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BAPTIST CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

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was, Mat 3 16 and prayer was, Acts 4 31 and singing Psalms, &c was Acts 16 25 26 so this of laying on of hands was, Acts 8 & ch 19 for as the whole gospel was confirmed by (Heb 2 3 4) signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost in general, so was every ordinance in like manner confirmed in particular.

The Philadelphia Association published many editions of the Confession in this form. From this Association it went into the churches, and into other Associations, so that it is justly called in America "The Philadelphia Confession of Faith."

The Charleston Association adopted it in 1767. The article on the laying on of hands was omitted from all the editions published by this Association, though the one on singing is retained. The second edition, published at Charleston, 1813, has, in addition to the Confession, a "Summary of Church Discipline" and "The Baptist Catechism," bound in leather, and making a neat volume. In 1831 Rev. Daniel Sheppard issued an edition in which the Scripture references were quoted in full at the bottom of the page; the summary of discipline was retained, and an "appendix," supposed to have been drawn up by Oliver Hart and others, and treating various questions of Baptist polity and practice, was added. The whole makes a leather-bound volume of three hundred and three pages. A fourth edition appeared in 1850, and there may have been others.

Many churches and other Associations, both North and South, adopted this Confession. In recent years it has been losing ground, especially in the North, but it is still widely used, and in the South is probably the most influential of all Confessions.

The larger Baptist bodies in America have, as a rule, abstained from making doctrinal statements or formally

adopting existing Confessions. Indeed, the Southern Baptist Convention, in its address "to the Brethren in the United States," at its organization in 1845, says: "We have constructed for our basis no new creed, acting in this matter upon a Baptist aversion for all creeds but the Bible."

2. THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFSSION

The only Confession of any note produced by American Calvinistic Baptists is the so-called "New Hampshire Confession of Faith." Indeed, it is doubtful if it ought to be called Calvinistic, since it is non-committal on every point of difference between the Calvinistic and Arminian systems. It is brief and very moderately Calvinistic. It emanated from the region where Arminian influences among American Baptists have always been strongest, and it faithfully reflects the modifying tendency of their presence. It is perhaps the most widely used and influential statement of doctrine among American Baptists at the present time. Its origin explains its name.

On June 24, 1830, the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire appointed a committee "to prepare and present at our next annual session, such a Declaration of Faith and Practice, together with a Covenant, as may be thought agreeable and consistent with the views of all our churches in this State." Next year the committee reported that it had made some progress, but had been unable to finish its task. At the request of the members they were discharged, and Rev. I. Person was "appointed to finish the work and report to the Board of this Convention as soon as convenient." June 26, 1832, he submitted to the Board the draft of a Confession, which was received and referred to "a select committee consisting of [Baron] Stow, [J. Newton] Brown, and [Jonathan] Go-

ing, with the author. Two days later this committee reported to the convention in favor of adopting the articles "with some slight alterations; but after some discussion it was resolved to refer them to the disposal of the Board." The matter never came before the convention again. The next day, however, it came before the Board anew. The articles were presented, and after discussion, referred to "brethren Stow and Brown to be revised and presented at the next meeting of the Board." October 10 and 11, 1832, the Board heard the report of the committee, discussed it at length, received it, and discharged the committee. Brown was then appointed to prepare a complete copy for the next meeting of the Board, incorporating the alterations which had been decided on in this discussion. January 15, 1833, Mr. Brown presented the work. The Board ordered the words "article" or "articles" stricken out wherever they occurred, and the word "Declaration" substituted. It was then voted "that the Declaration of Faith and Covenant prepared by Brethren Stow and Brown, and now read before the Board of this Convention, are entitled to their unanimous approbation, and are by them cordially recommended to the adoption of the churches."¹ It contained sixteen articles, and was published with the authority of the Board of the Baptist State Convention of New Hampshire.

In 1853 Rev. J. Newton Brown, who was then editorial secretary of the American Baptist Publication Society, on his own authority revised this Confession, adding two articles, one on "Repentance and Faith," and one on "Sanctification," making eighteen in all. In this form he incorporated it in "The Baptist Church Manual," and circulated it widely. It was copied in other church manuals and thus further popularized until it has become al-

¹ Minutes N. H. Bap. His. Soc., 1899.

most the sole Confession used in the North, East, and West, where Calvinism has been most modified by Arminianism.

In 1867 Rev. J. M. Pendleton, who was then pastor at Upland, Pa., incorporated this Confession in his "Church Manual." This manual was widely circulated among the "Landmark" Baptists, of whom Doctor Pendleton was a leader. It thus came to be adopted as the doctrinal statement of most of the newer churches and Associations of this type. It was recently adopted by the Landmark Convention, and is said to be the statement recognized by most of the Associations. It was adopted as the "Articles of Faith" of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary after Article XIII had been changed by striking out the word "visible" and inserting "particular," making it read, "particular church," instead of "visible church."

In 1890 Rev. E. T. Hiscox, in his "Standard Manual," divided the article on "Baptism and the Lord's Supper" into two, making nineteen articles in all. In his "New Directory" he has further enlarged it, so that it now contains, as published by him, twenty articles.

All efforts to discover a copy of the original edition have proved unavailing. The following is reproduced from William Crowell's "Church Members Hand-Book," and may not be the exact original text, though it is certainly substantially so. Additions made in 1853 are enclosed in brackets, while other changes are indicated in the notes.

Declaration of Faith.

i. Of the Scriptures.

We believe [that] the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it 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 centre of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

ii. *Of the True God.*

[We believe] That there is one, and only one, living and true¹ 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; revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of² the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;³ equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

iii. *Of the Fall of Man.*

[We believe] That man was created in a state of⁴ 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 choice, being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, wholly given to the gratification of the world, of Satan, and of their own sinful passions;⁵ therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

iv. *Of the Way of Salvation.*

[We believe] That the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the Mediatorial Offices of the Son of God, who [by the appointment of the Father, freely] took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the [divine] law by his personal obedience, and made atone-

¹ "true and living" in ed. 1853.
² "revealed . . . of the Father," is as follows in ed. 1853, "that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father," etc.
³ "Ghost" in ed. 1853.
⁴ "a state of" omitted in ed. 1853.
⁵ "wholly given . . . sinful passions" is changed to "positively inclined to evil" in ed. 1853.

ment for our sins by his death⁶; being⁷ risen from the dead he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, [he] is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Saviour.

v. *Of Justification*

[We believe] That the great Gospel blessing which Christ of his fullness bestows on such^a as believe in Him, is Justification; that Justification consists in^b the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life, on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through His own redemption and righteousness,^c [by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of 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.

vi. *Of the Freedom of Salvation.*

[We believe] That the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, [penitent,] and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth except^d his own [inherent depravity and] voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ,^e which refusal will subject him to^f an aggravated condemnation.

vii. *Of grace in Regeneration.*

[We believe] That in order to be saved, we^g must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists

⁶ Ed. 1853 reads, "and by his death made a full atonement for our sins"
⁷ "and made . . . death."
^a For "that having risen" in ed. 1853.
^b For "of his . . . such" ed. 1853 has "secures to such."
^c For "consists in" ed. 1853 has "includes."
^d For "His own redemption and righteousness" ed. 1853 has "faith in the Redeemer's blood."
^e For "refusal to . . . Jesus Christ" ed. 1853 has "rejection of the gospel."
^f "which refusal . . . to" changed to "which rejection involves him in."
^g "sinners" in ed. 1853.

in giving a holy disposition to the mind; and ¹³ is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation, ¹⁴ by the power of the Holy Spirit, [in connection with divine truth,] so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence is ¹⁵ found in the holy fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God.

viii. *Of Repentance and Faith.*

[This article added in 1853.]

We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.

ix. *Of God's Purpose of Grace.*

[We believe] That Election is the gracious ¹⁶ 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 utterly 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 is ¹⁷ 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 our ¹⁸ utmost diligence.

¹⁶ For "and" ed. 1853 ff. 3 "that it."

¹⁷ "Or calculation" omitted in ed. 1853.

¹⁸ "Is found . . . God" appears in ed. 1853 as follows: "appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life."

¹⁹ "eternal" in ed. 1853.

²⁰ "may be" in ed. 1853.

²¹ "The" in ed. 1853.

x. *Of Sanctification.*

[Added in 1853.]

We believe 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; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means—especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer.

xi. *Of the Perseverance of Saints.*

[We believe] That such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from mere ¹⁹ professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and [that] they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

xii. [Of the] *Harmony of the Law and the Gospel.*

[We believe] That the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church.

xiii. *Of a Gospel Church.*

[We believe] That a visible 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 proper ²⁰ officers are Bishops or

¹⁹ "Superficial" in ed. 1853.

²⁰ "Scriptural" in ed. 1853.

Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

xiv. *Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.*

[We believe] That Christian Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water,²¹ in the name of the Father [and] Son, and Spirit,²² to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in a²³ crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, with its purifying power²⁴; that it is pre requisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church, by the [sacred] use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

xv. *Of the Christian Sabbath.*

[We believe] That the first day of the week is the Lord's-Day, or Christian Sabbath; and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and [sinful] recreations; by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

xvi. *Of Civil Government.*

[We believe] That civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests 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, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

xvii. *Of the Righteous and the Wicked.*

[We believe] That there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such

²¹ "Immersion . . ." in " reads " immersion in water of a believer, info."

²² "Holy Ghost," in ed. 1853.

²³ "The," in ed. 1853.

²⁴ For "with its purifying power" is substituted the following: "with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life" in ed. 1853.

only as through faith are justified in 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 impotence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

xviii. *Of the World to Come.*

[We believe] That the end of this²⁵ world is approaching; that at the last day, Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

3. CATECHISMS

American Baptists, especially in the earlier period, were diligent in training their children and servants in Baptist doctrines. For this purpose they have used various catechisms. The earliest and most widely used was "The Baptist Catechism," issued under the authority of the English Baptist Assembly about 1694, and adopted by the Philadelphia Association in 1742. Many editions appeared, sometimes erroneously called Keach's Catechism, sometimes with and sometimes without Scripture proofs, and it held its place until catechisms ceased to be used.

Many others were issued by individuals; by Basil Manly, by Henry D. Brown, by Jas. P. Boyce, by W. J. E. Cox, by John A. Broadus, and by others. More recently the catechism has fallen almost wholly into disuse, and efforts to introduce it into Sunday-school literature have not been very successful.

²⁵ "The" in ed. 1853.