

Let Christian Men Be Men 4th 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

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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

The pages that follow recount a series of events which, in the providence of God, led to my secession from the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church in the year 1984. My purpose in setting these things down is twofold: firstly, to provide a faithful testimony to the truth of the gospel and to the doctrines commonly known as the Doctrines of Grace; and secondly, to exhort Christian men to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 1:3).

It is my hope that this account may be of particular use to those who are called to the ministry of the Word—whether preachers, elders, or deacons—and to any who seek to preserve sound doctrine in the midst of growing apostasy. Should you read this and find that you share my concern for the truth, I would be grateful to hear from you. It is my belief that these things, though difficult, may be used by our Lord for the furtherance of the gospel. If I may be of any help to you—or if you feel led to offer guidance or counsel—please don't hesitate to get in touch. I have listed several recommended publications at the end of this book for further reading and edification.

Bierton is a village near Aylesbury, in the county of Buckinghamshire. The Bierton Church was established in 1831 as a Strict and Particular Baptist society, in accordance with English law. The founding meeting was chaired by the son of John Warburton of Trowbridge, Wiltshire, a well-known minister of that era. The church was later received into the Gospel Standard list of churches on the 16th of January, 1981.

It is important to make clear that my departure was not a break with the Strict Baptist denomination as a whole, nor was I under any form of church censure or discipline. Rather, I withdrew from the communion at Bierton as a matter of conscience. In accordance with the strict rules of our church's constitution, I technically remained a member of the society—yet I chose to walk apart, being persuaded in my spirit that I could no longer continue in good conscience.

Conscience Set Free

Having voluntarily withdrawn from that fellowship, I now find my conscience clear to speak of these matters. I am bound not by the traditions or rules of any society, but only by the law of Christ. The official date of my secession was the 26th of June, 1984.

A Final Note

Please bear with me regarding any errors in spelling, grammar, or composition. I left school virtually illiterate, and only learned to read after I was brought to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I make no boast of this—only to say that the Lord has been gracious to me. I would be very glad of the help of a proof-reader.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Clarke remains the sole surviving member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, all other members having passed away. The penultimate member died before the chapel was formally closed for public worship on 22nd December 2002.

David recounts his remarkable conversion from a life of crime to faith in Christ on 16th January 1970, as detailed in his earlier work, *Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists*. He joined the Bierton Church in 1976 and later authored *The Bierton Crisis* (1984), a personal record of his secession from that church on grounds of conscience and doctrinal integrity.

In 1981, the Bierton Church became aligned with the Gospel Standard denomination. Its Articles of Religion—an able refinement of the 1646 First London Confession of Faith (2nd Edition)—were not contrary to the church's founding principles. However, their adoption stirred up strong opposition, both internally and from without, leading to troubling divisions. As church secretary, David found himself at the centre of the conflict, feeling bound to address matters that touched directly upon the truth of the gospel.

In January 1982, David was recognised by the church as a minister sent out to preach wherever the Lord might open a door. His calling was supported by

Mr Hill (Pastor of Ebenezer, Luton) and Mr Hope (Pastor of Zoar, Reading), both Gospel Standard ministers. He ministered across many churches in England, where he encountered a range of challenges confronting the churches and believers alike—problems he believed must be addressed, not avoided.

David became persuaded that God's people were perishing for lack of knowledge, as the prophet declared:

“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.” — Isaiah 5:13

During his time at Berton, he began to speak out against various doctrinal errors: hymns that taught a general redemption; views of the Mosaic Law as binding upon believers contrary to gospel liberty; and misplaced reverence for buildings or so-called “holy tables.” Conscience would not allow him to continue, and in 1984, he withdrew from the church and published *The Berton Crisis*, distributing it privately to trustees and concerned parties. Notably, the church never removed him from membership—indeed, they desired his return.

David observed that when tradition is exalted above the Scriptures, truth soon withers. Men may start well in gospel liberty but drift into vain disputings and fleshly religion. By “falling from grace,” he meant not the loss of salvation, but a departure from gospel truth as the rule of life, that is the doctrines of grace.

Though the Berton Church had adopted the Gospel Standard Articles of Religion, David faced opposition from those within and without the church. These included:

Arminianism

The role of the Law of Moses vs. the Gospel as rule of life

The “offer” of the gospel (Fullerism) versus declaration

Difficulties with the added Gospel Standard articles

The so-called “Hyper-Calvinism” debate

Antinomianism

Women’s roles in the church

The use of head coverings

Reverence for objects or buildings

Use of cassette recorders and televisions

He also uncovered a marked divide between Gospel Standard Baptists and other Reformed or Grace Baptists—particularly over issues such as duty-faith, free offers of grace, and election. Matters came to a head signified by the London Grace Baptist Association Ltd. taking possession of the Bierton chapel upon its closure and who denied David access, rejecting his membership and who opposed Gospel Standard beliefs.

David held that:

Particular redemption is clearly taught in Scripture, and worship hymns must reflect this.

The Gospel, or Royal Law of Liberty, not the Mosaic Law, is the believer’s rule of life.

Gospel truth must be declared, not “offered” indiscriminately.

The added Gospel Standard Articles, though often misunderstood, affirm election, regeneration, and the gracious nature of saving faith as the gift of God.

Women may serve in the church, but not as elders or in ruling roles.

Head coverings for women remain a biblical practice.

No spiritual significance should be attached to tables, buildings, or relics.

Media tools (TVs, radios, internet) should not be condemned by another

man's conscience.

David believes the Lord Jesus has called him to share these matters for the benefit of any who love the truth and seek to walk faithfully. His desire is that this testimony may be of great spiritual profit, written with the same solemnity as that described in Job 19:24:

“That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!”

When David first printed *The Bierton Crisis*, now republished as *Let Christian Men Be Men*, he sent it only to those directly involved, as listed below, affirming his freedom of conscience under the law of Christ, not the rules of men. The church itself never rescinded his membership, and even after returning from gospel work in the Philippines in 2003, when he was invited to reopen the Bierton Chapel for worship by the Mr. Crane the former Bierton overseer.

This account is written out of conscience, conviction, and concern for the truth. It is not intended to dwell on personal matters but to illuminate and bring attention to the doctrinal issues affecting churches today.

CONTENTS

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION	3
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	4
PRELUDE	9
GENERAL LETTER TO THE PERSONS BELOW	10
CHURCH RULES AND CHURCH BUSINESS	12
CHAPTER 1 – TRUTH CAUSES A DIVISION (LUKE 2:51)	13
CHAPTER 2 - My Method And The Problem	15
CHAPTER 2 - A Further Attempt To Resolve Our Differences	19
CHAPTER 3 -Joining The Bierton Strict And Particular Baptists	20
CHAPTER 4 – Visitors And Strict Communion	25
CHAPTER 5 – Evangelical Repentance	29
CHAPTER 6 – The Children's Hymn Book	31
CHAPTER 7- I Consider Leaving The Church	33
CHAPTER 8 - A Decision to Stay	37
CHAPTER 9 - A Dream	39
CHAPTER 10 - Events Turn For The Worst	40
CHAPTER 11 – Communion Refused	44
CHAPTER 12 – Mr Sayers and the Gospel Standard Articles	54
CHAPTER 13 – Leprosy Discovered	56
CHAPTER 14 – Announcement of Registration	61
CHAPTER 15 – My Conclusion	66
CHAPTER 16 – Mr Crane's Response	71
CHAPTER 17 – I Seek a City	73
CHAPTER 17 – Our History and My Background	76
CHAPTER 18 – The Bierton Articles of Religion (1831)	78
CHAPTER 19 – Bierton Becomes a Gospel Standard Cause	80
CHAPTER 20 – Mr Royce of Luton and the Added Articles	84
CHAPTER 19 – John Metcalfe and Tyler's Green Chapel	88
CHAPTER 20 – What Next: The Aftermath	92
CHAPTER 21 – My Letter to the Association of Grace Baptist	94
CHAPTER 22 – The Closure of the Bierton Chapel	97
CHAPTER 23 – Continued Ministry	98
CHAPTER 24 – No Rest for the Sole of My Feet	99
CHAPTER 24 Gospel Standard Articles	101
CHAPTER 25 - THE HISTORY OF THE ADDED ARTICLES	117
APPENDIX	129
FIRST REGISTRATION 1	138
DOCUMENT LIST	141
GROUND PLAN	157

PRELUDE

Love Covereth a Multitude of Sins

I am well aware this publication may cause offence. Some will object, saying names should not be mentioned, nor letters published without the consent of their authors. That may be so, yet for the truth's sake I cannot remain silent. There is a day coming when all shall be revealed before the judgment seat of Christ. I write not with malice, but with love for the Lord's people.

I pray this record may be a help to others who find themselves in similar difficulties, and that its treatment of these serious issues will serve those earnestly seeking to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” — 1 Peter 4:8

All the other members of the church have died.. I alone remain.

A Common Problem

I trust that what is written here will help others avoid the snares that so often beset the churches. May this record be a means to restore the fallen (Deut. 22:4). Churches without pastors and those not governed according to Scripture are bound to falter unless they return to the word of God and the obedience of faith:

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.” — John 14:15

This book deals with subjects such as particular redemption, handling of offences, the role of the law, the nature of gospel invitations, the Sabbath, gospel rest, and the importance of doctrinal integrity.

The issues I raise reflect conditions found across many churches today, where the cause of Christ and the purpose of His gospel church are all but forgotten:

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...” — Hosea 4:6

A TESTIMONY FOR THE ELECT OF GOD

My hope is that this testimony may serve the glory of God and the calling in of Christ's elect. May the gospel be declared in this generation, and may this account contribute in some small way to that end.

GENERAL LETTER TO THE PERSONS BELOW

Enclosed is a copy of my article, *The Bierton Crisis*. It is sent to the following individuals, all of whom are connected to the events described. Some are named directly; others are quoted via correspondence. Some are trustees, others ministers, or churches where I have preached.

It has been said I should have obtained permission to publish their names or letters. But I am persuaded that for truth's sake, this must be done. The New Testament epistles often name both faithful saints and enemies of the truth—why should we do otherwise?

I urge all readers to seek the Lord for wisdom to discern between good and evil. May this testimony prove helpful. I would humbly ask for your prayers—for me, for my family, and for the dear people of Bierton. I have a deep love for them still.

If any feel led to offer help, correction, or reproof in love and truth, I shall be thankful.

This General Letter is sent to:

Mr Sayers, Minister, Watford

Mr Crane, Overseer, Bierton, Lakenheath

Mr Baumber, Trustee & Minister, Bedford

Mr Janes, Trustee & Deacon, Eddlesborough

Mr Dix, Minister, Dunstable

Mr Levey, Deacon, Dunstable

Mr John Just, Dunstable

Mr J. Gosden, Minister, Southborough

Mr Ramsbottom, Minister, Luton

Mr Wood, Minister, Croydon

Mr Howe, Former Minister, Aylesbury

Mr C. Lawrence, Minister, Harold

Mr S. Scott-Pearson, Minister, Maulden

Mr Royce, Luton

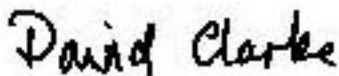
Mr Hope, Minister, Reading

Mr Martin, Trustee & Minister, Blunham Strict Baptist

Churches: Evington, Oakington, Attleborough, Bierton, Blackheath, and
Stamford

Yours in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
David Clarke

David Clarke – 31/10/1984

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Clarke". The script is cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

1 Corinthians 16:22–24

CHURCH RULES AND CHURCH BUSINESS

It is common courtesy—and indeed a matter of integrity—that church matters spoken of in confidence should not be discussed outside the church without its consent. This principle is not unlike that which governs a family, where private matters ought not to be shared without permission from those involved. Such discretion is the norm.

However, there are exceptions to this rule. In matters of serious concern, it is entirely appropriate—and sometimes necessary—to speak out. Even the law of the land compels a citizen to report wrongdoing when they have knowledge of it. In like manner, when the truth of the gospel is at stake, the higher law of Christ must take precedence. As the Lord Jesus said:

“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.” — Matthew 10:27

David Clarke, being the sole surviving member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, bears the responsibility for its testimony and all matters related to its witness. In the first edition of *The Bierton Crisis*, David stated plainly that his departure left him free in conscience—not governed by the rules of the society, but bound only by the law of Christ. This liberty gave him both the right and the duty to take a stand for the truth, and this he endeavoured to do.

The church, for its part, was free to terminate his membership, but it did not. In fact, they wished for his return.

CHURCHES CONNECTED

The following churches were associated with Bierton, or had some connection through fellowship or preaching engagements:

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

CHAPTER 1 – TRUTH CAUSES A DIVISION (LUKE 2:51)

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 laid the axe to the root of the error that ultimately caused the division between myself and the Church at Bierton. I formally seceded on the 26th of June 1984.

Our church had operated 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 troubled to find that for the second year running, he had selected two children’s hymns for both the children and their unconverted parents to sing: “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so,” and “There is a green hill far away.” He had commented that Jesus loved each one of them. I was grieved, for how could he declare that Christ loved every child and parent there, when none gave evidence of saving faith? Mr King, though a minister from our Gospel Standard church, was teaching general redemption—a departure from the doctrine of particular redemption.

In an attempt to address this, on Wednesday 20th April 1983, I preached from Titus 3:8: “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.” I sought to apply this practically to our church’s needs. I suggested we restore a suitable children’s hymnbook—one that did not contain hymns teaching universal redemption. I asserted that it was a good work to set our church in order, though such a course may offend our natural inclinations.

I pointed out several areas needing reform: we had no pastor and required sound teaching and ruling; we ought not to teach error in the Sunday school; and that hymns teaching “Jesus died for all” were inconsistent with our Confession of Faith.

During my address, I observed Mr King shaking his head disapprovingly when I labelled it heresy to teach that Jesus died for “each one.” He later remarked that he knew not by what spirit I spoke.

After the meeting, Mrs Gurney asked when we might convene a church meeting to discuss these matters. A quarterly meeting was due, and we set it for 27th April at 2:30 p.m. Mr King chaired the meeting and read from Psalm 23.

At that meeting, he noted he would step down as chairman by the next meeting, citing disagreement within the membership. He then ruled that, per Gospel Standard rule 15, no matters of serious import could be addressed without one month's notice—thus forbidding discussion of my sermon.

He further charged that I had brought serious accusations against the church, and that the authority of the chair ought to be respected. I challenged this, explaining I sought only the church's view on whether it was right to teach children and unconverted parents that Jesus died for them all.

I claimed the delay was a tactic of Satan, and drew a parallel with Oliver Cromwell resisting the tyranny of kingship.

I proposed that outside witnesses be called—suggesting Mr Hill of Luton or Mr Hope of Reading. Miss G. Ellis preferred someone less familiar, and we agreed on Mr Ramsbottom of Luton or Mr Philip Janes, a trustee. This motion carried, 5 votes to 2. I had assumed the chair in the debate, but invited Mr King to close in prayer.

In a postscript to the minutes, Mr King asked for an honourable dismissal, arguing I should not have joined the church if I disagreed with those hymns. I replied that dismissal required just cause and that teaching general redemption was not consistent with our confession.

Afterwards, the church noted it could not recall the final paragraph of the postscript and did not adopt it as official record.

At that meeting, I saw something of the spirit of religious hypocrisy twisting and turning like a serpent. My conscience would not let me stay silent.

Leaving the chapel in sorrow, my wife and I encountered Mr Hill, standing outside the Pentecostal chapel at Bierton crossroads. He had mistakenly come to preach, having walked two miles from the bus stop on the Aylesbury Road, he had come from Luton. We felt the Lord had sent him for our comfort. He embraced us, listened, and encouraged us with these words: "Them that honour me I will honour" (1 Samuel 2:30).

That evening, after tea, we joined him at the chapel to hear Mr Goode preach the Word of God.

CHAPTER 2 - My Method And The Problem

In the days following our April 1983 church meeting, I felt it necessary to write directly to Mr King, whom I believed had conducted himself in a manner both unbecoming of a minister and damaging to the peace and purity of our church. On 2nd May 1983, I handed him the following letter personally at our weeknight meeting. No other church member was aware of its contents—until Mr King chose to read parts of it aloud at a later meeting (see Church Minutes, Unofficial Meeting, 19th October 1983).

Letter to Mr King – 2nd May 1983

Dear Mr King,

Your conduct and policy during our recent church meeting have caused offence—not only to myself, but also to my wife, who is likewise a member of the church. I must tell you plainly that your actions serve only to harm the Bierton cause. Nevertheless, I thank God, who gives more grace, for His watchful care over His people. He will not suffer His little ones to be destroyed, but will turn these trials for their good.

You began the meeting by casting doubt on the spirit by which I preached the previous Wednesday, and then sought to prohibit any discussion of the matters I had raised—citing church rules in an attempt to silence necessary correction. Even Mrs Gurney voiced her unease, saying it would be unjust to forbid a member from expressing their views for a whole month.

Your application of Rule 15 is incorrect. That rule pertains to motions requiring a church vote, not to open discussion of serious concerns. It does not bar a church member from raising doctrinal issues simply because you find them uncomfortable.

Moreover, you accused me—and others—of joining the church to create disorder, even implying my baptism was invalid because it had not taken place at Bierton. You referred to my baptism as a “Free Will Baptism” and said I should have remained in the church I came from. These personal attacks were entirely uncalled for.

I must ask: are you an enemy to the doctrines we at Bierton profess to hold? Or are you careless with your words when teaching children and unconverted parents? In either case, your conduct is at odds with the articles

of our faith and with the calling of a Christian minister.

You say I bulldozed the meeting, but I believe I was taking charge of a runaway horse. Like Phinehas in Numbers 25:7–8, I acted to halt that which was defiling our worship.

The doctrines of God’s distinguishing love, particular redemption, and election are not things to be whispered or watered down. To teach otherwise—to suggest Christ died for all children indiscriminately—is to contradict the Scriptures. Hymns sung by children in the presence of unconverted parents should not suggest saving grace where no evidence of it exists.

You further accused the Rev. Stephen Scott-Pearson of “Romanising” because he wore a clerical collar. But you failed to mention that the very publication in which this image appeared also showed him protesting publicly against the Pope’s visit to Britain. If anything, Mr Scott-Pearson is a faithful contender for the faith. Can the same be said of you?

You objected to hosting an informational meeting at Bierton about the Pope’s visit, citing your desire not to offend your Roman Catholic friends. Again, I must ask: where is your loyalty—to truth or to social harmony?

As for your claim that we entered the church already knowing the nature of the Sunday school hymns—Bertha has testified that these hymns were only recently introduced. I myself first raised this concern last year.

You forget that it was you who proposed the church join the Gospel Standard causes—a decision far weightier than any I have put forward.

As a trustee, you are sworn to preserve our Articles of Faith. If you no longer believe or uphold them, you are not only unfaithful—you are, by legal standards, guilty of perjury.

You claim you are under inquisition. I say, rather, you are under gospel scrutiny—and that is a blessing, not a curse. Great men are not always wise (Job 32:9).

My charge stands:

To teach children that “Jesus loves them each one,” and that “Jesus died

for them all,” is false doctrine.

To have them sing such hymns is not a good work, but a delusion that confuses the nature of God’s love for His elect.

These hymns contradict the Scriptures and the Articles of the Church. I seek to preserve the doctrines of grace which this church, until now, has publicly professed. Do you?

I say to you, as Paul said, “Be ye reconciled to God.” Let us not destroy the peace of Zion for the sake of sentiment. I am willing to forgive and restore fellowship if you will submit to Scripture and confess the truth.

Yours in the name of Jesus Christ,
David Clarke

P.S. I am willing to submit all I have said to the judgement of any Christian minister in membership with a Gospel Standard cause.

Further Correspondence and Attempts at Reconciliation

Following the delivery of that letter, I attempted to meet Mr King in person but found him out. I left the following note:

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, in the presence of Mr Hope and Mr Hill—or some other ministers or brethren—in accordance with the principles set forth in Matthew 18:15–17.

Yours sincerely,
David Clarke

(28th May 1983)

Mr King’s Initial Response

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 Reply

*Dear Mr King,

Thank you for your note of Saturday. I note you do not mention Mr Hill. If Mr Collier (minister of Linslade Strict Baptists) would be willing to accompany Mr Hope, would you be willing to meet with them both? (Matthew 18:15–17; Matthew 5:23).

Yours sincerely,

David Clarke

P.S. I felt your reference to “the doors being shut” was somewhat manipulative.*

Mr King’s Second Reply (6th June 1983)

Dear David,

I am sorry for the delay in replying to your last note. I had not realised you were insisting on two ministers, when Scripture mentions one or two witnesses.

Nevertheless, if it will ease your conscience, you may proceed as you feel.

Mr Collier is not very well, and I do not think it kind to ask him to get involved.

Kindly let me know your further arrangements.

My heart before God is to forgive—even as I hope I have been forgiven.

My manner before all men is to apologise. In one word—SORRY.

In love,

Arthur King

Final Attempts to Resolve

Because of the seriousness of the matter, I believed Mr Collier—an experienced minister familiar with our church—was best suited to judge impartially. I called upon him, explained the situation, and he confirmed that particular redemption was indeed biblical. He agreed the children's hymn-book should be replaced.

He advised me to speak with Mr King once more before arranging a formal meeting.

When I did so, I approached with great fear and pressure upon my spirit. I expressed my hope for reconciliation and apologised for any unjust offence I may have caused. Mr King likewise expressed sorrow, and we parted with mutual prayer and Scripture.

Yet despite these moments of warmth, I was soon disappointed. It became apparent that Mr King had not grasped the central issue. This was not a matter of personality or pride—it was about the truth of the gospel. The doctrine of particular redemption was being publicly denied in the name of sentiment.

And so, the matter remained sadly unresolved.

CHAPTER 2 - A Further Attempt To Resolve Our Differences

Following the meeting of 27th April 1983, it became clear that the concerns I had raised—particularly regarding the teaching of general redemption to children—had not been resolved. Despite the ruling of the chairman that discussion of such matters was out of order under Gospel Standard Rule 15, I remained persuaded that the spiritual health of the church demanded urgent attention.

In response, I endeavoured to pursue a course of peace and truth by proposing the involvement of impartial and respected parties from outside our fellowship. It was my belief that these trusted brethren, being free from the internal tensions of our own society, might offer godly counsel and help mediate a way forward in love and order.

To that end, I wrote personal letters to Mr Hill of Luton and Mr Hope of Reading—both esteemed ministers of the Gospel Standard persuasion. I laid out the situation in as careful and charitable a manner as possible, praying

that the Lord might incline their hearts to assist. It was never my desire to divide, but rather to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace—so far as that unity could be based upon gospel truth.

At this time, I also addressed a letter to the church itself, expressing my concerns and reaffirming my willingness to discuss matters openly, so long as the Scriptures were held as our only rule of faith and practice.

Yet, despite these efforts, there was resistance. Some felt I was stirring up strife or making mountains out of molehills. Others feared the involvement of outsiders, seeing it as a threat to our independence as a local church. The suggestion that Mr King might not be suitable to continue preaching if he held to views contrary to our Confession of Faith was met with discomfort, even alarm.

Still, I could not retreat from my convictions. To teach that Christ died for each and every child in a blanket way, without evidence of grace or calling, was to propagate a false gospel. It undermined the very heart of particular redemption and confused the atoning work of our Saviour.

My conscience was captive to the Word of God. I was not contending for preference or personal bias but for the truth as it is in Jesus. I knew the cost of such a stand, yet I also knew the solemn charge laid upon all faithful men: to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints (Jude 1:3), and to withstand error even when it arises among brethren.

CHAPTER 3 -Joining The Bierton Strict And Particular Baptists

At this point in the narrative, it is important to explain how I came to join the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church. Around 1973, I found I could no longer, in good conscience, continue my association with the Pentecostal church I had been attending. While I still held affection for the people there, I felt compelled to leave when I discovered that just across the road stood a chapel where the very truths I had come to believe—the doctrines of sovereign grace—were both professed and preached.

I began attending the Bierton chapel as a member of the congregation, drawn by the gospel they upheld.

Distinguishing Doctrines of Grace

It was my friend Mr Alan Benning, from Wendover, who first told me about the Bierton chapel and its adherence to the doctrines of grace. He informed me that Mr J. Hill, a Gospel Standard minister from Luton Ebenezer Church, was due to preach at their upcoming anniversary. Eager to hear such preaching, I began attending the weeknight prayer meetings.

I hoped to hear the doctrines of free and sovereign grace clearly set forth, as I had found in the writings of men like William Huntington, William Gadsby, and John Kershaw—men who gave all the glory to Christ in the matter of salvation. Their autobiographies had greatly encouraged me.

I recall sitting quietly at the back of the chapel for that Wednesday night meeting. At the time, I knew nothing of the form of service or the structure of church governance at Bierton. Nor was I yet familiar with their Lord's Day or weeknight preaching arrangements.

The Doctrines I Believed

By this point in my life, I had become convinced that the Scriptures were the infallible Word of God—the only authority for faith and practice. I believed in the one true and living God, sovereign and self-existent, who exists in three divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These Three are One, undivided in essence.

I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father, who became man through the incarnation—being born of the virgin. Though truly God, He took upon Himself our human nature, yet without sin. Thus He became that glorious and complex person: God manifest in the flesh, the only Saviour of God's elect.

It was this same Jesus who had called me directly by His grace and revealed Himself to me outside any church or religious system. When I heard Mr Hill preach at that anniversary meeting, it was this Christ—the Christ of the Scriptures—that I heard exalted.

Distinction from Arminianism

At that time, most churches in the Aylesbury area taught what I now recognised as Arminian doctrine—a universal love of God towards all

men, a general atonement, and salvation made possible rather than certain. Doctrines that were wrong and opposed the reformed doctrines of grace.

Alan Benning and I visited other Gospel Standard causes. We attended Linslade Chapel, where Mr Collier was pastor. At one anniversary, we heard Mr Andrew Randall preach—a man who had previously been among the Brethren. He spoke soberly and doctrinally. We also attended the Waddesdon Hill anniversaries, where Mr James Hill ministered. That church, founded in 1752, was a Particular Baptist cause. I fondly recall attending with Bertha, Ruth Ellis, Alan Benning, and Grace Knight.

Becoming a Member at Bierton

After some time, I wrote to the church to express my desire to join. Having been born again and baptised, I felt a responsibility to unite with a church that held the truth. My application was accepted, the Articles of Religion I was given to subscribe to were not those contained in the original 1831 Trust Deed. I was received into membership on 8th January 1976—but not without difficulty. So I shared my concern with the Church. The two articles in particular presented serious doctrinal problems for me, and I could not, in conscience affirm them.

Mr Hill of Luton Assists

The church referred my concerns to Mr Hill of Luton Ebenezer, who kindly reviewed the matter. After examining the original articles from 1831, we found no record of how the altered articles had come into use. The church agreed I could be received on the basis of the original Articles of Faith. The problematic versions were thus set aside in my case.

Articles of Religion: The Problem

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

Article XII reads: We believe that Christ hath 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; Hebrews 4:9.

Article XVI reads: We believe that all who die in their infancy go to heaven by virtue of the death of Christ. — Matthew 19:13–15.

My objection to Article XII was that the scripture quotations cited do not support the statement. In particular, the text of Hebrews 4 does not refer to the seventh-day Sabbath, but rather to the spiritual rest which is found in Christ Jesus — as is later expressed in Gadsby's Hymn 636. It seemed to me that the compilers of this article had sought to establish a mistaken notion of gospel rest and were unclear regarding the believer's rule of life — a matter more accurately treated in Article 26 of the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith.

The scriptures plainly teach that the gospel of Christ, not the Law of Moses (commonly referred to as the moral law), is the believer's rule. This gospel is called the royal law and the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25, 2:8).

This matter is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 16, Mr Crane's Response, and under the heading I Join the Bierton Church.

As for Article XVI of the Bierton Articles: again, the scripture cited has nothing to do with infants dying in infancy, and therefore is not applicable. I believed that this article undermined the doctrine of the fall of mankind in Adam and denied the sovereign prerogative of God to show mercy to whom He will. Not all infants are loved of God, for it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated — and this before they were born (Romans 9:13).

Granted, if God hath chosen certain infants who die in infancy to be in Christ, then indeed they shall go to heaven by virtue of His blood and righteousness. But I find no scripture that teaches this doctrine as expressed in the article, and I could not, in good conscience, affirm it to be true. I could, with equal reason — though I do not believe it — imagine that all infants dying in infancy are damned by virtue of the imputed guilt of Adam.

Appointed as Church Secretary

Once received into membership, I was later appointed as church correspondent and secretary. My duties included arranging ministers to preach. It was a heavy responsibility for someone new to such affairs.

One matter involved Mr Martin Hunt, a visiting minister from Colnbrook. The church there had placed him under discipline. Mr King and I were tasked with speaking to him. The issue involved his stance on particular

redemption. I asked Mr Hunt if he could affirm our 1831 Articles of Religion. He said he could not. As a result, we no longer invited him to preach. This avoided judging the internal affairs of another church while preserving our own integrity.

Doctrinal Disparities Among Ministers

Bierton hosted preachers from across the country, not all of whom were Gospel Standard ministers. Some adhered to the 1689 or 1966 Baptist Confessions; others leaned toward Presbyterian-ism. Some preached duty faith and repentance. It was clear that there was no consistent doctrinal standard among them.

A Growing Sense of Call

As I listened to sermons that lacked scriptural clarity or promoted unsound doctrine, I increasingly felt a burden to preach the Word myself. This desire had been planted in me from the day of my conversion.

I had spoken occasionally at weeknight prayer meetings but was not yet formally recognised. Bible colleges held no appeal—I had met too many who had studied theology yet seemed never to have known the new birth. I resolved to learn directly from God through study, prayer, and experience.

Encouraged by my future wife, I studied teaching at Wolverhampton Polytechnic and earned a Certificate in Education from Birmingham University in 1978. I believed learning how to teach well would serve me in declaring the gospel with clarity.

Teaching and Preaching

I began teaching at Luton College of Higher Education in 1978. During this time, I also informed the Bierton Church of my felt call to preach. The church asked Mr Hill and Mr Hope—both Gospel Standard ministers—to hear my testimony and assess my doctrine.

They questioned me particularly on the believer's relationship to the Law of Moses. I stated that Christ had no need to fulfil the law to become righteous—He was always righteous. His obedience and righteousness are imputed to us. Our rule of life is the gospel—not the Law of Moses, but the Royal Law of Liberty.

Wolverhampton Teacher Training Group



David (B Centre Right) at Wolverhampton Polytechnic

The Church Affirms My Call

Both Mr Hill and Mr Hope affirmed my call. The church invited me to preach, and I did so at a weeknight meeting, where members of the Eaton Bray and Oxford Strict Baptist churches also attended.

Sent to Preach

From 1982 onward, I received many invitations to preach. The Lord opened doors throughout the country. I could have preached three times every Sunday, every week of the year. This was in addition to my full-time teaching job and ongoing studies with the Open University.

In a short span, I preached in 15 Gospel Standard Churches across the UK. The Lord had called, the church had sent me, and I sought to declare His truth wherever I was given opportunity.

CHAPTER 4 – Visitors And Strict Communion

Having laid out the history of my joining the Bierton church, my duties as Secretary, and my call to preach, I now turn to further difficulties that arose after the fateful meeting of 27th April 1983—described in Chapter 1, Truth Causes a Division. That meeting marked the beginning of open controversy within our fellowship, and almost immediately thereafter, we encountered another challenge related to communion, Gospel Standard alignment, and

our practice of strict communion.

Mr Levey Preaches at Bierton

On Sunday, 1st May 1983, we had invited Mr Douglas Levey, a deacon of Dunstable Baptist Church, to preach both morning and evening services. In line with our usual custom, the preacher for the day would also conduct the Lord's Supper in the evening.

However, after the evening service, a problem arose. Mr Levey came to me in some perplexity. He was aware that our church had recently affiliated with the Gospel Standard and that our communion practice was now restricted accordingly. He informed me he was not in membership with a Gospel Standard cause and thus uncertain whether he ought to officiate or even partake.

Simultaneously, I was approached by Mrs Evered, who, without hesitation, told me that I must conduct the communion myself. This act—of a woman giving directive to a man in church matters—only added to the sense of disorder.

Having previously warned the church about the teaching of general redemption in the Sunday school, and seeing no repentance nor concern, I knew I had to act decisively.

Refusing Communion to Mr Levey

I told Mr Levey quietly that he should follow my direction and explained, briefly, that action was necessary. We entered the chapel from the vestry, and I addressed the congregation.

I explained that, as Mr Levey was not in membership with a Strict Baptist church holding to Gospel Standard principles, he could not sit at the Lord's Table with us. I asked him to confirm this publicly. He did so respectfully.

I then told the church that, according to our current alignment with the Gospel Standard Articles, it would be out of order for Mr Levey to partake. Though some members looked visibly displeased, I stood firm. I reminded them they had voluntarily aligned themselves with the Gospel Standard—not I—and if that were the case, then our rules must be honoured, else we descend into further disorder.

I invited Mr Levey to remain with us in the chapel while we observed the ordinance. He graciously accepted and understood my decision.

Mr Levey's Letter and Mr Dix's Objection

Ten days later, I received a letter from Mr Levey. He mentioned, rather incidentally, that he had shared the event with his pastor, Mr Kenneth Dix, during a car journey. Mr Dix took great exception and wrote to me directly, expressing deep disapproval over how Mr Levey had been treated.

In his letter dated 10th May 1983, Mr Dix stated that Douglas had been “shamefully treated,” that the episode was “humiliating,” and that such conduct reflected the “rigid application of man-made rules.” He feared it undermined both the Word and the witness of our church. Mr Dix also hinted that such practices smacked of sacramentalism, placing the Lord's Table above the preaching of the Word.

My Response to Mr Levey

I wrote to Mr Levey on 12th May 1983:

“I regret any discomfort caused. You were not humiliated in my eyes, nor do I believe in yours. The issue, however, must be brought before the church due to the serious implications. In the absence of a pastor, our Articles must govern us, and we are compelled to act in a way that is both scriptural and honourable to our convictions.”

I assured him that his right to preach had not been called into question. Men like William Huntington or Augustus Toplady—were they alive—could not have sat with us at communion either under our Articles, but their ministry would still be welcome.

My Reply to Mr Dix

On 1st July 1983, I responded to Mr Dix. I clarified that Bierton had joined the Gospel Standard formally and that our Trust Deed outlined clear practices regarding membership and communion. I reminded him that while preaching engagements may allow for doctrinal liberty, participation in the Lord's Supper was a different matter governed by order.

I further explained that Bierton, having no pastor, lacked the flexibility that a properly governed church might have. Thus, I acted, as a private member, within the constraints of our Articles. I noted too that Douglas had not been excluded for doctrinal reasons but on the grounds of church order alone.

I respectfully disagreed with his view that communion ought to be accessible to any minister of the Word, reminding him that while faith precedes order, order preserves truth and prevents confusion.

The Case of Mr and Mrs Howe

I also referenced a prior incident involving Mr Peter Howe, former minister of Ivanhoe Particular Baptist Church. He and his wife visited Bierton on 7th November 1982 and asked to partake of the Lord's Supper. Mr Dawson of Kent, who was preaching that day, did not know the couple.

Mr Howe's church had closed, and they were no longer in membership anywhere. Moreover, I was aware that Mr Howe advocated duty faith and duty repentance—doctrines contrary to our Articles of Faith. He had even recommended I read Andrew Fuller's *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, which supports such views. Knowing this, I could not, in good conscience, admit them to communion.

With some fear and trembling, I explained this to them and wrote to them the very next day to clarify our position and apologise for any offence caused.

Mr Howe's Gracious Reply

In January 1983, Mr Howe wrote back kindly, assuring me he and his wife had taken no offence. He acknowledged the discipline of the Lord's Table was often lacking in churches and appreciated our commitment to order.

However, he expressed sadness at the difficulty of finding a welcoming church. His letter was warm, reflective, and honest. Despite doctrinal differences, his tone was gracious and understanding.

Church Approval

At the next church meeting, I presented both my letter and Mr Howe's reply. The church agreed with the decision I had made. They upheld our order and supported my action, though we all felt the burden of being a church

without a pastor.

Final Reflections

These matters—the refusal of communion to Mr Levey, the firm but courteous decline of Mr and Mrs Howe, and the letters that followed—were submitted to the church for judgment. They are recorded in the church minutes of 6th July 1983.

All this reflects the struggles of a congregation trying to maintain order and integrity without pastoral leadership. It was my conviction that unless Articles of Faith and rules of practice were adhered to, disorder and doctrinal compromise would soon follow. These experiences confirmed it.

CHAPTER 5 – Evangelical Repentance

In hindsight, I believe I was too reserved in my earlier dealings with Mr Howe. At the time, I acted as a private member of the church, lacking the formal authority of an elder or deacon. Had I held such an office, I might have more confidently addressed our doctrinal differences—not out of strife, but for the sake of the truth and Mr Howe’s own spiritual good.

As a Gospel Standard cause, our church was committed to defending the doctrinal positions laid out in the Gospel Standard Articles of Religion. This commitment made it all the more necessary to address theological misunderstandings or errors, especially when they touched on fundamental truths like repentance.

The Views of Mrs Evered

It was around this same time that another matter came to light. Mrs Evered, a long-standing and influential member of the Bierton church, voiced her rejection of the term evangelical repentance. She took exception to its use by Mr J. Tanton, who had preached at Bierton earlier in 1982.

At our church meeting held on 13th October 1982, Mrs Evered raised her objection, claiming the term had no basis in Scripture. No action was proposed, and none of the other members voiced disagreement at the time. I, as Secretary, reminded the church of Article 26 of the Gospel Standard Articles, which clearly expresses our belief that evangelical repentance is not

a natural duty, but a gift of divine grace.

My Letter to Mrs Evered

Following that meeting, I wrote to Mrs Evered, hoping to clarify matters. I explained that:

Repentance in Scripture appears in various forms—natural, national, legal, and evangelical.

Evangelical repentance is not a human work but a gracious fruit of the Spirit, and thus not to be presented as a duty incumbent upon all men.

Dr John Gill, well known among Gospel Standard Baptists, expounds this clearly in his *Body of Divinity*.

Despite this, Mrs Evered remained unconvinced and insisted that another minister supported her view. However, she declined to name him, and the issue was left unresolved.

Mr Howe and the Added Articles

The issue of repentance connected directly to Mr Howe's approach to our church. When he requested to join us in communion, we had recently aligned with the Gospel Standard cause—an association Mr Howe had previously questioned on doctrinal grounds.

Years earlier (circa 1972–1976), Mr Howe had objected to the Gospel Standard's added Articles of 1878, claiming they lacked scriptural warrant. He particularly resisted the Article 26 on duty faith and duty repentance, believing instead that all men had a duty to repent and believe. However that view did not reflect the doctrine of grace as saving faith is the gift of God and not a legal duty.

I was forced to support my position using only Scripture, rather than relying on the Articles, for Mr Howe would not accept their authority. Though I had read similar views in A.W. Pink's *The Total Depravity of Man*, I could not agree.

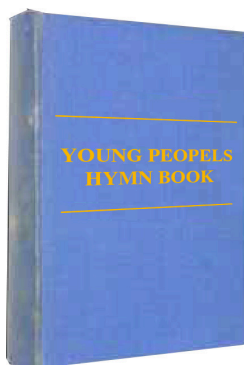
When Mr Howe sought communion at Bierton, I felt constrained. We were doctrinally at odds. Yet within the church itself, members like Mrs Evered

were expressing views inconsistent with our Articles. Were I to rebuke Mr Howe as a representative of the church, while others denied the doctrines I defended, it would show a house divided.

I came to see how unclear many were on these matters, and how essential it was to resolve our doctrine regarding repentance and saving faith. Sadly, it was never resolved in a biblical or united way.

CHAPTER 6 – The Children’s Hymn Book

The National Association of Strict Baptist Sunday



The Children’s Hymn Book

This chapter concerns the distressing matter of children being taught hymns which contradicted both our Articles of Religion and the Holy Scriptures. Few can understand the personal strain and anxiety these matters bring unless they’ve walked a similar road. Yet truth is not negotiable. And when it’s being undermined, even in small ways, it must be defended.

Church Meeting – 15th June 1983

The meeting began with a reading from 1 Corinthians 11:20–30. It was convened to address, among other things, letters from Mr P. Janes (Trustee) and Mr B. Ramsbottom (Minister, Luton Bethel), both regarding the teaching methods used in our Sunday school.

Miss G. Ellis raised a question about the postscript to the April minutes, in which I had stated that Mr King’s teaching of general redemption to the children would prevent him from preaching at Bierton. She asked for clarification: “What views are meant?”

I replied: “The view that teaches children that God loves them all and that Jesus died for each one.”

Attempts to Alter the Minutes

It was suggested that this paragraph should be removed to avoid future embarrassment. I explained that the purpose of minutes is to record faithfully what took place, regardless of agreement or disagreement. Some members claimed not to recall the conversation. It was proposed that a clarifying note be added. This passed. A full deletion of the paragraph was also proposed, but it failed to carry.

To resolve the impasse, the chairman signed the minutes only up to the end of the official notes—before the disputed postscript. This satisfied the members, though I found it troubling.

It was evident to me that some wished to clear Mr King of any blame. Yet he had never denied my charge that he told the children Jesus had died for each of them. Nor had he retracted it.

Letters from Mr Ramsbottom and Mr Janes

The first letter, from Mr Ramsbottom, gave a concise and careful explanation of the purpose and principles of a biblical Sunday school. He strongly advised:

Teachers must be gracious and doctrinally sound.

Hymns must be both simple and doctrinally correct.

The idea of Christ dying for all children is a grievous error.

Even well-meaning hymns such as “Jesus loves me, this I know” are inappropriate if they imply universal atonement.

Mr Janes, writing as a trustee, echoed these concerns. He acknowledged the complexity of the issue but stated clearly that hymns like “Jesus loves me” give a false sense of security and are not suitable for use in our Sunday school.

Church's Response and Decision

Despite the soundness of these letters and the clarity of the doctrinal position, the response within the church was disappointing. The teachers claimed that the hymns in question could be interpreted in a “limited sense,” citing Isaiah 53:6.

Mrs G. Ellis suggested careful selection of hymns going forward.

Mrs Gurney proposed retaining the current hymn book. A vote was taken—and the motion carried.

My Reflections

I was grieved. I had brought forward two witnesses to confirm our doctrinal position—not for my own sake, but for the benefit of the women, who seemed to be driving the outcome. And yet, it was as if their vote now carried the same weight as scriptural truth. This exposed the deep weakness in our practice. The congregation had defaulted to majority vote—even where truth was at stake.

So then, what was I to do?

CHAPTER 7- I Consider Leaving The Church

From this time, I seriously considered leaving the Church at Bierton. Truth no longer seemed to be the prime mover of our faith and practice. I had sought the Lord earnestly in prayer, contending for the faith, but it was clear that the people of Bierton were holding fast to their customs rather than to truth. I could not see how things could be put right while such attitudes prevailed.

I had two children and twins on the way, and I wanted my family raised in a place where the truth of God was upheld—not sentimentality. If God hated some men, then the children ought to be told. And if He loved some, then let that be declared. I could not abide any longer in a place that peddled the sentimental notion of universal love, which to me was a hallmark of the Arminian churches I had previously visited in Aylesbury—the very ones Mr. King had said I should have stayed with.

I made my intention known to the church and placed our house on the market. We hoped to move nearer my work and perhaps attend the church at Eaton Bray.

Circumstances and Delay

My wife was expecting twins in November, and we concluded that if it were truly God's will for us to move, then our house would sell quickly. It did—to our first viewer, in fact. We began looking at houses in Eaton Bray and Eddlesborough and inquired at the Eaton Bray Chapel.

But doubt set in, and within a few weeks, the sale fell through. Our prospective buyer withdrew. Coupled with our misgivings about Eaton Bray and the approaching birth of our twins, we decided it was not the right time to move. We would remain at Bierton, continue the fight for truth, and endure whatever was required—even if the people hated contention.

Church Meeting: 6th July 1983

The next church meeting was held on Wednesday 6th July 1983, at 2:30 p.m. At this meeting, I read out a letter from Mr. Dix, and the church was informed of a letter received from Mr. Levy, who had written to say he did not agree with Mr. Dix's views on the events surrounding the communion service. On the contrary, he approved of the actions I had taken.

I explained to the church the background and details of the events in question. Mrs. Evered had suggested that I conduct the communion service. I reminded the church that they had approved the Gospel Standard Articles of Religion, which restricted communion to those in membership with churches practicing strict communion.

I had written to both Mr. Levy and Mr. Dix, offering apologies for any unintended offence and explaining the situation.

Communion Policy Moving Forward

Some members expressed their disapproval of the incident, stating that it had upset them. Since I had already written to the concerned parties, it was agreed that no further correspondence was necessary. It was also agreed that

henceforth, when the Lord's Supper was held, only ministers from Strict Communion Baptist churches would be invited to preach, to avoid similar incidents. This motion was carried by vote.

Mr. King Steps Down

Later in the meeting, Mr. King asked to be excused while the church dealt with two letters he had submitted. He then left the meeting. The following are the contents of his letters:

Letter 1: 15th June 1983

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 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, I am persuaded—fully persuaded—that I cannot remain in fellowship with the Church at Bierton, at least for a period.

Only the Lord knows whether this will be temporary or permanent. Pray for me.

God bless you all. Deeply sorrowing, forgive me.

Christian love,

Arthur King

Letter 2: 6th July 1983

My Dear Friends,

The Lord knows my feelings 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, and I have declined any future engagements for 1984. While I remain in membership with you, I feel it is in name only. My prayers continue that the Lord will show me—painfully perhaps—His way out from such pressures.

May God bless you all and forgive me.

Arthur King

Secretary's Report

I explained to the church that Mr. King had requested to be relieved of his December 25th, 1983 preaching engagement and that if I were present on future weeknight services, they would be prayer meetings only.

It was agreed that Miss Gwen Ellis and I would speak with Mr. King to understand his thoughts and actions, subject to his willingness.

Letter to the Church: 5th July 1983

I then read a letter I had written to the church, explaining the reasons behind my earlier decision to leave:

Church Not Governed by the Bible

Rejection of Mr. Scott-Pearson based on superficial reasons.

Mistreatment of Mr. Lawrence, lacking biblical restoration principles.

Indifference toward teaching general redemption to children, with no real concern for biblical accuracy.

Family and Domestic Needs

With twins on the way, and my wife struggling to cope with the church difficulties while raising children, it was pressing that I provide for my own

household.

The Church's Response

Miss Gwen Ellis said many would be sorry if Bierton Chapel were to close and expressed hope that we could continue in right principles. This sentiment was shared by others.

Despite this, I resolved to stay, seeing no open door to leave. I would remain and contend for gospel truths, regardless of the opposition within the church.

This resolution led to the next chapter in our ongoing trials—Battle Number Three.

CHAPTER 8 - A Decision to Stay

Realising that we could not depart the Bierton Church without a providentially opened door, I concluded we must remain. Despite the grief, frustrations, and a sense of isolation, I resolved to continue contending for gospel truth, even if it meant disturbing the peace of every member. Our third battle soon emerged, this time involving Mrs. Evered—ironically the very person instrumental in Bierton becoming a Gospel Standard cause.

The Third Battle: Heresy or Holy Table

One Lord's Day morning, while dressing my niece for the chapel service, Mrs. Evered directed me to remove her cardigan from the desk, claiming it was a "holy vessel set apart unto God" and should not be used for a secular purpose. Astonished at such an utterance, I held my peace until I visited her the following day.

During that Monday evening visit, she confirmed her belief, stating that she had been taught from a young age that the chapel and its furnishings were sacred. She insisted the table was a "holy vessel," akin to those under the Old Covenant, and that the chapel was the "House of God." She declared herself unwilling to be persuaded otherwise.

I was compelled to confront this error directly and in writing. The table, as with any piece of chapel furniture, is not sacred. Under the New Covenant,

we have no worldly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:11). The only house God now inhabits is His church—His people—not buildings made with hands (Acts 17:24; 1 Timothy 3:15).

In my letter, I admonished Mrs. Evered, warning her of the danger in propagating superstition. I warned that if she continued to direct members with such erroneous beliefs, church discipline would become necessary. I insisted she consult with a Gospel Standard minister, none of whom, I was certain, would support her view.

She returned my letter unread, declaring she already knew the truth. I then gathered the present church members to disclose what had been said. Some, surprisingly, appeared sympathetic to her views. When I firmly stated that I would not allow such ideas to flourish unchallenged, Miss Gwen Ellis stormed out in anger. The heresy had revealed itself.

The Church in Disarray

With no pastor, no elder, and Mr. King having stepped down from chairing meetings, the disorder was evident. I wondered whether we could even call ourselves a true church.

More Divergence: Ecumenicalism and Mission Aylesbury

Plans were afoot in Aylesbury to participate in ‘Mission Aylesbury,’ a joint evangelical outreach linked with Billy Graham’s visit to the UK. I proposed to our church the idea of hosting lectures on the Reformation in the chapel, to remind believers of our rich gospel heritage.

Concerns were raised: “Do other chapels do this? What would the trustees think?” I sought counsel from our trustees—Mr. Baumber of Bedford, Mr. Hill of Luton, and Mr. Janes of Eaton Bray.

Mr. Baumber phoned to say he had no objection, provided it caused no division. Mr. Janes replied in writing, saying he fully supported the idea and even expressed a desire to attend. Sadly, due to internal church unrest, I did not pursue the matter further. I was disappointed that the Bierton Church could not rise to the occasion.

CHAPTER 9 - A Dream

Background to the Dream

On Sunday, 29th September 1983, I was preaching at Oakington, Cambridgeshire. That night, I had a dream that stayed with me. To explain it, I must first mention Ruth Ellis, a church member now in Bethesda Home, Harpenden.

Though her behaviour could be erratic and troubling, she had a deep love for the hymns of Denham and Hart and was often able to recite them from memory. She was dismissed by many as eccentric, but I believed she merely struggled to communicate properly.

The Dream

I found myself among people I believed were friends, gathered in what resembled a hotel reception room. I voiced an opinion, and immediately, I felt the mood shift. Without words, they conveyed: “You’re wrong—hopelessly wrong.” They considered me beyond redemption, no longer worth engaging with.

I was grieved beyond description. The sense of isolation was overwhelming—it was how I imagined Ruth must have felt. I awoke and shared the experience with my wife, weeping. I resolved from that moment to speak the truth of God’s word, even if I were to be counted a madman.

Another Attempt to Resolve Our Disorder

In light of these mounting troubles, I called a church meeting for 19th October 1983. Though I had no formal authority, I felt constrained to act. Present were: Mr. King, Miss B. Ellis, Mr. C (a member), Mrs. Evered, Miss G. Ellis, and myself.

Mr. King opened in prayer and read from 1 Corinthians 13. He explained his own struggles with nervous affliction and spoke of a letter he had received from me dated 2nd May 1983. He said he had shown it to the deacon at Linslade since Mr. Collier, their pastor, was unwell. Mr. King then physically removed himself from the desk, saying he could not read from my letter

while standing at “The Table of God.” I question now why did Mr King find it necessary to refer to The Table of God.

He read only selected excerpts, which saddened me as they cast a shadow over the rest of the letter. Mr. King then reiterated his desire to be excused from his preaching engagement in December and left the meeting.

I proposed that we appoint an overseer to help restore order. I recommended Mr. John Gosden of Kent and Mr. Philip Janes, one of our trustees. After some discussion, and despite Gospel Standard rule 15 requiring one month’s notice for motions, the proposal was approved.

Help Denied

Mr. John Gosden responded with kind but firm words. Due to the 100-mile distance and his commitments, he could not assist. However, he exhorted us to consider whether we could even be called a church, lacking as we did in governance, unified ministry, and orderly discipline. He advised us to either:

Appoint qualified male members as elders (1 Timothy 3), or

Place ourselves under the care of an established Gospel church until such time we were spiritually and practically restored.

I was grateful for his honesty and gave the letter to Mr. King for his consideration.

These events confirmed to me how deeply our disorder had grown. Without biblical leadership, clarity in doctrine, and a willingness to uphold truth, the very fabric of our church was unravelling. Yet still, I could not forsake my duty to speak truth for the sake of Christ and His gospel.

CHAPTER 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 prophecy 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 experienced 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?

CHAPTER 11 – Communion Refused

Lacking Pastoral Oversight and Church Authority

Without a pastor in place and no clear authority vested in the church, I found myself at a loss. It appeared to me that no one properly understood the issues involved, and I felt as though I were the cause of the unrest.

Withdrawing from the Lord's Table

Amid such disorder, I could not, in all conscience, partake of the communion that month. I therefore excused myself and asked Mr Crane, of Lakenheath, to understand my position. At the time, I offered no further explanation, for he was a visiting minister unfamiliar with our internal affairs.

Refusal to Conduct the Ordinance

As the divisions within the church remained unresolved, I was persuaded it would be improper to proceed with the communion service whilst these disagreements lingered. In light of this, I prepared the following statement, which I read to the church during our weeknight meeting in November 1983:

“It is the custom of the Bierton Church to hold the communion service on the first Lord’s Day of each month. The service is to be officiated and conducted by the minister appointed to preach that day. I am scheduled to preach on the first Lord’s Day of December 1983, but I must express grave concerns to the Church.

I abstained from the communion on the first Lord’s Day in October for several reasons, all of which may be summarised as follows:

The church is not united in the truth, and there is marked variance among us. To pretend outwardly that we are of one heart and mind, when that is not the case, is to make a mockery of Christian unity. Such conduct amounts to hypocrisy and dishonours the very communion of Christ’s body.

Let me set forth six matters of disorder that illustrate our lack of harmony and which, to this day, remain unaddressed in a manner befitting the honour of Christ.”

Six Evidences of Disunity

Mr King’s Withdrawal

Mr King regards himself as a member in name only. He has asked to be relieved from his preaching duties at Bierton throughout 1983, although he has not ceased preaching elsewhere. It was only during our last informal meeting that he gave any real explanation. Unless we address this, we stand as a church out of order.

Doctrinal Confusion Over Redemption

When I highlighted the inconsistency of teaching General Redemption to the children and their unsaved parents—whilst Scripture plainly teaches Particular Redemption—the church did not address the matter but rather took offence. This indifference testifies to a broader lack of doctrinal clarity.

Ministerial Variance

Both Mr King and I are licensed by the church to preach, yet we stand opposed on the vital doctrines of General versus Particular Redemption and the Love of God toward the elect in contrast to His hatred of the reprobate. I uphold that Scripture teaches Christ died only for the elect, as declared in Romans 9, and that God's love toward them is eternal and unchangeable. We cannot rightly serve the church if we are divided on so foundational a doctrine.

Doctrinal Imposition by Mrs Evered

Mrs Evered insists upon imposing her religious views and practices upon the congregation, even when they are clearly unscriptural. When I opposed her privately and then later in the presence of others, it led to further disruption—and yet the church seemed perplexed as to why.

Disruption During Worship

At a recent prayer meeting, three members—Miss G. Ellis, Mrs Evered, and Mr King—walked out, apparently offended by remarks I made during the Scripture reading. These remarks addressed the communion table, the church building, and modern heresies which mirror Old Testament ceremonialism. To allow such heresies to pass unchallenged places the church out of order.

Improper Governance and Past Errors

The church has made decisions in the past which run counter to the spirit of the Gospel. For example, in the matter of Mr Lawrence, Mrs Evered objected to him preaching again and gave her reasons. Yet, rather than deal with the matter properly, another member suggested it would be better to avoid

inviting him again for a year, for the sake of peace. The church agreed. This approach is not honourable. If a visiting minister errs, the matter must be dealt with biblically and justly.

Conclusion of the Statement

“From these six matters, it is clear that we lack effective church government. Without duly appointed officers to oversee and remedy such concerns, we are out of order.

Therefore, as long as these matters remain unresolved, we lack the spiritual unity required to rightly observe the Lord’s Table that this discern the Lord’s body.. To do so would be to show no reverence for the Table—a symbolic expression referring to the communion of the body of Christ.

In light of these convictions, I must, with a clear conscience and in the fear of God, abstain from conducting this service until these issues are biblically resolved. We bear a solemn responsibility before the Lord to set our house in order.”

Signed,

David Clarke Minister of the Gospel

The Church’s Response

Some members questioned whether we might simply observe the Lord’s Supper on another Lord’s Day with a visiting minister. They did not agree with my decision.

Due to the difficulty of securing suitable ministers, we had none to preach on the first Lord’s Days of January, February, or March that followed. I remained available to preach and administer the ordinance, but only if the church resolved its divisions.

Seeking a Remedy

The troubles were mounting. I therefore called for a church meeting to

address the disorders and seek a godly resolution.

Church Meeting – 14th December 1983

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

Chairman: Mr D. Clarke

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians chapter 2, followed by prayer.

I opened the meeting by acknowledging that we had no formally appointed chairman, likely the reason for Mr King's absence. Nonetheless, we were gathered to set in order the things that were wanting, as serious disorders were now among us. It was time to establish proper church governance.

Each member had read the letter from Mr Gosden, explaining his inability to assist. A letter from Mr King was read, in which he reiterated his unwillingness to attend church meetings. Miss G. Ellis felt he had not made this plain before.

Despite this, all agreed that help was needed. I suggested asking Mr C. A. Wood of Croydon to act as overseer, possibly alongside others, and the members agreed. We had previously only received chairmanship, but now we sought true oversight—an elder to help set things in order. The church unanimously saw the need for such an office.

Mrs Evered, however, believed we should resolve our differences before seeking outside help. I replied that our disagreements were of such seriousness that biblical authority was needed to adjudicate them.

She then objected to being charged with heresy by me, insisting her reverence for the communion table, vestry, and building was not unscriptural. She believed she was upholding tradition. I responded that we required a biblical judgment to settle such matters, and I had no authority to act alone.

What Is the House of God?

I asked Mrs Evered to provide any Scripture for her practices. She cited comments by Mr G. Collier about Benjamin Keach's meetinghouse, not Scripture. When asked if she revered Anglican or Roman Catholic

buildings, she replied that she did, albeit not their doctrines.

I then read from 1 Timothy 3:15:

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

God seeks worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23). The New Testament church is not a building but a people—a spiritual house made up of living stones (1 Peter 2:5). Reverencing physical objects is superstition, akin to Romanism.

When Miss G. Ellis asked about Psalm 87:2, “The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob,” I explained that this referred to the ordinances of the Gospel, not literal doors.

Mrs Evered said, “You just don’t see it.” I replied, “I see it very clearly. Your views are superstitious and tend toward Roman Catholicism.” I warned that if such superstition prevailed, we might suffer the same fate as Shiloh (Jeremiah 7:14).

We agreed we could not settle such weighty matters without Scripture and a proper elder.

I noted that I would benefit from such oversight in future matters. The members agreed Mr King and I should meet with Mr Wood to discuss church affairs thoroughly.

Next, Mrs Evered disputed my sermon statement that Satan reigns over men. She said he was not yet bound. I replied that Satan rules in the kingdom of darkness over the minds of the ungodly, but is bound metaphorically—he can do only what God permits.

On Naming Individuals

Miss G. Ellis said ministers ought not name people from the pulpit or in letters. Mrs Evered added that Gospel Standard ministers would never do so. I responded that Scripture gives precedent—Paul named Demas and Alexander the coppersmith (2 Timothy 4:10, 14). Naming error is part of

faithful ministry.

On Offence and the Sabbath

Mrs Evered asked me not to speak of things that might offend. I said I try to avoid offence, but I must speak what I believe to be of God, and the church must judge accordingly (1 Thessalonians 5:20–21).

She then asked whether I believed in keeping the Sabbath. I replied that if she observed it unto the Lord, she did well. I explained that the seventh-day Sabbath belonged to the Mosaic covenant and has been fulfilled in Christ. The Lord's Day is the first day, and we are not under obligation to Old Testament holy days (Colossians 2:16).

She said, "Lords Day or Sabbath—it's the same." I replied that the Gospel, not the Ten Commandments, is our rule of life, and pointed her to Article 16 of the Gospel Standard Articles of Religion.

On My Secular Work

Finally, she questioned whether my work teaching electronics was proper for a minister. I said I believed it to be entirely fitting.

We concluded by resolving to invite Mr C. A. Wood to help at Bierton, and we closed the meeting with prayer.

Mr Wood's Response and Further Steps

I contacted Mr Wood straightaway. However, owing to prior commitments and practical constraints, he was unable to take up the role of overseer. Nevertheless, he expressed willingness to assist at an initial meeting, if another suitable minister could be found to join him in the task.

He recommended that we reach out to Mr Ramsbottom, who might know of someone closer to Bierton who could help. Mr Wood further advised that even if our ministers were not all Gospel Standard listed, that need not be an impediment. He mentioned names such as Mr Haddow of Prestwood, Mr C. Dawson of Westoning, or Mr J. Buss as potential helpers.

In a subsequent weeknight meeting, Mrs C. Gurney, Miss B. Ellis, Miss G. Ellis and I discussed the matter and agreed that Mr Crane of Lakenheath—a regular visiting minister—should be approached to act as overseer. All were in agreement, and our secretary was instructed to make the necessary arrangements. Mr King and I were also to meet with Mr Crane beforehand to explain the full extent of our troubles.

Mr Crane responded promptly and graciously offered his help. I arranged a visit to brief him fully on our affairs. Mr King, however, declined to participate.

Church Meeting – 18th February 1984 Time: 2:30 p.m. Members Present: Mrs I. Clarke, Miss B. Ellis, Miss G. Ellis, Mrs C. Gurney, Mrs Evered, and Mr D. Clarke Chairman: Mr Crane (of Lakenheath)

The meeting began with the singing of a hymn, the reading of 1 Corinthians chapter 2, and prayer.

As secretary, I opened by reviewing the events that had brought us to this point, particularly noting that the church had not observed the Lord's Supper since November 1983. We had gathered, by God's grace, to "set in order the things that are wanting."

I reported that Mr King had declined to attend, stating that if the church wished to remove him, it was free to do so. He preferred to remain at home.

Mr Crane read a letter from Mr King in which he outlined his health concerns and how the church's circumstances had exacerbated them.

The church was reminded of our collective duty before God—to act righteously and put things in order for the sake of truth and the Gospel witness at Bierton.

I explained that Mr Crane had agreed to take oversight as elder if the church unanimously approved and that the scope of authority would include:

Governing the church according to the Scriptures.

Access to all church records and minutes.

Freedom to visit and enquire of members regarding church matters.

Availability to all members for counsel and advice in church affairs.

We reviewed the minutes of previous unofficial meetings (19th October, 14th December, and January). Before approving them, Mr Crane wished to confirm the church's agreement to his oversight.

Mr Crane cautioned that while the church could invite others to conduct the communion service, doing so without resolving the issues at hand would be unwise. The purpose of this meeting was to establish order.

Mrs Evered reiterated that "The House of God" and "The Table" had always been revered by the church and cited Old Testament references about the holiness of God's vessels.

I replied that while there were many matters to address, we now had a means to resolve them biblically. Some issues would have to wait until Mr King could participate, but others could proceed immediately.

Mr Crane reflected on his upbringing, noting the reverence and quiet observed in chapels in his youth. He acknowledged that the Bierton children came from diverse, often secular backgrounds, and such differences must be accounted for. He urged all to be both discerning and charitable.

Sabbath Observance and Legalism

Mrs Clarke shared her discomfort with the judgmental atmosphere she had experienced, recounting an incident where nappies were rinsed on the Sabbath after a meal at Bertha Ellis's home. Mrs Evered had objected, believing it improper Sabbath conduct. Mrs Clarke said such legalism left her feeling alienated.

Mr Crane hoped that these matters could be addressed without her departure and noted that reverencing a table was, in his view, an excessive phrase. He affirmed that "The House of God" referred not to a physical building, but to wherever God meets with His people.

He added that every day should be lived unto the Lord and that Christ

Himself is our true Sabbath.

I acknowledged there were further issues I wished to raise with Mr Crane in private. While the task was daunting, I believed discussion would help not only myself but also the church at large.

Mr Crane confirmed that he would take up the office of elder if the church was unanimous in agreement. The matter was put to the members, and all were in favour.

He accepted the role. Attention then turned to reviewing the minutes.

Further Matters Arising

Mrs Evered raised concerns stemming from a letter I had written to Mr King after Easter 1983, which she felt was condemnatory and contributed to later troubles. I confirmed that this letter had been partially read aloud by Mr King at the October meeting and was part of the church record. These matters were to be addressed now that we had a functioning church structure.

The minutes of prior meetings were accepted without objection.

I then referred to my earlier statement to the church, explaining my abstention from communion since October 1983. While the statement was not re-read due to time, its content was to be addressed.

Mrs Gurney asked why the communion could not proceed. I reminded her this meeting was not the forum for that particular decision.

I raised my ongoing objection to the children being taught Hymn 169 from the Young People's Childrens Hymn Book (S.B.S.S.A.), especially its final verse, which declares:

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

This, I argued, was a doctrinal error—teaching general redemption where we hold to particular redemption. We cannot affirm Christ died for those not yet called by grace nor lead children to believe the Lord Jesus died for all children.

This hymn had been sung publicly at Easter, even after I had expressed objections the year before. The matter related directly to our existing division.

I also noted the need to speak with Mr Crane about a separate matter involving Mr H. Sayers of Watford, a visiting minister.

Mr Crane signed the church minutes and invited members to contact him with any concerns. A provisional date for the next church meeting was set for the end of March or early April.

The meeting closed with prayer.

CHAPTER 12 – Mr Sayers and the Gospel Standard Articles

Around this time, a mutual acquaintance informed me that Mr Sayers, who preached for the Strict Baptists at Watford, held views contrary to the Gospel Standard Articles of Religion. Given that he had been invited to preach at Bierton Chapel, and as church secretary, I felt it my duty to enquire further.

I telephoned Mr Sayers directly. He was not forthcoming, so I turned to Mr D. Crowther, a deacon at the Attleborough cause, to see what had passed between Mr Sayers and their church. Mr Crowther kindly forwarded a letter from Mr Sayers, in which he expressed his disagreement with the Gospel Standard's position, particularly on the matters of 'duty faith' and 'duty repentance.'

Mr Sayers' Letter to Mr Crowther – 25th February 1983

Mr Sayers began by invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit and expressed a sincere desire to honour God. He addressed questions raised by Mr Crowther, chiefly concerning the interpretation of certain scriptures often cited in relation to 'duty faith.'

He maintained that the Gospel should be preached universally to all

mankind, and that the revealed will of God is that all men everywhere should repent and believe. He cited passages such as 1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9, Ezekiel 33:11, and Deuteronomy 29:29 to support his view that although only the elect will respond savingly, the offer of salvation is to be made indiscriminately.

Mr Sayers acknowledged the doctrine of election but asserted that we are not to attempt to identify the elect beforehand. He cited Christ's lament over Jerusalem in Matthew 23:37 and Luke 13:34 as evidence of a general benevolence, even toward those who would not come.

He affirmed his belief that gospel invitations, commands, and exhortations are addressed to all men. He referenced Mark 16:15–16, John 7:37–38, and Isaiah 55:6–7, arguing that such calls extend to “every creature,” though they are only effectual to the elect.

Concerning God's common love for mankind, Mr Sayers cited John 3:14–18 and Ecclesiastes 11:6, emphasising that though God is justly angry with the wicked, He still delays judgment and calls them to repentance.

On baptism, he denied any saving efficacy in the ordinance but insisted it is joined to the command of salvation and ought not be delayed. He held that a profession of repentance and faith is sufficient ground for baptism, pointing to the example of Philip baptising the Ethiopian eunuch. He referenced Simon Magus as an example of one whose profession proved false, but noted that churches are not to judge the reality of grace, only the profession.

Mr Sayers concluded by stressing the urgency of obedience to Christ's commands, including baptism, quoting: “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved.”

Bierton Church Unequal to the Task

After reading this letter, it became plain that Mr Sayers did not adhere to the Gospel Standard Articles. I later asked him whether he had subscribed to them when joining the Watford Church, a Gospel Standard listed cause. He said he had not been asked to.

This greatly surprised me. How could a man preach in Gospel Standard

chapels without ever subscribing to their doctrines?

Yet what was I to do? Our own church had unresolved issues—over Particular Redemption, so-called ‘holy tables,’ and general disorder among members. How could we now take up this weighty matter? We were not in a spiritual position to judge it.

The issues of ‘duty faith’ and ‘duty repentance’ had already stirred controversy in my own experience. I had encountered opposition when preaching at Eaton Bray, another Gospel Standard cause, where I had defended Article 26 while expounding Acts 17. My doctrine and manner were criticised. Mr Godly, a minister there, later reproved me gently.

I had also raised these concerns in writing with the Gospel Standard Committee and received a satisfactory reply. In fact, I had taken great care to examine the matter before our own church applied to be listed among Gospel Standard churches. Two pertinent letters—one to the Committee and one to Mr Peter Howe (formerly of Ivanhoe Particular Baptists)—are included in the supplement, pages 33–40.

It had also become clear to me that some of our own members were confused on these matters, and the church itself was no better equipped now to deal with them.

Bringing the Matter to the Church

Nevertheless, the issue could not be ignored forever. It would have to be raised at a church meeting, though the timing was fraught. We were already in turmoil.

I did eventually raise the matter at our church meeting in February 1984. (See page 86 for full details.)

CHAPTER 13 – Leprosy Discovered

A Metaphor for an Incurable Disease

In this chapter I relate how the communion service was restored at Bierton, but this soon led to a far graver issue which, to this day, remains unresolved: namely, the question of whether the Law of Moses is the believer’s rule of

life, or whether that rule is the Gospel itself. Sadly, this vital truth lies buried under much confusion, but I trust that in due time it shall shine forth when the Lord fulfils His promise as recorded in Acts 15:16.

Restoration of the Communion

Following our February church meeting, I was at liberty in conscience to resume conducting the communion. Accordingly, in March, I preached from Acts 15:16:

“After this I will return, and will 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 absent from those meetings, but that evening we gathered around the Lord’s Table, and I presided over the communion.

Leprosy Cannot Be Cured

However, by the next church meeting, it became all too clear that the deeper one looked into the disorder within our fellowship, the more alarming the reality became. I liken it to the biblical plague of leprosy—visible to those whose eyes have been opened. To those who respond lightly to the question of whether Moses’ law or the Gospel governs the believer, I say: hold your peace and speak only as the oracles of God permit. For here lies the heart of the issue: Mrs Evered held fast to Moses, whilst I was resolved to follow Christ and His Gospel.

Church Meeting Reveals the Disease

21st April 1984, 2:30 p.m.

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

Chairman: Mr Crane (of Lakenheath)

The meeting began with the singing of a hymn, the reading of Galatians 5:5, and prayer.

Following opening comments from the chairman, the minutes of the previous meeting were read, approved, and adopted.

Three matters arose:

Mrs Gurney questioned Mr King's continued absence.

Mrs Evered wished the church to know the contents of a private letter I had sent to Mr King.

She also requested that I state my beliefs regarding baptism, sin, and the commandments, as she felt this bore upon the ordinance of communion.

Mr Crane suggested these points would be dealt with in order.

Regarding Mr King's absence, Mr Crane said the matter might be healed in time, but noted that the letter I had sent seemed to have worsened things. Mrs Gurney, having suffered herself in the whole affair, questioned why Mr King was permitted to excuse himself.

Mr Crane observed that while Mr King continued to preach elsewhere, he declined to preach at Bierton due to the scrutiny he would face. Miss G. Ellis clarified that Mr King ought not to regard my letter as being from the church itself. Mr Crane agreed—it was private.

Mrs Evered insisted the letter should be read. I said I was willing, especially as Mr King had already shared parts of it. But since Mr Crane had not read it, I suggested he first do so privately and determine its appropriateness. Mr Crane responded that he saw no need to read it publicly, as it would serve no helpful purpose.

Doctrinal Discrepancies Among Ministers

I then raised a concern about those engaged to preach at Bierton. Mr Crane explained that the church, founded in 1831, had a free grace doctrinal basis, enshrined in its trust deed. Ministers invited to preach ought to affirm those doctrines. However, having joined the Gospel Standard, the church had now bound itself to those Articles. Many of our preachers did not agree with all of them. Mr Crane urged caution—better not to engage ministers only to reject them later.

Miss G. Ellis recalled Mr Hope had said existing ministers could continue. Mr Crane replied that Mr Hope might not have known how many of them were in doctrinal disagreement.

Sunday School Concerns

Mr Crane noted that the church must address issues in the Sunday School. I had earlier objected to Hymn 169 being taught to the children, particularly the final 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.”

I contended that it was doctrinally unsound to declare that Christ died for the children before they were effectually called and brought to faith. Mr Crane agreed, noting the hymn book (used by the Strict Baptist Mission) contained many such problematic hymns. No resolution was offered.

Baptism, Sin, and the Commandments

Mrs Evered requested that I clarify my beliefs on baptism, sin, and the commandments. Mr Crane first summarised the church’s position as set out in its Articles of Faith. Mrs Evered then asked that he read Christ’s words to the rich young ruler in Luke 18 and Mark 10.

After Mr Crane’s comments, I asked leave to respond.

My Answer on Baptism

Only those regenerated and born again should be baptised, upon profession of faith. Baptism confers no saving grace—it does not remit sin—but symbolises what God has already done. It points to union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. By it we declare that the old man is crucified and buried with Him, and the new man lives by the power of the risen Christ.

The believer is thus dead to the law and sin, and alive unto God—not under

Moses' law, but under Christ's Gospel.

My Answer on Sin

Sin continues to dwell in the believer. Even sins of thought would damn us, were it not for Christ. Sin was present before Moses gave the Ten Commandments—every sin is referenced in Genesis save for the Sabbath, which was first broken in Exodus 16:27.

My Answer on the Law of Moses

The Law was given to Israel as part of a covenant, and it excluded the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:12). The apostles, when considering this very issue in Acts 15, gave no such law to the Gentile believers. I maintained, in line with Article 16 of the Gospel Standard Articles, that the believer's rule of life is the Gospel—not the Ten Commandments.

I pointed the members to the following appendices at the back of the book:

The Law and the Gospel by F. L. Gosden

The Law and the Gospel by J. C. Philpot

The Christian's Relationship to the Mosaic Law

The Sabbath by Gilbert Beebe

On the Fourth Commandment by John Calvin, William Tyndale, and John Frith (both martyrs)

I have since then published m book Christ The Rest Not Moses seeking to explain this position.

Reaction to the Church Meeting

This meeting confirmed my fears—unless the mouths of those who champion Moses are stopped, the whole house will be subverted. Alas, such views are not isolated to Bierton; they are common across the Gospel Standard and

Strict Baptist circles.

I knew I could not continue amongst those who could not walk in Gospel liberty with me or with those who sought to bind burdens on others. The liberty we have in Christ is worth more than chapel buildings, friendships, even family. I saw no alternative. I must depart. Leprosy cannot be cured but by the Lord.

CHAPTER 14 – Announcement of Registration

In the first week of June 1984, I made known to the remaining few at Bierton my decision to resign. Mrs Evered had ceased to attend meetings when I led the prayer or preached, and so it was only Mrs Gurney, Miss B. Ellis, and Miss G. Ellis who were present when I formally announced my resignation.

Mr Crane's Special Visit

Mr Crane paid me a special visit shortly thereafter to speak on these matters. His counsel was that I ought to remain, as there was nowhere else I might go where things would not be the same—or worse. His words gave me pause.

Persuaded to Stay, Briefly

I determined to attend the next weeknight meeting, intent on making my position known. I asked Mr King to stay behind afterwards so I might speak to him, but he declined. Mrs Evered was again absent.

Address Given – 12th June 1984, 8:15 p.m.

Opening Prayer“O Lord God, Thou hast promised to hear when Thy people call upon Thee. And we do now call in Jesus' name. Come to our aid, for His sake we ask. Amen.”

Spoken Address

What I say tonight is of great weight. The consequences will be far-reaching. I have recorded these words so that they may be heard by any sincerely interested in preserving the cause of truth, whether at Bierton or elsewhere.

You may feel, upon hearing what I say, that enough is enough. You may believe I err in my interpretation of Scripture. If that be your mind, and you can no longer walk with me, then I ask you, in the fear of God and before the elect angels, to receive my resignation.

Yet I pray instead that this may prove a turning point, for the good of all and for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am well aware that wherever God is at work, the adversary will speak evil of it. I apologise if my manner seems improper, but I do not believe the Lord is bound by human etiquette when His church is in crisis.

We are in dire straits, and such times call for decisive action. I have spoken with Mr Crane regarding my resignation from both membership and the office of secretary. He urged caution and doctrinal soundness.

But having laboured much in prayer, I am persuaded we must act. Our limitations—our age, our small number, our geography, our constitution under the trust deed, and our ties to the Gospel Standard denomination—mean that unless God intervenes, we are at an impasse.

We must seek the Lord's will, apply the principles of Scripture, and walk in faith.

Reminder of My Resignation

I stated in May and June of 1984 that two matters required immediate attention:

Resignation from Office as Secretary This matter is urgent, as ministerial appointments for 1985 must be arranged now. Typically, ministers confirm availability between now and the end of June.

Resignation from Membership This is not merely procedural. It stems from spiritual conviction. I can no longer, in good conscience, continue to preach or teach among you, for by remaining silent and seeking peace above truth, I have forfeited the ability to exercise faith in God for the restoration of Bierton.

Areas of Compromise as Secretary

Ministers Rejected for Wrong Reasons: I have been compelled to invite only those preachers acceptable to the women of the church. This usurps scriptural order. Ministers such as Mr C. Lawrence (Harold), Mr S. Scott-Pearson (Maulden), Mr Redhead, Mr Payne, and Mr Butler (Chelmsford) were all rejected at the behest of the women. The rationale? To maintain peace, even at the cost of truth. I will not continue in this practice.

Hypocrisy Unmasked: I once preached at Winslow Chapel and was appalled to discover they had appointed a woman pastor and were engaged in ecumenical services with Anglicans and Roman Catholics. I wrote to the deacon, Mr Paul Duffet, in protest. Yet my conscience reproved me—how could I object to Winslow when Bierton was likewise ruled by women?

General Redemption Hymns in Sunday School: I objected to the children singing Hymn 169, which implies Christ died for each of them. I hold that no one may rightly claim that until effectual calling evidences their union with Christ. The women dismissed my concern.

Superstitious Reverence for Buildings: I have opposed the view that the chapel building or the communion table are holy. Such views have brought contention, yet I am persuaded that until these superstitions are cast out, we cannot expect God to bless us.

Call of Abraham

I must obey God rather than men. I do not know what lies ahead for my family and me, but I must teach my friends and loved ones the ways of the Lord Jesus Christ. To do so, I cannot remain in a compromised or stifled position, for every man must give an account unto God, and each must act and walk according to the measure of faith given to him. I have a family to bring up, and I must do so free from false religion.

Whilst I am bound and constrained by my membership here, and the church is pulling in a direction contrary to that in which I must walk, I am not free to walk by faith, nor am I being true to the Faith. Hence, truth would cease to be the governing principle in my life.

My experience has led me to believe that the structure and government of the Bierton Church — like many churches — inhibit the flourishing of truth. Truth cannot thrive once the primary purpose of church activity becomes the protection of tradition for the preservation of the status quo. In such cases, truth becomes subservient to that end, and thereby ceases to be truth in its own right. It no longer stands as truth, nor does it set free.

Recommendation

At this point in the meeting, I went on to give my recommendation, but before doing so, I would like to pause and explain my concluding statement concerning truth — a matter I mentioned to Mr Crane but not to the rest of you at that meeting.

Cessation of Truth

By this I mean: truth is no longer the prime concern — only insofar as it serves to uphold the order and traditions to which we have grown accustomed, regardless of whether that order is according to the Word of God.

Take, for example, the term Strict Baptist, or the Gospel Standard denomination in general. The image that may come to many minds is this:

A certain style of chapel building; a form of worship beginning with an opening hymn, followed by a scripture reading and a long prayer (say, twenty minutes), then notices. Next, a second hymn, followed by the sermon, and closed with a final hymn and benediction — all lasting about an hour. Women are expected to cover their heads in worship.

The minister engaged to preach is usually from some distance and is himself a member of a like-minded Strict Baptist cause. His ministry is acceptable provided he is suitably attired (typically in a dark suit and tie), and his speech is familiar to the people — using well-worn expressions such as free grace, denouncing free will, and adopting a standard range of doctrinally approved phrases. Whether his preaching is intelligible or edifying seems secondary, so long as it doesn't unsettle the people and assures them that all is well. Should that be the case, he will generally be invited back to preach again the following year — and so the cause continues.

The general perception is that to read The Gospel Standard, to support the anniversary services of neighbouring chapels, and to conform to the

accepted conduct of the majority is to be faithful to the cause of Christ. Because this is commonplace and “normal,” one may be led to assume this is the way spoken of in scripture — that this church order is the way of life to be preserved and contended for. Any deviation from it is seen as falling away from truth.

Hence, the people commit themselves to the preservation of a certain way of life. They promote it. It becomes the habitual norm — the path we expect our children to follow. And then we say that the grace of God tempers us to walk in this way, for after all, it is the way, the truth, and the life.

But when this occurs, I say the people are like Samson — their eyes have been gouged out, and they are made to tread the mill.

The Evidence of Decline

The evidence I have to support my assertion — that truth has ceased to govern — is as follows:

When I charged the church at Bierton, a Strict and Particular Baptist Gospel Standard cause, with teaching general redemption — or at least tolerating it by way of the hymns used or otherwise — the church took offence. There was no sign of repentance. The general consensus seemed to be: What harm is there in saying to the children that Jesus died for each of them, or that He loves them all?

It was also argued that since the scriptures use phrases like “all the world,” we cannot be in error for singing hymns which suggest redemption for all — even though we acknowledge that “all” cannot always mean every individual.

To this I reply: it is not truth that governs such thinking, but rather an unguarded sentimentality toward the children and a long-standing pattern adopted over many years. If the people cannot see the error in this, then they have no eyes to see in this matter.

The same must be said of the matter concerning the Holy Table and the chapel building itself. I maintain that it has not been truth guiding the people’s views, but rather a carnal mindset and an ingrained attachment to certain sentimental notions about a physical place of worship. Some of our ministers must take responsibility for the use of loose, unscriptural language in these matters, which Satan has used to seduce many. I ask you plainly: do

the people love the chapel more than they love the truth?

Yes, I understand it may hold fond memories — but will we forsake even this for the sake of Christ? If not, then seduction has taken place, and truth has ceased to be the prime mover in our hearts. This is akin to how the Church of Rome leans heavily on its traditions and history — preserving its identity, extending its influence, and compromising truth for the sake of peace. Such a church has left the foundation upon which the true church of Christ is built. And the end of such a way is death.

A City Whose Builder and Maker Is God

How then can I be at peace in such a place? I seek a city whose builder and maker is God — not a chapel, nor a people, who will not forsake all for the Lord Jesus Christ. Yea, even should that include the chapel, family, and lifelong friends.

In all these things, I believe we are learning — by painful experience — the truth of what our Lord Jesus said: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword... And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” (Matthew 10:34,36).

CHAPTER 15 – My Conclusion

I concluded my address with a recommendation that Gwen be appointed secretary, and that under no circumstances should Mrs Evered take that position. I then commended the gathered few to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build us up and give us an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

I also explained that I would write to those churches where I had engagements to preach, so as to spare them any embarrassment. Since I was no longer in membership—either with Bierton or any other church—I could no longer accept such invitations.

Where Does This Leave Us?

This was the very question I asked Mr Crane during our conversation. I was still, at that time, responsible for contacting ministers for 1985’s preaching calendar. Yet with all these issues heavy upon my mind, I drafted a letter for

our visiting ministers, though I wondered whether it would be best simply to step back and tend to my own house.

Draft Letter to Visiting Ministers

“Dear Brethren,

Some among you have often referred to our chapel at Bierton as ‘the House of God,’ both in preaching and in prayer. This has, regrettably, encouraged the notion that our building, vestry, or communion table are sacred places or holy vessels.

I have opposed this idea, pointing instead to Scripture: God dwells not in temples made with hands (Acts 17:24). Christ is the true tabernacle. His people, joined to Him by regeneration, are the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16; Rev. 21:3). The New Testament makes this plain.

I would respectfully request that you bear this in mind when referring to the place of our gatherings.

Yours in the truth of Christ,

David Clarke, 1984

Mr Crane reviewed this draft and remarked that, though some ministers might take it personally, he himself had reconsidered his own use of such expressions and saw no harm in the letter being sent.

The Pain of Separation

Mr Crane told me that the church—being so few—did not want me to leave. I replied that I too found the thought painful. I had a family to consider, and to be without a church would bring strain not only within our village but also among other churches.

Yet how could I remain? Mr King had effectively abandoned his responsibilities, attending only prayer meetings, and refusing all others. The church neither understood nor accepted my doctrinal convictions all of which were in accordance with our Articles of Religion, yet wished for my

continued service.

On Mr King and Church Order

I believed that both Mr King and Mrs Evered should be brought under church discipline. But the church would not hear of it. So what was I to do?

Mrs Evered's Absence and Errors

Mrs Evered refused to attend meetings if I led them, nor would she join in communion when I presided. This stemmed from my rejection of her views on the building, the communion table, and the law. She insisted the Law of Moses was the believer's rule. I stood opposed, holding to Article 16 of the Gospel Standard Articles.

Letter of Affirmation (1981)

I reminded the church of the letter I wrote on 12th February 1981, in response to their decision to affiliate with the Gospel Standard.

"I believe the Gospel Standard association is a means by which God preserves His truth. In particular, its Articles rightly treat our relationship to the Law, uphold particular redemption, and reject the unscriptural notion of gospel offers. These are truths widely denied in our day."

Believers' Rule of Life Is Not Moses' Law

Were the Ten Commandments our rule of life, then the seventh-day Sabbath must be observed. Yet this was rejected by faithful men such as J. C. Philpot (GS 1861), William Gadsby, John Bunyan, John Gill, William Huntington, and John Calvin. The Christian, being under the gospel, is not under Moses' rod.

Affirmation of Gospel Standard Article 16

"We believe the believer's rule of life is the gospel, and not the 'moral law' issued upon Mount Sinai, which hath no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth."

Mrs Evered ought not to contend otherwise. Though few understand this clearly, those who subscribe to the GS Articles bear responsibility to uphold them.

Two Options for the Church

Cease to be a Gospel Standard cause and thus remove all obligations.

Prepare a written doctrinal statement to clarify disputed articles, distribute it to visiting ministers, and ensure all preachers support our confession.

I favoured the second option. If the Gospel Standard Articles were better expressed today, many of the long-standing controversies could be resolved.

Article 26: My Revision

“We deny ‘duty faith’ and ‘duty repentance’—terms which signify that it is every man’s duty to live by faith upon Christ. We reject exhorting men in a natural state to savingly believe or turn to God. These are graces wrought by the Spirit in the elect, under the Covenant of Grace. Yet all men ought to repent of ungodliness and believe the gospel report concerning Christ.”

Articles 31 & 34 – Concerning Ministerial Address

These articles rightly warn against applying apostolic exhortations to unregenerate men or transferring Old Testament commands intended for Israel to the gospel age. These points must be taught clearly.

Sunday School Hymns

Hymn 169 teaches that Christ was slain “for me”—this cannot be placed in the mouths of unregenerate children. Hymn 108, “God loves the little children,” implies universal atonement. Such hymns are Arminian. If no suitable hymns exist, we must produce a new hymn book faithful to our confession.

On Roman Catholic Influence

In 1982, when the Pope visited Britain, I suggested a meeting to address the church's duty in that hour. The church refused to permit the use of our building, lest Roman Catholic neighbours be offended. The meeting was held at my house instead. We must not be silent. We should hold educational meetings on the Reformation and invite trustworthy speakers.

Ecumenism and the Monarchy

There are signs that ecumenism threatens even the Coronation Oath. If Protestant witness is to remain, the church must be awake. Let us not tread in ignorance like Samson shorn of strength.

Responsibility with Light

I make no boast. God's grace alone made me to differ from my companions in Aylesbury—drug takers and the lost. The Lord has given light. I must act upon it.

Conclusion

If my recommendations are acceptable, let us call upon the name of the Lord and proceed. If not, then I must be released from all responsibility and go where God directs.

I loaned the recording of this message to both Mr King and Mrs Evered.

Their Response

Mr King refused to listen or read anything from me. "There is one above who knows all," he said.

Mrs Evered returned the tape with a letter:

"It is abhorrent to me that church business should be mechanically recorded. There should have been a proper meeting, and all things done decently and in order. Thus saith the Lord, 'Stand ye in the ways and see...' (Jer. 6:16)."

My wife found humour in the situation, but I groaned within. It was as though a hand had written on the wall:

Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.

And I wondered—how many others in our churches were likewise blind?

CHAPTER 16 – Mr Crane’s Response

Having given a copy of my recorded address to Mr Crane, he responded promptly and thoughtfully. His reply, written as a letter, touched on many spiritual and doctrinal matters that echoed our shared concerns for the gospel and the state of the church.

Mr Crane’s Letter

“Dear David,

You said a great deal. We live in an age of deep deception. Though vital religion has never been confined to one nation since the days of Christ on earth, England has undeniably been much favoured. Was it not said, ‘Play the man, Ridley, for by God’s grace we shall this day light such a candle in England as I trust shall never be put out’? We must not grow complacent as our Protestant heritage is eroded through the craft of men.

The days of the end are marked by decline, falling away, and love grown cold. Unless the Lord revives His work, we face spiritual desolation. He has prolonged this world in mercy, yet time shall not always continue. The Romeward drift is not new—it appeals to man’s natural religious instinct, a need for ritual and image. Though Rome is fallen, it remains religious and has endured centuries.

But sin is sin—whether Arminian, Romanist, or among our own ranks. Even within Strict Baptist traditions, idols may arise, and false Christs may be followed if not revealed by the Spirit. True faith is the gift of God. We need not a new reformation, but a fresh outpouring of the Spirit upon all—monarchs, ministers, and men.

I understand your frustration, David. If the Lord has given you light, it is that others might see. Do not complain when they argue—they are in darkness. You seek to go where light already shines, but perhaps the Lord calls you to bring light where it is most needed.

Reason tenderly with the people, as Paul did at his trial. Some will receive your message unto life, others unto death. Leave the results with God. Remember: not all ministers have the same commission. Some are messengers of comfort, others of warning. You must wait upon the Lord.

If God means for you to remain at Bierton, or even serve as pastor, He shall bring it to pass in His own time. But wait patiently. The vision, though it tarry, shall surely come.

Concerning church order: those who absent themselves from the Lord's Table without just cause should fall under censure. Yet be mindful—your words, though sincere, may have wounded some. Let time and grace work healing.

I see no harm in your letter to visiting ministers. We should indeed circulate our Articles of Faith and invite only those who agree. These Articles are essential—not binding to the Spirit-led preacher, but protective against error. I see no controversy in Article 26, though I appreciate your concern for clarity.

As for historical lectures and Reformation meetings, they are of natural interest but should not overshadow Christ. Books may inform, but it is Christ who feeds the soul. Let every church gathering ask, 'Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?'

Lastly, yes, the Sunday School needs a revised hymn book. Truth must reign both in chapel and classroom.

I trust this helps. Write again if more needs be said.

Yours faithfully in the Lord,

Paul Crane"

My Response

I recognised I had but one option left—to maintain a consistent and faithful witness, I must formally withdraw from Bierton. I called Mr Crane and

informed him of my decision and followed with a letter dated 26th June 1984. In it, I stated my conscience no longer permitted me to remain.

Letter of Resignation to Mr Crane

“Dear Paul,

Thank you for your thoughtful response to the address I gave at Bierton. As you know, I shared a copy of the recording with Mr King and Mrs Evered, but both refused to hear it. Their refusal grieved me.

I find encouragement in the scriptures—2 Timothy 2:20–21 and Psalm 68:6. It is with sorrow, but out of necessity, that I withdraw from membership at Bierton. I have said all that needs to be said regarding the disorder among us.

My continued presence would not benefit either myself or the church. I will write to those churches where I am engaged to preach and ask to be relieved of those engagements, so as to cause no embarrassment.

My withdrawal means I am no longer under your oversight, but you, as a church, must act according to your rules. I must walk by the Word of God and contend for the truth with the means given me.

Yours in Christ,

David Clarke”

Mr Crane telephoned me shortly afterwards, hoping I might reconsider. I explained that I could not. The week was already past for contacting ministers for the 1985 schedule, but Mr Crane responded that if the Lord willed it, the church would have its ministers—even if not contacted until December.

Thus, on 26th June 1984, I formally seceded from the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, founded in 1831, and joined to the Gospel Standard in 1981.

CHAPTER 17 – I Seek a City

Heb. 11:10

If anything I've written here benefits any scattered child of God, may the Lord bless it to their gathering unto Christ.

My Hopes and Desires

Pardon what is not spiritual. If any feel inclined to write, to encourage or reprove, for mutual edification, I welcome it. I seek that city whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10), and a people of like mind who walk in truth and love.

“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 whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Galatians 1:3–5)

Conclusion to the Whole Matter

My secession from Bierton was not a departure from all churches. Technically, the rules of the Gospel Standard prevent one from ceasing membership—only the church may remove a person, either honourably or otherwise. Mr Crane was unwilling to do this.

Though I seceded, I maintained the doctrinal truths found in both the Bierton Articles of Religion (1831) and the Gospel Standard Articles. It was the church that drifted—not I.

Only true repentance and a return to these gospel principles will restore Bierton or any other church.

“But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth... and the ruin of that house was great.” (Luke 6:49)

If I can be of help to any, please let me know.

I Preach at Home

Having left Bierton, I struggled to find fellowship. Though I believed in gathering with a local church, I knew not where to turn. So, I began to preach

at home—to my wife, my children, and those friends who came to hear.

I felt besieged, and our home became a refuge. This same room had hosted Gordon Ferguson in 1982 when he addressed the dangers of the Pope's visit to Britain.

A Need for Church Membership

I believed then, as now, that Christians ought to be joined to a local church. But where could we go? The Gospel Standard denomination, as evidenced at Bierton, had veered from the gospel in practice, if not in name.

Their traditions—particularly the added articles—were failing to preserve truth. We were, in effect, unchurched.

Anxiety and Weakness

After the strain of Bierton, I found myself anxious and uncertain. I feared further preaching engagements, not wanting to draw others into our conflict. This fear grew, and I struggled with what felt like a breakdown.

A Serious Incident

At this time, a grave matter occurred which affected my family and others. It required police involvement. Had we been in a properly functioning church, the issue could have been dealt with biblically. This incident revealed to me the value of Strict Communion.

I Saw the Wisdom of Strict Communion

Strict Communion provides a framework for church discipline when civil authorities fail. It was through this painful experience that I came to appreciate it more deeply.

A City Whose Builder Is God

I felt compelled to write *The Bierton Crisis*, circulating it to all involved. I believed I had been called to preach and to defend the gospel. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

“The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.” (Philippians 1:12)

CHAPTER 17 – Our History and My Background

After the publication of *The Bierton Crisis*, I was heartened by the support of Mr David Oldham, pastor of Stamford and Evington Strict and Particular Baptist Churches. He kindly invited me to Leicester, and we spent the day discussing the issues raised in the book. His fellowship was a great comfort, for at that time, I felt completely alone.

Our History

The following testimony was originally prepared in response to a question from Mr D. Crowther, deacon at the Attleborough church. He had invited me to preach shortly after my secession from the Bierton church. In writing to him, I explained that I was no longer in membership with any church and that my preaching might, therefore, cause embarrassment among other congregations. I suggested that, should they still wish me to come, Mr Crowther could consult Mr Crane, the acting overseer at Bierton, to learn the reasons for my resignation. If the church at Attleborough, having understood my position, still desired me to minister the Word, I would do so with a clear conscience.

I include here a copy of that letter and another addressed to Mr Royce of Luton, who had written to enquire about Gospel Standard Article 32. This article, like others, had caused unease both within and outside the denomination. I hope that my responses will clarify my doctrinal stance and be helpful to others navigating similar difficulties.

“The day is coming when the watchmen shall see eye to eye.” (Isaiah)

May the Lord hasten that day.

To Mr D. Crowther of Attleborough

Dear Mr Crowther,

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on my own behalf concerning my secession from the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church. I also appreciate that Mr Crane has conveyed to you his own understanding of these matters, although it appears he has misunderstood my position, particularly regarding the Gospel Standard Articles and Bierton's alignment with that body. Therefore, I am forwarding this letter to him as well.

I first became acquainted with the Gospel Standard churches in 1973–74, through the Bierton chapel, when Mr Hill, a Gospel minister at Luton's Ebenezer Chapel, introduced me to these matters. At the time, I knew of no other churches faithfully contending for the doctrines of sovereign grace, which by then I had come to receive as biblical truth.

I had been converted by grace in 1970, called out from a life of crime, addiction, and immorality. With no church upbringing, all I had was the Bible and what God taught me by His Spirit. In the Lord's kind providence, a friend lent me William Huntington's *The Kingdom of God Taken by Prayer* and John Kershaw's *Mercies of a Covenant God*. Both books deepened my understanding of gospel truth.

Initially, I attended a Pentecostal church in Aylesbury, but their Arminian doctrine soon proved inconsistent with the Scriptures. I left them and began attending the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, whose Articles of Religion reflected the doctrines of grace.

In January 1976, I joined the church as a member.

However, over the years, it became evident that the church was drifting. While they still professed adherence to sovereign grace, their practice and tolerance of contradictory teachings—particularly regarding general redemption, the law as a rule of life, and the compromise in discipline—compelled me to withdraw.

My hope and prayer remain that this account will be used of God to strengthen others who find themselves in similar trials.

Yours sincerely,

David Clarke

CHAPTER 18 – The Bierton Articles of Religion (1831)

These are the articles of faith I solemnly subscribed to when I was received into membership of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church on the 8th of January, 1976. I transcribed them directly from the original trust deed, which was in the safekeeping of Miss Bertha Ellis. The document itself bore the signature of the son of John Warburton, the Gospel Standard minister from Trowbridge.

The Articles Are As Follows:

It was recorded that a number of persons had covenanted together for the purpose of divine worship at a chapel adjoining the said hereditament, namely, the Bierton Baptist Chapel. These persons called themselves “The Society of Particular Baptists,” referred to henceforth as “the church.” They bound themselves to uphold and propagate the following doctrines:

1. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are divinely inspired and form the only rule of faith and practice. These same Scriptures reveal the one, true, living God—self-existent, infinite, and eternal.
2. That there are three self-existent, co-eternal Persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—three Persons, yet one God. The Lord Jesus Christ is both very God and very man in one glorious and indivisible Person.
3. That before the foundation of the world, God did elect a definite number of the human race to everlasting life, whom He predestined to adoption through Jesus Christ, according to His own sovereign grace and the good pleasure of His will.
4. That God created Adam upright, and that all his posterity fell in him, he being the federal head and representative of all mankind.
5. That in the fulness of time, the Lord Jesus Christ took upon Himself human nature and, as the substitute for the elect only, truly suffered and died, thereby making full satisfaction for their sins, according to God’s holy law and justice, and meriting for them all necessary blessings both for time

and for eternity.

6. That the redemption obtained by Christ through the shedding of His blood is both particular and effectual—intended solely for the elect, who alone shall benefit from its blessings.

7. That the justification of God's elect is entirely through the imputed righteousness of Christ, received by faith, and not on account of any works of righteousness which they themselves have done. Their full and free pardon is through Christ's blood alone, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

8. That regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and saving faith are all the work of God the Holy Ghost, wrought by His invincible and effectual grace.

9. That all those whom the Father has chosen, the Son has redeemed, and the Spirit has sanctified, shall most certainly persevere in grace and be saved eternally.

10. That there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust; and that Christ shall return to judge the quick and the dead. The wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into everlasting glory.

11. That baptism (by immersion) and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by Christ to be observed until His second coming. Baptism must precede communion; therefore, only those who have publicly professed their faith and been baptised by immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost are eligible to partake of the Lord's Table. No one unbaptised, in this manner, shall be permitted to commune at the Lord's Table in the chapel.

Furthermore, it was agreed that the property (i.e., the hereditaments) be conveyed to the trustees to be held in trust for the purpose of maintaining holy worship according to the doctrines and practices here outlined.

The election or removal of any future pastor of the church shall be decided by a vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at a duly convened church meeting, the purpose of which must be clearly stated and announced publicly for four successive Lord's Days. Members eligible to vote must have

attended the Lord's Table at least four times in the preceding six months, unless hindered by illness or other unavoidable circumstances.

No minister may be elected to, or remain in, the pastoral office unless he holds to these doctrines and the defined mode of communion. Neither shall any person be received into membership, nor permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper, unless they have been baptised (i.e., immersed in water) upon a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ and can give a satisfactory account of the work of grace in their souls—having been called out of darkness into God's marvellous light.

CHAPTER 19 – Bierton Becomes a Gospel Standard Cause

How the Church Functioned

It was only after I joined the church and was later appointed as Secretary that I gained access to the minutes of the church meetings. Through them, I came to understand the specific responsibilities held by Mr Hill and others within the fellowship.

Mr Hill had agreed to act as Chairman of the church on the 8th of January 1976—the very day I was received into membership. It turned out that this was the first and only time he was invited to act in such a capacity, and even then, only to assist the church with the election of new trustees. At that same meeting, Mr King agreed to serve as Secretary, taking over from Mrs Evered, who had previously carried out that duty. The church resolved that Mr Hill would chair alternate church meetings going forward, but clearly, he was not granted pastoral oversight—only an administrative role.

At that time, the Bierton Church was not a Gospel Standard listed cause.

First Move Toward the Gospel Standard

The matter of becoming a Gospel Standard cause was first raised on the 7th of July 1978. Mrs Evered proposed we apply for membership, and Mr Hill gave a detailed explanation of the procedure. He advised that if the church were minded to pursue this further, the matter could be brought forward at the next meeting. He also suggested we might consider adopting Gadsby's Hymnbook, as our existing collection (Denham's) was outdated and out of

print.

At the meeting held on the 1st of November 1978, Mr King resigned as Secretary, and I, acting as Chairman, declined to take on the role myself due to personal and domestic circumstances—I had just completed my teacher training and moved to Leighton Buzzard to begin lecturing at Luton College of Higher Education. I hoped that this move would also benefit my wife, as we had no pastor at Berton, and the church at Linslade (where Mr Collier ministered) seemed promising.

It was suggested that Mrs Evered take on the role of Secretary, but she refused unless the church became a Gospel Standard cause. I felt this was not the appropriate time to consider such an affiliation, and we first needed to resolve the matter of appointing a new Secretary. I also knew that Miss R. Ellis and Mrs C. Gurney were not in favour of joining the Gospel Standard, and I myself was not satisfied that the reasons for doing so were spiritual. One such reason given was that Mrs Evered's sister, Mrs Groom (a member of the Prestwood Gospel Standard church), had moved to Berton and could not partake in our communion without offending her home church, since we were not a Standard cause.

If the church had desired to join the Gospel Standard to take a stand for the doctrines of sovereign grace, especially against duty faith and the ten commandments as a rule of life, that would have been another matter. But this was not the motive.

Moved by concern, I offered to serve as Secretary for a period, even though I was living in Leighton Buzzard and considering transferring to the Linslade Church. The church accepted my offer, and I continued in the office until 30 April 1980.

Vote Against Joining

On 24 January 1979, a church meeting was held to vote on joining the Gospel Standard. All members were present. Despite only Mrs Evered proposing the motion, a vote was taken: four members were against, and one abstained. Mr King then proposed the matter not be raised again for at least one year, and this motion was carried.

Correspondence with the Gospel Standard Committee

Due to the concerns expressed, I felt it wise to write to the Gospel Standard Committee to clarify two matters:

The reason for Mr Hill's withdrawal from their approved list of ministers.

The meaning of Article 26, which denies exhorting unregenerate men to saving faith.

In a letter dated 14 August 1979, Mr D.F. Dickerson replied. He stated that Mr Hill had agreed to withdraw his name temporarily as a public expression of sorrow over certain matters. Regarding Article 26, he explained that the intent was to avoid free-will invitations to sinners, instead encouraging those under conviction to flee to Christ, as enabled by the Spirit. He affirmed that the article did not deny man's responsibility under the law.

I was thankful for this response, though I remained concerned about how the term "law" was used, especially as it pertained to the Mosaic covenant. I accepted the Gospel Standard's position, as articulated by J.C. Philpot and others, that the Ten Commandments were not binding on Gentile believers as a rule of life.

Second and Third Attempts to Join

On 23 April 1980, I requested to be relieved as Secretary, having moved to Leicester. Mr King proposed Mrs Evered take the role, which she accepted conditionally—that we reconsider applying to the Gospel Standard. I suggested we vote after three months.

However, at a special meeting held on 21 May 1980, Mr Hope (a minister from Reading) was elected Chairman without my knowledge. At the 18 June 1980 meeting, five voted in favour of joining the Gospel Standard, and two against. The motion failed due to lack of unanimity.

Later, a third vote was taken at the 10 October 1980 meeting (from which I was absent). The minutes recorded that "two members were still in opposition."

Final Decision to Join

On 16 January 1981, at a quarterly meeting (again in my absence), the church voted by ballot and unanimously agreed to join the Gospel Standard causes. Mr Hope agreed to handle the correspondence. I received a letter dated 24 January 1981 from Mrs Evered informing me of the decision.

I was surprised. Both Miss R. Ellis and Mrs C. Gurney had previously opposed the move. Upon visiting them, Mrs Gurney admitted she felt pressured to comply, and Miss Ellis said she misunderstood the voting method.

I brought my concerns to the church but was told by Mr King that the minutes would be read at the next meeting, and not shown to me then.

Further Controversies and Reactions

Shortly after, Mr John Just, a visitor, wrote a letter raising concerns over women speaking in meetings and the lack of male leadership. These concerns were dismissed by the church. Mr Hope, as Chairman, rebuked Mr Just.

Around this time, I also wrote to the Gospel Standard Committee seeking clarification on our position. Their Secretary confirmed that:

No breach of trust deed had occurred.

The church's original articles remained valid.

No legal changes were required.

I was relieved, though the letter was forwarded to Mr Hope, and Mrs Evered rang to rebuke me—this being the second time she attempted to exercise authority over me, contrary to Scripture (1 Tim. 2:12).

Reaction of Mr Dix and Letter to Mr Hill

Mr Dix, of the Dunstable Baptists, later expressed dismay that Bierton had joined the Gospel Standard and said it was unlawful under the trust deed. This prompted me to write to Mr Hill of Luton.

In his reply, dated 27 October 1981, Mr Hill assured me there was no

inconsistency. He believed the Gospel Standard causes upheld the doctrines to which the Bierton Church had always adhered. He said the original articles and the Gospel Standard articles were practically identical and encouraged me to be at peace.

His letter brought me comfort and confirmed my hope that our move, while controversial, had not violated our founding principles.

CHAPTER 20 – Mr Royce of Luton and the Added Articles

Whilst preaching at Eaton Bray in Edlesborough, I met Mr Stephen Royce of Luton, who raised a question about the Added Articles of Religion of the Gospel Standard. Stephen and his family had attended the Watford Strict Baptist Church, where Mr Hill had once been the pastor. Stephen had come to believe in the Lord and desired to be baptised. However, difficulties arose.

Mr Royce had moved to Luton, where Mr Ramsbottom was now the pastor at Bethel Chapel. Mr Sayers Senior had succeeded Mr Hill at Watford, and his son, Howard Sayers—a minister sent from Watford—made it publicly known that he did not accept the Added Articles. This, of course, did not help Stephen Royce, nor his father, in resolving the matter.

Stephen's issue was that while he desired baptism, he could not, in good conscience, subscribe to the wording of the Added Articles. Mr Ramsbottom, sharing similar reservations, would not present his request for baptism to the church. This left Stephen in a quandary. Could he be baptised as a believer but not become a member? Was it right to go against his conscience simply to join the church?

I fully understood his problem and, having been sent to preach by the Bierton Church—a Gospel Standard cause—I felt compelled to write and offer a detailed reply.

My Letter to Mr Royce – Dated 18th August 1984

Dear Mr Royce,

Concerning Article 32, you asked for my thoughts. Let me say at the outset that it is imperative for any believer to be fully persuaded in his own mind when subscribing to articles of religion. It is not fitting that we become like

those in the apostate Church of England who once swore allegiance to their Thirty-Nine Articles and then denied them in spirit or practice. Scripture warns of covenant-breakers (Romans 1:31), and such betrayal is a sign of the latter days.

When I was converted in 1970, I resolved that I would not join any church unless I could fully agree with its confession of faith. Since then, I've learned that most chapels are held under trust deeds which specify doctrinal terms. Trustees are sworn to ensure that those tenets are upheld.

In 1976, I declined an invitation to become a trustee of Bierton Chapel, as I then questioned whether strict communion—as laid out in the trust deed—was biblical. I now believe it is. However, that decision was taken from principle.

I say to you—never give assent to any confession if your conscience is uneasy. A regenerate man has a good conscience, one which must not be violated. A defiled conscience weakens the believer, robs him of spiritual strength, and prevents him from standing firm in truth.

Let us now examine Article 32:

“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.”

Breaking Down the Article

There are several assertions:

Apostolic addresses in Scripture are brief.

They were given in special and unique circumstances.

The apostles were directly guided by the Lord.

We cannot draw absolute and universal rules for preaching from these cases.

Modern times are vastly different from those in the apostles' day.

It is unsafe to universalise apostolic examples.

Some wrongly claim apostolic inspiration.

Such claims have led to Romanist and Protestant errors.

The core message of the article seems to be: "It is unsafe to derive universal rules for ministerial preaching from a handful of apostolic examples."

Now, some thoughts:

We may have only brief records of apostolic addresses, but all Scripture is divinely inspired and profitable for doctrine and correction (2 Timothy 3:16).

Yes, every circumstance in Scripture is unique—but that does not mean they cannot inform present-day practice.

Apostles were not always under direct inspiration—Peter is an example of human weakness. But this does not invalidate the authority of inspired Scripture.

We do not extract rules from isolated incidents but from the whole of Scripture. Even so, apostolic examples do teach us.

Of course, our times differ from the apostolic era—but truth does not change.

It is far more dangerous to ignore apostolic examples than to follow them reverently.

No Christian believes himself to be inspired as the apostles were.

We do agree that claiming inspiration leads to error—as found among

Romanists and many Protestants.

Ministerial Appeals and Evangelical Repentance

The article seems to discourage appeals to sinners on the grounds that only the regenerate can respond. This ties in with Article 26, which rejects the notion of “duty faith.”

I wrote to Mr Dickerson of the Gospel Standard Committee in 1980 and he kindly explained that Article 26 does not deny man’s moral responsibility. Rather, it opposes free-will invitations—commands to believe and accept Christ that presume man has the power to do so without the Spirit.

There is such a thing as natural or legal repentance—commanded by the law and conscience. God is just in requiring this. But evangelical repentance—the sorrow that flows from faith and love for Christ—is a gift of grace. No man has this by nature.

Gospel ministers do warn sinners. Jonah did. Jesus did. The apostles did. And the Gospel calls all men to repent outwardly. But saving faith and repentance is granted only to the elect. This is the distinction made by Gill, Gadsby, Philpot, and Huntington.

Historical Difficulties and Mr Popham’s Remarks

Even Mr Popham, writing in 1906, acknowledged that he could not speak for the intent of those who composed Article 32. He admitted that not all were accurate theologians. That leaves us with ambiguity.

In my view, the article should not have been added in its current form. It lacks clarity and diminishes the authority of Scripture examples. If it was intended to safeguard against Arminianism and universal invitations, then its aim was noble—but its wording is unhelpful.

Conclusion

If we reject Article 32 as written, that need not exclude us from Gospel Standard churches, provided we are clear about what we do believe. If the

article denies mans responsibility towards God to natural men altogether, it is wrong. But if it upholds the truth that faith and repentance are gifts of grace—not duties of the unregenerate—then it is right.

This is the position of the old divines, and I trust it is yours too.

Yours in the cause of gospel truth,

David Clarke

CHAPTER 19 – John Metcalfe and Tyler’s Green Chapel

During the difficult period at Bierton Church, I had occasion to speak with Dr John Verna at my home in Bierton. He told me that he and his wife had met Mr John Metcalfe of Penn, near High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. Some of Mr Metcalfe’s congregation had a literature stall in Aylesbury Market Square and sold only the Authorised King James Bible. This caught my attention, as I had recently read a tract by Mr Metcalfe titled *The Gospel of God*, which addressed the claims of the Papacy and Pope John Paul II. I found it encouraging and doctrinally sound.

I recalled that James, a visitor to Bierton Church, had once attended Mr Metcalfe’s chapel, and so I decided to visit Tyler’s Green Chapel (also known as Bethlehem Meeting Hall) to meet Mr Metcalfe for myself. I took my daughter Esther, then about four years old, with me one Sunday evening.

When we arrived, the chapel gates were locked. It was damp and dark, and I wondered if the gates had been deliberately locked as a kind of symbolic warning—like the door shut against the five foolish virgins (Matthew 25:2). We waited in the road until the meeting ended. As the congregation filed out quietly, I approached a well-dressed gentleman in a cream raincoat—Mr Metcalfe himself. I asked him about the locked gates. He smiled and said they had been forced to do so due to past vandalism.

He introduced his daughter and noted that he appreciated our persistence. Upon hearing I had read his tract and agreed with its sentiments, he invited Esther and me to supper at his home. We were warmly received. The house and garden were beautiful and well-kept, and Esther was fussed over with chocolate biscuits. I shared my testimony of conversion and explained the situation at Bierton regarding law and gospel, particular redemption, the

Added Articles, and holy tables. Mr Metcalfe listened, asked about my work, and seemed pleased I was a lecturer and a minister of the gospel.

I admired Mr Metcalfe. He was courteous, convicted, and uncompromising—determined to follow the Lord. He opposed Dr Ian Paisley, disliked the use of ecclesiastical titles such as “Dr,” and had theological differences with notable figures like Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones. I felt I could learn a great deal from him.

An Invitation to Tyler’s Green Chapel

Later, I returned with my wife, and we were invited to a Sunday morning service where Mr Metcalfe preached. Our four children were cared for by one of the members. The sermon was powerful—unlike anything I had heard before. It aligned closely with his publication *Messiah*, and I found myself stirred with excitement. Mr Metcalfe seemed keen for feedback, but I, out of caution, offered none.

A Strange Evening with Paul Rowland

Sometime after, I arranged a visit to Mr Metcalfe with Paul Rowland, a minister of the Strict Baptist Church and an employee of the Trinitarian Bible Society. Paul held to the Scottish Presbyterian view and would only sing Psalms in worship. I spoke highly of Mr Metcalfe, and he agreed to visit.

We were welcomed into Mr Metcalfe’s eloquently decorated lounge. The atmosphere was dignified. He soon raised theological issues, particularly objecting to the Presbyterian notion that the righteousness of Christ, wrought out under the Law, is our justifying righteousness. He argued that the New Testament does not mention “the righteousness of Christ,” but only “the righteousness of God,” which he considered distinct from the Law.

The conversation turned peculiar when Mr Metcalfe asked whether the fruit Adam ate was good or bad. Paul answered, but not to Mr Metcalfe’s satisfaction. Then, in a theatrical gesture, Mr Metcalfe produced a shotgun from behind a curtain and removed the cartridges, explaining that he had been threatened by the IRA and had searched our coats upon entry. He later used the discovery of tobacco in one of our pockets in a disparaging way.

Clarifying Justification

Following the evening, I pondered the discussion on justification. At the time, I was studying the doctrine of eternal justification. My understanding was:

Eternal Justification: In God's mind, the elect were justified from eternity, though the work and merits securing this justification occurred in time through Christ.

Imputed Righteousness: Christ's righteousness—his sinless life and vicarious death—is imputed to the elect. This is the righteousness of God, not righteousness under the Law of Moses.

Justification by Faith: This takes place in the conscience upon believing, bringing peace and joy (Romans 5:1).

Justification by Blood: Our sins are removed through Christ's death (Romans 5:9). God declares the elect righteous because they are clothed in Christ's righteousness.

I believed that Mr Metcalfe was reacting not to the imputation of Christ's righteousness but rather to the Presbyterian framing of it.

An Unpleasant Telephone Call

Later that week, Mr Metcalfe called me. Mistaking him for Dr Verna, I greeted him as "John." This did not go down well. He insisted I call him "Mr Metcalfe." Our conversation became strained. He demanded feedback about his sermon, but when I gently raised concerns about the tract *The Gospel of God*, he became hostile.

He declared he had more theology in his little finger than I ever would in a thousand years. He said my testimony was "disgusting" and compared me to the Pharisees who blasphemed the Holy Ghost. The call ended abruptly.

My wife had already expressed concern about his influence on me, and this encounter confirmed her fears. While attending a week of study at Durham University, I wrote to Mr Metcalfe to explain myself.

My Letters to Mr Metcalfe

In two letters, I explained that I felt he would not allow others to test what they heard, despite the scriptural command to “prove all things.” I apologised if I had caused offence but defended the truth of my testimony and raised theological concerns about his use of the phrase “the merits of Christ’s person.” I argued that merit pertains to Christ’s obedience as man, not to His divine person.

I never received a reply. Both letters were returned without comment. I took that as rejection.

Later Reflections and Writings

This episode led me to further study. Decades later, I published *Difficulties Associated with Articles of Religion Among Particular Baptists*, exploring issues like the Gospel Standard’s added articles.

Conclusion

This account demonstrates how loosely the Bierton Church treated articles of religion. Initially, they adopted a spurious set of articles and later shifted towards Gospel Standard affiliation through the determined efforts of Mrs Evered—without unanimous consent or a properly convened meeting. Both Mrs Gurney and Miss Ellis opposed the move but were pressured into compliance or misunderstood during voting.

The issues I encountered with Mr Metcalfe, though of a different nature, similarly revealed how theological clarity and humility are essential. While I admired Mr Metcalfe’s convictions, his unwillingness to allow questioning and his overbearing manner ultimately hindered fellowship.

As for the Bierton church, according to its strict membership rules, I remain its sole surviving member, since my membership was never formally terminated. Mr Crane affirmed his support when I sought to reopen the chapel in 2002, after learning of the passing of all other members.

May the Lord indeed “build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down” (Acts 15:16).

CHAPTER 20 – What Next: The Aftermath

The difficulties I faced upon leaving the Bierton church were many, and the effects on both myself and my family were profound. I naturally questioned whether I had done the right thing—but concluded that I could not have done otherwise. The other churches I was aware of, particularly those outside the Gospel Standard circle, seemed shallow in their doctrine, which led us to relocate to Shropshire to connect with a church in Snailbeach. But I was unable to find suitable work there, and this only deepened my growing sense of abandonment by God. I felt rejected—like Saul, cut off from grace and lost in apostasy.

We moved back to Luton to be near my employment at Luton College of Higher Education. It was then that I began to recover from that despondency, though we remained unaffiliated with any church, still wounded by the painful experiences at Bierton. We were wary of history repeating itself.

It was during this period that I ran into difficulties at the college, clashing with management in a way that ended with them paying me to leave. I sought medical help for sleeplessness and was prescribed medication to lower my mood. Unfortunately, this had a severe effect: I descended into deep depression and, tragically, into a period of backsliding and sin. I even tried to deny God’s existence in order to justify my actions—a shameful and grievous time that led to the breakdown of my marriage. My wife divorced me, and rightly so.

This plunged me further into despair. I knew the gospel well enough to understand that God would not hear the prayer of the wicked. Yet, despite my efforts to dismiss Him, I could not escape the truth. In desperation I came to this conclusion: had there been no God, I would have had to invent one, such was my need for deliverance. I realised that if I wanted God’s help, I must be prepared to forsake my sin. And it was at that point—when I made that inward decision—that my prayer was heard.

I began to recover, slowly and gently, nourished by the milk of the Word. The promises of the Lord Jesus sustained me, and my joy gradually returned. I sought Christian fellowship once more, though cautiously.

Two significant events followed this restoration. First, I received word that my brother Michael, imprisoned in the Philippines, had become a Christian. This cheered me greatly. Second, a church I had recently begun attending proposed the election of women elders—a new conflict I was in no state to endure. When I opposed the proposal, I was told, in effect, to leave. So I did.

Out of this, I felt compelled to write. I documented my brother's and my own story in *Converted on LSD Trip*, a testimony of our early life, our criminal past, my conversion, and life at Bierton, followed by Michael's remarkable conversion. Then I wrote *Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary* (later retitled *Does the Lord Jesus Want Women to Rule as Elders in His Church?*) to challenge the issue of female eldership. Both books are available on Amazon and Audible.

Inspired by Michael's conversion, I travelled to the Philippines in 2001 to support his work among prisoners. I stayed nearly a year, working with local volunteers and inmates to support those who had turned from crime to Christ. Out of this mission came our publication *Trojan Warriors*, containing the testimonies of 66 former criminals.

The Closure of the Bierton Chapel

Upon returning to the UK in 2003, I contacted Mr Crane, the church overseer, who informed me that the Bierton chapel had closed for worship on 22nd December 2002. He encouraged me to reopen it.

It transpired that the Association of Grace Baptist Churches Ltd (South East), of 7 Arlington Way, London EC1R 1XA, had taken over management of the chapel's property. They had assumed possession of the church's trust deed from our aging trustees—Mr Janes, Mr Martin, Mr King, and Mr Baumber—who had felt unable to continue in that role.

The original trust deed had been held by Miss G. Ellis and was with her solicitor, which was crucial for any registration with the Land Registry. The Association had obtained the deed after her death.

When I approached the Association to request the use of the chapel for our ministry and for meetings with visiting ministers from the Philippines, they refused. Instead, they intended to sell the building and profit from it. They

even commenced demolition work—against the terms of the trust—in order to push for planning permission and increase its market value.

Despite our plans, the Association were not interested in honouring the chapel's original purpose. They offered to sell me the building for around £150,000. Worse, they disputed my claim to membership and my right to use the chapel, even though I remained—according to our own rules—the last lawful church member.

This sad chapter only reaffirmed the need to preserve our history and stand firm in the truth. The Bierton chapel had been entrusted for gospel worship, not commercial gain. It remains my hope and prayer that the Lord will yet raise up those who seek to worship Him in spirit and truth.

“To build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down” (Acts 15:16).

CHAPTER 21 – My Letter to the Association of Grace Baptist

Churches Ltd

To: Association of Grace Baptist Churches LtdCC: Charities

CommissionDate: Sunday, 11 July 2004

Subject: Trusteeship of the Bierton Chapel

Dear Sirs,

I write to request evidence of your lawful entitlement to act as trustees for the Bierton Baptist Chapel, founded in 1831. The church was listed as a Gospel Standard cause in 1981 by proper church consent. Since only 22 years have passed, the governing Articles of Religion remain those set forth in the original Trust Deed of 1831.

Your association with the Strict Baptist Association does not automatically entitle you to administer Bierton Chapel, unless this was expressly agreed upon by the Bierton Church—a condition I contend was never fulfilled. I therefore request strict proof of your appointment as lawful trustees, and an explanation of how the original trust deeds came into your possession.

I also wish to inform you that the Society of Strict and Particular Baptists,

meeting at Bierton, continues through my ministry. As one of the original seven church members, I assert that I remain, according to the church's rules, a lawful member. I therefore believe that I and others are entitled in law to use the Bierton Schoolroom and Chapel for religious worship.

As you are no doubt aware, any proceeds from the potential sale of the chapel would require Charities Commission approval under cy-près doctrine.

Yours in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, David Clarke
Hon. Director,
Trojan Horse International (TULIP) Phils. Incorporated

Their Response and Denial

The Association initially denied that we were a Gospel Standard church and that I was a member. However, I provided them with a copy of *The Bierton Crisis* (1984), a letter from Mr Ramsbottom affirming our Gospel Standard listing, and confirmation from Mr Crane—our acting overseer—who supported my request to reopen the chapel.

Despite these evidences, the Association insisted I was no longer a member, ignoring our rules regarding membership cessation. Our rules stated that membership could only cease through honourable transfer to a church of the same faith and order, or by dishonourable dismissal—neither of which applied to me.

When I challenged the Association's legitimacy as trustees—stating they were never elected by the Bierton Church—I was ignored. I asked them to confirm that their copy of the trust deed matched the one I held, but they refused. That trust deed clearly states that trustees must be elected by the church and must uphold the doctrines stated therein.

The Bierton Church would never have chosen trustees who subscribed to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. We were a Gospel Standard cause. I appealed to the Association's secretary, Mr David Whitmarsh, who denied both our Gospel Standard standing and my membership. He also refused to provide me with a copy of the trust deed.

Faced with this denial, I registered a legal caution with the Land Registry to prevent any unauthorised sale of the chapel.

County Court Proceedings

I pursued a two-part legal claim:

That I remained a lawful member of the Bierton Church.

That the Association were not the lawful trustees.

The judge ruled that our rules of church membership were not enforceable in law, claiming that any person could leave an association at will. However, according to our church's constitution, secession must be formally recognised by the church. As the church had never terminated my membership, I held that I remained a member. The judge disagreed, and my claim to membership was dismissed.

Given the burden of further litigation, I withdrew the second part of the case, which challenged the legitimacy of the Association's trusteeship. This case cost me £6,000 in legal fees. I left the matter with the Lord.

Denial of Access to Church Records

I then wrote to the Strict Baptist Historical Society requesting access to the church minute book to confirm the status of my membership. I was told that the records had been given to Mr Kenneth Dix of Dunstable. When I asked to see them, I was ignored. Mr Dix had falsely claimed that the church had terminated my membership, but there was no record of such an act. This was never brought before the church and was a fabrication.

Solemn Declaration Made at London Central County Court – 6th September 2006

To establish the truth of these matters and clarify my standing, I submitted a solemn declaration to the court. This outlined the Bierton Church's Articles of Religion, my call to the ministry, the history of the Gospel Standard listing, and my continued service as a sent minister—particularly in my work in the Philippines.

CHAPTER 22 – The Closure of the Bierton Chapel



The Bierton Society of Strict and Particular Baptists was formed in 1831. Their Articles of Religion, Protestant and Calvinistic in doctrine, are contained in the [original 1831 Trust Deed](#). The chapel was officially closed for worship on 22nd December 2002.

In 1981, the church became a Gospel Standard cause and adopted the strict rules of practice associated with that denomination. This included the understanding that a member cannot simply resign; any departure from the church must follow a process—either by transfer or exclusion.

In 1984, I seceded from the church over matters of conscience, documented in *The Bierton Crisis* now republished as *Let Christian Men Be Men* and even though I withdrew, the church never terminated my membership, and so I remain a member by default, and continue ministering under the authority of my call.

Upon returning from mission work in the Philippines in 2003, I discovered the chapel had been closed and the Association of Grace Baptist Churches Ltd had assumed control. I requested to use the chapel for lawful worship and to host visiting ministers from the Philippines. My requests were denied.

The Association subsequently applied for planning permission to convert the chapel into a private dwelling, even intending to use the graveyard as off-road parking. They denied our Gospel Standard status and sought to profit from the chapel's sale, despite its original consecration for gospel worship.

I wrote to all relevant parties, including former trustees and the Land Registry, asserting my claim and protesting the Association's actions. I submitted my solemn declaration to the court and to the Land Registry. Despite these efforts, the chapel was eventually sold in 2006.

Conclusion

The opposition I faced stemmed largely from doctrinal differences—chiefly the Bierton Church's alignment with the Gospel Standard Articles, which were rejected by the Association of Grace Baptist Churches Ltd. The Association acted in defiance of our historic trust deed, elected trustees, and distinct doctrines.

I pray that this record stands as a testimony, not merely of protest, but of my duty to defend the truth and preserve the integrity of our church's original foundation.

David Clarke 11 Hayling Close, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 3AE

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CHAPTER 23 – Continued Ministry

A Summary of Events

Having seceded from the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists on 26th June 1984 over matters of conscience, I have set forth the following summary:

The Bierton Church was established in 1831. I was received into membership in 1976, and in 1981, the church became a listed Gospel Standard cause by unanimous consent. In 1982, I was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel. This call was sanctioned by Mr Hill of Luton and Mr Hope of Reading, both ministers within the Gospel Standard community.

As church secretary, I maintained communication with all our ministers and dealt with accusations made against our fellowship for adopting the Gospel Standard Articles. Opposition came from several quarters, most notably Mr

Kenneth Dix, but I remained resolute in defending our church's stand.

Despite our initial unity, the church was unable to maintain fidelity to its founding principles and trust deed. Consequently, I formally seceded in 1984. According to our constitution, my membership remained in force, as it was never formally terminated. Despite serious personal failures, including a grievous fall, I continued preaching both in the UK and abroad, including in the Philippines.

Upon hearing of the closure of the Bierton Chapel, I was encouraged by Mr Paul Crane, our appointed overseer, to reopen the chapel. However, the Association of Grace Baptist Churches Ltd—who were never elected trustees of the Bierton Chapel—refused my request and denied our Gospel Standard affiliation.

In a legal case at London County Court, the judge ruled that our Gospel Standard rules were not enforceable in civil law. The Association denied my membership and legitimacy, proceeded to register the trust deed with the Land Registry, and ultimately sold the chapel in 2006. It is now a private residence. The funds from the sale, I contend, should have gone to the Particular Baptist Fund (1717), not to churches opposed to our doctrinal position.

Despite these obstacles, my ministry continues under the original commission given by the Bierton Church in 1982.

CHAPTER 24 – No Rest for the Sole of My Feet

“But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot...” —Genesis 8:9

Upon my return to the UK, I sought fellowship among like-minded believers, only to face further disappointment. A Strict Baptist minister informed me that no Gospel Standard church would accept me into membership due to my views on the Sabbath and the Law of Moses. I had questioned his interpretation and offered my understanding in a spirit of Christian discourse.

However, instead of open discussion, I was summarily dismissed. I later wrote to the minister to clarify my position and help resolve our doctrinal differences. His response was curt and ungracious:

“Your views on the Law and the Lord’s Day are wholly wrong and derogatory to the person and work of Christ... No Gospel Standard church would accept such unscriptural notions.”

Despite claiming to avoid contentiousness, his letter contained no scriptural arguments to support his assertions. He refused any further dialogue and even forbade me from publishing his letter, though I believe it necessary to expose such unbiblical attitudes.

My Letter to the Unnamed Minister – 18th November 2003

In my letter, I pleaded for Christian openness, emphasising the scriptural clarity on the distinction between Law and Gospel. I cited Paul’s arguments in Galatians and Romans, showing that the Law came by Moses—not Adam, Noah, or Abraham—and that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

I pointed out that the Law of Moses, including the Sabbath, was never given to the Gentiles and that insisting upon it as a rule of life for believers undermines the sufficiency of Christ. My position was not based on imagination, as the minister claimed, but on the clear teaching of Scripture.

Rather than seeking to offend, I sought correction if I was wrong. However, the response I received exposed deep doctrinal error and a spirit of division, not Christian charity.

My Final Response

After a decade of reflection, I decided to publish my reply. The minister’s stance was not that of a weaker brother but rather a strong one imposing legalistic views. Like the Judaizers who compelled Gentiles to adopt Jewish customs, he was insisting on the Law of Moses as a rule of life which denies the Gospel Standard article on this subject.

Paul rebuked Peter to his face for a similar error (Galatians 2:11). I do likewise in spirit—not with malice, but in defence of gospel liberty. The New Testament warns us not to let any man judge us in respect of Sabbaths (Colossians 2:16). My exclusion from Gospel Standard churches for adhering to Christ alone as my Sabbath rest is a fulfillment of the words: “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

Set for the Defence and Confirmation of the Gospel

Now is the time to earnestly contend for the faith. I have republished Dr John Prideaux's *The Doctrine of the Sabbath* and commend it to readers. (See Further Publications.)

Summary: Jesus, Our True Sabbath Rest

Those born again are new creations, with a new nature. They have been justified by faith and declared righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ. Peace with God is obtained not by the Law of Moses, but by resting in Christ—the true Sabbath rest.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature...” —2 Corinthians 5:17–21

Christ The Rest Not Moses

I have now written on the subject in my book *Christ The Rest Not Moses*,

Eschatology and the End of the Law

To fully grasp the fulfilment of the Law of Moses, one must understand eschatology—the study of last things. Jesus and the apostles lived during the “last days” of the Jewish age. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 marked the end of the Mosaic covenant.

The Book of Revelation depicts this judgment as the downfall of apostate Israel. The Law and its types and shadows were fulfilled in Christ. This was not the end of the world, but the end of the old covenant era.

For further study, I recommend *The Parousia* by James Stuart Russell. See the list of publications at the end of this book.

CHAPTER 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 God¹; And we believe that therein are revealed all the doctrines and truths which we here state².

2. The Trinity

We believe that there is but one living and true God³; that there are Three Persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost⁴ – 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 Father⁵.

3. The Everlasting Love Of God; Election;

Predestination; Adoption; And The Eternal, Covenant Of Grace

We believe in the everlasting and unchangeable love of God⁶; and that before the foundation of the world the Father did elect a certain number of the

1 Deut. 4. 2; Ps. 19. 7; Prov. 30. 5, 6; 2 Pet. 1. 19-21; Rev 22. 18, 19; John 5. 39.
2 2 Tim. 3. 15-17.

3 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.

4 Matt. 28.19; John 1.1; 2 Cor.13.14; 1 John 5.7; Jude 20, 21.

5 John 10. 15, 30; Eph. 2. 22; Heb. 1. 3; Heb. 9. 14.

6 Jer. 31. 3.

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 will⁷; 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 chosen⁸, 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 God⁹. 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 Ghost¹⁰.

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 part¹¹. And we believe that, though He existed from all eternity as the eternal Son of God¹², 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 Mary¹³. 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 assumed into union with His Divine Person, when made of a woman and not before¹⁴; that this human nature was not sinful,

7 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.

8 2 Sam. 23. 5; John 1. 17.

9 Rom. 5. 12-21; Ps. 58. 3.

10 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.

11 Prov. 8. 23.

12 John 1.18; Phil.2.5-8; Heb.1.5,8; Heb.13.8; 2John3; Rev. 1. 8.

13 Isa. 7. 14; Matt. 1. 23; Luke 1. 26-38; John 1. 14; Gal. 4. 4.

14 Luke 2. 40; Heb. 2. 14-17.

peccable, or mortal¹⁵, though capable of death by a voluntary act¹⁶, but essentially and intrinsically pure and holy¹⁷; 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 others¹⁸; 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 eternity¹⁹.

6. Particular Redemption

We believe that the eternal redemption which Christ has obtained by the shedding of His blood is special and particular²⁰; 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 thereof²¹.

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 them²², 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 grace²³.

8. Regeneration

We believe that the work of regeneration²⁴ 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; Believing In Christ; And Final Perseverance

We believe that all those who were chosen by the Father and redeemed by

15 Ps. 16. 10; Acts 2. 27.

16 John 10. 17, 18.

17 Song 5. 9-16; Heb. 7. 26.

18 John 10. 15, 26; John 17. 9, 13.

19 Heb. 9. 22-28.

20 Gal. 3. 13; Heb. 9. 12-15.

21 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.

22 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.

23 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.

24 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.

the Son, and no others, shall, at the appointed time, certainly be convinced in their hearts of sin by the Spirit²⁵, 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 man²⁶; but that none can spiritually come to Christ unless drawn by the Father²⁷; 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 glory²⁸.

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 savingly²⁹. 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 man³⁰. 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 alone³¹. 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 Christ³².

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 heart³³, 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 pleasure³⁴. And we also believe that man's works, good or bad, have not anything to do with his call, or being quickened, by the Holy Spirit³⁵.

25 John 16.8; 1Cor.2.14; Eph.2.1.

26 1Tim.2.5; Heb.8.6; Heb.9.15; Heb.12.24.

27 John 6. 44, 65.

28 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.

29 Eph. 2. 1-3.

30 Isa. 1. 6; Rom. 3. 10-19; Rom. 7. 18.

31 John 6. 68; John 10. 9; John 14. 6; Acts 4. 12; Eph. 2. 8-10; Heb. 6. 18.

32 Rom. 8. 14; Gal. 5. 16-25; Gal. 6. 14-16. 19

33 Rom. 8. 8.

34 Phil. 2. 13.

35 2Cor.3.5; Eph.2.3-9; Tit.3.5; Heb.13.21.

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 sins³⁶. We believe in the application of the Law to the elect sinner's conscience by the Spirit of God³⁷, 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 Ghost³⁸.

13. The Effects Of Faith

We believe that faith is the gift of God³⁹, as well as true spiritual repentance and hope⁴⁰, and a manifestation of pardon to the soul; that through faith Christ is made precious to the soul⁴¹, and the soul drawn out in love to God⁴²; 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 Gospel⁴³.

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 unjust⁴⁴; that the just (the elect) shall be raised up in glory and honour⁴⁵, 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 unspeakable torments of hell for ever and ever⁴⁶.

15. Baptism And The Lord's Supper

36 John 3. 3-8; John 6. 37-65; Rom. 8. 30; 1 Cor. 1. 26-29; Eph. 2. 4, 5.

37 Rom. 7. 7, 9, 12.

38 Ps.30.3; Ps.130.7; Isa.40.2; Jer.33.8; Mic.7.18; Rom. 7. 5-10.

39 Eph. 2. 8.

40 Acts 5.31; Rom. 15.13; 2 Thess. 2.16; 1 Pet.1.3.

41 1 Pet. 2. 7.

42 1 John 4. 19.

43 Gal. 2. 16-21; Gal. 5. 22-26.

44 Acts 24. 15.

45 Matt. 24. 31; Matt. 25. 31-40.

46 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.

We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper⁴⁷ 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"⁴⁸ is unscriptural, improper, and not to be allowed in the churches of Christ⁴⁹.

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 Gospel⁵⁰; 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 forbids⁵¹.

17. Infant Baptism Denied

We deny and reject, as unscriptural and erroneous, the baptism of infants⁵², whether by immersion, sprinkling, pouring, or any other mode.

18. Baptismal Regeneration Denied

We reject as blasphemous the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration⁵³; 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 Father⁵⁴; 2, by redemption by God the Son⁵⁵; and 3, by the almighty regenerating operation of God the Holy Ghost⁵⁶. We believe that the blessed Spirit is the Author of what is styled in

47 1Cor.11.2,26; 1Cor.14.40; Col.2.5-8.

48 Rom. 16. 17

49 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.

50 Gal. 6. 15, 16; 2 Cor. 3. 10; Rom. 7. 2-4.

51 Deut. 24. 1; Matt. 19. 8, 9.

52 Heb. 11. 6; Acts. 8. 12, 37.

53 John 1. 13; 1 Pet. 1. 23.

54 Jude 1.

55 John 17. 19.

56 Rom. 15. 16.

Scripture the new creature, or creation⁵⁷, or new heart⁵⁸; being, in truth, an implantation of the Divine nature⁵⁹, through which the child of God would, according to the inner man⁶⁰, 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 man⁶¹. 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 man⁶², 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 estimation⁶³.

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 godly⁶⁴, and that there is a growth in grace⁶⁵, which consists principally in a growing experimental knowledge of a man's sinful self⁶⁶, 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 Christ⁶⁷.

21. Indwelling Sin

We reject the doctrine of perfection in the flesh, or that the believer ever becomes free from indwelling sin⁶⁸ in this life, or whilst in the body. "If we say 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

57 2 Cor. 5. 17; Eph. 4. 24.

58 Ezek. 36. 26.

59 2 Pet. 1. 4.

60 Rom. 7. 22.

61 Rom. 7; Gal. 5. 17.

62 Eph. 4. 22; Col. 3. 9.

63 John 15. part of 5; 2 Cor. 3.5; Rev .3.17.

64 Tit. 2. 11, 12.

65 2 Pet. 3. 18; Phil. 3. 8-10; Mark 4. 26-29; 1 John 2. 12, 13.

66 1 Kings 8.38; Ezra 9.6; Job 40.4-6; Ps. 73.22; Dan. 10. 8.

67 John 3.30; 1Cor. 2.2; Tit. 3.3-8; Eph. 3.8; 1 Tim.1.15.

68 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.

God does not chastise His people for sin⁶⁹. 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 did⁷⁰. 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 it⁷¹, not in vindictive anger, but in tender love, as a father does the son in whom he delighteth⁷². 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 rod⁷³, 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 perseverance⁷⁴ 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 Gospel⁷⁵, 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

We deny that Christ died⁷⁶ for all mankind.

69 1 Cor. 11. 32.

70 Jer. 3. 14, 22; Hos. 14.

71 Ps. 89. 30-33; Prov. 3. 11, 12.

72 Job 5. 17; Ps. 94. 12; Ps. 119. 67; Isa. 54. 7, 8; Heb. 12. 5-11.

73 Mic. 6. 9.

74 Isa. 51. 11; John 10. 28, 29.

75 Isa. 55. 1; John 7. 37; Prov. 28. 13; Matt. 11. 28-30; John 6. 37.

76 Matt. 25. 31-46; John 10. 11, 15, 26.

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 believe⁷⁷. 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 God⁷⁸.

27. The Non-Elect Incapable Of

Receiving Grace

We deny that the Holy Spirit ever enlightens⁷⁹ 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 it⁸⁰.

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 all⁸¹.

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 cross⁸².

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 fire⁸³.

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 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

77 Gen. 6. 5; Gen. 8. 21; Matt. 15. 19; Jer. 17. 9; John 6. 44, 65.

78 John 12. 39, 40; Eph. 2. 8; Rom. 8. 7, 8; 1 Cor. 4. 7.

79 Isa. 6. 9, 10; John 14. 17; Rom. 11. 7, 8; Mark 4. 11, 12; Luke 8. 10; John 12. 39, 40.

80 John 3. 27; 1 Cor. 2. 14.

81 Mark 16. 15; 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

82 1 Cor. 15. 16, 20; Luke 24. 39; Acts 1. 9, 11.

83 Matt. 25. 46; Rev. 19. last part of 20; Rev. 14. 10, 11; Rev. 20. 10, 15.

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 faith⁸⁴; 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 God⁸⁵, 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 sins⁸⁶, and, being made to feel that he has no righteousness of his own⁸⁷, 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 for ever put away⁸⁸; 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 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.

84 Matt. 6. 30; Matt. 15. 28.

85 Luke 18. 13.

86 Matt. 5. 4.

87 Isa. 64. 6; Phil. 3. 9.

88 Rom. 8. 16; Eph. 4. 30; Heb. 9. 12, 26; Heb. 7. 27; Heb. 10. 14.

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.

CHAPTER 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 Articles⁸⁹ 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 Religions 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 Articles⁹⁰ 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 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

⁸⁹ 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.

⁹⁰ 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.

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 consciousness 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 nu-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 Chancery⁹¹ 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

⁹¹ 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.

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 to xii), we are told that, amongst others, the following were 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 XXXV⁹² 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 :

92 Mr. Hatton drew up these Articles in one, about three months before the death of Mr. Sears.

“The Committee appointed at the ‘Aid Society’ Meeting met at 17 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 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 my book *Difficulties Associated with Articles of Religion Among Particular Baptist* asserting that articles of religion should be written as a means of teaching the gospel of our lord Jesus Christs.

APPENDIX

Land Registry



19 March 2012

Your ref
NONE

Our ref
BM304531 /OC/243

Land Registry
Leicester Office
Westbridge Place
Leicester
LE3 5DR

DX 11900 Leicester 5
Tel 0300 006 0003
Fax 0300 006 0023
Email leicester.office@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk
www.landregistry.gov.uk

Official copy/copies

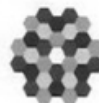
The official copy/copies of the document(s) you applied for is/are enclosed.

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



David Clarke
11 Hayling Close
Fareham
Hampshire
PO14 3AE

Sent by e-mail

Email sent to:
nbptto@yahoo.co.uk

Date
16 December 2011

Your 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.

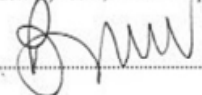


Notes on the Transcription

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 1

First registration application

Land Registry
Official Copy
This copy may not be the same
Size as the original.

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 Particulars of under/over payments Fees debited £ Reference number
2. Address or other description of the estate to be registered Baptist Chapel, Aylesbury Road, Birtton, 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, Aylesbury, Northshire NE2 900".</i>		
3. Extent to be registered Place "X" in the appropriate box and complete as necessary. <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>		
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. <p style="text-align: right;">TOTAL £</p> Fee payment method: Place "X" in the appropriate box. 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 Place "X" in the appropriate box. <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		
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 EC1R 1XA 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 mortgage** *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 DL 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 DL 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.

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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, Bierton, 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 ^(a)	Item No. ^(b)	Date	Document ^(c)	Parties
✓	1	25/02/1832	Foundation Trust Deed of Bierton Baptist Church	William Bonham, Joseph Rose, Robert Dell and William Bell etc. (Trustees of Bierton 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 Bierton Baptist Schoolrooms & toilets	Abel Dearing and Thomas Todd etc. (Trustees of Bierton 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 ^(a)	Item No. ^(b)	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

FIRST REGISTRATION 1

First registration
application



Land Registry

FR1

If you need more room than is provided on a panel, use continuation sheet CS and attach to this form.

1. Administrative area and postcode if known	
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Address/DX No.

Reference

E-mail

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16. Signature of applicant
or their conveyancer

David S. Whitburn (Secretary)

Date *21.9.05*

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© Crown copyright (ref: LR/HQ/CD-ROM) 6/03

DOCUMENT LIST

List of documents
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Land Registry

DL

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Baptist Chapel, Aylesbury Road, Birtton, Bucks. HP22 5DN

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FOUNDATION TRUST DEED

WILLIAM BONHAM the younger Tailor WILLIAM DICKINS Farmer WILLIAM RODWELL Labourer DAVID PRICE Labourer JAMES JEFFREY Labourer and WILLIAM PARKER Labourer all of Berton 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

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

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 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.

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 28 th | 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 Blerton 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 Pilomaker 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

[Fleet?] 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

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

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John Roberts formerly of Bierton and
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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. Duny?]

GROUND PLAN

