

CONFESSION OF FAITH 1991

All Scripture proof-texts are taken from the King James Version

PREAMBLE

The mainstream of true Baptist life in the English speaking world has been historically manifested in churches rather than in social institutions: and its true doctrinal heritage has been preserved in the statements of these churches, both independently and associationally. This mainstream of Baptist life has been solidly identified with the Calvinistic soteriology, as is reflected in such antecedents of the New Hampshire Confession as the First London Confession, the Second London Confession, and the Philadelphia Confession. The churches thus identified were known as PARTICULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES, both in England and in America. The modified New Hampshire Confession, hereinafter set forth, preserves this essential doctrinal position.

Articles of Faith

I. The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men and is divinely inspired and is inerrant and infallible in the original autographs. It is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction that has God for its Author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" 2 Ti 3:16,17. (2 Pt 1:21; 2 Sa 23:2; Ac 1:6, 3:21; Jn10:35; Lk 16:29-31; Ps 119:31; Ro 3:1,2)

"Every word of God is pure. Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" Pr 30:5,6. (Jn 17:17; Rev 22:18,19; Ro 3:4)

"As many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law" Ro 2:12.

"If any man hear my words, the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" Jn 12:47,48. (1 Co 4:3,4; Lk 10:10-16; 12:47,48)

II. The True God

We believe that the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy

Spirit; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

"God is a Spirit" Jn 4:24. "His understanding is infinite" Ps 147:5. "Thou whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth" Ps 83:18. (Heb 3:4; Ro 1:20; Jer 10:10)

"Who is like unto Thee-glorious in holiness?" Ex 15:11. (Isa 6:3; 1 Pe 1:15,16; Rev 4:6-8)

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" Mk 12:30.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power" Rev 4:11. (Mt 10:37; Jer 2:12,13)

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" Mt 28:19. (Jn 15:26; 1 Co 12:4-6; 1 Jn 5:17)

III. The Fall of Man

We believe that the Scriptures teach that Man was created in holiness under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but by choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil and negatively without ability to please God; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

"God created man in His own image" Ge 1:27. "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good" Ge 1:31. (Ecc 7:29; Ac 17:26; Ge 2:16)

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat" Ge 3:6-24. (Ro 5:12)

"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners" Ro 5:19. (Jn 3:6; Ps 51:6; Ro 5:15-19; 8:7)

"We have turned every one to his own way" Isa 53:6. (Ge 6:12; Ro 3:9-18)

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others" Eph 2:3. (Ro 1:18,32; 2:1-16; Gal 3:10; Mt 20:15)

"The soul that sinneth it shall die" Eze 18:19,20. "So that they are without excuse" Ro 1:20. "That every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God" Ro 3:19. (Gal 3:22)

IV. God's Purpose of Grace

We believe that the Scriptures teach that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of His free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

"Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God; who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" 2 Th 2:13,14.

"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" 2 Ti 2:10. (1 Co 9:22; Ro 8:28-30; Jn 6:37-40; 2 Pe 1:10)

"Knowing brethren beloved, your election of God" 1 Th 4:10.

"Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom he called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified" Ro 8:28-30. (Isa 42:16; Ro 11:29)

V. The Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of God's grace. Jesus Christ, God's Son, took upon Himself man's nature, yet without sin. Through His mediatorial office of priest, Christ, having lived a sinless life of obedience to the Law of God, died under the curse of the Law for the sins of all who believe in Him. This Jesus made a full and final atonement for the sins of all those given to Him by the Father and for none else. Such salvation is freely bestowed upon whomever God chooses and is not conditioned upon foreseen faith or repentance, but wholly upon the mercy and the grace of God. Those saved are secure in Christ since He, as the atoning Priest and Sacrifice, is now risen from the dead, ascended into glory, seated at the right hand of the Father, and is ever living to make intercession for His people. The salvation of God is therefore not merely made possible, but is actually procured, through Christ's vicarious death, for all who believe savingly in Him.

"And He that sent Me is with Me; the Father has not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him" Jn 8:29. (Php 2:8, Gal 3:13, Heb 4:15)

"Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" Mt 20:28. (Isa 53:11,12; Jn 10:11,15,16; 1 Pe 2:24; Heb 9:28)

"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" Php 2:6,7. (Heb 2:9,14; 2 Co 5:21)

"For He saith to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.' So then it is not of him that willeth, not of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" Ro 9:15, 16. (Jn 1:12,13; 2 Th 2:13, 14; Eph 1:3-7)
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"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" Heb 9:12. (Heb 9:13,14; Heb 10:10,12-14; 1 Jn 3:2; 1 Pe 2:9,10)

VI. Regeneration

We believe that the Scriptures teach that regeneration, or the new birth, is that change wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, by which a new nature and a spiritual life, not before possessed, are imparted, and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus; a holy disposition is given to the mind, the will subdued, the dominion of sin broken, and the affections changed from a love of sin and self, to a love of holiness and God; the change is instantaneous, effected solely by the power of God, in a manner incomprehensible to reason; the evidence of it is found in a changed disposition of mind, the fruits of righteousness, and a newness of life. And without regeneration salvation is impossible.

"Verily, verily I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" Jn 3:3.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" Jn 3: 6.

"Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God" 1 Pe 1:23.

"Of His own will begat He us, with the Word of truth" Jas 1:18.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" 2 Co 5:17. "Ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him" 1 Jn 2:29. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" Eph 4:24.

"And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him" Col 2:13. "But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead" Ro 6:13.

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" Col 1:13. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" Jn 1:13.

"And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" 1 Co 6:11.

VII. Repentance

We believe that the Scriptures teach that repentance is a personal act. Prompted by the Spirit; and consists in a godly sorrow for sin, which is offensive to God and ruinous to the soul; true repentance is accompanied with great humiliation in view of one's sin and guilt, together with prayer for pardon; also by sincere hatred of sin, and a persistent turning away from, and abandonment of all that is evil and unholy. Since none are sinless in this life, repentance needs to be often repeated.

"In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" Mt 3:1,2. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" Ac 3:19.

"The times of this ignorance God overlooked, but now He commandeth all men everywhere to repent" Ac 17:30. "Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" Ac 20:21.

"Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of" 2 Co 7:10.

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" Lk 24:47.

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel; and remission of sins" Ac 5:31.

"But thou, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgement of God." Ro 2:5 "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" Isa 55:7.

VIII. Faith

We believe that the Scriptures teach that faith as an evangelical grace wrought by the Spirit, is the medium through which Christ is received by the soul as its Sacrifice and Savior. It is an assent of the mind and a consent of the heart, consisting mainly of belief and trust; the testimony of God is implicitly accepted and believed as true, while Christ is unreservedly trusted for salvation; by faith the believer is brought into vital relations with God, freely justified, and lives as seeing Him who is invisible. Faith cannot save, but it reveals Christ to the soul as a willing and sufficient Savior, and commits the heart and life to Him.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" Ac 16:31. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth" Ro 10:3. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" Ro 5:1.

"But without faith it is impossible to please God" Heb 11:6. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" Heb 11:1.

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith" Ro 1:17. "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness" Jas 2:23. "Blessed is the man who trusted in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is" Jer 17:7. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion which cannot be removed, but abideth forever" Ps 125:1. "The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants, and none of them that trust in His shall be desolate" Ps 34:22.

"For we walk by faith and not by sight" 2 Co 5:7.

"Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe" Ro 3:22.

"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" Ro 10:10.

IX. Justification

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel by which Christ secures to such who believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of faith, His perfect righteousness is freely and judicially imputed to us by God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

"Of His fullness have all we received" Jn 1:16. (Eph 3:8)

"By Him all that believe are justified from all things" Ac 13:39. (Isa 3:11,12; Ro 8:1)

"Being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" Ro 5:9. (Zec 13:1; Mt 9:6; Ac 10:43)

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" Ro 5:1,2. (Ro 5:3,11; 1 Co 1:30,31; Mt 6:33; 1 Ti 4:8)

X. Adoption

We believe that the Scriptures teach that adoption is a gracious act, by which the Father, for the sake of Christ, places believers in the estate and condition of sons. This sonship God established by sending the Spirit of adoption into their hearts, whereby they become members of the family

of God and are thus entitled to all the rights, privileges, and promises of sons and are therefore heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God" Ro 8:14. "But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" Ro 8:15. "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" Ro 8:16.

"For ye are the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ" Gal 3:26. "And because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" Gal 4:6.

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself" Eph 1:5.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" 1 Jn 3:1. "To redeem them that are under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons" Gal 4:5.

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons" Heb 12:7. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" 1 Pe 2:9.

XI. Sanctification

We believe that the Scriptures teach that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. We further believe that the essential evidences of this sanctification are manifested in the lives of all who are true believers as the fruit of the Spirit and the vicarious Christian graces toward the perfection of a visible reproduction of the life and character of Jesus Christ in contemporary society; and that this purpose is to be pursued in the continual use of the appointed means—especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer, and in the practice of all godly exercises and duties. We further believe that the gifts of the Spirit have been given to the church for its edification as they have been severally bestowed upon individual believers in various times and places of church history according to the sovereign will of God; and that among these the sign gifts (such as speaking in tongues, miracles, etc.) were bestowed upon the church through chosen individuals during the apostolic days of the church's infancy for the authentication of message until the completion and distribution of the Scriptures.

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification" 2 Th 4:4. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly" 1 Th 5:23. (2 Co 7:1; 13:9; Eph 1:4)

"The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day" Pr 4:18. (2 Co 3:18; Heb 6:1; 2 Pe 1:5-8; Phm 12-16)

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, of His good pleasure" Php 2:12-13. (Eph 4:11, 12; 1 Pe 2:2; 3:18; 2 Co 13:5)
"Exercise thyself unto godliness" 1 Ti 4:7.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" Gal 5:22,23. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked" 1 Jn 2:6. (1 Jn 3:3)

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" 1 Co 12:4. "For as we have many members in one body, and all in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us" Ro 12:4-6.

"And He gave some apostles; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" Eph 4:11,12. (1 Co12:28-31 and all of 1 Co 12)

"Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" 1 Co 13:8-10. (1 Co 14)

XII. The Perseverance of Saints

We believe that the Scriptures teach that such as are truly regenerate, being born of the Spirit, will endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

"And this is the Father's will that sent me, that of all which I have given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again the last day" Jn 6:39.

"Then said Jesus, If you continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed" Jn 8:31. (1 Jn 2:27,28; 3:9; 5:18)

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have no doubt continued with us; but they went out that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us" 1 Jn 2:19. (Jn 13:18; Mt 13:20,21; Jn 6:66-69)

"And we know that all things work together for good unto them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" Ro 8:28. (Mt 6:30-33)

"He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" Php 1:6. (Php 2:12; Jude 24,25; Heb 1:4; 13:5; Jn 4:4)

XIII. The Lordship of Christ

We believe that the Scriptures teach that Jesus is Lord over all creation and that all judgment has been committed to Him. We believe that His Lordship is essential to the salvation of His people and must be the ruling concern in the life of the church. We further believe that in His Lordship, Christ has freed us from the covenantal relationship to the Law of Moses and from the law of sin and death and has given us the New Covenant discipline of grace which teaches us that, "denying

ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous of good works." Tit 2:12-14.

"As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him" Jn 17:2.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" Php 2:9-11. (Col 2:9,10; Jn 5:22-27; Ac 2:32-36)

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" Ro 8:2-4. (Ro 10:4; 1 Co 1:30; Gal 4:1-7)

XIV. A Gospel Church

We believe that the Scriptures teach that a local church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its only Scriptural offices are bishops or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls" Ac 2:41,42. (Ac 5:11; 8:1; 11:31; 1 Co 4:17; 1 Ti 3:5)

"They first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" 2 Co 8:5. (Ac 2:47; 1 Co 5:11,18)

"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you" 1 Co 11:22. (2 Th 3:7; Ro 16:17-20; 1 Co 11:23; Mt 18:15-20; 1 Co 5:5)

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" Mt 28:20. (Jn 14:15; 15:10; 1 Jn 4:21; 1 Th 4:2; 2 Jn 6)

"With the bishops and the deacons" Php 1:1. (Ac 14:23; 15:22; 1 Ti 3; Tit 1)

XV. Christian Baptism

We believe that the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Christ; in the name of the Father, and Son and Holy Spirit; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that baptism is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation, and to the Lord's Supper.

"And the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest... And they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him" Ac 8:36-39. (Mt 3:5,6; Jn 3:22,23; 4:1,2; Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 8:12; 16:32-34; 18:8)

"Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" Mt 28:19. (Ac 10:47,48; Gal 3:26,27)

"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life" Ro 6:4. (Col 2:12; 1 Pe 3:20,21; Ac 22:16)

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and there were added to them, the same day, about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" Ac 2:41,42. (Mt 28:19-20)

XVI. The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the Lord's Supper is a provision of bread and wine, as symbols of Christ's body and blood, partaken of by the members of the church, in commemoration of the suffering and death of their Lord; showing their faith, and participation in the merits of His sacrifice, and their hope of eternal life through His resurrection from the dead; its observance is to be preceded by faithful self-examination.

"And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you" Lk 22:19,20. (Mk 14:20-26; Mt 26:27-30; 1 Co 11:24-30; 1 Co 10:16)

"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death until He come" 1 Co 11:26. (Mt 28:20)

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" 1 Co 11:28. (Ac 2:42,46; 20:7,11)

"And they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayer" Ac 2:42.

XVII. The Lord's Day

We believe that the day commonly called the "Lord's Day" is the first day of the week, and that this was the accustomed day for the Church of the New Testament to assemble because the Sabbath of the Old Covenant had been fulfilled in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We therefore agree that this custom should continue because of the command of Scripture not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together." (Heb10:25) The full purpose of such "assembling" is that we might, "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works," attend to the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, support the divine commission for the church, and most of all to worship our Sovereign Redeemer.

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples come together to break bread, Paul preached unto them ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" Ac 20:27. (Rev 1:10; Jn 20:19; 1 Co 16:1,2)

"For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as to them; but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest . . . for he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His" Heb 4:3-11.

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye seen the day approaching" Heb 10:23-35. (Ac 2:42-47; 20:7)

XVIII. Civil Government and Religious Liberty

We believe that the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience. Civil rulers have no rights of control over, or of interference with religious matters.

"The powers that be are ordained of God. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil" Ro 13:1-7.

"Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" 1 Pe 2:13.

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God, the things that are God's" Mt 22:21. (Tit 3:1; 1 Pe 2:13; 1 Ti 2:1-8)

"We ought to obey God rather than man" Ac 5:29.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" Mt 10:28. (Da 3:15-18; 6:7,10; Ac 4:18-20)

We further believe that liberty of the soul is a key distinctive of Baptist teaching. The Lord Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of all, the Judge of the living and the dead and is thus the only Lord of conscience, having a peculiar right so to be. Thus we believe that it is the will and mind of God, for these Gospel times, that all should have the free liberty of their own conscience in matters of religion, or worship without the least oppression of persecution. For any in authority to act otherwise we confidently believe to be expressly contrary to the mind of Christ, who requires that whatsoever men would have others do to them, they should do to others.

"There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another" Jas 4:12. (Ro 14:4; Rev 19:14)

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not; taste not; handle not; Which are all to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" Col 2:20-22. (Mt 15:9; 1 Co 7:23)

"But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" Ac 4:19. (Ac 5:29)

"Feed the flock of God which is among you taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock" 1 Pe 5:2,3. (2 Co 1:24; Mt 7:12)

XIX. The Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are, in His sight, wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in this life and after death.

"Ye shall discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not" Mal 3:18. (Pr 12:26; Isa 5:20; Ge 18:23; Jer 15:19; Ac 10:34,35; Ro 6:16)

"The just shall live by faith" Ro 1:17. "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" Ro 7:6. (1 Jn 3:7; Ro 6:18,22; 1 Co 11:32)

"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" 1 Jn 5:19. "As many as are of the works of the Law, are under the curse," Gal 3:10. (Jn 3:36; Isa 57:21; Ps 10:4; Isa 55:6,7)

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death" Pr 14:32. "Thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented" Lk 16:25. (Jn 8 :21-24; Lk 12:4,5; Lk 11:23-26; Jn 12:25,26; Mt 7:13,14)

XX. The World to Come

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven; and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless sorrow, and the righteous to endless joy; and this judgement will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" 1 Pe 4:7. (1 Co 7:29-31; Heb 1:10-13; Mt 24:35; 1 Jn 2:17; Mt 28:20)

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" Ac 24:1. (1 Co 15:12-58; Lk 14:14; Da 12:2; Jn 5:28,29; 6:40; 11:25,26; 2 Ti 1:10; Ac 10:42)

"The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from the just" Mt 13:49. (Mt 13:37-43; 24:30,31)

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" Mt 25:35-41. "He that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy let him be filthy still; and he that is holy let him be holy still" Rev 22:21. (1 Co 6:9,10; Mk 9:43-48; 2 Pe 2:9)

"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them who trouble you, and to you who are troubled, rest with us when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe" 2 Ti 1:6-12. (Heb 6:1,2)

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?" 2 Pe 3:11,12.

XXI. The Second Coming of Christ

We believe that the return of Christ will be personal, visible, and in His resurrected body, and that His return is both a day of salvation and a day of judgement. We believe that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given by the Father. That day will not only be a day of judgment for apostate angels, but also for all who have lived upon the earth. All men shall appear before the tribunal of Christ to give an account of their thoughts, their words, and their deeds and to receive recompense according to what they have done in the body whether good or evil.

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" Ac 1:10,11. (1 Th 4:13-18; 1 Co 15:23,24)

"For the Father judges no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" Jn 5:22. (Jn 5:22-30; Mt 25:31-46)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad" 2 Co 5:10. (Mt 12:36; Ro 14:10; 2 Ti 4:8)

Amendments

XXII. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son, and that He is of the same essence and proceeds from the Father and the Son. His activity includes all the acts of God from creation to redemption. He administers the New Covenant, as planned by the Father and purchased by the Son, in regeneration, sanctification, and final glorification of the elect. He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgement, and bears witness to the truth of the gospel. He effects the new birth, and seals all so re-born. He witnesses to the glory of Christ to the believer; He guides, teaches, permanently indwells, empowers, comforts and helps him in all his life and work. The baptism of the believer in the Holy Spirit is initial, and His filling of the believer is commanded and should be continually pursued.

Mt 28:19; Heb 9:14; Jn 14:16-18, 26; Lk 1:35; Ge 1:1-3; 2 Th 2:7; Jn 16: 8-11; Jn 15:26-27; Ac 5:30-32; Jn 3:5-6; Eph 1:13-14; Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:33; Ac 11:16; Lk 24:49; Jn 16:13; Jn 14:26; Ro 8:14, 26-27; 2 Th 2:13; 1 Pe 1:2.

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