to others death. Leave the issue with God.

If like the Jews they reject you, then shake off the dust from off your shoes and say, nevertheless the gospel has come nigh you. Not all ministers have the same commission. Some have a note of warning, others of comfort. Not all have good delivery, some may seem to be boring, and we should strive to be clear and interesting, yet faithful. It might be better to have at Bierton reading services when suitable ministers cannot be procured. Note all would be acceptable to you. I fully accept your views on doctrine. There is a need for clear teaching but doctrine in itself is insufficient. Like dry bones it needs round it the flesh of experience.

The articles of the G. S. are only over your association with that body. However the articles of the Bierton church are practically the same. They are the same in essence. The added articles, so called, are words of caution not statements of faith. Statements of faith are important. As words of caution, written in an age of much schism and argument, they were useful. Has the age of schism departed. The same errors are in man now as then. However, they can never bind the spirit taught and moved preacher, who speaks as prompted by God. I cannot see any controversy in the article concerning duty faith etc. I do not see any need to re-write this article. To me it is quite clear. What God does in us becomes our articles of faith.

You should invite men to preach at Bierton agreeable to the articles of faith. You are a Strict Baptist church, you believe in particular redemption, and

therefore you should invite men with similar views. To do otherwise would deny and compromise your position. Strict communion also surely says we believe that God has chosen us and saved us in His Son Jesus, which makes you a separate people, baptised in accordance with scripture. How can you therefore have men to minister the ordinance that see otherwise? These men like Huntington we know were good gracious men, but your light enables you to go a little further perhaps than they.

You, David would probably like to minister at Bierton every week. Is this God's will? You cannot force it neither against the wishes of the people or against the will of God. If God requires you at Bierton, say as their pastor, then God will do it for you and for his own will. In his own time. But you must wait for it. If the vision tarry wait for it.

Church Discipline

If members fail to attend the ordinances they should fall under the censure of the church. However, you as secretary have appointed yourself to many first Lords days, not I am sure for selfish reasons but because you could not fill them otherwise. You could have the ordinance another week though. There is enmity between you and some members. If by your sharp words you have injured them, wait for the Lord to heal. The light of some members may as yet be very dim. Do not censure them for that. They can only have light when God gives it. We can however ensure the members are circulated with the 'Bierton articles of faith' and that at our next meeting. The secretary should be authorized to engage any such ministers on any Lords day. Members failing to attend worship because of their dislike could fall under the censure of the church.

I suggest that each minister be circulated with Bierton articles.

The C of E articles re-relics might be useful in the book also! Regarding lectures etc. Are a great interest to our natural minds. They do not always benefit the soul. I am not against them. Books on the subject of Protestant history are numerous and very profitable however the purpose of a church meeting together is to hear about 'Jesus'. Our language ought to be 'Saw ye Him whom my soul Loveth'. Other activities are but side shows to the real purpose.

I have scribbled a few notes and missed out much I did scribble. Perhaps have missed the vital point. Write and ask for more if you need it.

Regarding the Sunday school hymn-Book. Yes you do need a new one. Have you read the Young Peoples Hymnal?

We need truth in the school as well as in the chapel. A thin wedge eventually becomes a thick one.

PAUL (Crane)

My Response

I decided I had but one option if I was to maintain a constant witness against the errors I had faced at Bierton and elsewhere.

I telephoned Mr Crane and explained my position and said I would write immediately. From Mr Cranes letter I had seen that the matter of “duty faith” or “duty repentance” was not considered a problem at Bierton or elsewhere. Unlike myself who had found it necessary to teach the truth in respect of these doctrines from first principles and give a clear definitive statement to such terms in order to clear the ambiguity²¹ of the Gospel Standard articles 26 and 31.

I had found it necessary to put in writing, in clear terms, the scripture teaching on the subject. To me the person writing these articles needed an editor because I do not believe what is written expresses what they wished to say. And since they were rewritten I have not found any one to have given a reasonable commentary on the subject.²²

I also did not think lectures upon the reformation were sideshows to the gospel. However I was not prepared to make a issue of this since we had enough to cope with as it was.

Letter Of Resignation

Sent To Mr Crane:

Dear Paul,

26th June 1984

Thank you for the reply and prompt attention given to my speech, which I gave at the Bierton chapel on the first Wednesday in June. I gave a copy of the tape recording to Mr King but he would not listen to it nor receive a letter from me.

Mrs Evered also had a copy but likewise she would not listen to what I had to say to the church. The following is a copy of her letter dated the 19th June: (see the letter on page 119)

Now finding consolation and instruction from the scriptures such as 2 Tim 2 ²⁰⁻²¹ and Psalm 68 ⁶. I am constrained to withdraw from membership with the churches at Bierton. My conscience no longer gives me leave to remain.

21 For the benefit of those who cannot see a problem with them please see Chapter 19 Bierton Becomes A Gospel Standard Cause and under Mr Royce of Luton Added Articles. And also the History of The Added Articles included in the Appendix of this book.

22 For those interested please read my publication Difficulties Associated with Articles of Religion Among Particular Baptists.

I have said enough already regarding the disorder amongst us; I see no benefit to reiterate what has been spoken. I do not believe my remaining among you is right for my family nor me. I can see no prosperity for the people of God at Bierton unless attendance is given to the things mentioned. I will forward a written copy of what is recorded on the cassette.

Since I withdraw myself from the church I exclude myself from the privileges of membership and will accordingly write to the churches where I am engaged to preach and ask leave to withdraw from such preaching engagements in order to avoid them embarrassment.

For those who have found me a friend; I hope this causes no breach in friendship. It simply means I am no longer tied by church membership to you and am free to do what I must do. Nevertheless you are tied by the rules of the society to do what you must.

I must and can only walk by the Word of God and wage war against the enemies of the gospel with the weapons given me. As with David I cannot use the armour of Saul for I have not proved it. But in the name of the Lord God of Israel I shall fight the fight of faith. By this step of faith and successive steps I believe God will appear for my good and the good of the church of Christ universal.

Yours very sincerely,
David Clarke.

Response To My Letter

Mr Crane telephoned me and asked if I was sure in my mind what I was doing. He had hoped he could have thrown the letter away and so ignores it. I explained he could not and must act on its contents.

I reminded him that I had not engaged any minister for the Bierton church and that week was the customary week for letters to be sent to engage ministers to preach for the year 1985. Mr. Crane said that was not a prime concern for if God intended the church to have ministers for that year then they shall have them even if they are not contacted until late December of this year.

I had seceded from the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church, which was founded in 1831 and became a Gospel Standard cause in 1981. My date of secession being the 26th June 1984.

15 I SEEK A CITY

(Heb.. II¹⁰)

If what is written here is of any benefit to the children of God scattered abroad, may it be so used to help them be gathered unto Christ Jesus our Lord.

My Hopes And Desires

Excuse all that is not spiritual and if any feel they may be of help to me and mine in our pilgrimage please feel free to communicate.

‘ I seek a city whose builder and maker
Is God’ (Heb.. II¹⁰)” and a people of like
Mind that we may have mutual help, reproof
For correction unto edification and in
Righteousness and mutual consolation in
Christ Jesus our Lord. Ps 20 ².
Grace be to you and peace from God the father
and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave
Himself for our sins; that he might deliver us
From this present evil world, according to the
Will of God and our father:
To who be glory forever and ever Amen.
Gal. I ³⁻⁵ .

Conclusion To The Whole Matter

My secession from the Berton Strict and Particular Baptist Church was not a separation from any other Church. The Berton Church was a Gospel Standard cause and according to our rules I cannot cease to be a member. It is the Church alone who severs membership by giving an honourable, or dishonourable discharge. The Church at Berton could have severed my membership, along with Mrs Clarke and Mr King, but the church did not do so and so we are still members. This is according to our rule 22, which deals with Church membership.

Mr Crane wished me to change my mind and return to full communion, as I was not found wanting in any way by doctrine, conducts or practice.

Whilst at the Berton Church I maintained and contended for the truths of sovereign grace, as outlined in the **Berton Articles of Religion** stated in the trust deed 1831 and signed by Mr Warburton and also the **Gospel Standard Articles of Religion**. It was the remaining members of the Berton Church who forsook their heritage, not me. Only repentance and a turning again to the Lord as expressed in those truths mentioned will put the matter right.

I write this way for the generation to come. Unless we remain faithful to the truths of God and build a house, as Jesus said according to his word, then the house we build will tumble and fall and the fall of such a house will be great.

Luke 6. 49 And the ruin of that house was great.

If I can be of any help to any please call me.

David Clarke

I Preach at Home

Having left the Bierton church I found it very difficult to adjust to our new situation. I considered going to another church but where was the question. In the mean while we met at home and I preached to my family and friends on Sunday mornings. I felt I had been under siege and my home was now my refuge. I was now preaching in the same room that Gordon Ferguson had preached during 1982 when we considered the times and imminent visit to the UK of the Pope of Rome.

I did however believe we should be in a local church but where could we join. I was very aware of the failing in the Gospel Standard way of things as they were at Bierton. Bierton church had in fact fallen from the way of the grace of God. Even though their words were full of the language. Their Articles of Faith were clear that the Gospel is the rule of life for the believer but in practice the Law of Moses and their own tradition had become law. Also the position of their added articles was very shaky and I found them inappropriate to adopt as a confession of faith. We found ourselves unchurched and I believed we should do something about it.

I sought God in prayer and felt we should be prepared to move house and job in order to be in a church where God wanted us to be.

I Experience Anxiety

After the conflict at Bierton and my seeking to know the mind of God and seeking His direction I began to feel very weak and fearful. I began to fear going out to preach. I soon was unable to face going out to fulfil those preaching engagements. I did not feel it right to go preaching and get other churches unnecessarily involved in judging the issues that I had with the church at Bierton. There appeared to be just too much to deal with. I became fearful and it crippled or disabled me. I felt like I was having a breakdown of some kind. I just did not know how to cope.

A Very Serious Issue Occurs

At this time a very serious matter occurred, which affected my whole family and others and required the involvement of the police. I now realize that had we been in a functioning church the matter could have been dealt with. A Strict

Communion church order would have been a safeguard and a help to resolves such an issue. I am prepared to share this matter with any one on a private basis if it will help as it is very serious and such matters cannot be ignored.

The Sense of Strict Communion.

It was this event that led me to see the sense of strict communion, as the church had the power to deal with such an issue when the law of the land failed.

A City Whose Builder And Maker Is God.

I felt compelled to write, "The Berton Crisis" and I circulated it to all who were effected as I believed not only had I been called to preach but was also set for a defence and confirmation of the Gospel. I was to learn again that those things that had happened to me were to turn out for the furtherance of the Gospel. Phil 1 verse 12. But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

David Oldham Pastor of Evington offers help.

After the publication of, "The Berton Crisis", Mr David Oldham, pastor of Stamford and Evington Strict and Particular Baptist Churches invited me to spent the day with him at Leicester and we were able to talk through some of the issues that I had written about. I was very thankful for this help, as I felt at that time so alone.

Our History.

The following pages were written to answer a query raised by Mr D Crowther, deacon of the church meeting at Attleborough. At this church I was asked to preach shortly after my secession from the Berton church. I wrote and explained to Mr Crowther that I was no longer in membership with any church and my coming to preach at Attleborough may cause some embarrassment between the churches. I explained should the church at Attleborough wish me to preach then to enquire of Mr Crane, the overseer of the Berton cause, of my reasons for secession. After which if they still wished me to preach I would be free in conscience to preach the gospel to them at Attleborough. Free in conscience in this sense: The church at Attleborough would be quite clear as to my reasons for secession and were satisfied I was not acting out of order as a Christian in my contention for the truth.

Following this letter is another letter written to Mr Royce of Luton who enquired about one of the Gospel Standard Articles, Article 32. I enclose this in order to show there have been problems over this article causing a great deal

of unrest in and outside the denomination. My reply to Mr Royce shows my doctrinal position in respect of this controversial point and I hope it will help any in difficulty.

The day is coming when the watchmen will all see eye to eye' (Isa)
I pray hasten the day.

Mr D. Crowther, from Attleborough

Dear Mr Crowther,

I am pleased to speak for myself in respect of my secession from the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church. I am also thankful that Mr Crane has already spoken and conveyed to you what he understands of all I have said. It would seem he misunderstood my references to the Gospel Standard Articles and the Bierton Church joining the Standard cause. For this reason I shall forward a copy of this letter to him since I do not know all he said to you and I believe this written record will help settle matters which are not in order at Bierton.

I was introduced to the Gospel Standard denomination in 1973 / 74 through the Bierton Church, when Mr Hill Minister of the Gospel of Luton Church Meeting at Ebenezer, that time I knew of no other churches that faithfully contended for the doctrine of grace which I had come to receive as biblical and according to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I had been called by grace and converted, from a life of crime, drug taking and immorality in 1970, having no church background, my knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and of Gospel truth came through reading the scriptures, seeking God and various books. In the providence of God a friend loaned me the book, " The kingdom of God taken by prayer " by William Huntington and another friend " Mercies of a Covenant God " by John Kershaw? At that time I was meeting with a Pentecostal Church in Aylesbury and had attended a wide circle of Churches, none of which taught the doctrines of Sovereign Grace. I ceased to attend the Pentecostal Church because of their Arminian doctrine and I started to attend the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church. Until this time I did not know of any people that loved and taught the truth of Absolute Predestination and the doctrines of free Sovereign Grace. It was at the Bierton Church I became a member in 1976.²³

16 BIERTON ARTICLES OF RELIGION OF 1831.

These are the articles I solemnly subscribed to when I joined the church at Bierton, on the 8th of January 1976, and which I strove to maintain.

23 Please see Chapter 3 of this book, I Join The Bierton Strict Baptists.

These article I transcribed from the original trust deed held by Miss Bertha Ellis. The son of John Warburton from Trowbridge signed the document.

The Articles Are As Follows:

And whereas certain persons meet together and with the blessing of God will continue to meet together for the purpose of divine worship at a chapel or place of worship adjoining the said hereditament and called the Bierton Baptist Chapel and the said persons call them selves “The Society of Particular Baptists” and such persons are herein after meant and referred to by the expression of “The Church” and the said persons believe and pledge themselves to the promulgation and support of the tenets or articles of faith herein after set forth, that is to say,

1 They believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are given by inspiration of God and are the only rule of faith and practice and that these scriptures reveal the one true and only God who is self-existent, infinite and eternal.

2 That there are three self existent co-eternal persons in the Godhead namely the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost and these three are one God and that the Lord Jesus Christ is very God and very man in one glorious complex person.

3 That Before the world began God did elect a certain number of the human race unto everlasting life and salvation whom He did predestine to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ of his own free grace and according to the good pleasure of His will.

4 That God created Adam upright and all his posterity fell in him, he being the federal head and representative of all mankind.

5 That the Lord Jesus Christ in the fullness of time became incarnate and that he really suffered and died as the substitute for the elect of God only and in their stead whereby he made all the satisfaction for their sins which the law and justice of God could require as well as made a way for the bestowments of all those blessings which are needful for them for time and eternity.

6 That the eternal redemption which Christ hath obtained by the shedding of his blood is special and particular that it is only and intentionally designed for the elect of God who only can share its spiritual blessings.

7 That the justification of Gods elect is only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them and received by faith without consideration of any works of righteousness done by them and that the full and free pardon of all there sins and transgressions is only through the full free pardon of all their sins and transgressions is only through the blood of Christ according to the riches of Gods grace.

8 That regeneration, conversion, sanctification and faith are the work of the

Almighty efficacious and invincible grace of God the Holy Ghost.

9 That all those chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son and sanctified by the Spirit shall certainly and finally persevere unto eternal life.

10 That there is a resurrection of the dead both of the just and the unjust and that Christ will come a second time to judge the quick and the dead when he will consign the wicked to everlasting punishment and introduce His own people into his kingdom and Glory where they shall be for ever with Him.

11 That baptism of believers by immersion and the Lords Supper are ordinances of Christ to be continued until His coming again and that the former is absolutely requisite to the latter, that is to say that only those are to be admitted as members of the church and participate in its privileges including the ordinance of the Lords supper who upon profession of their faith have been baptised namely immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And that no person who has not been baptised as afro said shall on any account be permitted to sit down or commune at the Lords table within the said school room and whereas for the purpose of giving effect to the objects and intentions of the parties hereto and of the said church it has been agreed that the said Hereditament's shall be conveyed to the trustees upon the trust and for the purpose hereinafter contained and these present have been approved by the members of the said Church meeting called for that purpose and held at the said chapel on or before the date

Hereof

The indenture further witnesseth that in further pursuance and consideration of the premises they the trustees do hereby severally covenant and agree amongst themselves and with each other and with the church that they the trustees their successors and assigns shall and henceforth stand and be possessed of the hereditament And premises hereinbefore conveyed unto them upon trust to dedicate and devote and preserve the same for the purpose of holy and divine worship according to the tenets or articles of faith herein set forth.

That the election of any future pastor of the said church and the removal of any pastor shall be decided by the vote of two thirds of the church assembled at a regularly convened church meeting together with the object for which it is convened having been publicly announce for four successive Lords days. Any member eligible to vote has to have been four times to the Lords table in six months unless prevented by illness etc.

No minister shall be elected to the pastoral office or continue therein but such as holds to the doctrines and communion aforesaid nor shall it be lawful

for the said church to receive into fellowship any such persons as members but such as have been baptised that is by immersed in water upon confession of their faith in Christ and are able to give some satisfactory account of a work of grace having passed upon their souls in being called out of darkness into Gods marvellous light, nor shall it be lawful for the said church to admit to her communion (in which term is include the ordinance of the Lords supper) any person who has not been baptised by immersion in water on a profession of faith in the name of Jesus.

17 BIERTON A GOSPEL STANDARD CAUSE

How The Church Functioned

It was only after joining the church and after me being appointed the Secretary I had access to the minutes of the church meetings. I then discovered Mr Hill's responsibilities along with the responsibilities of the officers of the church.

I discovered Mr Hill only accepted the office of chairman on the 8th of January 1976, and that he chaired the meeting for the first time on the day I was received into membership. I noticed also Mr Hill had only been asked to act the once and that to council the church with respect to the election of new trustees. I found also Mr King had at that meeting agreed to act as secretary. Prior to this Mrs Evered had performed this task.

At the same meeting the church asked Mr Hill to acts as chairman on alternate occasions to which Mr Hill agreed to do.

Hence I found Mr Hill did not have the oversight since he was only asked to chair certain church meetings.

At this time the Bierton cause was not a Gospel Standard listed church.

The First Move To Become A Gospel Standard Cause

The church at Bierton voted to become a Gospel Standard cause on the 16th of January 1981²⁴. I was not present at that meeting and the news came as a surprise for the following reasons: (I ask you to bear with me for the following sequence of events is important)

Mr Evered first mentioned we make application to join the Gospel Standard denomination at a meeting dated the 7th of July 1978.

The following is a transcript from the minutes of that meeting:

Mrs Evered proposed that the church should make application to join the Gospel Standard churches and Mr Hill gave lengthy details of the procedure. He explained if the church decided to think about this further then it could

24 By Chance was noted that this was 14 years to the day of my call by grace to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, which was 16th January 1970.

be brought forward again at the next church meeting and application could be made. Mr Hill also mentioned we could also change to the Gadsby' Hymn book should we wish since our Denham's collection had worn very much and were out of print and the Gadsby's Hymns were used in other Gospel Standard causes.

At the next church meeting Mr King resigned office as secretary. The meeting was held on the 1st of November 1978 and I was acting chairman.

I did not feel I could act as secretary at that time due to my domestic and private circumstances. At that time I had just finished at Teachers Training College and had lived between Wolverhampton and Leicester. From here I had moved the Leighton Buzzard taking up my first lecturing post at Luton College of Higher Education. Also having purchased a house in Linslaid where Mr Collier was the minister at the Linslaid Church. I thought this move might benefit my wife since we had no pastor at Bierton. Hence my attendance at the Bierton chapel had been irregular for that year.

It was suggested that Mrs Evered take up the office as secretary but she refused unless we became a Gospel Standard cause.

I realized that was not the time to consider our association with the Standard churches for we had to elect a secretary before business could continue. I also knew that Miss R Elliss and Mrs C. Gurney were not in favour of becoming a Standard cause. Neither was I satisfied that the reason behind the suggested move was spiritual and honourable. For example:

Mrs Groom, in membership of Prestwood Strict Baptist Church, a Gospel Standard cause (sister of Mrs Evered) had moved to Bierton. She had sought permission to partake of the communion at the Bierton Church. However the Prestwood church would not grant her permission because we were not a Standard Church and were not satisfied with our articles of religion.

The pressure to become a Standard cause came from Mrs Evered because unless we did so her sister could not join in the communion, at Bierton, without offending the Prestwood church. Hence these reasons were not with a regard for a defence of truth but rather to cater for family needs.

Had the church wished to join with the Gospel Standard Strict Baptists in order to promote the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, wishing to distinguish between other Strict Baptists who held and maintained the 10 commandments were the rule of life for the believer and that held to duty repentance. Then that would have been different for at that time these were the doctrinal differences between many of the ministers we had to preach and the doctrinal tenets of the Gospel Standard were clear on these points.

As the chairman I ruled the church would consider the matter of joining the Gospel Standard denomination in due course, after we had elected a secretary. After discussion we had no one prepared to take on the responsibility as secretary.

Moved with concern I expressed to the church I would offer my help and act as secretary for a period. In spite of my living at Leighton Buzzard and my consideration of transferring membership to the Linslaid church where Mr Collier was the pastor and minister.

The church took up my offer of help and in this office I continued until the 30th of April 1980.

Church vote against joining the Gospel Standard

At the church meeting on the 24th of January 1979, where all members were present, consideration was given to joining the Gospel Standard cause.

After discussion a vote was taken even though Mrs Evered was the only proposer. Four members were against the motion and one member abstained.

At the same meeting Mr King proposed this matter should not be raised for another year. This motion was put to the church and carried by vote.

My letter to the Gospel Standard Committee

Since so much concern had been expressed about joining the Gospel Standard cause I thought it appropriate to write to the committee in order to ensure they had not lapsed into a false position in respect of repentance toward God. Their articles 26 needed clarification to my mind especially since I had already been in conflict with a minister who opposed the Standard position.²⁵ I wrote to the committee on two matters.

1. In connection with Mr Hill,
2. In connection with article 26.

The following is a transcript of that letter to the committee:

Dear Sirs,

9th July 1979

I am the secretary of Bierton Strict Baptist Church and during our recent church meeting we have considered seeking membership to be listed as Gospel Standard cause. With this in view there are two matters I would like the committee to clarify.

- 1 The recent withdrawal of Mr Hill's name from

Approved List of ministers.

25 See my article 'The Bierton Crisis' under the Chapter heading letter to Mr Peter Howe.

2 Article 26 of the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith.

With respect to my first point; what was the committee's reason for requesting Mr Hill to withdraw his name from the approved list of ministers? I ask his question since Mr XXXX is one of our trustees and have faithfully served the church at Bierton for many years.

The second point is for a clear explanation of the concluding statement of article 26, ' so we deny the doctrine that man in a state of nature should be exhorted to believe in our turn to God'. Since this would appear man in a state of nature ought not to please God.

Yours faithfully,
David Clarke.

Letter From Strict Baptist Societies

GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS SOCIETIES

Editor of The Gospel Standard

Mr B. A. Ramsbottom.

Editor of The Friendly Companion

Mr L. R. Broome.

Chairman and Treasurer

Mr J.T. Pollington.

Secretary

Mr. D.F. Dickerson.

14th August 1979

Dear Mr Clarke,

The following is a copy of the letter, which answered my enquiries: -

Thank you for your letter of the 17th July from which I was interested and pleased to learn that the church at Bierton was considering seeking membership with the Gospel Standard Churches.

As enabled I will try to answer the points you have raised: -

A) Mr XXXX – As Mr XXXX himself has expressed sorrow for certain things which Have taken place, the committee asked him to withdraw his name from the list of ministers for a period of twelve months as a public expression of this, to which he agreed.

B) Article 26 - Article 26 simply means that we do not make free will appeals generally to a congregation to repent, accept Christ; give their hearts to God etc. Rather we preach the vital necessities of repentance and faith in Jesus, and

encourage those who feel their need to flee to Him in their sorrow, as enabled by the Holy Spirit. There is no suggestion at all that men in a state of nature ought not to please God. Their duty is clearly revealed in the law of God, but they have neither ability nor desire to fulfil it.

I sincerely trust I have made these points clear to you and that the Church will be enabled to make application for membership amongst us. Should you do so I would be pleased have a glance of the engagements for the years?

May the Lord abundantly bless the flock at Bierton with His Spirit and build you up in His fear and grace.

With Kindest Regards,
Yours very sincerely

D.F. Dickerson
Secretary.

I Was Thankful For This Reply

To this reply I was thankful; man's responsibility before God was not denied and that it was acknowledged the law showed man's responsibility and hence they would not deny legal repentance or a natural repentance which law and nature dictates.

However I would have sought further clarification with respect to the reference to the law of God and its terms, since this was given only to Israel in covenant and by it the gentiles were aliens and strangers to the covenants of promise; the law thus making a middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. Eph.. 2¹²⁻¹⁴. I could accept the "whole of the scriptures" being the law of the Lord but not the 10 commandments as given by Moses since these were never enjoined upon the gentile world whether they be Christian or not. I knew this to be the Gospel Standard position from Article 16 and as specified by J C Philpot in the Gospel Standard of 1862. I knew also if Mr Dickerson be not clear upon this point he could always consider my references together with Mr Gadsby's book (hymn 636) "The perfect Law of Liberty"; also Dr J Gill in his commentaries and "Body of Divinity". Hence we differ from the Presbyterian's over this matter. I thought to write again on this matter should the church actually take further steps to join the list of churches.

Second Move Gospel Standard Cause

At the church meeting, on the 23rd of April 1980, I asked to be relieved of my duties as secretary and chairman since I was now living in Leicester. Mr King proposed that Mrs Evered should take up the office as secretary and to

this proposal she said she would do so upon a temporary basis if we would consider joining the Gospel Standard. Since this was a more reasonable offer of help and the conditions of that help were acceptable I put this matter to the church. I suggested after a period of three months we could decide by vote whether we seek membership with the Standard causes. Under these conditions Mrs Evered took up office as secretary and Mr King was elected to act as chairman. The meeting to consider the joining of the Gospel Standard cause was provisionally booked for the 7th of July 1980.

New Chairman Elected

At a special church meeting, of which I was not informed, Mr Hope (Minister of the Gospel, at Reading) was elected to act as chairman.

This meeting was held on the 21st of May 1980.

Church meeting the 18th of June 1980

Having heard Mr Hope had been asked to act as chairman and a date booked for the next church meeting being the 18th of June 1980, I did all within my power to attend.

I noted at that meeting Mrs Evered had asked Miss B. Ellis to bring along the deed box containing the trust deed of the chapel.

Church Vote Against Joining The Gospel Standard

At this meeting Mr Hope brought to the church the matter of joining the Standard cause. The following is a transcript of the minutes of that meeting:

Membership of the Gospel Standard

It was thought that a decision should be made at this meeting, as there had been enough time given for consideration whether to join or no. Five were for and two against.

It was desirable to have a unanimous agreement by vote which was not forthcoming therefore it was rejected but to be brought up again and when the members are in agreement.

My Comments

I suggested to the chairman and the church unless we were in agreement over this matter we could not apply for membership with the Gospel Standard churches. To this Mr Hope agreed, likewise most of the members. I knew Miss R Elliss and Mrs C Gurney were not in favour of joining the Gospel Standard denomination (whatever that meant to them) and I too was not in favour of joining any association if other members were not agreeable. This being because I realized unless the church be all of one mind how could we strive together to maintain gospel precepts. The majority of our ministers were not Gospel Standard men and were not in full agreement with these articles.

Hence I did not think the church were in the position to exclude all ministers who were not Gospel Standard minded. I knew this to be the case since only a few years (1976/77) ago Mr John Gosden²⁶ had been preaching at Bierton and several of us thought he might be a suitable minister to call and be our pastor. At that time Mr Gosden was in membership of the church meeting at Grove Chapel, Camberwell (Independent) and hence was not a Strict Baptist. Also his position in respect of the Gospel Standard would mean he be now excluded from preaching at Bierton if we became a Standard cause. Mr Gosden expressed his doctrinal position to me after I wrote²⁷ shortly after the church at Bierton had become a Standard cause.

John Gosden and GS Added Articles

6th of April 1982

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of the 15th March. I do regret the delay in replying, this has been partly due to heavy commitments and difficulties, and partly to an uncertainty as to whether I can help you on any of the dates suggested.

The only possible Sunday would be June 26th 1983 but this, at the moment is not too certain. However I will tentatively reserve this for you and will write to confirm or otherwise in a week or so.

I do hope that you will be helped in the responsibilities as Church Secretary, and also in the work of the ministry to which you have been called. You will need a continual supply of wisdom, grace and strength. My late Father said, “Be a labourer not a trifler”. Good advice. I believe his careful preparation for the pulpit before each service, coupled to a close walk with God largely explains the freshness and effectiveness of his long ministry.

Regarding the G. S. Position. My differences are not with individuals; some of my best friends are in the denomination. My difference with them is over some aspects of their Articles of Faith. Articles, which I consider to be vitally important not only theologically, but in their practical outworking in experience. The areas of difficulty are: the strange and unorthodox view of the relationship between Law & Gospel XVI. The restrictions placed on the promises of the Gospel, which consequently obscure the warrant of faith. XXIV, XXVI, XXXII, XXXV. And the unorthodox view of Sanctification. XIX.

A far more satisfactory and orthodox view is expressed in the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith, Salvation” by F.E. Kevan, and ‘Redemption accomplished and Applied’ by J. Murray. Each of these books are currently available and would

26 See John Gosden’s letter to the Bierton Church

27 See Chapter 10 Events Turn For The worse

be helpful to you. See also A.W. Pink on Man's total depravity, chapter 20.

God willing I will write again re the June date.

With Christian regards,

Yours sincerely,

John Gosden

Differences Of Opinion

Mrs Evered knew Mr Gosden was not a Gospel Standard minister and for this reason would not wish him to preach at Bierton. Her reasons for his rejection were not actually honourable as will be seen:

A special church meeting was held on August the 18th 1980 to discuss whether Mr Friend and his wife could join us in the churches communion during his holiday break in September. Mr Friend and his wife were related to a member of the congregation .

At this meeting there was no chairman and Mrs Evered was the secretary. Mr Just a member of the congregation had made enquiry on behalf of his cousin and his wife if they could partake of the churches communion. Mrs Evered records in the minutes of that meeting the following:

The church of which Mr Friend was in membership was connected with the Evangelical Times (or so it was alleged) and for this reason Mrs Evered was opposed to Mr Friend joining us. A decision was needed by the church to see if the church at Southborough supported an 'Open Communion' . The enquiry was made and the Pastor (Mr John Gosden now of Southborough) did not support an open table.

My Comments

This incident shows up the devious ways of the natural heart. My suspicion was that reasons were being sought to exclude Mr Friend from the communion by Mrs Evered, because she knew the John Gosden was the Pastor of the church at Southborough, that Mr Friend was a member and according to her read the Evangelical Times newspaper. Mrs Evered also opposed Mr Gosden because he read the Evangelical Times.

Mr John Gosden's Doctrinal Views

This prejudice was shown up through this incident. In fact no mention was made as to Mr Gosden's doctrinal views in respect of the Law and Gospel or any other doctrine of faith and the reason being because they were either not discerned or not considered important. But as can be seen Mr J Gosden's position is opposed to the Gospel Standard Articles over the issue of Law and Gospel. But the ironic thing is that so was Mrs Evered who maintains the Law

of Moses being the 10 commandments were her rule of life. This may be seen from my contention with the church at Bierton as expressed in my article 'The Bierton Crisis 1984' and Chapter 13 Leprosy Discovered.

My Conclusion

I knew the majority of the Bierton church and congregation got on very well with Mr Gosden however as can be seen from the letter Mr Gosden is not in the Gospel Standard position in respect of the Law, duty faith or sanctification. Also the folk at Bierton appeared not to pay any regard to such differences.

Having then a close knowledge of the general position of the folk at Bierton I expressed my mind; believing it be wrong to impose or surreptitiously bring about a union with the Gospel Standard causes when in fact the people at Bierton were not aware nor would be governed by the rules of the Gospel Standard society. Herein lies my statements, if I said anything to that effect, I was not happy with the Bierton Church joining the Standard churches: Had the church been convinced internally of those distinctive tenets of truth which are expressed in the Gospel Standard articles and were moved with a due since of fear towards the living and true God to preserve and contend for them in the way expected and expressed in the rules of the society; then I had no objection and would lead them in those paths necessary to promote the distinctive tenants of the Christian gospel. I.e. The glory of free grace, Christ alone exalted and a repudiation of all legal notions and boasting engendered in them that take Moses Law as their rule of life and conduct rather than the gospel. In my judgment these folk at Bierton could not walk that path at that time, as demonstrated by them by teaching the children and their unconverted parents to sing hymns as:

Jesus loves me this I know for the bible tells me so.

They had not reached, nor were likely to reach, that stage of knowledge and experience, which must cause us to question such loose expressions used in children's hymns. I say not likely to if the pressure to become a Standard cause continued, for in my judgment the motives for such a move were not spiritual but carnal. I have not fully disclosed all what I considered to be carnal motives in becoming a Gospel Standard cause for the sake of brevity but have given one example. I.e.; We become a Standard cause in order that a blood relation could partake of our communion.

I had resolved that I would not support a motion to become a Gospel Standard cause unless all members were in agreement and that the folk at Bierton could give clear statements as to their beliefs in respect of articles 26 and some of those articles, which had caused controversy.

However since this matter of becoming a Standard cause had been voted

again I saw no need to pursue these matters any further at that time.

Third Move Gospel Standard Cause

This was a surprise to me and I did not expect the matter to be put as a motion to the church without the required notice. However the following is transcript of the church minutes of the meeting the 10th of October 1980, where all members were present except my self: (quote)

“Two members were will still in opposition to the Gospel Standard churches. Hopefully to, D.V.? Refer latter”.

My Comments

I knew Miss R Ellis and Mrs. Gurney both members were against joining the Standard churches but not actually against them and also any such decisions to join the Gospel Standard cause must be made at a meeting specially convened for that purpose. I.e. Due notice given to all members of any such motion of serious importance. This rule had not been complied with.

It seemed to me that Mrs. Evered was set to do all she could to influence the church and Mr Hope to obtain what she wanted namely to join the Standard cause; come what may.

I was completely unaware of this third attempt to join the Standard until I read of it in the church minutes several mouths later and that being after I resumed the office as church secretary.

Fourth Move Gospel Standard Cause

Bierton a Gospel Standard Cause

The church became a Gospel Standard listed cause after the next church meeting. At that meeting I was absent it being the normal quarterly meeting and Mr Hope was presiding as the chairman. Had I known the church had gathered and were to consider joining the Gospel Standard again I would have done my uttermost to attend.

The meeting was held on the 16th of January 1981 and the minutes of that meeting record:

Joining Gospel Standard A Listed Cause

Vote was taken by ballot.

Was unanimous. Mr Hope kindly undertaking the correspondence ‘ for joining.’

A foot note mentions, ‘ Mr D Clarke to be written to informing him of the

results of this meeting.’

Becoming A Gospel Standard Cause

A received a letter from Mrs. Evered to inform me that the Bierton church had joined the Gospel Standard list of churches. This is a transcript of that letter:

Dear David,

24th January 1981

Just a line to let you know the result of our church meeting held on the 16th inst. It was decided (taken by ballot) unanimously that we join the Gospel Standard causes, it was a wonderful meeting. I am sure led by the Holy Spirit.

The chairman was Mr Hope who kindly consented to deal with the correspondence. A new bible has been purchased for the pulpit. Repairs as was sanctioned at the last church meeting are still progressing. The church is praying for a Pastor after the Lords own heart. It is vital that we as members of the above cause are the same, one in heart. God loves to answer faithful prayer through His dear Son. Then there will you be helpful member to us a church, if your circumstances permit?

Trusting Irene and the children are well.

May the Lord richly bless you in your labour for Daily bread and in labour for Him?

With Christian love

Gladys Evered

Hon. Sec.

Endorsement Becoming Gospel Standard Cause

It struck me as strange a thing for the whole church to be now unanimous, after such a short time, in their desire to become a Standard cause. Miss R Elliss and Mrs. C Gurney had always said they wanted no such changes. But here I was informed otherwise. The second thing which struck me was the fact that such a matter of serious importance was not treated at a specially convened meeting or notice given to that effect one month previously there to.

However I wrote to the church in response to Mrs. Evered’s letter and made a point of attending the church, at my earliest convenience, to enquire about these things. The following is a copy of my reply to the church:

Dear Mrs. Evered

12th of February 1981

Thank you for your letter dated 24th of January 1981 informing me of the outcome of the recent Church meeting. May I confirm my approval and desire to help the cause at Bierton even though my present circumstances are not helpful.

I believe the Gospel Standard causes are a means by which God is preserving His truth our relationship to the Law as believers, Particular Redemption and the declaration of the Gospel as opposed to offering the gospel.

All doctrine, which the majority of churches of our day deny. I believe also a right understanding of these truths are the means of preserving a true godly fear and reverence in our worship of God.

Yours with Christian regards,

David Clarke

My Visit To The Bierton Folk

I visited Mrs. Evered and asked to see the church minutes of the previous meeting but she refused to allow me to read them.

I then called upon both Miss R Elliss and Mrs. Gurney and asked about the meeting and their opinions. Mrs. Gurney said she was placed under pressure to agree to join the Gospel Standard cause. This pressure came by being made to feel she was the only one hindering this action.

Miss R Elliss said she misunderstood the method of voting and that she was opposed to the church charging to a Gospel Standard cause.

Mrs. Gurney informed me Mr Hope had expressed impatience with them saying this matter of joining the Standard cause could not keep coming up every meeting and so the church must vote by private ballot. This method of voting was that which Miss R Elliss said she misunderstood. Also was that vote which was said affirmed a unanimous decision.

Being persuaded what had taken place was dishonourable I approached the following church members, when gathered at a convenient time after one of our meetings, expressing my finding and reaction.

The church members present were: Mr King, Miss B. Ellis, Mrs. Evered, Miss R Elliss and Miss G Ellis.

Having made certain enquiries by which I may have caused some offence; I apologise for any wrong done. However I am still not satisfied that the events,

which took place and decisions made at the recent church meeting, were entirely in accordance with its members.

My justification for pursuing this matter is that after careful questioning of the members I find both Mrs. C Gurney and Miss R Elliss did not wish the Bierton cause to become a Gospel Standard cause. That the unanimous decision came through Mrs. R Ellis misunderstanding the method of voting; she not wanting the Bierton cause to become a Standard cause.

I expressed I took exception to this action and my conscience would not allow me to remain silent. Also that had I known this matter of joining the Standard cause was on the agenda at that quarterly meeting I would have wished to have been present. This being in accordance to the Gospel Standard rule 15.

The church had agreed that such a decision to become a Standard cause was to be unanimous therefore I wished the church to vote again on this matter with all Members present.

That Mr Hope should chair such a meeting (in fairness to him) since and decision to the contrary ought to be rectified by him.

I wished a meeting to be held in the usual way in order to ascertain if the church acknowledge my complaint and would consider my request.

The reaction of the church to my complaint

Mr King felt I was quite out of order and Miss G Ellis said both Mrs. Gurney and Miss R Elliss were under no pressure and they were in agreement to becoming a Gospel Standard cause.

Mr King said the church minutes were not available to me and would be read in the usual way at the next church meeting.

Mr John Just letter to the church at Bierton

Soon after this event the church members were circulated with a letter of complaint and of conscience from Mr John Just, a known visitor to the church, it was a very pertinent letter and its essence was as follows:

My concern is over the women speaking at the church meetings. Reminding them that the head of every man was Christ and the head of every woman the man. That women should learn in silence rather than take the rule.

Also those elders should be appointed to deal with Church matters

Those believers should obey them that have the rule over them. Of the member present (Miss R Elliss) being now unwell and unable to clearly express her self) it was said they did not wish the matter to be taken any further but left as they were.

My Reactions

I believe the Church was wrong in this matter but I saw no benefit in me

taking the matter any further. I thought it wrong in the same way Jacobs's deception was wrong nevertheless that outcome was of the Lord.

This left me now in the position of seeking further information from the Gospel Standard committee in order to free my conscience and be absolutely sure where we stood as a church tied to a denomination body.

My concern was now manifold: Did the folk at Bierton realize what they had done in joining the Gospel Standard cause? Were they aware of the doctrinal stand and views expressed in the Standard articles which were opposed by many of our visiting ministers. I could accept them but only after our church expressed their understanding of the articles, which had already, caused some controversy.²⁸

We already had our own confession of faith as expressed in our Trust Deed and this could not be altered (Gal 4 23). Therefore if we know use the Gospel Standard articles as shedding further light upon our current articles of religion then we also must have an appendix to the Gospel Standard article-clarifying article 26 and 32.

However I realized this seemed impossible with the folk at Bierton for they had not the minds to cope with such matters. Nevertheless, a believer, having a clear understanding of these things knew this could not be left unattended to. For I believed if God were to continue His work amongst us we ought to be clear and doctrinally sound in matters of faith and practice.

I was also concerned about church meetings since nothing had been said about such rules of conduct in them. The Gospel Standard rules forbids the women from speaking in them (according to the scriptures) but at Bierton the women had always spoken and continued to do so.

Church Reaction To John's Letter

At the church meeting of the 3rd of April 1981, Mr Just's letter was mentioned. Mr Hope expressed that he thought Mr Just to be quite out of order since the letter should have been addressed to the chairman and that he should have signed the letter.

The church rejected the charge that women were speaking and usurping any authority over the man.

Mr Hope thought he ought to write on behalf of the church a letter of kingly reproof for his actions.

My Comments

I thought Mr John Just was perfectly in order and the church had never

28 See Chapter 13 Leprosy Discovered and other references.

adopted any formal means of dealing with any such affairs. Also Mr Hope was only the chairman and not an overseer and that Mr Just had genuine cause of complaint and concern over the affairs of the Bierton Church.

At this meeting Mr Hope mentioned he had a copy of a letter from Mr Dickinson the Secretary of the Gospel Standard committee and wished to deal with the matter mentioned in it.

The letter contained a copy of some enquiries I had made privately to the committee and their replies.

Mr Hope asked if I was satisfied with the committee replies to my questions. To which I replied I was. At this Mr Hope seemed surprised and after the meeting I explained my reasons of enquiry and actions, to which Mr Hope seemed to understand.

Letter To Gospel Standard Committee

The following is a copy of my letter of enquiry to the Gospel Standard committee followed by the committee's replies.

Dear Mr Dickinson,

4th of August 1981

Re: Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church and Her association with the Gospel Standard denomination.

I wonder if you could clarify our position as a church at Bierton and the above-mentioned association?

1. Have you any literature, which explains the structure of the Gospel Standard Society. I.e. When was the denomination formally so called and why was it formed.

2. How does the committee function.

3. How are members elected to the committee?

4. What role do the churches play?

5. What is the Gospel Standard list of ministers?

6. What is the connection with the Poor Relief and Bethesda Home Societies?

Also:

7. Will our present association constitute a breach of any clause in our trust deed?

8. Should our trustees be informed of our present connection with the Gospel Standard Churches?

9. Does this connection mean our former Articles of Religion, as set out the trust deed, are to be set aside and we adopt those set out in the booklet published by the Gospel Standard Societies.

Yours sincerely with Christian regards,

David Clarke.

Church member

PS. 10. Is it necessary to make any legal adjustments to our trust deed?

Reply from the Gospel Standard Committee

From my letter it can be seen my ignorance of some things which people take for granted people already know. This was not so with me I have no background nor relatives in any church to know these things from and hence was obliged to find out these things directly. The following is a copy of the letter from Mr Secretary in answer to my questions:

THE GOSPEL STANDARD STRICT BAPTIST SOCIETIES

13th August 1981

Dear Mr Clarke,

Thank you for your letter of the 4th August enquiring about the position of the Church at Bierton and the Gospel Standard List of Churches.

I understand the position was fully explained to the Church on the 16th January 1981 when the Church unanimously applied to be associated with Gospel Standard Churches.

However in reply to your questions which I will number:

1. I suggest you obtain a copy of "Historical Sketch of the Gospel Standard Baptists" by S.F. Paul obtainable from Gospel Standard Trust Publications as advertised in the "Gospel Standard" & 2.

3. I enclose a copy of the Rules of the Societies.

4. I cannot understand the purport of this question, but perhaps the Rules will help.

5. This is a list of accredited ministers who agree with the Articles of Faith of the Gospel Standard Societies.

6. Part i) See the Rules. Part ii) Please write to Mr A.J.

Watts who is the Sectary to the Bethesda Fund.

7. Your association will not constitute a breach of the Trust Deed unless the

Deed states you must not associate with the Gospel Standard Societies.

8. This is a matter you should take up with the Church's Chairman.

9. No.

P.S. 10 No.

Yours sincerely,
Secretary

Point 9 It was confirmed on the telephoned on Monday The 17th of August 1981: we cannot alter the trust deed.

Repercussions Letter Gospel Standard

Mr Dickerson forwarded my letter to Mr Hope and Mrs. Evered was informed. Mrs. Evered then took it upon herself to reprove me, over the telephone, for my actions. She charged me with wrong conduct as a church member and also for not issuing directives to none church members.

This matter is related in the following letter, which I had prepared to send Mrs. Evered. I did not send this letter because afterwards I had second thoughts wondering were my motives pure. The letters reads:

Dear Mrs. Evered,

28th August 1981

Thank you for the telephone call of Thursday evening informing me of your concern. May I assure you my correspondence with Mr Dickinson, concerned myself privately. Neither did I make any of our church business a matter of public scrutiny. Therefore the matter was not the church business and not written in the name of the church. I did not therefore represent the church in any way whatsoever. My plea being, not guilty to the charge you made.

However there are one or two matters arising from the issue which must be considered for they gave me personal offence and would be wrong for me to let them slip. My duty being to bring them to your attention.

This has been the second time whereby you sought to censor me when you had no right to do so. But trusting you did it unawares I forgive if you can assure me you did so unawares.

The first instance occurred when you told me to tell a visiting woman member of the congregation to cover her head during public worship, and the second occasion you reproved me for writing (whether church business or not to another person. The reproof coming not from your self as a private member

but as church secretary.

The nature of these offenses are as follows:

As a woman you sought to excises authority over me being a male member of the church in that you told me and reprovred me assuming authority not given you by the church and contrary to the scripture (I Tim. 2.12).

As secretary you assumed responsibility not given you by the church. For in this office you are a delegate and a representative of the church, which means you only act and carry out the instructions of the church. Hence you cannot exercise authority over a male, which is the result of personal judgment, nor make decisions for and on behalf of the church unless sanctioned to do so.

Therefore in both the above instances you acted out of place as church secretary, a women member, and a church member, speaking with usurped authority. Now of all this what is the sum? I excuse you if you acted in ignorance but advice you to consider and resolve in you own mind what are the limits of your jurisdiction as a secretary and keep to them.

I do understand the nature of your concern and realize the burden and weight of responsibility you feel however a right understanding of the office you have been given would alleviate some of this burden you carry.

Yours with Christian regards,

David Clarke,

Reaction Of Mr Dix, Dunstable Baptists

Shortly after these events Mr Dix was engaged to preach at Bierton on a weeknight meeting and afterwards at my home he expressed his surprise and regret over the Bierton church joining the Gospel Standard.

After consideration of some of the things he said I felt constrained to write to Mr Hill, minister of the Gospel, Luton. The following is a transcript of my letter to Mr Hill:

October 1981

Dear Mr Hill,

Proverbs 2 10⁻¹².

Trusting it is with a live and tender conscience, as opposed to a dead and carnal reasoning mind, I am moved to seek your help and advice, in connection with our cause at Bierton.

In conversation with Mr Dix, after our Wednesday night preaching service, he charged us as a church at Bierton in acting illegally and immorally because of our actions in becoming a Gospel Standard cause.

The charge being that we had broken the covenant as set out in our own

trust deed; that had we wished to become a Standard church we should have formed another church in another building. Our actions being illegal and immoral for no man can dis-annul or add to any rule or regulation or term set out in the operative deed of trust and we as a church must be bound by those articles of religion and rules of practice, set out in that deed alone. This being so since the founder members and trustees in title covenanted together to maintain support and preserve those articles set out in that indenture.

This matter has caused me some concern in the past and seeking to resolve this issue as a matter of conscience I wrote to Mr Dickerson the Secretary of the Gospel Standard committee, asking for help from whom I obtained some assistance.

I came to this conclusion that since the articles of our church are in no way inconsistent with the articles of the Gospel Standard societies we as a church are free to publicly acknowledge agreement to them and associate as a church with other such churches and so be known as a Gospel Standard cause. This acknowledgement and association in no way contravening any article of religion or rule of practices set out in our trust deed. Hence the rules of our church would be in no way added to or diss-annul and any future member could only be required to give assent to those articles set out in the deed of trust.

I would value your judgment in this matter for I often find myself alone in my views realizing my opinions are, or may be, disregarded by some on the grounds I am a novice and inexperienced in matters of this importance. I am persuaded that my position, as described above, is sufficient to answer Mr Dix, but have hesitated to do so since I have not the authority of the church to do so, nor am I certain our position as a church is fully understood by our members for they are now being regulated by the rules of the Gospel Standard articles. Also I believe a prospective new member of the church, would only be asked to subscribed to these articles alone, without reference to those articles set out in the trust deed. Which if Mr Dix were to ask and I confirm this was so it would confirm his opinion and justify his accusations.

Having therefore, I trust, a measure of faith and good hope, through the grace of God, to confess the Lord Jesus Christ before men and the world and being moved by conscience to walk in the church of God, and the world, in all honour thus obeying the gospel rule 1 Pet. 3¹⁶. ; Could you advice me in the way I should act and the correct course of action, if any that I should take.

Yours in the care and cause of God and truth; may the Lord Jesus comfort, preserve and strengthen you according to His riches in glory especially in this time of bereavement.

David Clarke

23 / 10 / 81.

Shortly before this time Mr Hill had just lost his wife Beth and so briefly alluded to in his reply.

Letter from Mr. Hill

Dear David,

27 October 1981

I do appreciate the kind letter from you both, I know it is sincere.

I am so stunned by the suddenness of it all (the death of Mr Hills Wife) so please forgive my short note, but I felt I must answer your enquiry immediately to set your mind at rest.

Mr Dix is wrong, but I fell it shown the enmity, which there is to the Gospel Standard causes.

Your articles are almost identical and if you can subscribe to the one set, you can subscribe to the others also I am sure that those godly men who drew them up, would in these days ally themselves to the Gospel Standard denomination, because as a body they are the only people I know who contend for the same things. Further, most of the trustees, I think all of them belong to Gospel Standard churches. However just to instance a case the late Mr Raven who was the chairman of the Gospel Standard committee and Pastor of Small fields, told me himself that his church had their own articles of faith, but fully subscribed as a people to the Gospel Standard articles; it was a position just like yours.

I hope this note will put your mind at rest.

Please ring me when you have had the church meeting re: your exercise and have the sanction of the church to preach, for I want you to come to Ebenezer. (Mr Hill did ask me to keep this matter private at that time)

Now my very warm love to Irene and yourself and dear little children?

The enclosed is something for them.

Yours in gospel affection,

James Hill

18 MR ROYCE OF LUTON ADDED ARTICLES

Whilst preaching at the church at Eaton Bray in Edelsbrough I met a Mr.

Royce from Luton who asked me about the Added Articles of Religion of the Gospel Standard.

Stephen Royce and his family including his father and mother had attended the Watford Strict Baptist Church. Stephen had become a believer and felt it right to be baptised. But was seeking to resolve difficulties that he had in accepting the wording of the added articles of the Gospel Standard for this was required in order for him to be baptised and join the church. He was not given a satisfactory explanation.

He had been brought up at the Watford Strict Baptist Church, where Mr Hill was the pastor but he had moved to Luton Ebenezer and Mr Sayers's senior was the new pastor and his son Howard Sayers²⁹ was a minister sent from the Watford church. At that time Howard made it clear he did not accept the added articles of the Gospel Standard. That of course was no help to Stephen Royce or his father.

Stephen Added Articles

Stephen Royce had become a Christian and believed he should be baptised but Mr Ramsbottom, the pastor of Luton, would not put forward his request to be baptised to the church as he in conscience could not subscribe in totality to these added articles.

This became a real problem to him and he wondered why he could not just be baptised as a believer and simply not join the Church meeting at Bethel chapel. This was because he could not in conscience agree with the wording of the Added Article as they appeared to deny scripture. He didn't think it right to do so.

I fully understood his problem and felt for him so I put pen to paper (or type face) and sought to answer his questions, since I was a member of a Gospel Standard listed Church and had been called by the Lord and sent to preach by the Bierton Church which was a Gospel Standard cause. The following is my reply to his questions.

18th Aug. 1984

Dear Mr Royce

Article 32

In response to your request that I should give my views upon the above mentioned article may I say at first; I believe it imperative we should be clear in our minds as to what we subscribe too when joining any society that have articles of religion. We ought not to be as them in the apostate Church of England who once swore on oath and gave assent to the 39 Articles of the Anglican Church

29 See Howard Sayers Letter Chapter

but have now perjured themselves by denying them openly or privately. This sin is spoken of in Rom. I. 31, which mentions covenant breakers and of course is characteristic of the last days; such sins we should ever turn from.

The principle I adopted, when first called by grace, in 1970 was that I would not join any denomination or society of Christians unless I could agree with their doctrinal confessions. I have learned since that chapel buildings and a churches assets are linked to a trust deed. In which the Trust Deed specifies who are the lawful beneficiaries of the chapel building and church assets. Also a body of trustees have solemnly sworn on oath, to watch and guard and to do all in their power to ensure that the Society in question, continues in those tenets of religion set out in that trust deed.

I am of the opinion that there is many who fail in our responsibilities and neglect what they put there hand too. I was once asked to be a trustee of the Bierton Strict & Particular Chapel in 1976 but declined since I questioned whether the ‘strict communion principles’ set out in the trust deed and carried out by the church were biblical. Hence I declined the request on a matter of principles. I will add here I am now clear in my mind that ‘strict communion’ principles are correct. How this is administered is another thing; again I have dealt in controversy over this issue, with Mr Kenneth Dix the pastor of the Baptist church in Dunstable (this may be seen in my article entitled “**The Bierton Crisis**” 1984).

Well to the point; never give assent to any articles or religion, unless your conscience gives you leave to do so. At regeneration we are given a tender and good conscience, never violate it and let it be ruled by the Word of God alone. Then you be Christ’s free man and need fear no man.

A soiled conscience weakens a man; robs one of strength to wage warfare against sin and error, as every exercised Christian will tell you.

The way I propose to answer your question is as follows: -

1. Consider the statement as written.
2. Break it down into its natural parts.
3. Discover the main point of belief.
4. Consider this article in the light of the whole confession of faith.
5. Give my opinion.
6. Recall the purpose of these articles.
7. Consider what the compilers of this article may be denying.
8. Assert what the true position is, one, which we could agree

with.

9. Consider what one should do if the article is in error.
10. Recall what Mr Popham said in 1906 about this question.
11. Answer the assertion as listed in my broken down form (see b) above)
12. Give my conclusion.

I think by looking at the article in this way we may be able to see more clearly the path we are to take.

To the first point then; the article 32 itself: -

We believe that it would be unsafe; from the brief records we have of the way in which the apostles, under the immediate direction of the Lord, addressed their hearers in certain special cases and circumstances, to derive absolute and universal rules for ministerial addresses in the present day under widely different circumstances.

And we further believe that an assumption that others have been inspired as the apostles were has led to the gross errors amongst both Romanists and professed Protestants.

In the articles we find; there are several assertions

1. We have only brief records of Apostolic addresses to mixed groups of people.
2. That such occasions were certain special and Circumstantial cases.
3. That on these occasions they were under the Immediate direction of the Lord.
4. That from these cases we cannot derive absolute and universal rules for ministerial addresses.
5. That these occasions were under widely different Circumstances than the present day (1878).
6. That to derive any absolute and universal rules would be unsafe.
7. That it is an assumption that any one has ever Been inspired as the Apostles.
8. That such assumptions have let to gross errors found amongst Romanists and professed Protestants.

In breaking the article down in this way it is easier to treat each point. However, I think the main point of belief is: -

“We cannot derive absolute and universal rules for ministerial addresses from certain particular scriptures”.

The rest of the article anticipates objections by those who make reference to scriptures containing Apostolic addresses and justifies such caution by alluding to errors of the Romanists and professed Protestants.

My Comments Article 32

1. We have only brief records of Apostolic addresses to mixed groups of people. *Be this as it may, we have the record of which it pleased God to grant and that scripture is that which is profitable for doctrine, reproof and correction in righteousness. Yes every word, accent and punctuation. (As in the original)*

2. That such occasions of Apostolic addresses were special and circumstantial cases. *Every case and occasion is special and peculiar and can never be repeated and no one could deny all circumstances are different.*

3. That on these occasions the Apostles was under immediate direction of the Lord. *We know the apostles were not always under the immediate direction of the Lord as Peter is discovered to us. However since this article does not refer to any particular reference this cannot be disproved.*

4. That from this case we cannot derive universal rules for ministerial addresses. *Since these cases referred to are not specified who can say. However we draw rules from ministerial addresses from no single example but from the whole tenor of the scriptures and hence we are able to deny certain modes of Congregational addresses.*

5. That these occasions were under different circumstances and widely different than the present day of 1878. *No person would deny that the times in 1878, in England, were different to those days of the Apostles in other lands, but we do take note of these occasions and differing circumstances in order to understand Apostolic doctrine.*

6. That to derive any absolute and universal rules would be unsafe. *This has been considered in part under my point IV. We derive any such rules from the whole of the scripture and not just one part. I would say it be unsafe to ignore the apostolic examples for our apostle exhorted “These things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of piece shall be with you”.*

7. That it is an assumption that any one has been inspired as the Apostles.

To this the whole body of Christ agree, that is they who take the scripture to be the only rule of their faith and practice.

8. That such assumptions have lead to the gross errors found in Romanists and professed Protestants. *Since we deny apostolic inspiration to any but apostles this must be the case.*

Absolute and Universal Rules For Ministerial Addresses

It seems that this article is saying that it is wrong to make appeals and give exhortations to mixed groups of people that only regenerated people can respond too.

In connection with this I wrote to Mr Dickerson, the Secretary of the Gospel Standard committee in 1980 to which he kindly responded.

It seems that this article was written because there are many who teach that salvation is **offered to all men** and that all men **have a duty to repent believe and receive Christ**. (This article should be linked to Article 26 on the subject of Duty Faith and Duty Repentance).

Such universal methods of address is wrong since the atonement is limited and the blessings of grace, purchased by the lord Jesus, are bestowed freely on the elect by the Spirit of God. That regeneration and effectual calling, faith in Christ and repentance towards God flow from of a sense of love to Christ. These are not legal or natural duties but blessings of grace. There is a difference between legal repentance what the law of Moses and the law of nature dictates to the conscience. Legal repentance and Natural repentance are duties of the natural man. But evangelical repentance is a free grace blessing. Article 26 denies that it is a duty of all men to lay hold on Christ, to believe in Him and rest in Him by faith since this requires the operation of the Spirit of God and are grace gifts purchased and experienced through redemption.

Repentance and Responsibility

All men should cease from sin and it is right to inform men to turn from sins. Men should turn from sin and live uprightly. Such repentance is a duty of all men even if there was no salvation.

Remember God is good and the goodness of God leads men to repentance. But after, thy hardness and impenitent heart treasures up for thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. When God would render to every man according to his deeds. Romans 2 1-6. Hence the gospel calls men (outwardly) to these responsibilities he has fallen from **his original state and duty bound to turn from sin**. **This** being distinguished from **evangelical repentance** of which article 26 is speaking. This natural or legal repentance being enjoined and pressed upon all men in a state of nature

whether dead elect or none elect through the gospel. (See Dr J Gill Body of Divinity on the subject of repentance towards God and effectual calling.) Also read the Arminian Skeleton by William Huntington, page 217 / 218, where he states God hath power to command a change of heart and to make them clean even though man has lost the ability to comply. If you read the Seceders it is written of William Tiptaff that towards the end of his life he continually called men to repentance (Seceders Vol. I).

I know of no Strict Baptists who would deny this and it seems difficult to believe the compilers of these added articles could have fallen from the truth. Nevertheless we must take the articles as written for these articles define and limit church membership to such as agree with the compilers of these articles.

If these compilers deny ministers or Christians should warn people and children of their sinful ways by informing them; unless they repent they shall perish for their sins and exhort them to cease from them and call upon God for mercy they are wrong. For this is a fallen creatures responsible and duty whether dead elect or reprobate. This repentance may be considered as legal and to what natural conscience leads to. Of this kind of repentance Jonah, and the prophets, and the Lord Jesus, the apostles and the ministry of the gospel commands.

But if these compilers assert that the grace of evangelical repentance, which flows from faith in and a love to Christ, is a free grace blessing, a gift of God, is bestowed, and such repentance is unto life. That it flows from a love to Christ having knowledge of sins already pardoned then they are right. Since this cannot be a duty of all men or any in a state of nature. Hence no minister of the gospel in his right mind would dream of exhorting such to believe and turn to God in this way.

This I believe I could prove to be the position of Dr Gill, William Gadsby, John Warburton, John Kershaw, William Huntington and Joseph Philpot.

This is my position and I believe to be the biblical one. Hence we deny Duty Faith and Duty Repentance and do not agree with Andrew Fuller who expressed his views in his book "The Gospel worthy of all Acceptation". Nor Baxterianism as stated in article 28.

The Writer Of This Article 32

Now if you ask me what was in the minds of the writer and body of men that inserted these added articles it is rather difficult may I direct you to the Gospel Standards committee's response to the same question in 1906. Mr Popham writes: -

"It is not for me say what was in the minds of the framers of those Articles,

nor yet affirm that they were all accurate theologians etc.

Here we find the same difficulty and admittance that Mr Popham was not in the position to say what was in the mind of Mr Hazelrigg and the men that adopted those added articles. From this answer to the question we learn the problem is not new by any means, nor is it easily solved. As I have mentioned it should be read in conjunction with article 26. This is the reply given by to me Mr Dickerson, the Secretary of the Gospel Standard Committee when I enquired about article 26. Article 26 simply means that we do not make free will appeals generally to a congregation to repent, accept Christ; give their hearts to God etc. Rather we preach the vital necessities of repentance and faith in Jesus, and encourage those who feel their need to flee to Him in their sorrow, as enabled by the Holy Spirit. There is no suggestion at all that men in a state of nature ought not to please God. Their duty is clearly revealed in the law of God³⁰, but they have neither ability nor desire to fulfil it.

My Conclusion To This Article

As I have already said earlier, it had been better not to include this article (as it stands) since it is not specific, tends to diminish the use of every part of scripture and leaves an uncertain question mark "What is the compiler driving at"? Hence Mr Popham could not affirm that all these men were accurate theologians; are we in any better position today to do so? I think an understanding of how these articles came to be added could shed more light on the subject but that I must leave unless it is important to you.

However I include a chapter on this subject in Chapter 21 under the heading The History of The Added Articles.

Yours in the cause, concern and care of truth, with love to the Lord Jesus and his dear people.

19 JOHN METCALFE TYLER'S GREEN CHAPEL

It was during our troubles at the Bierton church I had occasion to speak to Dr. John Verna at m home in Bierton and he informed me he and his wife had met with John Metcalf of Penn, near High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire and that some of the people there often had a stall on the Market Square in Aylesbury selling Christian literature and the bibles they sold were only the Authorized King James version.

I was interested and because I had recently picked up a small tract written by John Metcalf called "The Gospel of God", which was about the claims of the Papacy and John Paul the second. I wished to meet John Metcalf because I

30 By the Law of God I would take to be the whole of scripture.

recalled our visitor to the Berton Church James who had attended Mr Metcalf's ministry and I understood and agreed with his writings in the tract. This had been most helpful and encouraging to me.

John Verna and Richard Bolt left and I felt encouraged by our meeting and I decided to go and visit the Church at Penn so as to meet Mr. John Metcalfe.

One Sunday evening I decided to go and I took my daughter Esther, she must have been about 3 or 4 years old and we drove to Penn and found the old chapel called Tyler's Green Chapel, Bethlehem Meeting Hall. Old-fashioned metal railings enclosed it and the gate was locked with no way in to the front door. It felt strange because the people were inside and a meeting was being held. I thought to my self had this door been locked deliberately to give a psychological shock to late comers and the feeling of being locked out as would be the case of the 5 foolish virgins mentioned by Jesus in Matth 25 verse 2)³¹.

It was damp outside and getting dark but I was determined to meet Mr. Metcalf so Esther and I waited outside, in the road, until the meeting had finished. Eventually the meeting ended and the people filled out sedately and quietly. I took courage and walked up to the man I believed to be John Metcalfe. Not too tall, well dressed, with a cream or white raincoat and white or grey hair. He was very courteous and when I introduced my self and explained my intent. I asked him about the chapel gates being locked gates he smiled when I explained my thoughts about the 5 foolish virgins. He then explained they locked the gates to prevent vandalism during the meetings, as they had, had trouble in the past.

He informed his daughter and noted my persistence in waiting and that I had read his tract on John Paul the II, which seemed to encourage him. He then invited me back to his home for supper.

Esther and I were received graciously and we exchanged much conversation. Mr. Metcalfe's daughters made a fuss of Esther and gave her chocolate biscuits. I was invited to share my testimony of how I became a Christian and I deliberately decided to tell all that took place the night of my conversion holding nothing back.

(See full account of my conversion³²). All was very quite and nothing was said that I remember. I explained my present situation at Berton Strict Baptist Church and the issues I had encountered regarding Particular Redemption, Law and Gospel, Added articles and finally Holy Tables. I was asked about

31 I have since learned a Full Preterist view of Eschatology views this correctly. See Our further publications The Parousia by James Stuart Russel for clarity.

32 As told in this book Conversion from crime to Christ.

my work and family and I explained I was a Lecturer at Luton College and a minister of the gospel in membership of a Strict Baptist church.

I felt greatly encouraged and noticed how nicely the house was kept. All in a lovely garden, spacious and it was beautiful. It was old and charming just as a Royal house and John Metcalfe kept an Alsatian as a guard dog.

John Metcalfe was a charming person a man of conviction, decisive and uncompromising. He seemed determined to follow God. I liked him and admired these qualities. I felt I could learn many things from this man. He had dealings with the Rev Ian Paisley but opposed him for unknown reasons. He despised the title Dr. and Dr. John Gill for accepting such titles. Also he had known Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones and eminent Christian ministers but opposed many things.

After that evening I returned another time with my wife and we were invited to attend the meeting at Tyler's Green Chapel one Sunday morning when Mr. Metcalfe would be preaching. It was arranged that one of the members of the church would look after our four children whilst we attended that morning meeting. This we did. This was a remarkable sermon and I had never heard such powerful preaching. I was greatly encouraged and I realized later to substance of his sermon was that contained in his publication "Messiah". The sermon was eloquent, powerful and I believed very faithful to the word of God. I was greatly encouraged and admired the man and wanted to support his work.

After the meeting I was asked by Mr. Metcalfe how I had got on and he seemed to be looking for feedback. I had become unaccustomed to give any kind of feedback, which could give rise to puff the old man up (rightly or wrongly), so I found this situation awkward. I kept quiet even though I was moved with excitement and wanted to express how well I had got on with the message spoken. It was so encouraging that I wanted to tell all my friends in excitement come and here a man speak the things of God.

Paul Rowland And I Visit John Metcalfe

It was shortly after this that Paul Rowland's, a minister in the Strict Baptist Church, who also worked for the Trinitarian Bible Society, came to preach at Bierton Church. He was a great advocate of the Free Scottish Presbyterian Church system and by conviction would only sing Psalms in Christian meetings. I spoke to Paul about John Metcalfe and invited him to meet him. Mr. Metcalfe seemed interested to meet Paul and I together, so we were invited across to his home at Penn one evening together.

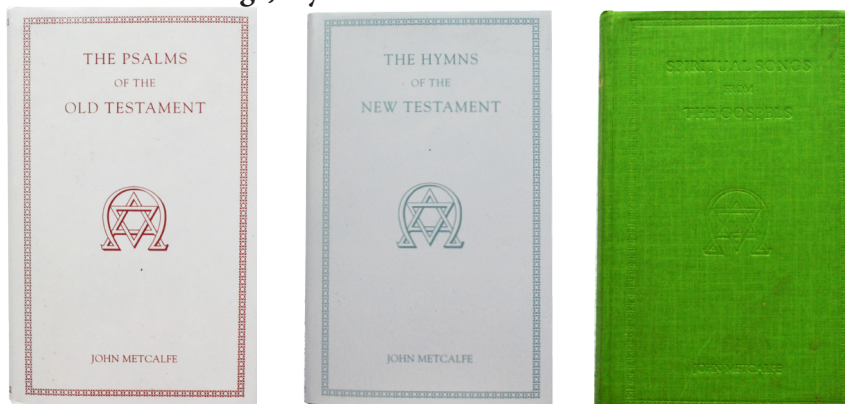
The Shot Gun And Our Pockets Searched

Paul and I went one evening to John Metcalfe's home and we were received

well and our coats taken to be hung up. We were invited to sit in a large lounge rather like a large study and library. It was beautiful decorated and very eloquent. John Metcalfe was dressed in a smart suit and tie.

John Metcalfe spoke about his work and recent publications the *Psalms, Spiritual Songs, and Hymns of the New Testament*

Songs, Hymns and New Testament Books



The Beautifully Produced Song Books

Paul Rowland got involved in talk regarding the Presbyterian Church and the Scottish Psalm Book. They soon spoke on doctrinal issues regarding the Law of Moses and legal Righteousness.

Christ Righteousness Imputed

John Metcalfe maintained that he opposed the views put forward by the Calvinistic Presbyterians who maintained the righteousness of Christ (that which he wrought out by obedience to The Law) was our justifying righteousness before God. He said he had, had a lot of opposition from the Scottish Churches because he maintained the righteousness of Christ is not mentioned once in the New Testament only the Righteousness of God. This righteousness being distinct from Law.

I was not full well aware at the time of the significance to this distinction and at first did not understand the issue. How ever the evening went well and was very stimulating and not without surprise. John Metcalfe posed us with a question as though it was a riddle asking was the fruit that Adam ate good or bad. It was as though he did not expect us to answer because he reminded us God had said his work was very good. I knew the answer straight away I did not need to think but thinking there must be some reason behind the question I awaited and Paul answered. This answer was not satisfactory to Mr. Metcalfe

and the issue was discussed. I did not answer because shortly after this John Metcalfe reached behind a curtain and brought out a shotgun in a dramatic gesture and preceded to take out the cartridges. John Metcalfe was not amused when I laughed in amusement he said he was suspicious of our visit that the IRA had threatened him and had to be very careful. He also had just been informed that our pockets had been searched to check up on us and that tobacco had been found in one of the pockets. Mr. John Metcalfe later used this against the person in derogatory comments.

Our visit to Mr. Metcalfe was one not to be forgotten and was quite Remarkable.

This cause me to consider many things and I tried to understand and unfathomed the discussion regarding Justification. I had at that time been considering the view of eternal justification of Gods elect. I knew of the controversy of Antinomian and the legalists. I had shared with John Metcalfe a love of the writings of William Huntington and about Martin Luther's issue of Justification by faith.

It was the misunderstanding of the conversation that he had with Paul Rowland regarding Justification that made me consider the issues that I thought they raised and understood the truth to be. These were:

Justification

1 Gods act of Justification³³, when viewed from the point before the world existed, was from all eternity. In one sense the elect were justified in Christ from all eternity (in the mind of God). However the work and merits of a justifying righteousness was to be performed in time by none other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 He was righteous by virtue of his person and spotless humanity. He did not become righteous by any works of the Law to Moses. He fulfilled the law and walked according to it.

The gentiles were never under the Law of Moses but rather by it excluded from the benefits that the Jews were promised to those who kept it. The Law never promised spiritual blessings only natural ones. All spiritual blessings, such as regeneration, adoption and the gift of faith, came only through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Also the Law of Moses was not, like the Presbyterian's Calvinist's say given to Adam as a rule to be kept and that eternal life promised to those who kept it. It was not.

33 Please see Dr John Gill in my book "Justification and Act of God not an Act of Faith", listed at the end of this book

I understood that in the Lord Jesus's righteousness sinners are clothed and accepted as righteous before God. This being the righteousness of God imputed to all that believe. This being the source and merits of a believer's justification.

3 In actual experience however, in time, the sentence of Justification takes place upon the person believing God, as Abraham believed God. It is received by faith and takes place in the conscience, when first we believe and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our saviour. This is justification by faith. (Rom. 5 verse 1). From this springs the joy of salvation, which of course involves the senses of the soul. This experience is justification by faith.

Justification by Blood

It could only be brought about by blood and made effectual by blood. Jesus himself being made a vicarious sacrifice. That being by the death of Jesus in the cross. By His death our sins are removed and we be made clean from all our sins. (Rom 5 verse 9). Justification being the declaration by God that we, being clothed in the righteousness of Christ, we are counted righteous for Jesus sake.

This was not the issue.

I learned later how after this was not the issue with Paul Roland and John Metcalfe.

The follow Saturday morning I had a telephone call from John Metcalfe, I did not realize it was him at first thinking it was Dr. John Verna and I addressed him as John. This did not go down well he said I was being too familiar and I must address him as Mr. Metcalfe. Needless to say I felt awkward and that this man was being unnecessarily rude. We got on to speak about the feedback he wanted and I said I had things to say but would rather wait until I saw him face to face rather than on the telephone. He became very impatient and demanded I say there and then on the telephone what I had to say. I felt threatened and awkward and was not at ease at all. So I decided I would say about the things I found awkward and unacceptable first explaining that the tract he had written was in fact in error.

His reply was, "look mate I have more theology than I would ever have in 1000 years. That my testimony of what Jesus had done for me was disgusting and that I was in the same danger as the Pharisees, which blasphemed the Holy Ghost during the ministry of Jesus. There the conversation ended.

During all this time my wife had been concerned about me becoming involved with the man as she had notice how much and effect he had on me.

That following week I was away on a week's study at Durham University as I was a student with the Open University. Here I wrote to Mr. John Metcalfe.

My response to John Metcalfe

Dear Mr. Metcalfe

26th July 1984

Further to our telephone conversation I have decided against meeting with you when I return from Durham for the following reasons:

You allow not the children of God to do as the apostle exhorts: "despise not prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" 1 Thes 5 verse 20 - 22.

My words to you on the telephone were that on the one hand I could rejoice with you thanking God for "here was a man I respected and trust in the things of God (for various reasons) whilst on the other hand I got cross with you and could take extreme dislike to you for what appeared to be a sinister way, This I took exception too.

Now you did not inquire as to what I meant but rather justified all your ways, methods and actions by stating your beliefs, saying that for the first time I had come under the preaching of the word of God in the unction of the Holy Ghost. That as the opponents of Christ questioned the spirit by which the Lord Jesus performed his mighty works, so too I come very close to their fearful condition.

You then stated your beliefs in respect of my own testimony; either you rejected what I said as true or was in doubt as to its reality and substance (correct me if I am wrong).

I am sorry if I offended you and your family when I gave my testimony, please forgive me. How ever I am not the only believer to speak of vile things. Deut 28 verses 53. Lam 2 verse 26 and Hos 1 verse 2 and many more. Do you impute guilt to these also as you do me? Never the less what I spoke was true and an actual account and not as you seem to imply an opportunity to speak of self. For that true account I offer no apology.

If you reject what I said as truth I protest I am no liar. And if you are in doubts as to the reality well I cannot add to or diminish what the Lord Jesus works or works not. You are entitled to your opinion but pray give me the same liberty to judge you, your preaching, writings and assertions.

I still do not understand your impatience with me questioning you regarding the statement in the tract, "The Gospel of God".

You say the issue at the Reformation was: Given the merits of Christ person, how are they imputed and his person imparted. Page 33. I said to you. I could understand the statement of "the merits of Christ's person being imputed but not his person imparted.

I gave you room to explain, owned an ignorance and awaited further light and even said I would reconsider the statement. Here however you said you knew more theology in your little finger than I ever would ever know in a 1000

years, given it were possible I should be granted such time; called me mate and kept me at a formal distance.

Well be that as it may I still await a theological precise statement, whether it be in realms of high and heavenly things or in terrestrial ones.

I say persons are communed with and not, with natures, imparted. Neither persons nor natures imputed. I would suggest your tract should read: Given the merits of Christ's person, how are these imputed and His nature imparted. I say I was not seeking to find faults; it stuck out like a sore thumb, just as my incorrect spelling may do.

Here again I beg your pardon and apologize for any seeming impertinence. I say to you this behaviour of yours displays no humility, of which you say is lacking in me. Also according to your judgment I am not low enough yet before God. You judge by appearances; so do I but are you right? Only God knows the agonies, the heart searching and tears shed since our conversation and that is no pretence.

On these points I have mentioned I beg your reply and answers. For how can two walk together if these differences divide? I certainly have no intention of being your enemy.

You said at one stage you wondered if I be teachable. Well I am allowing my feelings and reason to act in judgment over these issues. This I do as you set the example and encourage, or have I got this wrong as well?

I get excited for you, over the production of the Psalms and hymn-book and would like to have seen them in use. I hope my letter to you now will not cause that breach to prevent it.

I have read your tract 2 and have found both 1 and 2 very relevant, pertinent and well written. They search me. Particularly tract 2 and I find I have walked the path of your tract. May they be blessed of God for the furtherance of the Gospel and the purpose for which they were written?

I could comment on the tract 3 about Taylor Brethren but not unless you wish

Yours very Sincerely.

David Clarke.

Following this letter in hot pursuit I wrote the next letter this would have arrived the next day.

Dear Mr. Metcalfe,

I also think it wrong to speak of the merits of the person of Christ.

The merits of Christ yes! But not the merits of his person. The reason for this is:

As the Son of God he is a divine person. By nature He is God. Essentially God by nature but personally the Son of the Father. To speak then of the merits of a divine person is abhorrent to the delicate and gracious soul for one cannot admit any imperfections in God nor demerit as to perfection's, councils, actions or purposes. God is by definition essentially righteous. Perfectly just and right in all and in everything. Whether this glory be revealed or veiled always was and ever shall be.

The scripture speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ being the express image of the Fathers person.

I admit a complexity; in that the Lord Jesus Christ is bi natural, that is to say he has two natures. Yet he is but one person, co.-equal with the Father and Holy Ghost. By nature eternally God taking unto into union with himself, at the incarnation, our humanity, that which he was not, becoming truly man. There is now then a union of divine and human natures (never to be dissolved) in the person of the Son of God, hence Christ Jesus the Lord is a glorious complex person.

We may speak of the merits of Christ Jesus for he is truly a human being, having a real soul created when made man; this man may accrue merit by virtue of living in this world being not only made under the Law of Moses but under every divine rule, him being subject unto his God and Father. The divine servant.

The expression then, "how can the merits of Christ's person be imputed?" I say is too loose and really the whole quotation should read: given the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ how are they imputed and His nature imparted? This being the question at the Reformation.

If you think I am being nit picking then what kind of 1000-year theological course do you advocate as being worthwhile.

I write this way because I trust it will be of help to you. You certainly have helped me in causing me to consider many things. I also add I stand to be corrected and ask you to do so.

I expect I have touched on your doctrine of justification and perhaps you have deliberately phrased your statement in the tract the way you have because they reflect your views of justification. Am I right?

Please excuse this hurried note but I must write, as I am able. Yours
Sincerely

David Clarke

Durham. 25th July 1984.

My two letters were returned with no comments. I took it that, that was meant to express he rejected my observations or council, against himself.

David Clarke

Difficulties Associated With Articles Of Religion

As a result of this, and some 32 years later, I felt moved to write my book *Difficulties Associated with Article of Religion Among Particular Baptists*. See Further Publications at the end of this book. In which I seek to address some of these problems, including the secret history of the added articles of the Gospel Standard. Which is also followed by *The Doctrine Of The Sabbath* by Dr John Prideaux 1642, See Further Publications at the back of this book for details.

Conclusion

From this record of events I have shown that from the outset the church at Bierton were rather loose in their regard to articles of religion. This being shown firstly by their adoption of a spurious set of articles and hence a deviation from those tenets of religion set out in the trust deed. Then secondly by the views of one or two members who suggested I ignore those points, which caused me to object these saying, 'after all these are only man made rules'.

I have attempted to show that the move to become a Standard cause was by means of a subtle and determined effort of one of our members (Mrs. Evered) and that the meeting, which determined our joining the Gospel Standard denomination, was in fact out of order for that meeting was not specially convened to consider that motion. Also the unanimous decision to become a Standard cause was not so since Mrs. C Gurney expressed she was pressurized, in the meeting by being made to feel she was the only one stopping the church from doing what it wanted. Also Miss R Elliss expressed she did not wish any changes nor saw any reason to become a Standard cause. She wished things to continue as they were. That the unorthodox private vote was the cause of her being misunderstood for she wished to vote against becoming a Gospel Standard cause.

In this account I have indicated Mrs. Evered denied the terms evangelical repentance, maintained that the Law of Moses was her rule of life and hence I considered it necessary to establish a correct understanding of articles 26 and bring attention to the true rest for the people of God

I have also included a chapter 20 entitled Mr Royce and the Added Articles

to show that the problems relating to Article 26 and 32 of the Added Articles are nothing new.

I have written this full account of my reasons for leaving the Bierton church in ‘The Bierton Crisis 1984’, and circulated it to all concerned as mentioned at the beginning of this account.

It is now my desire that this publication will serve **“To build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down”. Acts 25 verse 36.**

Also according to our strict rules relating to church membership I am the sole remaining member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists church as the church never did terminate my membership. And Mr Crane confirmed he supported my return to reopen the chapel in 2002 once I learned of the decease of all the former members.

20 WHAT NEXT THE AFTERMATH

The difficulties and problem I faced upon leaving the Bierton church were numerous and the effects on my self and family great. Of course I questioned had I done the right thing but concluded I could do no other. The other churches I knew outside the Gospel Standard were very shallow in respect to doctrinal matters which prompted us to move to Shropshire to be connected with a church in Snailbeach but I was unable to get suitable work. I began to feel forsaken by God and then rejected by God and thought I was as King Saul, had been rejected and like an apostate.

It was only after we moved back to Luton to live near my work at Luton College of Higher Education that I began to recover from that form of depression however we were still not connected with a church as were vary wary those problems we had at Bierton thinking we did not wish a repeat of all those difficulties we had face connected at Bierton.

It was after this whilst living in Luton that a problem arose at Luton College and I had to face more stress which led me to have a run in with the management which resulted in them paying me to leave my lecturing post. As I result I sought medical help to help me sleep and was prescribed medication to bring my mood down. This resulted in me becoming very depressed realising the ramifications of what this could lead too. This depression was to last a number of years and the things of God became dim and various temptations began to come my way.

The Lord did provide for me with another lecturing post at Fareham College but that meant another move with me living in lodgings and my family living in out house at Luton until our house was sold some 18 month later.

It was during this time that fell into a back slid-en state and a fall into open sin which caused so much hurt and harm to all around. Such was my state that

I rejected the WORD OF GOD and sought every way to deny the existence of God in order to justify my sinful actions. It is too hurtful and shameful to write about but it ended in my wife divorcing me, for just reasons.

The turmoil that this caused was great and again I was plunged into depression again and I saw no way out. I had denied the existence of God and turned my back of the Lord Jesus but only God was able to deliver me from my fallen sinful state. Even though I had denied the existence of God I knew from my knowledge of the gospel that God would not hear the prayer of the wicked. I knew I had to be prepared to give up my sin in order to expect help from God. In fact I recall that I was so desperate had there been no God I would have invented God in order to deliver me. It was only when I decided to give up my sin that my prayer for deliverance was heard. It was then that gradually I began to recover through reading the simple promised of the Lord Jesus. I could only take the milk of the word of God. But thank be to God I recovered and began to seek Christian fellowship. Thanks be to God I recovered and felt so very much better.

There were two significant things that happened to me after this. I got word from my brother who had been sent to prison in the Philippines and he had become a Christian, which was good news to me.

And the other being was that the church I had sought Christian fellowship with sought to elect women elders, which was a blow to me as this was another church conflict that I just did not welcome.

As a result of this I felt compelled to write my brother and I's story and published this in, 'Converted on LSD Trip'. This being a true story of my brother and I's early life, our criminal past, my conversion and Christian and life at the Berton Church Along with my brothers past life and his conversion from crime to Christ.

I also felt compelled to write about the proposed election of women elders and how I was virtually told to leave if I did not accept this move. Needless to say I left and wrote the book Mary, Mary Quite Contrary, or Does The Lord Jesus Want Women To Rule As Elders In His Church.

Both of these books are available on Amazon.co.uk, Amazon Kindle and also as Audio-books in Audible and iTunes.

As a result of my brothers conversion I went on a mission of help to the Philippines and we worked with other prisoners and religious volunteers to bring help to other prisoners help to those who had turned their lives around sought to follow Christ. I worked on that mission work from 2001 to 2003 and lived in the Philippines for 10 months. It was the result of that

work we published our book Trojan Warriors, that contains the testimonies of 66 notorious criminals who had been converted from crime to Christ.

The Closure of the Bierton Chapel

I returned to the UK, in July 2003 and I spoke to Mr Crane, our Bierton church overseer as he informed me that the Bierton chapel had been closed for worship, on the 22nd December 2002.

Mr Crane suggested that I return to Bierton and reopen the chapel and he informed me that the Association of Grace Baptist Churches LTD (South East), 7 Arlington Way, London EC1R 1XA, had taken on the responsibility of the churches property. They had taken the Bierton Church Trust Deed from the lawful Trustees, Mr Janes, Mr Martin, Mr King and Mr Baumber who had expressed they were too old to bare the responsibility of looking after the chapel.

It transpired that our Bierton Trust Deed had been lodged with Miss G Ellis and was with her solicitors, which is a fact that is important when registering property with the Land Registry for the first time. They had recovered the Bierton Trust deed from the Solicitor of our church member when she died.

When I approached the Association of Grace Baptist Churches LTD to use our chapel for the ministry work they refused permission. This was because they wanted to sell the chapel and profit from the sale. They had hastily gone on with demolition work, contrary to the terms of trust, seeking to sell the Chapel, at a profit once they had acquired planning permission. Where as I had already negotiated and planned that summer to bring two Filipino Particular Baptist ministers to the UK to visit various churches and our chapel would have been the ideal solution for some of our meetings. The Association of Grace Baptists Churches LTD were not concerned or interested in carrying out the wishes and desires of the original church founders and church members of the day.

They offered to sell me the chapel for an offer in the region of £15,00.00. The Association of Grace Baptist Churches disputed my claim to membership and entitlement to use our chapel.

21 MY LETTER TO THE ASSOCIATION OF GRACE BAPTISTS CHURCHES LTD

To: Association of Grace Baptist Churches Ltd
CC: Charities Commission
July, Sunday 11, 2004

Dear Sirs,

Re : Trusteeship of the Bierton Chapel

I would be grateful if you would give evidence of your lawful entitlement to act as the trustees for the Bierton Church, founded in 1831.

The None Conformist Chapels Act 1844 deals with usage. However the Bierton Church was a listed Gospel Standard Cause in 1981 by church consent. A period of only 22 years have lapsed since then and the Articles of Religion etc., for the Bierton Chapel are those contained in the Trust Deed dated 1831.

The membership and Alliance of the Bierton Church with the Gospel Standard list of chapels was in no way a deviation from its own position as contained in it's own Article of Religions, contained in the Trust Deed dated 1831. It is unlawful to refer to any other Articles of religion such as the Association of Strict Baptist, of which you are members, which do not pertain to the Bierton cause, unless stated and agreed by Church at Bierton.

I would be grateful of you would give Strict proof of your entitlement to act as the Bierton Church Trustees and please explain how you came to hold the Deeds to the Bierton Baptist Chapel. I would like also to inform you that the Society of Strict and Particular Baptist still continues though my ministry. I believe we are entitled, in law to us the Bierton School room and its enlarged Chapel.

We maintain that I/we constitute the society members referred to in the Bierton Trustee Deed, named as the Society of Strict and Particular Baptists as witnessed by the indenture. I am one of the original seven members of the Bierton Cause.

As you will be aware an application to the Charities Commission will have to be made, upon any completion of sale, for a scheme of applying the proceeds of the sale of the chapel, and other funds associated with maintenance of the Chapel cy-press.

I trust this will assist you to make the right decision, if you are the lawful trustees, regarding my requests to us the Bierton Chapel for religious worship.

Yours in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,

David Clarke

Issued by: Hon.. Director, David Clarke, Trojan Horse International (TULIP) Phils. Incorporated,

C/o The Secretary, Dolores A. Clarke, Blk. 5 Lot 45,

Pueto Galera, St. Camillia, 4a Muntinlupa City.

To Their Shame.

They first of all denied that we were a Gospel Standard Church and my standing as a member of the Church. When I sent them a copy of my book, “The Berton Crisis 1984” and letters of confirmation that we were a Gospel Standard cause from Mr. Ramsbottom along with Mr. Cranes confirmation and that Mr Crane had suggested and supported my request to re open the chapel, they tried to say I was no longer a member. This was despite my bringing to their attention the fact of our strict rules, in relation to cessation of membership ensured that I by default remained a member of the church. The Church never terminated our membership and Mr Crane confirmed this in writing and I had presented this information to the Association of Grace Baptists Churches LTD with my application to use our chapel.

When I stated that they were not the lawful trustees, as the Church had not elected them to that position, I was ignored. I asked them to confirm that the copy of the Trust Deed that I held was one and the same as the one they had recovered from our deceased church member, they refused my request. This was because the trust deed states who were the legitimate Trustees, how they are to be elected and the responsibilities of church members.

Trustees were to be elected by the church and to be men who believed and supported the doctrines stated in the indenture. The reality was that the Berton Church was a Gospel Standard Cause and had no association with Grace Baptist churches. The church would never have elected this Association to be its trustees because their beliefs were those of the London 1869 Baptist Confession, and not those of our Church. The Berton Church was and Gospel Standard cause contrary to what the Association stated.

My Action

As a result of this denial and injustice I wrote and complained to the David Whitmarsh, the secretay of the Association of Grace Baptists LTD, who denied we were a Gospel Standard Church and that I was not longer a member. He knew nothing of the church rules that determine church membership and refused to send me a copy of the Berton Trust deed as requested.

I felt it necessary to register a caution with the Land Registry to prevent the sale of our chapel unless this dispute was settled.

The following is solemn declaration outlining my claim to be a member of the Berton Church despite my secession from the church in 1984 over matters of conscience. I was a member by default since my membership of the Church was not terminated by the church.³⁴ I also outlined my continued ministry, as a

34 See Rule 16 On Church Membership in our Gospel Standard Rules, of the Gospel Standard Articles of Religion.

sent minister of the Bierton Church, in the Philippines and UK.

Result of the County Court Case

I agreed to a two part hearing of my complaint.

1 My membership of the Bierton Church

2 My charge that they were not the Lawful Trustees.

It was adjudged that our rules relating to membership was not lawful as any person can leave an association if they chose. How ever this opinion does is not as our Articles maintain as the article 16 states that secession of membership can only be executed by the church and that be by an honorable transfer to another church of the same faith nor order or by dishonorable dismissal, neither of which was my case. I maintained I was according to our church rule still a member as the church never did terminate my membership. The lady judge thought our rules relating to church membership were wrong and she thought I was therefore no longer a member of the Bierton Church.

With reference to the second charge I deemed it to no purpose to prove these trustees were not lawful trustees as that would have meant further disputes, so I left the matter and withdrew my charge.

The trust deed states that the trustees must be elected by the church and I had, nor any of the earlier church member, elected them.

My further Action

I wrote to the Strict Baptist Historic Society requesting to see the church minutes kept in the church book but and I was informed the Bierton church book had been given to Mr Dix along with other items and these items were not available. I wish to view the record of our churches business relating to this matter my self as I was not happy with Mr Dix's claim. The Association stated that Mr Dix had stated the church had terminated my membership. It was not true. Needless to say my letter of request was ignored and no church book forth coming. This case in law cost me £6000 to pay the Association's legal costs. I left the matter with the lord.

Solemn Declaration

Made At The London Central County Court, 6th September 2006.

22 THE CLOSURE OF THE BIERTON CHAPEL

Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists were formed as a church in 1831. [*The Bierton Church Trust deed*](#) may be view here. Their chapel was closed after their last worship service on 22nd December 2002.

The Bierton Church became a Gospel Standard cause on 16th January 1981 and adopted the strict rules of church practice AND conduct of the Gospel Standard Articles Of Religion.

Please view the Wikipedia entry for further details under the heading [*Bierton None Conformist Place of Worship*](#).

The closing years of Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists are recorded ‘The Bierton Crisis 1984’ which tells of the secession of the sole remaining member of the church on 26th June 1984, over matters of conscience as the church had fallen into doctrinal and practical error. A copy of which was sent to the Association of Grace Baptists Churches.

A Solemn Declaration

1 [*A Solemn Declaration*](#) (click to view) made against the **Association of Grace Baptists Churches Limited** in London County Court. This association had taken the Bierton chapel deed with a claim that they were the lawful trustees, with a view to sell the chapel.

Solemn Declaration

London Central County Court Office and Administration

26-29 (or 13-14) Park Crescent London

W1B 1HT, England

Case number 5PO 00770

Complainant: Clarke

6th September 2005

-Defendant:

Association of Grace Baptist Churches Ltd.

Solemn Declaration by David Clarke.

Bierton Articles of Religion and trust Deed.

I, David Clarke, church member, and sent minister of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Society, meeting at the Bierton Chapel, who is now residing at, 11 Hayling Close, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 3AE, do solemnly and sincerely declare, that this declaration is true, and that the enclosed Indenture, is a copy of the original for the Bierton Chapel, date signed and witnessed 1831. My own hand took this transcript when I made then copy if the original, in the presence of Bertha Ellis, at 175 Aylesbury Road, Bierton. The term Church refers to the Society of Strict and Particular Baptists described in the enclosed Indenture. See document DL0 01. Spurious Articles Found

In 1976, I requested to inspect the Articles of Religion of the Bierton Church, with a view to becoming a member. I was presented with a set of religious tenets, which were not the same as those of the original Bierton Articles of religion, as set out in the Indenture 1831.

There were two articles or religion that I could not subscribe too. These sets of religious tenets were spurious to the original articles, as we could find no record as to their adoption in the church minutes. I agreed to the articles of religion expressed in the Trust Deed date 1831.

Original Articles to Govern

After serious discussion, with the church chairman Mr. Hill (Luton) it was agreed by the church that I was accepted as a church member of the Bierton communion, having subscribed to the original articles of religion dated 1831, witnessed and signed by John Warburton Jr. 1831. This took place at the church meeting on 8th January 1976. The chairman being Mr. James Hill, minister of the Gospel, Ebenezer Church, Luton, this being 6 years since my call by grace on the 16th January 1970.

Trustees Elected by the Church

At the church meeting, on the 2nd July, 1976, the following men were chosen, in accordance to the expressed term of our trust deed 1831, to be the new trustees: Mr. A. King (Bierton), Mr. Hill, (Luton), Mr.

T. Martin (Blunham), Mr. Baumber (Bedford), Mr. Heather (High Wycombe), Mr. Janes (Eaton Bray), Mr. F. Hill, Mr. D. White, Mr. P. Gurney and Mr. Foster. A total of 11 trustees.

On October 9th, 1979, Irene Clarke made application for church membership however the problem of which articles of religion to present to her for subscription was unresolved. As a result her application for membership was withdrawn, as the church were unable to decide. This occurred at the meeting dated 9th January 1980. See document DL 02. She was later accepted as a Church member upon her confession to the original Church articles of religion dated 1831.

Becoming a the Gospel Standard listed Cause

On the 16th January 1981 the Bierton Church, unanimously agreed to seek association with the Gospel Standard group of Strict Baptists. This was the proposal of Mr. A. King. I was not present at the meeting but was informed by Mrs... Evered who was the Secretary. The Church subscribe to the Gospel Standard Articles of religion without a problem and we were accepted and enlisted as a Gospel Standard cause on 3rd April 1981. We adopted the rules of conduct for church order and practice. Document DL30A and DL03B

Gospel Standard Rules adopted

These rules of conduct clearly supported the traditional view of our church that a member cannot resign. One is either in honourable or dishonourable membership, and honourable transfer must be to one of the same faith and order. See Document DL10.

A Rejection of the 1689 Confession

The Bierton Church did not accept the articles of religions of the 1689 confession, nor did we have association with the Limes Avenue Grace Baptist Church, in Aylesbury. We were distinctive Strict and Particular Baptist Society, historically associated, with the 1644 First London Confession, and would have been labelled historically, by opponents; namely Fullerite Baptists, such as the Grace Churches, as Gillite's or Huntingtonian's. The matters were fully recorded and outlined in, "The Bierton Crisis", ISBN number 0-9539473-3-5.

A Sanction To Preach

In 1982, Mr. Hope (Reading) and Mr. Hill (Lu- ton) made recommendations to the Church supporting my call to the ministry. The Church duly sanctioned my call to preach, after a special meeting was set-aside for that purpose.

Controversy over Particular Redemption

In 1983, a controversy arose in the church, over Mr. King's doctrinal error as he taught the Sun- day school children General Redemption, by using hymns at their anniversary meeting, which were contradictory to our articles of religion and as a Gospel Standard Cause.

In 1982, Mr. Janes. Member of the Gospel Standard church meeting at Eaton Bray (Trustee), and Mr. Ramsbottom (Editor of the Gospel Standard Magazine), supported my request for help, and confirmed that the teaching of General Redemption hymns, by the Church, and Mr. King was contrary to our Articles of Religion, as set out in our trust deed and association with the Gospel Standard causes. See document DL10.

On the 15th June 1983 Mr. A. King left (re- signed) the Bierton Church. See the whole controversy published in, *The Bierton Crisis 1984*.

Due to lack of church discipline, and order, we asked Mr. Paul Crane, a visiting minister, to act as our overseer.

On the 18th February 1984 Mr. Paul Crane, of 25 Roughlands, Lakenheath, was appointed as the overseer of the church at Bierton.

The Church did not take any disciplinary steps against Mr. King, due to his withdrawal from the communion, as we hoped he would return and resolve the differences that had occurred.

Resignation of Secretary

In July 1984, I resigned as Church Secretary, and seceded from membership Church over matters of conscience. I withdrew from the church communion and left the Church, to the care of God and in the charge of Mr. Crane. See, “*The Bierton Crisis 1984*”, which is a full account of my actions, which were carried out in the name and fear of the Lord. The trustees were fully informed over these issues. No disciplinary action was taken against me, in the similar way to Mr. King, and I was informed that it was hoped ‘I would return’. I left the matter to the Lord.

Church Members Die

Between the years 1984 and November 1995 the following Church members died: Mrs.. G Evered, Mrs.. Ruth Ellis, Mrs.. C. Gurney, Miss Gwen Ellis, Mrs.. G. Evered and Miss Bertha Ellis.

There is no record of Mr. King’s return to the church, or any acknowledgment of his former doctrinal errors being retracted.

The Church at Eaton Bray, of which Mr. Janes was a deacon, and also one of the Bierton Chapel trustees, withdrew from the Gospel Standard Association, over doctrinal differences. They adopted the 1689 confession, which was at variance with to the Gospel Standard distinctive tenets of truth.

Mission work to the Philippines

In August 2001, I was called on mission work to the Philippines, in order to preach the gospel according, to my calling in and sending, by the Bierton

Church, in 1982.

In December 2002, I wrote to Mr. Ramsbottom, the Editor of the Gospel Standard, in the UK, seeking the communication address of Mr. Crane, and Mr. Hope and the church at Albert Street, Oxford, in order to communicate with Mr. Crane and Mr. Janes as I wished to share and inform them of the work being done in the Philippines, and our return to the UK, with certain Baptist pastors from the Philippines, from mission work in July 2003. See document DL 04.

In January 2003 I wrote to Mr. Crane asking him for a reference to support my application for a visa, to work as a missionary in Philippines.

During the year 2002, Mr. King, aged 81 years, and informed, a trustee of the Bierton chapel, asked,

Mr. Janes and the other trustees to take over the running of the chapel.

In January 2003, as the result of my mission work to the Philippines, I baptised no less than 22 soul in Baguio City Jail, and 8 soul in Benguet City Jail, Philippines. See document marked, Baptism Certificate, DL 029A and DL029B

Mission work in the Philippines continue

In March 2003 I was awarded a permanent missionary visa to work throughout the whole of the Philippines, as a Particular Baptist minister, sent from the Bierton Church in 1982. DL028A and DL028B.

In March 2003, with the aid of a Particular Baptist minister, in Muntinlupa City, I registered our ministry with the Security Exchange Commission (SEC), in the Philippines, I being the founding Director. Our registration name and number being Trojan Horse International (TULIP) Phils. Incorporated. CN 200306347.

In March 2003, I wrote to Mr. Jane, one of our trustees at Bierton, informing him of our mission work and connections with the Strict and Particular Baptist in the Philippines and requested his help.

I was not informed of the Closure of The Bierton Chapel

Mr. Jane replied to my letter but he never informed me of the closer of the chapel and expressed, after consultation with his pastor Mr. Rimmes, he was not able to offer any help See Document DL 023.

In July 2003, on my return to the United Kingdom, I contacted Mr. Crane and was informed all the church members at Bierton had died. He informed me that the Bierton chapel had closed down and the Association of Grace Churches Limited offered it for sale.

Mr Crane Church Overseer suggest the chapel is reopened

Mr. Crane suggested that I return and reopen the chapel as he still considered

me a member of the church according to our tradition. See Document DL24.

Association Take Over

In July 2003, I wrote to the Association of Grace Baptist Churches limited and was informed that they were the lawful trustees. I had no idea how these new trustees had been elected by the church according, to our rules of conduct, and so I requested that I re-open the chapel to continue the work already begun at Bierton.

The Association of Grace Churches Limited, Mr. David Whitemash, being the Secretary, and David Coleman, the assistant, refused to allow me to use our chapel, but rather offered it to me for sale, at a price of £ 150,000. This was based on the assumption that planning permission had been granted for a two-occupation dwelling.

Opposition to Bierton Becoming a Gospel Standard Cause

Mr. David Coleman knew about the issues of the Bierton Church becoming a Gospel Standard cause, as he was a member of the Dunstable Church, in 1981. His Pastor was Mr. Kenneth Dix, who aggressively opposed the Bierton Chapel becoming a listed Gospel Standard Church. See The Bierton Crisis 1984. See document DL 032.

Association Denied We Were a Gospel Standard Cause

The Association of Grace Churches limited denied we were a Gospel Standard Church or governed by it rules and so reject my claim to lawful church membership, despite my many representations.

In August 2001, I went on Christian mission work to the Philippines and Trojan Horse International, our mission organisation, commissioned and supported William O. Poloc to return to his own city in Baguio to preach the gospel not only in his own city but the prisons of Benguet and Baguio City Jail.

In December 2002, I returned to the Philippines and baptised 22 inmates in Baguio City Jail and 8 souls who had turned from Crime to follow Christ. Baptism certificates were issued to these candidates in the name of Bierton Particular Baptists.

In April 2003, I returned to the Philippines and baptised Dolores A. Nava and Alan Neilson, upon confession of their faith in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord added to church such as should be saved.

I April 2003, our Ministry Trojan Horse International (TULIP) Phils Incorporated was officially recognized by the Bureau of Corrections, as an official work in New Bilibid Prison and Pst. Arnel Gonzales, a Particular Baptist minister for Muntinlupa City was appointed as our Religious Volunteer (RVO).

See documents DL 030A and DI 030B and 030C. Penultimate Church Member and Trustee Retires

In July 2004, I visited Mr. Jane at his home in Eddlesborough, and Mr. King at his home in Bierton. Mr. Janes informed me he was now 83 year old and Mr. King informed me he was 84 years old. See document DI 016.

Mr. Jane informed me that in then year 2002, Mr. King had asked him along with Mr. Baumber and Mr. Tim Martin, to take over responsibility of the chapel as he was now too old and in-firmed, to carry on.

Mr. Jane informed me that he too old and it was also in practical for the other trustees to run the chapel so they resigned and approached the Association of Grace Churches to mänge it's affair.

Mr. Jane informed me that the Trust Deed of the Bierton Church were discovered to be with the Solicitor of Miss Gwen Ellis, and these were give to the Association Secretary alone, with all the church records and financial accounts.

Refused Access and Use Of The Chapel

Despite my many representations, to the Association of Grace Baptist Churches, along with Irene Clarke (Holloway), Alan Neilson, Michael J. Clarke, Mrs.. Dolores Clarke and others, I was refused per- mission to re-open the chapel, for our lawful use. See document DL013.

Association Applies to Convert the Chapel to a Domestic Dwelling

In August 2004, a further application was made by the Association of Grace Churches Limited, to the Aylesbury District Council, to convert the chapel into a singe residential dwelling, and to convert the grave yard (10 church members, being buried there), into off road parking for the dwelling. The was on the pretext that the chapel was redundant to use and that the affluent Limes Avenue Church being a Grace Baptist church, could take care of any of the Bierton community who still wished to join or attend church.

Trustees withdrew from Gospel Standard

On the 28th July 2004, I visited Mr. Jane who informed that the Eaton Bray Church had withdrawn from their association with the Gospel Standard Churches and now subscribed to the 1989 confession of Faith. He expressed his objection to the Bier- ton Church being a Gospel Standard listed Church and did not wish to give any assistance to rectify the mistake made by the former trustees, and the current attempts of the Association of Grace Churches from selling the chapel and distribution of the funds raised for it sale. Mr. Janes informed me of the addresses of the Mr. Baumber and Mr. Martin. He also informed me that he felt it inconsiderate to involve Mr. King in any connection relating to these matters, as he was old and seriously ill. See document DL 025.

Remaining Trustee No

Wish To Be involved with the Chapel

In the 29th July, Mr. King informed me that he did not wish to be involved with the Bierton issues, due to his ill health and advice from his doctor. See documents DL 026A and 026B.

I visited the chapel in Bierton regularly during the period July 2003 and August 2004. During this time it fell into dereliction. The graveyard was UN kept and the interior had been stripped of its furniture. I tended to the graveyard personally on the 26th August.

Placed a Charge at the Land Registry Against First Registration

In August 2004, it was decided to seek first registration of the Bierton Chapel in my sole name, I being the sole person in law, able to do so, apart from Mr. King and Irene Clarke (now Holloway) as it was unregistered land, and the deeds had been taken, by Mr. Whitmarsh, through miss appropriation. See letter to the Land registry DL026.

In September 2004, I wrote to The Association of Grace Churches limited, with these my finding, and requested they return the Trust Deeds into the safe keeping of our Solicitor Battrick Clark, 155 White ladies Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 2RA. See document DL 027.

I have informed the former trustees, Mr. Jane, Mr. Martin and Baumber and all interested parties, of the mistake which has taken place and my desire to take over the lawful responsibly of the chapel for its use according to the terms of our original Article of religion expressed in the enclosed Indenture, dated 1831. This communication includes the Charities Commission and submission of this sworn declaration to the Land Registry.

Opposition To Gospel Standard beliefs caused the Opposition

It is believed that the opposition to the Bierton Church, and her association with the Gospel Standard Baptists, along with Mr. Kings declared doctrinal and practical errors, and Mr. Janes new allegiance to the 1689 confession, are the cause of the current animosity and refusal to return the Bierton Church trust deed are withheld for its lawful owners.

Proceeds from the sale to go to none Gospel Standard Churches

Also the fact that the proceeds of any sale of the chapel assets will go to those churches associated only with the Grace Association, namely Limes Avenue and Eaton Bray, and presumably other local churches as Eaton Bray and Albert Street Strict Baptist, Tring. Charities Commission No Help

On the 3rd September 2004 I was informed by the Association of Grace

Churches limited that the Charities Commission had made certain investigations and they were satisfied they were the lawful trustees. See document DL 033.

It is believed that no such Official enquiry has been made.

Bierton Chapel Allowed to be a Single Dwelling

On the 3rd September 2004 I was informed by Aylesbury Vale District Council that the Association of Grace Churches to a single dwelling. See document DL 034.

This application is an amendment to the first submission, to first registration of the Bierton Baptist Chapel, of date 29th July 2004. Submission number BM293716.

The property is clearly marked in the previously en- closed map and outlined in red.

And I make, this solemn declaration, conscientiously, believing the same to be true, by virtue of the Statuary

Declarations Act 1835.

Signature of Declarant: David Clarke

Declared at: 12 High Street, Fareham, Hampshire, and this day 3rd September 2004. Before me

Signature:

Address: 12 High Street, Fareham Hampshire, PO16 7BQ. Qualified Solicitor.

This publication contains:

1 A facsimile copy of the Trust Deed of the chapel belonging to the church which were lodged with the Land Registry

3 Land Registration Documents Title Number BM30453

4 Names and description of all Trustees

5 Land Plan of the Chapel

Bierton Society Of Strict Baptists Chapel 1831

Information relating to Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists may be seen in the Wikipedia article under None Conformist Particular Baptists Place of Worship³⁵.

³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bierton#Bierton_Particular_Baptists_non-conformist_place_of_worship

Website Address for the College:

<http://www.BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk>

E mail: nbpttc@yahoo.co.uk

11 Hayling Close Fareham

Hampshire

PO14 3AE

Former Bierton Baptist Summery

The Society of Particular Baptists were formed in Bierton, in 1831. Their Articles of Religion declare they were Protestant, Calvinistic Baptists.

Bierton Baptist Chapel



Bierton Particular Baptists None Conformist Place of Worship

The church meet for worship at the Bierton Baptist Chapel, originally called the school house, that was constructed in 1832 and enlarge in 1835.

A Closer View



Indication Of The Date Of Build And Enlargement

The church became a Gospel Standard cause in on 16th January 1981 and the last minister sent to preach by the church was in 1982. The chapel was closed for worship in 2002, after all the former members died, and it was eventually

180 21 MY LETTER TO THE ASSOCIATION OF GRACE BAPTISTS CHURCHES LTD
sold in 2006 and the trust deed were lodged with H.M. Land Registry and later
sold as a domestic dwelling.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT S

David Clarke is available for speaking
Engagements in the UK and abroad.

A Summery Of Events

Having written an account of my secession from Bierton Strict and particular
Baptists over matters of conscience on 26th June 1984. This is the sum of my
findings.

Our Bierton Church was formed in 1831 and I was accepted as a member of
the church, in 1976. We became a Gospel Standard cause on 16th January 1981.

In 1982 I was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel.
My application to preach was sanctioned by Mr Hill of Luton and Mr Hope of
Reading, both ministers of Gospel Standard churches. I was licensed to preach
by the church to go wherever the Lord open the door for me to preach.

I was also appointed as church secretary and corresponded with all our
ministers, including those who withstood our work. This enable me to examine
those serious charges levelled at the church for holding to serious doctrinal issues
once we became a Gospel Standard cause. Our alliance with the Gospel Standard
Baptists was seriously opposed by those outside our church, as witnessed by Mr
Kenneth Dix³⁶, and I was left to resolve those serious charges levelled at our
church for joining the Gospel Standard list of Churches.

I have shown the church were enable to maintain a faithful testimony to the
truths of the gospel of the Lord Jesus as outlined in Churches articles of religion
as set out in the indenture and trust deed of 1831 or the Gospel Standard Article
of Religion.

As a result I seceded from the church on 26th June 1984 over matters of
conscience. How ever due to our strict rules or membership and rule relating to
membership I remained a church member as the church did not terminate my
membership. However despite my many failings and serious fall I continued my
work as minister off the gospel not only in England but also in the Philippines
and now in Pakistan.

Upon hearing of the closure of the Bierton Chapel and the decease of its
members I was encouraged Mr Paul Crane, our appointed Church Over sear,
to return to Bierton and reopen the chapel. Upon approaching the alleged

36 See Chapter 4 Visitors and Strict Communion

trustees I was prevented from doing so by the actions of the Association of Grace Baptists Church LTD. These were not elected trustees of our chapel. This Association also opposed our doctrinal stand and position as a Gospel Standard cause.

When seeking to resolve my claim against the association the secular London County Court dismissed the ruling of our Gospel Standard Rules of conduct making them null and void. In that court the Association denied my membership of the Bierton Church and despite my objections and my charge of them no being lawful trustees. They went ahead and registered the Bierton chapel trust deed with the land registry and finally sold our chapel, in 2006. The Bierton Chapel is not a domestic dwelling and the monies raised from it sale should have been paid to the The Particular Baptist Fund, London 1717.

Despite all these awkward and difficult working or religious men my work as a sent minister of the Bierton strict Baptist Chapel continues, not only in the UK but also the Philippines and Pakistan. And I maintain the funds from the sale of the Bierton chapel should one return to me to make use of the work I was called and sent by the Church to preach the gospel, in 1982.

23 NO REST FOR THE SOLE OF MY FEET

Gen 8 verse 9.

But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

Serious Errors Held

By A Strict Baptist Minister

On my return to the UK I sought fellowship with like-minded believers, only to find more difficulties that I had already experienced at the Bierton church. A minister and Pastor of a Strict Baptist church in the south of England told me that I would not be accepted into membership by any Gospel Standard Church. This was because he disagreed with my understanding on the doctrine of the Sabbath. I had questioned his views of the Law of Moses and explained my understanding of the subject.

And so in my case on my return to the UK unlike the dove of Noah I was not received back into the ark of church membership.

The reason being I had questioned his view of the Sabbath. I stated to him that if he held the position he did then he would have a problem with the Sabbath. I sought to be of assistance to him, as he would certainly find his belief in the

Law of Moses a stumbling block to himself and also to others, if he taught those things. I wanted him to be honest with him self.

He informed me, in agitated tones, that my views would exclude me from membership of any Gospel Standard cause. I knew from my past experience at the Bierton church that this issue was no isolated problem. So what was I to do? And now I was told I would not be welcomed in any Gospel Standard Church. My response was one of dismay and hurt. So I decided I must write to this man as he was in serious error believing I could help him. His reply was far from satisfactory and less then gracious without any attempt to enlighten me or support his un-scriptural position.

Here is this minister's reply:

2nd December 2003

Dear David,

It is not my custom to answer letters of this nature.

However, I have been persuaded by many friends to make this brief reply. I am thankful to be the recipient of your letter and not the writer.

David, the views that you hold on the Law and the Lord's Day are wholly wrong and derogatory to the person and work of Christ. I can assure you that neither the church at B, nor the church at HE (of which I am a trustee), nor P, SS, or hold your errors, and would never receive into church membership those that hold such notions. Furthermore, there is not one church on the Gospel Standard list that holds your views or would receive into church membership any that believed such none scriptural notions.

I have learned the hard way, David, never to enter into endless questions of this nature and soul destroying controversy that brings nothing but pain to the brethren and disturbs the peace of the churches, "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (1 Corinthians 8:12). "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and striving about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain (Titus 3:9).

May God grant you light from his Word to turn from your errors? Please respect my wish not to publish my letter in any of your books. Yours sincerely:

Un-named Minister.

How To Deal With Such Correspondence

This letter was in fact a reply to my letter that I sent to him in connection

with the issue we were talking about. I had written to this minister seeking to help him as he had problems with the Sabbath. He had stated to me that I imagined strange things in connection with the gospel and so I wrote in order to establish a starting point to seek to resolve this difference of opinion and his problem. In fact his reply revealed gross errors on his part and demonstrated the need to defend the gospel truth.

Letter Minister of Strict Baptist Church

This is the letter that I sent to this minister which resulted in his rejection of the me and the truth that I maintained and advanced.

Date: 18th November 2003-12-10

Dear Un- named Minister (By request)

I too hate controversy. So please let us not be contentious.

The truth is given to us as light in order to shine in a dark place and I would not be faithful to its cause if I remained silent over an issue, which the scripture speaks so plainly about. I believe the distinction between Law and Gospel is a real distinction, which the scripture clearly speaks about. An argument, which rests upon a fact that one has held a view for 30 years and has contended over it, carries no weight when it opposes the plain teaching of scripture. A child who has no learning, in the school of the wise, but who believes the straight foreword words of scripture, is wiser than the men of this world who have read and studied all the works of many theologians.

This only would I learn of you received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law or the hearing of Faith. The contrasting statement in this instant is between works done to or according to Law or the hearing of faith, which is without reference to works done to Law. The Law in question is the Law, which came by Moses, and which was 430 years after the Gospel had been declared to Abraham. The Law here is the 10 commandments, which was delivered at Mount Sinai. I am not imagining this (as you have suggested) but quoting the plain teaching of Gods word.

Satan hates the truth and his ploy is to ridicule those who teach the truth. He will use underhanded methods to pick at the child of God by saying such things by saying ah! "That is your own imagination, you are wrong". This is because he hates the truth and does not wish the child of God to be free from the condemnation of the Law. But the child of God will be safe if he sticks close to the word of the Lord and he will not be confounded. The Law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. The Law came by Moses. Not Adam, Noah or Abraham. Those who say otherwise contradict the word of God. The

epistle to the Galatians is very clear about this. All arguments to the contrary are wrong and it does not matter who argues them. I am not being contentious by stating what the Scriptures say, as this is the Word of God, without comment or alteration or explanation. The plain word states the Law, and by which I understand to mean the 10 Commandments, came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ.

This is without controversy and must not be gain said. Those who seek to change the plain meaning of these words are the ones causing contention and being controversial. They wrest the Word of God. The scripture does not say the Law came by Adam, or Noah, or Abraham, but by Moses.

The contention between the child of God and child of the bondwomen is foretold by the allegory of the two sons of Abraham Ishmael and Isaac. There was a contention then, so it is now. There will always be a contention between the spiritual man and the natural man. The Apostle makes the point that the one who contends for the Law as a rule of life is the natural man, or son born to the bondwoman, whilst the spiritual man is the heir of promise and the true son.

It is always the son of the bondwomen who will persecute the freeborn Son who is the seed of promise. This will always be the case. I am then going to ask you not to persecute me because I speak the truth, as stated here in this part of God's Word. There have been many books and many sermons spoken upon this subject and great minds have wrested with these issues. I maintain that it does not matter if the whole of the Christian world, and its writers or preachers were to opposed to the truth here spoken off, it will not alter the truth that the Law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ.

The Law in all its glory came by Moses, to a people who had been chosen to be separate from all other people. It came to the Jew and not the Gentile. This Law, which came by Moses, excluded the gentiles from the covenants of promise. It did not include them.

Unless this can be agreed upon this straightforward statement of truth then we can go no further. There is no point in seeking to go further because if one seeks to alter truth in order to make scripture our system of doctrine and religious thinking then we will be deceived and not be those who rightly divide the word of truth.

I am open to discuss these issues with you, or with any one, but will not contend with you. It does hurt when you say it is my imagination when I recite the scripture. I know that I have a tender conscience and I would not wish to harm a child of God and if you are lead by the same Spirit you too would be grieved you if you know you hurt a child of God. I would never mean to hurt

you, in any way so please do not get offended if I express that you are wrong on an issue of doctrine, that you mentioned and came up in discussion.

I am open to correction but this must be from the Word of God and according to it. I am very clear in my understanding of many scriptures and I am also aware that I am not clear on others. When I speak that thing that I know why do you find it strange that I can be so certain.

The problem that you have ----, with your view of Law, will be that is that of the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath according to Moses is the seventh day of the week (Saturday) not the first Day of the week. And this cannot be altered or changed. You have the problem of wresting the scripture if you try and alter the scripture to make it your view of Law and Gospel. I believe I can help you in this matter, by sharing with you the scriptures, but you will need to be patient with me and not get wounded with me or upset if you disagree with me. I would also ask you not to get personal with me by saying I have an imagination, which is wrong. I felt your spirit was wrong towards me in your retort at that point. Please forgive me if I came over to you like that, in such a manor.

Yours Sincerely

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

David Clarke. 18th November 2003

Conclusion to the Response

This method of response by this un-named minister to my genuine letter is ungracious, un-scriptural and very hurtful. This is not the answer of God but that of a carnal religious man whose rule of life is the Law of Moses.

He advances no scripture truth to confirm his view regarding the subject of Law and gospel. It is as though his ears were Psalm 58 verse 5. His ears were stopped like a deaf adder and though I speak ever so scripturally, logically and with moral persuasion he would not listen. Therefore how can he respond to the truth? Then just as the adder he seeks bite. I was thankful for the promise in scripture that says, they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; Mark 16 verse 18.

By stating I would not be accepted into membership of any Gospel Standard church, holding the scriptural views of the gospel that I do, can only be his opinion and view.

His opinion is wrong and he is a bully and wishes to give me a bashing metaphorically, behind closed doors, and then seek to bind me to silence and then walk out of the room, pretending nothing had happened. Not so, as I am set for a defence and confirmation of the gospel, and will not remain silent.

My Response To The Unnamed Minister

I did not respond immediately to this letter but have left the matter for almost more than 10 years. The time however to has come to deal with these errors and other like errors.

Here is my response to that letter:

To: The Un-name Minister Date: 18th November 2003

This letter suggests that such people who have views of the Lords Day and Sabbath day, as I do and teach, are wrong. He refers to a weak brother being offended now since we were the only two present he must be referring to himself. To say he is a weak brother like other are weaker brethren and that my views hurt his tender conscience is a subtle ploy.

To say that my view offends him and that my views are hurtful to them because they have a tender conscience towards the Lord and their weakness must be considered by others is wrong. Is not right. In this matter there is no problem, as no Christian would wish to offend the weak believers conscience, in the thing that he allows himself to do, and so cause a weak brother to stumble.

The reality is that such who assert their views on others as this man does, and insist we follow them are the ones who cause division. They say others must follow them and their way. This man is an elder and one who is the strong not a weaker bother as Peter was, and the Jews who through bewitchment joined those who wanted to circumcise all believers. They caused the dispute by saying unless these converts be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses they cannot be saved.

And as such we are instructed to mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine, which ye have learned; and avoid them. Rom. 16 verse 17. Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them. Act 15 verses 1.

Also When Peter came to Antioch, Gal. 2 11, Paul withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed. Paul and Barnabas had strong contention with him and rebuked him openly. This was because Peter had been carried away with the Jews dissimulation. So too, in this issue, the un-named Minister is wrong along with those who too dissimulate; as he caused the division as can be seen in his letter. It was for this very reason the Apostle wrote, 'Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath'. Col. 2 16.

And so David is excluded from the privileges of a gospel church because he follows the Lord Jesus. And so the scriptures are fulfilled they that live godly

shall suffer persecution.

To cap it all he thinks it right to beat me up metaphorically, behind closed doors, and then bind me to silence so as not to inform others of what he has done and said.

Set For A Defence And Confirmation Of The Gospel.

I fell the time has come to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Grace be with you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the benefit of the reader I have republished Dr. John Prideaux, 'The Doctrine Of the Sabbath'. Please view the Further Publications list at the end of the book.

Summery Jesus Our true Sabbath Rest

The new man of grace is a new creation and he has a new nature whose motions are those of a good man. He also is possessed of his old nature that always seeks to dominate the new. Those who experience the new birth are those who were chosen by the Father, in Christ before the foundation of the world. They have been regenerated and are free to respond to the Gospel by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their right standing before God is based upon Gods act of Justification, where by the righteousness of the God man Jesus Christ is imputed to them, and in that righteousness they are declared just.

They are given the grace of faith to believe all the truth of God, and by faith have peace with God when they look too, and depend upon, the finished work of Christ, in his death and resurrection. Who by it made full atonement for their sins?

The sentence of justification is passed upon the conscience of the believer as they rest in Christ and look to him for all their salvation. The Lord Jesus is their true Sabbath rest.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 2 Cor. 5 verses 17

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor. 5 verses 20.

Eschatology

To have a clearer understanding of the fulfilling end of the Law of Moses and its rule we need to understand the scriptural teaching of the last days. It was Joel who referred to the last days and was the period of times the Apostles were living in.

Moses referred to the time as the latter end.

Deuteronomy 32:29 O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!

When Jesus spoke to his disciples upon the Mount of Olives he told them of the many things that would come to pass in those days before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

35 That upon you (Jerusalem) may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave unto him, and written by John, that describes the judgment of God upon the apostate Jews. This told of the destruction of Jerusalem a city described as The Mother of Harlots and bringing upon her the vengeance of God and according to the terms and curses of the Law of Mose.

The destruction of Jerusalem and her temple in 70 A.D took place in the last days, the end of the rule and Law of Moses. All the types and shadows foretold in the Law are fulfilled in Christ.

This was the end of the Jewish age and rule by Moses. It has nothing to do with the end of the world as many mistakenly think.

There are various eschatological views on this subject such as Amillennialism, Pre-millenarianism, Post-millennium , Historicist and Dispensational views, all of which speak of the end of the world.

For your further reading on this subject I can recommend James Stuart Russell's book, "The Parousia". Please see the publications listed at the back of this book for further information.

24 GOSPEL STANDARD ARTICLES

Articles of Faith and Rules

For further details of these Articles of Faith, readers are referred to the book, *What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe*, by J. H. Gosden, published by the Gospel Standard Societies in 1993 and obtainable from Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 12(b) Roundwood Lane, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 3BZ.

The following Articles of Faith are the same as those of the “Gospel Standard” Aid and Poor Relief Societies. Some of them are taken from those of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1640, &c., And the General Assembly of Baptist Ministers and Messengers, in London, 1689, and subsequently revised by Dr. Gill. These were amended by the late Mr. W. Gadsby, Mr. J. M’Kenzie, and Mr. J. C. Philpot; and afterwards, in 1878, well considered and unanimously agreed to by a duly-appointed Committee, consisting of the following friends: Mr. J. Gadsby, Mr. Hatton, Mr. Hazlerigg, Mr. Hemington, Mr. Hinton, Mr. J. Knight, Mr. Mockford, Mr. Vine, and Mr. Wilton; and finally unanimously adopted at a General Meeting of the Founders, ministers and others, of the Societies. The Rules of the Societies require that no person shall receive benefit from the Societies until he or she shall acknowledge his or her belief in the Articles.

Gospel Standard Articles Of Religion

1. The Holy Scriptures

We believe in the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and receive them as a gracious revelation of the mind and will of God³⁷; And we believe that therein are revealed all the doctrines and truths which we here state³⁸.

2. The Trinity

We believe that there is but one living and true God³⁹; that there are Three Persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost⁴⁰ – and that these Three Persons are equal in nature, power and glory; and we believe that the Son and the Holy Ghost are as truly and as properly God as the Father⁴¹.

3. The Everlasting Love Of God; Election;

Predestination; Adoption; And The Eternal,

Covenant Of Grace

37 Deut. 4. 2; Ps. 19. 7; Prov. 30. 5, 6; 2 Pet. 1. 19-21; Rev 22. 18, 19; John 5. 39.
38 2 Tim. 3. 15-17.

39 Exod. 3. 14; Deut. 4. 35; Deut. 6. 4; Num. 23. 19; 1 Sam. 2. 2, 3; Ps. 90. 2; Ps. 115. 3; Ps. 135. 5; Ps. 139. 7-10; Prov. 15. 3; Ecc. 3. 14; Isa. 40. 28; Isa. 45. 22; Isa. 46. 9; Jer. 10. 10; Jer. 23. 24; Mal. 3. 6; Mark 12. 29; John 4.24; 1 Cor. 8.6; Col.1.16.
40 Matt. 28.19; John 1.1; 2 Cor.13.14; 1 John 5.7; Jude 20, 21.
41 John 10. 15, 30; Eph. 2. 22; Heb. 1. 3; Heb. 9. 14.

We believe in the everlasting and unchangeable love of God⁴²; and that before the foundation of the world the Father did elect a certain number of the human race unto everlasting salvation, whom He did predestinate unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will⁴³; and we believe that in fulfilling this gracious design, He did make a covenant of grace and peace with the Son and with the Holy Ghost on behalf of those persons thus chosen⁴⁴, and that in this covenant the Son was appointed a Saviour, and all spiritual blessings provided for the elect, and also that their persons, with all the grace and glory designed for them, were put into the hands of the Son as their Covenant Head, and made His care and charge⁴.

4. The Fall Of Man

We believe in the Fall of our first parents, and that by it the whole of the human race became involved in, and guilty of, Original Sin; and that as they are born into the world, the whole of their posterity are, in consequence, actual transgressors against God⁴⁵. And we believe that by the Fall all men were rendered both unable and unwilling spiritually to believe in, seek after, or love God until called and regenerated by the Holy Ghost⁴⁶.

5. The Sacred Humanity Of The Lord Jesus Christ And His Offices

As Mediator, Surety And Substitute

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, being set up from everlasting as the Mediator of the New Covenant, and having engaged to be the Surety of His people, did, in the fulness of time, really and truly assume human nature, and not before, either in whole or in part⁴⁷. And we believe that, though He existed from all eternity as the eternal Son of God⁴⁸, the human soul of the Lord Jesus did not exist before it was created and formed in His body by Him who forms the soul of man within him, when that body was conceived, under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary⁴⁹. And we believe that Christ's human nature consists of a true body and reasonable soul, both of which, together and at once, the Son of God

42 Jer. 31. 3.

43 Gal. 4. 5; Eph. 1. 2-13; 1 Thess. 5. 9; 2 Thess. 2. 13; 2 Tim. 1.9; 1 John 3.1; 1Pet.1.2; 1 Pet.2.9.3 2 Sam. 23. 5; John 1. 17.

44 2 Sam. 23. 5; John 1. 17.

45 Rom. 5. 12-21; Ps. 58. 3.

46 Gen. 6.5; Gen. 8.21; Job 14.4; Job 25.4; Ps. 51.5; Jer. 13. 23; Jer. 17. 9; Matt. 15. 19; Rom. 3. 10-24; Rom. 5. 12-19; 1 Cor. 15. 22, 45-50; Eph. 2. 3; 1 John 5. 19.

47 Prov. 8. 23.

48 John 1.18; Phil.2.5-8; Heb.1.5,8; Heb.13.8; 2John3; Rev. 1. 8.

49 Isa. 7. 14; Matt. 1. 23; Luke 1. 26-38; John 1. 14; Gal. 4. 4.

assumed into union with His Divine Person, when made of a woman and not before⁵⁰; that this human nature was not sinful, peccable, or mortal⁵¹, though capable of death by a voluntary act⁵², but essentially and intrinsically pure and holy⁵³; and that in it He really suffered, bled and died, as the Substitute and Surety of His church and people, in their room and stead, and for no others⁵⁴; whereby, together with His holy, spotless life, He fulfilled the law, and satisfied all the claims of justice, as well as made a way for all those blessings which are needful for His people, both for time and eternity⁵⁵.

6. Particular Redemption

We believe that the eternal redemption which Christ has obtained by the shedding of His blood is special and particular⁵⁶; that is to say, that it was intentionally designed only for the Elect of God, the Sheep of Christ, who therefore alone share in the special and peculiar blessings thereof⁵⁷.

7. Imputed Righteousness;

Justification; And Pardon

We believe that the justification of God's Elect is only by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ imputed to them⁵⁸, without consideration of any works of righteousness, before or after calling, done by them, and that the full and free pardon of all their sins, past, present, and to come, is only through the blood of Christ, according to the riches of His grace⁵⁹.

8. Regeneration

We believe that the work of regeneration⁶⁰ is not an act of man's free will and natural power, but that it springs from the operation of the mighty, efficacious and invincible grace of God.

9. Conviction Of Sin;

50 Luke 2. 40; Heb. 2. 14-17.

51 Ps. 16. 10; Acts 2. 27.

52 John 10. 17, 18.

53 Song 5. 9-16; Heb. 7. 26.

54 John 10. 15, 26; John 17. 9, 13.

55 Heb. 9. 22-28.

56 Gal. 3. 13; Heb. 9. 12-15.

57 Isa. 35. 10; John 10. 15, 25-28; Acts 2. 47; Acts 13. 48; Acts 20. 28; Rom. 5. 8-10; Rom. 8. 33, 34; Rom. 9. 13, 15, 16; Rev. 14. 4.

58 Isa. 45. 24; Isa. 64. 6; Jer. 23. 6; Matt. 7. 18; Luke 18. 13; Acts 13. 39; Rom. 4. 4, 5; Rom. 5. 19; Rom. 10. 4; 1 Cor. 1.30; 2Cor.5.21; Phil.3.9; Titus3.5.

59 Rom. 3. 20-27; Rom. 4. 22; Rom. 9. 11; 2 Tim. 1. 9;

Heb.1.3; Heb.9.22; 1Pet.3.18; 1John2.1.

60 Jer. 50. 20; Ps. 110. 3; John 1. 13; John 6. 29, 63, 65; John 16. 8; Rom. 8. 16; Rom. 11. 4, 6; James 1. 18.

Believing In Christ; And Final Perseverance

We believe that all those who were chosen by the Father and redeemed by the Son, and no others, shall, at the appointed time, certainly be convinced in their hearts of sin by the Spirit⁶¹, be brought in guilty before God, and made the recipients of eternal life, coming to Christ for salvation, and believing on Him as the Anointed of the Father, and the only Mediator between God and man⁶²; but that none can spiritually come to Christ unless drawn by the Father⁶³; and that all the elect shall be thus drawn to Christ, and shall finally persevere; so that not one of the elect shall perish, but all arrive safely in glory⁶⁴.

10. Spiritual Death And Spiritual Life

We believe that all men are by nature so completely dead in trespasses and sins that they cannot, while in that state, know or feel anything of God in Christ, spiritually, graciously, and savingly⁶⁵. And we believe that, when quickened into everlasting life in Christ (as the elect alone are, or can be, or will be), the vessel of mercy then first feels spiritually the guilt of sin, and is taught to know, in his own experience, the fall and ruin of man⁶⁶. Thus every quickened child of God is brought, in God's own time and way, through the Spirit's teaching, from necessity to depend for salvation on Christ's blood and righteousness alone⁶⁷. And we believe that this teaching will not lead him to licentiousness, but make him willing to walk in good works, to which he is ordained, and which are acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ⁶⁸.

11. Man Unable To Perform Spiritual Good Works

Until He Is Called By Grace

We believe that man can never do a good work, properly so called, until the grace of God is implanted in his heart⁶⁹, and that nothing is spiritually good but what God Himself is pleased to communicate to, and work in, the soul, both to will and to do of His good pleasure⁷⁰. And we also believe that man's works,

61 John 16.8; 1Cor.2.14; Eph.2.1.

62 1Tim.2.5; Heb.8.6; Heb.9.15; Heb.12.24.

63 John 6. 44, 65.

64 Job 17. 9; Matt. 25. 34; John 4. 14; John 5. 24; John 6. 37, 44-47; John 10. 28; John 17. 6, 12, 24; Acts 2. 47; Rom. 8. 29-39; Phil. 1. 6; 1 Pet. 1. 3-5.

65 Eph. 2. 1-3.

66 Isa. 1. 6; Rom. 3. 10-19; Rom. 7. 18.

67 John 6. 68; John 10. 9; John 14. 6; Acts 4. 12; Eph. 2. 8-10; Heb. 6. 18.

68 Rom. 8. 14; Gal. 5. 16-25; Gal. 6. 14-16. 19

69 Rom. 8. 8.

70 Phil. 2. 13.

good or bad, have not anything to do with his call, or being quickened, by the Holy Spirit⁷¹.

**12. Effectual Calling; The Application Of The Law;
And The Manifestation Of Mercy And Pardon**

We believe in the effectual calling of all the elect vessels of mercy out of the ruins of the Fall in God's appointed time, and that the work of regeneration, or new birth, is the sovereign work of God, and His work only, the sinner being as passive therein as in his first birth, and previously thereto dead in trespasses and sins⁷². We believe in the application of the Law to the elect sinner's conscience by the Spirit of God⁷³, showing the sinner how greatly he has broken that Law, and feelingly condemning him for the same; and in the manifestation of mercy and pardon through Christ alone made known to the soul by God the Holy Ghost⁷⁴.

13. The Effects Of Faith

We believe that faith is the gift of God⁷⁵, as well as true spiritual repentance and hope⁷⁶, and a manifestation of pardon to the soul; that through faith Christ is made precious to the soul⁷⁷, and the soul drawn out in love to God⁷⁸; that all are the fruits and effects of the blessed Spirit, and that they will most certainly be productive of good works, and a walk and conversation becoming the Gospel⁷⁹.

14. The Resurrection Of The Body;

And Eternal Glory Or Damnation

We believe in the Resurrection of the body, both of the just and the unjust⁸⁰; that the just (the elect) shall be raised up in glory and honour⁸¹, and be openly acknowledged and fully acquitted in the Judgment Day, before angels, devils and sinners, and made fully and eternally blest both in body and soul; and that the wicked shall be raised up to be condemned, body and soul, to the

71 2Cor.3.5; Eph.2.3-9; Tit.3.5; Heb.13.21.

72 John 3. 3-8; John 6. 37-65; Rom. 8. 30; 1 Cor. 1. 26-29; Eph. 2. 4, 5.

73 Rom. 7. 7, 9, 12.

74 Ps.30.3; Ps.130.7; Isa.40.2; Jer.33.8; Mic.7.18; Rom. 7. 5-10.

75 Eph. 2. 8.

76 Acts 5.31; Rom. 15.13; 2 Thess. 2.16; 1 Pet.1.3.

77 1 Pet. 2. 7.

78 1 John 4. 19.

79 Gal. 2. 16-21; Gal. 5. 22-26.

80 Acts 24. 15.

81 Matt. 24. 31; Matt. 25. 31-40.

unspeakable torments of hell for ever and ever⁸².

15. Baptism And The Lord's Supper

We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper⁸³ are ordinances of Christ, to be continued till His Second Coming; and that the former is requisite to the latter; that is to say, that those only can scripturally sit down to the Lord's Supper who, upon their profession of faith, have been baptized, by immersion, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and that, therefore, what is called "Mixed Communion"⁸⁴ is unscriptural, improper, and not to be allowed in the churches of Christ⁸⁵.

16. The Gospel is the Believer's Rule Of Conduct Not The Law.

We believe that the Believer's Rule of conduct is the gospel, and not the law, commonly called the Moral Law, issued on Mount Sinai, which hath no glory in it by reason of the glory that excelleth, that is to say, the Gospel⁸⁶; the Gospel containing the sum and substance and glory of all the laws which God ever promulgated from His throne, and the Jews, because of the hardness of their hearts, being permitted some things which the Gospel forbids⁸⁷.

17. Infant Baptism Denied

We deny and reject, as unscriptural and erroneous, the baptism of infants⁸⁸, whether by immersion, sprinkling, pouring, or any other mode.

18. Baptismal Regeneration Denied

We reject as blasphemous the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration⁸⁹; that is, that the person baptized is or can be regenerated in, by or through baptism, much less, if possible, by infant sprinkling.

19. Sanctification

We believe in the sanctification of God's people, the term sanctification signifying a separation and setting apart by and for God. This, in the child of God, is three-fold: 1, by election by God the Father⁹⁰; 2, by redemption by God

82 Isa. 26. 19; Dan. 12. 2; Matt. 25. 31-46; John 5. 28, 29; Acts 23. 6; Rom. 6. 23; Rom. 8. 11, 23; Rom. 14. 10-12; 1 Cor. 15. 52; 2 Cor. 5. 10; Rev. 20. 12-15.

83 1Cor.11.2,26; 1Cor.14.40; Col.2.5-8.

84 Rom. 16. 17

85 Matt. 3. 13-16; Matt. 28. 19, 20; John 3. 22, 23; Acts 2. 37-42; Acts 8. 12; Acts 9. 18; Acts 10. 47, 48; Acts 16. 14, 15, 30, 31, 33; Acts 18. 8; Acts 19. 1-6; Rom. 6. 3; Col. 2. 12.

86 Gal. 6. 15, 16; 2 Cor. 3. 10; Rom. 7. 2-4.

87 Deut. 24. 1; Matt. 19. 8, 9.

88 Heb. 11. 6; Acts. 8. 12, 37.

89 John 1. 13; 1 Pet. 1. 23.

90 Jude 1.

the Son⁹¹; and 3, by the almighty regenerating operation of God the Holy Ghost⁹². We believe that the blessed Spirit is the Author of what is styled in Scripture the new creature, or creation⁹³, or new heart⁹⁴; being, in truth, an implantation of the Divine nature⁹⁵, through which the child of God would, according to the inner man⁹⁶, be holy as God is holy, and perfectly fulfill all the good pleasure of the Father's will; but groans being burdened, being constantly opposed by the contrary workings of the old man⁹⁷. We reject the doctrine of progressive sanctification, or that a child of God experiences such a gradual weakening, subduing, or rectification of the old nature, called in Scripture the old man⁹⁸, or such a continued general improvement as shall make him at any time less dependent upon the communications of the Spirit and grace of Christ for all goodness, or less a poor, vile, wretched, helpless sinner in himself, and in his own estimation⁹⁹.

20. Growth in Grace

We believe that the grace of God produces a real change in a man, and teaches him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live godly¹⁰⁰, and that there is a growth in grace¹⁰¹, which consists principally in a growing experimental knowledge of a man's sinful self¹⁰², the vanity of the creature, the glory of God, the spirituality of His law, and the want and worth of Jesus Christ. This is accompanied by a deepening distrust of everything but the grace and love of God in Christ for salvation, and is not a growth in conscious goodness, but in felt necessity and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ¹⁰³.

21. Indwelling Sin

We reject the doctrine of perfection in the flesh, or that the believer ever becomes free from indwelling sin¹⁰⁴ in this life, or whilst in the body. "If we say

91 John 17. 19.

92 Rom. 15. 16.

93 2 Cor. 5. 17; Eph. 4. 24.

94 Ezek. 36. 26.

95 2 Pet. 1. 4.

96 Rom. 7. 22.

97 Rom. 7; Gal. 5. 17.

98 Eph. 4. 22; Col. 3. 9.

99 John 15. part of 5; 2 Cor. 3.5; Rev .3.17.

100 Tit. 2. 11, 12.

101 2 Pet. 3. 18; Phil. 3. 8-10; Mark 4. 26-29; 1 John 2. 12, 13.

102 1 Kings 8.38; Ezra 9.6; Job 40.4-6; Ps. 73.22; Dan. 10. 8.

103 John 3.30; 1Cor. 2.2; Tit. 3.3-8; Eph. 3.8; 1 Tim.1.15.

104 1 John 1. 8; 1 Kings 8. 46; Job 9. 2; Job 15. 14; Ps.119. 96; Prov. 20. 9; Ecc. 7. 20; Rom. 7. 18.

that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

22. Backsliding And Chastening

We reject the doctrines that the children of God cannot backslide, and that God does not chastise His people for sin¹⁰⁵. For, though we believe that a child of God is called from a death in sin to a life of righteousness, and would, according to the law of his mind, or new nature, in all respects obey God’s holy will as declared in the Scriptures, yet through the temptations of Satan, the allurements of the world, and the power and deceitfulness of indwelling sin, he may fall for a season like David, Peter, and other Bible saints did¹⁰⁶. But we believe that when the children of God thus sin against God, and transgress His holy revealed will, God does in various ways and degrees chastise them for it¹⁰⁷, not in vindictive anger, but in tender love, as a father does the son in whom he delighteth¹⁰⁸. We believe, too, that in this matter of chastisement for sin God will deal in a most sovereign way, and as a God of judgment; so that, though the punished child shall be made to discern the reason of the rod¹⁰⁹, it is seldom safe for others to judge according to the outward appearance. We further believe that no man living in habitual sin gives any proof that he is a child of God, and we cannot, therefore, have fellowship with him, be his profession what it may.

23. Final Perseverance

We believe, as expressed in Article 9, in the doctrine of the final perseverance¹¹⁰ of the saints, and that, however much the elect of God may be tried by sin, and opposed by Satan, they shall all eventually attain to everlasting glory. Not one of them shall perish, for none can pluck them out of the Father’s hand.

24. Gospel Invitations

We believe that the invitations of the Gospel¹¹¹, being spirit and life*, are intended only for those who have been made by the blessed Spirit to feel their lost state as sinners and their need of Christ as their Saviour, and to repent of and forsake their sins.

25. Universal Redemption Denied

105 1 Cor. 11. 32.

106 Jer. 3. 14, 22; Hos. 14.

107 Ps. 89. 30-33; Prov. 3. 11, 12.

108 Job 5. 17; Ps. 94. 12; Ps. 119. 67; Isa. 54. 7, 8; Heb. 12. 5-11.

109 Mic. 6. 9.

110 Isa. 51. 11; John 10. 28, 29.

111 Isa. 55. 1; John 7. 37; Prov. 28. 13; Matt. 11. 28-30; John 6. 37.

We deny that Christ died¹¹² for all mankind.

26. Duty Faith And Duty

Repentance Denied

We deny duty faith and duty repentance – these terms signifying that it is every man’s duty to spiritually and savingly repent and believe¹¹³. We deny also that there is any capability in man by nature to any spiritual good whatever. So that we reject the doctrine that men in a state of nature should be exhorted to believe in or turn to God¹¹⁴.

27. The Non-Elect Incapable Of

Receiving Grace

We deny that the Holy Spirit ever enlightens¹¹⁵ the non-elect, to make them capable at all of receiving grace.

28. Baxterianism Denied

We reject the doctrine called “Baxterianism”; that is to say, that while all the elect shall assuredly be saved, there is a residuum of grace in Christ for the rest, or any of the rest, if they will only accept it¹¹⁶.

29. Indiscriminate Offers Of Grace Denied

While we believe that the Gospel is to be preached in or proclaimed to all the world, as in Mark 16. 15, we deny offers of grace; that is to say, that the gospel is to be offered indiscriminately to all¹¹⁷.

30. Christ’s Glorified Body

We believe that the glorified body of the Lord Jesus Christ is the same flesh and bones now in heaven as that which hung upon the cross¹¹⁸.

31. Annihilation Of The Wicked Denied

We reject the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked, and believe that all who die out of Christ shall be turned into hell, the fire of which shall never be quenched, the wicked there suffering for ever the torments of eternal fire¹¹⁹.

Note: It is the same word in the Greek which, in Matt. 25. 46, declares the eternity of life for the sheep which declares the eternity of punishment for the

112 Matt. 25. 31-46; John 10. 11, 15, 26.

113 Gen. 6. 5; Gen. 8. 21; Matt. 15. 19; Jer. 17. 9; John 6. 44, 65.

114 John 12.39,40; Eph.2.8; Rom.8.7,8; 1Cor.4.7.

115 Isa. 6. 9, 10; John 14. 17; Rom. 11. 7, 8; Mark 4. 11, 12; Luke 8. 10; John 12. 39, 40.

116 John 3. 27; 1 Cor. 2. 14.

117 Mark 16.15; 2 Cor. 4.3,4.

118 1 Cor. 15. 16, 20; Luke 24. 39; Acts 1. 9, 11.

119 Matt. 25. 46; Rev. 19. last part of 20; Rev. 14. 10, 11; Rev. 20. 10, 15.

goats. So (Rev. 20. 15), those who are “not written in the book of life” are “cast into the lake of fire”, where they are “tormented for ever and ever” (Ver. 10). Now the same words which are there translated “for ever and ever” are also used in Rev. 10. 6, where the angel “swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever”. Therefore, if God is “to live for ever and ever”, the torment in the lake of fire is to be for ever and ever; for the words are exactly the same in both passages.

32. Preaching Of The Gospel

(Apostolic Uniqueness)

We believe that it would be unsafe, from the brief records we have of the way in which the apostles, under the immediate direction of the Lord, addressed their hearers in certain special cases and circumstances, to derive absolute and universal rules for ministerial addresses in the present day under widely-different circumstances. And we further believe that an assumption that others have been inspired as the apostles were has led to the grossest errors amongst both Romanists and professed Protestants.

Note: When Articles 32-35 were added to the original 31 Articles, no Scripture references were provided, except for Article 35. Readers are referred to pages 150-152 of the book, *What Gospel Standard Baptists Believe*, where several Scripture references are given. For details of this book, see Note at the end of the Preface on page 7.

33. Preaching To The Unconverted

Therefore, that for ministers in the present day to address unconverted persons, or indiscriminately all in a mixed congregation, calling upon them to savingly repent, believe, and receive Christ, or perform any other acts dependent upon the new creative power of the Holy Ghost, is, on the one hand, to imply creature power, and, on the other, to deny the doctrine of special redemption.

Note: For Scripture references, see the Note which appears at the foot of Article 32.

34. Preaching Of The Gospel

(Exhorting The Unregenerate)

We believe that any such expressions as convey to the hearers the belief that they possess a certain power to flee to the Saviour, to close in with Christ, to receive Christ, while in an unregenerate state, so that unless they do thus close with Christ, etc., they shall perish, are untrue, and must, therefore, be rejected. And we further believe that we have no Scripture warrant to take the exhortations in the Old Testament intended for the Jews in national covenant with God, and apply them in a spiritual and saving sense to unregenerated men.

Note: For Scripture references, see the Note which appears at the foot of Article 32.

35. Degrees Of Faith

We believe that there are various degrees of faith, as little faith and great faith¹²⁰; that when a man is quickened by the blessed Spirit, he has faith given him to know and feel that he is a sinner against God¹²¹, and that without a Saviour he must sink in black despair. And we further believe that such a man will be made to cry for mercy, to mourn over and on account of his sins¹²², and, being made to feel that he has no righteousness of his own¹²³, to hunger and thirst after Christ's righteousness; being led on by the Spirit until, in the full assurance of faith, he has the Spirit's witness in his heart that his sins are forever put away¹²⁴; but that the faith is the same in nature as is imparted in his first awakenings, though now grown to the full assurance thereof.

Declaration (Especially for church members)

Now all and each of these doctrines and ordinances we can honestly say it is our desire to maintain and defend in one spirit and with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.

And we desire, by the grace of God, that our conversation, both in the world and in the church, may be such as becometh the gospel of Christ, and that we may live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.

And, as it regards each other in church communion, we desire to walk with each other in all humility and brotherly love; to watch over each other's conversation, to stir up one another to love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, but, as we have opportunity, to worship God according to His revealed will; and, when the case requires, to warn and admonish one another according to God's Word.

Moreover, we desire to sympathise with each other in all conditions, both inward and outward, into which God, in His providence, may bring us; as also to bear with one another's weaknesses, failings, and infirmities; and particularly to pray for one another, and for all saints, and that the gospel and the ordinances thereof may be blessed to the edification and comfort of each other's souls, and for the gathering in of vessels of mercy unto Christ.

And for every blessing and favour, both temporal and spiritual, we, who are

120 Matt. 6. 30; Matt. 15. 28.

121 Luke 18. 13.

122 Matt. 5. 4.

123 Isa. 64. 6; Phil. 3. 9.

124 Rom. 8. 16; Eph. 4. 30; Heb. 9. 12, 26; Heb. 7. 27; Heb. 10. 14.

as deserving of hell as the vilest of the vile, desire to ascribe all the praise to the glory of the grace of a Triune God.

Church Rules

The following note is reproduced from earlier booklets:

“Several of the Rules hitherto in circulation being found impracticable, the “Gospel Standard” Committee has formulated the following Rules, and issued them in the hope that they will be useful to the churches. Although it believes that these Rules will be generally acceptable, the Committee desires to make it quite clear that whereas the Articles of Faith are enrolled and binding upon all the churches of the “Gospel Standard” denomination, these Rules are not so, but are for guidance only, and each church will act independently in regard to adopting them or otherwise in regulating its own affairs.”

Admittance Into Church Membership

1. Any person desiring to become a member of this church, must first be interviewed by the pastor (if there be one) and deacons, who, if in their judgment the candidate is suitable for membership, shall duly bring the matter before the church. A copy of the church’s Articles of Faith and Rules to be given to each candidate for their instruction.

2. At a regularly constituted church meeting (see rules 13- 15) the candidate (whether already a member of another church or not) shall make a verbal confession of faith, and declare what he or she believes God has done for his or her soul. If accepted by a vote of the majority of members present and voting, signature in the church book to the Articles of Faith and Rules will be required. Thereafter, at the earliest convenient opportunity, the person shall, unless previously baptized by immersion, be so baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and be formally received into church fellowship at the next observance of the Lord’s Supper.

3. Any person who, having been baptized while only in a carnal profession of religion, has since been called by the Spirit of God to a knowledge of his or her lost condition by nature and practice, and to living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, being desirous of uniting with this church, shall attend to the ordinance of believers’ baptism, according to rule 2 (last clause), for “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14. 23).

The Pastorate

4. No minister shall be appointed as pastor until he has supplied at least months on probation, and unless there be in favour at least two-thirds (three-fifths) of the members present and voting at a church meeting duly convened for

this particular purpose (see rules 13-15); nor shall any minister be invited to supply on probation without a like majority, also at a duly convened meeting.

5. If at any time where there is a pastor, the conduct of such pastor should be contrary to the precepts of the gospel, or if he should depart from the Articles of Faith or any one of them, or if his ministry should become unprofitable, a majority of the members present and voting at a properly convened church meeting (see rules 13-15) shall be competent to declare that he shall no longer be the pastor; and he shall be removed from the pastorate accordingly. And at such meeting the pastor shall not be present. Always presuming that adequate opportunity has been afforded the pastor to explain himself.

Discipline

NOTE. – The object of discipline in the Church of Christ is (1) The vindication of the truth; (2) The restoration of any offending brother.

6. Any member of this church knowingly receiving the ordinance of the Lord's Supper with any church not of the same faith and order with ourselves, shall be reprov'd; and should the offence be repeated, be withdrawn from.

7. Any member knowing another to act disorderly, shall tell the offending brother or sister of his or her fault alone, in the spirit of meekness (Gal. 6. 1); and if not satisfied with the explanation, shall acquaint the pastor or deacons of the church with the matter; and if any member neglect to do so, and be found reporting it to others, such member shall be visited and reprov'd as acting contrary to Scripture rule.

8. Any member bringing, in any manner, an open reproach on the cause, shall be suspended; and no member suspended for any reason shall again be admitted to the Lord's Supper and to the privileges of membership, until godly sorrow and repentance are manifest, and satisfactory acknowledgment is made to the church.

9. Any member relating to any other person, not a member, what has been said or done at any church meeting, shall be liable, according to the judgment of the pastor and deacons, to be brought before the church to be dealt with.

10. If any member repeatedly neglect to attend the preaching of the Word, the Lord's Supper, and prayer meetings, unless from unavoidable causes known to the pastor and deacons and the church, a reason will be required for his or her absence; and if he or she shall be absent from the Lord's Supper upon more than three successive occasions, without being able to give the pastor or deacons who shall visit such member a satisfactory reason for such absence, they shall bring the matter before the church to be dealt with as it shall determine, whether for reproof, suspension, or withdrawal from the offending

party.

11. Members having private differences between themselves shall not bring the same before the church before the rule laid down in Matt. 18. 15, 16, has been first attended to by the offended party; and in the event of satisfaction not being given, that the peace of the church may if possible be preserved, the offended party shall first inform the pastor or deacons (assembled); but if not satisfied with his, or their mediation or decision, the member shall bring the case before the church, by giving one month's notice in writing to the minister or deacons.

Church Meetings

12. A church meeting, at which the pastor or a minister agreed by the church shall preside, shall be held every months, and oftener if required; and it is expected that all the members who are able will attend. No person shall be present at our church meetings but regular members of this church, except by special consent of the church. No member who may be under church censure shall be present at any church meeting.

13. All church meetings shall be audibly announced from the pulpit or desk when the people are regularly assembled for worship at least on the two Lord's Days immediately preceding the date of any such meeting.

14. The pastor or deacons shall have it in his or their power to call a church meeting whenever he or they consider it necessary; also he or they shall be required to do so when requested by not less than of the members, in any case considered urgent; but in every case proper notice (rule 13) shall be given; and any meeting held, whether called by pastor or deacons, or both, not according to such rule, shall be of none effect.

15. No motion of any serious importance (e.g., cases of discipline, application for membership, call to the ministry, appointment of pastor, etc.) shall be brought forward at any church meeting, unless notice thereof shall have been given at a church meeting held at least one month previous thereto; except in such a case as (in the judgment of the pastor and deacons) the cause of truth would suffer prejudice by delay.

16. All propositions, whether for church membership or otherwise, and all motions, shall be seconded before being put from the chair; and in the event of the voting being equally divided on any subject to be decided, the chairman (president) shall be allowed a second (casting) vote. Any debate or difference that may arise shall be settled by the majority of the members present and voting.

17. When any question has been decided by the majority of the church, if any member shall attempt to set aside or oppose the same decision within six

months afterwards, such member shall be accounted as acting disorderly and contrary to rule 16 of this church.

18. Female members may ask questions through a male member, or may, if asked by the chairman (president), answer any question put from the chair; otherwise they are not permitted to speak at church meetings. Should any female member persistently violate this rule, she shall be liable to suspension from the privileges of membership for months.

19. A statement of the finances of the cause shall be laid before the church every months, when the vote of satisfaction or otherwise shall be recorded.

20. The number of the deacons of the church shall not be less than two where practicable; no deacon shall at any time be appointed unless at least two-thirds (three-fifths) of the members present and voting at a church meeting held for the appointment of such deacon, be in favour of such appointment.

Visitors

21. Members of churches of the same faith and order may commune with this church by giving notice (naming their own church) to the pastor or deacons of their desire to do so not later than before the commencement of the service immediately preceding the communion service; or where the communion service is held separately, not later than the close of the preceding service.

Cessation Of Membership

22. The severance of any member from this church may be only effected by the church itself acting under its duly appointed officers (pastor and deacons), at a properly convened church meeting (see rules 12-15), in the following instances :-

(a) In respect of an orderly member for transfer to another church of the same faith and order, in which event an honourable dismissal should be granted; or,

(b) By disciplinary action of withdrawal AS A LAST RESORT in the case of any disorderly member neglecting to hear either

(1) An offended member's private remonstrance; or, after that,

(2) The additional exhortations of two or three other brethren; or still further,

(3) The admonition of the whole church, according to Matt. 18. 15-17.

Sanctioning A Member To Preach

23. Any member of the church considering that he has received the call of the Holy Spirit to the solemn work of the ministry of the Gospel, shall, before engaging to preach anywhere, relate to the pastor (or deacons where there is no pastor) his exercises relating thereto; who, if in his (or their) judgment the matter is indeed of the Lord, shall name the same to the church assembled according to rule 13. In the event of any question or reason entertained by any member or members (on grounds relating to walk or character) why the case should not proceed, the same must be raised and considered at this preliminary meeting; and no examination of the credentials of the member's call shall be undertaken until such question or reason shall have been satisfactorily disposed of by the church. If then agreed by not less than four-fifths (two-thirds) of the members present and voting, the church shall assemble, a month later (according to rule 15), to hear from the member a relation of the matter, and (either then or at a subsequent meeting, as agreed) to hear also an exercise of his gift in preaching. If approved by four-fifths (two-thirds) of the members present and voting, the member shall be given the church's sanction to preach.

Any member preaching contrary to or in neglect of this rule shall be dealt with as walking disorderly.

Should the member consider that his case has been prejudiced, or if through assumed prejudice the pastor or deacons do not bring it forward, the matter may be dealt with according to rule 11. But except for very serious defection in the church, it is believed that when such a matter is truly of the Lord no such course will be needful.

Notes:

(1) In some cases where the majority stated is not quite reached, that there may be no precipitate conclusion in so solemn a concern, it may be considered advisable for the church to hear the member preach on some further occasion or occasions, before coming to a final decision. This course should only be adopted when the church agrees by a majority of four-fifths (two-thirds) voting in favour.

(2) In cases of pastorless churches, it may be proper for the church to agree to invite the pastor of another church of the same faith and order to preside at the meetings relating to this important subject.

(3) Bearing in mind the solemn importance of such cases, and the serious responsibility assumed by the church in deciding the same, much earnest prayer is required that the great Head of the church would so dispose each member to act under the spirit of the fear of the Lord, and in the spirit of discernment, and of love to His truth and cause, that the voting may be regulated thereby with a single eye to His glory, according to the will of God.

Note – The blanks in Rules 4, 12, 14, 18, 19 should be filled up, and the alternative majorities in rules 4, 20, 23, be defined, by each individual church.

25 THE HISTORY OF THE ADDED ARTICLES

Of The Gospel Standard Baptists

This history brings to light the sever difficulties that are brought about by badly worded articles of religion. This problem arose among Particular Baptists in the England, in 1878 when four articles of religion were added to the original 31 Articles of religion that had been adopted by many churches who subscribed to the **Gospel Standard magazine**.

These articles have been referred to as Added Articles and they were written to prevent the practice of offering the gospel to men rather than preaching Christ.

Introduction

An article written by William Wileman with appended remarks by F. J. Kirby were first published in the November 1921 issue of the monthly magazine “The Christian’s Pathway”. F. J. Kirby had commenced this magazine in 1896 and was its Editor for more than thirty years and written some 30 years after the Added Articles¹²⁵ were added to the existing 31 Articles. History has shown that such unresolved issues mentioned in these pages have caused a great deal of unrest among Particular Baptists.

Gospel Standard 31 Articles

There were originally 31 Articles of Religion adopted by Particular Baptists by 1843. The four “Added Articles” were specially written in the late 1870’s; the effects of those circumstances surrounding these additions remain to this day.

The first 31 GS Articles were compiled in the mid-19th century based upon the Stamford Articles¹²⁶ of 1843 and various amendments and additions to those 15 Stamford Articles. The “**Added Articles**” of the late 1870s were put at the end of the 31 Articles to give the final set of 35 GS Articles. These 35 GS Articles are the Articles of Faith written into the Trust Deeds of the GS charitable societies with subscribers and beneficiaries.

Septimus Sears

Septimus Sears a particular Baptist minister wrote in his memoirs about the conflicts that he faced regarding introduction of these added articles. He

¹²⁵ The term Added Articles refers to Articles 32-35 of the GS Articles. The GS Articles are the 35 Articles of Faith embedded in the Trust Deeds of the Gospel Standard Societies formerly known as the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Societies.

¹²⁶ Stamford Articles: the 15 Articles of Faith written by J C Philpot based on J Gill and adopted in 1843 by the Church at Stamford Chapel under the pastorate of J C Philpot.

wrote that toward the end of 1875 there was a period of strife that resulted in the writing of the four “Added Articles”. Septimus Sears died whilst under this sustained difficult conflict. Shortly before his death Mr Sears said to a friend:

“They did not mean to kill me but they have done a great deal towards it. I can and do most freely forgive them. They know not what they have done but they did not mean it. Strifes and contentions are not the thing for a dying hour but I have the sweet consciouness that I have spoken God’s truth and that I am right and they are wrong.”

[“Memoir of Septimus Sears” (1880), page 144]

William Wileman

It is clear that the 1921 article by W Wileman had been written after some reluctance. No doubt the writing of it had been prompted by other internal controversies amongst Strict Baptists which had erupted in the preceding months and it had become necessary to counter the myths and half-truths which had arisen. As is often the case, those who would prefer to remain silent are sometimes compelled to break their silence

Gospel Standard Magazine

From a letter written by J C Philpot in 1847 it is clear that others, not connected with the Stamford church, wished to adopt his selection of Articles. interest spread more widely a few years later when J Gadsby advertised the set of Articles on the front cover of his magazine “The Gospel Standard. Minor changes to the Articles were followed by major changes as the promotion was maintained in the 1850s and 1860s. J C Philpot died in the last month of the 1860s and the final few Articles were written during the controversies of the 1870s.

During the late 1930s and early 1940s John H. Gosden wrote a series of articles on the GS Articles for inclusion in the issues of the magazine “The Gospel Standard” of those years. In these articles he remarks on a few but not all, of the deficiencies of the GS Articles.

Some years after his death these articles were collated and published in a book. The title of the book (a title not used by J. H. Gosden) suggests that adherents to the GS Articles are satisfied with the deficiencies in them. In a later book of articles it was stated that the GS Articles were “enshrined in Chancery”, which to some indicated the Popish progress of veneration for fallible dogma.

Trust Deeds

The terms and Articles (or Doctrines) in the Trust Deeds of a Chapel are binding on the Church using that Chapel. When a Church departs from the terms

and Articles (or Doctrines) in the Trust Deeds of its Chapel its occupancy of that Chapel becomes illegal. The constitution of a Church must be in complete conformity with the terms and Articles (or Doctrines) in the Trust Deeds of the Chapel in which the Church meets for worship.

J.K. Popham on Trust Deeds

A paragraph from a letter written by J K Popham (this important letter was written and published in 1921 but has not yet been republished) explains the matter clearly. Addressing his remarks to all persons within the GS association he wrote:

“A Trust Deed once executed settles the destination of the property placed under the control of Trustees to be dealt with as the Deed directs. If the acceptance of certain Doctrines is made by the Deed a condition of using the settled property or of receiving benefit from it, the law excludes from participation those who do not accept the specified Doctrines, although otherwise qualified; and at the same time equally forbids the exclusion of persons otherwise qualified to accept them. The law will not enquire into the propriety of the Doctrines upon which the Trusts are based, so long as they are not contrary to public policy, but will enforce them as it finds them, as the founders of the Trust desired.. ”

The phrase “the control of Trustees” refers to the fact that it is the duty of Trustees to uphold the terms and Articles (or Doctrines) in the Trust Deeds (their personal views being irrelevant to the performance of that duty).

The History Of The Four “Added ”

Articles: 32, 33, 34, 35. November 1921

By William Wileman

Every earthly event and every human action has two aspects: that which is open and manifest, and that which is unseen and beneath the surface.

I am now advanced in years, drawing near to the end of my course, and shall shortly have to lay down my commission at the feet of my Master. It is well known that there has been much pitiable and unprofitable controversy with regard to the Four “Added ” Articles. I have not been unobservant of this controversy, but have resolutely refrained from taking any part in it, believing that it has produced a great amount of harm and been a hindrance to our prosperity. I have not heard of a single instance of conversion as a result. At the same time, I am fully convinced that the spirit which prompted the addition of Articles 32 to 35 has been the cause of much of the declension we so sorely lament in our Churches ; and for this reason I think that daylight is better than darkness.

During the progress of this controversy I have noticed statements that were inaccurate through lack of knowledge of certain facts ; and yet I maintained silence. But as Mr. Kirby has applied to me to verify certain facts, and certain dates, which I alone could do, I have very reluctantly yielded to his desire. But let it be strictly observed that I do this not to add to strife and contention, but rather once for all to end them.

Only Person Living

I am the only living person who knows the secret history of the Four “Added” Articles. I was favored with a lengthened interview with Mr. J. K. Popham in my home on January 26th, 1921 and during conversation I named to him that I had written this Secret History and that in my judgment it was much to be desired that this should be laid before the Committee, as no present member of the Committee knows anything of the facts. At his request I sent the facts that follow to him on February 3rd, 1921, with the view of my statement being laid before the Committee.

On February 22nd Mr. Popham replied that he had decided that he was not the person to lay it before the Committee.

I am now an elder in the Church of Christ, both as a member and as a minister ; my first poor sermon having been preached in October, 1868. My mature judgment is that controversy, however desirable and even necessary at times, requires certain essential qualifications, and that very few persons possess them. Many persons who enter controversy fondly imagine that they are demolishing Nebuchadnezzars image, while they are only breaking their brother’s windows. Right glad should I be if all of us who love and preach the same precious truths could come together and work in harmony ; and if the following statement, painful and sad as it is, should contribute to this, I shall be well repaid for what it will cost me.

I was assistant to Mr. Septimus Sears from the end of 1870 to his death on December 26th, 1877, aged 58.

Sub Editor Gospel Standard

I was sub-editor of the Gospel Standard under Mr. John Gadsby, Mr. Hazlerigg, and Mr. Hemington, from October 21st, 1874, to June, 1881; and editor of the *Friendly Companion Magazine* from its commencement in January, 1875, to June, 1881. I was therefore an interested witness of the controversies of those years.

At the end of 1875, as is well known, an ungodly strife was originated by Mr. Gadsby and his helpers concerning the Scriptural teaching of Mr. Sears. This contention continued until Mr. Sears sank under it. I have preserved the letters-

nearly a hundred written to me by Mr. Sears, in some of which he describes the exercises of his heart under this cruel persecution.

In October, 1877, Mr. Joseph Hatton, of Redhill, wrote an Article, in four paragraphs, intended by him to be an antidote to the teaching of Mr. Sears. This Article was approved by Mr. Gadsby, and laid before the Committee at its meeting in October, 1877; and notwithstanding the pressure put upon the Committee by Mr. Gadsby, it was laid aside for further consideration. Mr. Hazlerigg especially disapproved of it, as being calculated, and intended, to fetter God's servants in their preaching.

At the Annual Meeting in April, 1878, at the Old Bailey, this Article of Mr. Hatton's, the germ of the Four " Added " Articles, was laid before the meeting for discussion, and raised a violent storm. Mr. Gadsby, Mr. Hatton, and a few others pressed its acceptance; Mr. Hazlerigg, Mr. Hemington and many others, strongly opposed its adoption.

In a private letter to my mother, dated May 13th, 1878, I have my own notes of that stormy meeting. This letter, which came back to me at my mother's death, contains my account of this meeting; and as it was written while the event was fresh in my memory, it may be accepted as strictly accurate.

Mr. Hazlerigg's Opposition

Mr. Hazlerigg opposed the addition of any new Articles as unnecessary, and as calculated to limit the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in His servants.

Mr. Hemington's Opposition

Mr. Hemington said: " I am here as a godly man to speak and act in the fear of God ; and I oppose them on principle. ' I was present at this meeting officially, to take notes for the Report and for the Gospel Standard for May ; and I reported Mr. Hemington's words verbatim as here given.

The contention grew so warm that ' Mr. Gadsby said he should cancel the Deed of Gift if the new Articles were not passed.

It was at length proposed and agreed that the Four new Articles should be referred to a Committee of nine, for their consideration.

This sub-committee met on Thursday, May 2nd, 1878, and consisted of the following members ; Gadsby, Hatton Hazlerigg, Hemington, Hinton, Knight, Mockford, Vine, and Wilton.

It should be stated that the Articles as proposed by Mr. Hatton condemned the use of words and expressions in preaching, rather than laying down principles.

This sub-committee sat for four hours. Hatton, Hinton, and Knight took the part of Mr. Gadsby; Hazlerigg, Hemington, Mockford, Vine, and Wilton

opposed him : four kings against five, as in Genesis xiv.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Hazlerigg took pen and ink and wrote four Articles in a modified form ; namely, very nearly in the form in which they now appear.

Mr. Hazlerigg, who had not forgotten his former attachment to Mr. Sears, pleaded very hard for the adoption of his Articles ; not so much as satisfying his own mind, but for the sake of peace, plainly stating that he was far from being satisfied with the entire transaction. Mr. Gadsby as strongly insisted on the adoption of Mr. Hatton's. It was then put to the vote, when it was found that Mr. Hazlerigg's Articles were carried by five votes against four.

Deed of Gift threat to with draw

When this meeting closed, the members came downstairs and had a long discussion in my presence. The drift of this discussion was to the effect that it was desirable to arrive at some definite result, and even to make this compromise, rather than that Mr. Gadsby should withdraw his gift. But I am able to testify emphatically that both Mr. Hazlerigg and Mr. Hemington strongly objected even to the compromise that had been effected that afternoon

Mr. Hazlerigg's manuscript was handed to me to copy. It was written in one long sentence, as he usually wrote, and I copied it out in four.

The next day, May 3rd, 1878, Mr. Gadsby commissioned me to prepare a new edition of the Articles of Faith, to revise the Scripture references to the 31 Articles, and to make suitable additions to those references ; also to attach Scripture references to the Four "Added" Articles, 32 to 35, and then to send the whole to press.

This occupied me for about three weeks. I added rather extensively to the Scripture references to the original 31 Articles; so that the Scripture references as they now stand were my own careful selection. But when I came to the Four " Added " Articles I hesitated so far as 32, 33 and 34 were concerned, and left them blank.

When this was completed, I took the "copy " up to Mr. Bishop to be set in type, asking him to let me have ten proof-slips. One of these I retained for my own use ; the other nine I sent by post to the nine members of the subcommittee above named, with a note to each, stating that as Article 32 was non-scriptural, and Articles 33 and 34 were unnecessary. I had left them without any Scripture references. This I repeated afterwards to Mr. Gadsby verbally.

To my intense surprise not one of the nine suggested any Scripture confirmation; and thus Articles 32 33. and 34 have been without such confirmation to the present day, namely, for 43 years.

On the G. S. wrapper, p. xvi, June, 1878, Mr. Hazlerigg tried his best to make an apology for passing these Articles ; and again, on p. xii and xiii of July wrapper ; but it is manifest that even therein he was writing against his better judgment and conscience, as I knew at the time, and as he himself very frequently freely confessed to many persons besides my self.

In addition to this, Mr. Hazlerigg gives his mature judgment concerning the Four “ Added ” Articles eight years later, in his pamphlet, “ A Momentous Question,” published by me for him in 1886. He therein distinctly states that he entertained strong objections to those Articles, and gives the grounds of his objections (pages 27 and 28). This pamphlet should be reprinted and widely circulated. I retain the original manuscript.

When it is said that these Articles were “unanimously adopted at a General Meeting of the Societies,” it should be realized that it is possible, by stating an art of the truth, to help the reader to believe either more than is true, or less than is true. The Added Articles were indeed laid before the General Meeting in April, 1879, and passed by that meeting; but it must ever be borne in mind:

1 That these meetings have never represented the Churches;

2 That the Annual Meetings of the earlier years, held in the Old Bailey, seldom consisted of more than thirty or forty persons, beside the ministers.

It may be added here that an “Article of Faith ” is a definite declaration of a truth to be “most surely believed among us,” having the Word of God for its sure foundation. A mere expression of human opinion, however true, is not, and cannot be, an Article of Faith. This is the vital defect of Articles 32, 33, and 34.

Summery

To sum up, we have the seven following facts :

1 The Four Articles were added with the avowed intention of limiting the liberty of ministers in preaching. To deny this is idle and puerile.

2 They were entirely unnecessary, because what there is of any good in them is contained in the earlier Articles.

3 They were passed under a threat from Mr. John Gadsby, and were thus forced upon the Societies.

4 In their final modified form they were yielded as a compromise, for the sake of peace, and to prevent a division.

5 This being so, and viewed in the light of all the circumstances, it is a distinct perversion of truth to say that they were unanimously passed.

6 Their addition at all was most vehemently opposed by many godly men, both in private and in public.

7 Finally : Why were Articles 32, 33, and 34 enrolled in Chancery¹²⁷ without any support of Holy Writ, after the nine men had been challenged to produce such support? Are we to expect to find grapes growing on thorns, or figs on thistles? -

With regards to the question of Mr. Hemington's signature to the Added Articles, concerning which so much strife has occurred , the exact truth is as follows. When the New Deed of Gift had been prepared, after Mr. Gadsby had revoked the former Deed in 1879, he asked Mr. Hemington to become a Trustee, and of peace Mr. Hemington agreed to do so. This being necessary for him to attach his signature to the Deed as this Trust Deed contains the 35 Articles. By signing the Deed Mr Hemington signed the Articles as a matter of course, as the greater must always include the less. But this fact by no or alters the larger fact that Mr. Hemington never his disavowed his hostility to the four "Added" Articles, nor did he ever approve of their addition to the day of his lamented death.

I think that all who knew and loved Mr. Hemington, and still revere his memory, will be well able to understand, and even appreciate the apparent inconsistency.

And now what is to be the outcome of all this? Brethren, is better for us to do here below than to write pamphlets?

Whilst we are thus engaged the Holy Spirit is grieved : " Are these His doings ?" The churches are desolated; power is withheld from the ministry; there are few or no conversions; our young people are driven away ; the world rejoices ; Satan triumphs. Can we not meet together with the view of seeking peace? When the Jewish temple had ceased to be had it ceased to be "Mine house," the Lord Jesus left it, never to enter it again, and said : " Your house is left unto you desolate". And it is of no use for us to ask Him to return to us until we first return to Him.

WILLIAM WILEMAN.

44 Caddington Road, London, NW2

Annotations And References

Upon The Forgoing "Secret History."

By The Editor.

In annual the report of that Annual Meeting, held in April, 1878 (see G. S.1878, pp. ix to xii), we are told that, amongst others, the following were

127 The term "Enrolled in Chancery" has no legal significance. It never possessed any legal significance but has been used by some (but clearly, not by W Wileman) in order to inspire veneration for the GS Articles. Some have imagined that enrolment in Chancery ensures an unalterable permanence for that which is enrolled.

present : then appears a list of names of including ministers, and then the names of 11 ladies. Generally these were attended by only 20 to 30 persons, in addition All money subscribers, whether men or women, possess the right to vote, no matter what his or her religious ‘ belief may be. This Report is most interesting. In respect to Articles XXXII. to XXXV¹²⁸ it reads:

“After considerable discussion in which several friends took part, it was resolved to leave the Articles to the consideration of a Committee consisting of the following friends :-Messrs. Gadsby, Hatton, Hazlerigg, Hemington. Hinton, J. Knight. Mockford, Vine and Wilton: and their decision as to the Articles themselves. and also as to adding them, in their present or an altered form, to the Articles of the Society, was to be Final.”

In the same issue, on page xi, we are told :

“The Committee appointed at the ‘Aid Society’ Meeting met at I7 Bouvier Street, on Thursday, May 2nd, all being present. After a sitting of four hours,

“It was resolved, That Articles XXXII., XXXIII., XXXIV., and XXXV., as now amended, be passed, added to the ‘Aid Society and made Fundamental Articles of both Societies.”

In the above “Secret History ” the curtain is drawn aside, and we see, not a prayerful, humble, gracious spirit seeking the good of the Churches, but a spirit of another nature and finally a compromise effected. These Articles stand as the result of a threat. Probably some will be tempted to dispute the accuracy of this statement, but in the course of our historical research we have come across statements from Mr. Gadsby’s own pen, which indicates his attitude. He says, when in October, 1877, he gave up the ‘Gospel Standard’ Magazine to the Societies :

“ I made two reservations

(1) That should the Societies at any time depart from their Articles of Faith, my heirs or executors might take the magazine back.

(2) That should I deem it necessary, I might myself take it back at any time during my life.” ...

“I have revoked the Deed of Gift ; but I am prepared to execute another providing a proper understanding can be come to “ (Gospel Standard June, 1879, p. 292).

This revoking of the Deed of Gift took place subsequently to the formulating of the Articles in the G. S. wrapper, p. xi, of June issue, 1878.

In July issue of G. S., 1879, on page xi, Mr. Gadsby says 1 “When I gave up the Gospel Standard to our Societies, I had quite intended that the gift should

128 Mr. Hatton drew up these Articles in one, about three mouths before the death of Mr. Sears.

be permanent : and I think it was a great pity that power was reserved to me to take it back, as it subjected me to continual temptations from myself and others, so to do. However, I was led to see my error ; and I now, in accordance with my promise at the meeting on June 6th, unreservedly withdraw all charges of error as made against Mr. Hazlerigg. J. G.”

In face of these statements there cannot be the slightest doubt that these Articles were a compromise under threat, and our Churches and ministers were thus brought into a peculiar position, amounting almost to bondage, for the sake not merely of peace but to retain the “ DEED OF GIFT.” No wonder strife continued.

Another point to note is that these “ Articles of Faith,” destitute of any Scriptural proof were enrolled as Fundamental Articles! One feels staggered, and the more deeply we have gone into these matters in our historical research the less we have wondered at the subsequent stumbling, confusion and frequent controversies which have been occasioned by them. The Societies are not the denomination. The denomination as Churches existed long before these Societies have been planted in the soil so these Societies have been planted in the soil of our denomination, and are dependent more or less on the Churches, and not the churches on them.

Conclusion

From this recorded history and observations it can be seen that errors in doctrine or miss worded articles of religion can cause havoc among believers. Wisdom is necessary to deal with this kind of problem and for this reason I have written m book Difficulties Associated with Articles of Religion Among Particular Baptist asserting that articles of religion should be written as a means to means of teaching the gospel of our lord Jesus Christs.

28 OF THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE GOSPEL

1 The Law and Gospel By F. L. Gosden

A Gospel Standard Minister

Preached at Gilead Chapel, Brighton, (This is just an extract fro the opening part to his sermon)

One Lord’s Day evening 3 April 1946

“Great peace have they which love thy law: nothing shall offend them.” (Psalm 119:165)

The law in the text is the gospel. The Law of Moses is a good law, holy and just; but it is not a law that sinners love. They reverence it, but it is an authority which can only curse them because they continue not in all things commanded,

and shuts them up in prison; it can make nothing perfect; it leaves a sinner where it finds him; it brings him under its condemning power.

But the law of the text is the law of the gospel. The apostle James speaks of it as 'the perfect law of liberty.' It is perfect because it makes the comers thereunto perfect and because the Lord Jesus, Who is the sum and substance of it, is perfect-made perfect through suffering.

The Law of Moses was a perfect law of bondage- the perfection of the Mosaic Law is the perfection of the justice of God exercised in the condemnation of sinners.

The law of the gospel is the perfection of liberty.

'Great peace have they which love thy law.' There is a blessedness in this description of the gospel as being 'a law,' for where there is a law there is authority; and Oh, the blessedness of the authority of the gospel as contrasted with the terribleness of the authority of the law. The gospel is greater than the law-not by its abrogation or destruction, but in its fulfillment; its authority abounds over the law, for 'where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' The apostle speaks of it in this way: 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free, from the law of sin and death.' He then goes on to speak of what the law, could not do. So that we see there are three laws, three authorities, three powers, three dominions spoken of. First, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is the law of the gospel making one free, from the law of sin and death; secondly, the dominion of sin in our members. Then there is thirdly, the Law of Moses that is the Ten Commandments; and what this law could not do, 'in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' That is the authority, the power of the gospel. The apostle -said, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ': it is the power or the authority of God in a particular direction and to a blessed end; it is the power of God unto salvation in them that believe. Therein is the righteousness of God revealed, the righteousness of faith.

2 The Law and Gospel, by J.C. Philpot

I shall take the occasion to offer my thoughts on these three distinct points:

1 Why the law is not the believer's rule of life.

2 What is the rule?

3 Disprove the objection cast upon us that our views lead to doctrinal or practical antinomianism.

By a believer, I understand one who by faith in Christ is delivered from the curse and bondage of the law, and who knows something experimentally of the

life, light, liberty and love of the glorious gospel of the grace of God. By the law I understand chiefly, though not exclusively, the Law of Moses. And by the rule of life I understand and outward and inward guide, by following, which a believer directs his walk and conversion before God, the Church and the world.

It is very necessary to bear strictly in mind that we are speaking wholly and solely a believer. What has the law to do with a believer in Christ Jesus? Is he required by the revealed will of God to take the law as a guiding rule in his life? I answer, No; and for several reasons.

1 God does not leave us at liberty to take at will one part of the law and leave the other. It must be taken as a whole or left as a whole, for God has so revealed it. I cannot find in any part of God's Word any mitigation of its terms, or any halving of it, so that, according to the views of many divines who have written on the subject, we may be dead to it as a covenant, yet alive to it as a rule. The essential and distinguishing characteristic of the law is that it is a covenant of works, requiring full and perfect obedience, attaching a tremendous curse to the least infringement of its commands. If then I, as a believer, take the law as my rule of life, I take it with its curse; I put myself under its yoke, for in receiving it as my guide, (and if I do not this it is not my rule,) I take it with all its conditions and subject to all its penalties.... The indispensable connection between a covenant and its rules is clearly shown in Gal. 5:1-6, where the apostle testifies to "every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole law". It is idle to talk of taking the law for a rule of life, and not for a covenant; for the two things are essentially inseparable; and as he who keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all (James 2:10), so he who takes but one precept of the law for his rule, (as the Galatians took that of circumcision,) by taking that one, virtually adopts the whole, and by adopting the whole puts himself under the curse which attaches to their infringement.

2 People speak very fluently about the law being a rule of life and think little of the resulting consequences; for amongst them is this, that its written precepts and not its mere spirit, must be the rule. Now, these precepts belong to it only as a covenant, for they were never enjoined by the Authority that gave them, and what God hath joined together let no man put asunder. To show this connection between the precepts and the covenant is the chief drift of the Epistle to the Galatians, who were looking to the law and not the gospel, and having begun in the Spirit, were attempting to be made perfect by the flesh. Read with enlightened eyes, this blessed Epistle would at once decide in favor of the gospel as our guiding rule of Christian conduct and conversation. Observe how Paul chides those who would so act: he calls them "foolish Galatians", and

asks who hath bewitched them that they should not obey the truth (that is, the gospel),” before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among them.” He appeals to their own experience and asks them: “receive ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?” He draws a line of distinction here between those works which are done in obedience to the law as a guiding rule, and that power of God felt in the heart which attends a preached gospel when heard in faith, and asks them under which of the two they had received the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit. But observe, further, now he bids them “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16). Now to “walk” is to live and act, and the rule which he here gives for this living and acting is not the law but the Spirit, and he tells them of the blessedness of this divine leading and guiding: “If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law”: that is, neither as a covenant nor as a rule- that they were free from its curse as a condemning covenant, and from its commands as a galling yoke which neither they nor their fathers could bear (Acts 15:10). But to show them that deliverance from the law did not set them free from a higher and more perfect rule of obedience, he bids them “fulfill the law of Christ”, which is love, a fruit of the Spirit and not produced by the law which worketh wrath and gendereth to bondage (Rom. 4:15; Gal. 4:24).

3 If we are willing to abide by the inspired Word of Truth we need to go no further than this very Epistle to decide the whole question. For in it we have laid down the rule according to which believers should walk, which is a “new creature” (or a new creation): “For in Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them, and on the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:15-16). Is the law or the Spirit’s work upon the heart held out here as the rule of a believers walk? The law is strictly a covenant of works; it knows nothing of mercy, reveals nothing of grace, and does not communicate the blessed Spirit. Why, then, if I am a believer in Christ and have received his grace and truth into my heart, am I to adopt for the rule of life that which does not testify of Jesus either in the Word or in my conscience? If I am to walk as a believer, it must be by a life of faith in the Son of God (Gal 2:20). Is the law my rule here? If it be, where are those rules to be found? “The law is not of faith”. How, then, can it lay down rules for the life of faith? If I wish to walk as becomes a believer with the Church, what help will the law give me there? To walk as such must be by the law of love as revealed in Christ and made known in my heart by the power of God. If I am to walk in the ordinances of God’s house, are these to be found revealed in the law?

We give the law its due honor. It had a glory, as the Apostle argues (2 Cor 3) as the ministration of death and condemnation, but this glory is done away, and why are we to look to it now as our guiding rule? The ministration of the Spirit, of life, and of righteousness “doth much more exceed in glory”, and why are we to be condemned if we prefer the Spirit to the letter, life to death, and righteousness to condemnation? A rule must influence as well as guide, or else it be a dead rule. If you chose to be guided by the killing letter which can only minister condemnation and death, and we chose for our rule that which ministers the Spirit, righteousness, and life, which has the better rule? It is much to be feared that those who thus walk and talk have still the veil over their heart, and know nothing of what the Apostle means when he says: “Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. But we all with open face beholding, as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor 3:17-18).

But not only have we these deductions to influence the mind in rejecting the law as a rule for a believers walk, but also we have the express testimony of God as a warrant for so doing. We read, for instance, “I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God” (Rom. 7:4). As a believer in Christ, the law is dead to me, and I am to it. The Apostle has clearly and beautifully opened up this subject. He assumes that a believer in Christ is like a woman is remarried after the death of her first husband; and he declares that “she is bound by the law of her husband as long as he liveth, but if the husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband (verse 2). Of course the first husband is the law, and the second husband is Christ. Now adopting the figure of Paul’s, may we not justly ask: Which is to be the rule of the wife’s conduct when re-married, the regulations of the first or the second husband?

2. What, then, is the believer’s rule of life. Is he without rule? A lawless wretch because he abandons the Law of Moses for his rule has no guide to direct his steps? God forbid! For I subscribe heart and soul to the words of the Apostle: Being not without law to God, but under law to Christ “(1Cor 9:21) (footnote-not under THE law, as our version; there being no article expressed or implied in the original). The believer then has a guiding rule, which we may briefly call -the gospel. This rule we may divide into 2 branches. The gospel as written by the divine finger upon the heart, and the gospel as written by the blessed Spirit in the Word of truth. These do not form two distinct rules, but the one is the counterpart of the other; and they are mutually helpful to and corroborative of each other. One of the promises of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:21-34; Heb. 8:8-12 compared) was: “I will write My law in their inward parts and write it

in their hearts.” This writing of the law of God in their heart, I need not tell you, is that which distinguishes it from the law of Moses which was written on tables of stone: and becomes an internal rule whereas the law of Moses was but an external rule. This internal rule seems to be pointed out in Romans 8:2 where we find these words: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.” By “the law of the Spirit of life”, I understand that guiding rule (for a rule in Scripture is frequently called a law; the word law in Hebrew signifying literally “instruction”) which the Spirit of God, as communicating life, is in a believers heart. It is, therefore, the liberating, sanctifying, guiding influence of the Spirit of God, in his soul which, as a law or a rule, delivers him from “the law of sin and death”; by which I understand not so much the law of Moses, as the power and prevalence of his corrupt nature.

If this then be a correct exposition of the text, we have a guiding internal rule distinct from the law of Moses, and a living rule in the heart, which that never was nor could be; for it did not communicate the Spirit (Gal. 3:2-5) But this internal rule as being “the law of the Spirit of life”, has power to lead all the children of God; for in the same chapter (verse 14) the Apostle declares that “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” This leading which is peculiar to the children of God and is an evidence of their sonship, delivers them from the law; for if we are led by Spirit we are not under the law” (Gal 5:8) either as a covenant or as a rule, for we have a better covenant and a better rule (Heb. 8:6). What is the main use of a rule but to lead? But who can lead like a living Guide? How can a dead law lead a living soul? The very proof that we are the children of God is that we are led by the Spirit; and this inward leading becomes our guiding rule. And is it not a disparaging of the guidance of the blessed Spirit to set up in opposition to His guiding rule a dead law and to call those Antinomians who prefer a living guide to a dead letter? This living guide is that holy, and blessed Spirit who “guides into all truth” (Jn. 16:13).

Here is the main blessedness of the work and grace upon the heart, that the leading and guiding of the blessed Spirit form a living rule every step of the way; for He not only quickens the soul into spiritual life, but maintains the life which He gave, and performs (or finishes- margin) it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6). This life is eternal, as the blessed Lord at the well of Samaria declared, that the water that he should give the believer should be in a well of water springing up into everlasting life (Jn. 4:14) It is then this springing well in a believer’s soul which is the guiding rule, for, as producing and maintaining the fear of God, it is “a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death” (Pro.14: 27).

But lest this guiding internal rule be abused, which it might be by enthusiasm, and that they might not be left to substitute delusive fancies for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the God of all grace has given to His people an external rule in precepts of the gospel as declared by the mouth of the Lord and His apostles, but more particularly as gathered up in the epistles as a standing code of instruction for the living family of God. Nor do these at all clash with the rule of which I have just spoken, but on the contrary harmonize entirely and thoroughly with it; for, in fact, it is one and the same rule; the only difference between them being that the blessed Spirit had revealed the one in the written Word, and by the application of that Word to the soul makes the other to be a living rule of heart.

Now there is not a single part or particle of our walk and conduct before God or man which is not revealed and enjoined in the precepts of the gospel; for, though we have not minute directions, we have what far excels all such unnecessary minutiae- most blessed principles enforced by every gracious and holy motive, and forming, when rightly seen and believed, a most perfect code of inward and outward conformity to the revealed will of God, and of all holy walk and conduct in our families in the church and in the world.

I would say that a believer has a rule to walk by which is sufficient to guide him in every step of the way; for if he has the eternal quickening's, teachings and leadings of the Spirit to make his conscience tender in the fear of God, and has a law of love written upon the heart by the finger of God; and besides this has the precepts of the gospel as a full and complete code of Christian obedience, what more can he want to make him perfect in every good word and work (Heb. 13:21). Can the law do any of these things for him? Can it give him life, in the first instance, when it is a killing letter? Can it maintain life, if it is not in its power to bestow it?

But it may be asked: Do you then set aside the two great commandments of the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" etc. and "thy neighbor as thyself"? No, On the contrary, the gospel as an external and internal rule fulfills them both, for "love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. 13:10). So this blessed rule of the gospel not only does not set aside the law as regards its fulfillment, but so to speak absorbs into itself and glorifies and harmonizes its two great commandments, by yielding to them in obedience of heart, which the law could not give; for the believers serves in the newness of the Spirit, not in the oldness of the letter (Rom 7:6), as Christ's freeman (Jn. 8:32) and not as Moses's bond slave. This is willing obedience not a legal task. This will explain the meaning of the Apostle: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: for the new man of grace, under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, delights in the law of God, not only for

its holiness, but as inculcating that to do which fills the renewed heart and the inward delight -love to God and His people...

3 The Christian Relationship To Mosaic Law

By Philip Mauro

The Gentile Believer and The Law

We have said that the experience of the “wretched man” of Romans 7 is not the normal experience of a converted Gentile. It is, nevertheless, a sad fact that it may (and often does) become the abnormal experience of converted Gentiles, who, through ignorance of the great gospel truths revealed in Romans, or through the influence of Judaizing teachers and legal systems of theology, fall from their standing in grace, and seek justification, or the gift of the Spirit, through law-works. Hence the solemn warning of Galatians 5:4: “You are deprived of all effect from Christ, whosoever in law are being justified; you are fallen from grace.” For as there were in Paul’s day, so are there now, many who desire “to be of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.”

So also the struggle of that “wretched man” becomes the experience of many unconverted Gentiles who, totally ignorant of remission of sins through faith in the blood of Christ... are seeking perpetually (because seeking vainly) for and inclination of the heart to keep the Mosaic Law. The condition of such, if they be earnest and sincere in their desire to keep the law, is indeed “wretched” in the extreme.

It was needful, therefore, that, in addition to the revelation given in Romans 7 of deliverance for the believing Jew from the yoke of the Law, the Epistle to the Galatians should have been incorporated into the Word of God, in order to instruct and warn Gentile believers against putting themselves under that yoke.

In referring, however, to Galatians our object will be simply to seek the light it throws upon the conflict described in Romans 7. What we find in Galatians affords strong confirmation to the view that the experience described in Romans 7 is that of a conscientious unconverted Israelite, and not at all a “Christian” experience. In fact, the main object of the Apostle in writing to the assemblies of Galatia was to warn them against teachings, which would lead them into such an experience.

In Galatians 2 Paul relates how he remonstrated with the Apostle Peter for compelling the Gentiles to live as do the Jews (v. 14). We may be sure that the matter in dispute is esteemed by the Spirit of God to be exceedingly important; otherwise it would not be brought to our attention in the form of a rebuke administered by Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, to Peter, the leader of the

twelve. In this connection Paul draws the line sharply between Jews and Gentiles, saying: "We, Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified out of the works of the Law, but out of the faithfulness of Christ, even we [Jews] have believed on Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of the faithfulness of Christ, and not out of works of Law" (vv. 15-16). And he adds: "For if I build again the things I threw down, I constitute myself a transgressor." That is to say, if he should set up the Law again as an obligation for himself, he would make himself a law-breaker. "For," he continues, "I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live to God." Here Paul again brings himself forward, as a typical Jew, and repeats in few words the doctrine elaborated in Romans 7. "I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live"; or, as the Greek may be equally well rendered, "I am not any longer living, it is Christ that lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God."

It is possible for every believer to reach the place where he can make this saying of Paul his own. It involves death to sin and life to God in Christ, and the abiding presence of the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead. This verse obviously contains a condensed statement of the truth revealed in Romans 6 and 7 concerning the believer's death (as to his old nature) with Christ, and his living again in the supernatural life of the risen Christ. That new life is not lived under the Law of Sinai.

"I do not," says Paul, "make void the grace of God" (as Peter was doing by his dissimulation and by returning to the practice of Judaism) "for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died for nothing" (v. 21).

Galatians 3

Having thus dealt with the case of the believing Jew, who had been delivered from the Law by means of Christ's death, the Apostle directly addresses the Galatians, who, being Gentiles, never were under Law, but began their relations with God in the Spirit. The Jew began his service of God in the flesh. For him, therefore, there might be found some excuse for continuing after conversion as a man in the flesh under Law, not exercising the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free. But for Gentile believers, who never were under the Law, but had the great advantage of beginning in the Spirit, to put themselves under Law and to attempt to be perfected in the flesh was the "senseless" action of those who had been "bewitched." "O senseless Galatians, who had bewitched you," that you should act thus after the truth concerning Christ crucified has been plainly put before you? "Are you so senseless? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being perfected in the flesh?" (Gal. 3:1-3). It was indeed "senseless" in the extreme to undertake the perfecting in the flesh of the work that was begun in the Spirit.

The Apostle then refers to Abraham, whose faith was accounted to him for righteousness, and points out that the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles out of faith, proclaimed that good news to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all nations (Gentiles) be blessed." (Gal. 3:8).

The Galatians are warned of two serious facts. First, Paul teaches that all who are of the works of Law (in contrast to those that are "of faith") are under the curse of the Law. Second, he asserts that the curse comes upon every one who continues not in all things, which are written in the book of the Law to do them. From this it follows that no one is being justified with God in virtue of Law: "For the just shall live out of faith; but the man that does those things (required by the Law) shall live in virtue of them" (vv. 10-12).

In view of this, it would naturally be asked, How does it come about that the Jews, who were placed under the Law, which none of them has kept, have escaped from the curse of the Law? The answer is, "Christ has redeemed us (Jews) from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us." This statement manifestly applies solely to Israel, for the curse of the Law was never pronounced against the Gentiles. Hence Paul uses in verse 3:13 the pronoun "us." The contrast between Jews and Gentiles is again clearly marked by 3:14, which goes on to say that Christ was made a curse for the Jews in order that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles in Christ Jesus. The contrast between the curse of the Law, pronounced upon those who were under the Law, and the blessing of Abraham coming to the Gentile believers in Christ, is very instructive. And an additional result of the endurance by Christ of the curse of the Law is then set forth, namely, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The promise was made to Abraham and to his seed long before the Law was given. From this it follows that the Law, which was given 430 years after, cannot nullify the promise. If then the Law was not given for the purpose of adding anything to the promise, or of taking anything from it, why was it given? It was added for the sake of transgressions that is in order that the repeated transgressions of the Law by every Israelite might reveal the presence and nature of sin in the flesh, and show the futility of attempting to secure justification out of Law-works. Moreover, it was given, not as a permanent institution, but only "until the Seed should come to whom the promise was made." (3:19).

This statement shows that the period of the Law was strictly limited in time, as it was limited also in scope to the children of Israel. Its era did not begin until 430 years after God had begun to deal with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants; and it ceased when the promised Seed died under the Law.

The curse of the Law was exhausted when Christ was made curse by hanging on a tree (Deut. 21:23). Whatever God's purposes were with the Law, they were all accomplished when the promised Seed died on the Cross? Since that event even the Jew is no longer a man under Law, for by no amount of law keeping can he now secure the promised blessings of the Promised Land. The old covenant is entirely at an end (2 Cor. 3:7- 11; Heb. 7:13). The words on the Cross-, "It is finished" (in the original it is the single word "accomplished") included the purpose of the Law, which thereupon came to an end.

The temporary character of the Law as a Divine institution is further set forth, with great clearness, in verses 23-25. "Before faith came," says the Apostle, "we [Jews] were kept [or guarded] under Law, having been shut up to the faith which was about to be revealed. Wherefore the Law has been our pedagogue [tutor] up to Christ in order that out of faith we might be justified. But faith having come, we are no longer under a tutor." By noting the tenses of the verbs, as given in the above renderings, the sense will be readily and clearly apprehended. It is very clear indeed that these statements apply only to Israelites. The Gentiles were not kept under Law, but were left without Law. They were not "shut up" in any way, but allowed to follow the devices of their own hearts. They were not under a pedagogue, or under tutors and governors (4:2), for God had no dealings with them. God has called Israel His "Son" (Hosea 11:1; see Amos 3:2); and of Israel alone, of all the peoples of the earth, can it be said that they were under tutors waiting the time appointed of the Father.

After speaking in the first person of the Jews, the Apostle, addressing the Gentile Galatians, says by way of contrast: "For you are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek." The contrast between the "we" of verses 24,25 and the "you" of verse 26 is very significant.

Some of the statements (in Galatians 4) are broad enough to embrace both Jews and Gentiles, for both were, before conversion, in bondage to the elements of the world; but the special bondage of the Jew - the yoke of the Law and the penalty of its curse - is also specifically mentioned. As the heir is "under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father; even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem those that were under the Law, that we [Jews] might receive the status of sons. But because you [Gentiles] are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba Father.'" (4:2-6) The defective reading of verse 6 in the A.V. "And because you are sons," instead of "But," as it is in the

original, hides the contrast between the case of the believing Israelite and that of the believing Gentile. The former needed to be redeemed from under the Law before he could receive the status of a son (“adoption of sons”); whereas for the latter there was no such need. The bondage of the Gentiles was a different kind of bondage. They, not knowing God at all, were in bondage to those who by nature are not gods (4:8); but the point we wish to examine is that they were not under Law at any time, and this point is very clearly presented in the passage we have been examining. (Editor’s note: Randall Seiver has presented a better explanation of this passage in his book on Galatians “The Fullness of Time” available from Sound of Grace, Webster N.Y.

The Believer’s State Is Not One Of Lawlessness

In emphasizing the important truth that the believer is not under the Law, because, if a Jew he was delivered from the yoke of the Law by the death of Christ, and if a Gentile he was never under the Law at all, must not obscure the important fact that the state of the believer is not one of lawlessness - far from it. What is spoken of in Romans 7, as “the Law” is the Law given to the Israelites through Moses? That Law was by no means a complete statement of God’s requirements, though it was quite sufficient for the purpose of revealing the presence of sin in the flesh, for demonstrating the utter corruption of human nature, and for making manifest the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The teachings of Jesus Christ showed that the full requirements of God’s holiness and righteousness are far above those of the Law of Moses. “You have heard that it was said by (or to) them of old, you shall not kill...But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother without a cause, etc.” (Matt. 5:21-48).

The believer of this dispensation is not living under the Law of Moses. That law was given for the regulation of the conduct of men in the flesh. The believer is “not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:9). He is not, therefore, in the sphere in which the Law of Moses was effective.

The child of God, though not under the Law of Moses, is “not without Law to God, but in-law to Christ” (enormous Christou, 1 Cor. 9:21). He owns the risen Christ as His Lord, and judges that his entire life in the body is to be lived no longer unto himself, but unto Him who died for him and rose again (2 Cor. 5:15). Being in the Spirit he is to be governed by “the law of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:2). Being in Christ he is to “fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). This is a condition very different from that of the Israelite under the Law of Moses, and on a much higher plane. The life of the child of God is not a life hedged about by constraints and prohibitions, but a life of liberty in which he is free to follow all the leading of the Spirit, and all the inclinations of the new nature, which the

Spirit imparts, to those whom He quickens. It is a life of freedom - not freedom to sin, but freedom not to sin. He who practices sin is the slave of sin; only the free man can refuse obedience to the demands of sin, and yield himself to God as one who is alive from the dead. The Word of God abounds in directions addressed to the children of God, by which their walk, while yet in the body, is to be guided and controlled. These directions are found in the commandments of Christ, and in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, whom the risen Lord empowered to be the channel for the revelation of His special communications to and concerning the Church. And these directions are illustrated by all the Holy Scriptures, the things which happened to the Israelites having been written, not for our imitation, but for our admonition (1 Cor. 10:11).

The believer has been called into liberty; and he is exhorted to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free (Gal. 5:1). Yet he is not to use his liberty so as to furnish occasions for gratifying the desires of his old nature (Gal. 5:13). Having been brought, through the resurrection of Christ, into the sphere of the Spirit, the believer is commanded to remain there; that is, to be occupied with and interested in the things of the Spirit. While so engaged he cannot at the same time be fulfilling the desires of the flesh. "This I say then, walk in [or by] the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). "If you be led of the Spirit you are not under the Law" (Gal. 5:18).

Ephesians, which especially reveals the position of believers as quickened together with Christ, raised up (i.e. ascended) together with Him, and seated together in the heavenlies in Christ, abounds in practical directions for the believer's guidance in all his earthly relations. We...call attention to them in order to guard against the supposition that, because the believer of this dispensation is not under the Law of Moses, he is therefore in a state of lawlessness.

The main points, then, of the teaching we have been examining are these:

1. That the sufferings of Christ were incurred for the sins of His people, that is to say, the sins of those whom God justifies upon the principle of faith.
2. That the death of Christ delivers the believing sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, from the servitude of sin.
3. That the death of Christ also brought the economy of the Law to an end, and delivered all converted Israelites from the yoke of the Law.
4. That the resurrection of Christ brings all believers into the sphere of a new humanity, where there is a new life, whose Source is the risen Christ, which life is imparted by the Spirit of God to the believer while the later is yet in the mortal body.
5. That believers, though not under the Law of Moses, are governed by the

Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and are required to “fulfill the law of Christ.

4 The Sabbath By Gilbert Beebe

A Primitive Baptists

January 1, 1855

There is much said at the present day on the subject of a Sabbath day, as being of perpetual obligatory force on all mankind throughout all time. But in what part of the Scriptures they find a precept to that effect we are not informed. They certainly but seldom, if ever, refer us to the fourth commandment of the Decalogue; and we have supposed their reasons for not doing so were obvious.

1. Because we are expressly informed by Moses himself that, that very covenant, or law, was made exclusively with those Israelites who were all of them then present, and alive on the day that the ten commandments were presented to them from the Mount of God. It was a law which, had not been given even to the patriarchs, (See Deut. 5:1-4).

2. Because the fourth commandment required those unto whom it was given, to observe the seventh, and not the first day of the week, as the Sabbath of their God—because that God had rested from the work of creation on the seventh, and not on the first day of the week.

3. Because the children of Israel were by the fourth commandment required to observe the seventh day altogether differently from the manner in which professed Christians pretend to observe the first day. The children of Israel were to totally abstain from all labor, themselves, their wives, their children, their servants, and even their cattle; no fires were allowed to be kindled, no horses to be harnessed, no meetings to be attended, no Sabbath Schools to be kept, no collections for mission or other purposes, to be taken up on that day.

4. Because the penalty for a transgression of that precept, was altogether different from that inflicted by modern Sabbatarians for a breach of the Sunday laws of our own, or any other lands. That provided in the Jewish law, being death by stoning, and the laws of men only requiring fines and imprisonments.

5. The fourth commandment required those unto whom it was given to labor six days, including the first day, and the Sunday laws of our land forbid our obedience to that part of the fourth commandment which requires us to labor on the first day of the week.

We know of no partial obligation to keep the law. If the Sinai covenant, which was given exclusively to the children of Israel, is binding on the Gentiles to any extent, it must be binding in its full extent. An inspired apostle has settled this question beyond all reasonable dispute, “For whosoever shall keep

the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," (Jam. 2:10). And Paul to the Galatians, 5:3, shows who are debtors to keep the law. He says, "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." But in searching the Scriptures, we can find none who are obligated to obey part of the law, or partly obligated to do the whole law. "Whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law," and they are of course bound to go according to the letter of the commandment. The grand question then is, whether the whole Sinai law is binding on all men, and throughout all time? If so, then all are involved in the curse, and the salvation of any of the human family is impossible. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for all have sinned; and consequently by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God.

The doctrine of redemption is very prominently set forth in the gospel; and Christ has not only redeemed his people from the curse, but also from the dominion of the law; and the apostle has made the emphatic proclamation to the saints, "Ye are no more under the law, but under grace." The inquiry then is reduced to this; How far are we obligated to keep a law that we are not under? When Paul found some of the brethren inclining to the works of the law, he was afraid of them, lest he had bestowed on them labor in vain, for they observed days, and months, and times, and years. In his allegory, (Gal. 4:21-27), Paul sets forth the old Sinai covenant, by the person of Hagar, the bondwoman, who could not be the mother of a free child. For this Agar is Mount Sinai, in Arabia, which answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which Jerusalem he affirms, is the mother of all those saints, who, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. In the second chapter to the Colossians, we are informed that Christ has blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took them out of the way, nailing them to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect to an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. This language would seem to be plain enough for an ordinary Christian, taught of God. These ordinances of the old covenant were a shadow of things, which are realized in the body of Christ, or in the gospel church, which is his body, his flesh and his bones. We trace the shadowy import of the Sinai Sabbath to the body of Christ, or to the gospel church, and there we enter into that rest which was shadowed forth by the legal Sabbaths of the old covenant. The anti-typical Sabbath, being found alone in that rest

which remaineth for the children of God, and into which all those who, with a true and vital faith, believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, have entered, is clearly set forth in the New Testament, particularly in the third and fourth chapters to the Hebrews. This gospel Sabbath we understand to be the whole gospel dispensation; in distinction from the old covenant dispensation, and it begins severally with each believer in Christ, as soon as they truly believe in our Lord Jesus Christ; and are enabled to rest alone on him for their justification before God. We have neither the time nor the space necessary to show the analogy, which the typical Sabbath of the law bears to the rest, which is enjoyed by the saints in the gospel. A very few particulars must for the present suffice, and,

1. The old covenant Sabbath was given exclusively to the circumcised children of Israel, and to no other people; so the gospel Sabbath, or Rest, is given exclusively to the spiritual Israel, who are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

2. The children of the old Sinai covenant were often charged with the sin of Sabbath-breaking, and that sin, with them, consisted in their performing on the seventh day, such labor as was only lawful for them to perform in the six days in which they were commanded to do all their labor. So under the gospel dispensation, the saints, by adhering to the abrogated institutions of the old working dispensation, observing days, and months, and times, and years; or by looking for justification before God by anything short of the blood and righteousness of Christ, do violence to the holy Sabbath of the gospel. As in the types, many of the children of Israel could not enter into rest, because of unbelief, so we find that our doubts and unbelief, which often press us down, render it impossible for us to enter into that rest which remaineth for the children of God. Our own experience teaches us that when we doubt the reality of our interest in Christ, or the application of his promises to us, we are like the troubled ocean that cannot rest: we labor, and toil to do something ourselves, to reinstate ourselves in the favor of the Lord. When we feel cold, we are prone to kindle fires of our own, and to comfort ourselves with sparks of our kindling, and endeavor to walk in the light of our fire; but if we are truly the children of God, we shall for all this lie down in sorrow; for this Sabbath-breaking. No fires were to be kindled by the Israelites on that day. Nor will the Lord suffer us to warm or enlighten ourselves by any fires that we can make. Christians are commanded to forsake not the assembling of themselves together for the worship of God, and for their mutual edification. To obey the command, suitable times must be appointed for such meetings; the first, or any other day of the week, may be designated, provided that we attach no special

sanctity to the time; and the first day of the week is as suitable as any other day. The apostles met frequently on the first day, and also on all the other days of the week, they were daily in the temple praising God, &c. So we conclude that the Christian church is at liberty to make her own appointments, as to time—provided that she allows no man, or set of men, to judge her in regard to the time, and when she makes such appointments, each member is in duty bound to attend the appointment, unless providentially detained.

As Christians we have no right to observe any day religiously in obedience to human legislation; either Sabbaths, first days, or thanksgiving days; because God has forbidden that we should allow any man to judge us in these things. We require no human legislation on the subject. The order and decision of the church is more effectual with the saints than all the pains, penalties and fines, ever imposed by the rulers of the darkness of this world. Let us observe the admonition of the apostle, and “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

The Sabbath of the Jews required no grace in the heart, no spiritual emotion of the new man, to qualify those to whom it was given, to observe it. Their service was in the oldness of the letter, and theirs was a worldly sanctuary, and carnal ordinances. Any circumcised Jew, whether a believer or an infidel could abstain from labors on the seventh day, and that was all that was required of them. But the anti-typical, or gospel Sabbath, requires faith in Christ; for none but believers can enter into that rest which remains, for the people of God. The hour has come and the true worshipers must worship God in spirit and in truth. Not only the Scriptures of the New Testament declare it, but the testimony is corroborated by every Christian's experience. Christians know that they cannot believe only as the Lord gives them faith; and equally well do they know that they cannot rest unless they believe.

When faith, which is of the operation of God, is given, the recipient requires neither the thunder of Sinai, nor the arm of secular legislation, to incline him to keep the Christian sabbath of Gospel Rest. The starving soul requires no coercion to incline him to eat, nor does the weary, heavy-laden soul require legal enactments to drive him to his rest. As the Sinai Sabbath required the carnal Israelite to abstain totally from servile labor, so the gospel Sabbath requires the spiritual Israelite to cease from his work, and trust, and rest alone on Christ, for his justification and acceptance with God. As the Sabbath-breaker under the law was to be stoned to death, by all the children of Israel, so the legalist who would attempt to drag the ceremonies of the legal dispensation into the gospel church, or to justify himself before God by the works of the law, is to be stoned, (not with

stones literally, but with the smooth stones from the brook of gospel truth), by all his brethren, until his legal spirit yields up the ghost.

Those who have no higher conception of a gospel Sabbath than to suppose it consists in the literal observance of one day out of seven, have yet to learn that "Whom the Son makes free, are free indeed."

5 John Calvin's Institutes

Book II chapter 8

Fourth Commandment

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR AND DO ALL THY WORK: BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH OF THE LORD THY GOD. IN IT THOU SHALT NOT DO ANY WORK, &C.

The purport of the commandment is, that being dead to our own affections and works¹²⁹, we meditate on the kingdom of God, and in order to such meditation, have recourse to the means which he has appointed. But as this commandment stands in peculiar circumstances apart from the others, the mode of exposition must be somewhat different. Early Christian writers¹³⁰ are wont to call it typical, as containing the external observance of a day which was abolished with the other types on the advent of Christ. This is indeed true; but it leaves the half of the matter untouched. Wherefore, we must look deeper for our exposition, and attend to three cases in which it appears to me that the observance of this commandment consists.

First, under the rest of the seventh days the divine Lawgiver meant to furnish the people of Israel with a type of the spiritual rest by which believers were to cease from their own works, and allow God to work in them.

Secondly he meant that there should be a stated day on which they should assemble to hear the Law, and perform religious rites, or which, at least, they should specially employ in meditating on his works, and be thereby trained to piety.

Thirdly, he meant that servants, and those who lived under the authority of others, should be indulged with a day of rest, and thus have some intermission from labour.

Section 29. *Explanation of the first purpose, viz., a shadowing forth of spiritual rest. This the primary object of the precept. God is therein set forth as our*

¹²⁹That is those who are regenerated and as such are the children of God (not those Christened as Calvin relates too by baptism)

¹³⁰The earliest is Barnabas Chapter 2 and Chapter 13.

sanctifier; and hence we must abstain from work, that the work of God in us may not be hindered.

We are taught in many passages¹³¹ that this adumbration of spiritual rest held a primary place in the Sabbath. Indeed, there is no commandment the observance of which the Almighty more strictly enforces. When he would intimate by the Prophets that religion was entirely subverted, he complains that his Sabbath s were polluted, violated, not kept, not hallowed; as if, after it was neglected, there remained nothing in which he could be honoured. The observance of it he eulogises in the highest terms, and hence, among other divine privileges, the faithful set an extraordinary value on the revelation of the Sabbath. In Nehemiah, the Levites, in the public assembly, thus speak: “Thou madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath , and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant.” You see the singular honour which it holds among all the precepts of the Law. All this tends to celebrate the dignity of the mystery, which is most admirably expressed by Moses and Ezekiel. Thus in Exodus: “Verily my Sabbath s shall ye keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that does sanctify you. Ye shall keep my Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever does any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever does any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath , to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever,” (Exo 31: 13-17). Ezekiel is still more full, but the sum of what he says amounts to this: that the Sabbath is a sign by which Israel might know that God is their sanctifier. If our sanctification consists in the mortification of our own will, the analogy between the external sign and the thing signified is most appropriate. We must rest entirely, in order that God may work in us; we must resign our own will, yield up our heart, and abandon all the lusts of the flesh. In short, we must desist from all the acts of our own mind, that God working in us, we may rest in him, as the Apostle also teaches, (Heb 3: 13; 4: 3, 9).

Section 30.

The number seven denoting perfection in Scripture, this commandment may, in that respect, denote the perpetuity of the Sabbath, and its completion at the last day.

This complete cessation was represented to the Jews by the observance of

¹³¹Num 13:22; Eze 20:12; 22:8; 23:38; Jer 17:21,22,27; Isa 56:2; Neh 9:14.

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one day in seven, which, that it might be more religiously attended to, the Lord recommended by his own example. For it is no small incitement to the zeal of man to know that he is engaged in imitating his Creator. Should any one expect some secret meaning in the number seven, this being in Scripture the number for perfection, it may have been selected, not without cause, to denote perpetuity. In accordance with this, Moses concludes his description of the succession of day and night on the same day on which he relates that the Lord rested from his works. Another probable reason for the number may be, that the Lord intended that the Sabbath never should be completed before the arrival of the last day. We here begin our blessed rest in him, and daily make new progress in it; but because we must still wage an incessant warfare with the flesh, it shall not be consummated until the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah: "From one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord;" (Isa 66: 23); in other words, when God shall be "all in all," (1Co 15: 28). It may seem, therefore, that by the seventh day the Lord delineated to his people the future perfection of his Sabbath on the last day, that by continual meditation on the Sabbath, they might throughout their whole lives aspire to this perfection.

Section 31

Taking a simpler view of the commandment, the number is of no consequence, provided we maintain the doctrine of a perpetual rest from all our works, and, at the same time, avoid a superstitious observance of days. The ceremonial part of the commandment abolished by the advent of Christ.

Should these remarks on the number seem to any somewhat far-fetched, I have no objection to their taking it more simply: that the Lord appointed a certain day on which his people might be trained, under the tutelage of the Law, to meditate constantly on the spiritual rest, and fixed upon the seventh, either because he foresaw it would be sufficient, or in order that his own example might operate as a stronger stimulus; or, at least to remind men that the Sabbath was appointed for no other purpose than to render them conformable to their Creator. It is of little consequence which of these be adopted, provided we lose not sight of the principal thing delineated, viz., the mystery of perpetual resting from our works. To the contemplation of this, the Jews were every now and then called by the prophets, lest they should think a carnal cessation from labour sufficient. Beside the passages already quoted, there is the following: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure,

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nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord," (Isa 58: 13, 14). Still there can be no doubt, that, on the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ceremonial part of the commandment was abolished¹³². He is the truth, at whose presence all the emblems vanish; the body, at the sight of which the shadows disappear. He, I say, is the true completion of the Sabbath : "We are buried with him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life," (Rom 6: 4). Hence, as the Apostle elsewhere says, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ," (Col 2: 16, 17); meaning by body the whole essence of the truth, as is well explained in that passage. This is not contented with one day, but requires the whole course of our lives, until being completely dead to ourselves, we are filled with the life of God. Christians, therefore, should have nothing to do with a superstitious observance of days.

Section 32

The second and third purposes of the Commandment explained. These twofold and perpetual. This confirmed. Of religious assemblies.

The two other cases ought not to be classed with ancient shadows, but are adapted to every age. The Sabbath being abrogated, there is still room among us, first, to assemble on stated days for the hearing of the Word, the breaking of the mystical bread, and public prayer; and, secondly, to give our servants and labourers relaxation from labour. It cannot be doubted that the Lord provided for both in the commandment of the Sabbath.

The former is abundantly evinced by the mere practice of the Jews.

The latter Moses has expressed in Deuteronomy in the following terms: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant; - that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou," (Deu 5: 14). Likewise in Exodus, "That thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed," (Exo 23: 12). Who can deny that both are equally applicable to us as to the Jews? Religious meetings are enjoined us by the word of God; their necessity, experience itself

¹³²The condemning power of the law in respect of the breach of the Sabbath continued over them who were under the law. The believing Jew and Gentile are reckoned dead to the law by their union to Christ in His death and resurrection. The was fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ in every respect and Jerusalem and the temple destroy in 70 A.D. to the terms of the breach of the Law.

OF THE LAW OF MOSES, CALVIN'S INSTITUTES BOOK II CHAPTER 8 235 sufficiently demonstrates. But unless these meetings are stated, and have fixed days allotted to them, how can they be held? We must, as the apostle expresses it, do all things decently and in orders (1Co 14 40). So impossible, however, would it be to preserve decency and order without this politic arrangements that the dissolution of it would instantly lead to the disturbance and ruin of the Church. But if the reason for which the Lord appointed a Sabbath to the Jews is equally applicable to us, no man can assert that it is a matter with which we have nothing to do. Our most provident and indulgent Parent has been pleased to provide for our wants not less than for the wants of the Jews. Why, it may be asked, do we not hold daily meetings, and thus avoid the distinction of days? Would that we were privileged to do so! Spiritual wisdom undoubtedly deserves to have some portion of every day devoted to it. But if, owing to the weakness of many, daily meetings cannot be held, and charity will not allow us to exact more of them, why should we not adopt the rule which the will of God has obviously imposed upon us?

Section 33

Of the observance of the Lord's day, in answer to those who complain that the Christian people are thus trained to Judaism. Objection.

I am obliged to dwell a little longer on this because some restless spirits are now making an outcry about the observance of the Lord's day. They complain that Christian people are trained in Judaism, because some observance of days is retained. My reply is, That those days are observed by us without Judaism, because in this matter we differ widely from the Jews. We do not celebrate it with most minute formality, as a ceremony by which we imagine that a spiritual mystery is typified, but we adopt it as a necessary remedy for preserving order in the Church. Paul informs us that Christians are not to be judged in respect of its observance, because it is a shadow of something to come, (Col 2: 16); and, accordingly, he expresses a fear lest his labour among the Galatians should prove in vain, because they still observed days (Gal 4: 10, 11). And he tells the Romans that it is superstitious to make one day differ from another (Rom 14: 5). But who, except those restless men, does not see what the observance is to which the Apostle refers? Those persons had no regard to that politic and ecclesiastical arrangement[20], but by retaining the days as types of spiritual things, they in so far obscured the glory of Christ, and the light of the Gospel. They did not desist from manual labour on the ground of its interfering with sacred study and meditation, but as a kind of religious observance; because they dreamed that by their cessation from labour, they were cultivating the mysteries which had of old been committed to them. It

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was, I say, against this preposterous observance of days that the Apostle inveighs, and not against that legitimate selection which is subservient to the peace of Christian society. For in the churches established by him, this was the use for which the Sabbath was retained. He tells the Corinthians to set the first day apart for collecting contributions for the relief of their brethren at Jerusalem, (1Co 16: 2). If superstition is dreaded, there was more danger in keeping the Jewish Sabbath than the Lord's day as Christians now do. It being expedient to overthrow superstition, the Jewish holy day was abolished; and as a thing necessary to retain decency, orders and peace, in the Church, another day was appointed for that purpose.

Section 34

Ground of this institution. There is no kind of superstitious necessity. The sum of the Commandment.

It was not, however, without a reason that the early Christians substituted what we call the Lord's day for the Sabbath. The resurrection of our Lord being the end and accomplishment of that true rest which the ancient Sabbath typified, this day, by which types were abolished serves to warn Christians against adhering to a shadowy ceremony. I do not cling so to the number seven as to bring the Church under bondage to it, nor do I condemn churches for holding their meetings on other solemn days, provided they guard against superstition. This they will do if they employ those days merely for the observance of discipline and regular order. The whole may be thus summed up:

As the truth was delivered typically to the Jews, so it is imparted to us without figure; first, that during our whole lives we may aim at a constant rest from our own works, in order that the Lord may work in us by his Spirit;

Secondly that every individual, as he has opportunity, may diligently exercise himself in private, in pious meditation on the works of God, and, at the same time, that all may observe the legitimate order appointed by the Church, for the hearing of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and public prayer:

And, thirdly, that we may avoid oppressing those who are subject to us. In this way, we get quit of the trifling of the false prophets, who in later times instilled Jewish ideas into the people, alleging that nothing was abrogated but what was ceremonial in the commandment¹³³, (this they term in their language the taxation of the seventh day), while the moral part remains, viz., the observance of one day in seven¹³⁴. But this is nothing else than to insult the Jews, by changing

133As to this liberty, see Socrates. Hist. Trip. Lib. ix.c.38.

134French, "ne discernans entre le Dumanche et le Sabbath autrement, sinon que le septieme jour estoit abroge qu'on gardoit pour lors, mais qu'il on faloit

OF THE LAW OF MOSES WILLIAM TYNDALE (1563) JOHN FIRTH (1533) 237
the day, and yet mentally attributing to it the same sanctity; thus retaining the same typical distinction of days as had place among the Jews. And of a truth, we see what profit they have made by such a doctrine. Those who cling to their constitutions go thrice as far as the Jews in the gross and carnal superstition of sabbatism; so that the rebukes which we read in Isaiah (Isa 1: 13; 58: 13) apply as much to those of the present day¹³⁵, as to those to whom the Prophet addressed them. We must be careful, however, to observe the general doctrine, viz., in order that religion may neither be lost nor languish among us, we must diligently attend on our religious assemblies, and duly avail ourselves of those external aids which tend to promote the worship of God.

6 William Tyndale (1563)

And as for the Sabbath, a great matter, we be lords over the Sabbath; and may yet change it into the Monday, or any other day, as we see need; or may make every tenth day holy day only, if we see a cause why. We may make two every week, if it were expedient, and one not enough to teach the people. Neither was there any cause to change it from the Saturday, than to put difference between us and the Jews; and lest we should become servants unto the day, after their superstition. Neither needed we any holy day at all, if the people might be taught without it.

7 John Firth (1533)

Was a close companion of William Tyndale. Firth was martyred- burned at the stake-his arrest was issued by Thomas More himself.

‘And as concerning the abrogation, or alteration of ceremonies, we have a godly example of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was instituted and commanded of God to be kept of the children of Israel. Notwithstanding, because it was a sign or a ceremony, and did signify unto them that it was God which sanctified them with his Spirit, and not themselves with their holy works; and because, also, that all ceremonies and shadows ceased when Christ came, so that they might be done or left undone indifferently; our forefathers, which were in the beginning of the church, did abrogate the Sabbath, to the intent that men might have an example of Christ’s liberty, and that they might know that neither the keeping of the Sabbath, nor of any other day, is necessary, according to Paul, Ye observe days, times, and months, I am afraid of you that neantmoins garder un” - making no other distinction between the Sunday and the Sabbath, save that the seventh day, which was kept till then, was abrogated, but that it was nevertheless necessary to keep some one day.

135French, “leur conviendroyent mieux” - would be more applicable to them.

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I have laboured in vain towards you. Howbeit, because it was necessary that a day should be reserved, in the which the people might come together to hear the word of God, they ordained in the stead of the Sabbath, which was Saturday, the next day following, which is Sunday. And although they might have kept the Saturday with the Jews, as a thing indifferent, yet did they much better to overset the day, to be a perpetual memory that we are free and not bound to any day, but that we may do all lawful works to the pleasure of God, and profit of our neighbour. We are in manner as superstitious in the Sunday as they were in the Saturday, yea, and we are much madder. For the Jews have the word of God for their Saturday, since it is the seventh day, and they were commanded to keep the seventh day solemn; and we have not the word of God for us, but rather against us, for we keep not the seventh day as the Jews do, but the first, which is not commanded by God's law. But Paul addeth, That no man judge us as concerning holy days, meats, and such other exterior things; yea, and in no wise will he that we observe them, counting them more holy than other days. For they were institute that the people should come together to hear God's word, receive the sacraments, and give God thanks. That done, they may return unto their houses, and do their business as well as any other day. He that thinketh that a man sinneth which worketh on the holy day, if he be weak or ignorant, ought better to be instructed, and so to leave his hold. But if he be obstinate, and persevere in his sentence, he is not of God, but of the devil, for he maketh sin in such as God leaveth free.

Conclusion to this matter

In the good providence of God all these matters that I have related in this account have not happened by chance. They have highlighted serious issues relating to doctrine and practice of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ that need to be addressed in our day. It will be noticed one can be brought up in a chapel teaching gospel truth all ones life and yet be without a spiritual work of God the Holy Ghost in the heart and fall from grace, meaning the doctrines of grace. These matters have enable me to address issues of gospel truths that need to be taught correctly. I have been able to advise and direct students of the bible to read the works of Dr. John Gill all of which I have republished and made available freely on my Internet Archive Library access at, <https://archive.org/details/@davidolores>.

I am available to help and advise on any of these matters. Please feel free to call or email me.

Eschatology

For further light on this subject it is necessary to review the eschatology taught since the Reformation and for your help I enclosed some excellent studies listed at the end of this book.

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Land Registry



19 March 2012

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Tel 0300 006 0003
Fax 0300 006 0023
Email leicester.office@
landregistry.gsi.gov.uk
www.landregistry.gov.uk**Official copy/copies**

The official copy/copies of the document(s) you applied for is/are enclosed.

Please contact the Land Registry office named if you have any questions about the enclosed official copy/copies.

The fee taken for this application is £12.00.

NONE

MR D CLARKE
11
HAYLING CLOSE
FAREHAM
HAMPSHIRE
PO14 3AW

Land Registry
Leicester Office



David Clarke
11 Hayling Close
Fareham
Hampshire
PO14 3AE

Sent by e-mail

Email sent to:
nbpttc@yahoo.co.uk

Date
16 December 2011

Our ref
0

Our ref
BM304531/A/176/MT/CCT

Title number **BM304531**

Property **Bierton Baptist Chapel, 142a Aylesbury Road, Bierton (HP22 5DT)**

Dear Mr Clarke

Thank you for your e-mail enquiry of 11th December 2011.

I have provided the information requested in the order presented to us:

- 1) We do hold a record of the original caution title registered in your favour under title number BM295201. The title is of course closed as you are aware.
- 2) The documents held in connection with the first registration of the Chapel are the application form (FR1) dated 21st September 2005, document list (form DL) and item number 4 on that list being described as a Transcription of the Foundation Deed of Brieton Chapel executed on 25th February 1832.
- 3) We do not hold any of the original deeds or documents.
- 4) Presumably the documents enclosed with application form FR1 on form DL. I cannot comment further as the documents (with the exception of the Transcription mentioned above) were returned to the applicant.
- 5) Access to the above mentioned documents involves an inspection fee that is one and the same as purchasing official copies from us. The latter therefore is the simpler option. Forms FR1 and DL can be purchased by written postal application for a single fee of £12, and the Transcription for an additional fee of £12. Cheques should be made payable to 'Land Registry'.

Land Registry
Leicester Office
Westbridge Place
Leicester LE3 5DR

DX 11900 Leicester 5

Tel 0116 265 4000
Fax 0116 2654 008
leicester.office
@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk
www.landregistry.gov.uk

I trust the above information is helpful.

Transcription of the Foundation Deed of Bierton Chapel. Executed on the 25th
February 1832 by William Bonham and others.

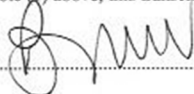
Land Registry
Official Copy
This copy may not be the same
size as the original.

Notes on the Transcription

The three pages of the Deed are bound in reverse order along the lower edge.

(1) Where the correct reading of a word or proper name is in doubt this has been indicated by enclosing the word in square brackets with a question mark. Square brackets have also been used to comment on the text and indicate illegible marks.

Brown Cooper Monier-Williams Solicitors, of 71 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, WC2A 3JF, Solicitors, certify that, except where specifically indicated pursuant to note (1) above, this transcription is a true and accurate copy of the original.

 Date 19-9-05

[In the left hand margin on each page of the Indenture there is affixed a blue impressed stamp saying "ONE POUND" under a coat of arms. Beneath that is a round stamp with a crown in the middle reading around the edge "BUCKINGHAM 18.10.30".]

THIS INDENTURE made the 25th day of February in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and thirty two BETWEEN WILLIAM BONHAM late of Wilstone in the Parish of Tring in the County of Hertford and now of Bierton in the County of Bucks Bricklayer of the first part JOSEPH ROSE of Aylesbury in the said County of Bucks Gentleman a trustee for the said William Bonham of the second part ROBERT DELL of the same place Wine Merchant (in whom as surviving executor of the last Will and Testament of John Parker late of the same place Gentleman the hereditaments hereinafter particularly mentioned and described and intended to be hereby bargained and sold are now vested for the residue of a satisfied trust term of one thousand years) of the third part and WILLIAM BELL Farmer THOMAS ELLIOTT Butcher THOMAS BONHAM Bricklayer JAMES BONHAM Bricklayer

First registration
application

Land Registry

FR1

If you need more room than is provided on this form, use continuation sheet CS and attach to this form.

1. Administrative area and postcode if known		FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY Record of fees paid
2. Address or other description of the estate to be registered Baptist Chapel, Aylesbury Road, Bierton, Bucks. HP22 5DN <i>On registering a rentcharge, profit a prendre in gross, or franchise, show the address as follows:- "Rentcharge, franchise etc, over 2 The Grove, Anytown, Northshire NE2 900".</i>		
3. Extent to be registered <i>Place "X" in the appropriate box and complete as necessary.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> The land is clearly identified on the plan to the _____ <i>Enter nature and date of deed.</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The land is clearly identified on the attached plan and shown <u>edged red</u> <i>Enter reference e.g. "edged red".</i> <input type="checkbox"/> The description in panel 2 is sufficient to enable the land to be clearly identified on the Ordnance Survey map <i>When registering a rentcharge, profit a prendre in gross or franchise, the land to be identified is the land affected by that estate, or to which it relates.</i>		FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY Particulars of under/over payments
4. Application, priority and fees <i>A fee calculator for all types of applications can be found on Land Registry's website at www.landregistry.gov.uk/fees</i> Nature of applications in priority order Value/premium £ Fees paid £150 1. First registration of the estate 2. 3. 4. TOTAL £ Fee payment method: <i>Place "X" in the appropriate box.</i> I wish to pay the appropriate fee payable under the current Land Registration Fee Order: <input type="checkbox"/> by cheque or postal order, amount £ _____ made payable to "Land Registry". <input type="checkbox"/> by Direct Debit under an authorised agreement with Land Registry.		
5. The title applied for is <i>Place "X" in the appropriate box.</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> absolute freehold <input type="checkbox"/> absolute leasehold <input type="checkbox"/> good leasehold <input type="checkbox"/> possessory freehold <input type="checkbox"/> possessory leasehold		Reference number
6. Documents lodged with this form <i>List the documents on Form DL. We shall assume that you request the return of these documents. But we shall only assume that you request the return of a statutory declaration, subsisting lease, subsisting charge or the latest document of title (for example, any conveyance to the applicant) if you supply a certified copy of the document. If certified copies of such documents are not supplied, we may retain the originals of such documents and they may be destroyed.</i>		
7. The applicant is: <i>Please provide the full name of the person applying to be registered as the proprietor.</i> Application lodged by: ASSOCIATION OF GRACE BAPTIST CHURCHES LIMITED Land Registry Key No. (if appropriate) 00096055 Name (if different from the applicant) Address/DX No. 7 ARLINGTON WAY, LONDON EC1R1XA Reference E-mail david@agbc.se.org.uk Telephone No. 020 7278 1225 Fax No. 020 7278 3598		FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY Status codes

8. Where you would like us to deal with someone else *We shall deal only with the applicant, or the person lodging the application if different, unless you place "X" against one or more of the statements below and give the necessary details.*

- Send title information document to the person shown below
- Raise any requisitions or queries with the person shown below
- Return original documents lodged with this form (see note in panel 6) to the person shown below
If this applies only to certain documents, please specify.

Name

Address/DX No.

Reference

E-mail

Telephone No.

Fax No. *

9. Address(es) for service of every owner of the estate. The address(es) will be entered in the register and used for correspondence and the service of notice. *In this and panel 10, you may give up to three addresses for service one of which must be a postal address but does not have to be within the UK. The other addresses can be any combination of a postal address, a box number at a UK document exchange or an electronic address. For a company include the company's registered number, if any. For Scottish companies, use an SC prefix, and for limited liability partnerships, use an OC prefix before the registered number if any. For foreign companies give territory in which incorporated.*

Unless otherwise arranged with Land Registry headquarters, we require a certified copy of the owner's constitution (in English or Welsh) if it is a body corporate but is not a company registered in England or Wales or Scotland under the Companies Acts.

10. Information in respect of a charge or mortgagee *Do not give this information if a Land Registry MD reference is printed on the charge, unless the charge has been transferred.*

Full name and address (including postcode) for service of notices and correspondence of the person entitled to be registered as proprietor of each charge. *You may give up to three addresses for service; see panel 9 as to the details you should include.*

N/A.

Unless otherwise arranged with Land Registry headquarters, we require a certified copy of the chargee's constitution (in English or Welsh) if it is a body corporate but is not a company registered in England and Wales or Scotland under the Companies Acts.

11. Where the applicants are joint proprietors *Place "X" in the appropriate box*

- The applicants are holding the property on trust for themselves as joint tenants
- The applicants are holding the property on trust for themselves as tenants in common in equal shares
- The applicants are holding the property *(complete as necessary)*

12. Disclosable overriding interests *Place "X" in the appropriate box.*

- No disclosable overriding interests affect the estate
- Form DI accompanies this application

Rule 28 of the Land Registration Rules 2003 sets out the disclosable overriding interests that you must tell us about. You must use Form DI to tell us about any disclosable overriding interests that affect the estate.

The registrar may enter a notice of a disclosed interest in the register of title.

13. The title is based on the title documents listed in Form DL which are all those that are in the possession or control of the applicant.

Place "X" in the appropriate box. If applicable complete the second statement; include any interests disclosed only by searches other than local land charges. Any interests disclosed by searches which do not affect the estate being registered should be certified.

- All rights, interests and claims affecting the estate known to the applicant are disclosed in the title documents and Form DI if accompanying this application. There is no-one in adverse possession of the property or any part of it.
- In addition to the rights, interests and claims affecting the estate disclosed in the title documents or Form DI if accompanying this application, the applicant only knows of the following:

14. Place "X" in this box if you are NOT able to give this certificate.

We have fully examined the applicant's title to the estate, including any appurtenant rights, or are satisfied that it has been fully examined by a conveyancer in the usual way prior to this application.

15. We have authority to lodge this application and request the registrar to complete the registration.

16. Signature of applicant
or their conveyancer

David S. Whitford (Secretary)

Date 21.9.05

Note: Failure to complete the form with proper care may deprive the applicant of protection under the Land Registration Act if, as a result, a mistake is made in the register.

List of documents

Please complete in duplicate.

Land Registry
Official Copy
This copy may not be the same
Size as the original.

Land Registry

DL**1. Property****Baptist Chapel, Aylesbury Road, Berton, Bucks. HP22 5DN****2. Documents lodged**

Notes (a) The first column is for official use only. If the Registry places an asterisk "*" in this column, it shows that we have kept that document.

(b) Number the documents in sequence; copies should also be numbered and listed as separate documents.

(c) If you supply the original document and a certified copy, we shall assume that you request the return of the original; if a certified copy is not supplied, we may retain the original document and it may be destroyed. For first registration applications, see the note in panel 6 of Form FR1.

OFFICIAL USE ONLY ⁶⁰	Item No. ^(b)	Date	Document ^(c)	Parties
✓	1	25/02/1832	Foundation Trust Deed of Berton Baptist Church	William Bonham, Joseph Rose, Robert Dell and William Bell etc. (Trustees of Berton Baptist Chapel)
✓	2	13/12/1880 (on rear of page two of 1832 Deed)	Memorandum of the Choice & Appointment of New Trustees	Thomas Bonham, James Jefferary etc.
✓	3	11/12/1929 (on rear of page one of 1832 Deed)	Memorandum of the Choice & Appointment of New Trustees	George E C King, John Roberts etc.
*	4	19/09/2005	Certified Copy of the above Deeds	Transcribed by Brown Cooper Monier- Williams Solicitors.
✓	5	24/04/1907	Trust Deed of Berton Baptist Schoolrooms & toilets	Abel Dearing and Thomas Todd etc. (Trustees of Berton Baptist Chapel, Schoolrooms & Toilets)
✓	6	25/03/1977	Copy of the Memorandum of the Choice & Appointment of New Trustees	Percy Gurney, Sidney White, Percy Foster, P C Janes, T D S Martin, D Baumber, F H Hill, J A Heather, J Hill, A V King

OFFICIAL USE ONLY ⁽⁶⁾	Item No. ⁽⁶⁾	Date	Document ^(c)	Parties
✓	7	05/02/2003	Memorandum of the Choice & Appointment of New Trustees (AGBC Ltd)	Association of Grace Baptist Churches Ltd.
✓	8	17/03/2005	History of Trustees (since 25/05/1832)	From William Bell to AGBC Ltd. (Extracted from the Minutes of the Members' Meetings of Bierton Baptist Church).
✓	9	21/09/2005	Summary of Case re. David Clarke's claim to be a member of Bierton Baptist Church	David Clarke gave an undertaking to the Court to remove all the Cautions he had lodged at the Land Registry (regarding this property) before 16.00hrs on 20/09/2005.

If you would like to discuss this correspondence or require it in an alternative format please contact me, quoting our reference.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Temple
Direct line 0116 202 2284

30 OUR TRUST DEED: THE INDENTURE

WILLIAM BONHAM the younger Tailor WILLIAM DICKINS Farmer WILLIAM RODWELL Labourer DAVID PRICE Labourer JAMES JEFFREY Labourer and WILLIAM PARKER Labourer all of Bierton aforesaid JAMES HENRY MARSHALL Bookseller JOSEPH FREEMAN Tile Maker SAMUEL BROCKLEHURST Gardener JOHN GUNN Grocer AUGUSTUS LINUS Grocer and THOMAS REYNOLDS Taylor all of Aylesbury aforesaid and WILLIAM WOOLLHEAD of Hardwick in the said County of Bucks Gentleman of the fourth part WHEREAS the said parties hereto of the fourth part have contracted with the said William Bonham Bricklayer for the absolute purchase of the land and hereditaments hereinafter particularly mentioned and described and intended to be hereby bargained and sold in manner and for the purposes hereinafter in that behalf mentioned and the fee simple and inheritance thereof in possession free from encumbrances for the sum of one pound one shilling NOW THEREFORE THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH that in pursuance of the said recited contract and agreement and for and in consideration of the sum of one pound one shilling of lawful money of Great Britain to the said William Bonham Bricklayer in hand well and truly paid by the said several above named parties hereto of the fourth part at or before the sealing and delivering of the these presents the payment and receipt whereof the said William Bonham Bricklayer doth hereby acknowledge and thereof and therefrom and of and from every part thereof doth hereby acquit release and discharge them the said several parties hereto of the fourth part and each of them there and each of their heirs cestuique trust executors administrators and assigns for ever AND ALSO in consideration of the sum of five shillings of like lawful money to the said Joseph Rose and Robert Dell in hand also paid by the said parties hereto of the fourth part at or before the execution hereof the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged they the said Joseph Rose and Robert Dell according to their respective estates and interest in the premises and at the request and by the direction of the said William Bonham Bricklayer testified as aforesaid HAVE and each of them HATH bargained and sold and by these presents DO and each of them DOTH bargain and sell and the said William Bonham Bricklayer HATH granted bargained sold aliened released and confirmed and by this present deed indented sealed and delivered in the presence of two credible witnesses and intended to be forthwith inrolled in His Majesty's High Court of Chancery DOTH grant bargain sell alien release and confirm unto the said William Bell Thomas Elliott Thomas Bonham James Bonham William Bonham the younger William Dickins

William Rodwell David Price James Jeffrey William Parker James Henry Marshall Joseph Freeman Samuel Brocklehurst John Gunn Augustus Linus Thomas Reynolds and William Woolthead parties hereto of the fourth part their heirs and assigns ALL that plot or piece of land parcel of a pightle orchard or house close of inclosed Ground lately pasture ground situate in the Parish of Bierton aforesaid in the said County of Bucks adjoining or belonging to a messuage or tenement formerly divided in to and used as two cottages or tenements heretofore in the several tenures or occupations of Thomas Cripps and William Parker afterwards of William Bowden and Barnard Rodwell since of Thomas [Impey?] or his undertenants or assigns since with some additions and alterations converted into and used as four tenements and in the several occupations of Barnard Rodwell John Godd Thomas Wiggins and Anne Capell and which with subsequent additions now consist of six tenements in the several tenures or occupations of George Rodding William Brandom Elizabeth Wallace Widow Sarah French Widow Thomas Collins and himself the said William Bonham Bricklayer and which plot or piece of land is bounded on the south side by the turnpike road leading through Bierton aforesaid on the east and north by other parts of the said pightle orchard or close and on the west by the scites and ground belonging to other cottages or tenements built by the said William Bonham Bricklayer on other part of the said pightle orchard or close and contains in width at the south end thereof twenty seven feet or thereabouts and at the north end thereof twenty five feet or thereabouts and in length on the east side thereof sixty seven feet or thereabouts and on the west side thereof sixty eight feet or thereabouts as the same is now set out and divided from the remainder of the premises by a Brick wall and part of a foot path on each side thereof together with the fences on all sides of the said plot or piece of land and all ways waters watercourses hedges ditches trees walls fences mounds easements commodities and advantages emoluments hereditaments rights members and appurtenances whatsoever to the said land and premises hereby bargained and sold or intended so to be belonging or in any wise appertaining and the reversion and various remainder and remainders yearly and other rents issues and profits thereof and every part thereof AND ALSO all the estate right title interest use trust inheritance possession benefit property possibility claim and demand whatsoever both at law and equity of them the said William Bonham Bricklayer Joseph Rose and Robert Dell and of each of them of into and out of the said land hereditaments and premises hereby bargained and sold or intended so to be and every part thereof TO HAVE AND TO

HOLD the said land hereditaments and all and singular other the premises hereby bargained and sold or intended so to be and every part thereof with the appurtenances unto the said William Bell Thomas Elliott Thomas Bonham James Bonham William Bonham the younger William Dickins William Rodwell David Price James Jeffrey William Parker James Henry Marshall Joseph Freeman Samuel Brocklehurst John Gunn Augustus Linus Thomas Reynolds and William Woolhead parties hereto of the fourth part their heirs and assigns TO the use and behoof of them the said William Bell Thomas Elliott Thomas Bonham James Bonham William Bonham the younger William Dickins William Rodwell David Price James Jeffrey William Parker James Henry Marshall Joseph Freeman Samuel Brocklehurst John Gunn Augustus Linus Thomas Reynolds and William Woolhead parties hereto of the fourth part their heirs and assigns forever UPON THE TRUSTS nevertheless and to and for the intents and purposes hereinafter expressed and declared that is to say upon trust to permit a Chapel or meeting house and other offices to be erected built and completed and from time to time repaired re-erected and re-built upon the said land and to permit the Chapel or meeting house thereon for the time being to be from time to time and at all times hereafter dedicated used and enjoyed as a place of Public Religious Worship by the Society or congregation of Protestant Dissenters called Particular Baptists and Independents who shall assemble thereat and maintain the doctrines commonly known as Calvinistic and by such other persons as shall thereafter be united, to the said Society and attend the worship of God at such Chapel or meeting House and for that purpose to permit to officiate in the said chapel or meeting house such person or persons of the denomination of Protestant Dissenters called Particular Baptists and Independents as the major part of the adult MEMBERS of the said Society being Communicants therein shall at any church meeting duly assembled for that purpose from time to time elect to officiate as their Minister or Pastor therein according to the usual order and custom of societies of Protestant Dissenters of the Denomination aforesaid which person or persons so from time to time elected as Minister or Pastor of the said society shall continue such Minister or Pastor only so long as and no longer than the major part in number of the adult members of the said society being Communicants therein shall think fit and to permit any part of the offices or buildings on the said land to be used with and be appendant to the said Chapel or Meeting House as a vestry room or otherwise to be taken for the enlargement of the said chapel or meeting house as occasion may require AND UPON FURTHER TRUST as to such

Worship Discontinued And Dissolution

part of the said land as shall be more than sufficient for the scite of the said Chapel or Meeting House and offices with their appendages to permit and suffer the same from time to time and at all times hereafter to be used and occupied as and for a Burial Ground or place of interment for the bodies of the members of the said society or Congregation and of such other persons as the major part of the adult Members of the said Society being Communicants therein shall from time to time think fit and allow to be there interred AND UPON FURTHER TRUST from time to time if and when thereto required by the adult Male Members being Communicants of the said Society or Congregation for the time being in their Church meeting duly assembled or the major part in number of them so assembled to raise such sum or sums of money as they or the major part of them so assembled shall direct by mortgage of the said premises and thereupon to demise or release and convey the said premises for that purpose and to stand possessed of the money which from time to time shall be received for any such mortgage UPON TRUST to lay out and dispose of the same in such manner and for such purposes for the benefit for the said Society or for the Improvement of the trust property or the enlargement, repair or rebuilding of the premises or otherwise as the major part in number of the adult members of the said society being communicants therein as aforesaid and present at a Meeting to be called for that purpose shall from time to time direct but in case the said Society or Congregation of Particular Baptists and independents shall be totally dissolved or dispersed and the public worship of the said Chapel or meeting house be discontinued by them for the space of twelve calendar months together THEN UPON FURTHER TRUST to let convey or otherwise dispose of the said Chapel or Meeting House and premises to such person or persons for such term in such manner and for such purposes either Religious or Civil as the Managers for the time being of a Society called "The Particular Baptist Fund" established in London in One thousand seven hundred and seventeen shall from time to time direct or appoint of or concerning the same PROVIDED ALWAYS that in case any mortgage sale or other disposition of all or any part of the said premises shall at any time be made or any letting thereof shall take place in pursuance of the Trusts aforesaid the person or persons becoming a purchaser or purchasers or mortgagee or mortgagees or otherwise paying any money in respect of the said premises his, her or their heirs, executors or administrators shall not be compelled to see to the application of the money so by him, her or them paid nor be answerable or accountable for the misapplication or nonapplication of the same

Election Of Trustees

or any part thereof and that the receipt or receipts which shall from time to time or at any time or times be given by the trustee or trustees for the time being for such purchase, mortgage or other monies or any part thereof shall be a good valid and sufficient acquittance and discharge and good valid and sufficient acquittances and discharges for the sum or sums of money which shall therein be acknowledged to have been received PROVIDED ALSO and it is hereby agreed and declared that when and so often during the continuance of the trusts hereby created as the number of the trustees shall by death or otherwise be reduced to five or less and so from time to time as often as there shall be not more than five trustees for the purposes aforesaid or oftener if the adult members of the said Society or congregation shall think it expedient so many other persons being Protestant Dissenters by profession shall be named and chosen to be Trustees of the said premises as shall make the number of 15 trustees at the least such Trustees to be from time to time nominated appointed or chosen by the adult members of the said society or the major part of them for that purpose duly assembled by Public Notice in their Church meeting and upon every such choice the continuing trustees or trustee for the time being or the heirs of the then last surviving Trustee shall by sufficient conveyances and assurances in the law convey and assure the said land Chapel or Meeting house and premises with the appurtenances to such new trustees so to be appointed as aforesaid so and in such manner as that the same may become legally and effectually vested in such new trustees only or in such new trustees and the continuing trustees or any of them as the case may require upon such or the like Trusts and to and for such or the like interests and purposes as are hereinbefore declared and expressed concerning the same AND the said Robert Dell for himself his heirs executors and administrators and for his own acts only AND the said Joseph Rose for himself his heirs executors and administrators and for his own acts only so hereby severally covenant and declare with and to the said parties hereto of the fourth part their heirs and assigns that they the said Robert Dell and Joseph Rose have not nor have either of them at any time heretofore made done committed executed occasioned or knowingly suffered any act deed matter or thing whatsoever whereby or by reason or by means whereof the said land hereditaments and premises hereby bargained and sold or intended so to be or any part thereof are is can shall or may be in any wise impeached charged affected or incumbered in title estate interest or otherwise howsoever AND the said William Bonham Bricklayer for himself his heirs executors administrators and assigns doth

hereby covenant promise and agree to and with the said parties hereto of the fourth part their heirs and assigns in manner following that is to say that (for and notwithstanding any act deed matter or thing whatsoever by him the said William Bonham Bricklayer or any trustee for him made done committed executed occasioned or knowingly suffered to the contrary) he the said William Bonham Bricklayer either alone or together with the said Joseph Rose and Robert Dell now at the time of or immediately before the sealing and delivering of these presents is and stands or was and stood so seised of and in the said land hereditaments and premises hereby bargained and sold or intended so to be as to have good right full power and lawful and absolute authority to grant bargain and sell the same AND every part thereof with the appurtenances unto and to the use of the said parties hereto of the fourth part their heirs and assigns for ever in manner and upon the trusts aforesaid and according to the true intent and meaning of those presents AND ALSO that it shall and may be lawful for them the same parties their heirs and assigns from time to time and at all times for ever hereafter peaceably and quietly to enter into and upon and to have hold use occupy possess and enjoy the said land hereditaments and premises hereby bargained and sold or intended so to be and to receive and take the rents issues and profits thereof and of every part thereof to and for their use and benefit as such Trustees as aforesaid without any let suit eviction ejection molestation hindrance or interruption whatsoever of from or by him the said William Bonham Bricklayer his heirs or assigns or of from by or through any other person or persons whomsoever having or legally or equitably claiming or who shall or may have or legally or equitably claim any estate right title or interest whatsoever of in to or out of the said land hereditaments and premises or any part thereof by from through under or in trust for him or them in any manner howsoever and that free and clear and freely and clearly and absolutely acquitted exonerated released and discharged or otherwise by the said William Bonham Bricklayer his heirs executors or administrators well and sufficiently saved defended kept harmless and indemnified of from and against all and all manner of former and other gifts grants estates titles troubles charges and incumbrances whatsoever at any time or times heretofore had made done committed executed occasioned or knowingly suffered by the said William Bonham Bricklayer or any other person or persons whomsoever by his act means or privity AND FURTHER that he the said William Bonham Bricklayer and his heirs and any other person having or legally or equitably claiming or who shall or may have or legally or equitably claim

any estate, right, title or interest of in to or out of the said land hereditament and premises hereby bargained and sold or intended so to be or any part thereof by from through under or in trust for him in any manner howsoever shall and will from time to time and at all times hereafter upon every reasonable request and at the proper costs and charges in all things of them the said parties hereto of the fourth part their heirs or assigns make do acknowledge levy suffer and execute or cause and procure to be made done acknowledged levied suffered and executed all such further and other lawful and reasonable acts deeds devices conveyances and assurances in the law whatsoever for the better more perfectly and absolutely or satisfactorily granting releasing and conveying of the said land hereditament and all and singular other the premises hereby bargained and sold or intended so to be with the appurtenances unto and to the use of the said parties hereto of the fourth part their heirs and assigns for ever upon the trusts aforesaid as by the same parties their heirs or assigns or their counsel in the law shall be reasonably advised or devised and required AND LASTLY that for the making out shewing maintaining and defending the title and interest of the said parties hereto of the fourth part their heirs and assigns in or to all or any part of the hereditaments hereby bargained and sold or intended so to be he the said William Bonham Bricklayer his heirs or assigns shall and will from time to time and at all times hereafter (unless prevented by fire or other inevitable accident) upon every reasonable request and at the proper costs and charges of them the said parties hereto of the fourth part their heirs or assigns or any of them produce and shew forth or cause or procure to be produced and shewn forth to them or to their agent attorney or Solicitor or to such other person or persons as they shall direct desire or require or at any trial hearing or examination in any Court of law or equity or other judicature or upon the execution of any commission or otherwise in England as occasion shall require and permit to be perused examined inspected or given in evidence the several deeds evidences and writings specified in the schedule hereunder written and every or any of them and at the like request costs and charges make and deliver or cause to be made and delivered unto the said parties hereto of the fourth part their heirs or assigns attested or other copies or abstracts of or extracts from all and and every or any of the same deeds evidences and writings and permit such copies abstracts or extracts to be examined and compared with the originals by any person or persons whom they or any of them may appoint.

Indenture Schedule

IN WITNESS whereof the said parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

THE SCHEDULE to which the above written indenture refers

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1773 | October 28th | Indenture between John Cripps of Bierton in the County of Bucks Yeoman (therein further described) of the one part and John Perkins of Aylesbury in the said County of Bucks Gentleman of the other part |
| 1800 | March 19 th | Indenture between Thomas Gripps of the Parish of Chopping Wickham in the said County of Bucks Labourer therein further described on the one part and Henry Stratford of Penn in the said County Baker of the other part |
| 1802 | June 11 th & 12 th | Indentures of Lease and Release the Release between the said Thomas Cripps of the first part the said Henry Stratford of the second part Daniel Lathwell of Aylesbury aforesaid Gentleman therein further described of the third part Thomas Capp of Grafton in the Parish of Wing in the said County of Bucks Carpenter of the fourth part and John Parker of Aylesbury aforesaid Gentleman of the fifth part |
| 1802 | October 30 th | Indenture between the said Thomas Capp of the one part and Noah Gaddesdon of Aylesbury aforesaid Baker of the other part |
| 1803 | August 5 th & 6 th | Indentures of Lease and Release between the said Thomas Capp of the one part and Thomas Woodman of Bierton aforesaid Baker of the other part |

- 1813 October 21st & 22nd Indentures of Lease and Release the Release between the said Thomas Woodman of the one part and the said William Bonham Bricklayer and Joseph Rose of the other part
- 1813 October 23rd Indenture between the same William Bonham Bricklayer of the first part the said Joseph Rose of the second part Thomas Dell of Aylesbury aforesaid Gentleman and William [Rickford?] of the same place Banker therein further described of the third part and the said Thomas Woodman of the fourth part
- 1818 January 10th Indenture between the said Thomas Woodman of the one part and the said William Bonham Bricklayer and Joseph Rose of the other part

[Signed and Sealed]

William Bonham Bricklayer, Joseph Rose, R Dell, William Bell, John Elliott, Thomas Bonham, James Bonham, W Bonham junr, William Dickens, William Bradnell, the mark of David Price, James Jeffery, William Parker, J H Marshall, Joseph Freeman, Samuel Brocklehurst, John Gunn, Augustus Linus, [Thomas Reynolds?] and William Woolhead.

[In margin of last page]

taken and acknowledged by William Bonham Bricklayer the party hereto of the first part at Aylesbury in the County of Bucks this twenty eighth day of July One thousand eight hundred and thirty two Before me James James a master [illegible?] in Chancery

[MEMORANDA ENDORSED]

[Stamp Ten Shillings Impressed]

MEMORANDUM of the choice and appointment of new Trustees of the Particular Baptist Chapel situate adjoining main Road in the Parish of Bierton in the County of

Buckingham at a meeting duly convened and held for that purpose at the Particular Baptist Chapel aforesaid on the 13th day of December 1880 Thomas Todd Chairman

Names and description of all Trustees on the constitution or last appointment of Trustees made the 25th day of February 1832

William Bell Farmer Thomas Elliott Butcher Thomas Bonham Bricklayer James Bonham Bricklayer William Bonham the younger Tailor William Dickins Farmer William Rodwell Labourer David Price Labourer James Jeffrey Labourer and William Parker Labourer all of Bierton and James Henry Marshall Book seller Joseph Freeman Pilmaker Samuel Brocklehurst Gardener John Gunn Grocer Augustus Linus Grocer & Thomas Reynolds Tailor all of Aylesbury and William Woolhead of Hardwick Gentleman

Names and Descriptions of all the Trustees in whom the said Chapel and Premises now Become Legally Vested

1st Old Continuing Trustees

Thomas Bonham Bricklayer and James Jeffrey Labourer both of Bierton.

2 New Trustees now chosen and appointed

[Fleet?] Bonham Bricklayer Thomas Todd Baker Thomas Bonham junior Bricklayer Thomas Norwood Butcher James King Coal dealer James Bonham Butcher Thomas Todd junior, Baker George Dickins Labourer Abel Dearing, Labourer and George King [*superscript E - C*] Bricklayer all of Bierton and Henry James Lester Coach builder Edwin North Aerated water manufacturer John Turner Chemist William Hopcroft Grocer Henry Gunn Miller and John Willison Gentleman all of Aylesbury and George Butcher of Tring Banker and John Roberts Stableman of Bierton

Dated this 13th day of December 1880

[Signed] Thomas Todd Chairman of the said meeting

Signed Sealed and Delivered by the
said Thomas Todd as Chairman of the said
Meeting at and in the presence of the
said Meeting on the day and year aforesaid in the
presence of

[Signed] James Bonham
[Signed] Thomas Norwood

[Stamp Ten Shillings Impressed]

Memorandum of the choice and appointment of new trustees of the Particular Baptist Chapel situate adjoining the Main Road in the Parish of Bierton in the County of Buckingham at a meeting duly convened by Public Notice on the 8th day of December 1929 and held for that purpose in the Chapel aforesaid on the 11th day of December 1929.

[Signed] W. A. Chapman. Chairman.

Names and Descriptions of all Trustees on the last appointment of Trustees made the 13th day of December 1880:-

Thomas Bonham of Bierton aforesaid,
Bricklayer
James Jeffrey of Bierton aforesaid, Labourer
[Flect?] Bonham of Bierton aforesaid,
Bricklayer
Thomas Todd of Bierton aforesaid, Baker

Names and Descriptions of all Trustees in whom the said Chapel and Premises now become legally vested:-

FIRST: Old continuing Trustees –
George Esau Chapman King formerly
of Bierton and now of Aylesbury,
Bricklayer

Thomas Bonham the younger of Bierton
aforesaid, Bricklayer

Thomas Norwood of Bierton aforesaid,
Butcher

James King of Bierton aforesaid, Coal dealer

James Bonham of Bierton aforesaid, Butcher

Thomas Todd the younger of Bierton
aforesaid, Baker

George Dickins of Bierton aforesaid,
Labourer

Abel Dearing of Bierton aforesaid, Labourer

George Esau Chapman King of Bierton
aforesaid, Bricklayer

Henry James Lester of Aylesbury, Bucks,
Coach builder

Edwin North of Aylesbury aforesaid, Aerated
water manufacturer

John Turner of Aylesbury aforesaid, Chemist

William Hopcroft of Aylesbury aforesaid,
Grocer

Henry Gunn of Aylesbury aforesaid, Miller

John Willison of Aylesbury aforesaid,
Gentleman

George Butcher of Tring, Herts, Banker

John Roberts of Bierton aforesaid, Stableman

John Roberts formerly of Bierton and
now of Aylesbury, Stableman

SECOND: New Trustees now chosen
and appointed -

Ernest Thorne, Batchelor of Lee
Common, Bucks, Gentleman

Alfred Henry Brooks of Fools Gray,
Kent, Basket maker

William Arthur Chapman of
Aylesbury, Bucks, retired Accountant

William Figg of Waddesdon, Bucks,
House Decorator

Bernard Fleet of Bierton, Bucks,
Bricklayer

Percy George Foster of Bierton,
Bucks, Engineer's miller

Percy Gurney of Bierton, Bucks,
Bricklayer

William James Holt of Wickham
Marsh, Bucks, Chair maker

Ellis King of Bierton, Bucks, Farmer

Frederick George King of St Albans,
Herts, Schoolmaster

Raymond Thomas King of Southall,
Middlesex, Motor garage proprietor

William John Markham of Bierton,
Bucks, Builder

Samuel David Pierce of Lee
Common, Bucks, Fruit grower

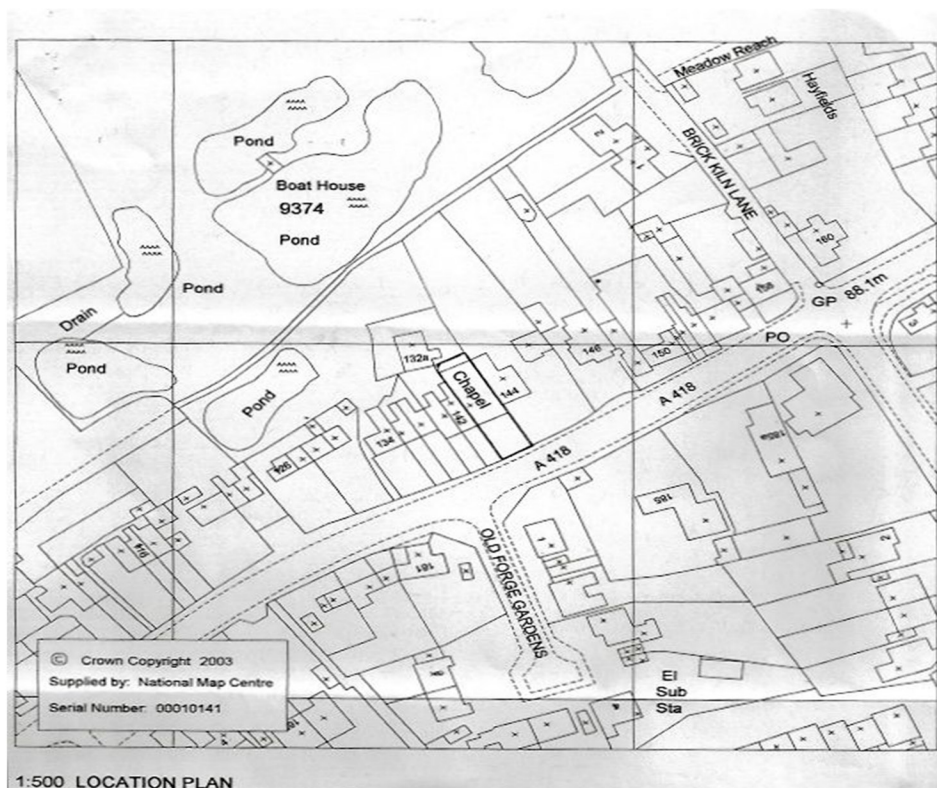
William Charles Plail of Tottenham,
Middlesex, Baptist Minister

Inrolled in His Majesty's High Court of Chancery the 30th day of July in the year of our Lord 1832 being first duly stampd according to the tenor of the statutes made for that purpose

B.P.E. -

[Signed] [D. Dunny?]

Plan View Of The Bierton Chapel In Bierton



Where Did the Money Go From The sale of our Chapel

Looking at the trust deed it states the money from the sale of the Chapel should go to **The Particular Baptists Fund London 1717** and not The Association of Grace Baptists Churches. However on contacting the Fund I was informed I was not eligible to benefit for the fund as they only support ministries in the UK and not abroad. What do you think of this ?

<https://www.pbfund.org.uk/history.html>

The Secretary

Particular Baptist Fund

5 Sandalwood Road

Westbury

Wiltshire

BA13 3UP

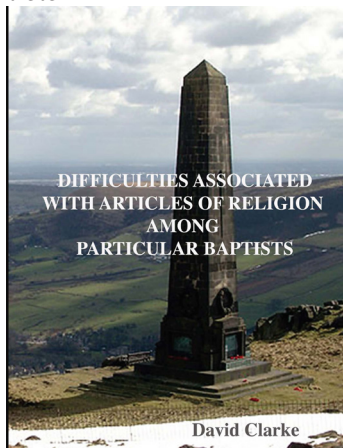
By telephone: 01373 825605

By e-mail: info@pbfund.org.uk

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION

Among Particular Baptists



David Clarke

Articles of Religion are important when dealing with matters of the Christian Religion, however problems occur when churches fail to recognize there is a growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in any believer. When a person first believes in the Lord Jesus Christ they cannot possibly have a comprehensive knowledge of a churches constitution or its articles of religion, before solemnly subscribing to them. The author David Clarke has introduced the Doctrines of Grace to Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan, situated in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan and bearing in mind his own experience with articles of religion he has compiled Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan articles of religion from the first Bierton Particular Baptists of 1831, of which he is the sole surviving member, the **First London Baptist Confession, 2nd edition 1646**, and those of Dr John Gill, in order to avoid some of the difficulties encounter by Particular Baptist during the later part of the 19 century and since. This booklet highlights the problem and suggests the Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan is as step in the right direction.

Isaiah 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

Available as a PDF from BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

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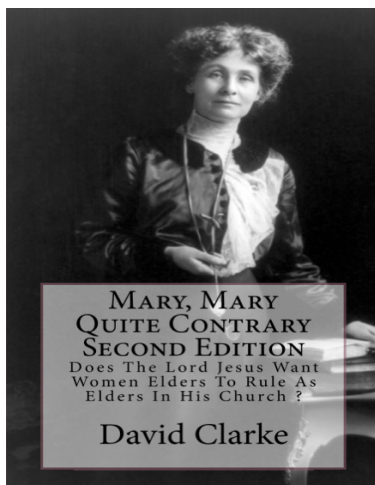
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Gospel Standard 31 Articles

MARY, MARY QUITE CONTRARY, 3RD EDITION

Does The Lord Jesus Want Women To Rule As Elders In His Church ??

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert E

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / General

When treating the subject of women elders in the church we are not dealing with the affairs of a secular society and so it has nothing to do with women's rights, equality of sex or race in the world. This matter only relates to men and women in a Christian church. It is about the rules of the house of God, which is the church of the living God and rules for those who are members of the body of Christ and members of an heavenly county.

The Suffragettes

Emmeline Pankhurst (1858 -1928) was a Suffragette and worked very hard to bring equal rights for women to vote as men. In the year of her death all women over 21 gained the right to vote. The Suffragette movement brought about many changes for the better in a secular society but not so for women seeking to follow Christian principles. One of her famous quotes was, "Trust in God She shall provide". Terms which do not reflect Christian beliefs. We know God will provide and He is not a she.

In the USA and the UK, women's political rights were brought into general political consciousness by the suffragettes and since then there have been legal rights granted to the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, same sex marriages, along with the development of the feminist movement and the appointment of persons from the LBGT community to responsible positions in the Church of England. All of this has caused conflict in the Christian community due to differences beliefs of right and wrong.

This book seeks to show what the bible has to say about the role of women in the church and family. Since these rules are taught by the Apostles of Christ they are the word of God to us and we should obey. The secular world may differ and turn from the narrow path taught in scripture but we should follow the word of God, this is our wisdom.

Foreword by Dr. Ken Matto

We live in a day of rank apostasy. That apostasy is not limited to the unbelieving world because much of it is accepted by the Christian world. David Clarke hits head on one of the tenets of the apostasy which has exploded internationally. A time like this had been prophesied by Isaiah. Isaiah 3:12 (KJV) As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. The tenet which David Clarke hits head on is the one of women preachers and women elders in the churches. Isaiah states that women were ruling over the people of God, when the men should have been in leadership roles. The Scripture states that “they which lead thee cause thee to err.” In this book you will find a confrontation between elders and the word of God. When church leaders neglect the truths of Scripture and base everything they believe on as their “personal opinion“, then the paths have been destroyed for the Christian, as Isaiah teaches.

One of the outgrowths of the charismatic movement, is the teaching that women are just as qualified as men to be elders and pastors. This is not to say that women are lacking leadership qualities but the Bible is very clear that they are not to rule over men and are not to have rule in the churches. It is unfortunate that many feminized men in the church kowtow behind the concept that disallowing women rule in the churches is not showing them love. The reality is that being disobedient to the commands of Scripture is nothing more than rebellion against God. 1 Samuel 15:3 speaks about rebellion being as the sin of witchcraft. God has given specific instructions concerning the churches and their structure and who are we to claim that we know more than God.

The deep apostasy which many churches have accepted is made visible in this book but not only churches, Bible colleges have also acquiesced to disobeying the Bible and have endorsed women rulers in the church. It is a shame that those who bring the truth are considered the troublemakers in the churches. Tell me, what kind of love do you show someone when you actually help them to be disobedient to God? Will they still love you when they are in

hell paying for their sins of rebellion? It is time for Christian men to step up and be men. 1 Corinthians 16:13 (KJV) Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. This book needs to be in the library of all Christians to help them oppose the incursion of women rulers in the church. It is still not too late to bring about a repentance on the part of church leaders for allowing themselves to be swayed by false teaching. A strong church obeys God, a weak and dying one disobeys God, regardless of how many attend.

Dr. Ken Matto

Scion of Zion Internet Ministry

www.scionofzion.com

British Church Newspaper (Book Review)

One of the most profound changes that has come over our society in the last century is married women going out to work.

This trend was given a considerable boost by the need to recruit female workers in the factories during WW2.

Many other factors have contributed since then. They range from labour saving devices in the home to the unpredictable nature of modern marriage.

Things have now progressed to the point where women are taking over the professions including the ordained ministry.

This short paperback is written in a vigorous, forthright English style, to the point of being unconventional. However it is clear and readable.

Mr Clarke argues that church elder-ship should be male. He states the familiar arguments from Scripture and he also quotes many passages from the Bible which speak of male leadership.

The book is one long appeal to Holy Writ as being the final word in matters related.

He has no patience with those who argue that we must defer to modern opinion: "When men find themselves looking over their shoulders wondering what will this person or that person think of me if I do not do or say the approved thing then that is where Satan has got you. If you find your self not doing things which you know are right before God and proper because you feel others may disapprove of you, then that is Satan ensnaring you so that you will be ineffectual in your work for God. **We are told to resist the Devil** and he will flee from you. (Page 76).

Much of the book is occupied with an exchange of letters between the author and the elders of Mr Clarke's church who have decided to appoint women elders.

He then enters into correspondence with the head of a Bible College

who comes to Mr Clarke's church as a visiting preacher. These vigorous debates enable Mr Clarke to present his arguments in an interesting context.

We recommend the book. Dr Napier Malcolm, editor of the British Church News Paper.

Available as a PDF from BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU



David Clarke

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

When I first published my story of conversion from Crime to Christ I thought every one would be delighted to hear all about it so I asked my boss the principal of Fareham College to write a foreword to my book. I was very disappointed, surprised and hurt at his answer.

He said he would have nothing to do either privately or publicly with a book that overlay refers to drug taking.

I understood he was a Christian and thought that he would have been delighted and pleased to hear my story and have it told to all the world.

You see I had written all about my past criminal life as a youth, my imprisonment for violence and drug taking that led to my downfall.

It was when I was down and at rock bottom that I cried out to God for help asking Jesus please help me. He answered me on the 16th of January 1970 saying He was with me and would never leave me and that what I had been going

through was nothing compared to what hell was like.

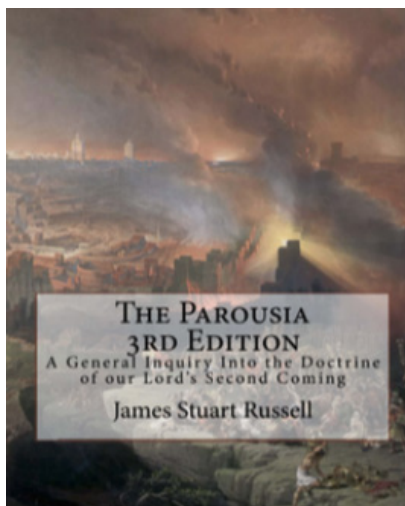
You see title of my book was, 'Converted on LSD Trip' and on its front page was a write up of the court case where I confessed to 24 crimes and a three year career of undetected crimes and my former profligate life.

So this time my book has a different title and written to remind my readers, religious and none religious friends, family and acquaintances that we have all sinned and cannot throw stones at others thinking we are better than them and that such were some of you. In other words we are all in need of the salvation I write about and have experience. I was saved for a life time of crime immorality and drug taking and live to tell the story.

This tells true story and reason for Christmas.

Available as a PDF from BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

THE PAROUSIA



James Stuart Russell

Foreword By Ed Stevens

The word "Parousia" (par-oo-see-ah) is not a household word, but students of end-time prophecy know it is a reference to the Second Coming of Christ. It comes from two Greek words ("para" beside, and "ousia" state of being) and literally means "to be beside" (present with someone). It came to be a more specific reference to important people coming for an extended (but not long-term) visit to one of their subject territories (a "visitation"). It can refer either to the initial arrival or the afterward presence. It is used in the New Testament almost exclusively of Christ's Second Coming.

Russell examines every significant New Testament text about Christ's

return, to see when it would occur and what it would be like. Since he believed the Second Coming occurred in the first century at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, his view is labeled “Preterist.”

The word “Preterist” is another prophetic term with which many are unfamiliar. According to Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, a Preterist is “a theologian who believes the prophecies of the Apocalypse have already been fulfilled.” A Preterist is the opposite of a Futurist. Futurists teach that the three major end-time events (parousia, resurrection, judgment) are still future in fulfillment, whereas Preterists teach these events have already been fulfilled. Some may wonder what difference it makes?

Everything crucial to Christianity is at risk. The Deity of Christ, the integrity of the apostles and prophets, and the inspiration of the New Testament is at stake. How so?

Jesus and the NT writers repeatedly make time- restricted predictions about His return and the other end-time events. They do not merely suggest that Christ’s Parousia might occur in their lifetime, they unequivocally affirm it.

Liberals, skeptics, and Jewish/Islamic critics use those “time statements” to discredit Jesus and the New Testament. Inspired men cannot make mistakes. Since Jesus and the NT writers predicted Christ’s return to occur in their lifetime, and it supposedly didn’t happen, they assume Jesus and the NT writers were mistaken.

Indeed, if we cannot trust their prophetic utterances, we cannot trust anything else they say. Christianity is totally discredited if those predictions failed to materialize exactly as they prophesied.

You might wonder what these “time texts” are? Matthew 16:27-28 is a good example. This book deals with every one of them. They were not mistaken when they predicted Christ’s return in their lifetime. It really occurred, at AD 70.

Theologians who study end-time prophecy consider Russell’s book a classic defense of the Preterist view. It is this book, more than any other during the past 125 years, which has moved so many toward Preterism.

Many in the Reformed faith (e.g., R. C. Sproul, Sr., David Chilton, Gary DeMar, Ken Gentry, Gary North, Jim Jordan, et al) credit Russell’s book as having a significant impact on their eschatological views. R. C. Sproul, Sr. says he looks favorably at Preterism because it is the only view of prophecy which effectively counters the liberal-skeptic-critic attack. He has written much to recommend Russell’s book and encourage the spread of Preterism, even though he does not go as far as Russell does. In his Foreword to the 1999 Baker Books

reprint of *The Parousia* (pp. ix-x), Sproul says:

Russell's work is valuable chiefly for his analysis of the time-frame references of New Testament prophecy and his understanding of the main reference to the parousia. ...Russell's book has forced me to take the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem far more seriously than before, to open my eyes to the radical significance of this event in redemptive history. It vindicates the apostolic hope and prediction of our Lord's close-at-hand coming in judgment.... I can never read the New Testament again the same way I read it before reading *The Parousia*.

Until this book appeared in 1878, Preterism had little systemization. This book began that process, and remains one of the most consistent and comprehensive explanations of Preterism available. The Preterist view flourished in Germany and Britain. But America, still recovering from civil war, took little notice. In global terms, its impact is still marginal, but it has seen significant growth in the past ten years, and the Internet is one of the big factors stimulating that. What the Gutenberg printing press did for the Protestant reformation, the Internet did for the Preterist reformation.

The Internet is the perfect place to publish helpful material like this. One of the first books to be posted on Preterist websites was Russell's *Parousia*. Even though the electronic version has had many readers in the short five years it has been available, it has not diminished demand for printed copies. This book is destined to remain a Preterist classic.

Russell did a remarkable job of interpretation compared to previous centuries. He pointed the way in a number of areas that we are only just now beginning to develop further. He devoted over 170 pages to the book of Revelation. One of his best statements is there. He uses the "time" statements in the first three verses of Revelation to show how crucial the date of writing is to the interpretation of the book:

It may truly be said that the key has all the while hung by the door, plainly visible to every one who had eyes to see; yet men have tried to pick the lock, or force the door, or climb up some other way, rather than avail themselves of so simple and ready a way of admission as to use the key made and provided for them. (*Parousia*, p. 367)

Russell leaves no excuses for Futurism. His survey of all the "Parousia" (second coming) references is a tour de force in Preterist exegesis. This book was the first wave of what has become a whole storm of books defending the AD 70 fulfillment of end-time prophecy.

Futurists and Partial Preterists for too long have hidden behind the excuse

of wanting explicit “time indicators” before assigning a text to AD 70. Russell and modern Preterists have exhaustively shown that all NT end-time texts have first century “audience relevance” written all over them, which functions as an implicit time indicator. The New Testament was not written to us originally. We are reading someone else’s mail. The primary task of a Bible interpreter is to discover what the original author intended to communicate to his original audience, not just to ask what it “could” mean to us today.

THREE DIFFICULT TEXTS SIMPLIFIED

There are three scriptures which most partial preterists think are yet to be fulfilled: Acts 1:11, 1 Cor. 15:20-57, and 1 Thess. 4:13-18. Russell shows that an AD 70 fulfillment is the most consistent interpretation of these texts. However, he does not deal very much with Acts 1:11. As a result, many Futurists and Partial Preterists have used this text to teach another major return of Christ still in the future. Modern Preterists have now shown that these three texts contain implicit time indicators and contextual clues which connect them inseparably to the Parousia and final consummation in AD 70. For a fuller explanation of these three texts from a Preterist perspective, see the three books written by this author (*Stevens Response To Gentry, Questions 5 About The Afterlife, and Expectations Demand A Rapture*).

In those books, we deal especially with the typological imagery of Christ’s ascension into the cloud- filled heavenly Holy of Holies to present His own blood to make final atonement, and His “second appearance” back out of the heavenly temple to announce atonement to His anxiously waiting saints. The Acts 1:11 reference to the return of Christ is easy to apply to AD 70 when we realize it is speaking of the reverse of the visible ascent of Christ in Theophany form. His descent would follow the same Theophany pattern as His ascent, meaning that it would be visible like His departure. He ascended visibly with clouds and angels in the presence of a few disciples, and the two angels (Acts 1:10-11) promised that He would descend visibly “in like manner” in that same Theophany pattern to only those disciples whom He wished to see it. Both the going away and the return were “cloud comings” (Theophanies) accompanied by angels. He left the same way He would return (in clouds with the angels) to appear to his anxiously waiting disciples (“How long, O Lord?” and “O, our Lord, come!”). They expected His return before all of that generation died. Some of them were promised to remain alive until His return, and that they would literally “see” it before they all died (Matt. 16:27-28 and John 21:22f).

Even some partial preterists (e.g. Kenneth Gentry in his book, *Before Jerusalem Fell*) have agreed that Rev. 1:7 (which mentions a “cloud coming”

or Theophany which “every eye would see”) was fulfilled in AD 70. Since most expositors connect Rev. 1:7 with Acts 1:11, it seems reasonable to assign both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 to the visible Theophany that was seen by the Jewish people just before the war in AD 66. Notice what R. C. Sproul, Sr. said about the angelic appearances in the sky in AD 66 and its connection to Rev. 1:7 – “... the Old Testament prophets, when speaking of a real historical visitation of God in judgment upon cities and nations, used exactly this kind of language in a metaphorical way to describe that coming of divine judgment.... As some 19th century scholars...Jonathan Edwards...B. B. Warfield and others have suggested, what Jesus is talking about here on the Mount of Olives [Matt. 24:3] ...is the end of the Jewish age. And that the coming that he’s talking about, and that he’s warning these contemporaries about over and over again... that was coming on that generation...was the judgment of God that was coming on Jerusalem and the temple in the year 70 AD.... Was Jesus visible? Did “every eye see him” [Rev. 1:7] and all of that? No. Although, one of the weirdest passages you ever read in ancient history is the paragraph that is found in Josephus [Wars, Bk 6, Ch 5, Sect. 3]. I quote it in my book [The Last Days According to Jesus, p. 124]... After talking about some remarkable, astonishing celestial events that some people had reported, he said, “Besides these a few days after that feast, on the one-and-twentieth day of the month Artemisius ...before the setting of the sun, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds....” ...The overwhelming testimony of the contemporaries (and he was there as an eyewitness) was that people did see something in the clouds. And what is it they saw? They saw chariots. Is that the first time the chariot throne of God is seen in the clouds over Palestine? What took Elijah to heaven? What were the whirling merkabahs [chariots] Ezekiel beheld? Was not the basic symbol in the Old Testament of the movable judgment throne of God, his chariots of fire? And here we have the testimony of many, many people saying they saw these chariots running about the clouds right before the end of Jerusalem. ...It lends credence to the further application of Jesus’ predictions of what would come in this judgment of the nation of Israel and of the city of Jerusalem...” [R. C. Sproul, Sr. “Last Days Madness” speech, 1999 Ligonier Ministries National Conference in Orlando. Bracketed material inserted by the author of this Foreword.]

Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History, Bk 3, Ch 8, Section 5) quotes this same material from Josephus, and Tacitus (Histories, Book 5, “About The Jews”) alludes to the same events. Sproul’s comments stimulate several thoughts. If Rev. 1:7 was fulfilled by the appearance of angels and chariots in the sky at AD 66, and if Acts 1:11 is speaking of the same judgment coming (or cloud coming,

Theophany) of Christ, then what text teaches a still future visible coming of Christ? If the angelic armies literally seen in the clouds at AD 66 were the fulfillment of “every eye shall see Him” (Rev. 1:7) as Sproul has allowed as a possibility, then it was also the fulfillment of Acts 1:11! In Matt 16:27-28, which R. C. Sproul, Sr. affirms is AD 70, it states that some of those disciples would not taste death until they saw Christ return. It therefore seems logical that the visible coming of Christ at AD 66-70 which is mentioned in Matt. 16:27-28 must be the same coming dealt with in both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11.

The commander of the angelic hosts (Christ) was present with His angelic armies on that occasion (AD 66), just like Rev. 19:11-21 pictures for us. This was the visible return of Christ with His angels to judge His enemies and reward His saints, as both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 had predicted. Matt. 24:29-31 and Luke 21:25-28 also indicated there would be visible “signs” accompanying the return of Christ with His angels to raise the dead out of Hades, perform the judgment, and reward His faithful saints. This fulfills the “in like manner” terms of the Acts 1:11 text. Both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 fit the Matt. 16:27-28 “visibility” pattern.

It is also clear from the similarities between 1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess. 4 that these two “parousia” texts are speaking of the same AD 70 return of Christ. Since both texts state that the resurrection will occur in connection with the “parousia” (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:15-17), and since the NT does not distinguish between two different parousias separated by thousands of years, and since this parousia is said to occur in the lifetime of some who would “live and remain” until it occurred (1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:15), then it is clear that these two texts were fulfilled in AD 70. This forces some adjustment in our concepts about the nature of fulfillment once we get the time of fulfillment straightened out. All three of these difficult second coming texts have been explained from a consistent AD 70 fulfillment. This leaves partial preterists nowhere to hide. We can thank Russell for pointing the way toward this approach to these three texts.

A LITERAL RAPTURE

Another area in which Russell greatly served the interests of future generations was the rapture. Four other scholars within a generation of Russell also taught the idea of a literal rapture in AD 70 (Milton S. Terry, E. Hampden-Cook, Richard Weymouth, and William S. Urmy). There are minor differences in the way each of these men described it, but all agreed there was a removal of some true Christians in connection with the return of Christ in AD 70. Modern advocates of a literal AD 70 rapture (such as Garrett Brown, Walt

Hibbard, Arthur Melanson, Ian Harding, Ed Stevens, and others) go further to assert that all true Christians (and nothing but true Christians) alive at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem were “snatched away” to be with Christ in the spiritual realm. Russell suggested that only some Christians were caught up – a “partial rapture” with the sleepers or unwatchful Christians left on earth. But it seems from Jesus’ sharp criticism of that group in Matthew 25 (and in the book of Revelation) that the sleepers or unwatchful were not true Christians. The tribulation and apostasy eliminated the insincere. By the time of the rapture the only watchful, awake, and “worthy ones” were the true Christians. There would have been few (if any) pretenders and “mere professing Christians.” So in either view, the group of saints actually raptured is basically the same, whether we see it as only the watchful Christians, or as true Christians only.

The arguments we all use to establish the necessity of a literal rapture in AD 70 are exactly the same. The strongest arguments are the Biblical “expectation statements.” Scripture alone is our standard, not scripture plus history, tradition or anything else. The only authoritative material that we can use to make any final decisions about what did or did not occur in AD 70 is the Bible. If it says the Parousia was going to occur in AD 70, that should be enough. We shouldn’t have to be convinced by history or any external arguments. If the text of scripture says something is going to occur within a certain time frame, then we are bound to believe it, regardless of whether we can find external historical or traditional support for it, and regardless of whether our credulity is stretched to the breaking point. The same thing happened in the field of archaeology in regard to the Hittites and Darius the Mede. The Bible was the only evidence we had for the existence of these people for a long time, yet that did not make advocates of sola scriptura doubt the veracity of the Bible. So for sincere believers, the question boils down to this: What did the NT writers believe, teach, and expect to see, hear, and experience at the Parousia? Did they expect to experience the Parousia in any conscious way? Did they expect to “know” it had occurred afterwards? Or did they expect it to happen totally in the invisible realm without being consciously aware of it in any way? It is these Biblical “expectation statements” that also need to be examined, not just the “time statements.”

We Preterists have pressed Futurists with the “time statements,” and rightly so, because they are “sola scriptura” arguments. They are Biblical statements that need to be dealt with. So are the “expectation statements.” What the “time statements” do for Preterism in general, the “expectation statements” do for the rapture view in particular. The time statements nail down the “time” of the parousia and its related events, while the expectation statements reveal the

content and “nature” of those events in the experience of the Church.

Just because the Parousia may not have been validated historically in the way some might have preferred, it never stopped us from seeing it as a fulfilled “fact.” The “time statements” forced us to believe that it must have occurred, regardless of a lack of historical confirmation. Even if we are unable to find external historical proof for a literal rapture in AD 70, it does not invalidate the Bible’s affirmation of it. Our concern is simply, “What does Scripture actually teach?”

Rapture advocates have been accused of teaching a rapture based only on external historical “arguments from silence.” Not so! Scripture is the driving force. The expectation statements are Biblical arguments, just like the time statements. The time statements help establish the time of fulfillment, while the expectation statements help determine the nature of fulfillment. As you study the following list of Biblical passages, find the answers to these two questions: (1) What does Jesus say is actually going to be seen and experienced by His saints at the Parousia? (2) What do the NT writers and pre-70 Christians indicate that they were expecting to actually see and experience at the Parousia? (Matt. 16:27-28; 19:28; 24:31; John 14:2-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Cor. 5:1-4; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:6- 10; 2:1; and 1 Jn. 3:2). These texts show clearly what the first century Church expected to experience at the Parousia.

Paul said that when Christ would come to cast His enemies “away from His presence” and gather His saints (2 Thess. 1:6–2:1), that the saints would “marvel at Him” in His presence and in the presence of all who have believed, and Christ would be glorified by their collective presence with Him “on that day.” That doesn’t sound like a very silent occasion to me. Did they fail to “recognize the time of His visitation” and remain silent (as if it had not occurred). They should have been celebrating and proclaiming the fulfillment of His Parousia (if they were still around). There is a strange silence here, at the very time when we would have expected anything but silence, when they said they would be marveling at Christ in His presence. Their silence does not match their expectations, unless they were doing those things in the heavenly realm (no longer on the earthly scene).

If all living Christians remained on earth after AD 70, why didn’t some of those who saw these incredible events in AD 70 say something about it? Why the silence, if they were still around? Russell and the other four scholars mentioned above proposed the literal rapture to explain that silence. Silence is not a significant argument all by itself. But as Sherlock Holmes would agree in the case of the dog that didn’t bark when a supposed outsider broke in,

sometimes silence is significant, especially when the circumstances would force us to expect otherwise. Expectations demand our attention even in the case of silence, if the Bible clearly teaches us to expect something other than silence. And it does.

For more indepth studies of the rapture at the parousia in AD 66-70, see this author's book entitled, *Expectations Demand A Rapture*, and the excellent series of articles written by Ian Harding.

THE MILLENNIUM

Russell was uncomfortable with any view of the Millennium which ended at AD 70 (p. 514). He considered such a short duration of the millennium (40 years or less) to be "so violent and unnatural that we cannot hesitate to reject it" (p. 514). He suggested the millennium only began at AD 70 with a limited "first" resurrection and judgment (of the righteous only), and is still ongoing in history and moving toward a yet future final resurrection and judgment of the rest of the dead (the wicked only – p. 518). It seemed to him that the Millennium was "introduced parenthetically" as an exception to the AD 70 time limits of the rest of the book (p. 514).

He noted that some people (such as myself) consider the idea of a Millennium after AD 70 as challenging the imminent time indicators throughout the book of Revelation. We would prefer a 40-year millennium (AD 30-70) which stays within those time limits.

Russell places a flashback to AD 70 at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:10), so that the white throne judgment in Rev. 20:11ff takes place in AD 70. Preterists who take the 40-year approach cannot disallow his flashback, since we insert one at the beginning of the millennium.

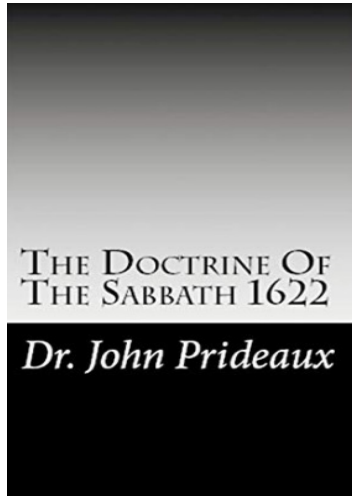
Russell's millennium interpretation deserves careful consideration. He acknowledged his understanding of it might not be perfect, and held out the hope that succeeding generations "will soon correct what is proved to be erroneous, and confirm what is shown to be right." (p. 535)

In conclusion, I have to repeat how impressed I am with Russell's exegetical work here. Many thousands of Bible students all over the world have been, and will continue to be, blessed by this book. We send this reprint forth with strong encouragement to seriously and objectively consider everything he has to say, and to "search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so." (Acts 17:11)

Edward E. Stevens

Bradford, Pennsylvania July, 2003

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE SABBATH 1622

By John Prideaux (Author)

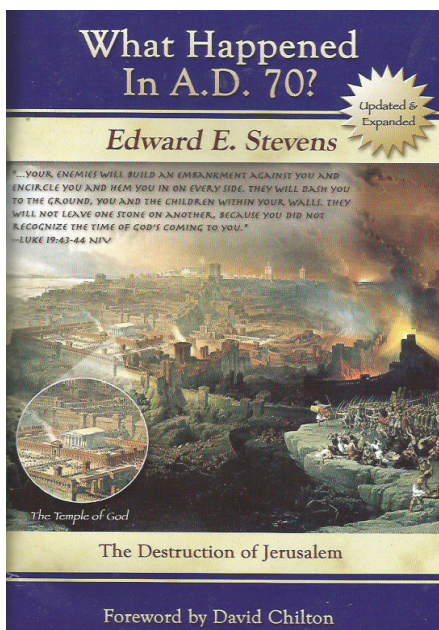
Of all the controverts which have exercised the Church of Christ, there is none more ancient than that of the Sabbath: So ancient that it took beginning even in the infancy of the Church, and grew up with it. For as we read in the Acts There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise the people, and to command them to keep the law of Moses; whereof the Sabbath was apart: Which in the general, as the apostles labours to suppress in their first General Council, held in Jerusalem: So did S. Paul, upon occasion of whose ministry this controversy first began, endeavor what he could against the particular, shapely reproving those which hallowed yet the Jewish Sabbath and observed days, and months, and times, as if he had bestowed his labor in vain upon them. But more particularly in his epistle to the Colossians, Let no man judge you in respect of a holy day or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which were a shadow of things to come but the body is of Christ. Both which expressions of Paul are in this following discourse produced to this very purpose. Yet notwithstanding all this care both generally of the Apostles and more especially of Paul to suppress this error; it grew up still and had its patrons and abettors.

This reproduction of, 'The doctrine of the Sabbath', by Dr. John Prideaux has been presented for those who have been troubled by the insistence of those religious people who insist that the first day of the week is the Sabbath day and to be kept holy, as dictated by the law of Moses. It is not. We include also Dr. John Gill on the subject of the circumstances of public worship as to place and time. It is the view of this publisher that the time and place of Christian

worship it is a matter for the Christian community to decide and is not legislated in the scriptures.

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WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70



Ed. Stevens

This book introduces a view of Bible prophecy which many have found extremely helpful in their Bible study. It explains the end time riddles which have always bothered students of Bible prophecy. It is a *consistent view* which makes the book of Revelation much easier to understand. It establishes when the New Testament canon of scripture was completed, demolishes the liberal attack on the inspiration of the New Testament, and is more *conservative* on most other issues than traditional views. And there is *no compromise* of any essential Biblical doctrine of the Christian faith.

The key to understand any passage of scripture has always been a good grasp of the historical setting in which it was originally written (*audience relevance*). Two thousand years from now our history, culture, politics and language will have changed dramatically. Imagine someone then having to learn the ancient language of "American English" to read our USA newspapers! If they saw one of our political cartoons with a donkey and elephant, what would they think? How would they go about understanding it? Not only would they have to study the language, but also our culture, history, politics and economics. The same applies

to Bible study. If we are really going to understand what all the “donkeys and elephants” (beasts, harlots, dragons, etc.) Symbolize in the book of Revelation, we will have to seriously and carefully study the language, history, culture and politics of the First Century. Of course, the truths essential for salvation are couched in simple language that everyone can grasp. But there are numerous scriptures in the Bible which are “hard to understand” (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), and Bible prophecy is one of those things which must be approached with much more focus on the original historical art cultural context (audience relevance)

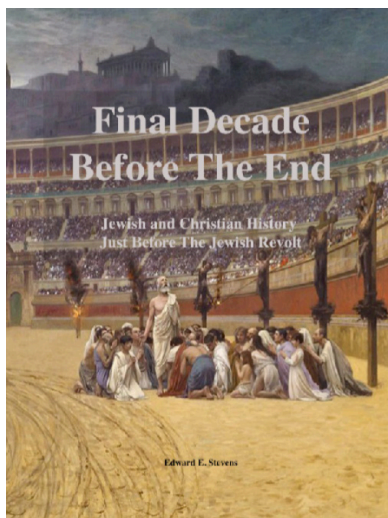
One of the main purposes of this book is to provide a closer look at the historical framework behind the New Testament. Many have found it helpful to lay aside (at least temporarily) the legion of speculative opinions about the book of Revelation, and look at a more historical alternative, which is that *the book of Revelation was written to the first century church and had primary relevance to them*. It warned of events that were about to happen in their lifetime, and prepared them for the tribulation and other events associated with the End of the Jewish Age.

Atheists, skeptics, Jew, Muslims, and liberal critics of the bible use the supposed failure of those end times events to occur in the First Century to undermine the integrity of Christs and the inspired NT writings.

Non-Christian Jews laugh at this supposed non-occurrence, and use it as evidence that Jesus is not the Messiah. Their forefathers in the flesh rejected Jesus in His first coming because He did not fulfill the Old Testament prophecies in the materialistic and nationalistic way that they were expecting, even though Jesus told them that His Kingdom was not of this world, and that it would be within them instead. Yet it seems that many futurists today are expecting that same kind of materialistic and nationalistic kingdom to arrive at a future return of Christ Are they making the same mistake about the Second Coming that the Jews made about His first coming? Jesus repeatedly said His Kingdom is “not of this world” and that it would “not come with observation.” It is a spiritual entity, and it has arrived We live in it. Both futurist Christians and non-Christian Jews need to realize this.

Christians are finally beginning to seek alternatives to the fatally flawed *futurist* interpretation. This book introduces the Preterist view.

“Preterist” simply means past in fulfillment It means that Christ has already fulfilled His promise to return and consummate redemption in Himself and His ongoing spiritual kingdom (the church). We should be like the noble-minded Bereans and “search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are true” You might want to have your Bible open alongside as you read

FINAL DECADE BEFORE THE END**Ed. Stevens**

Ever since the booklet, **What Happened In AD 70?** was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church.

Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell's view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, *First Century Events in Chronological Order*. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events.

The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD

70, the more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans.

Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to “teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4). Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul’s other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2Tim 2:2).

We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38- 44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the end-time prophecies that we document here.

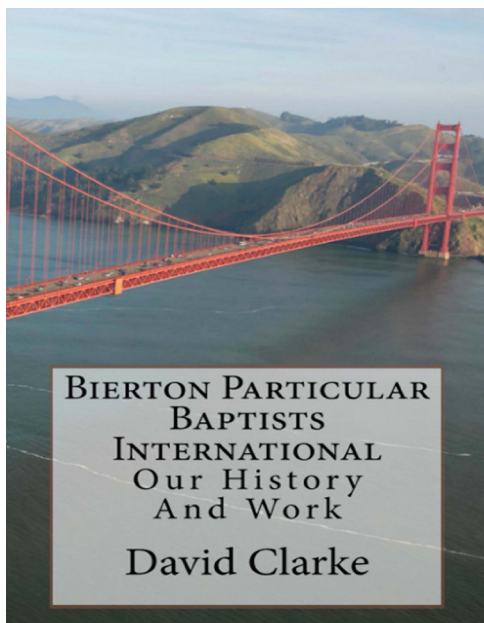
After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing in both intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronic persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the end-time events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of “tribulation” upon the church and the “days of vengeance” upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

Edward E. Stevens

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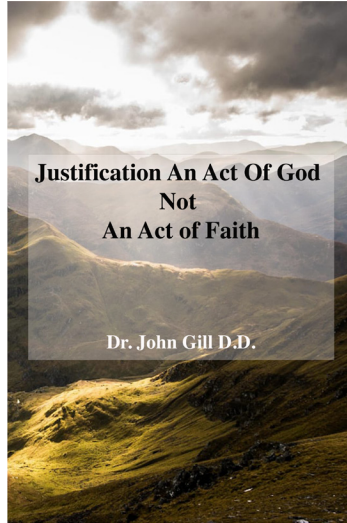
BIERTON PARTICULAR BAPTISTS INTERNATIONAL

OUR HISTORY AND WORK



By Bierton Particular Baptists (Author), David Clarke (Author)

Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists were formed as a Protestant Calvinistic church in, 1831 whose articles of religion are set out in the appendix of this book. This book seeks to tell of the continuing work of the author as the sole remaining member of Bierton Particular Baptists seeking to fulfill his calling as a sent minister of the Bierton Church seeking to preach and teach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which it continues today in an International capacity seeking to promote the gospel in Pakistan. A full account of the authors succession may be read in, "The Bierton Crisis", published and listed under further publications at the back of this book. Bierton Particular Baptists has worked in the Philippines continues to function in the UK and supports an early work in Pakistan.

JUSTIFICATION AN ACT OF GOD**NOT AN ACT OF FAITH**

Dr. John Gill

Alternatively Eternal Justification an Antidote To Fullerism Paperback – November 21, 2020

By Dr John Gill DD (Author), David Clarke (Editor)

This book treats the subject of Justification by faith and is Dr. John Gill's treatment of the subject as taught in his Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity in which he demonstrates that Justification is an Act of God and not an act of man's faith. It is written Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness Gill shows that the 'it' that was counted to him for righteousness was the righteousness of Christ as it is to all who are justified by faith. Abraham believed God and by faith depended and believed all the promises of God, just as believers do in the Old and New Testaments. We are not justified because of the exercise of our faith as many Christian beliefs, but by believing in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is an act of the new man, and a faith that draws assurance from the promises of God in the scripture.

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