

## The Articles of the church, 1785

'We whose names are underwritten, do now, in the most solemn manner enter in the relation and fellowship of a church of Christ. Though our number be but small, and our strength perfect in weakness, and our enemies many and mighty, do we, in the fear of the LORD, and in the strength of omnipotent grace, with deep humiliation for our innumerable transgressions, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, who, we trust, hath afforded us repentance unto life, now in the presence of God, angels, men, and each other, give up ourselves to the LORD and to each other by the will of God; and from henceforth desire to renounce our own righteousness, and everything that shall attempt to rival Christ in our affections, accounting them dross and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus our Redeemer; and do most sincerely desire to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ with all the affection of our souls, and most solemnly avouch and confess Him to be our King, our Lord, our Head, and our Husband. We rely on the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for our justification and complete salvation, and most cordially receive him in all his offices as Prophet, Priest, and King, to whose righteous laws we openly profess subjection, acknowledging it our indispensable duty and privilege to receive, believe, and maintain, all the important doctrines of divine grace - viz., that there are three divine and co-equal persons in one Jehovah, - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We, also, believe in personal election unto holiness here, and eternal life hereafter: likewise in the doctrine of original sin, particular redemption, and the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in the efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and that the saints shall finally persevere unto eternal glory: likewise, the WATER-BAPTISM, BY IMMERSION, IS AN ORDINANCE OF CHRIST, TO BE ADMINISTERED TO BELIEVERS ONLY, and that prior to their receiving the LORD'S supper. We likewise believe it an indispensable duty to walk together in brotherly love, not only to render our communion comfortable to ourselves, but pleasing to God, and lovely in the sight of all His people. And, as the opportunities of prayer are graciously commanded for the increase of every spiritual gift and grace, so also, for the promoting of Christian love. We, therefore, trust that the blessed

Spirit of all grace will so effectually testify of Jesus to our souls, and that, in this solemn engagement, He doth now oblige us to confess that the love of Christ constraineth us most sincerely, most unfeignedly, and most affectionately, to love one another, believing those to be our mother, our sister, and our brother, that hear the word of God and keep it. We esteem it, therefore, our duty and privilege to watch over one another in love, and highly to esteem our minister for his work's sake; and, therefore, solemnly engage to meet together, as opportunity shall serve, to join our supplications for the success of the gospel, ---that our number may be increased, --- that we may grow in grace, and more and more be conformed to the lovely image of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath set us an example of love and humility in our conduct one to each other; and hath taught us that in bearing one another's burdens we fulfil the law of Christ; and that we do not suffer sin to rest upon one another, as the Lord may be pleased to show it unto us, but to warn, rebuke, and admonish one another, with all meekness and long-suffering, remembering that sin, Satan, and the world, are our common enemies; and that, when any individual member suffers, unfeigned sympathy becomes the whole, whether in adversity, temptation, or tribulation, as afflictions of every sort necessarily await the saints. We, therefore, as fellow travellers, engage to cleave to each other in the strength of the grace of God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, trusting to be able to bear and forbear with one another, in our frailties, weaknesses, and infirmities, with much pity, tenderness, and compassion; and in every respect to behave towards each other according to the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ in his glorious and ever-blessed gospel. And now we cast ourselves with one accord at the feet of our dear Redeemer, relying alone upon the sufficiency of His grace for the performance of these duties, which we unitedly esteem and embrace as the glorious privilege of His ever-blessed gospel. Amen. So prays the church of Christ meeting at Old Ford, in the parish of Bow, in the County of Middlesex, on the 21st day of June, 1785.'