

How Did We Get Here from There?  
A History of Confessions Within Baptist Circles  
(highlighting the theological downgrades)  
Compare with *BibleWorks* timeline

- 1) *A True Confession*—1596
  - a) Written either by Henry Barrowe and John Greenwood while they were imprisoned or perhaps by Pastor Henry Ainsworth while he was in exile in Amsterdam.
- 2) *First London Baptist Confession*—1644
  - a) Pastors from seven London Baptist congregations gathered and utilized the *True Confession* of 1596 as a model to form their own statement of faith. They also made use of the writings of William Ames (*Marrow of Theology*).
  - b) This confession was “corrected and enlarged” in 1646.
- 3) *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Anglican)—1647
- 4) *The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations*—1651
  - a) From a General Baptist perspective rather than Particular Baptist
- 5) *Second London Baptist Confession*—1689
  - a) The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 has its roots firmly in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* of 1647. It differs from the *Westminster Confession* in adding Chapter 20 (The Gospel and its Gracious Extent), and in its understanding of the Church and Baptism. Chapter 20 is identical to the same chapter in the Congregationalists’ *Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order* of 1658, and where the *Baptist Confession* differs in minor points from the *Westminster Confession* it usually follows the *Savoy Declaration*.
  - b) Pastors Nehemiah Coxe and William Collins appear to have been the co-editors.
- 6) *Goat Yard Declaration of Faith*—1729
  - a) Written by Pastor John Gill, who pastored at Church of Christ in Horsley-down, Southwark (near London), England
- 7) *Philadelphia Baptist Confession*—1742
  - a) Essentially the same as 2<sup>nd</sup> LBC
    - i) A reference was made in 1724 to the *London Baptist Confession of Faith* with which the Philadelphia Association was in full agreement.
  - b) Adhered to primarily within the South and Southwestern states
  - c) The Philadelphia Catechism has 31 chapters with 212 questions
- 8) *Sandy Creek* (North Carolina) *Confession*—1758
  - a) 10 brief articles
- 9) *New Hampshire Confession*—1833
  - a) Written by John Newton Brown
    - i) Graduated from Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution (now Colgate University).
  - b) A watering down (milder form) of the *Philadelphia Baptist Confession*
    - i) Only 20 articles long, as compared with 34 full chapters.
  - c) Adhered to primarily in the North, West, and Eastern states

- d) The Southern Baptist 1925 *The Baptist Faith and Message* recommended the New Hampshire Confession, although they thought it needed to be “revised at certain points.”
  - e) “Francis Wayland [1796-1865] has long been remembered as the President of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, a post that he held from 1827 to 1855. As the chief executive officer of what was the third oldest college in New England, the Baptist answer to Congregationalist Harvard and Yale, Wayland exercised an enormous influence on Baptist life and thought in the ante-bellum United States and, as we shall see, down to the present day.... **Wayland’s perspective on the doctrine of salvation also helped mould Baptist thinking in the mid-nineteenth century** (emphasis not in original post). The classical Calvinism of eighteenth-century American Baptists like Oliver Hart (1723-1795) and Richard Furman (1755-1825) was falling out of favour, for theological precision was increasingly counting for less than church growth. This was especially so in the Northern United States and Wayland was a key figure in this theological transition. He was prepared to identify himself as a “moderate Calvinist” [Wayland [Jr.] and Wayland, *Memoir of the Life and Labors of Francis Wayland, D.D.*, I, 125], but would not affirm particular redemption. In truth, his little regard for either systematic theology or church history contributed significantly to his failure to grasp the full dimensions of biblical soteriology.” (Michael A. G. Haykin, *Historia ecclesiastica* blog, posted April 7, 2006)
  - f) A modified version of this is the official doctrinal statement of the *Minnesota Baptist Association*, (see [www.mbaoc.org/docs.htm](http://www.mbaoc.org/docs.htm)), *Pillsbury Baptist Bible College* ([www.pillsbury.edu/nav.php?link=history.htm%23mission](http://www.pillsbury.edu/nav.php?link=history.htm%23mission)), and the basis for the doctrinal statement of the GARBC (Paul R. Jackson, *The Doctrine and Administration of the Church*, Des Plaines, IL, RBP, 1975, p. 168).
- 10) *Spurgeon’s Catechism*—1855
- a) Merging the Westminster and London Baptist Catechisms
  - b) Darwin’s *Origin of Species* was published in 1859, gaining an entrance into many churches
  - c) Spurgeon battled in the *Downgrade Controversy* (1887 till his death in 1892)
    - i) The leadership of the Baptist Union in England refused to adopt a statement of faith.
- 11) *Abstract of Principles*—1858
- a) The original charter of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
- 12) *Cambridge Declaration*—1996
- a) By the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals
  - b) Clearly reasserts the five *Solas* of the Reformation and historic evangelicalism