

Declaration and Address.

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DECLARATION
AND
ADDRESS
OF THE
CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
OF
WASHINGTON.

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PROP. 1. THAT the church of Christ upon earth is essentially,
10 intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in
every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him
in all things according to the scriptures, and that manifest the same
by their tempers and conduct, and of none else as none else can be
truly and properly called christians.

15 2. That although the church of Christ upon earth must neces-
sarily exist in particular and distinct societies, locally separate one
from another; yet there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable
divisions among them. They ought to receive each other as Christ
Jesus hath also received them to the glory of God. And for this
20 purpose, they ought all to walk by the same rule, to mind and speak
the same thing; and to be perfectly joined together in the same
mind, and in the same judgment.

3. That in order to this, nothing ought to be inculcated upon
christians as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of
25 communion; but what is expressly taught, and enjoined upon
them, in the word of God. Nor ought any thing be admitted, as
of divine obligation, in their church constitution and managements,
but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus
Christ and his Apostles upon the New Testament church; either
30 in express terms, or by approven precedent.

4. That although the scriptures of the Old and New Testament
are inseparably connected, making together but one perfect and
entire revelation of the Divine will, for the edification and salva-
tion of the church; and therefore in that respect cannot be sepa-
35 rated; yet as to what directly and properly belongs to their imme-
diate object, the New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the
worship, discipline and government of the New Testament church,
and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members; as
the Old Testament was for the worship discipline and government
40 of the Old Testament church, and the particular duties of its
members.

5. That with respect to the commands and ordinances of our
Lord Jesus Christ, where the scriptures are silent, as to the express
time or manner of performance, if any such there be; no human
45 authority has power to interfere, in order to supply the supposed de-
ficiency, by making laws for the church; nor can any thing more
be required of christians in such cases, but only that they *so* observe
these commands and ordinances, as will evidently answer the de-
clared and obvious end of their institution. Much less has any hu-

man authority power to impose new commands or ordinances upon the church, which our Lord Jesus Christ has not enjoined. Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the church; or be made a term of communion amongst christians, that is not as old
5 as the New Testament.

6. That although inferences and deductions from scripture pre-
mises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's
holy word: yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences
of christians farther than they perceive the connection, and evident-
10 ly see that they are so; for their faith must not stand in the wisdom
of men; but in the power and veracity of God--therefore no such
deductions can be made terms of communion, but do properly be-
long to the after and progressive edification of the church. Hence
it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to
15 have any place in the church's confession.

7. That although doctrinal exhibitions of the great system of di-
vine truths, and defensive testimonies in opposition to prevailing er-
rors, be highly expedient; and the more full and explicit they be,
for those purposes, the better; yet, as these must be in a great
20 measure the effect of human reasoning, and of course must con-
tain many inferential truths, they ought not to be made terms of
christian communion: unless we suppose, what is contrary to fact,
that none have a right to the communion of the church, but such
as possess a very clear and decisive judgment; or are come to a
25 very high degree of doctrinal information; whereas the church
from the beginning did, and ever will, consist of little children and
young men, as well as fathers.

8. That as it is not necessary that persons should have a particu-
lar knowledge or distinct apprehension of all divinely revealed
30 truths in order to entitle them to a place in the church; neither
should they, for this purpose, be required to make a profession
more extensive than their knowledge: but that, on the contrary,
their having a due measure of scriptural self-knowledge respecting
their lost and perishing condition by nature and practice; and of the
35 way of salvation thro' Jesus Christ, accompanied with a profession
of their faith in, and obedience to him, in all things according to
his word, is all that is absolutely necessary to qualify them for
admission into his church.

9. That all that are enabled, thro' grace, to make such a profes-
40 sion, and to manifest the reality of it in their tempers and conduct,
should consider each other as the precious saints of God, should
love each other as brethren, children of the same family and father,
temples of the same spirit, members of the same body, subjects
of the same grace, objects of the same divine love, bought with
45 the same price, and joint heirs of the same inheritance. Whom
God hath thus joined together no man should dare to put asunder.

10. That division among christians is a horrid evil, fraught with many evils. It is anti-christian, as it destroys the visible unity of the body of Christ; as if he were divided against himself, exclu-

ding and excommunicating a part of himself. It is anti-scriptural, as being strictly prohibited by his sovereign authority; a direct violation of his express command. It is anti-natural, as it excites christians to contemn, to hate and oppose one another, who are
5 bound by the highest and most endearing obligations to love each other as brethren, even as Christ has loved them. In a word, it is productive of confusion, and of every evil work.

11. That, (in some instances,) a partial neglect of the expressly revealed will of God; and, (in others,) an assumed authority for
10 making the approbation of human opinions, and human inventions, a term of communion, by introducing them into the constitution, faith, or worship, of the church; are, and have been, the immediate, obvious, and universally acknowledged causes, of all the corruptions and divisions that ever have taken place in the church of
15 God.

12. That all that is necessary to the highest state of perfection and purity of the church upon earth is, first, that none be received as members, but such as having that due measure of scriptural self-knowledge described above, do profess their faith in Christ and
20 obedience to him in all things according to the scriptures; nor, 2dly, that any be retained in her communion longer than they continue to manifest the reality of their profession by their tempers and conduct. 3dly, that her ministers, duly and scripturally qualified, inculcate none other things than those very articles of faith
25 and holiness expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God. Lastly, that in all their administrations they keep close by the observance of all divine ordinances, after the example of the primitive church, exhibited in the New Testament; without any additions whatsoever of human opinions or inventions of men.

30 13. Lastly. That if any circumstantial indispensably necessary to the observance of divine ordinances be not found upon the page of express revelation, such, and such only, as are absolutely necessary for this purpose, should be adopted, under the title of human expedients, without any pretence to a more sacred origin
35 --so that any subsequent alteration or difference in the observance of these things might produce no contention nor division in the church.