

The New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1853)¹

I. The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction. It has God for its author, salvation through Christ for its purpose, and truth without any mixture of error for its content. It reveals the principles by which God will judge us. Therefore, it 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.

II. The Triune God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God. He is an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is the LORD, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth. He is inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are equal in every divine perfection, yet carry out distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

III. Humanity

We believe that humanity is the special creation of God, made in his own image. God created them male and female as the crowning work of his creation. The gift of gender is thus part of God's creation. The gift of marriage consists of the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime, and models the way God relates to his people.

IV. The Fall

Humanity was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker. By voluntary transgression, however, humanity fell from that holy and happy state. As a result, 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, they are now positively inclined to evil. Therefore, mankind stands under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

V. The Way Of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is entirely of grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. By the appointment of the Father, he freely took upon himself our nature, yet without sin. He honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his substitutionary death made a full atonement for our sins. He rose from the dead, and is now enthroned in heaven. Jesus unites in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections and, as such, is qualified in every way to be a suitable, a compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.

VI. Justification

We believe that a great gospel blessing which Christ secures to those who believe in him is Justification. Justification includes both the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal

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life. It is not given in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but only through faith in the Redeemer's blood. By virtue of this faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us by God. Justification brings us, immediately at the time of salvation, into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

VII. The Freeness Of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel. It is the immediate duty of all to accept these blessings by a heartfelt, repentant, and obedient faith. Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel, which only magnifies his condemnation.

VIII. Grace In Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again. Regeneration consists in the giving of a new and holy disposition to an otherwise rebellious sinner. It is accomplished in a way that is above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit and in connection with divine truth, thus securing our voluntary obedience to the gospel. The proper evidence of regeneration consists in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life.

IX. Repentance And Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces that are wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. He convinces us of our guilt, danger, helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, causing us to turn to God with true sorrow, confession, and pleas for mercy, while at the same time receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all sufficient Savior.

X. Election

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners. Being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, election includes all the means in connection with the end of salvation. It is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable. It entirely obliterates boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust, and an active imitation of God's free mercy. It encourages the greatest possible exercise of human responsibility. It may be discovered by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel. Election is the foundation of Christian assurance, and confirming our election deserves the utmost diligence.

XI. Sanctification

We believe that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness. It is a progressive work. It begins in regeneration and is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit—the Sealer and Comforter—by the continual use of God's appointed means, especially including the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, prayer, and the oversight and fellowship of a local church.

XII. The Perseverance Of Saints

We believe that all true believers endure to the end. Their persevering attachment to Christ and to his people is the grand mark distinguishing them from false professors. A special providence watches over their well-being, and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

XIII. The Church

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, joined together by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel. A visible church observes the ordinances of Christ, is governed by his laws, and exercises the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his word. The only scriptural officers of the church are Elders (also called Pastors), and Deacons, whose qualifications and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

XIV. The Ordinances

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit. This demonstrates, 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. Baptism is pre-requisite to the privileges of church membership and the Lord's Supper. We likewise believe that the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby the members of the church, following earnest self-examination, use bread and the cup to commemorate together the dying love of Christ. These two ordinances belong to the gathered church, serving to mark off believers from unbelievers and to make the church visible on earth.

XV. The Righteous And The Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked. Only those who 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. In contrast, all those who continue in rebellion and unbelief are wicked in his sight, and under his curse. This distinction holds both in and after death.

XVI. The World To Come

We believe that the end of the world is approaching. At the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution. Then a solemn separation will take place, as the wicked will be sentenced to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy. This just judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell.