Elder, J. Vernon.

May 27, 1896

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ARTICLES OF FAITH.

1. We believe that there is but one living true and eternal God, the Father, of whom are all things, from everlasting to everlasting, glorious and immutable in all His attributes.—I Cor. viii, 6. Isa. xl. 28.

2. We believe that there is the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, whom God freely sent into this world, because of the great love wherewith He loved the world; and Christ as freely gave himself a ransom for all, tasting death for every man; who was buried and rose again the third day, and ascended into Heaven, from whence we look for Him, the second time, in the clouds of Heaven, at the last day to judge both quick and dead.—I Tim. ii, 5, 6. Heb. ix, 5. I John ii, 2. John iii, 16. Acts 24, 15. John iii, 16.

3. We believe that there is one Holy Ghost, the precious gift of the Father through His dear Son, unto the world, to quickenegth, and 7 and 8; Acts ii, 4; Eph. iii 1; Eph. iv, 4, 5, 6.

4. We believe that in the beginning God made man upright, and placed him in a state of glory without the least mixture of misery, from which he voluntarily, by transgression, fell, and by that means brought on himself a miserable and mortal state, subject to death.—Gen. i., 17, iii, 19.

5. We believe that God is not willing that any should perish; but that all should come to repentance and the knowledge of the truth, that they might be saved, for which end Christ hath commanded the Gospel to be preached among all nations and to every creature.—Mark xvi, 15. Luke xxiv, 47, John iii,15-17; I Tim. ii, 4.

6. We believe that no man shall suffer in hell for want of a Christ who died for him, but as the Scripture has said, for denying the Lord that bought them; because they believed not in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Unbelief, therefore, being the cause why the just and righteous God of Heaven will condemn the children of men; it follows against all contradiction that all men, at one time or other, are found in such a capacity as that through the grace of God they may be eternally saved.—Acts xvii, 30; Mark vi, 6; Heb iii, 13; I John v, 10.

7. We believe the whole Scriptures are infallibly true, and that they are the only rule of faith and practice. II Tim. iii, 16,17.

8. We believe in the doctrine of General Provision made of God in Christ, for the benefit of all mankind, who repent and believe the Gospel.—Luke xiv, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; Matt. xxviii, 19, 20; Luke xiii, 3-5; Luke xxiv, 47; Acts iii, 19; Mark i, 15.

9 We believe that sinners are drawn to God the Father, by the Holy Ghost, through Christ His Son, and that the Holy Ghost offers his divine aid to all the human family; so as they all might be happy, would they give place to His divine teaching; whereas, such who do not receive the Divine impressions of the Holy Spirit, shall at a future day, own their condemnation just, and charge themselves with their own damnation, for wilfully rejecting the offers of sovereign grace.—Matt. xi, 27; John vi, 44, 66; Ps. i, 1; Tit. ii, 11, 12; Jer. xxii, 29.

10. We believe that men, not considered simply as men, but ungodly men, were of old ordained to condemnation; considered such who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ who bought them and therefore, shall bring upon themselves swift destruction; but we observe that they, and such the Apostle saith because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; therefore the indignation and wrath of God is upon every soul of man that doeth evil, living and dying therein; for there is no respect of persons with God. —Jude i, 4; II Peter ii, 1; II Thes. ii, 11, 12; Romans ii, 9 and 11.

11. We believe that all children dying in infancy, having not actually transgressed against the law of God in their own persons, are only subject to the first death, which was brought on them by the fall of the first Adam, and not that any one of them dying in that state, shall suffer punishment in hell by the guilt of Adam's sin, for of such is the kingdom of God.—I Cor xv, 22; Matt. xviii, 2, 3, 4, 5; Mark ix, 36, 37, Matt. xix, 14.

12. We believe that good works are the fruits of a saving faith, and that in the use of the means of grace, and not out of the use of those means, eternal life is promised to men.—Rev. xxii, 14, 15; Isa. i. 19, 20, Matt. xii, 8; Jer. vi 16; Luke xiii, 24, 55.

13. We believe that no man has any warrant in the Holy Scriptures for justification before God through his own works, power, or ability which he has in and of himself, only as he by grace is made able to come to God, through Jesus Christ; believing the righteousness of Jesus Christ to be imputed to all believers for their eternal acceptance with God.—Rom. iv, 24; Jer. xxii, 16.

14 We believe that all things are foreseen in the wisdom of God, so that God knoweth whatsoever can or cannot come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet not as having decreed any person to everlasting death or everlasting life, out of respect or mere choice, rather than He hath appointed the godly unto life, and the ungodly, who die in sin unto death.—Heb. iv, 13; Prov. viii, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31; Matt. xxv, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45 46

15. We believe, as touching Gospel ordinances, in believers' baptism, laying on of the hands, receiving of the sacrament in bread and wine, washing the saints' feet, anointing the sick with oil in the name of the Lord, fasting, praying, singing praise to God, and the public ministry of the word, with every institution of the Lord we shall find in the New Testament.—Luke xxii, 19, 20; John xiii, 5 to 17; James v, 14.

16. We believe the Gospel mode of baptism is by immersion, and that the believers are the only subjects for baptism.—Matt. iii, 6, 16; Mark i, 5, 10; Acts viii, 36, 39; Rom. vi, 4; Heb. x, 22.

17. We believe in a general resurrection of the dead and a final judgment at the last day.—John v, 28, 29; I Cor. v, 10.

18. We believe the happiness of the righteous is eternal and the torments of the wicked are endless.—Matt. xxv, 46.

FREE WILL BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE.

Historical Statement.

The first Free Will Baptist church, of which we have any certain knowledge within the present bounds of the United States, was organized at Perquimons, North Carolina, in 1727. The church so originating from this germ planted under divine direction, by Rev. Paul Palmer, have spread over a good portion of our country and are in a more prosperous condition than ever before.

June 30th, 1780, Rev. Benjamin Randall organized a church of seven members in New Durham, New Hampshire. This vine also spread until it has branches in all the States of the Union but three or four. It was many years before these two similar bodies knew of each others existence. The first Quarterly Meeting was formed in 1783, and the first Yearly Meeting in 1792. Randall died in 1808, having lived to see the Denomination with vigorous life rapidly spreading over the land.

We are unable to state the time of Palmer's death, or much about his life, but the permanence of his work indicates that he wrought well, and we hope if any one has the data from which a sketch of his useful life can be given, he will publish it for the good of the Denomination and of our common humanity.

The first General Conference met at Tunbridge, Vermont, October 11th, 1827. Five Yearly Meetings and one Quarterly Meeting were represented by twenty delegates. Two Yearly Meetings, making seven in all, from which no report was received, were recognized.

The statistics of the N. C. Conference are given in the reports of the 8th and 9th General Conferences, but for some reason, perhaps the long distance and inconvenience of travel, it never formally applied for admission as one of the members of the body.

A Constitution was adopted in 1841, by the 11th General Conference, held at Topsham, Maine. It had been approved by more than three fourths of the Yearly Meetings. We hope the Editor can find space for its publication in another column for our general information. It will be seen that it is as easily amended as any Constitution ought to be.

OBJECTS.

1. Mutual acquaintance.
2. Union of our different organizations.
3. To promote uniformity of practice.
4. To encourage the publication of denominational books, papers, tracts, &c.
5. To promote Home Mission work.
6 To sustain Foreign Mission work.
7. To build and sustain Schools and Colleges.
8. Anything that Providence indicates for the glory of God and the good of humanity.
9. All these without infringing on the independence of the churches, or the local bodies composing it.

HOW TO UNITE WITH THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

All an Association, Conference or Yearly Meeting has to do is simply vote to ask admission as one of the equal members of the General Conference, and send its letter and delegates to its session. It is hoped that all the Free Will Baptist organizations in the United States will be represented without fail, in the coming session at Nashville, Tenn., Oct. 7, 1896, at 10 A.M. The writer believes it the most important General Conference ever held, and is very anxious to see all the Southern organizations fully represented.

Nashville is a beautiful city. Our church there with its earnest pastor, is preparing to give us an old fashioned Free Will Baptist welcome. Don't allow a little expense of time, or money to keep you away, but for the cause of the blessed Savior, represented by our Denomination, be there with a mind to work. This is the first session in the State of Tennessee, although the Cumberland Association, whose guests we will be, is fifty-two years old, and there are several other organizations [illegible]

THOMAS E. PEDEN, Clk.

STRIVING AGAINST GOD.

BY REV. F. B. MEYER, A. M.

Let us consider two or three places where men have blocked God. We were once conducting a meeting for a minister who was slave to tobacco. I am not denouncing tobacco, because it is one of those matters in which every man must be guided by his own sense of duty. As soon as we began preaching in this clergyman's church he fumed and fretted. He did not say very much, but I was sure there was something that was cursing him. At the end of the week when he was passing with me over a bridge, he took out his pipe and tobacco pouch and threw them over into the tide. Then he told me that for months the Spirit of God had been dealing with him on that one point and he was fretting and resisting. He had said, "I am not going to give that up for any body. Plenty of men smoke, and I shall, I am not going to yield." God's Spirit dealt with him, blow after blow, but he refused and stood out. And he told me that all his spiritual joy and power, and a knowledge of the Word of God, stood right still. God was blocked.

There was another man I met who had some trouble with his brother over some money matters when the father died. He was a very proud man. His brother got into difficult circumstances. The brother had wronged him, and this man said that he would never speak to him again until the brother confessed that he had done the wrong. God dealt with that man, prompting him to forgive his brother, but he said no he should not! it was not his place; let the brother make an apology, and then he would forgive him. The brother was in very bad circumstances, and again the voice of God said, "Go and help him," but he said, "No, I will not." Then the brother's wife died, and there was an opportunity for him to go and be kind, but he did not. Then a child died. "When he comes and asks my forgiveness I will go, and not before." God kept dealing with that man until at last he came in utter desperation and said, "I do not know how it is it seems as if God were miles away; I have lost all my joy and peace and rest." I said, "You have thwarted God, and you must go to your brother and ask him to forgive you; you must humble yourself; you will never be right until you do."

I never shall forget an old man coming to my house, who said to me, "Do you think it is right when you are paying money that you took wrongly, to give your name at the same time?" I said, "What do you mean?" "Well," he said, "I took thirty pounds worth of coal that did not belong to me, and I feel miserable. When I get up to speak for God, it seems as if something choked [illegible] in the letter box of the firm I defrauded, but that did not make me any happier, and so I put in another ten pounds. I thought I would take another ten pounds to make it thirty, but do you think I ought to confess it?" I said, "Certainly, you must be a man, you must own up to it." He said, "Do you mind going and seeing the governor for me?" So I went to this man and said, "You have had some money sent back lately, have you not?" "Yes," he said, "I never heard of such a thing; I have two ten-pound notes put in the letter box." I said, "I can tell you about it," and I did. He said, "Well, that is a striking thing." I heard afterward that he was so struck with it that he told his manager they would break off doing a certain practice that was not perfectly honest, because he was not quite right in his conscience. I said, "There is another ten pound coming, but the man is going to bring it himself; he wants to own up to it." He said, "All right I shall be only too glad to grip him by the hand as an honest man." And that man after he had done it shot right up into the sunlight!

A woman came to me one day in great darkness of soul, and I began to inquire the cause, and found that ten years ago she was greatly troubled on the matter of Believers' Baptism. She had put it away from her until the impression had become less and less, and almost died away. As it declined her peace and joy declined. I told her that she was striving with her Maker and blocking him just at that one point, and that she should go back to the place where she had dropped the thread of loyal obedience, and obey Christ in this specific injunction, otherwise peace would be impossible. The child cannot escape one class in the school without injury, and a wise teacher will not allow it to have its way in such a matter. He will keep the little stubborn nature at the point which in its obduracy it has shirked until it is mastered, and God is too wise to allow any one of us to evade any piece of discipline which he knows is necessary for our true growth and welfare. He will come back to it perpetually, doing all he may to carry his point. It is only after he has been repeatedly foiled and thwarted that he will surrender his purpose and allow us to have our way, which is fraught with woe to ourselves. Belshazzer rebelled, and his kingdom was destroyed; Judas did it, and hanged himself; the Pharisees did it, and their city was destroyed; Julian, the Apostate, did it, and, falling back upon the fields of battle, said, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" The shores of the sea of time are strewn with the wrecks of men who have striven against their Maker and perished miserably. Have you been doing this long years? If so, let this be the close of a rebellion which can only bring misery in this world and the next.

Canon Wilberforce told me a story of Herkomer, our great portrait painter. Herkomer has an old father who lives with him in his splendid palace at Bushey. In his early life he used to model in clay. He has taken to it again, but his fear is that soon his hands will lose their skill, and his work will show the marks of imperfection. It is his one sorrow. At night he goes to his early rest, and when he has gone, Herkomer, the talented son, goes into the studio, takes up his father's feeble attempts, and makes it as beautiful as art can make it. When the old man comes down in the morning, he takes the work and looks at it and rubs his hands and says, "Ha, I can do as well as ever I did."

So Christ comes into your broken life and mine. If you will let him he will come at once. He will take out the marks of failure and sin and imperfection and he will give you a new, fair start. You will now take the position that all your heart is open to God; that you can say "Yes" to God about everything; that you yield to him your whole being. Write that letter to your brother and make it right with him. Enclose that money in an envelope to those whom you have kept out of their just earnings. Make right that wrong that lies back in your life; put away that cursed thing. You may, as far as you know, stand straight and clear with God. "Woe to him that striveth with His Maker!"

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FROM CASEY'S CHAPEL.

Dear Editor.

Please allow me space in your valuable paper and I will endevor to let our sister churches hear from us.

Our beloved pastor, Eld. J. F. Hill, met with us on Saturday before the third Sunday in May, and preached a very interesting sermon to an attentive audience.

On Sunday morning we met again at ten o'clock and held Sunday School. We have a large and flourishing S. S. there being about 65 enrolled and a regular attendence of forty. After S. S. was closed we had an intermission of ten minutes, Then we reassembled for service. Bro. Robt. Strickland preached an able sermon. On Sunday night Bro. Strickland preached for us again and then bid us adieu, to go home and join his good family. We hope the good brother will visit us again soon. Yours in the closest ties of christian love.

M. CASEY.

OBITUARY.

On the 14th day of April 1896, death entered the home of Eld. R. H. Harris, and took from him his loving companion. Sister Harris was about 57 years of age. She united with the Free Will Baptist church at Reedy Branch, Pitt county, about 27 years ago and was baptized by Eld. M. Manning. Her membership remained there for some time, after which she moved it to Core Creek with her husband and children, where she remained a consistent member until death. She lingered with dropsy for 5 years and was confined to her room 12 months. She leaves a husband, 3 sons, and 2 daughters to mourn their loss, but they mourn not as those having no hope. Dear relatives, prepare to meet her in heaven where parting will be known no more. The funeral was preached by the writer to a small, but very attentive congregation—Text: Heb. 4:11, after which her remains were deposited in the grave yard at Centenniel Methodist church, there to await the resurrection morn.

R. F. DAUGHETY.

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