

**University of Pretoria**

**The Decline of Confessional Calvinism among Baptist Associations in the Southern States  
during the Nineteenth Century**

**by**

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**Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**in the Department of Church History and Polity**

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**April 2018**

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## Acknowledgements

I remain grateful for the privilege of researching in Baptist history at the University of Pretoria. While being an international student certainly has its disadvantages and challenges, I owe a great debt to my supervisor, Dr. Jerry Pillay, in his direction for this research project. He assisted me in continually whittling down my scope of research to a focused area of specific evidences and was immensely helpful in constructing a final format to secure a successful original research project. Thank you, Dr. Pillay.

Several others assisted and encouraged me through the jungle of evidences I had to endure over the course of this research journey. Kathryn Blackburn Wright at Mercer University's Special Collections department in Macon, Georgia was overly kind in assisting me to find rare resources on Georgia Baptists. Taffey Hall, Director and Archivist, at the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville, Tennessee generously assisted me as I rummaged through thousands of archives representing over 400 Baptist associations in 12 states during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I simply could not have survived the avalanche of resources apart from her direction and assistance. Thank you, Taffey.

Also, I appreciate the much-needed feedback from renowned Baptist historian, Bruce Gourley, as well as Baptist theologians Malcolm B. Yarnell, III at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and Fisher Humphreys, now retired from Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama. Also, I thank North Carolina pastor, Timothy Rogers, for not only his shared knowledge of North Carolina Baptists, but also his encouragement and inspiration during the research process when I felt so overwhelmed.

I also thank my present church and its Lead Pastor, Joe Donahue, for allowing so much flexibility in my schedule at church to give adequate time to complete a research project of this magnitude.

I mostly thank my wife, Kathy Lynn Lumpkins, for her patience and support during these last two years. The many times I would come home at midnight, she never complained. Rather she continued inspiring and, at times, prodding me to not give in to discouragement. "Keep researching. Keep writing," she would say. Truly, Kathy is my soul-mate.

Finally, I thank my Lord for His sweet providence in my life. I first fell in love with Him at a Baptist church. And it has been a genuine honor to have studied the confessional Baptist faith wherein I found my First Love.

I declare that the thesis, *The Decline of Confessional Calvinism in Baptist Associations among the Southern States during the Nineteenth Century*, which I hereby submit for the degree Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Pretoria, is my own original work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other institution in either South Africa, United States of America, or any other country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edgar Peter Frank Lumpkins', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Edgar Peter Frank Lumpkins,

Student No. 17248745

Date: April 24, 2018

# Chapter One: An Introduction to the Study

## 1.1 Introduction

Baptist beginnings can be traced back to 1609 (McBeth, 1987, p. 21),<sup>1</sup> less than a hundred years after Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to Wittenberg's Castle Church door in 1517 (MacCulloch, 2004, p. 119). Varying theories continue to exist as to the major influences leading to the first known Baptist church on the European continent—Successionist theory, Anabaptism, and English Separatism. (Torbet, 1963, pp. 18-21)<sup>2</sup>

Within a generation of the rise of Baptists in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, two distinct soteriological expressions of biblical salvation began to forge among Baptist dissenters.<sup>3</sup> While the first Baptists were more in line with what came to be known as soteriological Arminianism,<sup>4</sup> by 1640, a forged movement within early Baptist life existed that expressed redemption more *strictly* Calvinistically than had been earlier maintained.<sup>5</sup> And, while many other Baptist fellowships spawned throughout the centuries,<sup>6</sup> the two major soteriological expressions of Baptist life and theology

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<sup>1</sup> See also McBeth, 1990, pp. 13-38; Michael E. Williams Sr., "The Context of Baptist Beginnings: 1517-1609" in *Turning Points*, pp. 3-12; Williams, 2004, p. 27; Harmon, 1989, p. 91; Wamble, 1958, pp. 4-18; Hayden, 1985.

<sup>2</sup> See further McBeth, 1990, p. 13; Handy, 1987, p. 589. According to Brackney, whether "Anabaptists were direct forbears of Baptists remains a subject of debate" (Brackney, 2004, p. 12).

<sup>3</sup> McBeth, 1987, pp. 21-22; Beale, 2013, p. 194; Cross and Livingstone, 2005, p. 155; Brackney, 2004, pp. 14-42; George, 1989, pp. 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> "Arminianism" is a theological view traceable to Dutch theologian, James Arminius (1559-1605), who challenged the post-Calvin Reformed thinkers in Geneva and beyond on their developing views pertaining to the "doctrine of predestination, the atonement of Christ, grace and its resistibility, and the perseverance of the saints" (Allison, 2011, p. 737). See also Hart, 2000, p. 33; McKim & Wright, 1992, p. 11; Olson, 2009, pp. 16-20.

<sup>5</sup> According to McBeth, the earliest Baptist group came to be called "General Baptists" because they, like James Arminius, saw Christ's death as being for all people (i.e. *general* or *universal* atonement). In 1640, a group of Baptists became prominent who were later identified as "Particular Baptists" because they interpreted Christ's cross-work as efficaciously designed only for the elect (McBeth, 1987, pp. 21-22). See also Oliver, 2006, p. xviii; Humphreys & Robertson, 2000, pp. 28-39; and Baker, 1958, pp. 43-48.

<sup>6</sup> Torbet suggests 46 different Baptist bodies currently in the United States alone (Torbet, 1963, pp. 542-544); more recent sources indicate Baptist groups continue to rise. For example, *The Dictionary of Christianity in America* estimates at least 52 distinct Baptist bodies existed by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Reid, et al., 1990). R. Gardner tallies the number of Baptist bodies in the United States at a whopping 96 (Gardner, 1996). A. Wardin observes that even though a large number of Baptist bodies exists in the United States alone, a full 92% are found in only five Baptist groups: Southern Baptist Convention; National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.; American Baptist Churches in the USA; Baptist Bible Fellowship International (Wardin, 1995, p. 367).

seem to be those Baptists who remain *more Calvinistic* in their understanding of biblical teaching and those Baptists who remain *less* (George, 1989, pp. 15-16).<sup>7</sup>

## 1.2 Background to the Study

Indeed, from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century right down until today, these two major expressions in Baptist life have theologically sparred with one another (Leonard, 2003, p. 47). At times their disagreements over theology appeared merely familial in nature, while at other times, Baptists fought against one another as raging combatants.<sup>8</sup> But few issues, if any, over which Baptists theologically disagreed through the years sparked more flames of contention than the issue of Calvinism. Al Mohler remarks “[Calvinistic] tensions have been present within the Southern Baptist Convention from the very beginning of our life and work together” (Albert Mohler, 2013). According to Alabama Baptist historian Wayne Flynt, “No biblical dispute shaped early Alabama Baptists so profoundly as Calvinism” (Flynt, 1998, p. 26). Indeed, entire Baptist associations split as result of “conflict [that] grew out of debate over the Calvinist doctrines of election and predestination” (French Broad Association, 1994, p. 11).

Hence, Baptists have fought over Calvinistic doctrines from the beginning of their continental existence through and up to Baptists in the south who formed the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. Perhaps F. Humphreys sums up best the long, intense, and recurring battle among Baptists over the doctrines of Calvinism:

There is one set of theological issues that has surfaced in each of the four centuries of Baptist history, namely, the issues related to Calvinism and Arminianism. The relative importance of this conversation has varied from generation to generation, but the conversation has never been fully silenced... [and] at the moment there seems to be no

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<sup>7</sup> Even so, George insists that today’s Baptists “would do well to connect again with the ideas which informed the theology of such great heroes of the past as John Bunyan, Rogers Williams, Andrew Fuller, Adoniram Judson, Luther Rice, and Charles Haddon Spurgeon,” all of whom George would consider on the “Calvinist” side of the historical ledger, it might be noted (George, 1989, p. 10).

<sup>8</sup> For a brief but popular overview of the controversies within the Baptist movement, particularly among Baptists in the Southern Baptist Convention, see Walter B. Shurden’s *Not a silent people: Controversies that have shaped Southern Baptists*. Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 1995, pp. 1-8; for a more recent rehearsal of theological controversies among Baptists from a decidedly sociological perspective, see Nancy Tatom Ammerman’s *Baptist Battles: Social Change and Religious Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention*. Rutgers University Press, 1995; for a broad treatment of the current conflict Calvinism poses in today’s Southern Baptist Convention, see Waggoner, Brad J., and E. Ray Clendenen. *Calvinism: A Southern Baptist Dialogue*. B&H Publishing Group, 2008, a book that developed from a symposium on the issue of Calvinism in the Southern Baptist Convention held in 2007.

reason to suppose that the conversation will be either resolved or transcended in the near future (Humphreys, 2000).

### 1.3 Problem Stated and Rationale for the Study

#### 1.3.1 Problem Stated

Though Baptists have dually expressed salvation in terms more Calvinistically, less Calvinistically, and even non-Calvinistically throughout their four-century existence, religious historians widely and confidently postulate that Calvinism dominated theological expression of biblical soteriology among Baptists in America in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Baptist historian, Thomas Kidd, remains representative as he concludes “Calvinism remained ascendant among Baptists well into the nineteenth century” (Kidd, 2015).<sup>9</sup>

Tom Nettles argues persuasively that Calvinism, “popularly called the Doctrines of Grace, prevailed in the most influential and enduring arenas of Baptist denominational life until the end of the second decade of the twentieth century” (Nettles, 2006, p. ix). Nettles further argues ‘Southern Baptist beginnings were self-consciously and vigorously Calvinistic. This is reflected in the confessions, the associations, the preachers, and the theologians. The changes that have come could with clear justification be called “theological apostacy” [sic]’ (Nettles, 1995, p. 21).<sup>10</sup> Nettles well illustrates the assertion above that few issues, if any, over which Baptists theologically disagreed through the years have sparked more flames of contention than the issue of Calvinism.<sup>11</sup>

Al Mohler agrees with Nettles: “The most influential churches, leaders, confessions of faith and theologians of the founding era were Calvinistic—it was not until *well into the twentieth century*

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<sup>9</sup> Professor Kidd’s article may be accessed at <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/calvinism-is-not-new-to-baptists>.

<sup>10</sup> For a more thorough treatment by Nettles, see Nettles, 2006, pp x-vvix.

<sup>11</sup> The claim pertaining to “apostacy” [sic] was made by none other than one of Southern Baptists’ most esteemed historians, Thomas J. Nettles, retired Professor of Historical Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. If scholars and professors make these kind of provocative claims, how much more their students will find liberty to do so, risking and/or perpetuating an inflammatory conversation for future dialogue. On the non-Calvinist side, Baptist Calvinists are often provocatively and categorically assumed to be “Hyper-Calvinists,” a term usually derogatory in nature and stems back to 18<sup>th</sup> century disputes not only between Arminian Baptists and Calvinistic Baptists, but also between one Calvinistic Baptist body and another (Toon, 1967, pp. 143-152). For a splendid overview of the rise of Hyper-Calvinism among English Particular Baptists, including its subsequent influence on American Baptists, see Allen, 2016, pp. 467-506.

that any knowledgeable person could claim that Southern Baptists were anything but Calvinists” (Ascol & Finn, 2011, p. 136, emphasis added). Hence, Calvinism seems by many to be established as the majority soteriological perspective among American Baptists not only for the first half of the 19th century as Kidd and others maintain, but also, as some claim, well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, as the evidence of this research argues, it would be a mistake to conclude that *strict* Calvinism was *universally* accepted as the default Baptist theology in the early 1800’s. One might cite the well documented “Anti-missionary” movement spawned both by Campbellism and Calvinism at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to illustrate that while *strict* Calvinism was theologically prominent amongst early 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptists, it was not universal.<sup>12</sup> A. H. Newman concludes the Anti-missionism era “the saddest and most discreditable feature of modern Baptist history,” a feature that threatened the global missionary efforts of Baptists begun a generation earlier (Posey, 1966, p. 64).

Moreover, contrary to both Nettles and Mohler, at or around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Baptist theology appears to transition from a strongly Calvinistic soteriology among Baptists of the southern United States to a much more moderated expression of Calvinism by the century’s end. In the words of W. Richards speaking of what may have been a defining moment at mid-19<sup>th</sup> century southern Baptist soteriology, “Calvinism was on the pinnacle for many Baptists in the south, but its hold on them was loosened” (Richards, 1991, p. 59). While Richards offers a reasoned defense why Baptists broke away from *strict* Calvinism, his evidence seems weak, or, at best, incomplete and thus requires more thorough examination and primary source evidence to sustain his claim.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Campbellism” was a movement primarily led by American Baptist, Alexander Campbell [1788-1866], ultimately leading to the Disciples of Christ denomination, a denominational split formed from former Baptist churches and church members. (Shriver & Leonard, 1997, pp. 85-86); see also Taylor, 1997, pp. 54-63 and Carroll, 1902, pp. 12-123 for an in-depth look into Anti-missionism. Tom Nettles’ treatment of the Anti-missions controversy appears more defensive of the Calvinistic theology in Anti-missionism placing more emphasis on objections the Anti-missions Baptists had with unbiblically sanctioned missions organizations than with evangelizing un-Christian heathen (Nettles, 2005, pp. 221-247).

<sup>13</sup> See chapter three, “Calvinism on the Defense,” in Richards’ *Winds of Doctrines* (45-62). A brief review of *Winds of Doctrines* follows under the literature review below.

Apparently *strict* Calvinism was theologically slipping away from American Baptists in the north as early as 1833 indicated in part by the publication of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith*, a confession which, in W. J. McGlothlin's estimation, became the "most widely used and influential statement of doctrine among American Baptists" by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> What remains problematic for those who insist on Calvinism's theological victory march in Baptist life until "well into the twentieth century" is not only the *broad* acceptance of the New Hampshire confession in Baptist life, but also the *belief* expressed by New Hampshire Baptists' declaration—a confession containing an undeniable absence of *strict* Calvinism that was so evident in *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith* (1742). McGlothlin's description of the New Hampshire confession is enlightening:

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 (McGlothlin, 1911, p. 224).

The ripples of theological shift in Baptist life went well beyond Baptists in the north. In fact, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the dilution of *strict* Calvinism was apparently striking enough that a well-respected theologian and editor of a leading Baptist newspaper in the south could state, without hesitation, at the century's end, "But it can be very confidently affirmed that there is now no Baptist church that holds or defends the five points of Calvinism" (Cody, 2006).<sup>15</sup>

Two-hundred and ninety-three "delegates" registered from 165 churches, associations, and other official Baptist bodies met in Augusta, Georgia on May 8, 1845 and launched what would become the largest group of Baptists in the world—The Southern Baptist Convention. (Barnes,

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<sup>14</sup> For the full text of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* (alternately entitled *The New Hampshire Confession*), including introductory remarks, see Lumpkin, 1969, pp. 360-367. For the text of *Philadelphia's* confession, see Lumpkin, 1969, pp. 235-295; 348-353 (*The Philadelphia Confession of Faith* was a slightly edited edition of *The Second London Confession of Faith* [1677, 1688-89] as Lumpkin makes clear in the introductory remarks).

<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, Zechariah Thornton Cody (1858-1935) was a student of the famed *strict* Calvinist theologian, James P. Boyce at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Cody was widely regarded a "theologian of the first rank" and was a key contributor to composing Southern Baptists' first convention-wide confession of faith in 1925 (Allen, 1958, p. 295).

1954, p. 305). Some scholars claim each delegate represented at that historic meeting fully embraced *strict* Calvinism (Ascol, 1998).<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, not only was the first president of the Southern Baptist Convention, W. B. Johnson, commonly reportedly a *strict* Calvinist (Nettles, 1997, p. 17), but every succeeding president for approximately the next 40 years of the convention's existence appeared to be a *strict* Calvinist. (Founders Conference, 1995, p. 30).<sup>17</sup> Thus, most all leading theologians and prominent pastors at the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention are usually perceived to be *strictly* Calvinistically-inclined.

Since *strict* Calvinism appears to be so strongly held at the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention (1845) by so many prominent representatives, the central question this research will pursue concerns the degree to which Calvinism was held by Baptists in the south during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Was *strict* Calvinism as expressed in Philadelphia's confession the common soteriological faith of Baptists in the southern states as seems to be held by many? Did *strict* Calvinism suddenly wane in influence after the southern convention was organized in 1845? Or, did *strict* Calvinism remain strong until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as some maintain? Did Baptists in the south consciously follow Baptists in the north in confessing a substantially less robust Calvinism after the New Hampshire confession was published in 1833? Did the New Hampshire confession usurp the Philadelphia confession in the south? If not, was New Hampshire's confession a factor at all in the south? Was Baptist editor, Z. Cody, overstating the case when he suggested it can be "very confidently affirmed" that there existed, at the century's end (circa 1900), "no Baptist church that holds or defends the five points of Calvinism"?

Other questions naturally follow. If *strict* Calvinism was not in decline at the time Cody wrote, but was thriving well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century as many Baptist Calvinists claim today, what accounts

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<sup>16</sup> A preliminary survey of the 1845 delegates immediately casts doubts on this emboldened claim, however. For example, I. T. Hinton and R. Holman are listed as the only two delegates from Louisiana. Both Hinton and Holman represented First Baptist Church, New Orleans which was a member of the Mississippi River Association established in 1843 and had adopted *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith*, hardly a strongly Calvinistic confession as the evidence presented in the course of this research will show (Paxton, 1876, pp. 65; 70-71).

<sup>17</sup> *SBC Life*, the online *Journal of the Southern Baptist Convention* lists as president of the Southern Baptist Convention in succeeding order, from 1845-1888, the following five men respectively: W. B. Johnson, Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, Richard Fuller, Patrick Hues Mell, and James Petigru Boyce (SBC Life, 2018).

for Cody's perception? If Cody was essentially correct, what causes led to *strict* Calvinism's theological dominance as expressed in Philadelphia's confession among Baptists to begin its descent? If *strict* Calvinism was widely received by Southern Baptist churches well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, why did the Southern Baptist Convention bypass the robust Calvinism of *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith* (1742) and instead adopt as its first convention-wide confession of faith an edited version of *The New Hampshire Confession of Faith* (1833) in 1925?<sup>18</sup> If New Hampshire's confession was a step away from the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia's confession as this research will argue, it seems reasonable to assume that *The 1925 Baptist Faith and Message* adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention as its first convention-wide confession could represent an additional step away from *strict* Calvinism.<sup>19</sup>

### 1.3.2 Rationale for the Study

The research in this project will make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge about Baptists and the transition in soteriological focus beginning to confessionally occur among Baptists in the south as early as the very beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The transition in soteriology will be discerned in large part by examining Baptist confessions and abstracts of faith adopted by numerous Baptist associations in states across the south and comparing those confessions with the Philadelphia confession and abstracts of faith reflecting the Philadelphia confession to detect the level of theological loyalty to and confessional dependence upon the Philadelphia confession present in articles of faith adopted by Baptist associations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> Compiling and analyzing the soteriological content of associational Baptist confessions

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<sup>18</sup> Hereafter throughout this research, *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith* (1742) and *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* (1833) will be abbreviated, when appropriate, by PCF and NCF respectively.

<sup>19</sup> The full text of *The 1925 Baptist Faith and Message* (BF&M1925) may be accessed online (The Baptist Faith & Message, 1925). Since 1925, the Southern Baptist Convention has edited, updated, and adopted the confession twice, 1963 and 2000.

<sup>20</sup> The states upon which the study focuses will primarily be those states with Baptist communities that sent delegates to Augusta, Georgia in 1845 to organize a southern convention (more on the specific states in chapter three).

from such a broad swath of Baptist life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century south appears itself to exist as a unique contribution for future study of Baptist confessionalism.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, this research offers perspective to other Christians who may not know who Baptists are. Many contemporary Christians, especially younger Christians, who follow high profile Baptists like Al Mohler, John Piper, Denny Burk, Matt Chandler, D. A. Carson, Jim Hamilton, Tom Nettles, Mark Dever, Michael A. G. Haykin, among many others on popular social media platforms and conference circuits, mostly know Baptists as *always* being *strict* Calvinists—or, at minimum, as *originally* being *strict* Calvinists. This research will “correct the record” so to speak. The evidence presented indicates that Southern Baptists were both confessionally *strict* Calvinist, *moderate* Calvinist, *mild* Calvinist, and even *non-Calvinist* from the very beginning of the convention in 1845.<sup>22</sup>

Even more, the confessional evidence indicates not only that soteriological *diversity* existed among Baptist associations from 1800 onwards through the end of the century, but also that confessional dependence upon and theological loyalty to the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrines of grace as reflected in the Philadelphia Confession of Faith suffered observable *decline* among Baptists of the south beginning early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In addition, this study will assist in alleviating some of the present tension within our convention over Calvinistic doctrine. As indicated by present circumstances in our denomination, there seems to be widespread ignorance not only concerning the confessional diversity expressed by Baptists throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but also concerning the decline of confessionally *strict* Calvinism well before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By not only showing that the decline of Calvinism among Baptists began much earlier than the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also showing the confessional diversity among Baptists throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while pinpointing some of the specific “turning points” which brought this shift in theology about,

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<sup>21</sup> In total for this study, over 400 Baptist associations in 12 southern states were examined for adopted articles of faith published in the associations’ annual session minutes. Consequently, a total of 376 of the 400+ associations yielded published articles of faith for examination.

<sup>22</sup> Since the Southern Baptist Convention is the largest Baptist organization in the world, it seems reasonable to focus upon Southern Baptists. By way of disclosure, the author has been and presently is affiliated with churches that are members of the Southern Baptist Convention.

confusion concerning the theological and confessional history of Southern Baptists will surely lessen.

#### 1.4 Research Methodology

The methodological highway on which the research will travel is fourfold: (1) literature; (2) influencers; (3) Baptist associations; and (4) time-frame. Concerning the latter, our historical window is 1800-1900.<sup>23</sup> Several reasons exist to limit the focused research to this period. First, the year 1801 is significant since it stands as a confessional turning point signaling the official concession of the PCF as a basis of union between the *strictly* Calvinistic Baptists of Kentucky and Separate Baptists. Far too many historians have seemingly overlooked this confessional milestone. In 1801, Kentucky's *strict* Baptist Calvinists (Regular Baptists), who, less than two decades earlier had demanded "strict adherence to" the PCF as a basis of union with Separate Baptists, chose instead to agree to terms of union that were essentially scrubbed of almost all theological dependence upon and confessional loyalty to the PCF.<sup>24</sup>

Second, the formation of a southern convention represents another milestone in Baptist life in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. And since many claims have been made about the *strictly* Calvinistic confessionalism embraced by the delegates who served as the originators of the Southern Baptist Convention,<sup>25</sup> it follows that a focus on the delegates to the Augusta meeting in 1845 would be a necessary component of this research. Finally, on the other chronological end, 1900 seems a suitable place to stop since it was questioned about that time by one of Baptists' most well-respected statesman where one might find a "Baptist church that holds or defends the five points

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<sup>23</sup> While 1800-1900 exists as the official window of research, some discussion naturally may be presented that spills over both the earlier and latter windows. For example, since the Separate Baptist movement had a significant impact on the *strict* Calvinism of Baptists in the south as the evidence will show, and since the Separate Baptist began prior to 1800, it stands to reason preliminary evidences will be presented dated before 1800.

<sup>24</sup> The only article in Kentucky's Terms of General Union reminiscent of Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism is perseverance of the saints. A full discussion of this issue is in chapter three.

<sup>25</sup> From this point on, reference to the Southern Baptist Convention will be "SBC" unless the reference indicates the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

of Calvinism.” Indeed, as the evidence will show, *strictly* Calvinistic confessions from local associations seemed well in the minority.<sup>26</sup>

So far as literature goes, the research will consider both primary and secondary sources from the relevant time period, offering generous amounts of empirical evidence to reasonably substantiate the conclusions drawn. Since the study focuses on Baptist belief as expressed in the associational confessions, most historical evidence assembled will include the published annual minutes of local Baptist associations. Occasionally considered will be biographies of personalities, published sermons, articles (both academic and popular), other denominational resources, and early Baptist historians. In addition, much use will be made of secondary sources most of which are Baptist theologies, journal articles, research dissertations, and Baptist history monographs.

While endless studies have been produced by historians and theologians concerning both Baptist history and Baptist theology,<sup>27</sup> fewer studies have been undertaken focusing on Baptist confessions. Still regarded as the standard works on Baptist confessionalism are W. McGlothlin’s work from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (McGlothlin, 1911) and W. Lumpkin’s excellent treatment on Baptist confessions just beyond mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Lumpkin, 1969). Lumpkin’s volume was more recently updated by Baptist historian, B. Leonard (Lumpkin, 2011). However, as will be shown in a later section, Leonard appears to have uncritically followed Lumpkin too closely at times.

While both McGlothlin and Lumpkin offer valuable evidences and analysis on American Baptist confessionalism in general, neither historian goes beyond what might be called “major” Baptist confessions.<sup>28</sup> After scanning the database at WorldCat.org for relevant books and scholarly

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<sup>26</sup> It was not until 1925 that Southern Baptists adopted their first convention-wide confession. From 1845 to 1925, then, no confession had been adopted by the convention. While there may be notable doctrinally-driven documents adopted by the convention such as James Carter indicates in Carter, J.E., *Southern Baptists’ First Confession of Faith*. *Baptist History and Heritage*, 5(1), pp 24-28,38, these documents should be viewed as precursory only indicating where the convention was heading doctrinally. J. Riddle offers a similar doctrinal document he indicates is Southern Baptists’ first confession of faith (Riddle, 2002). However, while “Confessional Boundaries for Southern Baptist Missionaries” was a statement of faith adopted convention-wide in 1919, the confession was to be used abroad by foreign missionaries and not stateside. Thus, it seems better to view the confession Southern Baptists adopted in 1925 at its first convention-wide first confession of faith.

<sup>27</sup> Examining the extensive bibliography of Baptist historian, H. McBeth, in his massive sweep of Baptist history offers a good hint about the extent of writing on Baptist history and theology (McBeth, 1987, pp. 823-838).

<sup>28</sup> McGlothlin records and examines three American Baptist confessions (McGlothlin, 1911, p. 3), while Lumpkin extends the examination to 10 (Lumpkin, 2011, p. iv).

treatments on confessionalism among Baptist associations in the southern states, it became clear that a sizable gap existed between works like McGlothlin and Lumpkin who dealt adequately with “major” Baptist confessions and the hundreds of associations in the southern states that embraced confessions but did not formally embrace one of the “major” Baptist confessions mentioned by McGlothlin or Lumpkin. In fact, no work was discovered that attempted to compile a sizable portion of articles of faith adopted by local Baptist associations in the southern states during the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the purpose of examining those confessions for potential differences in soteriological belief of the member churches of the associations.

Perhaps the closest volume to analyzing primary source confessional material from Baptist associations is Gregory Wills’ excellent volume, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900*.<sup>29</sup> Wills offers a substantial amount of valuable analysis concerning Baptist associations and their adopted articles of faith. However, for purposes of this research, two glaring weaknesses exist in Wills’ work. First, Wills’ examination of primary sources came almost solely from the state of Georgia. In the preface, Wills writes, “I relied primarily on sources from the Baptists of Georgia. Limiting the geographical scope of the study allowed me to attain depth that I would have sacrificed in a study of the South as a whole” (Wills, 1997, p. viii). Yet while understanding 19<sup>th</sup> century Georgia Baptists remains *necessary* to understanding 19<sup>th</sup> century southern Baptists, understanding Georgia Baptists *alone*, contrary to Wills, remains *insufficient* to understanding 19<sup>th</sup> century southern Baptists. Wills presumed that “limiting the geographical scope” allowed him to “attain depth” that he would have sacrificed had he moved outside Georgia. If so, why does Wills limit his analysis and confessional conclusions to associations embracing *strict* Calvinism?<sup>30</sup> The second weakness stems from the first. Wills goes on to declare, “Southern Baptists had some regional differences; Georgia was as close to the center of these differences as any state and harbored them all” (Ibid). Wills appears to suggest Georgia Baptists were

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<sup>29</sup> Wills, G. A., 1997. *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900*. Kindle edition ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>30</sup> Scanning the index of Wills’ volume, almost every association with which he makes positive conclusions embraced the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Yet at least 30 associations existed in 19<sup>th</sup> century Georgia that embraced either *moderate* or *mild* Calvinistic articles of faith. See *Appendix G* at the end of this research.

middle-of-the-road when it came to differences between Baptists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century south. While Georgia associations may have been middle-of-the-road in some respects, they certainly were not middle-of-the-road when it came to associational confessions. First, out of 84 Georgia associations examined in this research, not a single association yielded no adopted articles of faith.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, out of the 84 Georgia associations' articles of faith compiled, fifty-four associations followed the Philadelphia confessional tradition. The next closest state was Alabama. Out of 84 Alabama associations examined for articles of faith, only 14 associations adopted articles of faith following the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Hence, so far as Georgia Baptists being middle-of-the-road, while it may be true for other aspects of 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptist life, Georgia Baptists evidently tilted far beyond the center in their adherence to confessionally *strict* Calvinism when compared to other southern states. Thus, contrary to Wills, for a more accurate picture of 19<sup>th</sup> Baptist confessionalism, it stands necessary to glean evidence from a broad swath of Baptists in the south.

Consequently, over 400 local Baptist associations existing in 12 southern states during the 19<sup>th</sup> century are examined in this research for articles of faith, with a total number of confessions compiled at 376. Thousands of pages of the associations' annual session minutes were scanned to produce their officially adopted confessions.<sup>32</sup>

### 1.5 Preliminary Literature Review

The present research is not the first inquiry—academic or otherwise—to investigate an apparent shift in Baptist theology. Paul Basden compiled a dozen scholarly essays published in 1994 in the book, *Has Our Theology Changed? Southern Baptist Thought Since 1845* (Basden, 1994). Each of the chapters deals with “major turning points in the development of the doctrines and practices which have changed significantly between 1845 and the present” (ibid, p. 2). Only two of the chapters are relevant for our purposes in this study: “Predestination” (chapter 2) written by

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<sup>31</sup> See *Appendix G* at the end of this research.

<sup>32</sup> Most of the minutes examined in this research are presently archived in both microfilm and hardcopy form at the Southern Baptist Library and Historical Archives located in Nashville, Tennessee. Additional resources were located at Mercer University Special Collections Department in Macon, Georgia and Ouachita University special archives in Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

Basden; and “The Atonement” (chapter 3) written by Walter D. Draughon III.<sup>33</sup> Both chapters are based upon the respective author’s research in his doctoral dissertation.<sup>34</sup>

After offering a brief survey of the differences between Calvinistic and Arminian understanding of predestination, Basden concludes that the “Calvinistic view held sway” at the formation of the SBC (p. 43). Familiar names in Southern Baptist history like Patrick Hues Mell (1814-1888), John Leadley Dagg (1794-1884), and James Petigru Boyce (1827-1888) are cited as writing theologians who standardized the Calvinistic understanding of predestination for Southern Baptists from 1845 until the century’s end. It was not until the “first decades of the twentieth century” that Edgar Young Mullins (1860-1928) and later Walter Thomas Conner (1877-1952) ever so subtly challenged the Calvinistic understanding of predestination setting in motion a theological retreat to a rather full-blown Arminian understanding by the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Hershel H. Hobbs (1907-1995), Frank Stagg (1911-2001), and Dale Moody.

One weakness in Basden’s proposal concerns not his interpretation of the theologians he evaluates. Rather it concerns the views of the theologians he overlooks in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While few would dispute the enormous *Calvinistic* influence Mell, Dagg, and Boyce exuded in 19<sup>th</sup> century Southern Baptist life, to overlook the powerful personas of F. H. Kerfoot, E. C. Dargan, Z. T. Cody, B. H. Carroll, among many others, creates an interpretive gap in Basden’s primary proposition; namely, that the Calvinistic understanding of predestination dominated the views of Southern Baptists until the “first decades of the twentieth century” led by Southern seminary’s president, E. Y. Mullins. Is it possible the Calvinistic understanding of predestination was already, at least in some ways, being challenged *before* Mullins arrived to preside over the seminary in 1899?

In addition, it remains questionable to base a significant shift in the understanding of a theological tradition within an historically diverse ecclesial community like the SBC by citing

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<sup>33</sup> While Clark R. Youngblood’s contribution entitled “Perseverance and Apostasy” (chapter four, pp. 114-135) normally falls within the spectrum of Calvinistic doctrines, since Southern Baptists have not historically divided over this issue, and it was not until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century a controversy concerning apostasy erupted over Southern Baptist Theological Seminary theology professor, Dale Moody (1915-1992), Youngblood’s chapter remains outside the scope of this research.

<sup>34</sup> Basden, 1986; Draughon, 1987.

writing theologians alone. Basden evaluates only one segment of the Southern Baptist population to conclude his thesis—theologians. And even then, he not only overlooks some major theological players (see above), but also limits his study to *academic* theologians. Z. T. Cody (1858-1935), for example, was described as a “theologian of first rank” but did not serve in academia; rather he was a pastor and denominational newspaper editor (Allen, 1958, p. 295). It is not too much to suggest that Cody could have reflected more the *actual* belief of the SBC concerning predestination than any of the Calvinistic theologians who taught in the seminary.

In short, while Basden demonstrates a shift from a Calvinist understanding of predestination, he only does so for *some* theologians, *academy* theologians at that. Moreover, is it possible that Southern Baptist theologians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century no more represented the SBC in general than theologians of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century? Does the academy necessarily represent the church? Is academic theology equitable to, or perhaps even outweigh, an individual church’s theology in evaluating the soteriological beliefs of a Baptist denomination? If so, then one might legitimately stop with Basden’s thesis. If not, what source might better represent a broader swath of Baptist belief than the writing theologians of the academy? At least a partial answer to the latter question may be the present research proposed.

Since by design Basden’s work was limited to the shift in Baptist theology expressed only by writing theologians, a rich deposit of source material for obtaining a fuller understanding of Baptist theology and a possible shift in soteriological belief is entirely overlooked—Baptist confessionalism. Hundreds of Baptist associations across the southern states adopted confessions during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, since Basden’s work is silent on the role of confessional documents and any possible theological shift that may have occurred in them prior to 1900 and the influential rise of E. Y. Mullins, his proposal that the theology of the SBC changed primarily when Mullins became a major influencer in Baptist life may be entirely too late. That is, a theological shift could have already taken place in the churches and associations a generation or more earlier than Mullins. Indeed, examining the confessions of local associations of Baptists throughout the south could conceivably make Mullins more into a child of his times rather than the theological innovator and influencer he has been portrayed to be.

Therefore, while there is much to appreciate about Basden's contribution in understanding the decline of Calvinism in the SBC, especially the decline documented in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Southern Baptist theologians, far too many rocks are left unturned to remain satisfied with his thesis alone.

Unfortunately, Draughon's contribution on the change in Southern Baptist thought concerning Christ's atonement suffers in many respects similar to Basden's. Draughon focuses on Boyce, Dagg, Mullins, Conner, and Moody (pp. 75-76) rightly concluding Mullins moved away from Limited Atonement (i.e. Calvinistic view) so vividly expressed by Boyce and Dagg in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. However, Draughon completely glosses over Kerfoot's revision of Boyce's *Abstract of Systematic Theology* wherein Kerfoot explicitly denies Limited Atonement. (George, Winter 1985, p. 35).<sup>35</sup>

An even earlier attempt to show Southern Baptists' shift away from *strict* Calvinism came from W. Wiley Richards' *Winds of Doctrines: The Origins and Development of Southern Baptist Theology*. According to Richards, when the 19<sup>th</sup> century started, "Baptist theology in the fledging country was securely ensconced in the arms of Calvinism, or so it seemed" (Richards, 1991, p. 43).<sup>36</sup> The century had hardly begun when what Newman called "the saddest and most discreditable feature of modern Baptist history" raised a serious theological fuss (Posey, 1966, p. 64) amongst Baptists.<sup>37</sup> Quoting Baptist historian, David Benedict, the sheer volume of challenges *strict* Calvinism faced in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century placed it on the defensive for almost all

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<sup>35</sup> That Draughon was aware of Kerfoot's 1899 revision of Boyce's systematic theology textbook is obvious since he mentions the revision in a footnote in his dissertation (Draughon, 1987, pp. 12-13; Draughon incorrectly states the Kerfoot revision was published in 1890 rather than 1899). Why Draughon chose not to examine and evaluate Kerfoot's significant shift away from Boyce's *strict* Calvinism remains a mystery since it would have substantially strengthened his thesis. Also, the appended dialogue in Draughon's dissertation with Southern seminary professor, Dale Moody, is instructive (pp. 246-273). Though he did not elaborate, Moody indicated that Kerfoot's revision of Boyce's textbook demonstrated a theological milestone among Southern Baptists deliberately shifting away from *strict* Calvinism. "Moody: 'It's very important to notice, though, his revision—the revised edition of the Abstract of Systematic Theology. [You] see, Kerfoot put out a revision.' Draughon: 'Right.' Moody: 'He revised it at two points: on the atonement and on total depravity. That's what I mean. He ended up a three point Calvinist.' Draughon: 'So you think there was a major shift between Boyce and Kerfoot. That's where the road began to turn.' Moody: 'Yes!' (p.247).

<sup>36</sup> Phillip Thompson follows John Asplund's *Annual Register of the Baptist Denomination* (1791) which showed that in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, of 35 associations in the United States and territories, 17 formally subscribed to the *strict* Calvinism of the Philadelphia Confession, and 9 more held to "Calvinistic sentiment." (Thompson, Spring 2004).

<sup>37</sup> According to W. W. Sweet, "It is an interesting fact that anti-missionism did not appear in other frontier churches... This movement, then was undoubtedly peculiar to the Baptists..." (Sweet, 1964, p. 67).

of the second half. "That kind of preaching in vogue at the middle of the century would have been judged the quintessence of Arminianism" (Ibid, p. 52).

Richards cites four reasons for Calvinism's waning influence among Southern Baptists (Ibid, pp. 52-59). First, the organization of local churches into associations based upon Calvinistic tenets was more apparent than real. Second, Calvinism's waning influence can be partly attributed to the temper of the times. Third, the Campbellite movement contributed a huge blow toward the loss of Calvinistic tenets. Finally, Richards attributes the decline of Calvinism among Baptists perhaps most significant of all to the influence of English Baptist theologian Andrew Fuller (1754-1815).

While there remains merit in Richards' thesis, including his conclusion that Calvinism showed signs of influential exhaustion among Southern Baptists well before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Tom Nettles is correct in judging Richards' empirical evidence as insufficient to prove his contention: "[Richards'] thesis is interesting but his evidence is ambivalent" (Nettles, 1995). Moreover, Richards appears neither to be aware of Kerfoot's revision of Boyce's theology textbook promoting contra Boyce general atonement and a severely diluted understanding of total depravity nor of Z. T. Cody's summation at the century's end, "But it can be very confidently affirmed that there is now no Baptist church that holds or defends the five points of Calvinism" (Cody, 2006).<sup>38</sup> Also, like both Basden and Draughon, Richards fails to consider the almost ubiquitous presence of Baptist confessions published by Baptist associations throughout the south. Hence, while the present research embraces much of Richards' conclusions, one also finds it necessary to bolster the woefully lacking amount of evidence material Richards failed to document. Had Richards taken Baptist confessionalism seriously, his case for the shifting of Baptist theology may have been devastating for those proponents who insist *strict* Calvinism held sway over Baptists until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Hence, though the research surveyed above is adequate in showing a definitive change in soteriology among Baptists of the south, they all seem to possess at least two common

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<sup>38</sup> Out of print, Cody's full article may be found at [http://peterlumpkins.typepad.com/peter\\_lumpkins/2006/12/are\\_baptists\\_ca.html](http://peterlumpkins.typepad.com/peter_lumpkins/2006/12/are_baptists_ca.html).

deficiencies. First, the research appears to suggest the shift in Baptist theology took place much too late. While Richards indicates Calvinism began to wane among southern Baptists before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, his evidence appears sketchy at best. In addition, like the others in this review, Richards overcompensates the value of the writing theologians and published preachers. Moreover, the tendency Basden and others is to push the theological transition of southern Baptists in the south farther than Richards and on into the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with E. Y. Mullins as the principal catalyst for change.

Contrarily, this research intends to show that southern Baptists' allegiance to Calvinistic soteriology not only declined far earlier than the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as proposed by Richards, but also that Baptists in the south were more soteriologically diverse in their theological loyalties to Calvinism during the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century than has normally been claimed.

The second deficiency of Richards, et al that this research proposes to overcome is the overestimated value placed upon writing theologians and published preachers to gauge the beliefs of the southern Baptist masses. While it would be wrong-headed to exclude the views of Baptist theologians and the most educated pastors, it seems equally injudicious to exclude from evaluation the publicized beliefs of the local churches and Baptist associations of churches. Arguably, the latter remains a superior standard in gauging the beliefs of the masses since articles of faith adopted by either local churches or Baptist associations by nature are documents endorsed by the masses. Thus, this research intends to fill the gap in understanding Baptist belief by examining the confessional documents officially adopted by Baptist associations that stated what its member churches embraced about soteriological beliefs as a basis for organizational cooperation with one another.

## 1.6 Trajectory of the Research

Since the research examines an historical inquiry specifically dealing with the theological shift of a denominational group, it remains imperative to define the theological nature of the subject under consideration to accurately gauge whether a theological shift actually took place. Hence, chapter two will address the question, what is Calvinism? And more specifically, what is *Baptist* Calvinism? Included is an exposition of the so-called "TULIP" routinely expressed by Baptist

Calvinists. Also included is a section on Baptist Calvinism as expressed in associational confessions.

Beginning in chapter three, an historical survey of Baptist discussion particularly over Calvinistic themes unfolds leading up to the formation of the SBC in 1845. The record will reveal that while *strict* Calvinism appeared to have the upper theological hand especially over Baptists in the south, by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Baptist Calvinism was already clearly on the defensive and predictably would scratch and claw to hold on to the so-called “doctrines of grace” for the rest of the century. Included is a lengthy section on the contributions of Separate Baptists to the decline of confessional Calvinism. A survey of selected associational confessions published in annual minutes reveals in many ways a shift away from *strict* Calvinism at the very beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Occasionally, individual personalities and their contributions to the decline of confessional Calvinism will be included in the evidentiary record.

Chapter four examines The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith (1833, NHC), one of the clearest expressions of moving away from *strict* Calvinism. While many desire to read the NHC through the lens of Philadelphia, the evidence presented argues against this interpretation, evidence not the least of which was the negative reaction by many *strict* Calvinists in the southern states that the NHC was theologically nothing less than incipient Arminianism.

While chapter four documented the shift away from confessionally *strict* Calvinism New Hampshire’s confession represented in 1833, chapter five examines articles of faith from several Baptist associations in the southern states in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the primary material comes from three key states—North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. The evidence not only conclusively shows that *strict* Calvinism as expressed in the Philadelphia confessional tradition was not as dominant as many have suggested, but also shows that visible decline in dependence upon and theological loyalty to the PCF is verified within several associations.

Chapter six constitutes a pivotal moment in Baptists of the south with the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in 1845. Brief studies of personalities, delegates to the convention, and the representative states and Baptist associations involved gain attention. Of particular significance will be whether it is feasible to conclude that delegates who met in

Augusta, Georgia, May 8-12, 1845 represented Baptists in the south as adhering invariably to the Philadelphia confessional tradition, a claim frequently made by many contemporary Baptist Calvinists.

The focus of chapter seven not only examines the increased influence of New Hampshire's Declaration of Faith (1833) in southern associations in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and what the *mild* Calvinism expressed by New Hampshire Baptists meant toward loosening further the grip of Calvinism over Southern Baptists, but also tracks other confessional traditions among Baptist associations through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. More state Baptist associations are examined for confessional documents including Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, and Mississippi.

Chapter eight rounds out the study by drawing together the threads of confessional evidences presented in the previous seven chapters into the overall inferences warranted from the entire study. At the end of the research are attached five appendices offering generous supplemental material to assist researchers as well as a thorough bibliography for further investigation.

Thus, beginning at the very threshold of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Baptist associations were adopting, for purposes of organizational cooperation, confessions of faith that displayed little, if any, confessional dependence upon or theological loyalty to the *strictly* Calvinistic interpretation of the doctrines of grace as abundantly found in the Philadelphia confessional tradition. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed, we also find some Baptist associations that had adopted confessional statements in theological sync with Philadelphia Calvinism earlier in the century, before mid-century, exchange those articles of faith for a confession holding no allegiance to the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Indeed, the evidence compiled shows not only a pattern of *confessional diversity* on the doctrines of grace among Baptists of the south over the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century, but also traces a *confessional decline of strict* Calvinism among Baptist associations in the southern states beginning as early as 1800.

## Chapter Two: What is Calvinism?

### 2.1 Introduction

Before proceeding with an examination of Baptist confessions adopted by associations from the southern states during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it remains only reasonable to possess a solid notion for what one is looking. If confessionally *strict* Calvinism as a soteriological expression began to wane among Baptists in the south well before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as this research project intends to show, how could it be known without understanding what Calvinism is? Consequently, chapter two explores a working definition of Calvinism, a definition upon which the examination of the faith statements adopted by the various associations from the southern states throughout the rest of the research depends.

Defining what Calvinism is may at first appear to be an easy probe to pursue. However, scholars differ concerning just what constitutes Calvinism.

Richard Muller indicates three main usages of the term “Calvinism” as it pertains to doctrinal positions in historical theology (Muller, 2012, pp. 51-68). First many use Calvinism as indicative of “Calvin’s own distinctive theological positions.” Whether gleaned from Calvin’s Institutes alone or more broadly from Calvin’s extensive writings, Calvinism used in this way is restricted to the specific teachings of John Calvin. Second, the term “Calvinism” has also been used to describe the belief system developed by Calvin’s followers. Third, Calvinism as a theological term has been used synonymously with the entire “Reformed tradition.”<sup>39</sup>

Muller questions the first usage mainly because it “leaves Calvin the only Calvinist” (Ibid, p. 52). Further, to equate Calvinism with Calvin’s specific theological positions “encounters the extreme difficulty of actually finding distinctive doctrines in Calvin” (Ibid). For Muller, a quest of this nature seems doomed at the start: “We need to remind ourselves that the one truly unique theologian who entered Geneva in the sixteenth century, Michael Servetus, did not exit Geneva alive.

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<sup>39</sup> For older but virtually identical forms of Muller’s present thesis under consideration, see Muller, R., 1993. How Many Points?. *Calvin Theological Journal*, Volume 28, pp. 425-433 and Muller, R. A., 2012. Was Calvinist a Calvinist?. *Life and Word*, Volume 5, pp. 1-17.

Unique or individualized doctrinal formulation was not Calvin's goal" (Ibid). Calvin's doctrine of predestination, for example, was "strikingly similar to those of Bucer, Viret, Musculus, and Vermigli" (Ibid, p. 53). Finally, for Muller, there exists a "final, deeper problem" with equating Calvinism specifically with Calvin and Calvin's works:

[it] assumes that the theological tradition in which both Calvin and the later thinkers who have been identified as Calvinists reside was rather exclusivistically [sic] founded on the theology of Calvin himself and that Calvin's theology... supplies the foundational index by which membership in that tradition ought to be assessed (Ibid).

Consequently, using the term "Calvinism" appears to fallaciously beg the question because it "becomes its own criterion for its assessment and, by extension, the sole guide to all that is Calvinistic" (Ibid). Indeed, Muller concludes that this approach to defining Calvinism remains:

so misguided and reductionistic [sic] that it needs no extended rebuttal; it abstracts Calvin from himself by denying the importance of the larger portion of his work even as it abstracts him from his historical context and from the tradition in which he was a participant (Ibid).

Interestingly, if using the term "Calvinism" as indicative of the unique teachings of John Calvin makes Calvin the only Calvinist, then, Muller concludes, using "Calvinism" or "Calvinist" to reference the followers of Calvin's theology excludes Calvin himself as a Calvinist since "it should be clear that no one can be his own follower" (Ibid). More importantly, to suggest "Calvinist" or "Calvinism" to refer to the followers of John Calvin's teachings 'assumes that "Calvinist" is an appellation that might have been happily accepted by Calvin himself and by pastors, theologians, and exegetes who belonged to the same theological trajectory or tradition as Calvin within, let us say, a hundred years after his death.' But Muller rejects that assumption on both accounts since not only Calvin himself would receive the appellations as insults, the terms "Calvinist" and "Calvinism" were derisively employed by Calvin's enemies and theological opponents the first hundred years after Calvin (Ibid, p. 54).

The historical record indicates, according to Muller, that the terms "Calvinist" and "Calvinism" were self-employed by no major theologian following Calvin. Nor incredibly is "relative acceptance" of "Calvinist" and "Calvinism" observed until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. But even then, "the vast majority of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thinkers we identify as Calvinists did not

identify themselves as followers of Calvin” (Ibid, p. 56). So, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century decline in Protestant orthodoxy, ‘the Reformed tradition had undergone so many developments that identifying it as “Calvinist” rested less on its larger body of doctrine than on the affirmation of a few distinctive points, such as those ensconced in the famous TULIP’ (Ibid, p. 55).

Finally, Muller contends, while “Calvinism” as a theological term used synonymously with the broader Reformed tradition remains the “more common usage,” it raises far too many complicated questions concerning theological development in the later Reformed tradition to remain accurate or useful. Covenant theology, Limited Atonement, Christocentricity, and predestinarianism are among the theological developments in the later Reformed tradition Muller indicates are too often anachronistically imposed upon Calvin and Calvin’s own context. In short, “Calvin did not originate this tradition; he was not the sole voice in its early codification; and he did not serve as the norm for its development” (Ibid, p. 68).

Especially dissatisfying to Muller is the reductionistic approach by those who advocate the acrostic “TULIP”<sup>40</sup> to define either “Calvinist,” “Calvinism,” or the Reformed tradition, an acrostic “that has caused much trouble for the Reformed tradition and has contributed greatly to the confusion about Calvin and Calvinism.” In fact, according to Muller:

there is no historical association between the acrostic TULIP and the Canons of Dort. As far as we know, both the acrostic and the associated usage of “five points of Calvinism” are of Anglo-American origin and do not date back before the nineteenth century. It is remarkable how quickly bad ideas catch on. When, therefore, the question of Calvin’s relationship to Calvinism is reduced to this popular floral meditation—did Calvin teach TULIP? —any answer will be grounded on a misrepresentation. Calvin himself certainly never thought of this model, but neither did later so-called Calvinists. Or, to make the point in another way, Calvin and his fellow Reformers held to doctrines that stand in clear continuity with the Canons of Dort, but neither Calvin nor his fellow Reformers, nor the authors of the canons, would have reduced their confessional position to TULIP (Ibid, pp. 58-59).<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> **TULIP** is an acronym indicating the famous five-point summary of classic Calvinistic doctrine: Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, Perseverance of the Saints. Some have proposed “six point Calvinism” (i.e. **TULIPS**); see, Lee, F. N. ed., 2003. *The Sixth Point of Calvinism: Eschato: alias Dordt Decrees Christian Conquest*. s.l.: The Historicism Research Foundation, Inc. Others like Edwin Palmer do not limit the points of Calvinism to five: “Calvinism is not restricted to five points; it has thousands of points” (Palmer, 1980, p. 2). Albeit his denial to the contrary, Palmer goes on to explain Calvinism via the traditional **TULIP**.

<sup>41</sup> For a sampling of others who either share in Muller’s rejection of employing **TULIP** as indicative of Calvinism or offer alternatives to **TULIP**, see Stewart, K. J., 2011. *Ten Myths About Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the*

After considering Muller's rejection of the popular mnemonic device as descriptive of soteriological Calvinism, not to mention the wider Reformed tradition, his implication that Baptists and other dissenters who claim theological affinity with Calvinism becomes unsurprisingly predictable:

The issue remains complicated, moreover, by the self-identification of various persons and groups as Calvinist or Calvinistic in the centuries after the decline of Reformed orthodoxy. These groups include Baptists, who, on grounds of their denial of baptism to infants, would have been unwelcome either in Calvin's Geneva or in any of the confessionally Reformed contexts of the era of orthodoxy (Ibid, p. 68).

In response, while Muller persuasively addresses how monikers and labels may simplistically reduce complicated theological positions developed over several centuries across diverse cultures by various theologians with dissimilar backgrounds who expressed their theology in a myriad of contexts and wrote in response to innumerable occasions, nothing seems to follow except the wise practice of standard cautionary measures when employing descriptors like "Calvinism" and "Calvinist" to simplistically summarize a complicated theological position, a practice usually followed by most responsible interpreters. However, were one to follow Muller's hardline skepticism toward the acceptable value of "Calvinist," "Calvinism" and the so-called "TULIP," as viable abbreviations for theological positions, one might query whether any meaningful and extended dialog could ever go beyond wrangling over labels.

Interestingly, in Muller's criticism rejecting "Calvinist" and "Calvinism" as horribly simplistic and reductionistic, he repeatedly used "Lutheranism," "humanism," "Christocentricism," "Covenant theology," "decretal theology" and the like as abbreviated descriptors for theologies and philosophies that are just as complicated to unravel, and perhaps in some instances, *more* complicated to unravel, as he claims for "Calvinist," "Calvinism," and "TULIP." Hence, given his decided reluctance in simplistically using abbreviated terms in understanding the complexity of

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*Reformed Tradition*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic. pp. 75-96; Sproul, R. C., 1986. *Chosen by God*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. pp. 99-125; Nicole, R., 2002. *Our Sovereign Savior*. Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications. pp. 47-55; George, T., 2000. *Amazing Grace: God's Pursuit, Our Response*. Wheaton: Crossway. pp. 79-100. Carl Trueman also identifies "Calvinism" a misleading term to describe the Reformed faith (Hart, 2000, p. 103). Oliver Crisp counsels caution in using the term "Calvinism" as synonymous with "Reformed," a practice he indicates is often committed by "New Calvinists" (Crisp, 2016, p. 28).

the historic Reformed faith, how is Muller's usage of "Lutheranism," "Covenant theology," *et al* any less simplistic and reductionistic?

Even so, Muller's scholarly resistance against any serious usefulness of "Calvinism," "Calvinist," and "TULIP" as abbreviated descriptions of an identifiable theology flowing through and from John Calvin has hardly caught on in scholarly communities. The following definitions seem normative even in Muller's own Reformed tradition:

**Calvinism:** The developed and systematized teachings of John Calvin (1509-64), which spread throughout Europe and internationally from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. It is also called the Reformed tradition. Calvinism embraces both theological beliefs and a way of life (McKim, 1996, p. 36).

**Calvinist:** One who adheres to the theological thought developed by John Calvin (1509-64) and his followers (Ibid).

**TULIP:** An acronym and memory tool for the traditional five points of Calvinism that emerged from the Synod of Dort (1618-19). The theological points are Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, Perseverance of the Saints (Ibid, p. 289).<sup>42</sup>

Nor is this all. Baptist theologian T. Nettles identifies Calvinism as, "A system of theology reflecting the influence of Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger, and the reformers of the Netherlands" (Nettles, 2005, p. xii). However, he goes on to suggest "It is called Calvinism because John Calvin (1509–1564) organized its leading principles," principles Nettles identifies as, "unconditional election, Christ's atoning work accomplished so as to make certain the salvation of the elect, total depravity, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints" (Ibid, pp. xii-xiii).

Another Baptist theologian, M. Erickson, defines Calvinism as, "The thought of John Calvin" (Erickson, 2001, p. 28), and later describes the doctrines of Calvinism under the popular mnemonic device:

**"TULIP:** Mnemonic abbreviation of the traditional five points of the Calvinistic view of salvation: Total depravity, Unconditional predestination, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the saints. The five points stem from the canons adopted by the Synod of Dort" (Ibid, p. 205).

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<sup>42</sup> The cited definitions are from a standard dictionary published by a Reformed publisher.

The breadth of usage of “Calvinism,” “Calvinist,” and “TULIP” as meaningful terms among evangelical scholars remains impressive.<sup>43</sup> Hence, contra Muller, the overwhelming usage of these terms in both Protestant and Catholic academia as viable descriptors of Calvinistic theology cannot be dismissed so easily as Muller appears to do.<sup>44</sup>

## 2.2 Calvinism in Baptist Life

While modern scholarship appears to embrace the notion that Calvinism does have a core theology by which to identify its general presence in post-Reformation Christianity, it remains necessary for purposes of this research to briefly survey the historic Baptist movement to gauge its presence there. Fortunately, an abundance of materials in this area exists.<sup>45</sup> Contrary to Muller’s thesis that the term “Calvinism” remains unhelpful in evaluating historical theology as it pertains to post-Reformation Christianity, Baptists in general have borne little hesitation employing the term as a useful summary of soteriological belief. The well-worn quote by the legendary British Particular Baptist, C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892), illustrates the undeniable significance of Calvinism in historic Baptist circles:

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<sup>43</sup> While dialog continues in scholarly circles concerning precisely what evangelicalism is, for purposes of this research, the evangelical community of which southern Baptists are unquestionably and historically a part may be defined as a segment of historic Christianity that “emphasizes the gospel of forgiveness and regeneration through personal faith in Jesus Christ, and affirming orthodox doctrines” including verbal inspiration of Scripture, salvation by faith alone, and global evangelization (Erickson, 2001, pp. 60-61).

<sup>44</sup> For similar or parallel definitions and usages of “Calvinism,” “Calvinist,” and “TULIP” illustrating the broad range of scholarship in the Christian community using these terms as helpful and useful, see Reid, D. G. ed., 1990. *The Dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press; Soanes, C. & Stevenson, A. eds., 2004. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. eleventh ed. New York: Oxford University Press; Elwell, W. A. ed., 2001. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Second ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic. pp. 453-454; Kurian, G. T. ed., 2001. *Nelson’s New Christian Dictionary: The Authoritative Resource On the Christian World*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers; Cross, F. L. & Livingstone, E. A. eds., 2005. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 270; Rahner, K., ed., 1989. *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*. New York: Crossroad. p. 162; Boice, J. M., 1986. *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive & Readable Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press. pp. 518-519; Grudem, W. A., 2004. *Systematic Theology: In Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House p. 596 [footnote 35]; Boettner, L., 1932. *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company pp. 59-201; Steele, D. N., Thomas, C. C. & Quinn, S. L., 2004. *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented*. Updated and Expanded ed. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing. pp. 1-71; Smith, B. F. & Smith, K. M., 2016. *The Gospel Heritage of Georgia Baptists, 1772-1830*. Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books. p. 12; Reisinger, E. C. & Allen, D. M., 2000. *A Quiet Revolution: A Chronicle of Beginnings of Reformation in The Southern Baptist Convention*. Cape Coral: Founders Press. pp. 10-11; Roberts, R. P., October 1996. The 1677/89 London Confession of Faith: A Soteriological Study. *Baptist History and Heritage*, pp. 57-67. p. 64.

<sup>45</sup> The window of this research is 1800-1900 and is cradled in the American pre and post-Civil war south.

And I have my own private opinion that there is no such a thing as preaching Christ and him crucified, unless you preach what now-a-days is called Calvinism. I have my own ideas, and those I always state boldly. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else (Spurgeon, 1855, p. 100).<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, American Southern Baptist, John A. Broadus (1827-1895) noted:

The people who sneer at what is called Calvinism might as well sneer at Mont Blanc. We are not in the least bound to defend all of Calvin's opinions or actions, but I do not see how any one who really understands the Greek of the Apostle Paul or the Latin of Calvin and Turretin can fail to see that these latter did but interpret and formulate substantially what the former teaches (Robertson, 1901, pp. 396-397).<sup>47</sup>

In 1886, Broadus gave a eulogy for then recently deceased Baptist statesman, A. M. Poindexter, wherein Broadus seems to have incidentally equated Calvinism with the theology of the Apostle Paul while describing Poindexter's sermons:

"[Poindexter] found great delight in the sympathetic comparison of views with one who had independently wrought out that same system of theological truth which we are wont to call Calvinism, but might better call Paulinism" (Broadus, 1886, p. 400).<sup>48</sup>

Or, again, "What we call Calvinism is the doctrine of Paul, developed by Augustine and systematized by Calvin" (Broadus, 1876, p. 4)<sup>49</sup>

In addition, Broadus seems to have felt Calvinism pushed the human brain into thinking more profoundly about theological matters. "The doctrinal views we call Calvinism compel men to think deeply, if they are capable of thinking at all" (Broadus, 1876, p. 179). Of Puritan divines like Richard Baxter (1615-1691), Broadus suggested their "high Calvinism always makes for close

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<sup>46</sup> For examples of Spurgeon's similar descriptions of Calvinism, see Spurgeon, C. H., 1857. A Mighty Savior. In: *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*. London: Passmore & Alabaster; Spurgeon, C. H., 1872. The Marvellous Reservoir. *The Sword and Trowel*. p.208; Spurgeon, C. H., 1874. The Present Position of Calvinism in England. *The Sword and Trowel*, February, p. 31.

<sup>47</sup> For basic information on Broadus' life, influence, and contributions to Baptist life, see Allen, 1958, p. 195. See also "The Life and Work of John Albert Broadus" in George, T. and Dockery, D.S. eds., 2001. *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*. B&H Publishing Group. pp. 90-97; for a more detailed examination of Broadus' contributions to Baptist life, see Barron, J. R., May 1972. *The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptists*, Louisville: (Doctoral Dissertation) Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

<sup>48</sup> Abram Maer Poindexter (1809-1872) served several capacities in the SBC, including assisting the establishment of Southern seminary (Allen, 1958, p. 1093); see also, Cathcart, 1881, pp. 923-924;

<sup>49</sup> Broadus' colleague at Southern seminary was New Testament scholar, A.T. Robertson (1863-1934), who also equates "Paulinism" with "essential Christianity" but equates neither with Calvinism (Robertson, 1909, p. 91).

thinking and careful distinctions” being influenced as they were “by the desire to find everything in Scripture, and to draw out from every passage the whole of its possible contents” (Ibid, p. 205).

Recalling the profound theological influence Reformed theologian, Charles Hodge (1797-1878), had upon James Petigru Boyce (1827-1888), the founder and president of Southern Baptists’ first theological seminary while he was a student at Princeton Theological Seminary, Broadus again exalts the theological system popularly known among 19<sup>th</sup> century American Baptists as Calvinism:

It was a great privilege to be directed and upborne by such a teacher in studying that exalted system of Pauline truth which is technically called Calvinism, which compels an earnest student to profound thinking, and, when pursued with a combination of systematic thought and fervent experience, makes him at home among the most inspiring and ennobling views of God and of the universe he has made (Broadus, 1893, p. 73).

That Boyce, though undeniably Baptist through and through, theologically digested and retained the *strict* soteriological Calvinism of Hodge’s Presbyterian tradition appears to be denied by no one.<sup>50</sup> In summarizing a review of Boyce’s textbook, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* (Boyce, 1899), Broadus not only described in glowing remarks the Calvinistic influence Hodge had upon Boyce, but also revealed his own high estimation of Baptist Calvinism:

Dr. Boyce's work is... thoroughly in accord with the system of theological opinion commonly called Calvinism. This is believed by many of us to be really the teaching of the Apostle Paul, as elaborated by Augustine, and systematized and defended by Calvin. It is a body of truth that compels men to think—in itself a great advantage (Broadus, 1893, p. 310).

Further, Broadus alluded to the profound impact Boyce had upon theological students entering Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to prepare for ministry in Southern Baptist churches. He recalls the words of E. E. Folk, then editor of Tennessee Baptists’ denominational newspaper, *The*

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<sup>50</sup> For influence of Hodge on Boyce, see “A Study of the Influence of Princeton Theology upon the Theology of James Petigru Boyce and His Followers with Special Reference to the Work of Charles Hodge” (Th.D. thesis, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1964). Richards popularized much of his research in Richards, W.W., 1991. *Winds of doctrines: the origin and development of Southern Baptist theology*. Univ Pr of Amer. See also Z. T. Cody, “James Petigru Boyce,” *The Review and Expositor* 24 (April 1927):150; Nettles, 2009, pp. 84-90; Mueller, 1959, p. 47; George, Winter 1985, p. 32.

*Baptist & Reflector*, and former Boyce student, as Folk described his study experience under Boyce:

He was a great teacher. He could get more hard, solid study out of a boy than any teacher whose classes we ever had the privilege of attending, with possibly one or two exceptions. You had to know your Systematic Theology, or you could not recite it to Dr. Boyce. And though the young men were generally rank Arminians when they came to the Seminary, few went through this course under him without being converted to his strong Calvinistic views (Broadus, 1893, p. 265).

Benajah Harvey Carroll (1843-1914) remains an icon in Southern Baptist life.<sup>51</sup> Carroll was prolific author, popular preacher, and founder and first president of Southern Baptists' second oldest theological seminary. Organized in 1905 at Waco, Texas on the campus of Baylor University, the Baylor Theological Seminary eventually became the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1908 with Carroll as both professor and president until his death in 1914. The seminary moved to Fort Worth in 1910 and has since remained there.<sup>52</sup> Carroll's most ambitious writing project was his *Interpretation of the English Bible* in 17 volumes finally completing publication just a year before his death. In Volume 13, Carroll offers, as did Broadus, a similar but altogether brief estimation of Calvinism. "What we call Calvinism is the doctrine of Augustine. He saved the church for 300 years from going astray" (Carroll, 1948, p. 148). Similarly, American Baptist historian and theologian, Henry C. Vedder (1853-1935), concluded "That general body of doctrine which is commonly known in these latter days as Calvinism is only a restatement of Augustinianism, which was itself but a restatement of Paulinism" (MacArthur & Vedder, 1887, p. 400).

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<sup>51</sup> For an early biography and summary of Carroll's contribution to Baptist life, see Cranfill, J.B., 1893. *Sermons and Life Sketch of BH Carroll*. Also consult Allen, 1958, pp. 232-233; McBeth, 1987, pp. 669-671; Dockery, 2008. See James Spivey's excellent chapter (9) in George, T. and Dockery, D.S. eds., 2001. *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*. B&H Publishing Group. Baker deals extensively with Carroll's life and role in establishing Southwestern seminary (Baker, 1983, pp. 53-109). Tom Nettles focuses on Carroll's theology, insisting he held to five point Calvinism, including Limited Atonement, though, according to Nettles, "verbal realities" led Carroll to "protect the mysteries of the atonement, in which he saw universal benefits beyond the closures of our systems and even our present comprehension..." (Nettles, 2006, pp. 174-182).

<sup>52</sup> A dated but still helpful history of Southwestern seminary is Baker, R.A., 1983. *Tell the generations following: a history of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1908-1983*. Broadman Press. See also McBeth, 1998, pp. 143-150; Barnes, 1954, pp. 202-209; and Baker, 1974, pp. 303-304. For an early account of the first 30 years, see Scarborough, L.R., 1939. *A Modern School of the Prophets: A History of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary—A Project of Christ—A Product of Prayer and Faith—Its First Thirty Years—1907-1937*.

Tom Nettles' research remains unsurpassed in sheer volume, demonstrating the presence of Calvinism among 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptists in both northern and southern America. Nettles states his conclusion in his Magnum Opus, *By His Grace and for His Glory: A Historical, Theological, and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life*: "The writer's thesis is that Calvinism, popularly called the doctrines of grace, prevailed in the most influential and enduring arenas of Baptist denominational life until the end of the second decade of the twentieth century" (Nettles, 2006, p. ix).<sup>53</sup> The presence of "the doctrines of grace" among Baptists represent the broad salvific themes Calvin himself taught and summarized in five points. Elsewhere Nettles indicated that in 1839, due largely to the influence of English Particular Baptists and their confessions of faith, Calvinism was practically the universal theology of not only the main leaders of American Baptists but also among the grassroots Baptist church members: the "confessional impact of the 1689 [Philadelphia, Charleston] Confession" was so thorough, that the "theological ubiquity of Calvinism" existed "among the general populace of Baptists" (Nettles, 1995, p. 9).

In the first three chapters of *Grace and Glory*, Nettles traces the presence of the "doctrines of grace" in Baptist life all the way back to early 17<sup>th</sup> century England. Nettles makes it clear, however, that Particular Baptists alone would command his attention throughout *Grace and Glory* by spending just barely over a single page describing the first Baptists found, so far as we know, in the historical record (Holland, circa 1609). Rather Nettles fast forwards almost a full generation to 1638-1644 when the first Particular Baptist congregation found on English soil had produced the first Calvinistic confession. Granted it remains both understandable and predictable that in a work like Nettles' which purports to trace Calvinistic doctrine through Baptist history that the focus would be on Baptist Calvinists and not others. But arguably, given Nettles' stated thesis that Calvinism "prevailed in the most influential and enduring arenas of Baptist denominational life," if one *ignores* the contributions of non-Calvinistic Baptists throughout

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<sup>53</sup> Nettles never offers a definition of Calvinism in *By His Grace and for His Glory: A Historical, Theological, and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life* (hereafter, *Grace and Glory*). Rather, he assumes Calvinism is understood by readers and equates Calvinism with the "doctrines of grace," a term Nettles seems to prefer over either "TULIP" or the "five points of Calvinism." Nettles elsewhere defines Calvinism as theology "reflecting the influence of Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger, and the reformers of the Netherlands," distinctively highlighting the traditional five points (Nettles, 2005, p. xii-xiii).

history as Nettles appears to do, then most certainly it follows that Baptist Calvinism prevailed in the most influential and enduring arenas of Baptist denominational life.

Short biographical sections on Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) and John Bunyan (1628-1688) constitute the bulk of chapter one in *Grace and Glory*, both men of whom Nettles claims taught the traditional “doctrines of grace.” Chapter two rehearses exclusively the life and work of English Particular Baptist theologian, John Gill (1697-1771). Gill clearly embraced the traditional *strict* Calvinistic “doctrines of grace” as Nettles shows. Beginning in a section entitled “Testimonies Against Gill” (Ibid, p. 84), however, Nettles spends an extraordinary amount of ink defending Gill from critics’ allegations that he embraced Hyper-Calvinism.<sup>54</sup> Contra Nettles’ extended defense of Gill, most historians and theologians remain convinced Gill held to Hyper-Calvinism (Daniel, 1983, p. 766).<sup>55</sup> Chapter three in *Grace and Glory* traces the Calvinistic influence of English Baptist theologian, Andrew Fuller (1754-1815), on American Baptist theology. It remains common among historians to cite the influence of Fuller as a definitive shift in Baptist theology especially as it pertains to the extent of Christ’s atoning work and missiology (Newman, 1906, p. 587).<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> While Hyper-Calvinism will be occasionally referenced in this research, especially in conjunction with anti-missionism, little else will be discussed. Suffice it to say, Hyper-Calvinism may be defined as “a radical form of Calvinism that emphasizes the sovereignty of God so completely that it leaves only limited responsibility or choice to human beings” (Kurian, 2001). However, scholars are not monolithic in their understanding of what constitutes Hyper-Calvinism. Curt Daniel reduces his extensive research of Hyper-Calvinism among British Baptists into a few words: “[Hyper-Calvinism] is the rejection of the word ‘offer’ in connection with evangelism for supposedly Calvinistic reasons” (Daniel, 1983, p. 767). P. Toon defines Hyper-Calvinism as “a system of theology, or a system of the doctrines of God, man and grace, which was framed to exalt the honour and glory of God and did so at the expense of minimizing the moral and spiritual responsibility of sinners to God” (Toon, 1967, p. 144). Popular American pastor-theologian, J. MacArthur, defines Hyper-Calvinism as “belief that the gospel invitation is for the elect only. Hyper-Calvinists do not believe the gospel should be preached indiscriminately or that salvation should be offered freely to all. In essence, they oppose the very idea of evangelism” (MacArthur, 1993, p. 230). Norman Geisler offers a helpful chart distinguishing Hyper-Calvinism from other forms of Calvinism (Geisler, 2004, p. 564–565). B. H. Carroll cited eight characteristics of “Hardshells” (i.e. Hyper-Calvinists) in his treatment of the Anti-missions movement among 19<sup>th</sup> century American Baptists (Carroll, 1902, pp. 189-190).

<sup>55</sup> See also, McBeth, H. L., 1987. *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness*. Nashville: Broadman Press. p. 176; Toon, 1967, pp. 93, 96-100; McKim, 2007, p. 464; Elwell, 2001, p. 483; Armitage, 1886, p. 561; Ferguson & Packer, 2000, p. 324; Robison, 1971, pp. 111-125; Geisler, 2004, p. 564; Humphreys, 2000, p. 15; James Leo Garrett, 1990, p. 492; James Leo Garrett, 2009, p. 99; Allen, 2016, pp. 467-473. It should be noted that Allen suggests Nettles may have softened his defense of Gill against Hyper-Calvinism since *Grace and Glory* was first published in 1986 (Ibid, p. 470).

<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, see Richards, 1991, pp. 54-56. Allen concludes since Fuller was “the most important Particular Baptist in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,” his embrace of Universal Atonement remains “seismic in its consequences for Baptist history and theology” (Allen, 2016, p. 497).

In Section Two of *Grace and Glory*, Nettles expresses an extended interpretation of the traditional **TULIP** he finds in Baptist life (Nettles, 2006, pp. 303-385).<sup>57</sup> Chapter headings are four in number: Unconditional Election (Ibid, pp. 305-322); Depravity and Effectual Calling (Ibid, pp. 323-34)<sup>58</sup>; Christ Died for Our Sins According to the Scriptures (Ibid, pp. 335-359); Perseverance of the Saints (Ibid, pp. 360-385). Nettles couches his theological exposition within the historical trajectory of Southern Baptist Calvinism he finds “ubiquitous” among the “general populace of Baptists” all over the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century south (Nettles, 1995, p. 9).

Tom Ascol no less sees Calvinism as the reigning theological “orthodoxy” of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Baptist theology:

Call it what you will—Calvinism, reformed theology, the doctrines of grace—these truths are nothing less than historic Southern Baptist orthodoxy. This is the theology which gave rise to the formation and early development of the great missionary and evangelistic enterprise which we know as the Southern Baptist Convention. This is what our forefathers believed to be the true teaching of Scripture. These are the doctrines on which they built their churches and which undergirded their ministries (Ascol, 1995).<sup>59</sup>

Ascol remains clear about the theology he believes constitutes “Southern Baptist orthodoxy.” As he explains, at the very beginning of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, there existed “widespread doctrinal agreement among them,” theological agreement that was “built around

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<sup>57</sup> It should be noted that Nettles makes no actual use of **TULIP** in his exposition of Calvinism in this section (see above). Albeit preferring not to employ **TULIP**, Nettles nonetheless argues strongly for the content of Calvinism’s five points represented by the traditional **TULIP** and, for him, appears synonymous with the “doctrines of grace.”

<sup>58</sup> What Nettles dubs “Effectual Calling” and coupled with “Depravity” represents the “I” and “T” in **TULIP** respectively (many other Calvinists prefer “Effectual Call” to “Irresistible Grace”).

<sup>59</sup> Thomas K. Ascol is a Southern Baptist pastor, author, and Executive Director of Founders Ministries ([wwwFOUNDERS.org](http://wwwFOUNDERS.org)). He is currently the senior pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida, where he has served for 32 years as of May 2018. In 1982, reportedly seven men met in Euless, Texas and, according to Ascol, after an all-day prayer meeting, the Founders movement was born (Hinson, 1994). Founders Ministries presently is the largest network of Baptist Calvinists in the Southern Baptist Convention and has as its stated goal to encourage the “recovery of the gospel and the biblical reformation of local churches” (Editors, 2017). And for them, the doctrinal content of the gospel is nothing less than *strict* Calvinism (i.e. **TULIP**). Ascol has remained Executive Director since inception. Founders has had many well-known Baptist Calvinists as supporters through the years including Al Mohler, Daniel Akin, Russell Moore, Tom Nettles, Roger Nicole, Michael A.G. Haykin, Gregg Allison, Mark Coppenger, Nathan Finn, Thomas Schreiner, Gregory Wills, Donald Whitney, Mark Dever, and Greg Welty among many, many other high-profile Southern Baptists. For a brief history of Founders Ministries’ role in Resurgent Calvinism in the SBC, see Garrett, 1983, pp. 58-60. For the “official” history of Founders, see Reisinger, E. C. & Allen, D. M., 2000. *A Quiet Revolution: A Chronicle of Beginnings of Reformation in The Southern Baptist Convention*. Cape Coral: Founders Press. pp. 22-42.

the great salvation doctrines” commonly known as the “doctrines of grace,” and, according to Ascol, historically nicknamed “Calvinism.” Like Broadus, Ascol seems to equate Calvinism with the New Testament teaching of the Apostle Paul: ‘Some call this position a belief in “sovereign grace”—that is, that salvation is sovereignly and graciously given by God to sinners. Others call it “Calvinism” ... It might with equal justice be called Augustinianism, or even Paulism’ (Ascol, 1990).

Ascol appears at times to have little dependency upon using the **TULIP** in his exposition of Calvinism or the “doctrines of grace.”<sup>60</sup> Yet he goes on to define those “doctrines of grace” largely by the usual theological content found in the historical **TULIP**; namely, all men are “totally depraved”(T); hence, God chooses “individual sinners” to be saved “solely out of His grace and love” and “not based on any merit or justification found in the individual”(U); since God’s elect were “given to Jesus Christ” in eternity, Christ offered “Himself as a substitute in His people’s place” and “actually accomplished their redemption”(L); God applies to His elect the “redemption which His Son secured on the cross” by “drawing and effectually calling these by the gospel”(I); finally, those who are “chosen, redeemed and reborn” persevere and are “eternally secure” (P) (Ascol, 1995).

Consequently, both Ascol and Nettles unhesitatingly employ the term “Calvinism” as theologically descriptive of Southern Baptists up until the 1920s (Magazine, 2012). Furthermore, they appear to equate Calvinism with the so-called “doctrines of grace”; and, in turn, equate the “doctrines of grace” with the content of the traditional five points of Calvinism represented by **TULIP** (but as observed above, at times without using **TULIP**), the memory device commonly and broadly used in the theological community to summarize *strict* Calvinistic theology.

Ernest C. Reisinger (1919-2004) was a key figure in the resurging interest in Calvinism in Southern Baptist life beginning in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Garrett, 1983, p. 58).<sup>61</sup> As one of the original seven men whom Ascol referenced as meeting in Euless, Texas in 1982, the meeting out of which the Founders movement was birthed, Reisinger labored to lead Southern Baptists back

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<sup>60</sup> At other times, however, Ascol does employ **TULIP** to explain Dortian Calvinism (Ascol, 2013, pp. 20-22); for “Dortian Calvinism” as yet another term equitable to the “doctrines of grace” and the “five points of Calvinism” see Ascol, 2007, pp. 7-8.

<sup>61</sup> For biographical information on Reisinger, see Thomas, G., 2002. *Ernest C. Reisinger: A Biography*. Carlisle: Banner of Truth.

to their allegedly long-forgotten Calvinistic roots. Like Nettles and Ascol, Reisinger equated Paulinism with Calvinism and, in turn, Calvinism with Biblical Christianity:

John Calvin may well have been the man who first formulated that doctrinal principles into a formal system, but as I have said, the doctrinal principles did not originate with John Calvin or Augustine but with the apostle Paul... We can safely say Pelagianism is the ancestor of Arminianism, so Paulinism and Augustinianism are the ancestors of Calvinism (Reisinger, 2000, p. 8).

Calvinistic Christianity is nothing more and nothing less than biblical Christianity (Reisinger & Allen, 2000, p. 4).

[Calvinism] is a stable faith, firmly entrenched within the historic orthodox tradition, flowing from Jesus and Paul through Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Owen, Bunyan, Edwards and Whitefield (Reisinger & Allen, 2000, p. 6).

We call it Calvinism. It might with equal justice be called Augustinianism. We might, with the same cogency of reasoning, go even further back into the pages of ecclesiastical history and designate it Paulinism (Reisinger, 1995)

Reisinger also equates the “doctrines of grace” with traditional five-point Calvinism. ‘Since the early 1970s, our denomination [i.e., the Southern Baptist Convention] has seen an undeniable resurgence of interest in the theological system known as Calvinism and its attendant principles that we call the "doctrines of grace" ... The doctrines of grace [are] commonly called the "Five Points of Calvinism,"'; Reisinger concludes the “doctrines of grace” are “foundational to a God-centered theology” and thus are the “heart of historical, orthodox Christianity” (Reisinger & Allen, 2000, pp. 10-11).

Other lesser known Baptists also assumed Calvinism was to be equated with New Testament truth. For example, John William Porter (1863-1937), longtime editor for Kentucky Baptists’ denominational newspaper, *The Western Recorder*, seemed to agree with Broadus *et al* concerning Calvinism’s lofty ideals:

While it is true that John Calvin demonstrated and magnified the doctrine of God's sovereignty with unsurpassed perspicuity and power, yet the truth of election was not originated by, or dependent upon, him, or any other man. Baptists were preaching the elective purposes of God through riches of grace for centuries before Calvin was born. If any human name should be chosen to designate this doctrine, it would be more

appropriate to refer to it as "Paulism" rather than "Calvinism" (Porter, 1917, pp. 169-170).<sup>62</sup>

## 2.3 Defining Calvinism for Purposes of Research

### 2.3.1 Different Kinds of Calvinism

A major problem defining Calvinism in Baptist life stems from the various descriptions of Calvinism that are used by different authorities. In addition to qualifying Calvinism as *moderate*, historians and theologians also routinely refer to *strong* Calvinism, *extreme* Calvinism, *strict* Calvinism, *ultra-Calvinism*, *High* Calvinism, *low* Calvinism, and *mild* Calvinism.<sup>63</sup>

So far as Calvinism of the *moderate* sort, both modern and earlier Baptist church historians speak of *moderate* Calvinism. Mark Noll describes 19<sup>th</sup> century Texas Baptist, B. H. Carroll, as defending "culturally conservative, moderate Calvinism" (Noll, 2001). Thomas Armitage (1824-1890) associates "moderate Calvinism" with Andrew Fuller who "carefully avoid[ed] all extremes, especially that known as Hyper-Calvinism" (Armitage, 1886, p. 260), as does John T. Christian (1854-1925) (Christian, 1921, pp. 12, 282). Baptist historian, Henry Vedder, identifies Spurgeon as a "moderate Calvinist" because he "preached an atonement for the whole world" (Vedder, 1907).<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> For biographical information on Porter, see Allen, 1958, p. 1098. To be noted is Porter's apparent Baptist Landmarkism indicated by his presumption that Baptists existed and preceded the Reformation "centuries before Calvin was born." Landmarkism may be defined as an ecclesiological belief centered on the primacy of the local church and consequently led to the view that Baptists were the *only* church (Allen, 1958, p. 757).

<sup>63</sup> For sampling usage of each category: for *strong* Calvinism, see Baker, 1974, p. 143; Benedict, 1860, p. 25; for *extreme* Calvinism, see Mullins, 1908, p. 150; McBeth, 1987, pp. 223-224; for *strict* Calvinism, see Fortson, Spring 2004; Cook, 2009, pp. 148, 313; for *ultra-Calvinism*, see Reisinger & Allen, 2002, p. 189; MacArthur, 1991; for *High* Calvinism, see Goadby, 1871, p. 125; Finn, 2009, p. 31; for *low* Calvinism, see Daniel, 1983, p. 31; McGonigle, 1994, p. 31; for *mild* Calvinism, see Allen, 1958, p. 510; Carter, 1977, p. 81. Note also, that Calvinists at times characterized those who held to general atonement as "rank Arminians" (Vedder, 1907, p. 249); further see, Broadus, 1893, p. 265. Just what constituted the claim of "arminianism" among some Georgia Baptists by *strict* Calvinists like Jesse Mercer, Baptists who eventually made up the SBC, seems vague or perhaps conflicting (Smith & Smith, 2016, pp. 134-137). Even Mercer appeared to suggest that while general atonement was no reason to exclude from fellowship (i.e. denying **L** in **TULIP**), promoting final apostasy (i.e., denying the **P** in **TULIP**) most certainly would be (Mallary, 1844, pp. 201-202). Answer to this inquiry would assist in determining with confidence the theological criteria of exclusion employed by those confessing *stricter* Calvinism.

<sup>64</sup> While it may be true Spurgeon was a "moderate Calvinist" as Vedder claims, he mistakenly indicated Spurgeon held to general atonement and for that reason concluded Spurgeon embraced *moderate* Calvinism. But Spurgeon clearly embraced Limited Atonement as he often declared.

Theologians also identify *moderate* versions of Calvinism. E. H. Johnson (1841-1906) contrasted Hyper-Calvinism with *moderate* Calvinism's understanding of God's decrees in his systematic theology (Johnson & Weston, 1895, pp. 82-83). Lewis Chafer contrasted the "High, or Ultra, Calvinist" who has no place to "encourage the preaching of the gospel to those who, they contend, were reprobated from the beginning" from the "Moderate Calvinist" (Chafer, 1948, p. 8).<sup>65</sup> Norman Geisler proposes a *moderate* Calvinist understanding to explain eternal security (Geisler, 2002, pp. 63-69). Theologian, Jack Fish, proposes a whopping 18 characteristics that distinguishes *moderate* Calvinism that has been taught in the Emmaus Journal for a full generation (Fish, Winter 2006, pp. 4-5).

The most often cited rationale for judging Calvinism as *moderate* appears to be whether the atonement is viewed as limited or universal (Lightner, 1991, p. 123). D. Allen indicates that *moderate* Calvinism's understanding of the atonement is like Arminianism in that it views Christ's sufferings to be for *all* people but distinguished from High and Hyper-Calvinism's insistence that Christ suffered *only* for the elect (Allen, 2016, p. xxxviii). It seems to be normative among those who consider themselves less than five-point Calvinists to reject, at minimum, Limited Atonement. In other words, Limited Atonement is the weakest link within five-point Calvinism and further seems to some be more indicative of the views of systematic theologians than biblical expositors who focus on the "natural terminology" of the Bible rather the "strained interpretations" often offered by theologians who are "required to defend a theory" (Chafer, 1993, p. 184).

R. C. Sproul writes, 'One of the most controversial points of Reformed theology concerns the L in TULIP. L stands for Limited Atonement. It has been such a problem of doctrine that there are multitudes of Christians who say they embrace most of the doctrines of Calvinism but get off the boat here. They refer to themselves as "four-point" Calvinists. The point they cannot abide is limited atonement' (Sproul, 1986, p. 204). Yet, according to Sproul, for Arminians and Dispensationalists, along with other evangelicals, to deny Limited Atonement indicates their theological allegiance to semi-Pelagianism (Sproul, 2000, p. 165).

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<sup>65</sup> For Chafer, Moderate Calvinists could be either five-point or four-point Calvinists.

### 2.3.2 All or Nothing: Is Calvinism Still Calvinism Minus a Point?

Must, then, Calvinism be viewed as all or nothing when it comes to the five points or “the doctrines of grace”? In other words, could it be rightly concluded that if at least one of the “doctrines of grace” were denied, that Calvinism would not be present? A number of scholars answer yes to both questions.

Sproul appears to think holding Calvinism means embracing the entire **TULIP**. It’s an either/or theological proposition.

“My point is that there is confusion about what the doctrine of limited atonement actually teaches. However, I think that if a person really understands the other four points and is thinking at all clearly, he must believe in limited atonement” (Sproul, 2007, p. 142).

For Sproul, “a four-point Calvinist is an Arminian... When I have talked to people who call themselves four-point Calvinists and have had the opportunity to discuss it with them, I have discovered that they were no-point Calvinists” (pp. 140-141). Joel Beeke agrees. For Beeke, rejecting the **L** in **TULIP** basically reduces to “popularized Arminian theology” (Beeke, 2008, p. 74).

Additionally, E. Palmer concludes “The Five Points of Calvinism all depend on each other. If T is true, the U is true, and so are L, I, and P. They all hang or fall together” (Palmer, 1996, p. 60).<sup>66</sup> Steele and Thomas approvingly quote J. I. Packer insisting all five points of Calvinism must be accepted or rejected together: “For the five points, though separately stated, are really inseparable. They hang together; you cannot reject one without rejecting them all, at least in the sense in which the Synod meant them” (Steele, et al., 2004, p. 23).

According to Steven Cowan, the traditional “five points of Calvinism” are “all logically dependent upon one another,” indicating a “closed system” of biblical truths representing a “consistent picture of Christian theology” (Cowan, 1990, p. 190). Consequently, so interlocked are the points represented by **TULIP**, Cowan concludes “When one rejects or distorts any point of the Calvinist

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<sup>66</sup> Palmer reiterates in the same work how the five points of Calvinism logically depend upon one another: “All the Five Points of Calvinism hang or fall together. The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints naturally follows from the biblical fact of unconditional election. If the doctrine of election is false, then this doctrine is false, too; but if the doctrine of election is true, then this doctrine necessarily follows” (Ibid, p. 69).

system he ceases to be a Calvinist in any meaningful sense of the word. He is then dealing with an entirely distinct theological formulation.”<sup>67</sup> Loraine Boettner similarly concurs: “Prove any one of them [i.e., the “five points of Calvinism”] true and all the others will follow as logical and necessary parts of the system. Prove any one of them false and the whole system must be abandoned. They are found to dovetail perfectly one into the other” (Boettner, 1932, p. 59).

### 2.3.3 Shades of Calvinism

As persuasive as many scholars appear who argue that because Calvinism’s intricate system of logical connections necessarily collapses if one of the “petals” of **TULIP** is plucked from its epistemological cluster, the **TULIP** alone, at least in the sense of adding up the points, remains inadequate as the *only* measure by which to judge whether an individual, a church, or an association of churches confesses what theologians and historians refer to as Calvinism. Contrary to Cowan’s seemingly unreasonable conclusion that rejecting or distorting *any* point of the Calvinist system forfeits for the Calvinist “any meaningful sense of the word,” Benjamin True correctly concluded in his 1887 critical review of Henry Sheldon’s classic work on the history of Christian doctrine:

[Prof. Sheldon] is particularly careful to discriminate between the comparatively moderate views of Arminius and the more extreme positions of Episcopius and others, who closely approached the objectionable phases of Pelagianism. In making this distinction Prof. Sheldon is just and wise. But he is not equally careful to give a correspondingly considerate and favorable representation of the views of *moderate* Calvinists... the fact remains that there *have been* and *are* different shades of what is generally called Calvinistic doctrine or Calvinism. It may not be easy to represent correctly these diverse phases of opinion. But a history of Christian doctrine is precisely the book in which we expect this kind of delicate and difficult work (MacArthur & Vedder, 1887, pp. 269-270; italics original).

Similarly but contrarily to Muller’s *rejection* of **TULIP** (see above), those who *insist* on strict adherence to the traditional five points expressed in the **TULIP** before judging an individual, a confession, a church, or a convention of churches as embracing Calvinism, at least in some significant way, appear to go against the ebb and flow of the scholarly community both inside

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<sup>67</sup> See also, Gibson & Gibson, 2013, p. 43; Packer, 1990, p. 130; Badger, 2003, p. 37.

and outside of the Reformed faith tradition itself. As True insisted over a century ago, the fact remains that there *have been* and *are* different shades of what is generally called Calvinistic doctrine or Calvinism, and, therefore, to deny those shades of differences insisted upon by the Calvinistic community itself can only breed either theological confusion or theological-historical reductionism or perhaps both. As Henry Cole put it, "There are, in the religious world, almost as many different shades, kinds and degrees, of Calvinism as there are Calvinists" (Cole, 1856, p. 7).

#### 2.3.4 Exposition of the TULIP according to *Strict* Baptist Calvinism

For purposes of this research, *strict* Baptist Calvinism may be identified as a system of Baptist soteriology having five doctrines routinely represented by both Calvinist and non-Calvinist Baptists as depicted in the traditional acronym **TULIP**.

- **Total Depravity**
- **Unconditional Election**
- **Limited Atonement**
- **Irresistible Grace**
- **Perseverance of the Saints**

Below is an exposition of each of the five doctrines of *strict* Baptist Calvinism.<sup>68</sup>

##### 2.3.4.1 *Total Depravity*

*Strict* Calvinists often begin a discussion of Total Depravity by stating what Total Depravity is not (Erickson, 2001, p. 202).<sup>69</sup> By Total Depravity, Calvinists do not insist human beings are as bad as they can be. Rather they routinely state that Total Depravity means that every single part of a human being's existence is contaminated with sin. His or her mind is darkened by sin; the will is imprisoned by sin; and the sinner is fully guilty of sin from the moment of conception. Every human being is as guilty of Adam's sin as if it were literally him or her succumbing to temptation in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). This guilty state is often described as "imputed guilt" (Barrett, 2011, pp. 89-90). For *strict* Calvinists, apart from Jesus Christ, humans are utterly dead in

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<sup>68</sup> This section is intended to be *descriptive* in nature, and therefore little, if any, commentary will be offered. Especially avoided are theological evaluations of Calvinism since those matters are irrelevant to success of the present thesis.

<sup>69</sup> See also, Reisinger & Allen, 2002, p. 81; Ascol & Finn, 2011, pp. 113-114; Barrett, 2011, pp. 91-93; Sproul, 1986, p. 93; Boyce, 1899, p. 244; Shedd, 2003, p. 602; Strong, 1907, p. 637; Boettner, 1932, p. 61.

trespasses and sin.<sup>70</sup> A key biblical verse often used by *strict* Calvinists to demonstrate this sinful state into which human beings are born as a result of Adam’s sin is Ephesians 2:1: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (KJV).<sup>71</sup>

The significance of the notion for *strict* Calvinists that sinners are “dead in sin” should not be underestimated. Many *strict* Calvinists claim that if Total Depravity is accepted—the **T** in **TULIP**--then every other point of Calvinism unmistakably follows (Sproul, 1986, p. 105). Further, it is because of Total Depravity that salvation is based upon Unconditional Election. After all, *strict* Calvinists ask, how can dead people be expected to meet any conditions for salvation whatsoever? Dead men don’t believe. Dead corpses don’t choose. Dead people don’t do anything. So, it is with those who are dead in sin according to *strict* Calvinism. Dead means dead. Dead corpses *cannot* repent, *cannot* believe, and consequently *cannot* follow Jesus. Sinful humans are, in the words of Barrett, “dead, lifeless, rotting away at the bottom of the ocean. He does not need a life preserver but a resurrection! He is like Lazarus, dead in the tomb. He stinketh” (Barrett & Nettles, 2012, p. 121). Consequently, for repentance and faith to be actively and genuinely produced, two things must first take place.

First, the dead must become undead. A spiritual resurrection is required. Just as Jesus called Lazarus to come out of the physical tomb (John 11:43), so God must call the lost sinner from his or her spiritual tomb before faith can be exercised. *Strict* Baptist Calvinists call this regeneration (or, alternatively, effectual calling), the same thing Jesus told Nicodemus– “unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). One popular Calvinist teacher and bestselling author has repeatedly said that the essence of Calvinistic theology can be summed up in three words: *regeneration precedes repentance* (Sproul, 1986, p. 72). Again, “Regeneration is not the fruit or result of faith. Rather, regeneration precedes faith as the necessary condition for faith” (Sproul, 1992).<sup>72</sup> Sproul’s meaning seems clear: one does not repent from sin and believe

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<sup>70</sup> At this juncture, it should not necessarily be inferred that all those who embrace *lesser than strict* Calvinism reject either imputed guilt or what could judiciously be judged as a form of Total Depravity. The present concern is accurately defining *strict* Calvinism.

<sup>71</sup> King James Version. Unless likewise noted, all Scripture references throughout this research are from the New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

<sup>72</sup> See also Sproul, 2000, pp. 179-180; 195; Sproul, 1997, p. 193.

on Christ in order to be born again; rather one is born again in order to repent from sin and believe on Christ. Repentance and faith *follow* the new birth experience.<sup>73</sup> Arthur Pink concurs. Approvingly quoting W. T. Shedd, “The new life is not imparted because man perceives the truth, but he perceives the truth because the new life is imparted. A man is not regenerated because he has first believed in Christ, but he believes in Christ because he has been regenerated” (Pink, 1978, p. 55).

J. Boyce reasons thusly: “Regeneration (as in infants) may exist without faith and repentance, but the latter cannot exist without the former. Therefore, regeneration precedes” (Boyce, 2010, p. 381). W. Grudem concludes “Regeneration is the gift of God’s grace. It is the immediate, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit wrought in us... The fruit of regeneration is faith. Regeneration precedes faith” (Grudem, 2005, p. 1514).<sup>74</sup>

Second, not only must one be born again before one can repent and believe, *strict* Calvinists maintain the act of faith is a directly bestowed gift from God Himself. Calvinists interpret Ephesians 2:8–9 to show faith to be both a *special* gift and an *exclusive* gift: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” For them, the only ones who receive the gift of faith are those whom God regenerates. Shedd states “The Calvinist maintains that faith is wholly from God,

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<sup>73</sup> It should be noted that *strict* Calvinists often suggest that regeneration precedes faith only *logically* neither *chronologically* nor *temporally* (Sproul, 1997, p. 193; 195). A. A. Hodge concludes, “In the order of nature, regeneration precedes justification, although as to time they are always necessarily cotemporaneous” (Hodge, 1863, p. 404). For an extended defense of the belief that regeneration *logically* precedes faith, see Snoberger, M. A., 2002. The Logical Priority of Regeneration to Saving Faith in a Theological Ordo Salutis. *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*, 7(7), pp. 49-93; see also, Barrett, M., 2010. Is Irresistible Grace Unbiblical? A Response to Steve Lemke’s Arminian Objections. *Founders Journal*, Fall (82), pp. 4-13 for more defense. For extended theological and biblical arguments against the belief that regeneration precedes faith in either sense above, see Anderson, D. R., 2000. Regeneration: A Crux Interpretum. *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, 13(2), pp. 43-65. See also Anderson’s “Repentance is for all Men” (Anderson, Spring 1998). For more critiques, see Nichols, T. R., Fall 2005. A Free Grace Critique of Irresistible Grace. *CTS Journal*, Volume 11, pp. 52-63 and George Meisinger’s “The Issue of One’s Ability to Believe: Total Depravity/Inability” (Meisinger, Spring 2005); and Abasciano, 2012, pp. 49-93. David Allen offers primarily an exegetical response to *strict* Baptist Calvinists’ claim that regeneration precedes faith in Allen, D. L., Fall 2014. Does Regeneration Precede Faith? *Journal for Baptist Theology & Ministry*, 11(2), pp. 34-54.

<sup>74</sup> See also, Matthew Barrett’s “The Scriptural Affirmation of Monergism” in Barrett, M. & Nettles, T. J., 2012. *Whomever He Will: A Surprising Display of Sovereign Mercy*. Cape Coral: Founders Press. pp.120-187; Malone, 2000, p. 31; Shedd, 2003, p. 785; Nettles, 2006, pp. 324-328. It should also be noted that some Calvinists reject the notion that regeneration precedes faith. For example, see Erickson, 1998, p. 945 and Demarest, 1997, p. 265. Robert Culver offers a model where regeneration, faith, repentance, et al occur simultaneously (Culver, 2005, p. 653).

being one of the effects of regeneration” (Shedd, 2003, p. 744). Popular Baptist Calvinist, Arthur Pink (1886-1952), suggests that unbelievers should pray to God asking Him to bestow upon them the gift of faith. “When the Calvinist says that faith is the gift of God and that no sinner ever does or can believe until God gives him that faith, I heartily say Amen” (Pink, 2005). L. Berkhof insists “Faith is first of all a gift of God, and as such a part of the treasures that are hidden in Christ” (Berkhof, 1939, p. 449). As a gift, “faith is not first of all an activity of man, but a potentiality wrought by God in the heart of the sinner. The seed of faith is implanted in man in regeneration” (503).<sup>75</sup>

Hence, because faith is a gift of God, created and produced by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, this position gives glory to God and God alone for salvation. If even the faintest hint of human ability on the sinner’s part is admitted, then, for *strict* Calvinists, human ability ultimately helped God save a person from sin. Barrett concludes:

"For some, such a debate may appear insignificant. To the contrary, God's glory hangs in the balance. If God's working in calling and regenerating the sinner is conditioned upon man's will, then God cannot receive all of the glory in salvation. But if God works alone, effectually to call and regenerate dead sinners, then He does receive all of the glory in our salvation"120-121.<sup>76</sup>

Consequently, if the sinner did anything at all to assist in deliverance from sin, including responding in faith to the gospel presentation, then it follows the sinner could legitimately take, however small, some of the credit for salvation thus robbing God of *all* glory. “Salvation is from the LORD” (Jonah 2:9). Thus, for *strict* Calvinism, it remains gratuitous at best to suggest “Salvation is of the LORD” but only as spiritually dead sinners contribute to Him their meritorious assistance.

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<sup>75</sup> For an extended critique of the *strict* Calvinist notion that faith is a gift of God for the elect alone, see Aldrich, R. L., 1965. The Gift of God. *BIBLIOTHECA SACRA*, Volume July, pp. 248-253; see also, López, 2007, pp. 260-276. In defense of faith as a gift, see Countess, 1969, 117-120.

<sup>76</sup> For Barrett, if one rejects monergism, by implication, one rejects, or at minimum, distorts a major theological plank in *strict* Calvinism—Total Depravity.

#### 2.3.4.2 Unconditional Election

Since sinful human beings are dead in trespasses and sin, possessing no capability whatsoever of hearing God, understanding the gospel, or turning from sin and believing on Christ short of a) an actual spiritual resurrection from the dead (i.e. being born again); and, b) God bestowing upon His chosen ones the gift of faith so they can believe, it remains impossible to avoid the conclusion that Unconditional Election is true. Much theologically rides upon predestination, election, and foreordination when speaking of salvation from the *strict* Calvinist perspective. Election is the foundation of salvation. Thus, Smith and Smith quote approvingly of Georgia Baptist, Silas Mercer (1745-1796), “We believe it to be the duty of every gospel minister, to insist upon this soul comforting, God-honoring doctrine of Predestination, as the very foundation of our faith” (Smith & Smith, 2016, p. 4).<sup>77</sup>

For *strict* Calvinists, the only ones who are ultimately saved from their sin are God’s elect whom He chose out of His own good pleasure before the foundation of the world, those whom the Father gave the Son in an eternal covenant before the world was. Baptist Calvinist, Fred Malone, writes, “The Old Testament covenants of promise and the New Covenant fulfillment are all administrations of that one historical Covenant of Grace (or way of salvation), which is the historical outworking of the eternal Covenant of Redemption” (Malone, 2007, p. 69). The eternal Covenant of Redemption, for Malone, is the divine covenant between the Persons of the Trinity before creation.

Nettles indicates Jesus Christ is the one in whom the elect “by the eternal covenant (Hebrews 13:20–21), [has] redemption through his blood and in whose character we know the Father and through whose work we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Reisinger & Allen, 2002, p. 13). As *strict* Baptist Calvinists affirm, God’s choosing of the elect had nothing whatever to do with whether the person would have faith which, for them, is fundamentally an Arminian notion. That is, predestination based upon foreknowledge. To the contrary, the person will have faith only because God determined him or her in eternity to have faith.

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<sup>77</sup> See also, Pink’s, *The Doctrines of Election and Justification* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005); Beeke, 2011, p. 36; Reisinger, 2000, p. 18.

*Strict* Calvinistic confessions routinely suggest that God determined the specific number of those He intended to save and, by necessary implication, those He intended to condemn before He created the world. *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith* (1742, PCF) indicates that “angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished” (Chapter 3, para 4).<sup>78</sup>

Consequently, the only people effectually called, regenerated, resurrected to new life, and to whom saving faith is given are the ones God chose before creation as His elect and, in an eternal covenant, gave to the Son as the only beneficent recipients of His redemptive death on the cross. So, according to *strict* Calvinists, election cannot be based upon anything God sees the person doing in the future, including believing. If God based His election upon the faith He sees someone doing in the future, He would be basing His election upon something spiritually good someone does in the future, faith being a spiritually good thing, according to *strict* Calvinists.

Biblical passages such as Ephesians 1 and Romans 9–11 are keystone texts *strict* Calvinists employ in arguing their case for Unconditional Election. Romans 9:11–13 reads “for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, “THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.” Just as it is written, “JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.” Commenting upon this passage, A. Davis concludes:

Just as election for salvation was not based on anything God foresaw in the elect, so also reprobation was not based on anything bad God foresaw in the reprobate...Jacob’s good works did not get him elected, neither did Esau’s bad works get him rejected (Barrett & Nettles, 2012, p. 55).

Hence, God damns people to hell not based upon their *actual* sinfulness in life but solely upon His *antecedent* selection in eternity. That is, Unconditional Election.

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<sup>78</sup> *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith* (1741) remains the standard confession reflecting *strict* Baptist Calvinism in the United States. A copy of articles relevant to the research is included in *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

For *strict* Calvinists, it seems Unconditional Election is nothing other than the biblical teaching on God's divine sovereignty. God is God, and He can do with His creation as He sees fit. He owes sinful human beings nothing. Were God of a mind to, He could refuse to save anybody and still be God. Or, had He chosen to, He could have saved everybody and still be God. He could even have chosen to save those whom He did not choose and let those perish whom He chose to save, and still be God since He chooses solely out of the good pleasure of His will.<sup>79</sup> Ultimately, nothing good resides in any soul to solicit God's love toward him or her. God chooses whom He chooses and refuses whom He refuses.

#### 2.3.4.3 Limited Atonement

Undoubtedly, the most controversial theological petal in the **TULIP** is Limited Atonement. Many Calvinists openly reject the term, preferring "definite atonement" or "particular redemption." Despite their protests, Limited Atonement still prevails among them. Limited Atonement is the view that Jesus died *only* for the elect. Not that the *value* of Jesus' death is in question. Calvinists readily agree that Christ's death *could have saved everyone had it been God's design to do so*. Thus, His death is *sufficient* for all but only *designed* for the elect, and therefore, only *applicable* to the elect.

Consequently, the question is not about the *sufficiency* of Christ's atonement or about whether His death's benefits are *applied* only to those who believe. Limited Atonement advocates and general redemptionists agree. Rather the question concerns whether God *intended* Christ's death to be a sacrifice for all people's sins. Basically, was the atonement *designed to reconcile the entire world or redeem the elect only*? Those who hold to Limited Atonement will hardly concede Christ's death was designed to save the world. If God cannot fail, but God designed the atonement to save the world, then it follows God failed in His design of the atonement since all are not saved.

Hence, Christ died for His sheep; He did not die for goats. A familiar verse often used by *strict* Calvinists is Matthew 1:21: "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save

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<sup>79</sup> At this juncture, critics often raise the issue of the arbitrariness of God, and *strict* Calvinists repeatedly defend God against His alleged critics (Sproul, 1986, p. 156). See also, Pink, 1945, p. 489; Bogue, 2001, p. 9; Mullins, 2000, p. 339.

His people from their sins.” Another passage is John 10:11–15: “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep... I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.” Hence, *strict* Calvinists maintain it is only God’s people Jesus came to save—i.e. *His elect*.<sup>80</sup>

As noted earlier, Limited Atonement remains contentious among Calvinists themselves and has often brought the charge of theological Arminianism. However, some question whether even Augustine held to Limited Atonement (Allen & Lemke, 2010). What is more, many scholars today wonder whether John Calvin held to particular redemption (Allen & Lemke, 2010, pp. 191-212).<sup>81</sup> For many, Limited Atonement remains the least attractive point of the traditional “five points of Calvinism.” Nonetheless, *strict* Calvinism insists upon and vigorously defends Limited Atonement regardless of the dissent.

#### 2.3.4.4 Irresistible Grace

When *strict* Calvinists speak of irresistible grace, they are not speaking of bringing people kicking and screaming into heaven against their will. To the contrary, they are speaking about the unilateral desire and will of God to guarantee salvation to those whom He sovereignly chose in eternity. Irresistible grace, therefore, depicts God’s power to do what He eternally decreed. In a book-length debate with D. Hunt, Calvinist theologian, James White, explains:

The doctrine of “irresistible grace” is easily understood. It is simply the belief that when God chooses to move in the lives of His elect and bring them from spiritual death to spiritual life, no power in heaven or on earth can stop Him from so doing...Just as Christ had the power and authority to raise Lazarus to life without obtaining his “permission” to do so, He is able to raise His elect to spiritual life with just as certain a result (Hunt & White, 2004, p. 197).

North Carolina’s Kehukee Baptist Association expressed belief in the doctrine of irresistible grace in Article 7 of its abstract of faith, an abstract that was confessionally dependent upon and theologically loyal to the PCF:

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<sup>80</sup> See Boyce, 2010, p. 317; Reisinger & Allen, 2000, pp. 74-75; Nettles, 2010, p. 336; Grudem, 2004, pp. 594-603; Barrett & Nettles, 2012, pp. 77-119.

<sup>81</sup> See also, Allen, 2016, pp. 48-96; Thomas, 2007, pp. 27-35; Daniel, 1983, p. 735; Kennedy, 2002.

We believe that in God's own appointed time and way (by means which he has ordained) the elect shall be called, justified, pardoned, and sanctified; and that it is impossible they can utterly refuse the call; but shall be made willing, by divine grace, to receive the offers of mercy.<sup>82</sup>

According to Kehukee Baptists, refusing the call to come to Christ remained an impossible accomplishment since God had decreed His will by His sovereign power before the world existed.<sup>83</sup>

For *strict* Calvinists then, Irresistible Grace concerns the power of an omnipotent God to accomplish His eternal purpose. “The Calvinist insists that salvation is based on the free will of God, and since God is omnipotent, His grace cannot be resisted” (Spencer, 1979, 2001, p. 55). Of Irresistible Grace, three *strict* Calvinists conclude: “The grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused; it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ” (Steele, et al., 1963, 2004, p. 49).

So, while *strict* Calvinists deny Irresistible Grace brings people kicking and screaming into heaven, they do seem to hold that when God’s saving grace comes to sinners, nothing can thwart His saving grace from working upon the ones He chose from eternity to bring to salvation precisely as He determinedly foreordained. God’s omnipotent power accomplishes His will in the heart of the elect as He accomplished His will in forming matter: ‘Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light’ (Ge 1:3). Just as Lazarus gave no permission to Jesus to raise him from the physical grave, so the elect gives no permission to God to raise them from the spiritual grave.

Davis bears repeating: “Just as election for salvation was not based on anything God foresaw in the elect, so also reprobation was not based on anything bad God foresaw in the reprobate...Jacob’s good works did not get him elected, neither did Esau’s bad works get him rejected” (Barrett & Nettles, 2012, p. 55). Thus, God’s omnipotent power causes the elect to come to Christ similarly to the way gravity causes what goes up to come back down.

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<sup>82</sup> See all articles in Kehukee’s abstract of faith in *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

<sup>83</sup> See more on the Kehukee association in chapter three.

#### 2.3.4.5 Perseverance of the Saints

*Strict* Calvinists contend (as do many Christians) that once God saves a person from his or her sin, that person is saved for eternity. The term “perseverance” emphasizes that all God’s children will ultimately persevere throughout life. Their faith in Christ will never cease. *Strict* Calvinists, at times, seem to appeal to the logic of perseverance over and above the biblical promise of perseverance.<sup>84</sup> Palmer explains it this way: “All the Five points of Calvinism hang or fall together. The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints naturally follows from the Biblical fact of unconditional election. If the doctrine of election is false, then this doctrine is false, too; but if the doctrine of election is true, then this doctrine necessarily follows” (Palmer, 1980, p. 83).

*Strict* Calvinists interpret passages like Romans 8:35–39 to biblically demonstrate the Perseverance of the Saints: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” In addition to these words of the Apostle Paul, Jesus said: “My sheep hear my voice... And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand....no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:27–29).<sup>85</sup>

#### 2.4 Detecting Calvinism in Baptist Sources

In identifying the presence of Calvinism and Calvinism’s strength in Baptist sources, we will examine the evidences cited using both an *extensive* and an *intensive* lens. Because the so-called “five points of Calvinism” (i.e. **TULIP**) has been (and still is) so broadly accepted by the Christian community in defining or reflecting soteriological Calvinism since the Synod of Dort (1618-

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<sup>84</sup> For a discussion of the way many *strict* Baptist Calvinists differ in their approach to the perseverance of the saints, see Keathley, K., 2010. *Salvation and Sovereignty: A Molinist Approach*. Nashville: B & H Academic. pp.178-190.

<sup>85</sup> Since the denial of the Perseverance of the Saints fails to reveal any widespread influence among southern Baptists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this research will spend little time, if any, considering it as a criterion in detecting the presence of *strict* Calvinism. To be noted in conjunction with the charge of “Arminianism” by 19<sup>th</sup> century *strict* Calvinists toward many Baptists who often rejected the strong Calvinistic interpretations of election, predestination, and foreordination, evidences will show that at least in some cases, “Arminian” tenets such as “falling from grace” (i.e. denying the **P** in **TULIP**) were not held by those who were nonetheless charged with “heterodoxy” or “heresy.” See, for example, Georgia’s Chattahoochee United Baptist Association in chapter three.

1619)—accepted not only from those outside the Reformed theological tradition but also by those within the Reformed tradition itself—it seems injudicious to forfeit this highly used theological lens in detecting the presence of Calvinism among Baptists, especially when Baptists themselves use this mnemonic device unsparingly. On the other hand, since many shades of Calvinism have rightly been observed by both Calvinism’s friend and foe alike, it remains critical to note, when possible, the theological nuances of Calvinism’s presence in Baptist life. Hence, both the “five points of Calvinism” (*extensive lens*) and the intensity of each of the five points held (*intensive lens*), will be factored in as Calvinism’s presence and influence is gauged from the evidences examined among Baptists of the south during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Several implications follow the use of an *extensive/intensive lens* for judging the cited evidences and concluding whether Calvinism waned among Baptists during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. First, the presence of **TULIP** in its entirety as traditionally defined above will almost always indicate *strict* Calvinism.<sup>86</sup> Second, any denial or aberration of either of the five points of Calvinism as traditionally defined above moves *strict* Calvinism to *moderate* Calvinism. As is often noted by *strict* Calvinists themselves (see above), the loss of *any* point in the **TULIP** effectively makes Calvinism into non-Calvinism. While the interpretative approach here recognizes this conclusion as both premature and ultimately confusing and unhelpful, nonetheless, the loss of a single point in the so-called **TULIP** merits judging the presence of Calvinism a decidedly *modified* Calvinism.

As observed earlier, Limited Atonement remains the doctrine most commonly dropped from **TULIP** by otherwise self-identified Calvinists (i.e. “four-point Calvinists”).<sup>87</sup> Third, any denial or aberration of two or more of the “five points of Calvinism” moves *moderate* Calvinism to *mild*

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<sup>86</sup> We can think of no exceptions to the proposition that when **TULIP** is present in the evidences examined, so is *strict* Calvinism. However, it remains at least theoretically conceivable that the *intensive* lens could, in some way, temper the *extensive* lens so that while what is present in the documents represents the **TULIP**, the *intensity* of each of the doctrines is so dim, the **TULIP** may be maintained but tentatively.

<sup>87</sup> When dealing with confessions and abstracts of faith, however, the **U**—Unconditional Election—seems most often to be that doctrine of confessional Calvinistic belief that experiences a linguistic transformation. See the extensive confessional evidences from Baptist associations examined below beginning in chapter three.

Calvinism, or, to be blunt but not unfair or injudicious to the criteria defined above for judging the presence of Calvinism, hardly Calvinism at all.<sup>88</sup>

While the three implications above follow from and may be used in conjunction with the *extensive/intensive lens* for detecting the presence and strength of Calvinism in Baptist sermons and writings of individual Baptist authors who often explained their meanings or revealed the contexts in which the evidence may be judged, these types of evidences are offered sparingly in this research. Rather, overwhelmingly most of the primary sources examined and evaluated in this research are associational confessions. Hence, further criteria in detecting the presence and strength of the Calvinism, if any, reflected in confessional documents is demanded in addition to a theological template of **TULIP** as discussed above. The primary tool chosen to detect the presence and strength of Calvinism in the confessions and abstracts of faith assembled from Baptist associations across the southern states is to judge those confessions in light of standard confessions that indisputably reflect *strict* Baptist Calvinism.

## 2.5 *Strict* Baptist Calvinism and The Philadelphia Confession of Faith

### 2.5.1 Introduction

Virtually without exception, authorities unanimously accept *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith* (1742, PCF) as the standard theological expression for *strict* Baptist Calvinism. America's first Baptist association, the Philadelphia Baptist Association, organized in 1707, adopted a slightly amended version of the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession in 1742 (Allen, 1958, p. 308). The Charleston association followed Philadelphia Baptists and adopted the PCF in 1767 (McGlothlin, 1911, p. 298). The Second London Baptist Confession follows closely the Reformed Westminster Confession of Faith and may be said to virtually duplicate it on soteriology while dissenting from it on ecclesiology. And no one disputes the High Calvinism of the Westminster confession (Barrett & Nettles, 2012, p. 359). Hence, no one doubts the High Calvinism of Philadelphia's confession. Of the PCF, E. Y. Mullins described it:

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<sup>88</sup> *Modified* Calvinism may be either *moderate* or *mild* Calvinism; but both theological shades digress away from the *strict* Calvinism confessionally expressed in the Philadelphia Confession of Faith and the abstracts of faith grounded upon it.

This Confession is strongly Calvinistic, and it is an exact reproduction of the Assembly Confession, London, 1689, with the addition of two articles, one on Singing Psalms and the other on Laying on of Hands, both of which are commended (Mullins, 1912, p. 84).

One would be hard-pressed to find a single dissenting witness concerning the *strictly* Calvinistic character of the PCF.<sup>89</sup>

Hence, for most Baptist Calvinists, the PCF remains the standard Baptist confession in America that clearly displays the most complete statement of *strict* Calvinistic soteriology. But since the PCF is so lengthy, it hardly remains practical to duplicate here.<sup>90</sup>

Below, then, is a summary of Calvinism’s “doctrines of grace” (i.e. **TULIP**) as expressed in several chapters of Philadelphia’s confession. The summary provided will serve throughout the remainder of this research as a tool by which to detect confessionally *strict* Calvinism expressed in articles of faith found in Baptist confessions across the south.<sup>91</sup>

#### 2.5.2 Total Depravity and the PCF

The Calvinistic doctrine of Total Depravity concerns the nature and sinful condition of humankind after Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3) and constitutes the occasion which makes God’s redemptive plan for sinful humankind necessary. In Chapter VI, “OF THE FALL OF MAN, OF SIN, AND THE PUNISHMENT THEREOF, the PCF opens with an affirmation that God made Adam and Eve “upright, and perfect” (PCF, 1818, p. 25, Chap VI para 1).<sup>92</sup> Their “free will” possessed “natural liberty and power of acting upon choice,” a choice that was “neither forced, nor by any necessity of nature determined to do good or evil” (p. 32, Chap IX para 1). In their state of innocence, Adam and Eve possessed “freedom, and power, to will, and to do, that which

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<sup>89</sup> A copy of the relevant articles of Philadelphia’s confession is included in *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

<sup>90</sup> The PCF has 34 chapters not including a lengthy introduction “To the Reader.” The confession comprises over 15,000 words in 74 pages in the 1818 edition, the edition used for the following summary (Confession of Faith, 1818). Comparatively, the popular *New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* (1833, NHC) has slightly over 1,500 words covering 18 articles of faith (without proof-texts). Thus, while the PCF averages 440 words per faith article, the NHC averages 83 words per faith article.

<sup>91</sup> For an excellent exposition of the Philadelphia confession from a *strict* Calvinist, see Waldron, S. E. (2013). A modern exposition of the 1689 Baptist confession of faith. Though Waldron’s work is based upon London’s 2<sup>nd</sup> confession, it remains relevant and helpful for purposes here.

<sup>92</sup> Since the PCF does not follow the **TULIP** acrostic, chapters and paragraphs will be noted where applicable, along with page numbers from the 1818 edition cited. Also, some of the expressions in the articles naturally overlap into two or more petals of the **TULIP**.

was good, and well-pleasing to God” (pp. 32-33, Chap IX para 2). Because of their innate freedom, however, Adam and Eve remained “mutable, so that [they] might fall from it” (Ibid).

Nor did God leave them uninformed of His clear direction and exact expectations concerning His will in the Garden, as well as stating fair warning about the consequences of disobedience. Nevertheless, “Satan using the subtlety [sic] of the serpent to seduce Eve, then by her seducing Adam,” they both “willfully transgress[ed] the law of their creation” (pp. 25-26, Chap VI para 1).

Consequently, “by [their] fall into a state of sin,” Adam and Eve “wholly lost all ability of will” to accomplish “any spiritual good accompanying salvation,” and, being “dead in sin” and “altogether averse from that good,” were no longer “able, by [their] own strength,” to either convert or even “prepare [themselves] thereunto” (p. 33, Chap IX para 3).

Even more, not only did Adam and Eve fall from their original righteousness, but “we in them” fell as well, and through the sinful fall of both them and us, death came to all, “all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled, in all the faculties, and parts of soul and body” (p. 26, Chap VI para 2). Furthermore, since God appointed our first parents as the root of corruption while “standing in the room and stead of all mankind,” “the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity” (Ibid, para 3). Thus, we do not become sinners when we sin; rather we sin because we are already sinners by nature, possessing sinful guilt imputed to us from the Adamic fall.

From the Adamic corruption “proceed all actual transgressions” because all humankind since the fall has been “disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil” (Ibid, para 4). Indeed, the sinful corruption of our nature is so deeply depraved, that “during this life, [it] doth remain in those that are regenerated” (Ibid, para 5).

The distance we are separated from God because of our totally depraved condition remains “so great,” that we “could never have attained the reward of life but by some voluntary condescension on God's part” (p. 27, Chap VII para 1). Being the loving and gracious Creator He is, God had eternally planned a “covenant of grace” in which He would freely offer hopeless sinners “life and salvation by Jesus Christ” through faith in Him, promising “his holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe” (Ibid, para 2). The special group of depraved and

hopelessly lost sinners in the covenant of grace was made up of “all those that are ordained unto eternal life” (Ibid).

God Himself, then, “converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace” freeing him from his “natural bondage under sin,” and, “by his grace alone, enables him freely to will, and do that which is spiritually good” (p. 33, Chap IX para 4). The spiritual power bestowed upon the elect alone enabling them “to believe to the saving of their souls” requires “the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts” (p. 39, Chap XIV para 1). Because all are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins due to their total depravity, sinful creatures remain “wholly passive therein” until they are “quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit” and “thereby enabled... to embrace the grace offered,” an enablement demanding, because of their sinfully depraved condition, “no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead” (p. 34, Chap X para 2).

### 2.5.3 Unconditional Election and the PCF

Unconditional election begins with God’s eternal decree. “God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity... all things whatsoever comes to pass...” (p. 20, Chap 3 para 1). In this decree, God’s glory is on display as He predestines some men and angels to life while decreeing others to face the just condemnation of their sin. “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice” (Ibid, para 3). Thus, both His mercy and justice find their fullest expression in His wise and sovereign decree, an eternal decree resulting in the fixed number of elect men and angels “so certain, and definite” and “unchangeably designed,” that the number “cannot be either increased or diminished” (pp. 20-21, para 4).

Nor should it be supposed that God decreed to elect certain men and angels because of His mere foreknowledge of their future actions or belief. “Although God knoweth whatsoever may, or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed any thing, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions” (p. 20, para 2). Rather the elect who are predestined to life according to the eternal covenant of grace “God... hath chosen in Christ...out of his mere free grace and love; without any other thing in the creature

as a condition or cause moving him thereunto” (p. 21, para 5). Again, eternal redemption “effectually applies” to the elect “without any condition foreseen in them, to procure it” (pp. 31-32, Chap VIII, para 8). Finally, God’s effectual call to the elect is given to passive creatures: “This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, co-working with his special grace; the creature being wholly passive therein...” (p. 34, Chap X para 2).

Just as God eternally decreed to unconditionally elect a certain and exact number of men and angels to life and redemption, while similarly decreeing to leave others to their just condemnation, He also graciously and unconditionally “foreordained all the means thereunto, wherefore they who are elected... are redeemed by Christ,” and ultimately “kept by his power through faith unto salvation” (Ibid, para 6). For the elect, God is “pleased in his appointed and accepted time effectually to call by his Word and Spirit... to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ” (pp. 33-34, Chap X para 1). Because of sinners’ totally depraved condition, His effectual calling includes “enlightening their minds”; “giving unto them an heart of flesh”; “renewing their wills”; “determining them”; and “effectually drawing them,” all the while the elect “being wholly passive therein” (Ibid, p. 34). While it takes “no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead” to awaken spiritually dead sinners (Ibid, para 2), “they come most freely, being made willing by his grace” (Ibid, para 1).

In addition, since “God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fulness of time die for their sins...” (though “they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them”) (p. 36, Chap XI para 4), and foreordaining all the means to bring the elect to eternal life in Christ, He established faith as the “alone instrument of justification” (p. 36, Chap XI para 2). Saving faith, therefore, is sovereignly given exclusively to the elect and “hath immediate relation to Christ, accepting, receiving, and resting upon him alone... by virtue of the covenant of grace” (p. 40, Chap XIV para 2). “Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth [sic]... by pardoning their sins, and by accounting... [them]...as righteous... by imputing Christ's active... and passive obedience... for their whole and sole righteousness; they receiving... his righteousness by faith; which they have not of themselves: it is the gift of God” (pp. 35-36, Chap XI para 1).“ “The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled

to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts...,” a divine work unavailable to those not eternally decreed to be within the covenant of grace (p. 39, Chap XIV para 1).

Therefore, the non-elect outside the eternal covenant of grace cannot be saved from their sin: “neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only” (p. 21, Chap III para 6). The Gospel reveals the covenant of grace that is “founded in that eternal covenant transaction” between Father and Son about the “redemption of the elect,” and it is through this covenant of grace “all of the posterity of fallen Adam, that ever were saved, did obtain life and blessed immortality...” (pp. 27-28, Chap VII para 3). Hence, “Others not elected... not being effectually drawn by the Father... neither will, nor can truly come to Christ; and therefore cannot be saved...” (p. 35, Chap X para 4).

#### 2.5.4 Limited Atonement and the PCF

Since the “covenant of works” was “broken by sin,” it pleased the gracious and merciful Creator God to “give forth the promise of Christ... for the conversion and salvation of sinners.” (p. 51, Chap XX para 1). The promised Christ would be the “means of calling the elect, and begetting in them faith and repentance” thus fulfilling the eternal covenant of grace (Ibid). Thus, by His life, death, and resurrection, “The Lord Jesus... hath fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him” (p. 30, Chap VIII para 5). And, “Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ, till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof was communicated to the elect in all ages successively...” (p. 31, Ibid).

Through the redemptive work of Christ, He “did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified... undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them” and made “full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf”; that is, on behalf of the elect: “yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead... that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners”; that is, the justification of the elect (p. 36, Chap XI para 3). “By pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons, as righteous... for Christ's sake alone” God graciously imputes “Christ's

active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in his death, for their whole and sole righteousness; they receiving, and resting on him, and his righteousness by faith; which they have not of themselves: it is the gift of God” (pp. 35-36, Chap XI para 1).

Hence, the eternal design of Christ’s atonement was to save from sin all those, and only those, whom the Father gave to the Son in the covenant of grace. “It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus... according to the covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and man... head and Saviour of his church... unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified” (p. 28, Chap VIII para 1). Furthermore, according to His eternal covenant, God “doth certainly and effectually apply, and communicate the same; making intercession for them; uniting them... revealing unto them... persuading them...governing their hearts... and overcoming all their enemies by his Almighty power and wisdom” (Chap VIII para 8). “Neither are any other redeemed by Christ... but the elect only” (p. 21, Chap III para 6).

#### 2.5.5 Irresistible Grace and the PCF

Since sinful humankind remains so totally depraved, spiritually dead in trespasses and sin, in complete bondage to their natural sinful nature so that no spiritual good remains a possibility to them, an eternal covenant of grace took place between the Father and Son concerning an elect people whom He would unconditionally choose based solely upon His mercy and grace. “Those whom God had predestinated unto life, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time effectually to call by his Word and Spirit... to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds... giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills... determining them... effectually drawing them... yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace” (pp. 33-34, Chap X para 1).

Since fallen humankind were spiritually dead in their totally depraved state, the “effectual call is of... grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, co- working with his special grace; the creature being wholly passive therein... until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call... by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead” (p. 34, para 2). “Although the

gospel be the only outward means of revealing Christ... yet that men, who are dead in trespasses, may be born again, quickened or regenerated, there is moreover necessary, an effectual insuperable work of the Holy Spirit, upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life; without which no other means will effect their conversion unto God” (p. 52, Chap XX para 4).

#### 2.5.6 Perseverance of the Saints and the PCF

Just as God’s eternal choice of His people depended upon nothing good they could do or believe since they were totally depraved and dead in trespasses and sin, so “This perseverance of the saints, depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election... upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with him... the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace...” (p. 45, Chap XVII para 2). Indicative of God’s gracious gift of faith to the elect by which they are justified before God and have peace with Him, “God vouchsafed in and for the sake of his only Son, Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption; by which they are taken into the number... receive the Spirit of adoption... are enabled to cry Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened... yet never cast off, but sealed, to the day of redemption...” (pp. 37-38, Chap XII para 1).

As an eternal benefit of the covenant of grace between the Father and Son, “Those whom God hath accepted in the Beloved, effectually called... sanctified... given the precious faith of his elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved...” (p. 45, Chap XVII para 1).

That elect saints persevere does not imply they will be sanctified perfectly in this life. “This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part...” (p. 38, Chap XIII para 2). When genuine conversion of the elect takes place, they are enabled “freely to will, and do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruptions, he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil” (p.33, Chap IX para 4). In the “state of glory only” will the elect person’s will be “made perfectly and immutably free to good alone” (Ibid, para 5).

Furthermore, the sins to which the elect saints are subject are at times grievous and wicked. The elect may “fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein; whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves” (pp. 45-46, Chap XVII para 3). Even so, God, through His eternal covenant of grace, accounts for the continued sins of His elect saints. “Such of the elect as are converted at riper years... and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, God, in their effectual calling, giveth them repentance unto life... God hath in the covenant of grace, mercifully provided that believers so sinning and falling, be renewed through repentance unto salvation” (pp. 40-41, Chap XV para 1-2).<sup>93</sup>

## 2.6 *Strict* Baptist Calvinism in Abstracts of Faith Reflecting the Philadelphia Confession and Alternative Confessional Traditions

Due to the massive size of the Philadelphia confession, few associations included the full confession in its published minutes of the annual sessions.<sup>94</sup> Some associations, like Tennessee's Holston association, chose to simply name the confession in its constitution as its organizing document. “We adopt as our Confession the same which was adopted at Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) in the year of our Lord—1742—” (Holston Association, 1786). The more common practice seems to have been to compose an abstract gleaned from lengthy confessions (like the PCF), the goal of which was to distill its theological and ecclesial propositions down to a limited number of concise statements that captured the essence of meaning without losing its unique theological distinctions.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> The purpose of this exposition of the **TULIP** as expressed in the PCF was to offer a *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrines of grace. *Mild* Calvinism, *moderate* Calvinism, or even non-Calvinism usually has no denial of the doctrines of grace *per se*, but only the doctrines of grace as interpreted through the lens of *strict* Calvinism. Thus, for example, while belief in election is fully accepted, unconditional election is problematic for many who do not embrace *strict* Calvinism. Similar qualifications could be mentioned for each of the so-called “5 Points of Calvinism.” As the Baptist confessions presented in the research below show, most of the confessional contention over the doctrines of grace stemmed from the **U**, **L**, and **I** of the **TULIP**.

<sup>94</sup> Philadelphia's full confession exceeded 15,000 words and, with prooftexts, produced a book-size manuscript.

<sup>95</sup> As will be observed in the chapters following, innumerable Baptist associations across the south adopted shorter abstracts of faith, sometimes copying word-for-word the full abstracts of faith composed by others. At other times, associations picked certain articles word-for-word and changed other articles and/or simply dropped the articles from use entirely. Still other associations composed original abstracts of faith.

T. Nettles describes the use of abstracts of faith in commenting upon Tuscaloosa Baptists: "...the shorter confessions used by many Baptist associations in the South were distilled versions of the Philadelphia Confession, that is also the Charleston Confession" (Nettles, 2005, p. 270). Nettles is correct concerning many associations and the use of shorter abstracts of faith that were confessionally dependent upon and theologically loyal to the Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>96</sup>

Similarly, North Carolina Baptist historian, G. Paschal, explains the need for shorter abstracts of faith since:

it was recognized that the Philadelphia Confession, most of it taken from the Westminster Confession, and a product of the learned Presbyterian divines of England, was too long and confusing a document to be understood by many of the members of Baptist churches (Paschal, 1930, p. 155).

Hence, the call for shorter, more manageable confessions became both a necessity and a trend.

As early as 1791, Baptist statistician, John Asplund, published an apparently popular abstract of faith in his register of Baptist churches he purported as faithfully "agreeable to" the PCF. All articles in Asplund's abstract are listed below including his introductory paragraph describing its perceived loyalties to the PCF:

*An abstract of principles held by the Baptists in general, agreeable to the confession of faith adopted by upwards of one hundred congregations in England, and published in Philadelphia, 1742; which is a standard for the Baptists.*

1. WE believe in one only true and living God; and that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
2. We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election.
4. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
5. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will ability.
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Christ.

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<sup>96</sup> As will be argued later, while the PCF was perhaps the interpretative lens many Baptists in the south employed as the theological backdrop for their "distilled" abstracts of faith, significant qualifications exist in making this claim, qualifications the overlooking of which skews the historical record. More below.

7. We believe that God's elect shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
8. We believe that the saints shall persevere in grace, and never fall finally away.
9. We believe that baptism and the Lord's supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the subjects of these ordinances—And we believe that the true mode of baptism is by immersion.
10. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment.
11. We believe the punishment of the wicked will be everlasting, and the joys of the righteous will be eternal.
12. We believe that no ministers have a right to the administration of the ordinances, only such are regularly called, and come under imposition of hands by the presbytery, &c. &c (Asplund, 1791, pp. 53-54; Italics original).<sup>97</sup>

Few would contest most of the articles as generally reflecting both Baptist belief as well as many of the main confessional contributions of the PCF. However, only a glance at Asplund's abstract of faith is required to note that the majority of the 12 articles reflect little, if any, on the uniquely *strict* Calvinism found within the Philadelphia confession and discussed above in chapter two. Triune Monotheism (Article 1); Scriptural Authority (Article 2); Sinful Human Depravity (Articles 4 and 5)<sup>98</sup>; Christ's Imputed Righteous (Article 6); Believers' Baptism by Immersion Only and the Lord's Supper (Article 9); Perseverance of the Saints (Article 8)<sup>99</sup>; Eschatology (Articles 10 and 11); and Regular Order of Ministry (Article 12) are united theological themes duplicated repeatedly in Baptist abstracts throughout the south with hardly any linguistic variation at all.<sup>100</sup> Associational confessions and abstracts of faith examined in this research rarely deviated from an all but

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<sup>97</sup> Included also in Asplund's register is a sample Constitution for organizing a Baptist association, as well as sample Rules of Decorum for sessions and annual meetings (Ibid, pp. 54-55). Undoubtedly, these documents were widely employed as working models by Baptist churches desiring to organize local associations. J. Logan describes the adaptation of the 3 model documents—Constitution, Rules of Decorum, and Abstract of Faith—found in Asplund's register by North Carolina's Broad River association (organized in 1800) as the "System of Broad River Baptist Association" (Logan, 1887, p. 13) . According to Paschal, North Carolina's Yadkin association used a similar system of documents (Paschal, 1930, p. 216). More concerning the "system plan" for associations below.

<sup>98</sup> Note, however, the abstract articles affirming "Original Sin" (Article 4) and man's incapacity to "recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will ability" (Article 5) hardly reflect the Total Depravity found in the PCF and taught in *strict* Calvinism (see above). At times, articles on human depravity in associational confessions make it rather clear the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Total Depravity is avoided.

<sup>99</sup> Given the confessions examined for this research, perseverance of the saints was never a significant issue for Baptists in the south. Even associations charged with embracing Arminianism confessed explicit affirmation for perseverance of the saints (see the discussion on Georgia's Chattahoochee United Baptist Association in chapter three).

<sup>100</sup> The evidence for this assertion is forthcoming. However, in both *Appendix A* and *Appendix B* included at the end of this research, confessional evidence substantiates this assertion.

universal belief in each of these articles. If this is correct, then it follows that almost all American Baptist confessions and abstracts composed and adopted after 1742 *in some sense* reflected Philadelphia's confession. Why, then, did Baptists experience so much theological conflict over confessional content?

Two articles in Asplund's abstract deal with election and applied redemption. Article 3 explicitly affirms the "doctrine of eternal particular election," a confessional phrase that few, if any, have questioned depicts Philadelphia's *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election, and its subsidiary doctrine, particular redemption. Article 7 concerns applied redemption—that is, the plan of salvation as it individually unfolds in the believer's life; yet, it nonetheless displays a stated focus upon the "elect." And while a focus on the "elect" alone does not necessarily indicate, by itself, the presence of *strict* Calvinism,<sup>101</sup> coupled with Article 3 insisting on the doctrine of "eternal particular election," the two articles together become a powerful confessional motif indicating the presence of *strict* Calvinism. As the evidence unfolds in this research, patterns begin to appear concerning confessional differences between Baptists on both the doctrine of election and the particularity of the atonement.

Paschal helpfully demonstrates the development of at least two confessional traditions in North Carolina concerning the shorter "abstracts of faith" embraced by Baptists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the roots of which apparently began in the Yadkin and Broad River associations (Paschal, 1930, pp. 153-157; 213-216). The Yadkin association was officially organized in 1790 and embraced a brief abstract of faith that represented the Philadelphia confession. The abstract is presumed almost identical to Asplund's abstract cited above. Yadkin's abstract included, for example, both Article 3, "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election" and Article 7 "We believe that God's elect shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Ibid, p. 156).<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *Mild* Calvinists and even non-Calvinists usually have no reservations concerning the doctrine of election. Rather, it remains Unconditional Election that becomes the theological rub.

<sup>102</sup> As will be evident when abstracts of faith from various associations are examined later, these two articles show up in numerous associational abstracts both inside and outside North Carolina, sometimes together and sometimes only one appears in the abstract. Moreover, at times, these two articles are strengthened by additional language. For example, North Carolina's Kehukee association reworded Article 7 on applied redemption, making it undeniably loyal to the PCF: "We believe that in God's own appointed time and way (by means which he has ordained) the elect shall be called, justified, pardoned, and sanctified; and that it is impossible they can utterly refuse the call; but shall

A decade after the Yadkin association organized, the Broad River association was born in 1800 (Ibid, p. 208). Broad River Baptists, however, did not embrace Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism, and while they desired to adopt a brief abstract of faith in their "system," they would only accept the abstract if they could remove the theologically repugnant phrases, and adopt a more confessionally acceptable article. Paschal explains:

The Broad River was not a distinctive Separate Baptist association, but it did not accept the Articles of Faith of the Regular Baptists without modification. It rejected the article reading "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election..." (Ibid, p. 216).

Below is Broad River's abstract of faith adopted in 1800.

1. We believe in one only true and living God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three in one.
2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness.
5. We believe in the doctrine of Election through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the merits of Jesus Christ.
7. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and not finally fall away.
8. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects, and conscientiously do believe the true mode is immersion.
9. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and general judgment.
10. We believe that the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.
11. We believe that no minister has a right to the administration of the ordinances, only such as has been called of God, as was Aaron, and regularly baptized and approved of by the Church, and come under the imposition of hands by the Presbytery.
12. We believe that none but believers have a right to the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Logan, 1887, p. 17).

Easily noticeable about Broad River's abstract is the massive overlap between the articles in its abstract and articles in Yadkin's abstract, presumably an abstract confessionally dependent upon

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be made willing, by divine grace, to receive the offers of mercy." See *Appendix A* at the end of this research for Kehukee's entire abstract of faith.

and theologically loyal to the PCF, including the *strict* Calvinism in the PCF. The most significant difference is Broad River's Article 5 on election proposed and adopted in 1800, an article that can be found duplicated in numerous Baptist associations across the 19<sup>th</sup> century south: "We believe in the doctrine of Election through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (Ibid). Rather than confess Philadelphia's *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election, Broad River Baptists coupled together the work of the Holy Spirit with human belief as the means through which God elected His people. Or, perhaps Broad River Baptists were simply shifting the article on the doctrine of election to a Scriptural statement rather than a theological proposition.<sup>103</sup> Whatever the case, Broad River Baptists seemed to definitively defang any confessional dependence upon or theological loyalty to *strict* Calvinism's Unconditional Election found in the PCF.

Noteworthy also is Paschal's failure to note that Broad River Baptists dropped Article 7 found in Yadkin's abstract as well: "We believe that God's elect shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit." This is highly significant since it seems to remove completely any linguistic connections to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election.<sup>104</sup>

Consequently, given Paschal's confessional historiography, he appears to imply a dual confessional heritage among Baptists of the south, beginning in North Carolina, pertaining to the adoption of shorter abstracts of faith. One heritage confessionally intended to reflect the PCF and the *strict* Calvinism found within its contents. The article which seems to always suggest the presence of *strict* Calvinism is the article affirming belief in eternal particular election (or variant forms of this statement). As the confessional evidence from Baptist associations unfolds, this article will show up frequently in associational abstracts of faith across the south.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:13 "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

<sup>104</sup> Some associations kept Article 7 but disposed of Article 3 which seems to indicate a *partial* acceptance of the PCF on election. Still other associations failed to confess an article on election at all (more later as the occasion arises)

<sup>105</sup> For variations of stating Unconditional elections as "eternal particular election" see the Georgia Association and Kehukee Association's abstract in *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

A second heritage reflects a rejection of the unconditional election found in the PCF following the precedent set by Broad River Baptists: “We believe in the doctrine of Election through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” Variants of this article are also found in associational abstracts across the 19<sup>th</sup> century south as the evidence will reveal, and, like Broad River, represents a rejection of Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism.<sup>106</sup>

In this study, the PCF will exist as the standard confessional model of *strict* Calvinism in American Baptist life during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>107</sup> What is more, both Asplund’s abstract of faith that clearly depicted the Philadelphia’s reflection of *strict* Calvinism as well as the Broad River association’s abstract depicting a rejection of Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism will serve as models by which to judge the presence and intensity of Calvinism in associational confessions of faith. The former will be referred to as the Philadelphia confessional tradition and the latter the Broad River confessional tradition.

Finally, as will be argued in chapter four, The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith (1833) will exist, alongside both the Philadelphia confessional tradition and Broad River confessional tradition as a standalone tradition in its own right—the New Hampshire confessional tradition. These three confessional traditions make up most of the Baptist associations and their articles of faith examined in this study.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Another potential confessional heritage reflecting the adoption of Baptist associational abstracts which Paschal failed to note concerns the Terms of General Union adopted by Regular and Separate Baptists in Kentucky in 1801, terms of union that specifically set obligations to adhere to the PCF aside. In effect, the terms of union took the PCF off the table as the confessional standard for union between Baptist churches and associations. A copy of Kentucky’s Terms of General Union is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>107</sup>Some *strict* Baptist Calvinists prefer either the 1689 Second London Confession, the 1644 London Confession, or the Charleston Confession (1767). However, since all these Baptist confessions are so near identical for purposes of this study, only the Philadelphia confession will be cited.

<sup>108</sup> As indicated in chapter one, over 400 associations in 12 southern states were examined for articles of faith in this study. Hence, some patterns emerge which fit neither the Philadelphia, Broad River, nor New Hampshire confessional tradition. For example, no less than 35 associations in eight of the 12 states yielded Baptist confessions that possessed no article on the doctrine of election at all. Hence, these associations, while confessionally closer to Broad River than perhaps either Philadelphia or New Hampshire, deservedly belong in neither confessional tradition mentioned above. Also, some associations appear to follow a literary “freestyle” approach to writing articles for their confessions. More on these “unique” confessions as the evidence unfolds.

## Chapter Three: Baptist Beginnings in America and Confessionalism in the Early Nineteenth Century

### 3.1 Introduction

Now that a definition of *strict* Calvinism has been discussed in chapter two, along with examples of not only what a *strictly* Calvinistic confession looks like (PCF and Asplund's abstract), but also how an association worded its article on election so as to avoid the doctrine of Unconditional Election expressed in the PCF (Broad River association), the stage is set to discuss some contextual factors affecting the Baptist movement in early America.

The historical record shows that while *strict* Calvinism played a major role—perhaps a *domineering* role—in the theological makeup of American Baptist soteriology beginning at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it does little justice to the immense diversity of Baptist independence to ignore the obvious differences the evidences indicate were present between Baptists who held *strict* Calvinism on one hand and Baptists who embraced a significantly *modified* Calvinism (i.e. *mild* Calvinism or *non-Calvinism*) on the other.<sup>109</sup> As the evidence in this study unfolds, a confessional shift appears on the horizon in Baptist subculture as far back as the early 1800s that predictably would press the reset button so far as *strict* Calvinism ruling the soteriological beliefs of the majority of Baptists was concerned.

While few, if any, question whether *strict* Calvinism had its theological claws embedded deeply within American Baptist life in 1800, *strict* Calvinism was far from the universally accepted salvific scheme many assume existed among Baptists until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and some indicating well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ascol & Finn, 2011, p. 136). Rather Baptists wrangled over Calvinism at the very beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and even before. Much of the conflict about Calvinism that took place was occasioned by the rise of Separate Baptists in New England who later migrated south into Virginia, the Carolinas, and Kentucky.<sup>110</sup> Indeed in many ways, Separate Baptists represented well the Baptist movement from its inception into Colonial America, a movement not monolithically minded. As W. W. Sweet notes concerning Providence Baptist

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<sup>109</sup> See chapter two for more on *strict* Calvinism as well as *moderate*, *mild*, and *modified* Calvinism.

<sup>110</sup> See chapter four for more on the rise of Separate Baptists.

Church, presumably the first Baptist church organized on American soil, “Some of the leading members held Arminian views, others were strict Calvinists” (Sweet, 1942, pp. 128-129).<sup>111</sup>

### 3.2 Baptists in America entering the 19<sup>th</sup> century

According to some estimates, Baptists entered the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a mere hundred thousand or less. By the century’s end, however, Baptists had saturated both the south and western frontier by the thousands, even millions. “In America Baptist membership grew from some 100,000 to 313,000 during the first half of the [19<sup>th</sup>] century and climbed to over 3 million by its end” (Bebbington, 2010, p. 84). Similarly, H. K. Carroll argues that by 1893, White Regular Baptists in the north numbered 800,450 while White Regular Baptists in the south had grown to a staggering 1,280,066 (Carroll, 1893, pp. 22-30).<sup>112</sup> In 1707, about 20 Baptist churches existed with approximately 500 members, “or about 1 to 530 of the population” (Boyd, 1957, p. 53). By 1814, the Baptist ratio to population had remarkably gained 1 to 47. Over the century, Boyd claimed Baptist churches increased to 1,835 congregations with approximately 179,657 members, attributing the growth of Baptists from the 18<sup>th</sup> century until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century to several factors including the establishment of Baptist schools, spiritual awakenings, Baptist publications, foreign missionary movement, and even the persecution Baptists endured by the Church of England (Ibid, pp. 53-83).

Beginning with the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, N. Hatch persuasively argues that within the post-Independence War era between 1780-1830, American Christianity was just as significantly impacted in the United States as was the politics of the newly found nation (Hatch, 1989, p. 6). Trending away from centralized authority, religious populism wildly reigned in the newly established republic. Resulting from what Hatch called the “democratization of religion,” David

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<sup>111</sup> Many historians accept 1638/39 as the date Roger Williams established Providence church. See Brackney, 2006, p. 97; Boyd, 1957, p. 22; Armstrong & Armstrong, 1979, p. 55; Handy, 1987; Gorrie, 1850, pp. 134-135; Belcher, 1854, p. 170; Asplund, 1794, p. 14; Backus, 1843, p. 102. Sweet quotes evidences and raises questions concerning the original date, however, as does McBeth (Sweet, 1942, p. 128; McBeth, 1987, p. 136).

<sup>112</sup> Interestingly, Carroll also records the number of “colored” Regular Baptists in the south--1,348,989--making Black Baptists, if Carroll is correct, presumably the largest demographic of Baptists in America at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The growth of Black Baptists seems phenomenal given that a mere century earlier, just over 8,000 Black Baptists existed over all the American colonies (Gardner, Oct 1989, p. 33).

Bebbington concludes that a period of “extraordinary divisiveness” entered the evangelical world, including the Baptists. “Strong-minded souls who confidently carved out their own path in religion threatened the unity of denominational structures” (Bebbington, 2010, p. 85).

Among the five distinctive religious traditions affected by and influential in the rise of the general populace coalition “doing theology for themselves,” Hatch places Baptists (Ibid, pp. 4; 21). As America successfully revolted against its mother country, so now “The 1790s also witnessed fundamental challenges to the legal profession, orthodox medicine, and the [Christian] ministry as an office” (Ibid, p. 27). And, according to Hatch, given the aura of independence American culture was then experiencing, an all-out war on Calvinist orthodoxy seemed inevitable. “To the rebellious leaders of populist religious movements, nothing represented ecclesiastical tyranny more than the Calvinist clergy. [...] In the face of efforts of Calvinist coalitions to buttress Christian civilization, populist religious leaders worked with equal determination to withstand the control [Calvinists maintained] ...and launched a ferocious crusade against every facet of Calvinist orthodoxy” (Hatch, 1989, p. 170).

Accordingly, Hatch and Bebbington seem to show the incipient socio-trends away from Calvinism even before the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which, if they are correct, appears to question any pronounced confidence that *strict* Calvinism had an impregnable grip on American Baptists before 1845. It should be noted, however, that the successful struggle for independence from Britain that America accomplished should not necessarily be interpreted as primary in understanding why Calvinism was suffering setbacks in American Protestantism, especially among Baptists. Neither Hatch nor Bebbington seems to adequately account for the rugged theological individualism Baptists embraced from the very beginning of their existence. Baptists were born and bred in the cradle of dissent. As Roger Williams had insisted as a fundamental Baptist principle, each man “reserved to himself the rights of conscience, which no number of the ‘major’ part might touch, and *That* at once was made an inalienable right” (Boyd, 1957, p. 21; Italics original). For Baptists, the notion of cooperate democratic rule on one hand and individual conscience on the other was intrinsically embedded within their free church tradition. Or, as

Walter Shurden later says more colloquially, “Here Come the Battling Baptists” (Shurden, 1972, pp. 11-19).

Furthermore, Baptists were theologically divided among themselves over Calvinism well before Hatch’s notion of the “democratization of religion” in the post-Independence War era (1790-1830). Controversy over Calvinism existed in the first Baptist church on American soil established in 1638/1639. Recalling Sweet’s note above, “Some of the leading members held Arminian views, others were strict Calvinists” (Sweet, 1942, pp. 128-129). Porter Burbank suggests that beginning with the banishment of Roger Williams from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, “different views of the Atonement and Christian theology generally” have existed among Baptists, “some inclining to Calvinistic, others to Arminian, sentiments” (Burbank, 1849, p. 74). Burbank goes on to summarize that “generally there was but one denomination of Baptists in America till the origin of the Freewill Baptists, a little more than sixty years ago” (Ibid).

Within this “one denomination” of Baptists, however, Baptists fought over Calvinism though those who adhered to *strict* Calvinism appeared to out-number those who theologically questioned some of its key tenets. Scott Bryant concurs but insists the variations in Baptist life during the colonial period cannot be dismissed. In fact, according to Bryant, various groups of Baptists with numerous nuances of soteriology defined the colonial Baptist landscape. “To ignore the theological variety of the Baptist churches that existed prior to the [Great] Awakening is to disregard a number of Baptist congregations that should not be forgotten when telling the Baptist story. From their beginnings in America, Baptists have not exhibited one monolithic Baptist theology, but a variety of Baptist theologies that when examined in full produce a true picture of the Baptist tradition in colonial America” (Bryant, 2007, pp. 9-10).<sup>113</sup> David Benedict had previously claimed: “FROM nearly the beginning of the Baptists in America, there have been some, who have opposed a number of the principal articles in the Calvinistick [sic] creed. For a long time, most of these brethren resided in Rhode-Island and its vicinity, where their history has been related” (Benedict, 1813, p. 410).

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<sup>113</sup> See also Robert Gardner who suggests at least 11 different groups of Baptists existed in America between 1639 and 1790 (Gardner, Oct 1989, pp. 31-32). He rightly notes, however, that Particular-Regular and Separate Baptists made up the majority of the Baptist population during that time period.

### 3.3 Baptist Demographics

John Asplund (1747-1807) epitomized Baptist demographics in early America.<sup>114</sup> Historians often depend upon Asplund in gauging early Baptist numbers, tracking Baptist expansion, and even categorizing variations in Baptist belief among late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century churches and associations since few Baptist chroniclers existed at the time. Asplund published his first *Annual Record of the Baptist Denomination in North America* in 1791 followed by later edition(s) in 1794. Thomas Kidd appears to uncritically accept Asplund's account of the numbers as presumed fact.

In a 1793 survey, early Baptist historian John Asplund estimated that there were 1,032 Baptist churches in America. Out of those, 956 were Calvinist congregations. These were "Particular Baptists," for they believed in a definite atonement (or "particular redemption") ... "General Baptists," who believed that Christ had died indefinitely for the sins of anyone who would choose him, accounted for a tiny fraction of the whole. Even some of those, Asplund noted, believed in certain Calvinist tenets such as "perseverance in grace" (Kidd, 2015).<sup>115</sup>

Quoting Asplund's account *prima facie* as historically accurate could be problematic, however. First, by Asplund's own testimony, there exists viable reason to cautiously accept his statistics. Looking back on his first volume published in 1791, Asplund states in his subsequent volume in 1794 that due to "many imperfections" and "bad information" he "found it necessary to have it reprinted" (Asplund, 1794, p. Preface). Furthermore, even after the second printing correction,

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<sup>114</sup> For brief biographical material on Asplund, see Taylor, J. B., 1860. *Virginia Baptist Ministers: Vol 1*. New York: Sheldon & Company. p. 246.

<sup>115</sup> Professor Kidd's article, "Calvinism not new to Baptists," may be found online at <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/calvinism-is-not-new-to-baptists>. Kidd is more cautious in his history co-authored with Barry Hankins about Calvinism's strength among Baptist churches at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, rightly distinguishing *strict* Calvinism from *modified* Calvinism existing among Colonial Baptists. About this era, Kidd and Hankins write, "Most Baptist churches espoused moderate Calvinist beliefs. They generally held to the doctrinal views of English Baptist minister Andrew Fuller, who advocated a modified Calvinist view of the atonement... Some thought that this position was quasi-Arminian, suggesting that Christ had somehow died for all humankind. Staunch Calvinists saw the atonement as sufficient for only those predestined to salvation" (Kidd & Hankins, 2015, p. 82).

Asplund still laments that his first volume of Baptist statistics failed in accuracy: “but notwithstanding all, I have found many faults that have crept in, which partly were owing to my own neglect, and partly to the printer” (Ibid). Asplund indicates both printing error and personal error were present in his first volume even after a second printing to correct the mistakes. Asplund nonetheless assures the reader in his 1794 volume that his information is trustworthy. “In order to remedy the former defects, and to get further information, I have made another tour in 1792, 1793, and 1794 for two years, at least 10,000 miles, have visited about 550 churches and 24 associations, am personally acquainted with 700 preachers of our society, so that the Register now may be depended upon” (Asplund, 1794, Preface). Unfortunately, other than logging more miles and having more conversations, Asplund offers the reader no assurances that corrective steps were followed to avoid the inaccuracies not eliminated in his first volume.

Furthermore, when comparing numbers from Asplund’s two volumes, it remains unclear whether one should make confident assumptions concerning Asplund’s record-keeping. For example, while there obviously exist no statistical numbers for 1793 in the earlier 1791 volume to compare with numbers in the second volume, one can compare the numbers published for 1790 in both volumes. In doing so, one may note the clear discrepancy between the two sets of numbers for the same year Asplund records (Asplund, 1791, p. 47; Asplund, 1794, p. 90).

1790 Summary Statistics	“Annual Register” (1791)	“Universal Register” (1794)
Churches	867	890
Members	65,233	63,410
Ministers	1,156	1,196

What accounts for the discrepancies between 1790’s numbers published in 1791 and 1790’s numbers published in 1794 remains difficult to determine. Asplund offered no explanation or citations as to which errors remained in the first edition and corrected in his later edition. In some cases, however, one is “stuck” so to speak with Asplund’s numbers for the simple reason his

account is the only extant record available for observation.<sup>116</sup> In fact, Robert Gardner's work in gathering statistics for early Baptists from 1639-1790 seems to relatively substantiate Asplund's work overall. Gardner tallies 68,086 Baptists existed among American colonies in 1790 representing 1,006 local Baptist churches (Gardner, Oct 1989, p. 43). These numbers are statistically similar in scope to Asplund's registry.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, Gardner also suggests that Particular-Regular Baptists made up the vast majority of Baptists in 1790.

The Particular-Regular group was usually dominant in size and by 1790 far surpassed all others combined. At that time it comprised almost 82 percent of all Baptist churches and over 84 percent of all Baptist persons in North America (p. 34).<sup>118</sup>

While Gardner's statistics appear to fully substantiate Kidd's claim that "Calvinism remained ascendant among Baptists well into the nineteenth century" (Kidd, 2015), his insight into the makeup of Baptist associations in 1790 cautions one in interpreting too positively that over eight of ten Baptists in America in 1790 were Particular-Regular Baptists (i.e. *strictly* Calvinistic). "Beginning with the Philadelphia Association in 1707, eighteen associations were formed originally as Particular-Regular. In the 1780's, eleven Separate associations became Particular-Regular. All 29 Particular-Regular associations existed in 1790" (p. 35). Thus, a large part of the Particular-Regular churches in 1790 had a distinct Separate Baptist history. Gardner estimates

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<sup>116</sup> Asplund erroneously makes no distinction between Particular Baptists and New Divinity Baptists. Jonathan Maxcy (1768-1820) clearly denied Limited Atonement (Forman, 1811, pp. 179-211) and therefore was not a Particular Baptist (Asplund, 1794, p. 14). But he was not Arminian either. M. Haykin suggests Maxcy's "New Divinity" influence contributed to the rise of "Moderate Calvinism" in the south (Crisp & Sweeney, 2012, p. 204). Holifield notes that Maxcy's presidential appointment at the University of South Carolina beginning in 1809 was instrumental in disseminating New Divinity views among southern Baptists (Holifield, 2003, p. 283). Neither does Asplund possess warrant to theologically distinguish Separate Baptists from Regular Baptists by Separate's alleged adherence to Arminianism (Asplund, 1794, pp. 5-6). The evidence seems indisputable that Separate Baptists had both *strict* Calvinistic and non-Calvinistic advocates among them. Asplund also wrongly identifies Virginia Separate Baptist, Samuel Harris, pastor of Fall's Creek church, as Particular when he was widely known to hold "Arminian" theological sentiments (Ibid, p.28; same for John Waller who also held "Arminian" sentiments, p. 31). On the other hand, Asplund may be valuable to research by showing the theological variety of General Baptists, some holding to "falling from grace" and some holding to "perseverance of the saints." (Asplund, 1794, p. 6).

<sup>117</sup> Though some may legitimately object that there exists a grand difference and therefore worrisome difference between 68,086 members representing 1,006 churches (Gardner) and 63,410 members representing 890 churches (Asplund).

<sup>118</sup> W. Brackney states that in 1700, there existed 14 Baptist congregations in North America while by 1800, Baptist churches had swelled to 1,200 congregations with some one hundred thousand church members (Brackney, 2006, p. 24). Citing no research for his estimates, Brackney undoubtedly was referring to estimates Isaac Backus recorded in his history of New England Baptists (Backus, 1843, p. 177).

the mixture of Regular and Separate Baptist churches to be just under half as originally Separate Baptist: “...in 1790 almost 43 percent of all Particular-Regulars belonged to formerly Separate associations.”

While Separate Baptists cannot be considered exclusively “Arminian” as Asplund mistakenly proposed, there existed among Separate Baptists a large segment of those who embraced non-Calvinistic tendencies in both theological belief and ecclesial practice that most probably would have carried over into Particular-Regular Baptist life. Hence, just because 84% of American Baptists identified with and belonged to Particular-Regular churches as Gardner shows, it does not follow that 84% of American Baptists identified with and adhered to the *strict* Calvinism most probably appearing in Particular-Regular churches.<sup>119</sup> The evidence presented and examined below shows that theological dissent from *strict* Calvinism frequently came from *within* Regular Baptist churches and associations, particularly those associations containing Separate Baptist backgrounds. Indeed, arguably the ecclesial union of Regular and Separate Baptists in Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Kentucky at the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century could very well have been and/or led to the mortal but undetected wound of *strict* Calvinism’s presumed stronghold within American Baptist life.<sup>120</sup>

### 3.4 The Rise of Separate Baptists and the Impact on Confessional Calvinism in the Early Nineteenth Century

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

The Separate Baptist movement is hailed by historians of all stripes as among the greatest religious phenomenon in American church history. “One of the amazing aspects of the story of the Separate Baptists is that they bore off the largest fruit of the Great Awakening to a

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<sup>119</sup> Gardner argues that in Virginia in 1790 “57 percent of all Particular-Regular churches and 71 percent of all Particular-Regular members had Separate background” (Gardner, 1983, p. 100; emphasis added). Such a large percentage of Separate Baptists mixed into Regular Baptist churches qualifies substantially the import of Kidd’s declaration concerning the over-whelming majority of Baptists being “Particular,” especially if it can be shown Separate Baptists possessed a significant constituency of *modified* Calvinists who, in large proportion, were anti-confessional.

<sup>120</sup> Due to Separate Baptists’ well-documented hesitancy contra Particular-Regular Baptists in embracing man-made creeds, as well as defending Separate leaders who held strongly to “Arminian” theological sentiments, to drag this baggage with them as they merged together in ecclesial union offers little surprise that the rigorous Calvinism would inevitably face a significant challenge.

denomination that had remained largely aloof from that sweeping movement. But the revivalistic tradition, and the evangelistic zeal that keeps it alive, came to prevail among Baptists chiefly through the direct influence of the Separates” (Goen, 1962, p. 282). In comparison to both General and Particular Baptists, G. Paschal called Separate Baptists an “entirely different kind of Baptist” that appeared in the southern colonies in the mid-1700s subsequently proving to be “the most remarkable body of Christians America has known” (Paschal, 1930, p. 154).

Matthew Cook insightfully observes that “Within a decade, the Separates were larger than the Regulars who had been present [in the south] for more than sixty years” (Cook, 2009, pp. 17-18). Though some might suggest he unfairly criticizes Particular Baptists, Sydney Ahlstrom characterizes the work of Regular Baptists in the south through Philadelphia’s association as “consist[ing] of little more than reorganizing the old General Baptist churches” (Ahlstrom, 2004, p. 318). Ahlstrom also recognized Separate success regardless of the stonewalling they early on received from many Regulars: “Despite the antagonism of the Regulars their growth was little short of phenomenal” (Ibid, p. 320).

Known as a theological mixture of Calvinism and Arminianism,<sup>121</sup> and unlike Regular Baptists who seemed to glory in splitting theological hairs and adhering to detailed confessions of faith, the standard of which was Philadelphia’s confession, Separate Baptists seemed uninterested in the finer points of theology and demonstrated their disinterest by shunning confessions completely, or, at times, reluctantly composing confessions of faith themselves, a chief complaint Regulars frequently made against them. Rather Separates primarily focused on preaching the simple gospel, calling on hearers to be born again, baptizing converts, and establishing churches. The eventual and somewhat final merge of Separate Baptists into Kentucky’s Regular Baptist life some half century after Separate Baptists arrived in the south served as an historical benchmark denoting *strict* confessional Calvinism’s coming demise in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

W. Cathcart describes Separate Baptists as “A torrent of saving grace descended on Virginia, North Carolina, and other States through the labors of the Separate Baptists, which has never

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<sup>121</sup> Separate Baptist leader, John Leland (1754-1841), famously quipped, “the preaching that has been most blessed of God, and most profitable to men, is *the doctrine of sovereign grace in the salvation of souls, mixed with a little of what is called Arminianism*” (Leland, 1845, p. 172; italics original).

been exceeded in saving power in one section of country since the Saviour ascended into heaven," concluding that "wherever they were found they were the most aggressive and successful body of Christians ever known in our country (Cathcart, 1881, pp. 166-167). W. Barnes agrees: "The great Baptist progress south of the Potomac began after 1750 with the coming of the separate Baptists from New England" (Barnes, 1954, p. 7).

Early Baptist historian, Morgan Edwards, toured North Carolina gathering information for his history of Baptists in the United States. He describes in vivid terms the influence of Separate Baptists upon the Baptist landscape especially in the south. Of Sandy Creek influence, the first Separate Baptist church organized in North Carolina in 1755, Edwards wrote:

Sandy-creek church is the mother of all the Separate-baptists. From this Zion went forth the word, and great was the company of them who published it; it, in 17 years, has spread branches westward as far as the great river Mississippi (76); southward as far as Georgia; eastward to the sea and Chesopeek bay; and northward to the waters of Potowmack; it, in 17 years, is become mother, grand-mother, and great grandmother to 42 churches, from which sprang 125 ministers, many of which are ordained and support the sacred character as well as any set of clergy in America" (Edwards, 1770-1792, loc. 1950-1953).

W. Lumpkin concludes that few, if any, other denominations had established themselves so quickly in a region than Separate Baptists did in the south beginning in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Lumpkin, 1961, p. vi). "The accomplishments of the Separate Baptist movement are extremely remarkable since Baptists prior to 1755 were an insignificant and generally despised sect in America." Lumpkin goes on to note that within 20 years, Separate Baptists had spearheaded an "unprecedentedly popular religious movement," and within 30 years had led Baptists to become the largest denomination in the south (Ibid, p. 148).<sup>122</sup>

#### 3.4.2 Rise of Separate Baptists

Who were the Separate Baptists? From whence did they come? While details are still lacking concerning the exact location and year Separate Baptists originated, historians usually agree that Separate Baptists arose out of the second phase of the Great Awakening in New England under

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<sup>122</sup> Separate Baptists had their weaknesses as Lumpkin makes clear. Among the weaknesses Lumpkin describes are excessive emotionalism; lack of education; and even discouragement toward education; and a weak theology (pp. 150-153).

the fiery preaching of Anglican cleric and English itinerant evangelist, George Whitefield (1714-1770).<sup>123</sup>

In Massachusetts and Connecticut, most Baptists were General Baptist in persuasion.<sup>124</sup> Whitefield debuted in New England during the Fall of 1740 with a six-week itinerary, preaching in every town on the seaboard and in the Connecticut Valley, and consequently molding the shape revivalism would take for a full century (Goen, 1962, p. 9). He returned to New England in 1746. It was during the first preaching tour that two men, strangers at the time, and both belonging to Congregational churches, were converted to “*New light*” teaching under Whitefield’s preaching—Shubal Stearns (1706-1771) and Daniel Marshall (1706-1784).<sup>125</sup>

Some of those converted to the “*New light stir*” went back to their respective churches hoping to become catalysts of change in their crusty, dried-up congregations.<sup>126</sup> By 1744, disillusion set

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<sup>123</sup> See McBeth, 1987, p. 227; Nettles, 2010, 7-8; Lumpkin, W., 1961. *Baptist Foundations in the South*. Nashville: Broadman; Goen, C. C., 1962. *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press; Purefoy, G. W., 1859. *A History of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association; from its organization in A.D. 1758, to A.D. 1858*. s.l.:SHELDON & CO. A volume on the history of Separate Baptists written by a self-identifying Separate Baptist is Scott, M., 1901. *A History of the Separate Baptist Church with a Narrative of Other Denominations*. Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press. While containing some interesting conversations and dialogs purported to be by Separate Baptists themselves, the book is unfortunately flawed by an undeniable loyalty to some form of Landmarkism (Renault, October 1979, p. 19).

<sup>124</sup> Scanning Asplund’s register (1794), the number of General Baptist congregations existing in New England prior to the Great Awakening exceeds Particular Baptist congregations. According to Gardner, in 1740 five Baptist churches existed one of which was Particular (Gardner, 1983, p. 81). By 1750, eight Separate Baptist churches were organized doubling to 16 over the next twenty years and comprising “78 percent of all Connecticut Baptists” (p. 82). By 1790, however, Particular-Regular Baptist churches had absorbed the lion’s share of all Baptist churches in Connecticut, including the Separate Baptists. Out of a total of 58 Baptist churches, 38 were Particular-Regular Baptists.

<sup>125</sup> For brief but helpful biographical material on Stearns, see Allen, 1958, p. 1298. For an extended treatment of Stearns’ life and theology, see Nettles, 2005, pp. 153-173. John Spark’s outstanding biography on Stearns offers helpful material on the life, theology, praxis, and impact of one of Separate Baptists’ key leaders, if not sole patriarch, of the entire Separate Baptist movement. Sparks, J., 2001. *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity: The Life & Legacy of Elder Shubal Stearns*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. See also Bunce, B. G., 1976. *Shubal Stearns and Separate Baptist Beginnings in North America*, Bedford: North Carolina Baptist Convention. For biographical information for Marshall, see Allen, 1958, p. 824. See also Gregory Hunt’s article, “Daniel Marshall: Energetic Evangelist For the Separate Baptist Cause” (Hunt, n.d.). A recent work by Brandon Smith and Kurt Smith focuses primarily on Marshall’s pioneer work in Georgia: Smith, B. F. & Smith, K. M., 2016. *The Gospel Heritage of Georgia Baptists, 1772-1830*. Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books. Smith and Smith lean heavily upon Tom Nettles’ work and offer little beyond his analysis. The work stands undisguised as an apologetic for *strict* Calvinism and therefore remains less helpful as descriptive history than it does polemical belief.

<sup>126</sup> Albeit some historians associate Stearns and Marshall’s embracing the “*New light stir*” to Whitefield’s 1746 visit, Sparks concludes the weight of evidence falls toward a 1740-41 “*New Light*” conversion for Stearns with an ordination to Separate Congregational ministry coinciding with Whitefield’s second tour in New England in 1746

in so far as positively affecting their churches toward “*New light*” teaching. Thus, “The Separates first took their rise, or rather their name, about the year 1744” (Semple, 1894, p. 7). In many cases, whole churches “separated.” Established Congregational churches became “Separate Congregational” bodies while “*New light*” Baptist churches began to identify as “Separate Baptist.”

According to Sparks, the first Baptist church to be identified as “Separate Baptist” was Boston’s Warren Avenue Baptist Church (Sparks, 2001, p. 35).<sup>127</sup> Baptists and even Congregationalists like Daniel Marshall and Shubal Stearns who were influenced by the “*New light stir*,” upon failing to influence their respective local churches, soon pulled away from the established bodies perhaps concluding that transitioning to the Separate Baptist community remained their only viable option. However, more significant reasons to leave Congregational bodies would be found in a cardinal rule of Baptist ecclesiology—regenerate church membership.<sup>128</sup> Since only those who publicly and credibly profess faith in Christ and have received a new birth experience are subjects for baptism according to the New Testament, and infants are incapable of such a profession, it became clear to many Congregational Separates that Baptists who were stirred by the “*New*

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(Sparks, 2001, p. 30). No historian consulted for this research offered a hard date for Stearns’ conversion to Christ. Lumpkin offers a general description and date for both Stearns’ and Marshall’s move by the “*New light stir*”: “Two men [Stearns and Marshall] were strongly moved by Whitefield during his 1745 tour through Connecticut...” (Lumpkin, 1961, p. 10). After all is said, Henry Stroupe is typical: “Only a few facts about Stearns’ early life are known. He was born January 28, 1706, in Boston... Already a New-Light, he became a Baptist in 1751 and was baptized by Wait Palmer at Tolland, Connecticut. On March 20 of that year he was ordained [a Separate Baptist minister] ...” (Stroupe, 1958, p. 28).

<sup>127</sup> Sparks does not name the church but only indicates that upon the church organizing as a “*New light*” church, famed English Baptist, John Gill, sent them gifts including a communion tray and a book collection (Sparks, 2001, p. 35). According to N. Wood’s history of Boston’s First Baptist Church, however, the “*New light*” split-off church that received Gill’s blessings called itself for several years First Baptist Church, but eventually settled on Warren Avenue Baptist Church (Wood, 1899, p. 139). What is more, Wood appears to suggest that the split involved more than the “*New light stir*” indicated by Sparks. Rather dissenting members had charged Boston’s First Baptist Church pastor, Jeremiah Condy, with preaching “Arminianism” of the highest rank, that his preaching had become “so intermixed with Arminianism,” that it was “like the high Arminian clergy” (Ibid, p. 138). Thus, apparently the Calvinist-Arminian divide negatively affected Boston’s oldest Baptist congregation indicating once again that while Baptist Calvinism may have had the largest number of supporters overall, it is hardly correct to infer from those numbers the actual *strength* of the Calvinism embraced.

<sup>128</sup> George McDaniel names “regenerate church membership” as one of five ‘distinguishing principles of the people first called “Christians” and now called “Baptists”’ (McDaniel, 1919, pp. 11-12). E.Y. Mullins insisted “A regenerate church membership is a cardinal Baptist doctrine” (Mullins, 1912, p. 75). According to A.H. Newman, for Baptist churches to remain “apostolical,” they must retain several cardinal doctrines, the second of which was regenerate church membership (Newman, 1890, p. 239). Tom Nettles insists “a Baptist church cannot exist where there is no regenerate church membership and no affirmation of believer’s baptism” (Nettles, 2006, p. xxiii).

*light*” as were they constituted the natural ecclesial home to which they would migrate. And migrate they did.<sup>129</sup>

In March 1751, Stearns and his family were converted to Baptist views under the preaching of Wait Palmer at a gospel meeting in Windsor (Sparks, 2001, p. 43).<sup>130</sup> Palmer immediately baptized (immersed) Stearns and his family as believers. Palmer followed Stearns to his Tolland home and assisted in organizing a Separate Baptist church on March 20, 1751. Two months later, Palmer returned to Tolland along with another Baptist pastor, Joshua Morse, and laid hands on Stearns, ordaining him as the first pastor of Tolland’s Separate Baptist Church.

Stearns remained pastor until the summer of 1754 when he baptized Noah Alden, a former Congregationalist pastor, and now Separate Baptist preacher (Ibid, p.51). A month later, Stearns gathered his family, packed his belongings, and headed toward the southern frontier with twelve others joining him ultimately ending up at Sandy Creek, North Carolina. A mere week after they arrived at Sandy Creek, they constituted the Sandy Creek Separate Baptist Church on November 22, 1755 (Paschal, 1930, p. 175). There Stearns planted himself and for the next sixteen years served the church as pastor. Stearns died in 1771 and was buried in a countryside grave with a “rough stone” as a head the only identification of which was scribbled “S.S. Dec 1771” (Eloise., 1846).

### 3.4.3 General and Particular Baptists in the South

Prior to Stearns and the Sandy Creek Separates, both General and Particular Baptists had been in the south for several years. As early as 1695, General Baptists had established churches in

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<sup>129</sup> The migration of so many Congregationalists (paedobaptist) to Baptist (anti-paedobaptist) persuasion apparently became the occasion for the quip attributed to George Whitefield: “My chickens have turned to ducks” (Lumpkin, 1961, p. 20).

<sup>130</sup> Windsor was the hometown of Daniel Marshall. However, Marshall and his family had already left Windsor and moved south working with Indian tribes in the southern colonies. “It is not easy to conceive of greater sacrifices than he must have made, in taking his wife and three children from the bosom of civilized society, where they were surrounded with all the comforts of life, to live in a wilderness, in the midst of savages, and exposed to hardships and perils innumerable” (Sprague, 1860, p. 59). Marshall and his wife later joined up with Stearns in Virginia and travelled with the Stearns’ party to North Carolina. They, along with Stearns and his group, totaling sixteen in all, became charter members of Sandy Creek church, the first Separate Baptist church in the south. Semple lists eight men and their wives as the sixteen charter members (only naming the males) and all immigrating from New England: Shubal Stearns, Peter Stearns, Ebenezer Stearns, Shubal Stearns, Jr., Daniel Marshall, Joseph Breed, Enos Stimpson, and Jonathan Polk (Semple, 1894, p. 14).

Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas (Montgomery, 1882, p. 135). General Baptist itinerant preacher and church organizer, Paul Palmer ( -1747),<sup>131</sup> indicated in written correspondence that General Baptist churches existed in North Carolina prior to 1729, and thus arriving earlier than Particular Baptists (Benedict, 1813, p. 37). Palmer worked tirelessly, and his dedicated labor produced amazing results. Says J. D. Huffman about the full impact of Palmer's life and influence, "Paul Palmer was the greatest North Carolinian of his time. Not one of the men with whom he came into contact or collision can be compared with him ... The opposition, recognizing in him a dangerous foe, sought to crush him. Suits at law followed, lasting through several years. His vindication came at length; ample, complete. Then he turned to his life-work, the organization of one of the largest and most successful missionary enterprises of modern times" (Huffman, 1897, p. 243).

Richard Everard, then Governor of the Province of North Carolina, wrote a letter to the Bishop of London dated October 12, 1729 lamenting Palmer's effectiveness, requesting relief and assistance by sending more established Clergymen to do damage control. Everard's letter offers insight into the powerful results Palmer's gospel preaching had in North Carolina: "My Lord, when I came first here there were no Dissenter but Quakers in the Govt, and now by the means of one Paul Palmer the Baptist teacher, he has gained hundreds and to prevent it, tis impossible" (Recorder, 1927). General Baptists therefore had an ecclesial toehold in the Carolina colonies before Particular Baptists became prominent.

It should not be assumed, however, that Particular Baptists were entirely inactive in the south. The Philadelphia association sent missionaries into the pioneer areas. Unfortunately, at least some of their missionary work apparently possessed a purpose and agenda that was not conducive to evangelism. J. Huffman explains:

In the Philadelphia Association which was organized in 1707 they were very high Calvinists and so much concerned about doctrinal forms and formularies that the work of Grace in New England and New Jersey brought to them little quickening of spiritual life or increase of numerical strength. Two of their missionaries came into North Carolina, 1755-'57; but

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<sup>131</sup> A helpful article on Palmer from *The Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, 6 volumes, edited by William S. Powell (1979-1996) is available online (Stevenson, 1994). See also, Allen, C. J. ed., 1958. *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists Volume II*. Nashville: Broadman Press. p. 1068; Editor, 1916. Paul Palmer. *Biblical Recorder*, 17 May, p. 2.

there is no record of any meeting held by them in any community in which there were not Baptists and they organized no church which had not been organized before. They were engaged in correcting errors of doctrine or faults of organization (North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers, 1897, p. 138).

Even so, the first Baptist church in the south was a Particular Baptist church established at Charleston, South Carolina in 1683 (Tupper, 1889, p. 7).<sup>132</sup> Matthew Cook reminds us, however, that even in Charleston's First Baptist Church, both Particular and General Baptists were members.<sup>133</sup> The Charleston church had included "both General and Particular Baptists from its earliest days after its emigration to South Carolina. Disagreements over soteriological issues were seemingly avoided or minimized for the first quarter century of the church's tenure in South Carolina" (Cook, 2009, p. 45). And though that diversity did not remain an aspect of Charleston's theological identity with any consistency during the Pre-Revolutionary era, nonetheless the presence of both groups shows "theological diversity was a part of southern Baptist life from the earliest days" (Cook, 2009, pp. 42-43).<sup>134</sup>

From Charleston's First Baptist Church, along with three other churches, the Charleston Baptist Association was organized in 1751.<sup>135</sup> By adopting a slightly edited version of the 1689 Second London Confession in 1767, Charleston's Confession of Faith demonstrated its "confessional

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<sup>132</sup> "The oldest Baptist church in the South is the First Baptist Church in this city. It was constituted in 1683 by Rev. William Screven, who was its first pastor. Part of the original members came from Maine with Mr. Screven and part came direct from England" (Tupper, 1889, p. 7).

<sup>133</sup> Robert Baker and Paul Craven concur (Baker & Paul J. Craven, 1982, pp. 81-82). They also raise valid questions as to whether the Charleston church embraced the PCF in 1700 as Townsend seems to imply in his history of South Carolina Baptists (Townsend, 1935, p. 12). Joe King insisted Charleston's first pastor, William Screven (1629-1713), rather led them to embrace the Second London Confession of Faith omitting the articles on laying on of hands and ruling elders (King, 1964, p. 14). But as Baker and Craven point out, problems arise with this view since the Second London Confession did not have articles on laying on of hands and ruling elders. Those two articles were added later by Benjamin and Elias Keach (Baker & Paul J. Craven, 1982, p. 81).

<sup>134</sup> Clearly, the dominant theological trajectory in Charleston's First Baptist Church finally eliminating most all dissent would be *strict* Calvinism. The first pastor, William Screven, seemed to embrace *strict* Calvinism and even on his deathbed, counselled the church to ensure they called a pastor to follow him who was "orthodox in faith, and of blameless life, and does own the confession of faith put forth by our brethren in London in 1689" (Edwards, 1770-1792, pp. loc 2,598-2,599). Assuming Townsend's position that Charleston had adopted the Philadelphia confession, Baker and Craven perceptively ask, "Why would the pastor ignore the confession adopted by his own church in 1700 and urge that a new pastor own the London confession that was identical to his own church?" (Baker & Paul J. Craven, 1982, p. 81).

<sup>135</sup> For basic information on the Charleston association, see Allen, 1958, p. 248. For extended treatments, King, J. M., 1964. *A History of South Carolina Baptists*. Columbia: The General Board of the South Carolina Baptist Convention. pp. 62-64; Furman, W., 1811. *A History of the Charleston Baptist Association of Churches in the State of South Carolina*. Nashville: Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

identity” with the Philadelphia association since the latter’s confession also was an adaptation of London’s 1689 confession with but “minor variations” (Nettles, 2005, p. 75).<sup>136</sup> The Charleston association predictably became the hub of Particular Baptist work in the south.<sup>137</sup>

#### 3.4.4 Separate Baptists: *Strict* Calvinists, *Modified* Calvinists, or Arminians?

Sparks contends the influence Shubal Stearns commanded among the Separate Baptist community was unlike anything previously known in Baptist life. “The power and influence Shubal Stearns held over the English population of the North and South Carolina and southwestern Virginia backcountry ... were unprecedented for any pastor, and, with the exception of George Whitefield himself, for any religious leader in America” (Sparks, 2001, p. 110). About Stearns’ personal magnetism toward other Separate Baptist preachers, Edwards remarks “All the Separate ministers copy after him in tones of voice and actions of body” (Edwards, 1770-1792, loc. 1977).

Dubbed the “apostle of Western Carolina and Virginia,”<sup>138</sup> Stearns led Sandy Creek church to explosive growth from the original sixteen members when constituted in November 1755 to over 600 members in just three years (Semple, 1894, p. 9). In addition, hundreds more were converted and baptized during those first three years at “arms” (preaching stations) and churches Stearns organized surrounding Sandy Creek making the total converts approximately 900 (Sparks, 2001, p. 63). Nothing like it had either the Baptists or any other denomination experienced before. Williston Walker said of George Whitefield concerning his first trip to New England, “his hearers were as wax in his hands,” concluding “Never in the entire history of New England was a preacher possessed of such popular influence or received with such unbounded adoration by the community at large” (Walker, 1899, pp. 257-258). Similarly, Newman concludes of Stearns, “It is doubtful whether any evangelist but Whitefield surpassed Stearns in magnetic power over

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<sup>136</sup> The Fourth Edition of the Charleston confession published in 1850 also bears the “confessional identity” between the two associations: “Adopted by the Baptist Association of Philadelphia, September 25, 1742, and by the Charleston, in 1767” (Charleston Association, 1850, p. Title page).

<sup>137</sup> Philip Mulder indicates that much of the work of Particular Baptist outreach by missionaries such as John Gano focused on converting General Baptists into Particular Baptists and reordering their churches into Regular Baptist churches (Mulder, 2002, pp. 39-40). See also, Paschal, 1930, pp. 128-140.

<sup>138</sup> Eloise., 1846. Shubal Stearns. *The Biblical Recorder*, 21 March. “Eloise” may be a pseudonym for then editor of *The Biblical Recorder*, Thomas Meredith.

audiences. His tones were peculiarly impressive and captivating, and his eyes seem to have had almost magical power over those upon whom they were fixed. Trembling, weeping, screaming, and catalepsy were common effects of his highly impassioned exhortations” (Newman, 1894, pp. 208-209).

As far as Stearns’ lasting influence continuing into the following centuries, “In no small degree, it may be believed that the number and prosperity of the Baptists within the limits of the Southern Baptist Convention is largely due, under God's blessing, to the work begun by Elder Stearns in Guilford, Randolph, Chatham and Orange counties” (Taylor, 1898, p. 101). Southern Baptist leader, William Gwaltney (1835-1907), later served the same region of North Carolina as did Stearns, reminisced concerning the lingering effect Stearns had in the region a full century later: “Now the remarkable thing that I want to tell you about the work of this man is that over six hundred Baptist churches can be traced from the work which he did at Sandy Creek” (Biblical Recorder, 1889). Thus, perhaps it is not too much to suggest that most assessments of S. Stearns’ influence could relatively match most any assessment of the Great Awakening’s most grandiose preacher, George Whitefield.

Furthermore, Stearns’ influence would presumably extend beyond church organization and establishment, gospel preaching, and proper decorum, to positively affecting and even transforming theological belief and formation of doctrine within the Separate Baptist community. If so, what theological color would Shubal Stearns overlay upon Separate Baptists?

Some believe Stearns to have been at most a *mild* Calvinist. J. Easley attests to Stearns being the “recognized leader of the Separate Baptists in the southeastern colonies,” and as the leader, his influence helped firmly establish Separate Baptists with “both a modified Calvinistic doctrine and an evangelistic zeal” (Allen, 1958, p. 1298). Others go a bit farther. For example, Sparks suggests Stearns was influenced by General Baptists like Wightman Jacobs and the General Baptist Yearly Meeting, and therefore his theological perspective could be described as a “mild Whitefield-style evangelistic Calvinist” that also “exhibit[ed] a strong General Baptist perspective” (Sparks, 2001, pp. 45-46).

Contrarily, T. Ascol thinks that *strict* Calvinism was clearly the theological template Stearns embraced and influentially taught within the Separate Baptist community. For Ascol, the first thing one might consider when gauging Stearns' theological temperature, would be Stearns' Congregationalist heritage, a heritage which was strongly Calvinistic. "Separate Baptists emerged out of Congregationalism with its thoroughly Reformed confession of faith, the Savoy Declaration. ... Evidence suggests that they did not give up their strongly Calvinistic understanding of salvation" (Ascol, 2001, p. 9).<sup>139</sup>

In response to Ascol, while it is true Stearns' Congregational background was steeped within a strongly Calvinistic framework as rightly pointed out, it does not follow Stearns would have necessarily brought with him, in large or even significant part, the presuppositions of *strict* Calvinism when he pulled away from Congregationalism. Moreover, George Whitefield was as far from doctrinaire preaching as one could imagine within the Reformed community, focusing almost exclusively on simple gospel presentation and new birth experience. Nor is it clear that Stearns would have necessarily followed closely the theologies of Whitefield and Edwards beyond the initial "New light" message of spiritual rebirth and conversion as Ascol indicates about Stearns, and of which Nettles agrees: "...they looked to George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards both for their revivalistic evangelism as well as their Calvinistic theology" (Nettles, 2010, p. 35).<sup>140</sup> On what basis, however, does one conclude that Stearns, Marshall, or other early Separate Baptist leaders looked to Whitefield and Edwards for continued theological acumen and development?<sup>141</sup> Perhaps one should also consider Whitefield's alleged disdain for S. Stearns

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<sup>139</sup> See also Ascol, T. K., 2007. From the Protestant Reformation to the Southern Baptist Convention: What Hath Geneva to Do with Nashville?. *Founders Journal*, Fall(70), pp. 3-18;

<sup>140</sup> B. Smith and K. Smith likewise assert of Georgia Baptists: "Georgia Baptists had their beginning from the Separate Baptists that arose from New England New Light Congregationalism with Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and Eleazar Wheelock as their Calvinist mentors in experiential Calvinistic preaching. Those that removed to the South were the same theologically as those that remained in New England" (Smith & Smith, 2016, p. 2). Unfortunately, Smith and Smith offer no evidence to support their assertion.

<sup>141</sup> Ascol and Nettles seem baldly speculative at this point. Many people converted under Arminian preaching later become avowed Calvinists. Note also that Stearns rejected both Edwards' and Whitefield's paedobaptism. Why, then, conclude Stearns necessarily looked to Whitefield's and Edwards' Calvinistic soteriology while rejecting Whitefield's and Edwards' ecclesiology? Alternatively, S. Marini, followed by W. Davidson, argues more impressively that Separates originally embraced the "*Savoy Confession of 1688*, a virtually verbatim version of the Westminster Confession with changes in the mode of baptism and the definition of ecclesiastical organization" (Davidson, 2001, p. 112). Granted. But that *some* accepted the Savoy confession neither adequately accounts for New Light General Baptists who would not have embraced the Savoy confession, nor Separate Baptists' overall pattern of aversion to

particularly and the Separate Baptist movement generally, distancing himself from their version of the “*New light stir*”: “the only time George Whitefield appears ever to have been advised of Shubal Stearns’ work...he more or less completely, if untruthfully, disowned the whole of it” (Sparks, 2001, p. 86).

Alternatively, J. Sparks persuasively argues Stearns was highly influenced by the theology of Six Principle General Baptists in New England. Not only did Stearns accept baptism and communion as gospel ordinances, but “Stearns and his followers vociferously contended for at least half a dozen more,” including the laying on of hands after baptism, washing one another’s feet, love feasts, and anointing of sick with oil, *all General Baptist traditions* (Sparks, 2001, p. 44, Italics original). Lumpkin would be unsurprised to know of General Baptists’ influence on Separate Baptists. “General Baptists gave a number of able leaders to the Separate movement” (Lumpkin, 1961, p. 66).

Furthermore, Sparks also claims Stearns wrote the following preamble to the covenant adopted by Abbott’s Creek church when it was organized in 1756, the first church Stearns took under the wings of Sandy Creek (Sparks, 2001, p. 77). Daniel Marshall was installed as its first Separate Baptist pastor (Edwards, 1770-1792, p. loc. 2375).

Believing the Old and New Testament to be the perfect rule for life and practice and 2ly Repentance from dead works and 3ly Faith towards God and 4ly The doctrine of baptism and 5ly laying on of hands and 6ly the perseverance of the saints and 7ly The resurrection of the dead and 8ly Eternal judgment (Paschal, 1930, pp. 253-254).<sup>142</sup>

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confessions. More problematic for Marini’s position is Lumpkin’s doubt New England Baptists used confessions (Lumpkin, August 1957, p. 15). Finally, Marini offers no response to Spark’s strongly argued position that Separates were highly influenced by General Baptists. Even so, what must not be lost from Marini’s learned position in his stated thesis as it applies to this research is, that established New England Calvinism received a permanent challenge to its supposed privileged position as the dominant theological trajectory in pre-War Colonial America by the rise of post-War radical sectarian religions: “By the mid-1790s the elements of these new religious cultures cohered, membership had consolidated and expanded, and the first permanent indigenous religious alternatives to Calvinism had been born” (Marini, 1982, p. 6). Hence, as American Baptists entered the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Calvinism faced theological challenges that refused to go away.

<sup>142</sup> Sparks insists Stearns penned this preamble indicating General Baptist influence upon his theology (Sparks, 2001, pp. 44-45). Lumpkin offers cautious support to Sparks’ claim. “Perhaps the confession of the Abbott’s Creek Separate Baptist Church in 1783 more faithfully represents a Separate Baptist theology [than does the Grassy Creek document]” (Lumpkin, 1961, p. 62).

If Stearns was as influenced by General Baptists as Sparks maintains, it seems reasonable to conclude that Abbott's Creek's brief faith statement indicated above, containing articles of faith clearly indicative of General Baptist practice and belief, would naturally reflect General Baptist influence. And assuming General Baptist influence upon Stearns, it seems reasonable to presume Stearns may have held a much *milder* Calvinism than Regular Baptists normally would entertain (more on this later).

Rather than following Sparks' proposal that Stearns was author of the Abbott's Creek church document, T. Nettles cites Robert Devin's claim that Shubal Stearns wrote the covenant for Grassy Creek church around 1757, and if Devin is correct, would indicate a *strictly* Calvinistic framework which Stearns presumably embraced. Says Nettles, "Putting prejudice aside, therefore, the paper trail still confronts us. If Stearns wrote the covenant of the Grassy Creek Church, as Devin claimed, he was indisputably a Calvinist" (Nettles, 2005, p. 169).<sup>143</sup>

The first paragraph in Grassy Creek's church covenant reads:

Holding believers' baptism; the laying on of hands; particular election of grace by the predestination of God in Christ; effectual calling by the Holy Ghost; free justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ; progressive sanctification through God's grace and truth; the final perseverance, or continuance of the saints in grace; the resurrection of these bodies after death, at that day which God has appointed to judge the quick and dead by Jesus Christ, by the power of God, and by the resurrection of Christ; and life everlasting. Amen (Devin, 1880, p. 43).

Paschal casts doubt, however, as to Stearns' literary capability in writing such sophisticated, polished words containing the obvious High Calvinism in the first paragraph as well as the stilted language found throughout the remainder of Grassy Creek's covenant. "Though the main body of it may be due to Stearns, the preamble and concluding paragraph contain Calvinistic elements

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<sup>143</sup> Nettles overreaches to gain this bold assertion, however. First, a single document written 123 years after the fact hardly constitutes a "paper trail." Second, Nettles wrongly asserts Robert Devin *claimed* Shubal Stearns wrote the Grassy Creek covenant. Rather Devin indicated the covenant was *supposed* to be written by Stearns offering no commentary as to the source(s) of the supposition (see footnote following). Third, as late as 1787, Regular Baptists were complaining against Separate Baptists for "having never published nor sanctioned a Confession of Faith" (Howell, 1857, p. 58). If Stearns wrote the Grassy Creek covenant in 1757, why were Virginia Regular Baptists unaware of the written confession by the father of the Separate Baptist movement? Fourth, whether Stearns was a Calvinist is not necessarily in dispute. Rather, what *kind* of Calvinist was he? Or, what *shade* of Calvinism did Stearns embrace? The evidence argued here points to Stearns embracing some form of *mild* to *moderate* Calvinism, a Calvinism that could reasonably be an apt description for Separate Baptists *generally speaking*.

which must have been added after the discussion of the matter in 1775 in the General Association, of which Grassy Creek was a member” (Paschal, 1930, p. 252). Paschal makes a good point, a point consistent with what we know from other testimonies concerning Stearns. Edwards concluded, “Of learning he [Stearns] had but a small share, yet was pretty well acquainted with books” (Edwards, 1770-1792, locs. 1974-1975).<sup>144</sup> Even so, it remains a bit too speculative since Paschal cites no hard evidence to the contrary.<sup>145</sup>

Hence, it seems fair to conclude that, from a linguistic standpoint, it appears unreasonable to assume the author of Abbott’s Creek’s preamble to be the literary author of Grassy Creek’s covenant. Both documents are purported to have been written within the same general timeframe. The literary differences are hardly hidden. Nor is the obvious theological diversity

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<sup>144</sup> Edwards was less kind to Daniel Marshall: “His success is surprising when we consider that he is a man of no bright parts nor eloquence nor learning. Piety, earnestness and honesty are all he can boast of” (Edwards, 1770-1792, p. loc. 3069).

<sup>145</sup> There remains doubt as to the judiciousness of Nettles’ presumptuous judgment that the only reason Paschal questioned whether Stearns wrote the Grassy Creek document was his alleged “inveterate hostility to Calvinism” (Nettles, 2005, p. 167). Alternatively, Nettles bases his “certainty” of Stearns’ authorship on a parenthetical supposition written below the page heading entitled “Section IV The Church Covenant.” Devin states in the parenthesis: “(Supposed to have been written by Elder Shubael Stearns, about 1757)” (Devin, 1880, p. 43). Devin makes no attempt to validate the claim but merely reports it as supposition. Apparently, no similar claim or corroborating evidence is extant. So, Nettles’ “paper trail” begins and ends with an eleven-word parenthetical statement containing no citation. Elsewhere in the volume, Devin explicitly maintains, “I have not been able to find any record of its [Grassy Creek’s] proceedings from its organization to 1769” (Ibid, p. 71). Devin also indicates that Grassy Creek had *never* embraced a confession of faith throughout its history: “Many Baptist churches, (Grassy Creek is one among that number,) have never adopted such Articles of Faith because they have not found any need for them” (Ibid, p. 31). Nettles also appears to ignore other well documented facts about Grassy Creek. For example, Jeremiah Walker was held in the highest esteem by the Grassy Creek church (Ibid, pp. 72-75). Moreover, Samuel Harriss, a Virginia Separate Baptist pastor, groomed by Stearns, was also recognized at Grassy Creek church as its “spiritual guide,” subsequently serving the pastoral office at Grassy Creek from 1770 to 1773 (Ibid, pp. 76; 105). However, both Walker and Harris were well-known to have held “Arminian sentiments” throughout their ministries, hardly consistent with the High Calvinism revealed in Grassy Creek’s church covenant. Paschal notes Walker “continued an Arminian to the end of his days” (Paschal, 1930, p. 331). Concerning both Harris and Walker’s theological loyalties, in 1775, Virginia Separate Baptists took a query at the annual meeting that asked, “Is salvation, by Christ, made possible for every individual of the human race?” (Semple, 1894, p. 49). Semple’s description is telling: “The debate on this query took up the whole of Monday... The weight of talents and of influence seems to have been on the Arminian side. Samuel Harriss, Jeremiah Walker, John Waller, and many other distinguished preachers, stood forward, and zealously, as well as ably, supported the argument in favour of universal provision,” what Semple identifies as the “Arminian party” in contrast to the “Calvanistic [sic] solution.” Hence, to insist as does Nettles that Stearns wrote the Grassy Creek’s covenant raises more problems than his proposal solves. Better to follow Devin and just indicate that some have *supposed* Stearns to have written the Grassy Creek church covenant and leave it at that.

between the two statements lacking. Hence, it is possible Stearns wrote either of the two documents but nonetheless remains improbable he wrote both.

In conclusion, given the entire corpus of Sparks' argument for General Baptist influence over Stearns, it seems more probable than not that Stearns either wrote or was responsible for Abbott's Creek's brief preamble than to be the literary composer of Grassy Creek's polished, *strict* Calvinistic covenant.<sup>146</sup>

Another indication Stearns was influenced by General Baptists, according to Sparks, is Stearns' aggressive tendency to control associational matters he allegedly picked up from New England's General Six Principle Baptists:

This author theorizes that Shubal Stearns did indeed adopt an associational polity based upon his prior experience... He must have gotten it from the only organized Baptists he had known in New England during his three-year tenure as a Baptist pastor, the same Baptists who had probably introduced him to so many of the beliefs and customs he introduced into Christian worship in the backcountry... the old General Baptists of either Wightman Jacob's small Windham County Yearly Meeting in Connecticut, the older Rhode Island Yearly Meeting in which Valentine and Timothy Wightman, Daniel Fiske, and Joshua Morse had been raised up to the ministry, or, very probably, both groups." In short, Stearns "proposed to give his followers the only type of Baptist association with which he had ever been acquainted (Sparks, 2001, p. 90).<sup>147</sup>

Assuming the centralizing leadership profile Sparks concludes about Stearns, the decision of the Sandy Creek association to split into three associations in 1770 must have been a psychological blow to Stearns. Paschal writes, "it was unanimously agreed to divide the Association into three, one for each of the States of North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. That for North Carolina kept the name of Sandy Creek and has kept it unto this day" (Paschal, 1930, p. 254).<sup>148</sup> Before Stearns would pass on to his heavenly reward, he would experience much of his efforts crumble

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<sup>146</sup> Also significant is the fact that no extant evidence claims Stearns wrote Grassy Creek's covenant though one 1880 document reports without citing sources the covenant was "supposed to have been written by Elder Shubael Stearns" (see discussion above).

<sup>147</sup> W. Barnes indicates the tendency toward centralized control embedded within the Sandy Creek association may have been Stearns' baggage brought in from his Congregational-Presbyterian upbringing, "being never wholly freed from the ideas of ecclesiology [he] inherited from the past" (Barnes, 1954, p. 7).

<sup>148</sup> Virginia took the name "General Association" while Separates in South Carolina took "Congaree Association" (Mosteller, 1952, p. 30).

before his eyes.<sup>149</sup> Many of the strongest churches would be gutted after the Regulator's War was over (Sparks, 2001, pp. 175-177).<sup>150</sup> Little River church once boasting over 500 members rapidly decreased to under 50. Great Cohara Swamp church reduced to 8 members. But most saddening of all for Stearns, Sandy Creek's soar to over 600 congregants fell to a mere 14 members, less than when it was organized in 1755.

Summarizing, it seems best to view Stearns as a spiritual father to Separate Baptists, a controlling patriarch over all associational matters, always looking out for them, and ready to make decisions in their stead that he believed to be in their best interests. "Preachers and laymen gathered about him with filial reverence, calling him Father Stearns and listening without question to his teachings" (Hufman, October 1897, p. 8).<sup>151</sup> While Stearns probably retained some of his Congregational heritage, including some theological tenets tending to be more Calvinistic, nonetheless, the General Baptist influence he received, along with his primary focus on new birth preaching and untiring zeal in aggressive evangelism with open invitations to all listeners to immediately respond to gospel presentation, diluted the *strictly* Calvinistic tendencies he may have once embraced to the point where useless wrangling over Calvinism was something about which he had neither time nor interest. If Stearns was a *strict* Calvinist, he not only fooled his friends, but he also successfully fooled many who have studied his life and ministry since.

#### 3.4.5 Separate Baptists and *Modified* Calvinism

Like precisely placing Separate Baptists' leading light on a theological continuum, it remains no less difficult to accurately describe the soteriological beliefs of Separate Baptists as a faith group. Indeed, it may not be inaccurate to suggest that Separate Baptists were largely a motley crew of theological hybrids with a high sense of local-church tolerance for varying beliefs, especially when it came to the Calvinistic "doctrines of grace."<sup>152</sup> Contrary to Ascol and Nettles' bold indications

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<sup>149</sup> Not that Stearns' work was in vain. To the contrary, while the area around Sandy Creek was surely devastated, churches birthed by the mother Separate Baptist church continued to multiply all over the southern United States.

<sup>150</sup> For a thorough treatment of the Regulator's War, the Battle of Alamance, and its relationship to and effect upon Sandy Creek church and association, see Sparks, 2001, pp. 129-180; Lumpkin, 1961, pp. 72-86; Paschal, 1930, pp. 230-247; Purefoy, 1859, pp. 44-47; Thompson, 1902; Williams, 1901, pp. 53-55.

<sup>151</sup> James Reed referred to Stearns as our "reverend old father, Shubal Stearns" (Carson, January 1994, p. 30).

<sup>152</sup> By "hybrid" is not meant heterodoxy. Nor does "hybrid" imply apathy toward correct biblical beliefs. Rather, by "hybrid" is meant mixed beliefs on those matters Separates considered non-essential. Not that election,

that Separate Baptists were theologically *strict* Calvinists much in the same sense as Regular Baptists, the evidence points toward a different, more diverse theological profile.

Matthew Cook argues Separate Baptists throughout their history were plagued with suspicions of holding to Arminianism, or at least to ignoring it within their ranks. As late as 1773, the Charleston Association refused to correspond with the Congaree Association (Separate Baptist) based primarily upon the former's suspicion that the latter held to "Arminian tendencies" (Cook, 2009, p. 101).<sup>153</sup>

Reaching back to 1790, John Asplund divided Separate Baptists from Particular Baptists based upon the former's adherence to General Baptist principles. In fact, Asplund clumped "The Armenian, Freewill, Separate, or General Baptists" all into one category, viewing all Separates as basically holding to the theology of James Arminius (Asplund, 1794, p. 6). While Asplund was mistaken in his categories, and perhaps even simplistic in his conclusions, his theological instincts were astutely correct in discerning theological diversity to be very much a part of Baptist life.<sup>154</sup>

In his study of Separate Baptists, J. Mosteller mentions five characteristics of Separate Baptist theology, the second and chief of which was a "Modified Calvinism." (Mosteller, 1952, p. 36). "The major theological characteristic to be noticed in the Separate Baptists, however, had to do with their approach to Calvinism. They sailed an even, middle course between the Scylla of hyper-Calvinism and the Charybdis of extreme Arminianism, the former of which dried up the Particular Baptists and the latter had watered down the General Baptists. As a matter of fact, they made little mention of these doctrines [i.e. the "doctrines of grace"]."

Goen stressed the decided theological differences apparent between the old Calvinists and the Separate Baptists toward the "doctrines of grace" (Goen, 1962, pp. 284-295). According to Goen,

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predestination, atonement, etc. were negotiable so far as the Bible was concerned. Instead Separates refused to be strapped by *official* definitions proposed by man-made creeds and confessions preferring simple biblical language to define the terms.

<sup>153</sup> Cook claims Congaree's moderator, Phillip Mulkey, hand-carried another request from his association to correspond with Charleston two years later in 1775 only to be rejected again by Charleston. Cook speculates the reason this time may have been resistance from Charleston to Mulkey himself. By the end of the Revolutionary War, the Congaree Association disbanded, and the Bethel Association would rise from the ashes.

<sup>154</sup> However, Asplund assisted in perpetuating confusion with his overly simplistic understanding of Separate Baptists.

Separate Baptists' focus on "revivalism guarded them from the stultifying effects of rigid predestinarianism" that was indicative of the Philadelphia Baptists. "Theirs [i.e. Separate Baptists] was an evangelical Calvinism, and not so extreme as that of the Baptists of the Middle Colonies." In fact, the urgency behind Separate Baptist preachers who were wed to the "New light stir" created by Whitefield's fiery sermons "pressed for immediate commitment to Christ, pleading for an inward experience of heartfelt religion rather than a clear understanding of some doctrinal system." Juxtaposed to the "original Calvinism" was a Calvinism that prevailed in Separate Baptist life toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a Calvinism that was "greatly modified"; a Calvinism that "dismissed doctrinal controversy in order to make way for experimental faith" and could be aptly summarized by the famous edict of Separate Baptist leader, John Leland (1754-1841), "the preaching that has been most blessed of God, and most profitable to men, is *the doctrine of sovereign grace in the salvation of souls, mixed with a little of what is called Arminianism*" (italics original). Goen indicates the *strict* Calvinism that may have been held by first generation Separate Baptists continued to be "significantly modified" and finally "culminated in the New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1833)."

What is more, unlike many other historians, Goen includes within the Separate Baptist community inspired by the "*New light stir*," Benjamin Randall and rise of Free Will Baptists.

Perhaps it is not amiss to repeat that there was one group of New Light Baptists with separatist origins that discarded the Calvinistic background entirely. Benjamin Randall, a separatist from the Congregational church at Newcastle, New Hampshire, baptized by William Hooper at Madbury in 1776, was "preaching up" his religious experiences when some other Baptist ministers asked why he did not preach up election as he should. He replied, "Because I do not believe"; and then began to study the question in the New Testament, which confirmed him in his Arminianism. Out of the ensuing collision with Calvinistic Baptists, other preachers sided with him and the Free will movement (a name attached by their enemies and ultimately accepted by them) was born (Goen, 1962, p. 287).

If Goen is correct to include Arminian Baptists within the larger Separate Baptist theological sphere, then it seems historians who exclude from Separate Baptists those Baptists who definitively leaned more toward Arminian sentiments end up begging the historical question.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> The Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature connects Randall with Separate Baptists (Strong & McClintock, 1894, p. 14) as does Paul Basden in his unpublished doctoral dissertation (Basden, 1986, p.

B. Leonard speaks of the contributions of Separate Baptists to Southern Baptist life, one of which was, while remaining moderately Calvinistic, they nonetheless brought a “more Arminian approach to theology” to Baptists in the south (Leonard, April 1981, p. 3). Lumpkin states “Most Separate Baptists were modified Calvinists although they were not systematic theologians. There were considerable variety of belief among them. They avoided the universalist tendencies of some Arminians, but they either rejected or had little to say about the doctrines of predestination, limited atonement, and election of Calvinism” (Lumpkin, 1961, p. 62). J. Andersen argues that “Regular Baptist Calvinism was modified significantly by Separate Baptist revivalism,” a revivalism, Andersen contends, served to “Arminianize” the churches toward greater emphasis on free will, individual choice, and salvation for “whosoever will” believe... Moderate Calvinism resulted as it had earlier in England” (Andersen, October 1994, p. 17). K. Eitel states that Separate Baptists so emphasized free will decisions for Christ in response to gospel preaching that it “eventually led to such a modified form of Calvinism that it is hardly distinguishable from Arminian convictions” (Eitel, August 1998, pp. 20-21).

#### 3.4.6 Separate Baptists and Confessions

Separate Baptists’ aversion to confessions of faith remains well-established. Complaints about Separates’ lack of confessional practice go back as far as the first encounters Separates had with Regular Baptists in Virginia. Illustrative of many such encounters culminating in public complaints by Regular Baptists toward Separate Baptists commenced on August 10, 1787 at the annual meeting of the General Committee and recorded by R. Howell: “the Regulars complained that the Separates were not sufficiently explicit in their principles, having never published nor sanctioned a Confession of Faith” (Howell, 1857, p. 58). Similarly, William Fristoe writes, “The regular Baptists were jealous of the separate Baptists, because, as yet, they never formed nor adopted any system of doctrine, or made any confession of their faith, more than verbally...”

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93). It must be noted, however, that Randall, while converted by and influenced under the preaching of Whitefield in similar manner as was Stearns and Marshall, it wasn’t until 1770 that Randall was converted under Whitefield’s preaching, and not until 1776 that Randall began his itinerate evangelism that led to the rise of Free Will Baptists (McGlothlin, 1911, p. 308; McGlothlin, 1911).

(Fristoe, 1808, p. 15). Up until this time at least, Regular Baptists in Virginia were apparently unaware of any known confession of faith publicly embraced by Separate Baptists.<sup>156</sup>

The “*New light stir*” Separates experienced undoubtedly brought to surface a sense of settled resentment toward strict establishment and dead tradition rooted within their New England congregations. Confessions would have represented tradition as well as signify an obligation to embrace and/or affirm extra-biblical authority. As A. Wardin explains, “Separate Baptists, arising out of the Great Awakening and contending against a strong ecclesiastical establishment, were wary of confessions, feeling they were too restrictive and replaced the Bible as the final authority” (Albert W. Wardin, December 2002, p. 470). J. D. Huffman relates, “[Separate Baptists], by reaction from what they had experienced and observed of creeds in the State church of New England, were opposed to all confessions of faith. As late as 1790 the Sandy Creek and Yadkin Associations had not adopted one” (Huffman, 1898, p. 41).

Some early Separate Baptists who were also *strict* Calvinists like Isaac Backus were reluctant at first to join associations that had embraced confessions but eventually succumbed on the condition that associational confessions would not occasion the lording it over the local churches.<sup>157</sup> On the other hand, early Separate Baptist leader, John Leland, vociferously opposed confessions of faith. In commenting upon the 1787 merger between Separate Baptists and Regular Baptists in Virginia, Leland questioned the viable use of confessions in a religiously tolerant culture like the recently acquired freedom of religion Virginia obtained at much cost. “In kingdoms and states, where a system of religion is established by law ... it becomes necessary... [to declare a confession] ... but in a government like that of Virginia, where all men believe and worship as they please ... what need of a confession of faith?” He then likens confessions to a “Virgin Mary between the souls of men and the scriptures” and rhetorically concludes “Had a system of religion been essential to salvation, or even to the happiness of the saints, would not

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<sup>156</sup> If in 1787 Virginia Regular Baptists were unaware of any well-known confession of faith embraced largely by Separate Baptists, questions arise over the supposition R. Devin makes concerning Shubal Stearns penning the Grassy Creek covenant in 1757, a full 30 years earlier (Devin, 1880, p. 43). See also, discussion above on Stearns’ influence over Separate Baptists.

<sup>157</sup> Wardin writes: “With his Separate Baptist background, Isaac Backus, a champion of religious liberty, hesitated to join the new Warren Association in New England, which, by the way, had adopted the Philadelphia Confession. He finally joined with the assurance that the association had no jurisdiction over the churches” (Ibid).

Jesus, who was faithful in all his house, have left us one?” Moreover, Leland wonders why a man should “be called a heretick [sic] because he cannot believe what he cannot believe, though he believes the Bible with all his heart?” For Leland, confessions too often “check any further pursuit after truth, confine the mind into a particular way of reasoning, and give rise to frequent separations.” To the objections that inevitably arise implying that “hereticks [sic] are always averse to confessions of faith,” Leland responds, “I wish I could say as much of tyrants” (Leland, 1845, p. 114).

Mosteller centers the reluctance of Separate Baptists to embrace confessions squarely upon their avowed biblicism. “Having turned to the Scripture for direction in church government and the ordinances, the Separate Baptists continued not only to preach it, but to cling to it as the final authority. This devotion to the Bible accounts for their reluctance to accept any creed” (Mosteller, 1952, p. 36).<sup>158</sup> Separate Baptists themselves feared “adopting a confession of faith would only shackle them; that it would lead to formality and deadness, and divert them from the Bible” (Fristoe, 1808, p. 16). Of the early Separate Baptists of Connecticut, A. G. Palmer describes their incipient ant-confessionalism.

They left truth where the apostles left it, not to be transmitted by means of creeds and heartless subscriptions, but to be handed down from generation to generation in the experience of those who should embrace it, trusting in God that the line of the true spiritual priesthood would continue unbroken, and the church thus be perpetuated to the end of time.

[...]

To us it seems evident, that God, through the agency of these men, was preparing to give the world a practical illustration of *that great truth*, which the church has ever been so slow to learn, namely: that the *Bible understood*, the *Bible believed*, the *Bible loved*, the *Bible practiced*, is the *best*, the *only* safeguard to ecclesiastical purity (Palmer, 1844, pp. 25-26; Italics original).

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<sup>158</sup> See also, McBeth, 1987, p. 233.

Walter Shurden contends that the Southern Baptist Convention, from 1845 to 1925,<sup>159</sup> basically embraced an “anti-confessional disposition,” a disposition it inherited partly but directly from Separate Baptists.

Separate Baptists released a devotion to freedom which is without parallel in Baptist history. Because they wanted religious freedom, they rejected any infringement of the state in matters of faith. Because they wanted ecclesiastical freedom for the local church, they tended to be suspicious of associational authority. Because they wanted theological freedom for the local church and the individual conscience, they were apprehensive of confessions of faith (Shurden, 1979, pp. 69-70).

### 3.4.7 Confessional Merger of Separate Baptists and Regular Baptists

Notwithstanding the formidable resistance Separate Baptists maintained toward embracing confessions of faith, they eventually gave in and moved forward apparently perceiving the only way to gain unity amongst the Baptist family was to identify themselves with a written confession. To do so would mean compromise for both parties. “United we stand, divided we fall” became the apparent organizing principle (Goen, 1962, p. 290). Thus, Separates and Regulars began the long journey toward union.<sup>160</sup>

The first official attempt at union of Separate and Regular Baptists took place in Virginia in 1787 (Mosteller, 1952, p. 40). The doctrinal basis of the union proposed was the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (McBeth, 1987, p. 233).<sup>161</sup> Yet Separate Baptists would only accept

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<sup>159</sup> The timeline Shurden chose corresponds with the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention (1845) to the first convention-wide adoption of a Southern Baptist confession of faith (1925). For almost half of its existence, the convention had no confession of faith. More later concerning Southern Baptist confessions.

<sup>160</sup> It should not be supposed that the merger was either completed in a short time or that there were not serious difficulties *after* official mergers took place. Rather, proposed mergers between the two groups of Baptists failed several times before becoming relatively successful. John Leland mentions several failed attempts of Virginia Separate and Regular Baptists to unite prior to 1787: “Several attempts were made, at different times, to unite the Regular and Separate Associations together, but all proved in vain” (Leland, 1845, p. 113).

<sup>161</sup> Mosteller apparently overlooks the Separate General Association of Virginia’s attempt at union four years earlier in 1783 (Lumpkin, 1969, p. 353). They too based union with Regular Baptists upon the PCF and accepted caveats in accepting the confession. “We do not mean that every person is to be bound to the strict observance of every thing therein contained, nor do we mean to make it, in any respect, superior or equal to the scriptures, in matters of faith and practice...” (Semple, 1894, pp. 92-93).

Philadelphia's confession *partially*.<sup>162</sup> Semple records Separate Baptists' 1787 terms of union based upon the PCF:

To prevent the confession of faith from usurping a tyrannical power over the conscience of any, we do not mean, that every person is bound to the strict observance of every thing therein contained; yet that it holds forth the essential truths of the gospel, and that the doctrine of salvation by Christ and free unmerited grace alone, ought to be believed by every christian, and maintained by every minister of the gospel. Upon these terms we are united; and desire hereafter that the names Regular and Separate, be buried in oblivion; and that, from henceforth, we shall be known by the name of the United Baptist Churches of Christ, in Virginia (Semple, 1894, pp. 100-101).

Tom Nettles views the union based upon the PCF to indicate that Separate Baptists were just as *strictly* Calvinistic as was the Regular Baptists. "When Separate Baptists and Regular Baptists united in Virginia, the Philadelphia Confession of Faith formed the doctrinal basis. Therefore, by the time that union was complete, Baptist life in the South was characterized by strong doctrinal commitments to evangelical Calvinism..." (Nettles, 2006, p. xl). Nettles acknowledges elsewhere Separates' 1783 adoption of the PCF, along with stated reservations, "Separate Baptists had opposed written confessions, but they did accept this one [i.e. PCF] along with an additional statement that such formal acceptance did not bind every Baptist to strict observance of every detail, nor should anyone ever think that the confession stood above or even equal to Scripture itself" (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 344).

But Nettles gives insufficient credence to the stated reluctance of Virginia Separate Baptists in embracing the confession in full and the inherent problems arising from unidentified "details" in the confession that might be excluded from "strict observance." Nor does Nettles mention the terms of union explicitly and positively identified by Virginia Separate Baptists as the basis of the union in 1787; namely, a) "it [i.e. the confession] holds forth the essential truths of the gospel"; b) "that the doctrine of salvation by Christ and free unmerited grace alone, ought to be believed by every christian, and maintained by every minister of the gospel." Consequently, "Upon *these terms* we are united" (italics added).

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<sup>162</sup> *Partially* accepting confessions of faith as the basis of union could predictably be problematic, especially when the caveats are either ill-explained or entirely without mention. More on this later.

According to their stated terms of union, the entire PCF could conceivably, for union purposes, be reduced to basically two propositions.<sup>163</sup> First, within the PCF the biblical gospel is present. Second, the believer's life and message is summed up in salvation resting on unmerited grace alone. Leland described Virginia Baptists' terms of union similarly: "they united upon the principle of receiving the confession of faith ... as containing the great essential doctrines of the gospel, yet, not in so strict a sense, that all are obliged to believe everything therein contained" (Leland, 1845, p. 114).<sup>164</sup> Their desired outcome was, "that the names *Regular* and *Separate*, be buried in oblivion; and that, from henceforth, we shall be known by the name of the *United Baptist Churches of Christ, in Virginia*" (Semple, 1894, p. 101; italics original).

Separate Baptists and Regular Baptists in the Carolinas and Georgia followed similarly the example of Virginia in practice but not in formality. Apparently, no other southern Baptist state convention attempted to officially unite Separate and Regular Baptists but Kentucky.

As for Baptists in Kentucky, "The Baptists were the pioneers of religion in Kentucky. They came with the earliest permanent settlers" (Collins, 1850, p. 108). In 1782, Kentucky had three Baptist churches all of which were affiliated with the Regular Baptist order (Spencer, 1886, p. 32). Ironically, four out of the six known preachers at the time had migrated from Virginia and were associated with the Separate Baptists. In fact, according to Spencer, "Of the first twenty-five Baptist preachers that settled in Kentucky, twenty are known to have been Separate Baptists in Virginia and North Carolina" (Spencer, 1886, p. 92). The year 1785 was a busy year for Kentucky Baptists. Its first three Baptist associations were organized--Elkhorn, Salem, and South Kentucky—the first two of which were Regular order and the last a Separate Baptist association (Collins, 1850, p. 109).

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<sup>163</sup> It hardly bears stating that Virginia Regular Baptists would have interpreted neither the PCF in such a reductionist form nor Separate Baptists' terms of union in such sweeping manner.

<sup>164</sup> Few Separate Baptists would predictably have trouble embracing these terms of union. And, why would they? Since it was plainly stated that they were not "bound to the strict observance of every thing therein contained," and nothing is defined as necessary to accept but the "essential truths of the gospel, and that the doctrine of salvation by Christ and free unmerited grace alone," then Separate Baptists who disputed issues pertaining to *strictly* Calvinistic interpretations might feel freedom to do so. It seems to follow that only *partially accepting* a specific written confession is *defacto fully rejecting* the specific confession as written.

Spencer cites three failed attempts at merger of the Kentucky Separate and Regular Baptists before a final success (Spencer, 1886, p. 483).<sup>165</sup> The first formal attempt to unite Separate and Regular Baptists in Kentucky was in 1785 and unfortunately ended in a colossal disaster. On June 25<sup>th</sup> of that year, messengers from five Regular Baptist churches met at South Elkhorn church in Fayette county to explore a merger between the two Baptist groups.<sup>166</sup> No time was apparently wasted getting to the heart of the issue concerning union. The first question the assembly entertained was whether Philadelphia's confession should be "strictly adhered to, as the rule of our communion, or whether a suspension thereof, for the sake of society, be best?" (Spencer, 1886, p. 108). The jury went out but quickly came right back in with the worst possible verdict delivered to those anticipating a union. "It is agreed that the said recited Confession of Faith be strictly adhered to."<sup>167</sup> Unlike Virginia Regular Baptists that allowed the confession to be accepted but "not in so strict a sense, that all are obliged to believe everything therein contained," Kentucky Baptists demanded the PCF be "strictly adhered to."<sup>168</sup>

The result seemed predictable. Not only did Separate Baptists decline the terms of union, Spencer reports the hoped-for union between Separate Baptists and Regular Baptists tanked, and the relationship between them plummeted even farther down into more divisive depths.

The proffered Union was rejected, and the breach made wider. The contention between the parties became more distressing. The Separates succeeded in drawing off factions from a number of their rival churches ... This state of confusion continued about fifteen years after this attempt to form a Union between the Separates and Regulars, and

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<sup>165</sup> The three failed attempts were 1785, 1787, and 1793.

<sup>166</sup> Spencer informs us there were also some Separate Baptist representatives present but their names and churches failed to get recorded.

<sup>167</sup> Considering Regular Baptists' action Spencer here records as demanding strict adherence to the PCF, he makes some confusing claims elsewhere. First, he claims that while Kentucky Regular Baptists accepted the PCF, they apparently held no scruples in changing it themselves when they judged it to be in error: "The Regular Baptists adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, both in their several churches and also in their associations, amending, from time to time, such expressions as seemed to them erroneous" (Spencer, 1886, p. 483). This appears on its face a double standard exacted upon Separate Baptists. Second, Spencer erroneously claims Virginia Separate Baptists "almost unanimously" adopted the PCF in merging with Regular Baptists: "The Separate Baptists of Virginia finally adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith almost unanimously, and thereby paved the way for an easy union between them and the Regular Baptists..." (Ibid, p. 482). Spencer is at best ambiguous in his wording concerning Virginia Separates' act of *partially* adopting Philadelphia's confession.

<sup>168</sup> Benedict tells of correspondence that took place between Kentucky Baptists and Virginia Baptists on merging together, Virginia laying before them the plan they followed for the successful merger (Benedict, 1813, p. 238), a plan in which Kentucky Regular Baptists apparently were uninterested. Unlike Virginia, perhaps they interpreted a plan that allowed so many unstated caveats to the confession to be entirely too hazardous to genuine union.

doubtless did much to stir up strife among brethren, and retard the progress of religion (p. 108).

Eight years later in 1793, Kentucky's Tates Creek Association of United Baptists<sup>169</sup> was formed of Tates Creek Baptist Church and four others that did not agree with the South Kentucky Association turning down once again Elkhorn association's terms of union to unite on the basis of strict adherence to the PCF (Spencer, 1886, p. 128), another attempt at uniting Regular and Separate Baptists (Benedict, 1813, p. 238).<sup>170</sup> Spencer indicates that upon organization, the Tates Creek association "did not, at first, adopt any confession of faith, but *in general terms* agreed to that adopted by Elkhorn and Salem," the confession of which was the PCF (Spencer, 1886, pp. 278ff, italics added). But Spencer goes on to suggest that embracing the PCF even in *general terms* "caused such uneasiness among some of the churches, that she was compelled to withdraw her correspondence the next year."<sup>171</sup> So Tates Creek association seems to have tried the Virginia plan of accepting the Regular Baptists' confession *in general terms*. However, it too ended in failure. Once again, the attempted union drove the wedge between Separate and Regular Baptists deeper.

W. Davidson states that the South Kentucky Association's minutes reveal that Kentucky Separates saw themselves as a part of the union Virginia Baptists experienced in 1787, and therefore they were content to leave it at that (Davidson, 2001, p. 113). According to Davidson, the South Kentucky minutes read:

1. What was the Separate Baptists first constituted into a society upon, in Kentucky?  
Ans. The Bible.
2. How did we become united with the Baptists in Virginia, called United Baptists? Ans. On a letter the Committee of Baptists, in Richmond, directed to be written to us, in Kentucky, bearing date, October 2, 1788, from under the signature of Reuben Ford and William Webber.
3. Did those terms oblige us to receive any part of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith?  
Ans. No.

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<sup>169</sup> According to Spencer, "This was the first application of the term "United Baptists," in Kentucky" (Spencer, 1886, p. 105).

<sup>170</sup> See also, Davidson, 2001, p. 112.

<sup>171</sup> It was not until 1797 that correspondence resumed. Spencer does not indicate any terms agreed.

4. Do we agree to abide by the constitution in terms of union with United Baptists of Virginia? Ans. We do.

John Peck (1789-1858) offers a more unique but perceptive analysis of Kentucky Baptists during this era (Peck, 1852).<sup>172</sup> Even though there seemed to exist interest in the union of Separate Baptists and Regular Baptists, Peck describes the existence of a theological backdrop among Kentucky Baptists far more intense and complicated than usually expressed by historians. Indicative of Peck's analysis is a hopeless theological division existing in Kentucky at this time that would exceed any reasonable parameters of dispute over a confession of faith, and, unlike Virginia, preclude a potential merge:

A portion of the ministers of the Regular Baptists, who came to Kentucky at this period, would be now regarded as hyper-Calvinistic in doctrine... Hence...metaphors were often interpreted literally, figurative language misunderstood, and passages relating to the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus" misinterpreted, and the impression left on the minds of their hearers that Jesus Christ came into the world as a Saviour, and suffered and died to purchase the elect.

The sacrifice of Christ was held forth as literally the payment of a debt for his people. Sinners were "dead in trespasses and sins;" therefore, they could no more help themselves than a dead man; and as it is the office work of the Holy Spirit to quicken the dead, the mode of preaching the doctrine of regeneration as the work of the Almighty Spirit, was in such a form, and by such illustrations, as to leave the impression that the gospel was preached, not to convert sinners, but to comfort God's people...

[...]

The hyper-Calvinistic doctrines at a subsequent period became more prominent, and speculations were taught, until antimonianism in spirit, theory and practice prevailed to a ruinous extent among the churches in the Mississippi Valley...<sup>173</sup>

If Peck is correct, polarizing theological opposites were at play in Kentucky that may not have either existed or were prominent in Virginia. Unchecked Hyper-Calvinism on one side with a reactionary polarization on the other. Hence, the complete breakdown of union between

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<sup>172</sup> John Mason Peck was a pioneer Baptist missionary mostly in Illinois and Missouri during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He worked tirelessly planting churches, organizing societies, and building schools. He assisted in organizing the Baptist Convention of Illinois, serving as its first president and subsequently after that for many years. Peck was instrumental in defeating the 1823-1824 push for Illinois becoming a slave state. For a brief bio of Peck's life, see Allen, 1958, pp. 1080-1081. For a thorough account of Peck's contributions, see Peterson, R. L., Spring 1969. The Life of John Mason Peck. *Central Bible Quarterly*, 12(1), pp. 2-30.

<sup>173</sup> Peck does not limit his analysis to the state of Kentucky; rather, as his title suggests, generally to the Mississippi Valley. His essay focuses mostly on Kentucky and Tennessee. Nor does Peck limit his discussion to Baptists but includes Presbyterians among others.

Separate and Regular Baptists may have been prolonged many years beyond other states like Virginia, the Carolinas, and perhaps Georgia.<sup>174</sup>

Union did, however, occur for Kentucky Baptists in 1801. Collins attributes the success of the Separate and Regular Baptist union directly to the Great Revival in Kentucky beginning in 1799.

In 1799, commenced what is known to this day as the Great Revival, which continued through several years. During its prevalence, the accessions to the churches in every part of the state were unprecedented. [...] Several unsuccessful efforts had been made to effect a union between the Regular and Separate Baptists in Kentucky; but the Great Revival removed all obstacles. Melted into love by its influences, these kindred parties then mingled into one (Collins, 1850, pp. 109-110).<sup>175</sup>

Whether or not the Great Revival was the definitive occasion, Kentucky Baptists came together once again to consider merging. “The convention met at Howards Creek (Old Providence Meeting-house), in Clark county, on the second Saturday in October, 1801” (Ibid, p. 545). The Terms of General Union was unanimously adopted by both parties and would constitute the confession of faith upon which the Separate and Regular Baptists would base their united front.<sup>176</sup>

The content of the articles in the Terms of General Union remains surprising, however, given the robust insistence the Regular Baptists displayed for so many years over “strictly adhering to” Philadelphia’s confession. In fact, the influence of Philadelphia seems nowhere evident in

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<sup>174</sup> David Benedict similarly alludes to a polarization among Baptists at the century’s turn. ‘Forty years ago large bodies of our people were in a state of ferment and agitation, in consequence of some modifications of their old Calvinistic creed, as displayed in the writings of the late Andrew Fuller... [who]... maintained that the atonement of Christ was general in its nature, but particular in its application, in opposition to our old divines, who held that Christ died for the elect only... Dr. John Gill... [as] a noted advocate for the old system of a limited atonement, the terms "Gillites" and "Fullerites" were often applied to the parties in this discussion. Those who espoused the views of Mr. Fuller were denominated Arminians by the Gillite men, while they, in their turn, styled their opponents Hyper-Calvinists’ (Benedict, 1860, p. 135). Benedict was apparently a convinced *strict* Calvinist; thus, the context of the quote above must be seen in light of his overall lamentation that the old Baptist orthodoxy was waning away—“...But so greatly has the standard of orthodoxy been lowered...” (Ibid, p. 142).

<sup>175</sup> Spencer also suggests the Great Revival was instrumental in the union of Separates and Regulars (Spencer, 1886, pp. 535-554). For more on the Great Revival, see Nolin, 1922, pp. 62-65 (Nolin depends heavily upon Spencer). For a biographical treatment of the Great Revival of Kentucky from a non-Baptist outsider, see West, W. G., 1954. *Barton Warren Stone: Early American Advocate of Christian Unity*. Nashville: The Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

<sup>176</sup> The 1801 Terms of General Union is composed of 11 brief articles, and because of its significance, a copy is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

Kentucky Baptists' terms of union. Regulars appear to have conceded virtually all the *strict* Calvinistic doctrine indicative of the PCF when composing the confession. Containing eleven very brief statements as the theological basis of their union, Articles 3 through 5 articulate the statement's confessional expression of soteriology:

3d. That by nature we are fallen and depraved creatures.

4th. That salvation, regeneration, sanctification, and justification, are by the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

5th. That the saints will finally persevere through grace to glory (Baker, 1966, p. 46).

Philadelphia's elaborate focus on Adam's fall, humanity's fall in him, imputation of Adamic guilt, and the utter inability to respond in faith unless being one of the certain and fixed number of the eternally elect who would be irresistibly born again is replaced with a simple affirmation that as creatures we are "fallen and depraved" (Article 3). Applied redemption is summed up in four biblical words, the reality and application of which, is made available to humankind by four simple acts of Jesus revealed in the gospel (Article 4), with the genuinely redeemed person persevering to the end (Article 5). Nothing about Unconditional Election or even the doctrine of election at all for that matter. Nothing exists about predestination, foreordination, covenant of redemption, effectual call, Adamic guilt, meticulous providence, or a repeated focus on the elect, key elements of *strict* Calvinistic confessions like the PCF.<sup>177</sup> *Strict* Calvinism, or perhaps any Calvinism at all, seems to be scrubbed as theological criteria for Separate and Regular Baptists to unite. Arguably, the only distinctive Calvinism present is the **P** in **TULIP**. Thus, Kentucky's Terms of General Union for merging Separate and Regular Baptists seems to display little more than one-point Calvinism.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> As the evidence below indicates, at least 35 associations in 8 southern states adopted confessions later in the century that possessed no article of faith addressing the doctrine of election. Kentucky's terms of union may very well have been the inspiration behind those confessions. See *Appendix B* at the end of this research for various abstracts of faith lacking an article on election.

<sup>178</sup> S. Ahlstrom incredibly concludes of Kentucky's terms of union that while "Adherence to the Philadelphia Confession was not so strict as the Regular Baptists had hoped," "the creedal basis on which [they] united was at least as Reformed in temper as say, the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. [...] a basically Calvinistic theology, with concessions made only to those whose interpretation of Christ's work was in the tradition of Jacobus Arminius—who was, after all, a Reformed theologian" (Ahlstrom, 2004, pp. 441-442). Ahlstrom's remarks display little appreciation for Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism not to mention the long, and at times, bitter conflict over *strict* Calvinism in American Baptist life. One would be hard-pressed to categorize a confession as basically Calvinistic or "Reformed in temper" that lacked even a mention of election or predestination.

Especially noteworthy is article 9: “9th. And that the preaching *Christ tasted death for every man*, shall be no bar to communion” (italics original), an obvious allusion to general atonement. Hence, a foundation plank in *strict* Calvinism’s theological platform (i.e. the “doctrines of grace”; the **L** in **TULIP**) while not denied is explicitly conceded by Regular Baptists in their compromise, a compromise seemingly unthinkable and considered “heresy” or, at least, “heterodoxy” only a decade and a half earlier by Kentucky Regular Baptists.

Spencer indicates the Terms of General Union was “unanimously approved by the convention” and subsequently recommended to Kentucky churches for individual adoption. Consequently, the confession was “speedily accepted by all the Baptists in the State”; that a “golden age” had begun among Kentucky Baptists resulting in “divisions [being] healed” with “universal harmony” prevailing at last (Spencer, 1886, pp. 545, 547). If the confessional terms of union was the primary tangible instrument that brought Kentucky Regular and Separate Baptists theologically together, it seems conclusive that *strict* Calvinism as reflected in the Philadelphia confessional tradition was the major concession Regular Baptists placed on the table.<sup>179</sup>

The harmony Kentucky Regular and Separate Baptists would experience would not last, however. While the terms “Regular” and “Separate” were, for the most part, done away with the 1801 union, the theological division which constituted the substance of the separation in the first place did not die. The controversy over Calvinism in Kentucky would awaken once again.

#### 3.4.8 Reuben Ross, Kentucky Baptists, and the Waning of Confessionally *Strict* Calvinism

Reuben Ross (1776-1860) was born in North Carolina and converted to Christ in his mid-20s (Allen, 1958, p. 1174).<sup>180</sup> He was baptized at the Skewarky Baptist Church, a church associated

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<sup>179</sup> It seems strange that neither Ascol nor Nettles offers perspective on Kentucky’s terms of union. Nettles mentions the Terms in reference to its first article on the role of Scripture (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 346), but nothing else appears to be found in Nettles’ works. Also, an advanced google search on Founders Ministries’ resource center turned up no commentary on the terms of union Kentucky Baptists adopted. Nor does there seem to be any treatment in Founders Journal. Nor did M. Cook address Kentucky’s Terms of Union in his research.

<sup>180</sup> A brief but helpful biographical article on Ross taken from *The Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, 6 volumes, edited by William S. Powell (1979-1996) is available online (Ross & Flannagan, 1994). For a full treatment of Ross’ life and work, see his biography written by his son, James Ross, dedicated to the benefit of Ross’ grandchildren. Close friend, fellow minister, and popular theologian, James M. Pendleton (1811-1891), served as editor of Ross’ biography. Ross, J. & Pendleton, J. M., 1882. *Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross*. Philadelphia: Grant, Faires &

with the Kehukee Baptist Association, a *strict* Calvinistic group of Baptists. Five years later, he was ordained to the gospel ministry, and soon moved his family to Middle Tennessee where he served several churches as pastor in Robertson, Montgomery, and Stewart counties (Ibid). Ross also served churches in Todd and Christian counties, Kentucky where his influence in Baptist life soon escalated.

An informative testimony about the “old Calvinistic Baptists” into which Ross was born and raised is recorded in Ross’ biography. The following extended quote offers significant insight into how the *strict* Calvinistic theological subculture Ross would later abandon was perceived:

The members of the Baptist churches at that time, almost without exception, believed that a large proportion of the human race, including perhaps many of those dearest to them on earth, had no chance for salvation, but were doomed from the beginning, to endless wo.

[...]

All or nearly all of these believed... in what are known as the Five points of Calvin... They believed that those of them who had been elected from the foundation of the world would be, at the appointed time, "effectually called" and brought into the fold... and when the appointed time should come, the Holy Spirit would begin a mysterious work of grace in the soul, and carry it on with a power that nothing could withstand, till they were regenerated, pardoned, and saved (Ross & Pendleton, 1882, pp. 24, 39).

Ross was *strictly* Calvinistic in his understanding of the “doctrines of grace.” James Ross, son and biographer of R. Ross, described his father’s theology as he began in ministry:

At the commencement of his ministerial labors, as was to have been expected, he adopted the rigid views of his family and of the church to which they belonged... They believed in particular and unconditional election and reprobation, that Christ died for the elect only, and that not one of the elect would ever be lost or one of the non-elect ever be saved (Ibid, p. 278).

Yet Ross began to doubt some of the *strict* Calvinistic teachings he had learned from both his family and his church. Ross developed, over time, a convictional resistance to *strict* Calvinism. “Ross's studies led him to open gospel invitations to all persons, without regard to their status of election. This action eventually led to his theological shift from hyper-Calvinism to evangelical

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Rodgers. For a splendid survey of Ross’ theology and influence in Baptist life, see Mohon, T., Spring 2005. The Effect and Implications of the Theology of Elder Reuben Ross on Baptist Life. *Baptist History and Heritage*, pp. 86-97.

Calvinism” (Mohon, Spring 2005, p. 88). According to Ross’ son, R. Ross eventually denied Unconditional Election and Limited Atonement, and consequently, “bade adieu forever to the Calvinistic dogma” (Ross & Pendleton, 1882, pp. 285-288). In July 1817, Ross publicized his theological transformation in a funeral sermon preached at Port Royal, Tennessee.

Controversy immediately followed in the Red River Baptist Association, controversy that would last a decade or more before the association officially split. The occasion for the formal division was disagreement over *strict* Calvinism (Mohon, Spring 2005, p. 89). The Red River association met in October 1825 to dismiss churches to join the new association—Bethel Baptist Association (Ibid, p. 92).

Ross was the commanding voice in the new association, “the “father of Bethel association,”” serving as moderator from 1825-1851, and only then resigning because of ill-health (Ibid, p. 93). Under Ross’ leadership, “Bethel grew astronomically in its early years. After a meager beginning of eight churches and about 700 members, Bethel grew to 62 churches and more than 7,000 members by the Civil War” (Ibid, p. 94). More importantly, however, Bethel’s 1836 articles of faith were a “major departure from the abstracts adopted from the Red River Association” (Ibid, p. 93). As Mohon records,

Article four of the new confession taught that election was through the work of the Holy Spirit and the "obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." No mention was made of a pre-creation determinism of the elect by God. Article five proclaimed that "the Redeemer . . . tasted death for every man" and that Christ is the "Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" and that "all men every where are commanded to repent of their sins" (Ibid).<sup>181</sup>

Nor did Ross’ non-Calvinistic influence end with Kentucky’s Bethel association. Mohon describes the profound influence Ross and Bethel association had on the entire region reaching further south influencing Tennessee Baptists:

At that time, the association encompassed churches in eight counties of Kentucky and Tennessee and operated Bethel College (from 1854 to 1964). Bethel also served as a parent to two associations— Cumberland of Tennessee (1871) and Christian County of Kentucky (1923). Bethel was also the grandparent to two Tennessee associations— Nashville (1900) and Robertson County (1915)—both from the Cumberland... in at least

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<sup>181</sup> See more below in discussion on Kentucky’s Bethel association.

one instance, Bethel's 1836 articles were adopted by another association. In 1842, the Concord Association (Tennessee)... assumed the name "Concord Association of United Baptists" and adopted a new confession, which was an adaptation of Bethel's 1836 articles (Ibid, p. 94)

Fellow laborer with Ross in Bethel association was renowned Baptist theologian, James Madison Pendleton (1811-1891), named after then, U. S. President, James Madison (Allen, 1958, p. 1082).<sup>182</sup> Though Pendleton was Virginian by birth, he moved with his parents to a farm at Pembroke, Kentucky when only a year old. He was saved and baptized at age 19, and two years later ordained to the Gospel ministry. He pastored churches in Kentucky, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Pendleton was perhaps most known for his tract entitled "An Old Landmark Re-set," a tract that came to be called the "magnum opus of Landmarkism" (Ibid). Pendleton, along with two more influential 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptist figures, James R. Graves (1820-1893) and A. C. Dayton (1811-1865), became known as "The Great Triumvirate" of the Landmark movement (McBeth, 1990, p. 316).

Less popular was Pendleton known as a systematic theologian perhaps because he held no chair of theology, though he did serve as president of Bethel College in Russellville, Kentucky, a school he assisted in founding (Allen, 1958, p. 1082). Yet Pendleton wrote several influential works including a concise theology textbook entitled *Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology* penned while serving as pastor in Upland, Pennsylvania (1878). While Pendleton seemed to embrace some aspects of *strict* Calvinism,<sup>183</sup> he was adamant concerning his denial of Limited Atonement:

Now, if Christ did not die for all, and if it is the duty of all to believe in him, it is the duty of some—those for whom he did not die—to believe an untruth. This also reduces the matter to an absurdity, for it cannot be the duty of any one to believe what is not true. We must either give up the position that it is the duty of all men to believe the gospel, or admit that the atonement of Christ has reference to all men (Pendleton, 1878, pp. 244-245).

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<sup>182</sup> For more on Pendleton's life, see his autobiography, Pendleton, J. M., 1891. *Reminiscences of a Long Life*. Louisville: Press Baptist Book Concern. Also, see Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, 1904. *First Annual Meeting: So Much of the Exercises of the Evening as Pertain to the Life of Rev. James Madison Pendleton*. Campbellsville: Kentucky Baptist Historical Society. For more critical appraisal, see Huddleston, W. C., 1962. *James Madison Pendleton: a critical biography*, Louisville: unpublished Master's thesis (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary).

<sup>183</sup> See, for example his treatment on Election (Pendleton, 1878, pp. 97-114) and Providence (Pendleton, 1878, pp. 128-137).

Thus, Pendleton's denial of a main pillar in *strict* Calvinism's theological construct fit well into Ross and Bethel association's overall thrust toward a non-Calvinistic trajectory.<sup>184</sup>

Though huge theological concessions were given by Regular Baptists toward the Philadelphia's confession in their merger with Separate Baptists, and the non-Calvinistic influence of Reuben Ross and Bethel association in Kentucky and Tennessee in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, together raise formidable doubt as to *strict* Calvinism's future grip on southern Baptist life, M. Cook nonetheless argues that while southern Baptist methodologies became strongly revivalistic after the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ironically southern Baptists' commitment to confessional Calvinism *increased* during the same time period (Cook, 2009, pp. 144-145). That while Separate Baptists were far more numerous than Regular Baptists in 1770, "It was the Calvinistic confessionalism of the Regulars, however, that widely predominated by the end of the period in question" (Ibid, p. 147).<sup>185</sup>

Phillip Mulder seems to agree somewhat with Cook's claim that confessional Calvinism won the day (Mulder, 2002, pp. 37-65). However, Mulder is content to speak in very general terms. For example, while he suggests Regulars successfully coerced Separates to put teeth into their experientially-driven conversion theology by establishing a doctrinal litmus test— "Now real Baptists-real Christians-measured their religious experience according to doctrinal standards"— the doctrinal standard to which a convert related was, according to Mulder, "a basic Calvinist understanding of depravity and grace" (Ibid, p. 44). It remains difficult, therefore, to know if Mulder would fully accept Cook's trajectory that "Confessional Calvinism" increased as Calvinists took control. Additionally, Mulder makes statements which seem to agree, at least in part, with the thesis here:

Once the Calvinist Baptists triumphed over the Arminians, a strong emphasis on human depravity and salvation by grace joined the exclusive list of doctrines. However, with the *lingering heritage* of Separates, Regulars, Arminians, and other groups, as well as *strong*

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<sup>184</sup> Pendleton also later influenced Baptists away from *strict* Calvinism through his very popular Church Manual (Pendleton, 1867), a manual which contained J. Newton Brown's edition of New Hampshire's confession of faith.

<sup>185</sup> As the upcoming confessional evidence from Baptist associations will show, the presence of *strictly* Calvinistic articles in confessions and abstracts began to fade from Baptist life. Not that *strict* Calvinism *died* from Baptist life; instead *strict* Calvinism began to decline in its confessional expression, and Kentucky's 1801 terms of union appear to have played a major role in *strict* Calvinism's confessional declension.

*insistence on the independence of individual churches* debating the truths of the Bible, the *constitutions* of Baptist churches were *filled with a tremendous variety* of specific creeds and emphasis (Ibid, p. 55; Italics added).

Thus, while it may be true that Kentucky's terms of union, as a faith statement, constituted a written confession which Separates adopted, a practice they were theretofore consistently reluctant to do, by no apparent stretch can Separates' concession in embracing The Terms of General Union be considered an increase in "Calvinistic confessionalism" as Cook maintains was an overall pattern among Baptists in the south.<sup>186</sup> Indeed, Kentucky's terms of union could just as easily indicate a massive shift *away* from the *strict* Calvinistic confessionalism by the Regular Baptists, who, up until 1801, had vociferously demanded absolute adherence to all particulars within Philadelphia's confession. Add to this, Reuben Ross and Bethel associational influence in confessional *non-Calvinism*. Thus, Cook's notion that Baptists were "widely predominated" by "Calvinistic confessionalism" at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and well into the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries loses a considerable portion of its historical tenability since it seems it can account for neither Kentucky Baptists' confessional terms of union between Regular and Separate Baptists nor Bethel association's broadening influence toward non-Calvinism.

John Asplund also notes in some associations existing in 1790 that acceptance of confessions was based upon *partial* adherence to the documents (Asplund, 1791, pp. 48-53). He lists a total of 36 Baptist associations existing in 1790.<sup>187</sup> Of the 36 associations, less than half (17) fully embraced the PCF while two more embraced abstracts "based upon" the PCF. However, Asplund lists two associations that only *partially* accepted the PCF.<sup>188</sup> Furthermore, Asplund suggests fourteen associations held to no confession at all.<sup>189</sup> However, this many Baptist associations either having no confessions of faith or partially accepting confessions of faith can hardly be viewed as

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<sup>186</sup> As argued earlier, *strict* Calvinism was thoroughly scrubbed from the terms of union.

<sup>187</sup> Included in the 36 is the General Committee of Virginia which was subdivided into 9 district associations and the only Seventh Day Adventist Baptist Association in existence (Ibid, p. 53).

<sup>188</sup> Kentucky's Elkhorn association adopted the PCF "only with few exceptions" while Virginia's General Committee "Received the confession of faith partially, on the account of union with the regular Baptists."

<sup>189</sup> Asplund logged speculative judgment about the theological leaning of many of the associations he cited as having no confession. Some he judged as having "Calvinistic sentiments" while others embraced "General Provision." Since Asplund severely botched the theological distinction between Separate and Regular Baptists as the former being "Armenian" and the latter "Particular," caution is necessary when evaluating his discernment of theological sentiments being inclined one way or another.

evidence of a trend toward confessional Calvinism during the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as Cook suggests. It also indicates that confessionalism apparently was held from different perspectives and with varying degrees of intensity between various Baptist groups.

Moreover, Cook later indicates that southern Baptists would not move away from Calvinism until the 1830s:

What about southern Baptists' commitment to Calvinism, however? Was a commitment to Calvinism consistent with the surge of creativity occurring in Southern Baptist life due to revivalism? Somewhat surprisingly, on a confessional level the answer seems to be "yes." Few, if any, southern Baptist churches or associations displayed any official theological shift in the years immediately following the rise of the missions movement [...] The vast majority of southern Baptists continued to indicate a Calvinistic confessional identity (Cook, 2009, pp. 258-260).

However, as shown above, Kentucky Baptists and their Terms of General Union (1801) do not fit into what Cook indicates as an overall pattern of confessional Calvinism accelerating among southern Baptists until the 1830s. Nor do the other associations mentioned by Asplund above. It seems more reasonable to suggest Baptists entered the 19<sup>th</sup> century divided over and wrangling about some of the major points of Calvinistic belief absent a pattern suggesting they were everywhere wed to confessional Calvinism. This does not mean that *strict* Calvinism was dead in the American south during the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To the contrary, *strict* Calvinism was very much alive in the anti-missions movement during this time period.<sup>190</sup> Quoting from several sources, Joshua Guthman describes the impact *strict* Calvinism within the anti-missions movement had upon certain regions of the south between 1821 and 1845, including parts of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia (Guthman, 2015, pp. 7-8). But the majority of these churches and associations became Primitive Baptists. Nor should their influence be considered part of the "confessional Calvinism" Cook indicates flourished during the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>190</sup> Not all parties of the anti-missions movement were *strict* Calvinists, however. Calvinists and *non*-Calvinists (i.e. Campbellites) made up the anti-missions movement the much larger share of whom were *strict* Calvinists. For example, Spencer indicates three-fourths of antimissions advocates in Kentucky were *strict* Calvinists (Spencer, 1886, p. 694).

### 3.5 Conclusion

Thus, from the rise of Separate Baptists in New England during the Great Awakening to the arrival of Separate Baptists in North Carolina, they entered the scene destined to change the face of Philadelphia confessional Calvinism embedded in American Baptists. They went everywhere preaching the gospel of a new birth experience rather than arguing the finer points of theology. While Separate Baptists were not anti-theological or even theologically neutral toward fundamental beliefs of the orthodox Christian faith Baptists had historically embraced,<sup>191</sup> neither did they worry themselves over dotting every doctrinal “i” or crossing every theological “t.” Separates tolerated doctrinal diversity, at least in some important ways, and especially if the diversity centered upon the *strictly* Calvinistic interpretation of the “doctrines of grace,” a theological toleration against which Regular Baptists were frequently and staunchly opposed. When criticized for having “Arminians” among them, Separate Baptists shrugged their shoulders, suggesting the “Arminians” were both strong soul-winners and godly men, and therefore they allowed them a bit of theological legroom (Semple, 1894, pp. 99-100).

Thus, it hardly remains surprising that the coming of Separate Baptists, as fiercely independent as they were, and with neither written boundaries of confessional belief nor a distinct desire for them, would eventually go beyond simply disturbing Regular Baptists’ insatiable craving for order, tradition, and confessional conscience, and, upon merging, would either temper the confessional High Calvinism of Regular Baptists or, at minimum, make their *strict* Calvinism irrelevant to their merged relationship. Kentucky’s Terms of General Union in 1801 demonstrated their partial success. Perhaps Baptist historian, Walter Shurden, states our conclusion best:

For more than two decades after they came to the South, Separate Baptists refused to merge with the older Regular Baptists. One of the chief barriers to union was the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. The Regular Baptists had, over the years, adopted the Confession, and they wanted that document to be the basis of union with the Separates. The Separate Baptists finally agreed, but only after the nature and authority of the Confession was clearly delimited and virtually defanged. When merger came in 1777,

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<sup>191</sup> Of course, Separate Baptists insisted upon and defended without wavering historic Baptist principles such as believers’ baptism by immersion only, regenerate church membership, separation of church and state, priesthood of the believer, etc. After all, they were *Baptists*.

1787, and 1801, Separate Baptists had modified the impact of confessionalism in the South (Shurden, 1979, p. 70).<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Shurden suggests three other contextual factors relevant to the time-line in this section led Baptists toward decline from confessionalism—Campbellism, Landmarkism, and the rugged individualism of the pioneer frontier (Ibid, pp. 70-72).

## Chapter Four: The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith: A Deliberate Move Away from Confessionally *Strict* Calvinism

### 4.1 Introduction

The evidence in chapter three indicated that the rise of Separate Baptists in the south proved to be a theological catalyst introducing to the wild frontier a strong Baptist witness while possessing an almost instinctive reluctance toward man-made creeds and written confessions. Kentucky Separate Baptists merged with Regular Baptists based upon The Terms of General Union in 1801. The terms they agreed upon constituted a hefty theological concession to Separate Baptists. Two decades earlier, Regular Baptists had insisted Separates adopt and practice strict adherence to the PCF if they wanted union. And Regular Baptists prevailed. But all that changed in 1801 with the newly adopted document, a confessional document designed to unite Separate and Regular Baptists upon a theological consensus in working together for greater gospel advance.

Perhaps unpredicted by all sides was the confessional content agreed upon to establish the long-awaited union, theological content clearly lacking any *strictly* Calvinistic distinctive embedded in what traditionally had been known as the standard of Baptist orthodoxy, the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (PCF). Kentucky's terms of union remarkably fell outside the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Containing 11 very brief articles, the terms of union was embraced by Baptists far and wide across the state of Kentucky.<sup>193</sup>

In effect, whether intended or unintended, the Regular Baptists' concession to the terms of union seems to have served as an open wound that slowly bled the life out of the PCF as being the confessional standard which Regular Baptists everywhere had attributed to it. The king of Calvinistic confessions had toppled its throne. The terms of union was substituted in Philadelphia's place as the basis of confessional fidelity to unite Kentucky Baptists. But as

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<sup>193</sup> Kentucky's Terms of General Union was *among* the first American Baptist confessions to be composed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And, because of its wide adoption by Kentucky Baptists the state over (Spencer, 1886, pp. 546-547), the Terms of Union remains a significant piece of evidence strongly suggesting confessionally *strict* Calvinism entered Baptist life in the south squarely on the defensive at the very beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

influential as the terms was for Baptists in the bluegrass state, the single most influential Baptist confession composed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was still three decades away.

## 4.2 The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith (1833, NHC)

### 4.2.1 Introduction

On June 24, 1830, the New Hampshire Baptist Convention resolved to commission a committee to draft a confession of faith representative of the theology of all New Hampshire Baptists (Hurlin, et al., 1902, p. 51). The resolution acknowledged that while all Baptists were “united in their views of the important and essential doctrines and practice” of their faith, the confessions are not “precisely the same language” (Ibid). Therefore, a committee composed of N. W. Williams, William Taylor, and I. Person was appointed to draft 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” (Ibid).

Many suggest that the rise in popularity of Free Will Baptists in New Hampshire and the surrounding area played significantly in the adoption of a new confession reflecting the *modified* Calvinism as a result (Wallace, 1913, pp. 7-9).<sup>194</sup> However, there seems to be no acknowledgement in the historical record of New Hampshire Baptists and their sessions and meetings that Free Will Baptist influence served as a motivating factor catapulting the call for a new confession to accommodate Benjamin Randall’s impact and the loss of churches in New England. Nor does there seem to be a change in theology cited by New Hampshire Baptists. In fact, the resolution seems to suggest that all New Hampshire Baptists embraced “essential [Baptist] doctrines and practice” without using “precisely the same language,” more a concern of rhetorical discrepancy that called for a confession with updated language. However, a verbal discrepancy alone hardly accounts for the confessional document New Hampshire Baptists finally produced, a statement of faith that, like Kentucky’s terms of union three decades earlier, appears to have intentionally scrubbed *strictly* Calvinistic distinctives from its confessional core (more below).

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<sup>194</sup> See also, Cutting, 1859, pp. 104-105; McGlothlin, 1911, p. 299; Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 346; Nettles, 2010, p. xl; Lumpkin, 2011, pp. 376-378; Carter, 1977, p. 81; Lumpkin, 1984, p. 38.

After passing through several stages of an editorial process, the final draft of the NHC was edited, proposed, and unanimously adopted by the convention board of New Hampshire Baptists on January 15, 1833 to be published and recommended to all the Baptist churches of New Hampshire (Hurlin, et al., 1902, p. 74). The original edition apparently had 16 articles though “all efforts to discover a copy of the original edition have proved unavailing” (McGlothlin, 1911, p. 301). New Hampshire Baptists reportedly issued more than one edition of the declaration, the last of which was 1882 (Hiscox, 1894, p. 539). When J. Newton Brown included it in his church manual (1853), he had added two articles—one on “Repentance and Faith” and another on “Sanctification” (McGlothlin, 1911, p. 300).<sup>195</sup> J. Pendleton included the NHC in his *Church Manual* (1867) without further amendment, attributing the authorship of the full confession to Brown (Pendleton, 1867, p. 43). E. Hiscox (1814-1901) followed Pendleton in his first edition of *The Baptist Directory: A Guide to the Doctrines and Practices of Baptist Churches* by publishing the NHC with 18 articles (1868, pp. 154-175). However, Hiscox later edited the NHC for his *Standard Manual* (1890) by dividing into two articles the one article on “Baptism and the Lord’s Supper” (making the NHC 19 articles)<sup>196</sup>; and finally expanding the articles to 20 in his last *New Directory*, with an addition of an entirely new article he composed on “Adoption” (Hiscox, 1894, p. 542).

McGlothlin indicates that the first known reproduction of the NHC outside of New Hampshire was the publication of the original 16 articles as recorded in William Crowell’s *Church Member’s Handbook* (1850) under the section, “Articles of Christian Belief” (Crowell, 1850, pp. 19-28). McGlothlin claims before providing the NHC in full, ‘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’ (McGlothlin, 1911, p. 301). Lumpkin and Leonard uncritically assume McGlothlin’s claim without qualification (Lumpkin, 2011, p. 378).

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<sup>195</sup> Most modern-day versions of the NHC seem to follow Brown’s 1853 church manual edition.

<sup>196</sup> By Hiscox’s own testimony, he divided Brown’s article on Baptism and the Lord’s Supper into 2 articles totaling 19 articles in 1890. However, Hiscox apparently had forgotten he had already divided the article and consequently had published an edition of the NHC with 19 articles in 1880 (Hiscox, 1880, pp. 20-25).

McGlothlin overlooks, however, J. Newton Brown, whose first circulation of the NHC was not in his church manual.<sup>197</sup> Rather Brown first circulated New Hampshire's declaration of faith 18 years earlier than his church manual published in 1853, and at least a full decade and a half earlier than Crowell's manual in 1850. In 1835, Brown served as editor of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, and in that edition, is published New Hampshire's declaration of faith and covenant (Brown, 1835, p. 191).<sup>198</sup> In his brief introduction to the NHC in the encyclopedia, Brown identified the confession's source. "The following brief Declaration of Faith, with the Church Covenant, was recently published by the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire, and is believed to express, with little variation, the general sentiments of the body in the United States" (Ibid). Thus, within roughly two years of its adoption, the influence of New Hampshire Baptists' confessional faith began its ascent.<sup>199</sup>

This slight but significant overlook by scholars of the heightened influence the NHC received by being published in the encyclopedia almost two decades before Brown published it in his popular church manual has led to exaggerated claims. Scholars routinely assert that the NHC's influence and popularity were mainly spread by Brown's and Pendleton's church manuals published in 1853 and 1867 respectively. W. Lumpkin's claim is typical: "This document might not have become known outside of New Hampshire except for the work of one of its authors, J. Newton Brown, who...revised the confession on his own authority and published it in *The Baptist Church Manual* [1853]" (Allen, 1958, p. 308).<sup>200</sup> Yet as the usage of the original NHC by many Baptist associations cited in the section below demonstrates, New Hampshire's articles of faith *already* had produced a substantial impact on Baptists in the south *before* either Crowell or Brown

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<sup>197</sup> McGlothlin also overlooks the publication of the NHC in Robert Baird's 1844 edition of *Religion in America* (Baird, 1844, pp. 230-231).

<sup>198</sup> The preface written by Brown to *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* in the 1835 edition seems to indicate it was the first year the volume was published (Brown, 1835, p. vi). The encyclopedia continued to be published after Brown's death in 1868. As late as the 1876 edition, Brown was still credited as editor but with an additional editor, Geo. P. Tyler, who "Revised and Corrected to Date" the current volume. Brown's original preface remains intact in the 1876 edition as well as the NHC published exactly as it had been published in the original 1835 edition.

<sup>199</sup> Baird's volume on religion in America was first published in Britain in 1843 as a guide for English people to understand what was religiously happening in the United States (Baird, 1844, Preface to the American Edition). Hence, the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession was published in Edinburg 10 years prior to J. Brown's church manual first released in 1853.

<sup>200</sup> See also, George & George, 1996, p. 12; Nettles, 2006, p. xl; Leonard, 2003, p. 190; Leonard, 1994, p. 202; Goen, 1962, pp. 293-294; McGlothlin, 1911, pp. 300-301; Brackney, 2004, p. 41; Barnes, 1954, p. 118.

published his church manual in 1850 and 1853 respectively. Baptists as far south as southern Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana were impacted by the original 16 articles of the NHC as published in the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.<sup>201</sup>

#### 4.2.2 The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith and *Strict* Calvinism

Below are seven articles from the NHC relative to the soteriological presence of Calvinism in Baptist life.<sup>202</sup> A key notation is offered for each of the seven articles.<sup>203</sup>

New Hampshire Declaration of Faith (Brown, 1835, p. 191)	Key Notation
<p>III. OF THE FALL OF MAN.—That man was created in a state of 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, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defence, or excuse.</p>	<p><b>Key:</b> No verbiage indicating <i>strict</i> Calvinism’s understanding of Total Depravity. Adam voluntarily sinned. Consequently, all are now sinners not by constraint but choice. We inherit a sinful nature, but unlike PCF, there’s no imputed sinful guilt.</p>
<p>IV. OF THE WAY OF SALVATION. —That the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the law by his personal obedience, and made atonement for our sins by his death; being risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.</p>	<p><b>Key:</b> No indication of <i>strict</i> Calvinism’s eternal covenant of grace between Father and Son decreeing the elect and the redemption of the elect only or ensuring a Mediator for elect only; nor promising Holy Spirit to apply Christ’s merits to elect only as in PCF. Rather salvation is wholly of grace through atonement for sin Jesus makes as the all-sufficient Savior. Nor is PCF’s Limited Atonement indicated or implied.</p>
<p>V. OF JUSTIFICATION.—That the great Gospel blessing, which Christ of his fulness bestows on such as believe in Him, is justification; that justification consists in 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; 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.</p>	<p><b>Key:</b> Justification is by faith not works. Nothing indicating faith leading to justification is a gift to elect only as in PCF; nothing indicating believers are justified in eternity past as a result of the eternal covenant; nothing indicating Holy Spirit would only enable the elect to have faith and be justified.</p>

<sup>201</sup> Confessional evidence is the major thread of evidential sources for this research. However, the associational sources offered below remain representative rather than exhaustive since hundreds of Baptist associations across the southern states were launched during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Enough confessional evidence is supplied, however, to not only demonstrate both the decline and absence of confessionally *strict* Calvinism in various associations throughout the south, but also show merit for further specific research into associations and state Baptist conventions’ use of articles of faith, contents of articles of faith, comparative studies on articles of faith, and other worthy research proposals.

<sup>202</sup> The NHC remains significant to understanding the decline of *strict* Calvinism among 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptists. A full copy of the NHC is included at the end of this research in *Appendix B*.

<sup>203</sup> For comparison between the NHC and the PCF, see the exposition of the PCF in chapter two.

<p>VI. OF THE FREENESS OF SALVATION. —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 and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, except his own voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ; which refusal will subject him to an aggravated condemnation.</p>	<p><b>Key:</b> Salvation blessings free to all by the Gospel. PCF indicates salvation blessings free only to the elect. Nothing prevents the salvation of any one but own refusal to submit to Christ. No insistence upon lack of inclusion in eternal covenant or effectual call prohibiting persons from being saved. The Gospel provides full and free access to God by faith alone.</p>
<p>VII. OF GRACE IN REGENERATION. —That in order to be saved, we must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind, and is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence is found in the holy fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God.</p>	<p><b>Key:</b> No salvation without regeneration; mysteriously defies explanation. Holy Spirit empowers belief of gospel truth and living gospel life. No insistence regeneration precedes faith; no one is irresistibly called to believe; no one effectually made to believe.</p>
<p>VIII. OF GOD’S PURPOSE OF GRACE. —That election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he 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 wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, 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 ascertained by its effects in all who believe the Gospel; is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves, demands and deserves our utmost diligence.</p>	<p><b>Key:</b> Election is God’s gracious purpose in regenerating, sanctifying, and saving sinners; fully consistent with free agency and other gracious purposeful means. Glorifies God while promoting creaturely worship to Deity. Particularity remains absent. Definite number of elect remains absent. Denial of divine foreknowledge’s role in election absent. No “eternal particular election” as found in PCF. Thus, Unconditional Election remains absent.</p>
<p>IX. OF PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS. —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 superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.</p>	<p><b>Key:</b> Genuine believers endure and never finally fall away. Kept through faith by God’s power. At best, this article is the only article in the NHC that has <i>strict</i> Calvinistic tendencies.</p>

In summary, while the NHC may have been composed by Calvinistic Baptists for Calvinistic Baptists, it nonetheless lacks the *strictly* Calvinistic teeth of the PCF it was destined to replace.

McGlothlin describes the NHC this way:

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 (McGlothlin, 1911, p. 299).

Lumpkin indicates that New Hampshire Baptists’ Calvinism had been significantly modified since 1780 by the powerful influence of Benjamin Randall and the subsequent rise of Free Will Baptists in the region (Lumpkin, 2011, p. 376). A theological revolt took place against rigid Calvinism, and

the result was a desired confession that “sought to restate its Calvinism in very moderate tones” (Ibid, p. 377). Concerning the NHC, W. W. Barnes concluded the 1833 confession was “so mild in its Calvinism that the five points of distinction between Calvinism and Arminianism are almost ignored” (Barnes, 1942, p. 5).<sup>204</sup> Following Barnes’ estimation, Baptist theologian, J. Garrett, describes the NHC thusly:

Since the confession is silent as to the extent of the atonement, interprets repentance and faith as both human duties and divine graces, gives no indication of teaching irresistible grace, does not interpret election as God’s choice from eternity of particular human beings for salvation, and interprets perseverance both in terms of endurance to the end and being kept by the power of God, one can conclude that the label “moderately Arminian” would be as accurate as the term “moderately Calvinistic” (James Leo Garrett, 2009, p. 132).<sup>205</sup>

Another Baptist theologian, Malcolm Yarnell, insists the NHC “actually represents a turning away from the Second London Confession... [and] was the culmination of a significant undermining of the Calvinism of the Regular Baptists, who championed the Second London Confession at Philadelphia and Charleston” (Yarnell, 2008, p. 6). Goen admits “It is clear that this confession has proceeded from an originally Calvinistic source” yet goes on to conclude “but it is equally plain that its Calvinism has become greatly attenuated” (Goen, 1962, p. 287). Cathcart briefly describes the NHC, as its author, J. Newton Brown, “gently Calvinistical” (Cathcart, 1881, p. 288), while James Carter argues “The theology of the New Hampshire Declaration of Faith could be called moderate or mild Calvinism” (Carter, 1977, p. 81).

S. J. Grenz reasons that since “support for the previously dominant rigid Calvinism was waning,” a new confession was needed to reflect the more moderate views of the churches in New Hampshire. Thus, “Readily evident is the attempt by its drafters to articulate a moderate Calvinism during an era of theological controversy” (Leonard, 1994, pp. 202-203). More emboldened is Baptist historian, W. R. Estep, concerning confessional Calvinism’s modification in the NHC: “General dissatisfaction with The Philadelphia Confession led the New Hampshire Convention to consider the formulation of a new confession that would considerably modify the

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<sup>204</sup> Bebbington also suggests the composers of the NHC ignore Calvinism’s distinctions (Hillerbrand, 2004, p. 299).

<sup>205</sup> Unlike Garrett, Baptist historian, Jesse Fletcher, apparently sees only the Arminianism in the NHC, not the Calvinism (Fletcher, July 1995, p. 10). J. C. Andersen indicates the NHC reflects “modified Calvinism-Arminianism” (Andersen, October 1994, p. 18).

Calvinism of The Philadelphia Confession” (Estep, 1987, p. 3). P. Schaff says of the NHC, “It is shorter and simpler than the Confession of 1688, and presents the Calvinistic system in a milder form” (Schaff, 1919, p. 857).

Charles MacDonald cites a telling description from *The Christian Review* (1859) about how some Calvinistic Baptist scholars received New Hampshire’s articles of faith:

There is a collection of articles, commonly known as the ‘New Hampshire Confession,’ and frequently referred to by other denominations as the ‘Baptist symbol.’ This is an entire mistake. It is repudiated by a great many ministers and churches, even in the limited portion of our country where alone it has been adopted. It is a discredit to us; it is the creed of Mr. Facing-both-ways. It is a Calvinistic formulary, with an Arminian undertone of interpretation; ‘The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.’ We are sorry to see this confession reprinted, and helped into notice, in Dr. Hiscox’s excellent ‘Baptist Church Directory’, recently published (MacDonald, May 1939, p. 60).<sup>206</sup>

Similarly but more recently, Gregory Wills concludes that Baptists in New Hampshire “sought to soften their Calvinist identity” and “adopted a new confession in 1833 that expunged or obscured such Calvinist distinctives as human depravity, imputed righteousness, and eternal election” (Wills, 1997, pp. 109-110).<sup>207</sup> Indeed, according to Wills, many *strict* Calvinistic Southern Baptists raised suspicions about any association that would embrace “a creed as vague” as the NHC, a confession “which could accommodate both Arminians and Calvinists,” and thus not only be

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<sup>206</sup> E. G. Robinson and V. R. Hotchkiss were then current editors of the volume and most likely the source of the comments. (Robinson & Hotchkiss, 1859)

<sup>207</sup> Wills asserts in the context that later editions of the NHC moved it back toward *strict* Calvinism: “With later modifications back toward Calvinism, it became the most popular Baptist confession by the early twentieth century” (Ibid, p. 110). Unfortunately, Wills offers no examples, editions, or citations to substantiate his assertion. Later modifications did not necessarily shift the NHC “back toward Calvinism” as Wills claims. For example, while Hiscox’s 1880 *Star Book on Baptist Church Polity* included Brown’s 1853 rendering of Article 7 (Hiscox, 1880, p. 12; see also Hiscox, 1868, pp. 161-162), by 1894 Hiscox had changed the NHC article on regeneration to reflect more the original 1833 New Hampshire declaration (Hiscox, 1894, p. 548). Consequently, nothing exists to suggest regeneration precedes faith. Moreover, Hiscox’s new article on “Adoption” in his 1894 volume would flat contradict a *strictly* Calvinistic reading of the article on regeneration. Further, according to Article X, “Of Adoption,” adoption is God’s “gracious act” by which He “accepts believers” as His children “by a new and spiritual birth; sending the Spirit of adoption into their hearts, whereby they become members of the family of God...” (Ibid, p. 552). Thus, Hiscox appears to indicate *believers* are accepted as children of God by means of regeneration not vice versa as *strict* Calvinism would demand. Nor does Wills’ contention that later editions of the NHC were more Calvinistic account for lesser known editions of the NHC. For example, Alabama’s Clear Creek association’s edition of the NHC entirely guts Article 6, “Of Grace in Regeneration” of all Calvinistic sentiments: “That in order to be saved, we must be regenerated and born again, that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind and is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation by the Holy Ghost” (Clear Creek Association, 1886, p. 6).

plagued with professing false doctrine “but also [failing] to distinguish clearly between error and truth, especially the truth of election” (Ibid, pp. 109; 110-111). “Why would any group adopt it in place of abstracts of the London Confession unless it was to move toward Arminianism?” (Ibid, p. 110). Clearly, according to Wills, *strict* Calvinistic Baptists who embraced the PCF routinely viewed the NHC as nothing less than an Arminian compromise.<sup>208</sup>

Contrarily, some scholars insist the NHC was not intended to communicate a lesser commitment to *strict* Calvinism as Wills has concluded. Rather the NHC should be considered a condensed version of Philadelphia’s confession. In analyzing the theology of Baptist statesman, I. T. Tichenor (1825-1902), comparing Tichenor’s sermons with the NHC, Aaron Meraz describes the NHC thusly: “The confession has 18 articles of faith, thus it is a condensed version of the Philadelphia Confession” (Meraz, 2012, p. 76).

While it remains obvious the NHC is much briefer than the PCF,<sup>209</sup> there is no indication by examining the contents of both the PCF and the NHC that the composers of the latter attempted to condense the contents of the former. Nor does Meraz offer any evidence for his claim.<sup>210</sup> Timothy and Denise George declare that on issues of soteriology, “the New Hampshire Confession follows the Reformed orientation of the Philadelphia Confession, but its treatment of the doctrines of grace is briefer, less specific, and more susceptible to theological ambiguity” (George & George, 1996, p. 12). Unfortunately, the Georges offer no indication as to what they mean by “Reformed orientation,” or just how much “theological ambiguity” is expressed in the NHC.<sup>211</sup> Even so, as Wills notes above, when the NHC began to appear, many *strict* Calvinistic

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<sup>208</sup>For more on the departure from *strict* Calvinism displayed in New Hampshire’s 1833 confession, see Weaver & Finn, Spring 2004, p. 41; Cook, 2009, pp. 9; 307-309; Draughon, 1987, p. 71; Super, 2014, pp. 259-266; Basden, 1986, pp. 92-94; Richards, 1996, pp. 27-35; Barnes, 1942, pp. 3-8; Leonard, 2003, pp. 190-191; Wallace, 1913, pp. 6-10.

<sup>209</sup> The NHC has approximately 1,500 words (without proof-texts) while the PCF has in excess of 15,000 words.

<sup>210</sup> Incidentally, Meraz also made unique claims concerning the historical circumstances that prompted the development of the NHC. “The formation of the Triennial Convention called for a confession most Baptists would adhere to in their local churches. Further, the rise of antimissionism, the Campbellite movement, and cults like the Mormons moved Baptists to define specifically what they believed” (Meraz, 2012, p. 76). Nothing is mentioned concerning the popular theory of the rise of Free Will Baptists as the occasion for the NHC. However, citing Campbellism, Mormonism, and anti-missionism as factors related to New Hampshire Baptists composing a new confession seems entirely odd. No other authority this author found cited any of the circumstances Meraz lists as the occasion for the rise of the NHC. Nor does Meraz cite evidence for his assertion.

<sup>211</sup> Others make bald claims that the NHC looked to the PCF as its basis apart from any proofs as well. See, Smathers, 2013, p. 25; Ascol, 2005, p. 11; Reisinger, 2000, p. 16.

southern Baptists raised suspicions about anyone or any association that would embrace “a creed as vague” as the NHC, a confession “which could accommodate both Arminians and Calvinists.”

Jared Longshore cautions readers that the “New Hampshire Statement should not be understood as a watering down of the Regular Baptists’ Calvinism,” but, following Tom Nettles,<sup>212</sup> the NHC would be better interpreted as simply addressing the questions Free Will Baptists were raising about Calvinism at the time, presumably demonstrating that *strict* Calvinism could provide clear answers (Longshore, 2016, p. 108). It remains unlikely, however, that a confession that remains so *brief* in content as the NHC could better explain questions Free Will Baptists may have raised against the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF. What is more, the NHC completely ignores the issues of unconditional election, particular atonement, eternal covenant of grace, providence, effectual call, faith given to the elect alone, and other issues unique to *strict* Calvinism. How, then, could the NHC be interpreted as providing answers to questions about subjects not found in its contents? What remains confusing is, all the issues listed above are explicitly addressed in the PCF. Hence, why was the PCF not sufficient and adequate to answer the questions Free Will Baptists supposedly raised?

Jeff Robinson argues that the NHC sticks closely to the PCF in confessing *strict* Calvinism (Barrett & Nettles, 2012, pp. 360-361).<sup>213</sup> Concerning article 3 in the NHC, total depravity is set forth in “vivid terms” since it states that fallen humankind is now “by nature utterly void” of holiness and therefore “wholly given to the gratification of the world, of Satan, and of their own sinful passions” which rightly brings upon them “just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse” (Ibid). What Robinson failed to note, however, is what the PCF explicitly confesses that is *absent* in the NHC. In the PCF, “by [their] fall into a state of sin,” Adam and Eve “wholly lost all ability of will” to accomplish “any spiritual good accompanying salvation,” and, being “dead in sin” and “altogether averse from that good,” were no longer “able, by [their] own strength,” to either convert or even “prepare [themselves] thereunto” (A Confession of Faith, 1818, p. 33, Chap

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<sup>212</sup> More on Nettles’ interpretation of the NHC following.

<sup>213</sup> Robinson also follows Tom Nettles’ denial that the NHC was a weakened expression of *strict* Calvinism (Ibid, p. 360).

IX para 3).<sup>214</sup> Even more, not only did Adam and Eve fall from their original righteousness, but “we in them” fell as well, and through the sinful fall of both them and us, death came to all, “all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled, in all the faculties, and parts of soul and body” (Ibid, p. 26; Chap VI para 2). Furthermore, since God appointed our first parents as the root of corruption while “standing in the room and stead of all mankind,” “the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity” (Ibid; para 3). Thus, according to the PCF, we do not become sinners when we sin; rather we sin because we are already sinners by nature, possessing sinful guilt imputed to us from the Adamic fall. Missing from the NHC concerning the fall into sin, therefore, are Federal theology, loss of all free-will ability, and imputed sinful guilt all of which are usually connected with *strict* Calvinism.<sup>215</sup>

Robinson claims Article 4 in the NHC strikes at the heart of ‘Reformed soteriology in a crisply worded statement: “The salvation of sinners is wholly of grace.”’ While it may be true, however, that salvation being wholly of grace summarizes accurately Reformed soteriology, it does not follow that non-Reformed soteriology cannot also be said to be wholly of grace. Robinson simplistically created a false dilemma.<sup>216</sup> Robinson further suggests that the NHC places regeneration (Article 7) before faith (Article 8), presumably signaling the *strict* Calvinistic doctrine that insists regeneration precedes faith in redemption applied. In response, first, there is no apparent evidence the composers of the NHC were displaying a Reformed *ordo salutis* in the brief document. And if they were, why is it not clearer since the NHC was allegedly, according to Robinson and others, not intended to weaken *strict* Calvinism but to answer the rising questions posed by Free Will Baptists? Secondly, if one were to follow a chronological pattern that Robinson imposes upon the articles of the NHC concerning regeneration (Article 7) being positioned before

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<sup>214</sup> Quotes, chapters, and page numbers here and following are taken from the 1818 edition of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (A Confession of Faith, 1818).

<sup>215</sup> For a thorough treatment of relevant articles in the PCF, see Waldron, S. E., 2013. *A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*. Darlington, England: Evangelical Press. While Waldron’s commentary deals with the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession, his exposition is sufficiently applicable to the PCF.

<sup>216</sup> It also bears asking if Robinson could produce a Baptist confession of *any* stripe that would *deny* salvation was wholly of grace; or *affirm* salvation was according to works; or that salvation was based upon faith *and* works. Insofar as this author has researched Baptist history, no Baptist confession has ever indicated salvation was based on anything other than *wholly by grace*. Hence, Robinson’s point that Reformed soteriology is on display “in a crisply worded statement” that “The salvation of sinners is wholly of grace” lacks critical persuasion.

faith (Article 8), one could also conclude that since the article on election (Article 9) literally follows articles on regeneration and faith (Articles 7 and 8) in the NHC, then accordingly, election follows after regeneration and faith as redemption is applied, hardly a conclusion acceptable to *strict* Calvinists.

Finally, Robinson suggests Article 9— “Of God’s Purpose of Grace”—in the NHC refers to Unconditional Election because election is described as ‘an act in which God “graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners”’ (Ibid, p. 360). Yet the NHC neither mentions Unconditional Election directly nor implies it. Robinson assumes without argument Unconditional Election is what the NHC composers intended to confess, a simple case of circular reasoning.

Contrarily, there is no question what the composers of the PCF meant to confess concerning the *strict* Calvinistic doctrine of Unconditional Election. Unconditional Election begins with God’s eternal decree. “God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity... all things whatsoever comes to pass...” (Ibid, p. 20; Chap III para 1), a decree in which God’s glory is on display as He predestines some men and some angels to life while decreeing others to face the just condemnation of their sin. (Ibid, para 3). The eternal decree is utterly unconditional and thus results in the fixed number of elect men and angels “so certain, and definite” and “unchangeably designed,” that the number “cannot be either increased or diminished” (Ibid, pp. 20-21; para 4).

Nor should it be supposed that God decreed to elect certain men and angels because of His mere foreknowledge of their future actions or belief. According to the PCF, “God... hath chosen in Christ...out of his mere free grace and love; without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto” (Ibid, p. 21; para 5). Further, since “God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fulness of time die for their sins...” (p. 36; Chap XI para 4), and foreordaining all the means to bring the elect to eternal life in Christ, He established faith as the “alone instrument of justification” (p. 36, Chap XI para 2). And who is eligible to express saving faith? According to the PCF, saving faith is sovereignly given exclusively to the elect and “hath immediate relation to Christ, accepting, receiving, and resting upon him alone... by virtue of the covenant of grace” (p. 40, Chap XIV para 2). The elect who receive faith in time were determined to receive faith in eternity as indicative of the eternal covenant of grace

between the Father and the Son. No one else can be saved according to the PCF: “Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only” (p. 21, Chap III para 6); “Others not elected... not being effectually drawn by the Father... neither will, nor can truly come to Christ; and therefore cannot be saved...” (p. 35, Chap X para 4).

Unlike Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism, the NHC nowhere states or implies in Article 9 or elsewhere verbiage to match the clearly confessed Unconditional Election explicitly on display in the PCF. New Hampshire’s simple assertion that God “graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners” lacks the sharp teeth so evident in Philadelphia’s confession, confessional teeth that James Renihan elsewhere describes of the PCF as the “standard of Calvinistic Baptist orthodoxy in England, North America, and today, in many other parts of the world (Renihan, 2006, p. 33).

Nonetheless, T. Nettles insists the NHC retains the *strict* Calvinism of early Colonial Baptists and follows the Reformed soteriological pattern explicitly displayed in the PCF. “Many have interpreted the contents of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith as an attempt to modify the strong Calvinism of earlier days into something more palatable to the tastes of eighteenth-century churches [sic]” (Nettles, 2006, p. xli). But according to Nettles, it must not be ignored that one of the major concerns of New Hampshire Baptists was “succinctness.” So, while acknowledging the NHC is neither as detailed nor lengthy as the PCF, Nettles claims “it is also true that the substance of its doctrine remains unchanged” (Ibid).

As one considers the record, however, when New Hampshire Baptists resolved to compose a new confession, unlike Nettles’ understanding, their concern was not that their present confession was too wordy and therefore needed to be verbally pruned. Rather they clearly resolved to commission a confession of faith representative of the theology of all New Hampshire Baptists and to do so in such a way that language is more universally acceptable (Hurlin, et al., 1902, p. 51). Specifically, the resolution acknowledged that while all Baptists were “united in their views of the important and essential doctrines and practice” of their faith, their confessions were not “precisely the same language.” Hence, a committee was appointed to draft 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.” Nothing is mentioned in the resolution about the need for “succinctness” in the new confession as Nettles speculates.

Yet had New Hampshire Baptists desired to state Unconditional Election, Total Depravity, Irresistible Grace, et al in explicit terms while retaining what Nettles calls literary “succinctness,” it would by no means have necessitated reinventing the confessional wheel. For example, T. Ascol cites the Georgia Baptist Association’s articles of faith (1790) as fully indicative of Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism. ‘Abraham [Marshall] himself was instrumental in writing the first articles of faith for the Georgia Baptist Association of churches in 1790. Called the “Abstract and Decorum,” the articles reflect the Calvinism of the Philadelphia Confession’ (Ascol, 2007, p. 18). Article 4 from the Georgia association’s abstract is particularly relevant:

4<sup>th</sup> We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory: And that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the Father and the Son, before the world began, in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed (Ibid).<sup>217</sup>

Ascol is correct. Article 4 in the Georgia association’s faith statement clearly reflects, in abbreviated format, the Unconditional Election more elaborately stated in the PCF, an eternal particular election of a “definite number” of men and angels. Furthermore, the eternal covenant of grace between the Father and Son about redeeming the elect is affirmed along with an insistence on the explicit particularity of the redeeming work of Christ (i.e. Limited Atonement). Even more significantly, the Georgia association’s statement retains the quality of “succinctness” Nettles insisted was in the minds of New Hampshire Baptists when they chose to compose a new confession of faith.<sup>218</sup> If New Hampshire Baptists were still as *strictly* Calvinistic in 1833 as Nettles

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<sup>217</sup> Georgia’s confession is included in *Appendix A* at the end of this research. Ascol cites 4 of 8 articles of faith from Georgia’s abstract not all of which are solely reflective of Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism but could be just as reflective of other shades of Calvinism including *mild* and *moderate* Calvinism. For example, Ascol cites Georgia association’s article 5 as indicative of Philadelphia Calvinism: “5th. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them” (Ibid, p. 18). While there’s no dispute that article 5 reflects the PCF, it’s also indisputable that article 5 reflects other shades of Calvinism as well. Indeed, of the 8 articles in Georgia’s abstract that seem to *necessitate* their statement as reflecting *strict* Calvinism is article 4 quoted above. The other 7 articles are less indicative of *strict* Calvinism.

<sup>218</sup> Other confessions of faith were even more succinct than the Georgia Baptist Association while explicitly affirming and reflecting the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF. In 1791, recall John Asplund included what he called an “abstract of principles...agreeable to the confession of faith...published in Philadelphia, 1742” (Asplund, 1791, pp. 53-54). Of the twelve extremely brief articles, Article 3 reads, “We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election.” Less than 10 words clearly reveals theological affinity to the PCF.

claims, and were concerned to express their *strict* Calvinistic belief in a succinct manner, why did they avoid composing a statement similar to the Georgia association's that explicitly affirmed *strict* Calvinism while retaining succinctness? Why did New Hampshire Baptists choose instead to pen what G. Wills suggests was "a creed as vague" as the NHC, a confession "which could accommodate both Arminians and Calvinists"? (Wills, 1997, p. 110).<sup>219</sup>

According to Nettles, a further reason for the new confession was New Hampshire Baptists' desire to "show that the issues raised by the presence of the Free Will Baptists were certainly not foreign to the knowledge or concerns of historic Calvinism" (Ibid, xli). However, Free Will Baptists did not raise new or unique issues against *strict* Calvinism so far as the record shows. For Nettles, one of the issues emphasized by Free Will Baptists concerned human culpability, free moral agency, and divine fatalism (Ibid). But while Free Will Baptists most probably raised issues revolving around divine sovereignty and human freedom, those issues were definitively not issues created by them. Nor was the issue they raised concerning Limited Atonement either created by them or constituted a new question *strict* Calvinists needed to answer.

Nettles suggests in conclusion:

Rather than interpreting the New Hampshire Confession as a gradual retreat from the Calvinism of former days, it is better to see it as an affirmation of the Calvinist position on the particular issues raised by the presence and growth of Free Will Baptists in New England. The Calvinists did not jettison their distinguishing tenets but rather were saying, "We have a defensible and biblical understanding of the relation of man's will and duty to the doctrines of God's sovereignty" (Ibid, xlili).

Contrary to Nettles' embolden conclusion, his interpretation appears neither to account for the immediate contextual circumstances leading to the development and adoption of the NHC cited above nor the specific content within the NHC.<sup>220</sup> Nettles' speculates without evidence New

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<sup>219</sup> Similarly, W. Brackney describes Article 9 on election in the NHC as demonstrating "the admixture of Calvinist and Arminian thinking of the era" (Brackney, 2004, p. 41).

<sup>220</sup> Mark Nenadov argues consistently with Nettles' proposition that the NHC affirms a *strictly* Calvinistic order of salvation: "We should note here the decidedly Reformed view of the *ordo salutis*—regeneration precedes faith, given that the confession lists —repentance, and faith, and newness of life as fruits—not instrumental causes—of regeneration" (Nenadov, 2014, p. 8). In response, first, since Nenadov is concerned in his paper with J. N. Brown's understanding of regeneration, he rightly quotes Brown's 1853 edition of Article 7 rather than the original NHC which reads, "[the] proper evidence [of regeneration] is found in the holy fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God" (Brown, 1835, p. 191). But New Hampshire Baptists adopted the original wording of Article 7 as indicated in the 1835 edition. So, Nenadov's comments apply strictly to Brown's view alone and should not be construed as indicative of New Hampshire Baptists (Note: Nenadov himself does not imply otherwise). Second, Nenadov assumes

Hampshire Baptists desired “succinctness” in the new confession when the convention’s resolution called for consistency of language reflecting the beliefs of all Baptist churches in New Hampshire. Nettles also seems to suggest Free Will Baptists were raising unique questions the PCF had not addressed, or if it did, must have addressed inadequately, an assumption also without evidential warrant. If Calvinists were saying, as Nettles suggests, that they possessed “a defensible and biblical understanding of the relation of man’s will and duty to the doctrines of God’s sovereignty,” why would they not just point to what most *strict* Calvinists appear to deem the standard of Baptist orthodoxy and say, “And it’s right here in Philadelphia’s confession!”?

Nor does Nettles’ insistence that “Calvinists did not jettison their distinguishing tenets” in the NHC account for the widespread rejection of the NHC by *strict* Calvinists in various regions of the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Wills shows above, associations split over the NHC because the *strict* Calvinists within it understood the NHC to be a theological compromise. “Why would any group adopt it in place of abstracts of the London Confession unless it was to move toward Arminianism?” (Wills, 1997, p. 110).

Thus, if the NHC was not a confessional move away from *strict* Calvinism as Nettles insists, then how does his view account for the vigorous and widespread rejection of the NHC by *strict* Calvinistic Baptists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? In illustrating the theological suspicion of *strict* Calvinists toward Baptists who embraced the NHC, Wills cites the Florida Association’s 1846 petition to the Georgia Baptist Convention for entry into the fellowship (Wills, 1997, p. 110). A resulting

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without sufficient warrant Brown’s desire in his edition of the NHC was to ensure a decidedly Reformed theological notion couched in Latin phraseology (“*ordo salutis*”) would be clearly and precisely expressed; namely, regeneration must precede faith in the confession because, from Brown’s point of view, regeneration precedes faith in the actual order of salvation in the Bible. But this penchant for fastidious theological detail seems more characteristic of Philadelphia’s confession not New Hampshire’s. Third, the proof-texts supplied by Brown in his 1853 edition do not suggest Nenadov’s interpretation that Brown was confessionally affirming regeneration precedes faith. Rather, in biblically warranting his 1853 edit to Article 7, an edit which reads “and that its [i.e. regeneration’s] proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life,” Brown cited seven scriptural passages—Eph. 5:9; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 2:14-21; Matt. 3:8-10; 7:20; 1 John 5:4, 18 (Brown, 1853, p. 11). Not a single verse Brown cited, however, concerns the new birth and its relation to repentance and faith *per se* but sanctification of the believer in Christ. Thus, if any *ordo salutis* was intended, Nenadov seems to demonstrate not that Brown affirmed regeneration precedes faith; rather that regeneration precedes sanctification, hardly a theological notion specifically indicating a *strictly* Calvinistic belief. Finally, if an *ordo salutis* was in Brown’s mind in editing the NHC as Nenadov argues, then it seems to follow that divine election occurs *after* repentance and faith, since the article on election comes *after* repentance and faith in the NHC.

“protracted debate” began because the Florida Association had earlier embraced the NHC, and it was not until after Florida Baptists had “assured everyone that the association was not Arminian” that the Florida Association was received into fellowship with Georgia Baptists.<sup>221</sup> Strangely, Nettles finds *strict* Calvinism clearly confessed in the NHC that 19<sup>th</sup> century *strict* Calvinists among Georgia Baptists apparently missed.

Finally, Nettles elsewhere cites the abstract of faith of the Mississippi Baptist Association as a model confessional document that reveals as “quite prominent and painfully clear” the *strictly* Calvinistic doctrines of grace as one finds in the PCF, and apparently the same *strictly* Calvinistic expressions Nettles claims are fully but succinctly characteristic of New Hampshire’s confession (Nettles, 2006, p. xlv). Article 4 in Mississippi’s abstract reads, “We believe in the everlasting love of God to His people and the eternal unconditional election of a definite number of the human family to grace and glory” (Ibid). Article 7 states, “We believe there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus... [who] hath, by His most precious blood, redeemed the elect...” (Ibid).<sup>222</sup>

In addition, Nettles states that when Mississippi Baptists first organized their association in 1807, “it adopted 9 articles of faith... [that] reflect the order and language of the Charleston Confession” (Nettles, 1995, p. 19). Few, if any, would contest Nettles’ claim that Mississippi Baptists’ articles cited clearly reflect the *strictly* Calvinistic language of the Philadelphia-Charleston confessional tradition. One wonders, however, how Nettles’ claim that New Hampshire Calvinists “did not jettison their distinguishing tenets” when the language of the NHC they adopted lacks so entirely the *strictly* Calvinistic verbiage Nettles praised concerning Mississippi Baptists’ abstract. Again, since Mississippi Baptists’ abstract of faith included only 9 brief articles, articles that while crisp and succinct, nonetheless reflected the order and language of the Philadelphia confessional tradition, why did New Hampshire Baptists apparently fail so

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<sup>221</sup> It should be noted that Wills goes on to state that Florida Baptists finally abandoned the NHC adopting in its place an abstract affirming “the doctrine of eternal and particular election” (Ibid).

<sup>222</sup> Nettles concludes after citing Mississippi’s abstract, “This consensus in the doctrines of grace was perpetuated in Southern Baptist life through the second decade of the present century” (Ibid). The evidence presented in this study seems to show otherwise.

miserably in composing a succinct *strictly* Calvinistic confession that would not be mistaken for expressing either a weak Calvinism, or, at least to some *strict* Calvinists, rank Arminianism?<sup>223</sup>

Nettles is surely correct concerning the Mississippi association's confession. Mississippi Baptists succeeded in composing a brief, undeniably *strict* Calvinistic abstract of faith that reflected the Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>224</sup> Contrarily, however, claiming that the NHC also reflected the same confessional tradition as Nettles contends for Mississippi Baptists' abstract remains highly problematic.<sup>225</sup>

#### 4.2.3 The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith and its Early Impact on Selected Baptist Associations in the Southern States

##### 4.2.3.1 Introduction

When New Hampshire Baptists began to ponder a confessional rewrite in 1830, it most probably did not occur to them that the short declaration of faith they would eventually adopt and publish in 1833 would become perhaps the most influential faith statement among American Baptists in history, even surpassing Philadelphia's legendary confession (Barnes, 1954, p. 118). Steve Lemke concurs. "By far the most widely accepted and formative Southern Baptist confession from about the 1840s until today is the New Hampshire Confession of 1833" (Lemke, Spring 2015, p. 251).<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Nettles appears to want it both ways. When associations like the Mississippi association compose articles that explicitly display *strict* Calvinism and indeed, in his words, make it "quite prominent and painfully clear" what they mean, Nettles hails them as a textbook example of reflecting the Philadelphia-Charleston confessional tradition. On the other hand, when a Baptist body like New Hampshire Baptists composes a confession the content of which not only theologically offends many 19<sup>th</sup> century *strict* Calvinists as virtually revealing flagrant Arminianism (see above), but also fools most contemporary scholars into questioning whether the confession is Calvinistic at all, concluding the NHC at best *very moderate* Calvinism, Nettles nonetheless claims New Hampshire Baptists apparently "did not jettison their distinguishing tenets" of *strict* Calvinism and consequently seeks to interpret the NHC in light of the PCF.

<sup>224</sup> As well as other Baptist associations across the south as the evidence will show.

<sup>225</sup> From Nettles' point of view, it stands to reason why New Hampshire's confession *must* be viewed in a way that suggests "Calvinists did not jettison their distinguishing tenets" (Ibid, xlili). Otherwise, Nettles' historical trajectory collapses, a trajectory that insists it wasn't until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Calvinism began to wane in Baptist life. "[*Strict* Calvinism] prevailed in the most influential and enduring arenas of Baptist denominational life until the end of the second decade of the twentieth century" (Nettles, 2006, p. ix). If the NHC reflects a theological shift away from *strict* Calvinism, and the evidence seems to clearly affirm that it does, then within the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, confessionally *strict* Calvinism among Baptists had already begun its theological demise.

<sup>226</sup> Lemke is among the few who rightly suggest the decline of confessional Calvinism among Baptists was taking place well before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even before mid-century, citing the NHC as good evidence. However, Lemke never appears to grasp the significance between the original 16 articles of the NHC in the 1840s and Brown's edition post-1853 (Ibid, pp. 253-254). What is more, Lemke's claim that "By far the most widely accepted

Edward Hiscox emphasized of New Hampshire's confession "No other creed form has attained to anything like its general circulation among American Baptists" (Hiscox, 1894, p. 542). Hiscox summarized the circulation up to 1894 as follows:

About 100,000 copies have been circulated with the author's manuals alone, besides its wide dissemination by other means. In the Directory, not far from 60,000 have been sent out. In the Star Book on Church Polity more than 30,000, and in the Standard Manual about 10,000. On the whole, for common use among Baptists, no other form of doctrinal statement has so much to commend it as this, though none can be claimed as perfect (Ibid).

The total circulation of the NHC from church manuals published by J. Newton Brown (1853), J. M. Pendleton (1867), and Hiscox himself as he shows above, remains impressive and accounts in many ways for the wild popularity the NHC enjoyed among 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptists. Hiscox also indicates how sheer volume could explain in part why the PCF lost its powerful place in confessional prominence before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

But as one examines the evidence more closely, it becomes clear that roughly two decades before church manuals began spreading New Hampshire's confession, it had already carved a significant niche into Baptist life, even among Baptists in the deep south. The spread of the NHC in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century undoubtedly was mainly due to its publication in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Brown, 1835, p. 191). Ironically, the editor of the encyclopedia at the time was J. Newton Brown, author of *The Baptist Church Manual* first published in 1853 (Brown, 1853), and the individual most often cited as being mainly responsible for the wide circulation of the NHC outside the state of New Hampshire. W. Lumpkin's estimation of Brown's contribution to the wide circulation of the NHC due to inclusion of it in his popular church manual bears repeating: "This document might not have become known outside of New

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and formative Southern Baptist confession from about the 1840s" remains a claim very difficult to empirically demonstrate. Most of the evidences Lemke offers come from the NHC's inclusion in numerous church manuals beginning with J. Newton Brown's in 1853 and moving forward to the century's end (Ibid). But this is not sufficient to account for his claim. Throughout Lemke's very well researched and otherwise insightful paper, Lemke mentions only a handful of Baptist associations that adopted the NHC, again not enough, even when combined with the church manuals, to substantiate his emboldened claim that *by far* the NHC confession was the *most widely* accepted confession from the 1840s on. As we intend to show in this research, the NHC was more influential among Baptists especially in the south than has been previously acknowledged. On the other hand, from the evidences forthcoming in this body of research, Lemke's claim is much too robust to be sustained by the evidence. While the New Hampshire confessional tradition was strong in the south, it was virtually a dead heat with the influential Broad River confessional tradition among the associations. See *Appendix G*.

Hampshire except for the work of one of its authors, J. Newton Brown, who...revised the confession on his own authority and published it in *The Baptist Church Manual* [1853]" (Allen, 1958, p. 308). Surely surprising to Lumpkin, had he later become aware, would be the publication of New Hampshire's confession in England a full decade before Brown circulated it in his church manual beginning in 1853.<sup>227</sup>

#### 4.2.3.2 Alabama and the New Hampshire Confession

Established in 1818, the Cahaba Baptist Association was one of Alabama's oldest associations (Allen, 1958, p. 7), and therefore would most likely have had close theological affinities with the PCF. The 1832 minutes reveal an "Abstract of Faith," however, that appears only *moderately* Calvinistic. The abstract contains 12 brief articles and resembles North Carolina's Broad River association's articles of faith.<sup>228</sup> Article 3 states, "We believe in the doctrine of election, and that God chose his people in Christ, before the foundation of the world"; Article 7 reads, "We believe that God's elect shall be called, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Cahaba Association, 1832, p. 8).

As early as 1851, however, Cahaba Baptists had adopted what they called "The Baptist Confession of Faith" (Cahaba Association, 1851, pp. 21-23). Cahaba's articles of faith were the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's declaration published in 1835.<sup>229</sup> Thus, before Brown's church manual was published in 1853, Alabama's Cahaba Baptists had already adopted the original 16 articles of the NHC.

Judson Baptist Association located in southeast Alabama was organized in 1851 (Allen, 1958, p. 9). Rather than the PCF, the association's faith statement comprises the original 16 articles of the

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<sup>227</sup> Not only did W. McGlothlin overlook the original 16 articles of the NHC published both the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* and R. Baird's 1844 edition of *Religion in America* (Baird, 1844, pp. 230-231), but also Lumpkin's estimation that the NHC would not have been known outside the state of New Hampshire but for Brown's church manual seems embarrassingly exaggerated since Baird's volume on religion in America was first published in Britain in 1843 as a guide for English people abroad to understand what was religiously happening in the United States (Baird, 1844, Preface to the American Edition).

<sup>228</sup> Recall Broad River association was organized in 1800 and represented a confessional tradition in North Carolina that consciously rejected the Unconditional Election displayed in the PCF. Article 7 reads more like Asplund's abstract (see chapter two).

<sup>229</sup> Cahaba association (1818) should not be confused with Cahaba Valley association (1867).

NHC as published in Brown's *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Judson Association, 1860, pp. 19-24), another indication the proliferation of New Hampshire's confession had already gained a theological following in the deep south prior to the publication of Brown, Pendleton, and Hiscox's church manuals.<sup>230</sup>

In 1861, the Second Baptist Church of Montgomery, Alabama published for public consumption a book containing its Constitution, Rules of Decorum, Abstract of Faith, Covenant, and Rules Concerning Gospel [sic]. The church's abstract of faith is identical to the original 16 articles of the NHC gleaned from Brown's *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Second Baptist Church, 1861, pp. 7-13). The church most likely depended upon the earlier sources of the NHC rather than either Brown or Pendleton's manual both of which were available, and which included Brown's additional two articles.

Of interest also is the 1899 minutes of Alabama's Cullman Baptist Association declaring in article 11 of its constitution, "This association adopts the articles of faith known as the New Hampshire Confession, found in Crowell's Church Members' Hand-Book" (Cullman Association, 1899, p. 13). Organized in 1883 (Allen, 1958, p. 13), the association apparently opted for the original 16 articles of the NHC published in Crowell's manual rather than Brown's edition in 1853.

The vigorous disputing and infighting over Calvinistic doctrines that had plagued Baptists since their continental rise in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century was by no means absent from the American south. In the 1840s, "doctrinal wars raged among Baptists" writes Alabama Baptist historian, Wayne Flynt, over issues including predestination, election, and free will (Flynt, 1998, p. 29). Predictably, the NHC would receive a warm and hearty welcome from Baptists who not only suffered from spiritual fatigue over the associational infighting about Calvinism but also refreshing would be adopting a confession more accurately representing the theological dissent from the *strict*

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<sup>230</sup> Though unlike the 1835 encyclopedia edition of the NHC, Judson's articles of faith include proof-texts similar to Crowell's manual. However, the texts were apparently added by the association because they do not match the texts Crowell used. Also, in Judson's 1870 minutes, all proof-texts are dropped from the 16 articles (Judson Association, 1870, pp. 14-15). Additionally, an oddity occurs in article 9 between Judson's 1860 and 1870 minutes. In the 1860 minutes, the ninth article is correctly labeled "Of the Perseverance of the Saints" while the 1870 minutes labels article 9 as "Of the Preservation of Saints." Whether the change in terminology was intentional or not remains difficult to discern. See also, Central Baptist Association and footnote following.

Calvinism emanating from the Philadelphia confessional tradition many Baptists of the south experienced.

Below is a snippet from a circular letter<sup>231</sup> published in 1843 for the North River United Baptist Association. Beginning in 1832, David Andrews, an “Arminian” pastor, was eventually ousted from Bethel Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, along with just under half of the congregation, over “Arminianism” (Ibid, pp. 28-29). Organizing a prospering new church, Andrews later led in the formation of the North River association. In the 1843 associational minutes, the circular letter reads in part:

But Brethren, pause and look back...some ten or twelve years ago, and contrast the condition of the churches then and the condition of the churches now ... yea the churches were generally in the lap of antinomianism, calvanistic [sic] doctrines in the highest order were promulgated... that Jesus Christ made a particular or a special atonement for a definite number of Adam’s apostate race, and the rest of mankind was past by and ordained to wrath for their sins... But Brethren... see what a great difference, between the doctrine advanced by those Ministers that now belong to the North River Association. Those ministers preach now like they used to preach which was and is as follows: Christ Jesus made an atonement, general in its nature: that is he tasted death for every man: that the Holy Spirit reproves the world, that God commands all men every where to repent; and that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and also that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself... and all this or such doctrine as this, were called heresy by those antinomians” (North River Association, 1844, p. 5).

The circular letter remains fully consistent with the history of North River association. From the beginning of the association, North River churches had been united upon a confession of faith (North River Association, 1836, pp. 4-5).<sup>232</sup> Composed of 12 articles, North River Baptists’ abstract of faith reveals neither confessional dependence upon nor theological loyalty to the PCF. However, the abstract shows no confessional tendencies toward theological Arminianism as

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<sup>231</sup> Circular letters were common practice among Baptists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Allen, 1958, pp. 89-90). At each annual session either a single pastor or a group of pastors from the association was selected to write on a subject sometimes chosen by the association, sometimes chosen by the composer(s). Oftentimes, the letter was officially adopted and placed into the minutes. Also, circular letters can reveal the theological affinity of the association in general. However, no circular letter should be deemed authoritative in theologically speaking for every individual church. Nor did circular letters carry the same confessional weight as adopted articles of faith.

<sup>232</sup> North River’s full confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research. Both general atonement and perseverance of the saints are affirmed.

North River critics maintained.<sup>233</sup> And, as the minutes of each of the annual meetings indicate, the original confession seems unchanged from 1836 through 1843.

In 1844, however, the association moved on and passed a motion that 14 men be “appointed a committee to revise, alter, or amend our Constitution and Confession of Faith” (North River Association, 1844, p. 3). Even more significantly, resolution 34 in the same minutes reads thusly:

34. Resolved, That an Abstract of Principles, as published in the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, be published in our present Minutes, and recommended to the Churches as a substitute for the one now in use provided the Abstract proposed shall not be considered binding on any of our Churches, unless adopted by them in their Church capacity (Ibid, p. 4).

As shown earlier, the 1835 *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* edited by Brown published what may be as close to the original 16 articles of the NHC as one can get.<sup>234</sup> Hence, by 1844, North River association, an association branded by *strict* Calvinists as “Arminian,” had already embraced the NHC.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> See below on Andrews and North River critics.

<sup>234</sup> C. MacDonald publishes in his research what he indicated was Ira Person’s original draft of the New Hampshire confession first proposed to the New Hampshire convention for editorial purposes (MacDonald, May 1939, pp. 80-82). The alleged Person draft contains only seven articles, articles thoroughly washed of Calvinism completely. But even if the Person draft is genuine, it was a working draft the result of which in final form contained 16 articles. A copy of the Person draft is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>235</sup> Nettles appears confused concerning D. Andrews and the North River association. “The North River Association, under the leadership of David W. Andrews, had altered its confession on the doctrines of election and effectual calling...” (Nettles, 2006, p. 138). As stated earlier, from 1836 until 1844, nothing appears to have significantly changed in North River’s confession. In 1844, a committee was appointed; they then adopted the 1833 NHC and published it in the minutes (North River Association, 1844, pp. 5-7). Hence, to suggest North River association changed its confession on election and effectual calling not only contradicts the association’s published minutes but assumes North River association once had *strictly* Calvinistic notions of election and effectual call. To the contrary, North River association was established as a Baptist association that formally dissented from *strict* Calvinism. In this formal dissent, they appear to follow North Carolina’s Broad River association (see chapter two). Even so, insightful is the first statement of the preamble to North River’s original Constitution. “We, the United Baptist Churches of Jesus Christ, in Alabama, that believe the doctrine of a free salvation, and a general atonement” (North River Association, 1836, p. 3). With interest, when the association called for a committee to amend and revise the Constitution and Confession of Faith in 1844, they changed the Confession to the NHC but kept the original statement in the Constitution (North River Association, 1844, p. 7). Unfortunately, Nettles cites no sources to substantiate his claim. He goes on to credit Basil Manly, Sr. with settling the dispute between North River and Tuscaloosa association by a sermon he preached for a specified gathering (perhaps following Flynt, see Flynt, 1998, p. 29). Jeff Robinson uncritically follows Nettles suggesting even more strongly, “Manly encouraged the North River Association to hold the line on the historic Reformed position on election and avoid attempting to remove the valid biblical tension between God’s absolute sovereignty and man’s responsibility” (Barrett & Nettles, 2012, p. 346). Again, Robinson seems to wrongly assume North River was an association that once held to a *strict* Calvinistic confession but was teetering on abandoning orthodox doctrine, an assumption contrary to the evidence.

Alabama's Troy Baptist Association was constituted November 7, 1884 (Allen, 1958, p. 15). Comprised of only four churches at its birth, Troy association nonetheless adopted articles of faith (Troy Association, 1884, pp. 4-6). New Hampshire's Declaration was printed in the association's minutes. The articles are the 16 original articles based upon the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* edited by J. Newton Brown.<sup>236</sup>

The Shelby Association of Baptist Churches was organized in Shelby County, Alabama in October 1851 (Allen, 1958, p. 11). They adopted an Abstract of Principles consisting of ten articles of uneven length (Shelby Association, 1861, pp. 7-8). While not adopting the NHC per se, Shelby Baptists' Article 3 on election is obviously dependent upon New Hampshire's article on election. It reads in part, "Election is the gracious and eternal purpose of God, according to which He 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... it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, prayer, praise, trust in God, and entire imitation of His free mercy..." (Ibid).

#### 4.2.3.3 Louisiana and the New Hampshire Confession

By mid-century, New Hampshire's confession had not only begun to influence Alabama, but it also reached farther south into Louisiana. Louisiana Baptist historian, W. E. Paxton, published minutes of several associations in Louisiana during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Paxton, five churches met together on December 21, 1849 to form the Grand Cane Baptist Association (Paxton, 1888, p. 357). "They adopted the New Hampshire Confession of Faith as the basis of union" (Ibid). Since Grand Cane Baptists adopted the confession prior to Crowell's and Brown's church manual, presumably they adopted the original 1835 edition of the NHC published in *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Paxton also mentions Louisiana's Calcasieu association

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Furthermore, contra FyInt, no evidence seems to be extant in the North River minutes that it changed its adherence to the NHC it adopted in 1844 to a new Abstract of Faith created in 1849 in response to Basil Manly's sermon. In fact, in 1875, the original 16 articles of the NHC was still published as the associational confession (North River Association, 1875, pp. 6-7).

<sup>236</sup> The reason Troy association is considered in this section even though it was established later in the century is because it chose the original 16 articles of the NHC as published in the encyclopedia. In short, the original NHC as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* remained influential even into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. More evidence to follow.

organized in 1860. The articles of faith upon which they united, according to Paxton, was the New Hampshire confession (Ibid, p. 419).

The Ouachita association was organized in 1844 adopting as a confession “Calvinistic articles” (Allen, 1958, p. 798). Paxton is more specific naming 13 articles of faith, two of which specifically display *strict* Calvinism—“2. Eternal and personal election” and “4. Particular redemption” (Paxton, 1876, p. 276). The anti-missions controversy rocked the association for the rest of the decade resulting in splitting the association in 1850, with a group of churches withdrawing and forming an anti-missionary association (Ibid). As Paxton and Allen indicate, Ouachita Baptists then adopted the NHC. In the 1868 minutes of the Ouachita association, Paxton writes, “In this minute is found printed the Articles of Faith, which are copied from the New Hampshire Confession” (Ibid, p. 294). In 1871, Louisiana’s Big Creek association subsequently “adopted the Articles of Faith of the Ouachita Association as the basis of union” (i.e. the NHC) (Ibid, p. 350). Hence, by mid-century, Louisiana Baptists were already displaying confessional signs that the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia was fighting to hold on to its former confessional prominence.

The large population of *strict* Calvinists in Louisiana was hardly silent, however. In 1843, several churches near the Mississippi River came together to form the Mississippi River Association. The first session of the new association met in Wilkerson County, Mississippi, Oct. 20, 1843 and adopted a confession of faith (Paxton, 1876, p. 65). Sixteen articles were adopted, articles which Paxton identified as the NHC. Undoubtedly, the confession was the NHC as published first in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. But the articles proved controversial and gave rise to conflict from surrounding associations (Ibid, p. 70). Paxton describes the scenario thusly:

These articles are coined from the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, and differ in some particulars from the neighboring associations, which were based upon the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. At the time, it was customary to lay great stress upon the doctrines of election and predestination, and at first the surrounding associations hesitated to hold correspondence with this body (Ibid, pp. 70-71).

Mississippi River Baptists struggled along for the next two years bickering with each other over the confession as well as being theologically scorned by neighboring Baptist associations. Paxton describes the situation in 1845 as unchanged over the preceding two years. The NHC not only

caused the association to be “looked upon with some distrust by some of the neighboring associations,” but the NHC also apparently “failed to satisfy the constituent churches” (Ibid, p. 75). Consequently, a committee was appointed to revise the articles and bring a report back to the 1846 session. On October 24, 1846, the Mississippi River association adopted a new confession containing 7 articles reflecting the *strict* Calvinism of neighboring associations (Ibid, pp. 75-77).

#### 4.2.3.4 Mississippi and the New Hampshire Confession

In neighboring Mississippi, the Chickasaw Baptist Association was organized in the northern part of the state in 1837 apparently without a confession of faith until one was adopted in 1848 (Allen, 1958, p. 879). According to Mississippi Baptist historians, Z. Leavell and T. Bailey, presumably due to lack of record-keeping, little can be known of the workings of the association prior to 1843 (Leavell & Bailey, 1904, p. 498). However, in that year, records indicate 18 churches belonged to the association when they met in annual session, and 11 more churches were received into fellowship. Leavell and Bailey describe the Chickasaw association thusly: “It may be called the mother association of North Mississippi, as the Mississippi Association is in South Mississippi” (Ibid). Five years later in 1848, Chickasaw Baptists met for its annual session in Tippah county (Ibid, p. 499). The association was 10 years old,<sup>237</sup> and the leaders were concerned about organizational improvements, improvements they believed included adopting a confession of faith. Hence, Chickasaw Baptists unanimously adopted a resolution concerning articles of faith:

It was unanimously resolved "to adopt the articles of faith as found in the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," which was the declaration of faith, published by the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire” (Ibid).

More significantly, according to Leavell and Bailey, Mississippi Baptists the entire state over had incredibly embraced New Hampshire’s confession *before* 1850 (Leavell & Bailey, 1904, pp. 1324-1326). At an 1848 meeting of the Pearl River association, a resolution was passed,

Resolved, That in view of the painful division, which, in some parts of our common Zion, have grown out of a difference of articles of faith adopted by different associations and churches, this Association feels impressed with the importance and utility of uniformity of articles upon which associations are constituted.

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<sup>237</sup> Contra Allen, Leavell and Bailey accept 1838 rather than 1837 as the year the association organized (Ibid, p. 497).

Consequently, Pearl River Baptists began inviting other Baptist associations in the state to join them in promoting a universal confession suitable to every Mississippi association. A convention identified by Leavell and Bailey as “The Unity Convention” was planned for August 1849, and several associations including the Mississippi, Mount Pisgah, Union, and Central associations planned on attending (Ibid, p. 1325). Though considerable debate occurred, Leavell and Bailey record the outcome in this manner.

The Minutes of the Pearl River Association of 1849 speak of the meeting of the convention as satisfactory, and the articles of faith adopted are given in their records. The Mount Pisgah Association adopted about the same declaration.<sup>238</sup> They are in keeping with the New Hampshire declaration of faith. The articles of all the associations and churches of the State are about the same, and are the New Hampshire confession either in substance or form (Ibid, p. 1326).<sup>239</sup>

If Leavell and Bailey were but partially correct, it seems to follow that *strict* Calvinism had not only begun its theological descent among Baptists in the south by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, its mortal wound was already visible in significant ways, and consequently confessionally *strict* Calvinism’s dim future was perhaps already decided by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>240</sup>

#### 4.2.3.5 North Carolina and the New Hampshire Confession

Along with the NHC’s impact upon Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, North Carolina was another southern state profoundly affected by the 1833 NHC before mid-century. In May 1849,

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<sup>238</sup> Confusion exists in Leavell and Bailey’s narrative concerning Mount Pisgah association, however. At the annual session of Mount Pisgah association in 1848, “After full discussion, it was resolved to publish in our minutes the Abstract of Faith found in the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, that the churches might read it, and if thought satisfactory, might adopt, it” (Leavell & Bailey, 1904, p. 334). The abstract of faith, of course, was the original 16 articles of the NHC. But the association apparently only *recommended* the adoption, for in 1849, Leavell and Bailey record of Mount Pisgah’s annual session, “The question as to the wording of the Abstract of Faith was again before the body. The churches declined to adopt the Encyclopedia faith, whereupon an Abstract was presented before the body, so worded as to meet the feelings of all, yet retaining the principles of the old Abstract of Faith, which was unanimously adopted, and the question settled” (Ibid, p. 335). The contents of the old abstract are not provided for comparison, but one might reasonably conclude the old abstract was certainly more Calvinistic than the NHC.

<sup>239</sup> Pearl River’s quest for an appropriate confession was apparently a continuing journey. Leavell and Bailey record Pearl River’s 1830 hiring of David Cooper and subsequently, Norville Robertson, to secure for the association a suitable confession (Leavell & Bailey, 1904, p. 138). Cooper failed but Robertson delivered the goods. While the confession is not identified, it seems it remained unsuitable for purposes of uniting all Mississippi Baptists two decades later.

<sup>240</sup> Evidence below will shed doubt on Leavell and Bailey’s claim that in Mississippi “The articles of all the associations and churches of the State are about the same, and are the New Hampshire confession either in substance or form.” While many associations did accept the NHC, it remains a decided overreach to suggest “all associations and churches” in Mississippi embraced in form or substance the NHC.

one of North Carolina's oldest associations, the Chowan association dropped a *strictly* Calvinistic abstract of faith and adopted an edited version of New Hampshire's confession of faith (Delke, 1882, p. 90). Chowan's version included the sixteen original articles of the NHC (with minor word changes),<sup>241</sup> plus an original article by Chowan association entitled "Of Church Independence" inserted as article 12. In all, Chowan's version of the NHC contains 17 articles. Cashie Baptist Church, a member of the Chowan association, had embraced the NHC only a month earlier (Taylor, 1970, p. 11).

Pamlico Baptist Association was organized in Pitt county, North Carolina November 28, 1851 (Allen, 1958, p. 1017). On the second day of its first annual session, Pamlico Baptists adopted articles of faith, articles composed of the original 16 articles of the NHC as found in the 1835 *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* edited by J. Newton Brown (Pamlico Association, 1851, pp. 5-7). In the same year, Raleigh Baptist Association had the NHC attached as an Appendix in its 1851 minutes (Raleigh Association, 1851, pp. 11-14).

The roots of Charlotte's First Baptist Church extend back to 1832 when the Beulah Baptist Church was established in Charlotte, North Carolina. "It was on Sept. 12, 1832, that the Beulah Baptist Church was constituted in Charlotte, and the first Lord's Supper by the Baptists was celebrated..." (McLean, 1917, p. 9). The growth of Beulah was hardly healthy. Ten years later the church had only 11 white members and a few black members, while in 1847 the white membership dwindled to 6 as the "colored" membership arose to 19 (Ibid, p. 10). In 1855, plans began to surface for the reorganization of Beulah Baptist Church. Consequently, on September 7, 1856, Beulah church had its last public service (Ibid, p. 12). The day following, the Beulah church sat in conference, voted to dissolve, and immediately the same conference voted to establish the Charlotte Baptist Church of Christ (Ibid, p. 13). One of the first orders of business was the reading of Beulah's Declaration of Faith, and the subsequent adoption of the identical declaration of faith by the newly established Charlotte Baptist Church of Christ (later changed to First Baptist Church), a

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<sup>241</sup> For example, while New Hampshire's article 11 is entitled "Of a Gospel Church," Chowan changed the title to "Of a Church of Christ." Also, NHC's article 6 "Of the Freeness of Salvation" is changed to "Of the Fullness of Salvation" in Chowan's confession. However, this appears to be a recording error rather than an intentional change by Chowan association.

declaration and covenant McLean informs the readers “are still in use by this church” (ibid). Charlotte’s declaration of faith includes 11 articles, articles that are virtually identical in the original New Hampshire declaration published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.<sup>242</sup>

By far, one of the most compelling confessional narratives concerns North Carolina’s Sandy Creek association. Sandy Creek association was organized in 1758 by Shubal Stearns as the first Separate Baptist association in the south and, by many accounts, the third Baptist association in America (Allen, 1958, p. 1012).<sup>243</sup> Given Separate Baptists’ well documented aversion to writing confessions, it remains unsurprising the association apparently existed from 1758 until 1816 before composing articles of belief. According to Lumpkin, their decision to compose and adopt a confession in 1816 was largely attributable to the influence of Luther Rice (Lumpkin, 2011, p. 374). The 10 brief articles of faith display a *moderate to strong* Calvinism.<sup>244</sup> The single article that pushes the confession toward *strict* Calvinism is Article 4:

We believe in election from eternity, effectual calling by the Holy Spirit of God, and justification in his sight only by imputation of Christ’s righteousness. And we believe that they who are thus elected, effectually called, and justified, will persevere through grace to the end, that none of them be lost (Lumpkin, 2011, pp. 374-375).

While Sandy Creek’s 1816 article on election does appear stronger Calvinistically than some other abstracts examined in this study, arguably a case might be made to reasonably conclude Sandy Creek’s abstract is as much *moderately* Calvinistic as *strictly* Calvinistic. For example, nothing exists in Article IV concerning a “certain number” being elected which cannot be altered or changed as in the PCF and reflected in abstracts like composed and adopted by the Kehukee and Georgia associations. Nor is the confessional phrase “eternal and particular election” so often found among *strictly* Calvinistic bodies that clearly intended to reflect the PCF present. Nor is there any hint of a covenant of redemption whereby the elect was given to the Son, and

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<sup>242</sup> Of course, there are 16 articles in the encyclopedia. Charlotte church copied only 11 of the 16 for reasons of which are not clear. Omitted by Charlotte church are Articles X and XIII through XVI.

<sup>243</sup> For a full discussion on Shubal Stearns and Separate Baptists, see chapter four.

<sup>244</sup> Sandy Creek association’s confession is included in full in *Appendix A* at the end of this research. Also, see the footnote accompanying the confession disputing some who insist the confession theologically represents Sandy Creek Separate Baptists all the way back to 1758.

consequently, the Son covenants to redeem the elect by dying for them. In short, the stiff “particularity” motif so common in *strict* Calvinism is noticeably absent, or, at best, *weak* in the Sandy Creek confession.<sup>245</sup>

Even more, some interpret the 1816 confession as indicative of the *strictly* Calvinistic history originating from the very start of the Sandy Creek association (Ascol, 2001, p. 9). However, such an inference from a confession composed over a half century after the organization was established seems to presume far too much. First, Sandy Creek association most likely had no confession either in 1758 or the decades following. If it did, the chief complaint raised against Separates by Regular Baptists prior to merging together would have been entirely moot. Yet, as late as 1787, “the Regulars complained that the Separates were not sufficiently explicit in their principles, having never published or sanctioned a Confession of Faith (Semple, 1894, pp. 99-100).<sup>246</sup> Second, the old Sandy Creek association was effectively gutted immediately after the Battle of Alamance in 1771. Some 1,500 families migrated out of the area within two years after Alamance (Allen, 1958, p. 1012).<sup>247</sup> Even Sandy Creek church was decimated, declining from over 600 members before the Battle of Alamance to 14 members afterward. Other churches disbanded. Some survived. Even so, whatever theological trajectory the original association entertained, it does not follow the Sandy Creek association of 1816 was the same association with the same theological sentiments of 1758.

Nevertheless, even were one to grant *strict* Calvinism in play at the Sandy Creek association in the 1816 confession, within two decades, the association had apparently become unsettled with their confession. In 1836, a motion was made and passed to set up a three-person committee to “draw up Articles of the Faith of Baptists, and present them to our next Association” (Sandy Creek Association, 1836, p. 6). No minutes are apparently extant for 1837. Interestingly, whatever

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<sup>245</sup> However, since most interpreters appear to accept the *strictly* Calvinistic flavor of Sandy Creek’s Article 4 on election, conceded in this study is that Sandy Creek’s 1816 abstract of faith displays a *strictly* Calvinistic aura based upon Article 4 and the twice used term most often found in *strictly* Calvinistic communities reflecting the Philadelphia confessional tradition— “effectual calling” and “effectually called.”

<sup>246</sup> See chapter four for full discussion of Sandy Creek and Separate Baptists.

<sup>247</sup> For a thorough treatment of the Regulator’s War, the Battle of Alamance, and its relationship to and effect upon Sandy Creek church and association, see Sparks, 2001, pp. 129-180; Lumpkin, 1961, pp. 72-86; Paschal, 1930, pp. 230-247; Purefoy, 1859, pp. 44-47; Thompson, 1902; Williams, 1901, pp. 53-55.

debate ensued, the association appended the 1816 confession to the 1838 minutes (Sandy Creek Association, 1838, pp. 6-7; 9-10). Consequently, it seems reasonable to assume that since the debate on the articles was seemingly a wash, they decided to keep the 1816 confession. If so, the satisfaction with the original confession wore off quickly.

In 1845, Sandy Creek association “Resolved, therefore, That we adopt the following Sixteen Articles, with the Scripture References, as the Faith of this Association” recommending it “to the different Churches for their adoption” (Sandy Creek Association, 1845, p. 9). The 16 articles are, almost verbatim, the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* (1833) as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Hence, whether Sandy Creek Baptists’ 1816 abstract of faith was *strictly* Calvinistic and reflected the Philadelphia confessional tradition remains moot.

By 1845, *strict* Calvinism as displayed in the PCF was not the theological trajectory of Sandy Creek Baptists. Nor was Sandy Creek’s new confession linguistically dependent upon Philadelphia’s confessional tradition. Rather by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the first Separate Baptist association in the south, the third oldest Baptist association in America, had discarded its original confession of faith, a confession judged by many as *strictly* Calvinistic, and adopted a confession about which Baptist theologian, J. Garrett, concludes the label “moderately Arminian” would be as accurate to describe it as would the term “moderately Calvinistic” (James Leo Garrett, 2009, p. 132). Ironically, Garrett’s description of the NHC aptly describes the theological profile of Separate Baptists as evidenced in Chapter 4.

#### 4.2.3.6 Georgia and the New Hampshire Confession

Perhaps *strict* Calvinism was more embedded in Georgia than in any other southern state. Organized in 1784, the Georgia association was the first association organized in the state (Allen, 1958, p. 549). Apparently, it was organized without a confession but, according to the preamble, the confession became necessary because some churches began to embrace doctrines perceived to be unlike most of the churches at the time. The preamble reads in part, “that there are a number of Baptist churches, who differ from us in faith and practice; and that it is impossible to

have communion where there is no union, we think it our duty, to set forth a concise declaration of the faith and order, upon which we intend to associate” (Mercer, 1838, p. 24).<sup>248</sup> Article 4 reads,

We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory: And that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the Father and the Son, before the world began, in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed (Ibid, pp. 24-26).<sup>249</sup>

Georgia Baptists’ confession overall seems similar to many other abstracts across the south. Article 4, however, with its focus on a “definite number of the human race” to be elected, and the eternal covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son so that the elect “in particular are redeemed,” remain two themes frequently addressed and affirmed in High Calvinism and found in the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Surprisingly, Article 4 remains the exclusive article that displays theological affinity with and confessional dependence upon the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia. Other articles could indicate *moderate* or *mild* Calvinism and perhaps no Calvinism at all.<sup>250</sup>

Regardless of the powerful influence of the Georgia association among other Georgia Baptists, there was not theological unity on the *strictly* Calvinistic doctrines as confessionally expressed in the PCF even in Georgia. Alternatively, some of those associations flirted with the NHC for theological expression.

Tallapoosa Baptist Association was organized in 1835 (Allen, 1958, p. 553). Tallapoosa’s articles of faith were virtually the same as those of the Georgia association (Tallapoosa Association, 1835).<sup>251</sup> Article 3 on the fall of man states, “We believe in the fall of Adam, and the imputation of his sin to his posterity. In the corruption of human nature, and the impotency of man to recover

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<sup>248</sup> Perhaps the allusion in the preamble is toward the conflict over Calvinism in the Georgia association spawned by influential Virginia Separate Baptist leader, Jeremiah Walker (1746-1792), who moved to Georgia in 1785 (Semple, 1810, p. 129). The conflict ended with Walker and a few ministers and churches starting another association.

<sup>249</sup> A number of Baptist associations followed Georgia adopting virtually the same articles of faith as Georgia, associations including Appalachee (Appalachee Association, 1847); Central (Central Association, 1834); and Chattahoochee (Chattahoochee Association, 1826, no page numbers) among others.

<sup>250</sup> A full copy of Georgia’s articles of faith is included in *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

<sup>251</sup> Hand-Written, therefore no page numbers.

himself by his own free will and ability” (Ibid). Additionally, Article 4 says, “We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory: And that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the Father and the Son, before the foundation of the world, in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed” (Ibid).

By 1848, however, the doctrine of both sinful depravity and election had softened measurably: “We believe in the total and universal depravity of the human family” states Article 3 (Tallapoosa Association, 1848). Statements about human inability and imputation of sin are avoided.<sup>252</sup> Concerning election, Tallapoosa Baptists changed their confession to state, “We believe in Election through the everlasting love of god [sic] to his people. They being chosen in Christ before the world began” (Ibid). No mention of a “definite number” being chosen nor an eternal covenant of grace wherein “they [i.e. the elect] in particular are redeemed.” Thus, from 1835 to 1848, the *strict* Calvinism confessed earlier seems to have loosened.

More significantly, the *strict* Calvinism confessed by Tallapoosa Baptists in 1835, and subsequently amended in 1848 to a less ambitious Calvinistic understanding of human depravity and election than displayed in the PCF, seems to have been seriously challenged in 1853. According to the minutes, the original 16 articles of New Hampshire’s confession as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* was recommended to the association for consideration (Tallapoosa Association, 1853).<sup>253</sup> And while the NHC was not adopted as the 1854 minutes shows (Tallapoosa Association, 1854),<sup>254</sup> that Tallapoosa’s associational leaders would consider and recommend the NHC not only indicates New Hampshire’s confession was circulating among Georgia Baptists, but also that apparently many

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<sup>252</sup> While some may insist the term “total and universal depravity” nonetheless remains “total depravity,” it does not follow that just because the term “total depravity” is retained, that the composers necessarily intended the doctrine of total depravity as confessed in the PCF. It seems reasonable to presume that since much of the explanatory language of the article on human depravity is dropped from Tallapoosa Baptists’ article, it remains at least questionable they still insisted upon a loyalty to the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Total Depravity as found in the PCF. Coupled with the change in their expression of election, it seems most probable they intended to lessen their allegiance to the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

<sup>253</sup> Hand-written minutes, therefore no page numbers.

<sup>254</sup> Hand-written minutes, therefore, no page numbers.

Baptists in Georgia were not satisfied with their more *strictly* Calvinistic documents that were confessionally dependent upon and theologically loyal to the PCF.<sup>255</sup>

#### 4.2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, contrary to many who claim Baptists in the south did not embrace the NHC as did the northern and western Baptists, overall, the evidence seems to challenge. Yet the evidences presented from the southern states in this chapter are to be considered illustrative and not exhaustive.<sup>256</sup> Yet enough evidence exists to historically demonstrate that well before either Brown's or Pendleton's church manual was published or circulated in the south, Baptists were both familiar with and accepting of New Hampshire's original 16 articles published almost two decades earlier in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. What is more, even when Brown's, Pendleton's, and Hiscox's manuals were abundantly available at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in some cases, the original 16 articles published in the encyclopedia were still preferred over the later editions.

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<sup>255</sup> W. Cathcart mentioned Savannah's historic First Baptist Church had embraced the NHC (Cathcart, 1881, p. 145). Also, Hiwassee Baptist Association organized in 1849 in northern Georgia (Allen, 1958, p. 550) embraced the New Hampshire Confession later in the century (Hiwassee Baptist Association, 1882, pp. 11-15). In addition, apparently Georgia's Cave Spring Baptist Association, organized in 1869, embraced a confession that depended heavily upon the NHC (Allen, 1958, p. 554). More on Georgia in later chapters.

<sup>256</sup> More research concerning the impact of the NHC on Baptists in the south prior to 1853 and the publication of J. Newton Brown's church manual remains vital to a fuller understanding of Baptist confessionalism in 19<sup>th</sup> century America.

## Chapter Five: Nineteenth Century Associational Confessions and Examples of Conflict Over Calvinism in the Southern States

### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of chapter four was to document both the shift away from confessionally *strict* Calvinism New Hampshire's confession represented in 1833, as well as the rise in popularity of the NHC and its early impact even on Baptist associations and churches in the southern states prior to the publication of J. Newton Brown's classic church manual in 1853. Few scholars have appreciated the impact of the original 16 articles of the NHC as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* on Baptists even in the deep south.<sup>257</sup> However, the NHC was not the only confessional indication that Baptists in the southern states were apparently losing their confessional loyalty and theological allegiance to the *strict* Calvinism embedded with the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Thus, the present chapter will focus on other associations in the southern states that also adopted brief articles of faith.

Reaching back even farther than 1833 when the NHC was born, Baptists in the south had already relieved the Philadelphia confession of its previous privileged status as "standard of Baptist orthodoxy" by taking it completely off the negotiation table as did Kentucky's *strict* Calvinists, *moderate* Calvinists, *mild* Calvinists, and even non-Calvinists pledged their confessional union and cooperation together based upon a brief abstract of faith that embraced neither language nor theological article of faith reminiscent of Philadelphia's confessional tradition. The year was 1801, and the confession is known as Terms of General Union.<sup>258</sup>

Unlike New Hampshire's confession, the terms are very much like the abstracts of faith adopted by various Baptist associations the south over. For example, the first two articles in Kentucky's terms of union are almost exactly the same two articles expressed in virtually every Baptist

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<sup>257</sup> As mentioned at the close of the last chapter, since the presentation of the evidences was illustrative rather than exhaustive, more research is warranted into Baptist associations to gauge the full scope of impact the original NHC had on Baptists in the south before mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>258</sup> A copy of the terms of union is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research. For more on this subject, see chapter three.

abstract of faith examined in this study.<sup>259</sup> Also, the vast majority of the associational abstracts examined here have a brief article affirming the perseverance of the saints very similar to Article 5 in the terms of union: “That the saints will finally persevere through grace to glory.” Predictably, after Kentucky’s success in adopting brief abstracts of faith as the basis for associational union, more and more associations across the south would follow their lead not only in adopting brief abstracts of faith but also adopting abstracts that tended to scrub either confessional dependence upon or theological loyalty to Philadelphia’s confessional tradition.<sup>260</sup>

## 5.2 Confessions and Calvinistic Conflict in the Southern States

### 5.2.1 North Carolina

Named after the French Broad River flowing 210 miles from Western North Carolina to East Tennessee, North Carolina’s French Broad Baptist Association organized in 1807 with six churches, three each from two existing associations—Holston Association and Broad River Association (Allen, 1958, p. 1010). The organizers immediately prepared for adoption both a Covenant and Rules of Decorum for the newly established association. The confession contained twelve short articles including “3. We believe in the doctrine of Original Sin; 4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by his own free will and ability; 5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ; and “6. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and that they never shall fall finally away” (French Broad Association, 1994, pp. 3-4). While these articles are not necessarily *strictly* Calvinistic (more on this later), presumably many in the association interpreted them as *strictly* Calvinistic which caused much contention from the association’s very beginning. John Ammons insisted:

From the [beginning of the] organization of the French Broad Association there had been more or less questioning about doctrines and discipline; all of the leading spirits were Calvinistic, but there were many minds that revolted at the sterner aspects of Calvinism... These questions were taken up by the preachers and became, not only the grounds of contention and strife, but, in 1827, resulted in a division and the organization of the Big

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<sup>259</sup> It should be noted that Kentucky’s terms of union reverse the order of the two articles. Whereas in other associational abstracts, the article on God is first and the article on Scripture follows.

<sup>260</sup> Of course, Kentucky Baptists were not alone in adopting brief abstracts though they remain among the first southern states to adopt them on a broad scope. See the earlier discussion in chapter two on North Carolina Baptists’ Broad River (1800) and Yadkin (1790) associations for more on the tradition of embracing abstracts of faith.

Ivy Association... The principle question of difference was the doctrine of election (Ammons, 1907, pp. 10-11).

Contrary to suggestions the Big Ivey Association embraced heretical notions concerning historic Baptist orthodoxy, Ammons corrects the record: “The Big Ivy brethren were not heterodox as they have been represented, they were sounder than their creed, and the record shows that they were truly evangelical” (Ibid, pp. 12-13). As proof, Ammons produced Big Ivy’s confession of faith. It contained 16 articles, four of which are listed below:

- 3. We believe in the doctrine of Original sin, and that all mankind, since the fall are by nature the children of Wrath, one as much as another.
- 4. We believe in man's impotency, or inability to recover himself out of the fallen state he is in, therefore a Saviour is absolutely needed.
- 5. We believe that sinners are Justified in the sight of God only by the imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- 6. We believe in the Perseverance of the Saints in grace—that they are born again, or adopted into the family of Heaven—that they become equal heirs with Jesus Christ, and that He will raise them up at the last day (Ibid, p. 13).<sup>261</sup>

When comparing Big Ivy’s confession with French Broad’s, however, one wonders why a theological problem existed at all. By observing the articles concerning soteriology side-by-side, there is very little difference between the two:

French Broad Articles of Faith	Big Ivy Articles of Faith
3. We believe in the doctrine of Original Sin.	3. We believe in the doctrine of Original sin, and that all mankind, since the fall are by nature the children of Wrath, one as much as another.
4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by his own free will and ability.	4. We believe in man's impotency, or inability to recover himself out of the fallen state he is in, therefore a Saviour is absolutely needed.
5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.	5. We believe that sinners are Justified in the sight of God only by the imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ.
6. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and that they never shall fall finally away	6. We believe in the Perseverance of the Saints in grace—that they are born again, or adopted into the family of Heaven—that they become equal heirs with Jesus Christ, and that He will raise them up at the last day.

<sup>261</sup> Big Ivy’s full confession is found in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

More telling concerning the theological tension between the two parties in the French Broad association prior to the formal division is the last article in Big Ivy's confession, an article which remains extremely rare in confessions of faith. It reads:

16. None of the above-named articles shall be so construed as to hold with Particular and Eternal Election and Reprobation, or so as to make God partial, either directly or indirectly, so as to injure any of the children of men (Ibid, p. 14).

Though not a single article in French Broad's original confession adopted in 1807 expressed either Unconditional Election (nor any expression of election for that matter) or particular redemption (i.e. Limited Atonement) as generously displayed in the PCF, French Broad Calvinists apparently interpreted the confession in a *strictly* Calvinistic manner. However, original sin, sinful mankind's impotency to recover themselves by free will, imputed righteousness of Christ, and perseverance of the saints were hardly doctrines about which *mild* Calvinists, *moderate* Calvinists, and even *non*-Calvinists alike tended to reject. They did have difficulties, at least in part, with Unconditional Election, Reprobation, and Limited Atonement, then as now, and may account for the absence of those contentious doctrines when French Broad association was organized twenty years earlier.

The Tuckaseige Baptist Association was established in North Carolina November 6, 1829. It included churches from both Carolina and Georgia (Allen, 1958, p. 1013).<sup>262</sup> Tuckaseige Baptists placed its confession of faith directly within the constitution of the organization, a somewhat unusual practice as one sifts through 19<sup>th</sup> associational documents. The constitution was amended in 1830 and includes a preamble followed by 9 very brief articles of faith, three of which read: "Art. 3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin; Art. 4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by nature, and that justification, in the sight of God, is only obtained by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ; Art. 5. We believe, the saints shall persevere in grace, and that none of them, shall ever fall away and be lost" (Tuckaseige Baptist

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<sup>262</sup> Allen spells "Tuckaseige" with two e's at the end while the recorded minutes of the printed constitution has the spelling as above with a single e. Since the title page and the constitution explicitly indicate the association shall be "known by the name of the Tuckasiege Baptist Association," either Allen misspelled the name or perhaps used a modern spelling without explanation.

Association, 1830, p. 3). Not one of the articles reveals either confessional dependence upon or theological loyalty to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism.

The Tar River Baptist Association organized in 1830 by several churches that had withdrawn from the Kehukee Association over anti-missionism (Allen, 1958, p. 1013). Three years later in 1833, Tar River Baptists adopted a confession of faith, fourteen articles of which are made up almost entirely of biblical passages (Tar River Association, 1885, pp. 39-40). Article 4 deals with the fall and sinful human nature: "4. That as sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned, even so all are by nature dead in trespasses and sins. Rom. 5:12, Eph. 2:1." Article 6 confesses the coming of Messiah and the atonement: "6. That the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost; and that we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have now received the atonement. —Luke 19:10. Rom. 5:11" (Ibid, p. 40). Articles 9 and 10 respectively deal with the role of the Holy Spirit in conversion and salvation by faith alone: "9. That the Holy Spirit reproveth the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; also that He hath quickened us together with Christ. —John 16:8, Eph. 2:5; 10. That by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast. —Eph. 2:8, 9" (Ibid). Tar River Baptists confessed their allegiance to election by quoting in full Ephesians 1:3-4 and 2 Thess. 2:15 as Article 11. Article 13 affirms eternal security by quoting the Apostle Peter: "That we are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. —I Peter 1:5" (Ibid). Rather than composing a theological confession, Tar River Baptists decided to confess the Bible, a strategy that appears to project neutrality toward any soteriological system. The language of Philadelphia's confessional tradition remains absent.

Three Forks Baptist Association was organized on November 5, 1841 at Ashe county, North Carolina (Three Forks Association, 1841, p. 1). On the second day of the session, an abstract of principles was adopted. It contained 9 brief articles, four of which are as follows: "3. We believe in the Doctrine of Election by Grace; 4th. We believe in the Doctrine of Original Sin and in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by his own free will ability; 5th. We believe sinners are justified in the sight of God only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ; 6th. We believe that sinners are called, consecrated, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy

Spirit, and that all who are thus regenerated or born again by the Spirit of God shall never fall finally away” (Ibid, pp. 2-3). Neither of the four articles pertaining to the order of salvation is *strictly* Calvinistic. As with the Big Ivy association, Three Forks Baptists held to very similar sentiments expressing basically an obvious neutrality toward both *strict* Calvinism and Philadelphia’s confessional tradition.

The King’s Mountain Baptist Association was organized in 1851 at Cleveland county, North Carolina (Allen, 1958, p. 1010). Adopting an abstract of principles, five articles of which appear below, the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia was apparently not on the mind of these Baptists either:

3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness.
5. We believe in the doctrine of Election, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth.<sup>263</sup>
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the merits of Jesus Christ.
7. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and not finally fall away (Logan, 1887, p. 162).<sup>264</sup>

King’s Mountain’s confession is similar in content to Big Ivy association, an association of Baptists that had been considered by *strict* Calvinists as “heterodox” in its faith. Also, while election is clearly affirmed by King’s Mountain Baptists, it’s also clearly undefined unlike the PCF or abstracts taken from the PCF.<sup>265</sup> What is more, King’s Mountain Baptists’ article on election appears identical to Broad River’s article on election (see below).

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<sup>263</sup> See Broad River below. King’s Mountain’s article on election follows North Carolina’s Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the unconditional election found in the PCF. See also the full discussion in chapter two.

<sup>264</sup> A query was apparently taken up in 1860 during the King’s Mountain annual session regarding how the association interpreted the extent of the atonement. Recorded in North Carolina’s *Biblical Recorder*, “3. Is the atonement general or limited in its provision?” the response reportedly was, “We believe the atonement general in its provisions” (Gardner, 1860, p. 1).

<sup>265</sup> For a stellar example of a succinct expression of election reflecting Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism, see article 4 in the Georgia association’s abstract of faith published in *Appendix A* at the end of this research. See also, the Kehukee association.

Even earlier than King's Mountain, the Broad River Association was established in 1800 from churches both in South and North Carolina (Allen, 1958, p. 1015). In fact, King's Mountain was formed by churches dismissed from Broad River for that very purpose. Broad River originally incorporated such a huge geographical region that it later took 22 associations to handle the territory. Furthermore, Broad River was highly influential, establishing associations and inspiring confessions west and southwest of North Carolina. Apparently, Broad River's impact affected the demise of confessionally *strict* Calvinism. "The Broad River abstract of principles modified the Calvinism of the Philadelphia Confession. It was widely copied in that area and by immigrants moving west and southwest" (Ibid).

As inspiration for other associations, Broad River's confession is succinct and clear but thoroughly and undeniably non-committal on the *strict* Calvinism in the PCF.<sup>266</sup> Five of its 12 articles read "3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin; 4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness; 5. We believe in the doctrine of Election through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth;<sup>267</sup> 6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the merits of Jesus Christ; 7. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and not finally fall away" (Logan, 1887, p. 17).<sup>268</sup> Though they expressed belief in election, as did countless other associations which had no theological affinity with *strict* Calvinism, Broad River's doctrine of election possessed no resemblance to Philadelphia's focus on eternal decrees, unconditional predestination, eternal covenant of grace wherein a definite, unchangeable number of men and angels are chosen apart from divine foreknowledge or belief in the truth. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, Broad River Baptists consciously rejected the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election in the PCF.

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<sup>266</sup> Included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research is a copy of Broad River's full confession.

<sup>267</sup> Broad River's article on election was a conscious rejection of the "eternal and particular election" associated with Philadelphia's confessional tradition. See chapter two for a full discussion of Broad River's role in beginning a confessional heritage of rejecting Unconditional Election. Broad River's article on election is duplicated in associational abstracts across the south as evidence will show.

<sup>268</sup> An interesting query arose in 1816 at the Broad River annual session. '3. "Is it agreeable to the gospel for Baptists to call themselves Calvinists, and the doctrines of grace 'Calvinism?'" Answer. "We believe John Calvin preached more sound doctrine than any other noted reformer, yet we think it is contrary to the gospel, for Baptists to call themselves and the doctrines of grace by such titles' (Logan, 1887, p. 33).

Other North Carolina associations adopted similar confessions. For example, the Green River Baptist Association was organized by five churches dismissed for that purpose from the Broad River association in August 1841 (Allen, 1958, p. 1010). In 1856, the association adopted articles of faith for the basis of cooperation. Eleven condensed articles constituted the “Association Covenant,” four articles of which were: “3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin; 4. We believe in a man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by his own free will and ability; 5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ; 6. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and that they never shall finally fall away” (Green River Association, 1856, p. 5).<sup>269</sup> Unlike Broad River, its parent association, Green River Baptists did not even sense a need to address the doctrine of election. As prominent as predestination and election are in the PCF, to ignore either doctrine in an abstract of faith seems to strongly suggest that neither the composers nor the churches possessed either theological affinity toward or confessional dependence upon Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism.

Virtually identical to Green River's “Association Covenant” was Salem association's “Association Covenant” published and adopted earlier in 1838 upon its establishment (Allen, 1958, p. 1018), and therefore most probably the source for Green River's confession of faith. The only difference outside of insignificant verbal variants is an extra article (Article X) which speaks of local church approval for ministers' ordination (Salem United Association, 1839, p. 4). Like its confessional child, Green River, Salem association completely ignored the doctrine of election.<sup>270</sup>

Taylorsville Baptist Association was organized in 1852 and was more a “Temperance” association than an ordinary regional association (Allen, 1958, p. 1018). Even so, Taylorsville Baptists adopted a confession of faith in 1853 (Taylorsville Baptist Association, 1853, p. 6). Of 9 very brief articles, three are relevant here.<sup>271</sup>

3rd. We believe in the impotency of man to recover himself from the fallen state which he is in by his own ability.

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<sup>269</sup> A copy of Green River's full confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>270</sup> A copy of Salem association's full confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>271</sup> A copy of Taylorsville's full confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

- 4th. We believe that salvation is by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.  
7th. We believe in the final perseverance of saints in grace to glory (Ibid).

The only article in Taylorsville's abstract of faith that displays specific theological affinity with the PCF is the seventh article. Again, Taylorsville Baptists expressed no article either on election or predestination. Just how Calvinistic is a confession that reveals no theological concern in expressing its view on election and predestination? One might also query how much influence the Philadelphia confessional tradition had in composing a confession of faith that was silent on the doctrine of election?

### 5.2.2 Georgia

Early 19<sup>th</sup> century Georgia Baptists appear to have been thoroughly and *strictly* Calvinistic. Of Brandon Smith and Kurt Smith's recent volume on Georgia's *strict* Calvinistic Baptist history, Earl Blackburn concludes, "They carefully glean from primary source materials what the first Georgia Baptists firmly believed and confessed and warmly practiced, which led to the formation of the Georgia Baptist Convention" (Smith & Smith, 2016, p. xii). While Blackburn is correct that what many Georgia Baptists (or perhaps even *most* Georgia Baptists) embraced at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a form of Philadelphia's Calvinism, it remains historically imbalanced and therefore reductionistic to exclude those Georgia Baptists who verbally and publicly dissented from *strict* Calvinism as if they did not exist. As the evidence below shows, even in a supposed Calvinistic citadel like Georgia, dissent from confessionally *strict* Calvinism began in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

For example, the Coosa Baptist Association was the oldest association in northwest Georgia. Formed in 1836 (Allen, 1958, p. 548), Samuel Boykin claimed it had shown itself as "one of the noblest Associations" in the state having an extensive reach by spreading over six counties (Boykin, 1881, p. 271). In 1852 a query was submitted from Lookout Baptist Church to the Coosa association. It read: "Doth the 4th and 6th Articles of the Coosa Baptist Association hold forth Limited Atonement, so that a part of the human family is, and forever has been, excluded from grace and glory, according to the covenant agreement, and that the Spirit doth not strive with them to bring them to repentance so that a part of the human family is entirely left out of the

covenant?” (Sartain, 1936, p. 10). Theological presumptions standing behind this query indicate *strict* Calvinistic notions clearly expressed in the PCF, notions including a divine decree for a definite and unchangeable number to be the elect; a covenant of grace wherein is decreed that Christ would mediate for the elect only; the Holy Spirit would effectually and irresistibly call the elect only; would apply the merits of Christ to the elect only; would enable to repent the elect only; would bestow the gift of faith upon the elect only; and would infallibly and eternally preserve the elect only.<sup>272</sup>

After considering the question, Coosa Baptists unanimously replied, “Neither the Bible nor the 4th and 6th Articles refer to, or hold forth Limited Atonement, so that a part of the human family is, and forever has been excluded from grace and glory according to the covenant agreement, so that they cannot be saved, if they would: but all who will, may participate in the benefits of the atonement according to the gospel” (p. 43). Coosa Baptists appeared to neither embrace the *strict* Calvinism of the Georgia Association nor reflected the salvific particularity of the PCF.<sup>273</sup>

The Ellijay Baptist Association was organized in north central Georgia in 1840 (Allen, 1958, p. 554). Ellijay’s confession displays theological allegiance neither to the PCF nor the Georgia Association’s abstract of faith, an abstract with some articles that all sides agree clearly reflect Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism. Containing 12 succinct statements of faith, five of Ellijay Baptists’ articles follow below:

3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness.
5. We believe in the Doctrine of Election, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.<sup>274</sup>
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the merits, of Jesus Christ.
7. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and not finally fall away (Ellijay Association, 1840, p. 7).<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> For a summary of *strict* Calvinism displayed in the PCF, see chapter two.

<sup>273</sup> More on Georgia’s Coosa association in chapter eight.

<sup>274</sup> Georgia’s Ellijay Baptists’ article on election follows North Carolina’s Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the unconditional election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two.

<sup>275</sup> A full version of Ellijay association’s confession appears in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

Like Ellijay Baptists, while many associations confessed the doctrine of election, in many cases the article resembles neither the PCF nor other abstracts of faith clearly reflecting the PCF. Note the comparison in the visual chart below. Both Kehukee and Georgia associational confessions reflect the PCF's *strict* Calvinism on the doctrine of Unconditional Election. However, by comparing the various statements of election adopted by many other southern associations, it seems clear Philadelphia's notion of *strict* Calvinism and Unconditional Election remained absent from the composers' intention.

Other Baptist Associations	Article on Election <sup>1</sup>	Georgia Association Article on Election <sup>2</sup>	Kehukee Association on Article on Election <sup>2</sup>
Ellijay (Georgia)	5. We believe in the Doctrine of Election, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.	4th. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory: And that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the Father and the Son, before the world began, in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed.	3. We believe that God, before the foundation of the world, for a purpose of his own glory, did elect a certain number of men and angels to eternal life; and that this election is particular, eternal, and unconditional on the creature's part.
Mountaintown (Georgia)	4. We believe that God chose His people in Christ before the foundation of the world, and they are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto complete salvation.		
Harmony (Georgia)	III. We believe in the doctrine of election, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.		
Bethel (Georgia)	ART. 7. We believe the doctrine of election; that it is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners.		
Central (Alabama)	Art. V. We believe in the doctrine of election by grace, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.		
New River (Alabama)	4th. We believe in the doctrine of election, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of Truth.		

Friendship (North Carolina)	5. We believe in the doctrine of election through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.		
Mountain Union (North Carolina)	3. We believe in the doctrine of election by grace.		
	<sup>1</sup> See <i>Appendix B</i> for full confession for each association.		<sup>2</sup> See <i>Appendix A</i> for full confession of both Georgia and Kehukee associations.

Numerous articles on election from associational confessions could be added to the chart above to compare further with Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism nicely captured in succinct format in the Kehukee and Georgia articles. Sufficient articles on election are catalogued, however, to illustrate either a *different* understanding of election many associations expressed contra the *strict* Calvinism reflected in Georgia and Kehukee associations, or a confessional *neutrality* some associations developed toward officially adopting one interpretation of election rather than another. If the latter, it would account for both the absence of an article on election in numerous associational confessions of faith (see *Appendix B* at the end of the research for numerous confessions adopted by associations across the south lacking any article on election or predestination) as well as the bald assertion in some confessions stating only, “We believe in the doctrine of election by grace,” an article both Arminian and Calvinist theological polarities on both sides of the issue could reasonably embrace. Rather than denying or ignoring the biblical doctrine of election, a bald assertion affirming it potentially could defang the debate so far as the association was concerned, allowing each church to deal with it accordingly.<sup>276</sup> Even so, the fact remains, while many Baptist associations adopted articles of faith affirming its belief in the doctrine of election and predestination, including Georgia Baptist associations, it remains far from conclusive their understanding of election was universally inspired by Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism.

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<sup>276</sup> For example, if associations affirmed simply “We believe in the doctrine of election by grace” (as did North Carolina’s Mountain Union above), it would be like affirming, “We believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ,” leaving churches to autonomously embrace premillennial, amillennial, dispensational, or even postmillennial interpretations as they saw Scripture without discarding orthodoxy concerning Christ’s literal second coming. While this is only a theory, it does account for what could have been the motivation as to why many Baptist associations chose to confess the doctrine of election cautiously. Nonetheless, the bald, ambiguous statements on election suggest an obvious departure from the *strict* Calvinistic understanding of unconditional election found abundantly in Philadelphia’s confessional tradition.

The conflict in Georgia's Ocmulgee Baptist Association and the subsequent formation of the United Baptist Association illustrates the unrest over Calvinism even in a Calvinistic stronghold like Georgia. Burgess and Ward describe the mass revival spread all over the state of Georgia in 1826. 'Many were dissatisfied with the Calvinistic theology which prevailed. The differences culminated in the withdrawal of those who could not accept the old "Philadelphia Confession"' (Burgess & Ward, 1889, p. 227). Consequently, according to them, several churches withdrew from the Ocmulgee and Flint River associations, expressing Arminian sentiment and later organized into the first Arminian Baptist bodies in the state, the United Baptists. The circumstances surrounding the rise of Georgia's United Baptists, however, seem a bit more complicated.<sup>277</sup>

Cyrus White (1783-1844) was a popular Georgia Baptist pastor and leader in the Ocmulgee Association. He was instrumental in the formation of the Georgia Baptist Convention beginning in 1822, and served on the committee that drafted the convention's constitution (Boykin, 1881, p. 131). In 1823, White was one of four who were appointed agents of the convention to go all over the state preaching and promoting membership in the convention (Ibid, p. 146).<sup>278</sup> White's role in Georgia Baptist Convention affairs would abruptly end, however, in 1830.<sup>279</sup> A bitter controversy erupted concerning White's views on the atonement; his subsequent publication of his views; and the resulting formation of the United Baptist Association, and later, the Chattahoochee United Baptist Association.

In late 1829, White wrote and published a pamphlet entitled *The Scriptural View of the Atonement* wherein he denied the Calvinistic doctrine of Limited Atonement and affirmed

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<sup>277</sup> The circumstances can also be somewhat confusing and lead to different conclusions. See Crowley, 1998, pp. 69-71; Burch, 2003, pp. 88-92; and Chute, 2004, pp. 83-92.

<sup>278</sup> At first, the Georgia convention was called the "General Baptist Association." It wasn't until 1827 that it was called the Convention (Newman, 1894, p. 404).

<sup>279</sup> At the 1830 annual session of the Ocmulgee association, "The body withdraws from Bethlehem church on account of opposition to her minister, Cyrus White" (Campbell, 1874, p. 78). Later in 1832, Columbus association passed a resolution encouraging churches to censure White and a dozen more ministers whom the association claimed had "published a faith differing from the orthodox Baptists, and as they have already caused divisions among us" (Ibid, p. 101).

universal provision.<sup>280</sup> Consequently, public opposition led by *strict* Calvinist, Jesse Mercer (1769-1841),<sup>281</sup> ultimately resulted in White's expulsion from Georgia Baptist life.

Georgia Baptists denominational paper, *The Columbian Star and Christian Index*, announced in its August 28, 1830 edition it had received a fifty-page pamphlet containing ten letters written to Cyrus White by Jesse Mercer in response to White's book on the atonement (Brantly, 1830 [1831], p. 137). The paper's editor, W. T. Brantly, had earlier mentioned White's pamphlet in the May 22 edition, referring to White as a "worthy author" who wrote "many plausible things in favor of the views which he proposes to establish" by offering "sundry scriptures to confirm his views of unlimited atonement," and "erring" only in the first part of his pamphlet by not defining what the atonement is (Brantly, 1829 [1830], p. 332). Mercer's response to White was not as generous, however.

Mercer's letters appear in Georgia's paper from August 28 to November 20, 1830. In his first letter, Mercer brands White "Arminian" and mocks White for complaining that his views have been misrepresented, and "he in consequence, denounced as a heretic, by men of his own denomination" (White, 1830, Introduction). Mercer responds, "But what must have been my disappointment, when I found, in the perusal, [the] very view taken of the doctrine went to justify all I had feared, or heard reported of you as an arminian! Why complain of representations in your apology, and justify all that had been said of you in your book?" (Brantly, 1830 [1831], p. 137).<sup>282</sup> Mercer's "Arminian" moniker stuck to White, since most who have mentioned White

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<sup>280</sup> White, C., 1830. *A Scriptural View of the Atonement*. Milledgeville: Office of the Statesman and Patriot. White dated the Introduction, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1829. The volume is only 19 pages in length and therefore would constitute more a tract (or pamphlet) than a book.

<sup>281</sup> For biographical treatments of Mercer see Spright Dowell's brief piece in Allen, 1958, pp. 848-849. See an early collection of Mercer's memoirs in Mallary, C. D., 1844. *Memoirs of Elder Jesse Mercer*. New York: John Gray. On Mercer's theology, see Chute, A. L., 2004. *A Piety above the Standard: Jesse Mercer and Evangelistic Calvinism*. Macon: Mercer University Press.

<sup>282</sup> It remains unnecessary to analyze Mercer's letters for purposes here. However, Mercer did not deal so much with White's pamphlet's content but rather used quotes from White as a springboard to argue for *strict* Calvinism's understanding of Limited Atonement. Moreover, Mercer continuously employed unfair tactics against White throughout his letters by quoting extended blocks of content from Andrew Fuller's works not to counter propositions in White's pamphlet; rather to apparently prove White was not a "Fullerite" on the atonement. *White never mentions Andrew Fuller or his views anywhere in his short pamphlet*. Mercer justifies his questionable tactic: "You have always professed to me to be with Fuller in sentiment; but Sir, you have put yourself with Fuller's opponents" (Brantly, 1830 [1831], p. 260). Publishing an undocumented claim having no relation to the written content in

since seem to have uncritically followed Mercer's assessment of White's supposed "Arminianism" rather than depending upon White's stated position.<sup>283</sup>

The earliest reference to the White controversy seems to have been written by Georgia Baptist pastor and leader, Adiel Sherwood (1791-1879).<sup>284</sup> "Rev. Cyrus White ... was once a preacher of some reputation amongst the Baptists of Georgia. He embraced Arminian sentiments, and as the Georgia Baptists have ever been noted, (until at least of late years,) for a rigid adherence to what are termed Calvinistic principles, they soon came in collision with each other" (Babcock & Choules, 1842).<sup>285</sup>

What seems troubling is the tacit assumption that Cyrus White embraced Arminianism, and apparently only because he embraced unlimited atonement (or general provision).<sup>286</sup> However, it remains unclear whether White embraced Arminian sentiments. From the contents in his pamphlet, it seems just as reasonable, indeed perhaps more reasonable, to suppose White embraced a version of New England theology<sup>287</sup> rather than Arminianism. Throughout the south,

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White's pamphlet raises more questions about Mercer's motives in publishing the letters than it does to either understand or clarify White's position on the atonement.

<sup>283</sup> For example, see Anthony Chute (Chute, 2004, pp. 86-92), Daniel Williams (Williams, June 2014, pp. 39-40), and Robert Synder (Synder, 2013, pp. 86-91). See also, Wills, 1997, p. 103; Burgess & Ward, 1889, p. 227; Gardner, 2006, p. 2; Dever, 2001, p. 10; and M. Haykin in Crisp & Sweeney, 2012, pp. 205-206.

<sup>284</sup> For basic information on Sherwood, see Hansford Johnson in Allen, 1958, pp. 1199-1200. For a full and excellent treatment on Sherwood's outstanding ministry in Georgia and beyond, see Burch, J., 2003. *Adiel Sherwood: Baptist Antebellum Pioneer in Georgia*. Macon: Mercer University Press.

<sup>285</sup> As an interesting side-note of Sherwood's statement, one must wonder what the Georgia Baptist leader meant by his parenthetical phrase indicating that until recently, Georgia Baptists were known for their "rigid adherence" to "Calvinistic principles." Had a discernable shift taken place in Georgia Baptists' theological landscape prompting Sherwood's words published in 1842? Did White represent a movement away from *strict* Calvinism?

<sup>286</sup> Other than White's *The Scriptural View of the Atonement* (1830), there appears to exist no other extant writings or transcribed sermons available for examination. Hence, the only other evidence available for review to evaluate White's theological position are remarks mostly by White's critics beginning with Jesse Mercer. But as suggested earlier, Mercer's letters to White are problematic from the beginning, basing much of his criticism of White on assertions White allegedly made not so much in his book, but from Mercer's claims White had presumably spoken to him in private conversation. From an historical standpoint, in fairness to White, one should first examine White's stated position, if possible, to determine his theological beliefs rather than placing entirely too much weight on the critic's claims, resulting in judging White heterodox.

<sup>287</sup> New England theology (also commonly called "New Divinity") may be defined as a "movement within 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century American Calvinism that brought together elements of Puritanism with other concerns such as freedom of the will and divine justice" (McKim, 1996, p. 186). See also Boardman, G. N., 1899. *The History of New England Theology*. New York: A.D.F. Randolph Company; Foster, F. H., 1987. *A Genetic History of New England Theology*. A Garland Series ed. New York: Garland Publishing Co.; Crisp, O. B. & Sweeney, D. A. eds., 2012. *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press.; Holifield, 2003, pp. 135-149; and Ahlstrom, 2004, pp. 404-412.

New England theology had carved a theological niche into 19<sup>th</sup> century southern Baptist life. G. Wills concludes,

Historians have noticed the influence of New England Theology on Presbyterians and Congregationalists, but have not attended to its influence on Baptists. Like Presbyterians of the same period, Baptists had their old school and new school Calvinists. [...] William B. Johnson, first president of the Southern Baptist Convention, wrote in 1848 that South Carolina Baptists were fast becoming “moderate Calvinists.” By this he meant that they were adopting some of the distinctive views of New England Theology... Throughout the South Baptist leaders embraced the New England views (The SBJT Forum, 1999, p. 87).<sup>288</sup>

And, as Wills further points out, New England Theology embraced the moral government theory of atonement which held that ‘Christ died for all persons—his death was a “general atonement”’ (Ibid)— while at the same time holding to a strong view of election among other Calvinistic tenets, precisely the position, at least in part, found in White’s pamphlet. In rebutting those who believed denying Limited Atonement and affirming general provision created a war on personal Election, White remarks:

If I have understood Election, it means the sovereign right of GOD to choose whom he will. Now then, we would have the reader carefully remember a weighty truth in the parable of the supper; they all with one consent began to make excuse. And such is the enormity of the human heart, it will not submit to GOD’s government and grace. All men do most freely, most willingly reject the Gospel, and forever will, until the enmity of their heart is slain, and their stubborn wills subdued by sovereign grace. This application of the grace of GOD is made by him to whom he will; his people are made willing in the day of his power, and this is Election (White, 1830, p. 18).<sup>289</sup>

White’s clear and rather strong statement on election cannot be dismissed; and while it may not display the contours of the Unconditional Election one finds in the PCF, neither is it inconsistent with the doctrine of election confessed by numerous Georgia Baptist associations including Ellijay, Mountaintown, Harmony, and Bethel (documented above), associations not accused of embracing Arminianism.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> For more on the impact of New England Theology on Baptists in the south, see Crisp & Sweeney, 2012, pp. 197-207.

<sup>289</sup> White goes on to remark, “But I would here remark; that there is nothing in all this which destroys the moral agency or accountability of man; nor is there anything in Bible election which [supposes?] a barrier to the coming sinner, or hinders any, or all, from coming” (Ibid).

<sup>290</sup> What is more, basing election on foreknowledge seems to be more indicative of those who are theologically inclined toward an Arminian understanding of election. The PCF seems to clearly deny election based upon divine

More revealing and confirming that it remains at least questionable whether White held to Arminian sentiments are the striking similarities between White's arguments for general atonement and those found in Jonathan Maxcy (1768-1820). Maxcy was a Baptist educator, the second president of Brown University and the third president of Union College (Allen, 1958, p. 837).<sup>291</sup> However, his most influential role for Baptists in the south was his appointment as the first president of the University of South Carolina, bringing his New Divinity views with him. Wills acknowledges "Maxcy taught New Divinity views in South Carolina when he became the founding president of the University of South Carolina in 1809" (The SBJT Forum, 1999, p. 88). One of Maxcy's most notable theological positions was his view of the atonement. As noted above, Maxcy was a *moderate* Calvinist, holding a common New Divinity view of general provision (i.e. general atonement). When Maxcy was president of Rhode Island College in 1796, he preached in chapel two sermons on the atonement entitled "A Discourse, Designed to explain the Doctrine of the Atonement: in Two Parts" (Maxcy, 1844, pp. 53-81). Maxcy clearly argued for general atonement (Allen, 2016, pp. 291-295; 497). Thus, the similarities on general atonement between White and Maxcy, at minimum, pose doubt as to whether White was Arminian in theology. In conclusion, perhaps applicable to Georgia's Mercer-White conflict over Calvinism is the incisive remark by Baptist leader and Alabama historian, Hosea Holcombe, who said of the Calvinist-Arminian conflict simultaneously going on in Alabama, "What is called Calvinism with some, is denominated Arminianism with others; and a misunderstanding sometimes occurs, from a different manner of expression" (Holcombe, 1840, pp. 50-51).<sup>292</sup>

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foreknowledge. See chapter two. However, White does not mention foreknowledge as a factor in his remarks on election, perhaps further suggesting he did not perceive his position as favoring Arminianism.

<sup>291</sup> A worthy salute to Maxcy's accomplishments remains in William Sprague's classic volume on Baptist ministers (Sprague, 1860, pp. 297-304).

<sup>292</sup> One might object that the governmental view of the atonement is also embraced by many Arminians; hence, because White embraced a governmental view of the atonement, this substantiates Mercer's claim in connecting White to Arminianism. In response, first, that *both* Arminianism *and* New Divinity (i.e. *moderate* Calvinism) views embrace the governmental view of the atonement requires caution in labelling a theology one persuasion rather than another, especially when one of the persuasions ("Arminianism") is considered heterodox while the other ("New Divinity") is considered theologically acceptable. Even more, considering White's governmental view of the atonement as grounds to tag him "Arminian," while dismissing his clear view of personal election and God's sovereign influence in drawing people to Himself, remains entirely unfair to White. He explicitly stated a view of election many Arminians would question. And, as the evidence below indicates, the confessional expression of the Chattahoochee United Baptist Association he led in organizing lends itself in fully vindicating Cyrus White as an orthodox Baptist believer albeit not a *strict* Calvinist. Examining the written record alone suggests the conclusion

More significantly, evidence of another sort pertaining to the White-Mercer conflict over *strict* Calvinism concerns the association White organized upon expulsion from Georgia Baptist life. The United Baptist Association, originally created by White when the Ocmulgee association excommunicated him in 1830, officially divided in 1836 resulting from a geographical area much too large to sustain. Consequently, the Chattahoochee United Baptist Association was created (Williams, June 2014, p. 50). White was involved in leadership responsibilities from the beginning. Records are incomplete for some of the early years of the association, but a confession of faith for the Chattahoochee United association appears in the minutes of 1848. Of the 12 articles, five are listed below.<sup>293</sup>

3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's inability to recover himself from the fallen state which he is in by nature, by his own strength.
5. We believe in a Covenant between the Father and Son, in which all Grace is treasured up; and in the doctrine of Election, according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth according to 1st Peter, 1st chapter, 2d verse; and 2d Thessalonians 2d chapter, 13th verse: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."<sup>294</sup> But that Election should not be so construed as to make God the author of sin either directly or indirectly. Nor on the other hand do we believe the creature can do any thing meritorious in his salvation.
8. We believe that Saints will persevere in Grace to the end of their lives.
11. We believe that men by nature are so morally depraved that they will not come to God for life and salvation, and but for the influences of the Holy Spirit none would ever come to him (Chattahoochee United Association, 1848, p. 4).

In light of the broadly held assumption that both White and the Chattahoochee United Baptist Association were theologically tilted toward Arminianism, it remains confusing how interpreters came to their conclusion. Even Free Will Baptists frequently cite both the Chattahoochee United association and White as a part of their spiritual beginnings in Georgia (Burgess & Ward, 1889, p.

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that Jesse Mercer, for all his positive influence, and, at times, stunning contributions to Baptist life in Georgia, in the case of Cyrus White, theologically hung an innocent man.

<sup>293</sup> For Chattahoochee United Baptists' full confession, also known as "The Sharon Confession," see *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>294</sup> Chattahoochee United's article on election resembles North Carolina's Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the Unconditional Election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two.

227).<sup>295</sup> Strangely, the confession reflects no specific Arminian sentiments. Articles 3 and 4 are routinely found in numerous confessional abstracts throughout the south including Georgia; and some of those associations are deemed *strictly* Calvinistic by some interpreters. It remains true, that Articles 3 and 4 are sufficiently ambiguous as to uphold a broad understanding of human depravity. However, Article 11 counteracts any imbalance by insisting no one can believe apart from the Holy Spirit's direct work upon their heart.

The Covenant of Redemption in Article 5 is found mainly in *strictly* Calvinistic confessions albeit with a clearer expression of the covenant's nature. Plus, in Chattahoochee United's understanding of the covenant of redemption, no warrant exists to suppose they believed, as did Philadelphia Calvinists, that the eternal covenant of redemption was about saving only the elect. *Strict* Calvinists often gave details concerning the content of the covenant of redemption invariably including the Father giving the elect to the Son (Wills, 1997, p. 171; footnote 22). One might note also Chattahoochee United's doctrine of election is tempered by God's foreknowledge which is not characteristic of *strictly* Calvinistic confessions like the PCF.<sup>296</sup> In addition, election is qualified as to not make God the author of sin. Article 8 is an explicit affirmation of the perseverance of the saints, a dead give-a-way that whatever Chattahoochee United Baptists were at that time, they were not Arminians.

In conclusion, one is hard-pressed to make Chattahoochee United Baptists' confession even sympathetic toward Arminian sentiments much less embracing them. The Chattahoochee United Baptist Association stands as a direct challenge to the *strict* Calvinism imbedded among early 19<sup>th</sup> century Georgia Baptists.

While the Chattahoochee United Baptist Association stands as the benchmark of decline toward Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism among Georgia Baptists, other associations may be cited that *began* confessing *strict* Calvinism but, over time, wavered in theological loyalty to the PCF.

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<sup>295</sup> See also Davidson, 2001, p. 196; Williams, June 2014, pp. 50-53.

<sup>296</sup> Since Chattahoochee United's article on election did appeal to divine foreknowledge, perhaps that may explain why many would deduce they were "Arminian" in sentiment.

For example, the Chattahoochee Baptist Association was formed in 1824 in Hall county, Georgia (Allen, 1958, p. 548).<sup>297</sup> It began as a confessionally *strict* Calvinistic organization. In the 1826 hand-written minutes, an abstract of faith and gospel order are included both of which appear virtually identical to the Georgia association’s abstract of faith (Chattahoochee Association, 1826), with the doctrine of election clearly reflecting the Unconditional Election of the PCF. By 1843, however, some of the confessional articles had changed dramatically as the chart below indicates (Chattahoochee Association, 1843).<sup>298</sup>

<b>Chattahoochee Baptist Association: Abstract of Principles</b>	
<i>1826</i>	<i>1843</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> [We believe] in the fall of Adam, and in the imputation of his sin to his posterity. In the corruption of human nature, and the impotency of man to recover himself by his own free will ability.	3 <sup>rd</sup> We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4 <sup>th</sup> [We believe] in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory and that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the father and the son before the world began in which their Salvation is secure and that they in particular are redeemed.	4 <sup>th</sup> We believe in mans [sic] inability to Recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature by his own free will and holiness.
6th. [We believe] that all those who were chosen in Christ, will be effectually called regenerated converted sanctified and supported by the spirit and power of god so that they shall persevere in grace and not one of them be finally lost [sic].	5 <sup>th</sup> We believe in the doctrine of election According to the Scriptures Viz Through Sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth [sic]. <sup>299</sup>
	7 <sup>th</sup> We believe the saints shall persevere in grace and not finally fall away.

The changes in Chattahoochee’s confession are remarkable. Dropping the language of imputation of Adam’s sin, and substituting the broad theological term of “original sin” which possesses no “Baptist” definition, softens the original trajectory of Calvinistic Total Depravity and avoids the hint of Federal theology indicating imputed Adamic guilt. Also, the phrase “free will

<sup>297</sup> Not to be confused with the Chattahoochee United Baptist Association (1836) just addressed.

<sup>298</sup> No page numbers. Minutes are hand-written.

<sup>299</sup> Chattahoochee’s article on election follows North Carolina’s Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the Unconditional Election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two. By 1885, the final phrase of the 1843 article had been removed; thus, it read simply, “5. We believe in the doctrine of election according to the Scriptures” (Chattahoochee Association, 1885, p. 13). A full copy of the confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

ability" is changed to "free will and holiness" suggesting a focus more on the inability of salvation by works rather than the inability to believe the gospel. More significantly, Chattahoochee Baptists thoroughly gutted the article on election of any theological allegiance to Philadelphia's doctrine of election that clearly indicated *strict* Calvinism's Unconditional Election. Note Chattahoochee's article on election in 1843 has transformed and now patterned after North Carolina's Broad River association's article on election, an article specifically composed because Broad River Baptists rejected the unconditional election of Philadelphia's confession of faith. Also, dropped completely from the 1826 confession is the language pertaining to the elect being "effectually called," "regenerated," "converted," and "sanctified" and etc. *so that* they would persevere.

Finally, rather than suggesting the perseverance of the saints is inviolably connected to and dependent upon eternal election as they did in Article 6 of the 1826 abstract, Chattahoochee Baptists detached their article on perseverance as a standalone doctrine in 1843: "We believe the saints shall persevere in grace and not finally fall away," another hint that any rigid adherence to *strict* Calvinism was apparently waning away.

Hence, before the century's midway point, and two years before the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Chattahoochee Baptist Association, one of Georgia's oldest Baptist organizations, was confessing a *mild to moderate* Calvinism, if Calvinism at all. Indeed, whatever shade of Calvinism Chattahoochee Baptists were confessing in 1843, it was far from the *strict* Calvinism found in the PCF they had embraced less than two decades earlier.

Located in the North Georgia mountain range, the Clarksville Baptist Association was organized in 1851 (Allen, 1958, p. 554). Arthur Hinson claims that upon organization, the association "adopted articles of faith similar to the New Hampshire Confession" (Ibid). However, he is incorrect. Clarksville's articles of faith are seven in number and display little, if any, similarity to the NHC (Clarksville Association, 1851, pp. 4-5). In Clarksville's *Abstract of Principles*, the article on human depravity reads, "3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin, and in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness." Of election, Clarksville Baptists confessed, "We believe in the doctrine of election, through

sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth” (Ibid).<sup>300</sup> Instead of the NHC, Clarksville Baptists appear to have followed almost the exact language of the corresponding articles in the Chattahoochee association addressed above. Again, *strict* Calvinism is absent from the Clarksville Baptist Association.<sup>301</sup>

Georgia’s Hightower Baptist Association was organized in 1834 with 10 churches, most of which were dismissed from the Chattahoochee association for organization (Allen, 1958, p. 550).<sup>302</sup> The original confession reflects the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia (Baptist Hightower Association, 1835, p. 6). However, note the comparison of several articles in Hightower’s 1847 *Abstract of Principles*, a comparison which suggests the waning confessionally *strict* Calvinism among them (Hightower Association, 1847, p. 7).

<b>Hightower Baptist Association: Abstract of Principles</b>	
<i>1835</i>	<i>1847</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> We believe in the fall of Adam, and the imputation of his sin to his posterity, in the corruption of human nature and the impotency of man to recover himself by his own free will and ability.	3 <sup>rd</sup> We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4 <sup>th</sup> We believe in, the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race to grace and glory, and that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the father and the son before the world began in which	4 <sup>th</sup> We believe in man’s inability to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness.

<sup>300</sup> As many other Baptist associations throughout the south, Clarksville’s article on election seems to follow North Carolina’s Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the unconditional election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two.

<sup>301</sup> It should be noted that in Clarksville’s 1889 minutes, there appears an anomaly to the confessional research this author has completed thus far. With no stated reason apparent, the *Articles of Faith* that appear in the association’s minutes expresses a theological allegiance to *strict* Calvinism (Clarksville Association, 1889, p. 4). For example, Article 4 on election reads (without proof-texts here and below), “God, from eternity, loved His people, and before the world began, chose them in Christ, to grace and glory. The effectual calling, justification and glorification of each is infallibly secured through an eternal covenant between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” while Article 6 says, “The spirit and power of God will effectually call all the elect, and will support, sustain and keep them, through faith; so that they will persevere to the end, and not one be lost.” Human depravity undeniably reflects the PCF: “Adam fell, and all men fell in him. By this fall, the race became totally depraved and powerless to recover itself from its lost estate” (Ibid). Since Primitive Baptists were so strong in Georgia, it may be that Hyper-Calvinism overtook the association. More research may bear an answer to this historical anomaly.

<sup>302</sup> In the encyclopedia source cited, A. Hinson claims the organizational date to be 1835. However, the title page of the 1835 minutes reads, “The First Anniversary of the Baptist Hightower Association...commencing on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1835” (Baptist Hightower Association, 1835). Hence, since Hinson appears to be mistaken on the 1835 date, 1834 is recorded as the actual date by deducing from the wording of the 1835 minutes.

their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed.	
6 <sup>th</sup> We believe that all those chosen in Christ, will be effectually called, regenerated, converted, [sanctified?] and supported by the spirit and power of God, so that they persevere in grace and not one of them be finally lost.	5 <sup>th</sup> We believe in the election of all God's people and that they are called and saved, according to his purpose and grace given them in Christ Jesus before the World began, as it is stated in 2d Thessalonians, 2d chapter, and fifth verse: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."
	7 <sup>th</sup> We believe the Saints shall persevere in grace, and not finally fall away.

Hightower's amendments reflect a close confessional affinity with the Chattahoochee association above. The 1835 article on human depravity is divided into two articles in 1847 and reflects language less indicative of and more ambiguous toward *strict* Calvinism's understanding of Total Depravity. The imputation of Adamic sin suggesting the transferal of sinful guilt is dropped in 1847 and substituted with "original sin." More importantly, the 1835 phrase "free will ability" which seems to focus on inability to believe disappears, and "free will and holiness" surfaces indicating a denial of good works leading to salvation.

The wording of Article 4 in 1835 is almost identical to the Georgia association's article indicating the vast influence Georgia's oldest association possessed over a large segment of Georgia Baptists. As with the other Georgia associations addressed above, however, Hightower took a measurable step back from *strict* Calvinism on election. In 1835, election involves a "definite number" of elect that are the result of an eternal covenant whereby the Son agrees that the elect "in particular are redeemed" by His death, and further that "their salvation is secure" (i.e. perseverance of the saints) is a foreordained consequent of the eternal covenant. None of this *strict* Calvinistic understanding is present in the 1847 confession. Rather, a simple affirmation that all God's people who are elect are called and saved according to His purpose and grace before the world began. And the avenue through which this election occurs is "sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."<sup>303</sup> Finally, Hightower's sixth article in 1835 which welded

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<sup>303</sup> Indeed, it appears Hightower Baptists dropped the confessional tradition of adopting an abstract of faith that reflected the Unconditional Election found in the PCF and instead composed an article on election following North Carolina's Broad River confessional tradition, an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the unconditional election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two.

perseverance to eternal election, like Chattahoochee's amendment, is detached as an independent article standing on its own in 1847, perhaps suggesting that perseverance of the saints is not necessarily a foreordained outcome of the supposed covenant of redemption found in the PCF.

While Hightower's 1847 statement is undeniably Calvinistic, it hardly is *strictly* Calvinistic as was the 1835 statement that clearly reflected the PCF. Thus, after only a dozen years or so in existence, Hightower Baptists had loosened their confessional loyalty to the PCF, and, by implication, cut the apron strings of theological influence the Georgia association had, up until that time, impressed upon them.

The Mountain Baptist Association was organized in Habersham county, Georgia in 1832, and joining the Georgia Baptist Convention in 1836 (Allen, 1958, p. 555). Recorded in the 1838 minutes is Mountain Baptists' *Abstract of Principles and Preamble* composed of 12 brief articles and the opening preamble which states the purpose of the confession was to "set forth a declaration of those things, which we most confidently believe are according to sound doctrine" (Mountain Association, 1838, pp. 6-7). The articles are very similar to Chattahoochee's (as amended), Clarksville's (as amended), and Hightower's (as amended) discussed at length above. Articles 3 and 4 on human depravity employ the term "original sin" and focus on human inability toward works-salvation (man cannot recover himself by "his own free will and holiness") rather than inability to believe the gospel, and thus requiring irresistible grace (Ibid). Article 5 on election states as simply, and as theologically neutral as possible, their belief in "election through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth" (Ibid).<sup>304</sup>

Once again, the doctrine of perseverance is confessed both briefly and independently of eternal election: "We believe the Saints shall persevere in grace and not finally fall away" (Ibid). Hence, Mountain Baptists did not reflect the confessionally *strict* Calvinism found in the PCF as did the Georgia association and those that continued to confessionally follow it.

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<sup>304</sup> Mountain's article on election follows North Carolina's Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the unconditional election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two.

The Chestatee Baptist Association was organized in north-central Georgia in 1839 (Allen, 1958, p. 554). For reasons not apparent the association never joined the Georgia Baptist Convention. In 1840, Chestatee Baptists published their *Articles of Faith* (Chestatee Association, 1840, p. 5). Containing seven brief articles, not including three additional articles on “Gospel Order,” two are listed below:

3. We believe in the fall of Adam, and that the depravity of his fallen nature was entailed on his posterity, and in the impotency of man to recover himself by his own free willability.
4. We believe in election, effectual calling, and final perseverance of the saints in general (Ibid).

The Calvinism confessed by Georgia’s Chestatee Baptists is at most *moderate* Calvinism, posing little theological affinity to the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF. Universal sinful depravity results from the fall of Adam; however, no indication of Adamic guilt imputed to Adam’s posterity is confessed. The confession uses a unique word not found in any other confession examined in this research— “free willability.” So far as election is concerned, it is rolled into one sentence along with effectual calling and final perseverance without a single explanatory phrase. Hence, the composers either had little theological allegiance to the PCF, or, if they did, evidently remained rather theologically neutral so far as promoting it among the churches.<sup>305</sup>

In conclusion, while Georgia was undeniably the confessionally *strict* Calvinistic citadel of the south, hundreds of Baptist churches represented by the numerous associations and personalities catalogued above appear to have dissented from Philadelphia’s confession of faith; and consequently, the *strict* Calvinistic influence of the Georgia association. Instead, they confessed a theology from *mild* to *moderate* Calvinism, and, at times, no Calvinism at all. Furthermore, a significant portion of the Calvinistic dissent in Georgia took place before the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Chestatee Baptists did employ the term “effectual,” a term usually signaling a *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrine of grace. However, “effectual call” listed along with the bare terms of “election” and “perseverance” seems to be inadequate to judge Chestatee Baptists as *strictly* Calvinistic and reflecting the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

<sup>306</sup> The formation of the Southern Baptist Convention is the subject of the next chapter.

### 5.2.3 Alabama

Alabama's Central Baptist Association was organized in 1845 (Allen, 1958, p. 13). The articles of faith the association embraced are 12 in number and display little, if any, theological affinity to the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia (Central Association, 1875, p. 15). Article 3 states "We believe in the doctrine of original sin. That Adam disobeyed God, and that all mankind have inherited a sinful nature from Adam" (Ibid). Unlike the PCF's affirmation of federal theology wherein all mankind falls in Adam, the consequences of which is imputed Adamic guilt, Central's confession affirms all humankind inherit a sinful nature not sinful guilt. In addition, Article 5 states, "We believe in the doctrine of election by grace, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth" (Ibid).<sup>307</sup> No language is present connecting Central's understanding of election to Philadelphia's clear expression of Unconditional Election. The only article in Central's confession connecting it to the *strict* Calvinism in the PCF is article 7, "We believe in the preservation of saints."<sup>308</sup>

In 1852, Central association's name to Little Bigbee Baptist Association, and again in 1853 to the Bigbee Baptist Association (Allen, 1958, p. 13). Bigbee's confession also changed later to a confession containing but 4 brief articles.

- I. We believe in one living and true God; that in the Godhead are Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- II. We believe that the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, and the New Testament is the only rule of faith and practice.
- III. We believe that the Church of God is composed of such persons as believe in Jesus Christ and have been baptized; that baptism consists in the immersion of the whole body in water; and that the Lord's Supper should be administered to church members only.
- IV. We believe in the Doctrines of Grace taught by the United Baptists, viz: In the depravity of man; in the converting grace of God; in the resurrection of the dead; in the general judgment; in the eternal life of the righteous— in the everlasting punishment of the wicked (Bigbee Association, 1882, p. 16).

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<sup>307</sup> Central's article on the doctrine of election was undoubtedly influenced by the Broad River confessional tradition.

<sup>308</sup> Interestingly, Central states the doctrine as "preservation" of saints rather than the normal "perseverance" of saints. See also, Alabama's Judson Baptist Association which, in 1870, used the phrase "Preservation of the Saints."

If any theological sentiments for *strict* Calvinism ever existed among Central-Bigbee Baptists, their confessions are silent about it. They remained consistent with their theological roots in 1845.

Alabama's Boiling Springs association organized in 1860 (Allen, 1958, p. 12). Its abstract of faith reveals no evidence a theological allegiance existed toward Philadelphia's confessional tradition. The core articles dealing with sinful depravity, election, and salvation do, however, bear theological identity with other associations recorded above. "3rd.—We believe in the doctrine of original sin"; "4th. —We believe in man's inability to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own freewill and holiness"; "5th. —We believe in the doctrine of Election through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth" (Boiling Springs Association, 1875, pp. 15-16).<sup>309</sup>

Alabama's Cahaba Valley Baptist Association was organized in 1867 (Allen, 1958, p. 13).<sup>310</sup> It adopted articles of faith the content of which shows no theological affinities with the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia. They confessed the "the doctrine of election according to the foreknowledge of God" (Article 4); believed in "the depravity of human nature" and "man's inability to recover himself from his fallen condition by his own free will and holiness" (Article 3); and believed "the saints shall persevere through grace, being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, and not finally fall away" (St. Clair Association, 1899, p. 16).

### 5.3 Conclusion

Few will dispute the brute theological force of *strict* Calvinism in American Baptist life. Since the founding of the first Baptist church on American soil at Providence, Rhode Island in 1639, Calvinism has had a strong theological say-so concerning who Baptists were and what Baptists believed. The Philadelphia Baptist Association formed in 1707 was, for half a century, the reigning champion of Baptist organizational connectedness and official dispenser of "Baptist orthodoxy" through its adoption, use, and wide distribution of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.

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<sup>309</sup> Boiling Springs Baptists' article on election follows North Carolina's Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the unconditional election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two.

<sup>310</sup> The Cahaba association changed its name to the St. Clair Baptist Association in 1898 (Allen, 1958, p. 13).

Philadelphia Baptists rigorously insisted that since Baptist orthodoxy was defined for them by London Particular Baptists in 1689, discussion was over. Dissenters were heterodox, and they would be treated as such.

A new *kind* of Baptist confessionalism arose, however, that challenged the hardened Philadelphia *strict* Calvinistic confessionalism.<sup>311</sup> Arising as a *phoenix* from the ashes of dead ecclesialism—much of it dead Calvinism—came New England’s Separate Baptists, a spiritual motley crew of overly-jealous, overly-enthusiastic nomads setting up camp in Sandy Creek, North Carolina. While Separate Baptists had Calvinists—even *strict* Calvinists—among them, demanding *strict* Calvinism was not their thing. Much less was adopting a confession and making sure everybody was on board with it, so they would not face church discipline if they dissented. In fact, they allowed “Arminians” among them. They loved their “Arminian” brothers and refused to put them out when Particular Baptists came calling to complain.

Instead Separates preached the gospel. That was their strength. They cried, as did their father in the faith, the fiery Anglican cleric, George Whitefield, “Ye must!” “Ye must!” “Ye must be born again!” Hundreds, thousands even, came, and were converted. Churches spread all over the south. The evangelistic, revivalistic zeal of Separate Baptists, coupled with their hopelessly not-interested attitude toward confessions inevitably tempered Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism. While *strict* Calvinism won a few confessional battles in Virginia (lesser so in the Carolinas, and Georgia) by getting Separate Baptists to agree to the Philadelphia confession as a basis of union, it was a hollow victory since the terms specifically were that Separates did not need to agree to *everything* in the confession, just agree *generally* with it.

Separate Baptists in Kentucky were hardly as congenial. Nor were Kentucky’s *strict* Baptist Calvinists who demanded as terms of union that Separate Baptists must agree to and abide by every joy and tittle of the Philadelphia confession. No deal. Until 1801 when Regular Baptists (i.e. *strict* Calvinistic Baptists) and Separate Baptists adopted the Terms of General Union. In that confessional document, no article remotely resembles Philadelphia’s High Calvinism, and at least

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<sup>311</sup> Of course, as the evidence presented in the chapter makes clear, Baptist Calvinistic dissenters existed and were, in some cases, quite numerous prior to the Separates.

one article explicitly denies Philadelphia's confession by acknowledging general atonement as a viable preaching option for Kentucky Baptists. Symbolically, but more significantly, functionally, Kentucky's terms of union took *strict* Calvinistic confessionalism off the table, no longer ruling, so to speak, as King of Baptist confessionalism.

In less than a generation, Baptists in New Hampshire would, in 1833, construct and publish another confession; a statement of faith that would eventually overshadow the massive influence Philadelphia had garnered; a statement of faith that washed enough Calvinism out of the doctrinal fabric, that some theologians judge it as much *moderately Arminian* as *moderately Calvinistic*. The New Hampshire confession eventually took hold of Baptists in every region of the country. And, contrary to many, the evidence shows that even in the deep south, the NHC had a powerful influence *before* 1850. Several Baptist associations embraced it as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Knowledge*.

The evidence also shows that before mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, several southern Baptist associations amended their confessions by lessening the verbal allegiance to Philadelphia's confession, and consequently, softened their confessional allegiance to *strict* Calvinism. Some confessions appear to have avoided debate over predestination and election by avoiding an article of faith expressing election at all. Others simply confessed "We believe in election according to the Bible."

Hence, from an examination of confessions by dozens of associations in the southern states, it remains clear that *strict* confessional Calvinism was declining among Baptists even before 1845. In the next chapter, evidence will be examined concerning the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.

## Chapter Six: The Formation of the Southern Baptist Convention and Confessional Calvinism in the Southern States

### 6.1 Introduction

Chapters three through six presented evidences demonstrating that confessionally *strict* Calvinism as represented by the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (PCF) began the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a grand concession to Separate Baptists in the south. Kentucky Baptists' Terms of General Union (1801) that confessionally united *strict* Baptist Calvinists and Separate Baptists effectively took the PCF off the table so far as demanding full adherence to its High Calvinism. Less than a generation later, the New Hampshire Declaration of Faith (1833, NHC) began spreading outside New Hampshire, across many Baptist conventions, even spreading down into the deep south through its publication in *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (1835).<sup>312</sup>

Consequently, various Baptist associations and churches across Alabama, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Mississippi had embraced the NHC before 1850. Remarkably, the Calvinism in the NHC was so *mild* that some historians and theologians questioned whether it ought to be described as Calvinistic at all. Hence, that many Baptists in the south would so readily embrace the confession seems to suggest that their confessional loyalty to *strict* Calvinism, if loyalty existed, had declined immensely. Thus, the stage is set for dealing with the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.

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<sup>312</sup> R. Baird's massive study of religion in America was first published in Great Britain in 1843 "originally intended to meet the wishes of Christians on the Continent" (Baird, 1844, p. Preface to the American Edition). The American edition was published in New York a year later. In the section on Baptists, Baird followed *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (1835) by suggesting of the original 16 articles of the NHC as "supposed to express, with little variation, the general sentiments of the whole body of orthodox Baptists in the United States" (Ibid, p. 230). However, unlike the encyclopedia which reproduced all 16 articles, Baird only listed the 16 article headings and followed with quotations from selected articles along with brief commentary (Ibid, pp. 230-231). Amazingly, before the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and almost a decade before the publication of J. Newton Brown's popular church manual in 1853, New Hampshire's confession was being popularized abroad and cited as the indicative belief of most all Baptists in the United States.

The purpose of this chapter deals not with the reasons or circumstances leading to the formation of a new denomination of Baptists.<sup>313</sup> Rather, to continue examining the soteriological shift of Baptists from confessionally *strict* Calvinism to *modified, moderate, or mild* Calvinism as shown in chapters three through six, the concern here focuses on the *who* rather than the *why* of the southern convention. Consequently, the concentration is more concerned with the delegated representation at the first meeting that led to the official organization of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.

## 6.2 The Meeting at Augusta, Georgia in 1845

### 6.2.1 The Announcement of a New Southern Convention

Reportedly, delegates from nine states attended the Augusta meeting in 1845 that resulted in the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention: Alabama, District of Columbia, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia (SBC, 1845, pp. 8-11).<sup>314</sup> Who were the delegates and their actual number? What were the Baptist entities represented in each state? Is there any indication whether the delegates depicted the overall soteriological persuasion of the churches and associations in each state from whence they came? Did the entities themselves depict the general soteriological consensus of the Baptist population of each state? Was the delegation present at Augusta reasonably equitable as a broad swath of representation for all Baptists in the south? Was it even intended to be? Moreover, exactly what *kind* of representation were the delegates expected to deliver in Augusta? Was their mission intended to *theologically* represent their respective church, state convention, or associational entity? Did their *confessional* alliance function as the chief factor drawing Baptists together across the south to form a southern convention?

Appearing in the *Religious Herald* on March 13, 1845, Virginia Baptists published a call to meet at Augusta, Georgia in May or, alternatively, in June at Richmond, Virginia to consider a convention for Baptists in the southern United States (Gardner, 1995, pp. 17-18). On April 5<sup>th</sup>,

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<sup>313</sup> For treatments dealing with reasons Baptists in the south pulled away from northern Baptists and formed their own convention, see McBeth, 1987, pp. 343-391; Gardner, 1995, pp. 1-23; Barnes, 1954, pp. 1-11; Baker, 1974, pp. 161-168; Fletcher, 1994, pp. 9-42; Bell, 1995, pp. 16-24; Shurden & Varnadoe, 2002, pp. 71-96. For the original proceedings of the Augusta meeting leading to the formation of the southern convention, see SBC, 1845.

<sup>314</sup> See also, Allen, 1958, p. 1244.

the *Biblical Recorder* republished J.B. Taylor's passionate defense for forming a southern convention that earlier appeared in the *Religious Herald*. Taylor suggested he was willing to meet in Augusta or any other city to formalize a departure from northern Baptists. Albeit if it be "proper to hold it in this city [Richmond], the Thursday before the 4<sup>th</sup> Lord's day in June next will be a suitable time" (Taylor, 1845). The decision to meet in Augusta, Georgia rather than Richmond, Virginia on May 8-12<sup>th</sup> was finally published April 10, less than a month away from the decided location (Baker, 1974, p. 166).

Mixed response immediately came from Baptists across the south. Widespread support surfaced from various parts of Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky (Ibid, p. 19).

On the other hand, flags were raised concerning the timing of the convention even by those who were driving forces behind the formation of a new southern convention. On April 12<sup>th</sup>, First Baptist Church, Charleston, South Carolina passed a series of resolutions not only condemning the Board of the Triennial Convention for their breach of promise in treating southern slaveowners equitably with northern brethren, but also called for a deference of a southern convention until a later date. The deference would not only give the Triennial Board an opportunity to rescind its action, but also would give churches and associations the south over enough time to send adequate representation to the convention.

*Resolved.* That it is our right and duty to demand that the action of the Acting Board should be reversed and rescinded by the General Board.

*Resolved.* That in the hope, that this may be done, we respectfully recommend that the assemblage of the proposed Southern Baptist Convention; be deferred until the first Tuesday after the third Lord's day in June next (Charleston First Baptist Church, 1845).

In addition, many Baptist leaders in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi also advised delay (Barnes, 1954, p. 27).<sup>315</sup> Tennessee pastor and Baptist editor, R.B.C. Howell, wrote a letter approved by the Tennessee Executive Board requesting a delay, specifically citing faraway states like Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Missouri, and Mississippi that did not have enough time to

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<sup>315</sup> See also Baker, 1974, p. 166.

assemble their churches and associations, discuss the issues, appoint representatives, and make the proposed May meeting (Baker, 1974, p. 28).<sup>316</sup>

All concerns for delay were promptly dismissed. President of South Carolina's Baptist convention, W. B. Johnson, defended the Augusta location and hurried date for the southern convention in a circular letter to South Carolina Baptists and subsequently published in North Carolina's *Biblical Recorder*. Johnson indicated the issue was settled and focus should be on sending delegates, not questioning either the timing or location of the convention.

The propriety of your assembling at an early period, (and this is my excuse for not waiting longer for answers from the members of the Board, from whom no communications have yet reached me) is obvious from the fact, that our brethren from Virginia have proposed the meeting of a Southern Convention of Baptists, at Augusta Georgia, on the Thursday before the second Lord's day in May, and our brethren of Georgia have accepted the proposal. The time and place for such Convention to meet are, therefore, settled. Such a Convention will then be certainly held, and the propriety of our being represented there is too apparent to need remark (Johnson, 1845).

Contrarily, Howell's concern driving his request for delay, while ignored, proved to be substantiated. Out of the five states Howell named that had inadequate time to prepare for the proposed Georgia convention due to time and distance, only Kentucky managed to send a single delegate to Augusta (SBC, 1845, p. 11).<sup>317</sup>

Additionally, even for Baptists nearer to Augusta, the trip itself implied hardship. J. Fletcher rightly observes, "It is doubtful that in 1845 the trip was easy for anyone except those in the immediate area" (Fletcher, 1994, p. 12). Influential Virginia pastor and delegate, J. B. Jeter (1802-1880), rehearsed the difficulty of the trip to Augusta that Virginia delegates had to endure.

A large delegation, amounting to about forty, went from Virginia and Maryland to the meeting. The journey was one of marked interest. It was performed by rail to Wilmington, North Carolina, and thence by steamer down the Cape Fear river, and along the Atlantic coast to Charleston, South Carolina. In our trip down the river all were cheerful, bright, and sociable, but we had scarcely reached the ocean before we were in a dreadful storm.

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<sup>316</sup> Interestingly, Robert Boyte Crawford Howell (1801-1868) was elected Vice-President of the convention when it met in May 1845 without attending the meeting (SBC, 1845, p. 2). For a brief summary of Howell's life and contributions to 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptist progression, see H. Grice's biographical snapshot (Allen, 1958, pp. 656-657).

<sup>317</sup> As will be shown below, only Virginia exceeded Kentucky's Baptist population at the time. Thus, to have a single delegate representing the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest group of southern Baptists immediately raises questions concerning equity. Again, Howell's concern in requesting a delay seems substantiated.

One after another the passengers were seized with that most unpleasant disease, sea-sickness, and compelled to cast their dinners into the ocean... (Jeter, 1891, p. 234).

From Charleston the Virginia and Maryland delegates most probably would have travelled by carriage and horseback to Augusta.

Also, only the wealthier pastors and laymen would presumably possess the means to afford such a costly trip.<sup>318</sup> A substantial segment of Baptist pastors in the south were farmers. In Georgia, for example, which was numerically the most widely represented state to send delegates to Augusta,<sup>319</sup> Gardner tallies that “almost 73% of the [Georgia] delegates made at least part of their living on their farms” (Gardner, 1995, p. 29). Hence, given the peril of travel, price of fare, little notice to prepare, and limited availability for pastor-farmers to leave their livelihood to travel such great distances to the convention, Howell’s concern would seem well founded that faraway states like his (Tennessee) deserved more time to accommodate a special convention held in a distant state.

#### 6.2.2 The Number of Delegates Attending the Augusta Meeting

On May 8-12, 1845 in Augusta, Georgia, what has become the largest Protestant denomination in the United States was born—The Southern Baptist Convention (Allen, 1958, p. 1244). The number of delegates registered for the convention remains confusing even today as one scans both primary and secondary sources.<sup>320</sup> J. W. Storer cites the “historical tables” as suggesting there were:

236 “delegates” registered from 165 churches, nine associations, one ministerial conference (District of Columbia), the board of a state convention (Alabama), the executive committee of a state convention (Georgia), the executive committee of the Georgia Association, the Penfield’s Young Men’s Missionary Society (Georgia), Mercer University, and Furman Institute. The states represented in the above list were Maryland,

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<sup>318</sup> An interesting notice was published in the *Biblical Recorder* a week before the meeting: “The Delegates to the Southern Baptist Convention are informed, that arrangements have been made, for their return from Augusta, free of charge, to any point they may choose on the South Carolina Rail Road” (*Biblical Recorder*, 1845, p. 3). No indication follows whether the notice affected attendance.

<sup>319</sup> See SBC, 1845, pp. 7-11.

<sup>320</sup> The 1845 proceedings are notoriously difficult to read accurately (SBC, 1845). Delegates’ names are frequently misspelled as are cities, associations, and churches. Barnes (Barnes, 1954, pp. 310-311) and Gardner (Gardner, 1995, pp. 65-73), the latter of whom regrettably deals only with Georgia delegates, helpfully update many of the spellings of names and places.

Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Kentucky, and the District of Columbia (Allen, 1958, p. 1244).

Yet in the same paragraph, Storer cites convention secretary, James C. Crane, from the 1845 proceedings, who included an explicit qualification pertaining to the actual number of delegates who were registered and the identity of the entities they represented. “The undersigned has found it difficult to arrange the list of delegates, and is still uncertain as to the entire correctness of the names of churches and individuals” (Ibid).<sup>321</sup> Hence, from the very first record of proceedings for the Augusta meeting, doubt was expressed concerning the exact number of delegates.<sup>322</sup>

Storer claims there were 236 delegates at the Augusta meeting “according to the historical tables.” Yet Storer offered no indication the “historical tables” to which he referred. If he was referencing the 1845 proceedings, it remains confusing how he calculated the low figure of 236. The proceedings officially recorded 378 delegation names commissioned by various Baptist bodies (SBC, 1845, pp. 7-11).<sup>323</sup> However, there are 51 names bearing an asterisk (an asterisk indicated the delegate though appointed was absent from the convention), making the total present 327. How does Storer account for reducing 327 delegates by 91 delegates?<sup>324</sup> The answer may lie in the “historical tables” upon which he claims the 236 tally is based. However, since he failed to document the source, and since no one seems to cite any other tables but the 1845 proceedings, one is pressed to dismiss Storer’s number as an apparent miscalculation.<sup>325</sup>

Prior to Storer, others commented upon the number of delegates at the historic Augusta meeting.<sup>326</sup> Unfortunately, few eyewitness records of actual participants have been uncovered

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<sup>321</sup> See also SBC, 1845, p. 16.

<sup>322</sup> As the varied numbers of delegates from the sources following show, Crane’s warning that it was “still uncertain as to the entire correctness of the names of churches and individuals” turned out to be prophetic.

<sup>323</sup> See also Barnes, 1954, p. 29.

<sup>324</sup> Even accounting for duplicated names, 236 remains far too low (more on duplicates later).

<sup>325</sup> It also may be possible that Storer’s number is a typo in the article, and he intended, for example, 296 rather than 236, a credible estimation for the Augusta meeting. Since the encyclopedia is over a half-century old (no updates), the enigma continues surrounding Storer’s total of 236 delegates in Augusta. Moreover, few have subsequently followed Storer’s calculation of 236 delegates in 1845 (2 notable exceptions follow), a surprise since the article is found in the standard volume of information for Southern Baptists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>326</sup> No witness this researcher found claims a total number of delegates matching or even close to Storer’s 236. In fact, most early witnesses surveyed go the opposite direction by offering what appears to be high estimations.

(Gardner, 1995, p. 44). J. Jeter speaks only of the Virginia-Maryland delegation in which he participated travelling to Augusta, a delegation he estimated to be “about forty” (Jeter, 1891, p. 234). Virginia pastor and delegate, J. B. Taylor (1804-1871), indicated in his May 8<sup>th</sup> diary entry, “The Southern Convention met, about three hundred and fifty delegates in attendance” (Taylor, 1872, p. 154). Baptist historian and theologian, William Williams (1821-1877), noted in his historical sketch of foreign missions for Southern Baptists that “three hundred and ten delegates” met at Augusta in 1845 (Tupper, 1880, p. 470).<sup>327</sup> Both W. Cathcart and Kentucky Baptist historian, J. H. Spencer, follow Williams in citing 310 delegates meeting in Augusta.<sup>328</sup> On May 17<sup>th</sup>, North Carolina’s *Biblical Recorder* carried a story reportedly printed in the *Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel* suggesting “about 300 delegates from the States of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and Kentucky, and the District of Columbia” met in Augusta (Biblical Recorder, 1845).

Georgia historian and eyewitness delegate, S. G. Hillyer (1809-1900), later estimated “The number of delegates enrolled must have exceeded three hundred” (Hillyer, 1902, p. 33). While not an eyewitness, a contemporary of Hillyer cites the 1845 Augusta assembly as composed of 328 delegates (Wright, 1902, p. 8).<sup>329</sup> Similarly, then Educational Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, T. B. Ray (1868-1934), wrote at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “328 delegates from eight Southern States and the District of Columbia met in Augusta, Ga., May 8, 1845, and organized the Southern Baptist Convention” (Ray, 1910, p. 31).<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> A Report by the Georgia Historical Records Department also reports 310 delegates (Georgia Historical Records Survey, 1941, p. 10).

<sup>328</sup> Cathcart, 1881, p. 235 and Spencer, 1886, p. 691, respectively. Examining the 1845 proceedings, it remains unapparent how the number of delegates to be 310 was ascertained.

<sup>329</sup> As R. Gardner points out, it remains surprising that while many registered participants at the Augusta meeting were either authors themselves, or other authors who had later published biographies of a few of the delegates’ lives, the Augusta meeting had no commentary in those works (Gardner, 1995, p. 44).

<sup>330</sup> Presumably, Ray took the total names listed in the 1845 Proceedings as 378 (SBC, 1845, pp. 7-11) and then subtracted the number of absentees (50, as indicated by an asterisk in the proceedings) to calculate his total number of delegates at 328. However, to conclude 328 delegates attended the Augusta meeting based upon Ray’s formula seems incorrect since some of the names are recorded more than once in the master list. Several delegates were duplicated twice or three times, and at least one delegate was listed four different times (Barnes, 1954, pp. 310-311).

More recent estimations on the number of delegates who met in Augusta, Georgia in 1845 follow Baptist historian, W. W. Barnes (1883-1960), who seems to have carefully analyzed the record. After reproducing the tallied report of delegates listed in 1845, Barnes concludes that 293 delegates were present in Augusta, Georgia on May 8, 1845 who organized the Southern Baptist Convention (Barnes, 1954, p. 312).<sup>331</sup> R. Baker in a subsequent commissioned history of the convention followed Barnes' analysis without question and accepted 293 delegates as the most probable number (Baker, 1974, p. 165). J. Fletcher is the most recent historian of the Southern Baptist Convention, and he followed Barnes' in accepting the total delegates in Augusta as 293.<sup>332</sup> R. Gardner reduces the total to 290 delegates, and apparently, judging from his reasoning, makes a sound decision (Gardner, 1995, p. 45).<sup>333</sup> Thus, it seems that the most compelling number of delegates who met at Augusta, Georgia in 1845 to form the Southern Baptist Convention is approximately 290.<sup>334</sup>

### 6.2.3 Representation at Augusta in 1845

More significant than the number of delegates who met in Augusta in 1845 is the representation the delegates possessed. Given the difficulties churches and associations most probably faced in

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<sup>331</sup> Barnes calculated the total delegates by taking the 327 names who were listed as delegates present, subtracting 34 duplicated names, and concluded 293 delegates as the total.

<sup>332</sup> But as Gardner points out (Gardner, 1995, p. 45), in both Baker (Baker, 1974, p. 458) and Fletcher (Fletcher, 1994, p. 395), Storer's flawed total of 236 delegates at the 1845 Augusta meeting inexplicably shows back up in their historical tables.

<sup>333</sup> Gardner's differences with Barnes center on two names in two states, South Carolina and Georgia. Barnes has J. Mims and J. S. Mims as two different delegates from South Carolina whereas Gardner argues the two names represent but one person. In Georgia, it remains a bit more complicated. Barnes lists T.U. Wilkes twice (the second as a duplicate) and F. W. Wilkins once per the 1845 proceedings. However, Gardner argues the two names represent one man, the latter name of which should be expunged entirely. Gardner explains, "F. W. Wilkins of Antioch church (located in Morgan county and holding membership in the Central Baptist Association) must apparently be identified with Thomas U. Wilkes of the Central Baptist Association and the Providence church. An extensive search of Baptist and secular records has uncovered no person in Morgan or surrounding counties named F. W. Wilkins. On the other hand, Wilkes is frequently found, and, by 1848 (and probably in 1845), was pastor of the Antioch church. The vagaries of Baptist penmanship add further to the reliability of this assumption, which has been adopted in this essay" (Gardner, 1995, p. 45).

<sup>334</sup> Using Gardner's formula, the author calculated 289 delegates rather than 290, with the difference being in South Carolina delegates. Gardner tallied 101 delegates from South Carolina. After several recounts, the author could only tally 100 delegates from South Carolina, reducing the overall total of Augusta delegates from 290 (Gardner) to 289 (Lumpkins). In future reference to the number of delegates at the 1845 Augusta meeting in this research, various approximations may be employed all of which refer to the same body of delegates (e.g. "almost 300 delegates"; "just under 300 delegates"; "approximately 290 delegates"; "around 290 delegates"; etc.).

positively responding to Virginia's hurried call to assemble as indicated above, however, is it reasonable to assume that the approximately 290 delegates who met in Augusta to form the southern convention provided equitable, or even adequate, representation for Baptists throughout the south?

Says W. Williams, "Owing to the short notice of the meeting of the Convention, other States were reported only by letter" (Tupper, 1880, p. 470). Williams does not list the states sending letters of interest in lieu of delegates in organizing a southern convention. R. Baker, however, indicates that Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Florida sent letters "due to the fact that the short notice of the meeting prevented further representation" (Baker, 1974, p. 162).<sup>335</sup> R. Howell's plea to Virginia Baptists is noteworthy, specifically citing distant states including Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Missouri, and Mississippi that would not have enough time to make the proposed May meeting (Barnes, 1954, p. 28).

Consequently, L. McBeth doubts whether the approximately 300 delegates that met in Augusta should be considered representative of Baptists across the south.

This was hardly a representative assembly; of the 293 present, 273 came from the three states of Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia. Significantly, the American Baptist Publication Society had representatives in Augusta, which means that one of the Northern Baptist agencies helped form the Southern Baptist Convention (McBeth, 1987, p. 388).<sup>336</sup>

While 9 states were represented in Augusta, McBeth implies that approximately 93% of the delegates represented only 3 states. The table below visually shows what clearly seems to be disparity of Baptist representation indicative of the approximately 290 delegates from the southern states meeting at Augusta.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> The *Biblical Recorder* also published in a post-convention article (reportedly first published in the *Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel*), "Owing to the short notice of the meeting of the Convention, the States of Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas and Florida, were represented only by letters" (Biblical Recorder, 1845).

<sup>336</sup> R. Gardner concluded that, at least so far as Georgia delegates were concerned, "the modern principle of representation was not observed" (Gardner, 1995, p. 25).

<sup>337</sup> Included in the table are states both cited by Howell as having insufficient time to send delegates as well as states that sent letters of support acknowledged at the Augusta assembly (see above). In addition, the delegate totals represent R. Gardner's calculation of approximately 290 delegates (Gardner, 1995, p. 45), rather than McBeth who obviously followed W. Barnes (Ibid, p. 312) and R. Baker (Ibid, p. 165). For a full representation of the southern states, see *Appendix F* at the end of this research.

States Represented	Baptist Population in 1845 <sup>338</sup>	Associations	Churches	Augusta Delegates	% of Delegates
Alabama	33,003	33	525	14	4.8%
DC	N/A	N/A	N/A	0 <sup>339</sup>	N/A
Georgia	49,030	29	649	137	47.2%
Kentucky	61,050	38	679	1	.34%
Louisiana	3,398	5	75	2	.69%
Maryland <sup>340</sup>	1,960	2	22	2	.69%
N Carolina	32,273	31	446	2	.69%
S Carolina	41,083	13	394	101	34.8%
Virginia	80,725	33	536	31	10.7%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>302,522</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>3,326</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>99.91%</b>
<b>Other States</b>					
Arkansas	1,853	11	65	"letter"	0.0%
Florida	1,630	1	34	"letter"	0.0%
Mississippi	20,684	27	334	"letter"	0.0%
Tennessee	35,922	21	480	"letter"	0.0%
Missouri	16,829	25	352	R. Howell	0.0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>76,918</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>1,265</b>	N/A	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>379,440</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>4,591</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>99.91%</b>

The raw numbers appear to warrant McBeth’s concern pertaining to adequate representation of Baptists throughout the south. Kentucky, for example, had the second highest population of Baptists in the southern states during the relevant period, Virginia only bearing higher estimates.

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<sup>338</sup> Numbers cited in chart reflect numbers contained in the two-volume set of *The Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* and cross-referenced with the 1849-1851 editions of the *Southern Baptist Almanac*, and *The American Baptist Register for 1852*. Pros and cons exist on precisely what year’s statistics best estimates annual figures for a given association, as well as exactly which individual table of statistics bears the most robust authority for accuracy since no table fully agreed with the others. Hence, cross-referencing between the statistical tables was pursued and attempts were made to present credible estimates. The table’s statistics, therefore, are intended as illustrative and approximate rather than certain and scientific.

<sup>339</sup> The 1845 proceedings listed delegate, T. W. Sydnor, from both the District of Columbia (DC) (SBC, 1845, p. 7) and Virginia (Ibid, p. 8). Gardner placed him in the Virginia tally only. However, most historical records cite DC as represented in the total number of delegates.

<sup>340</sup> The two associations listed are from the 1849 almanac (Tennessee Publication Society, 1849, p. 15). Significantly, the church represented at Augusta by two Maryland delegates belonged to neither of the Maryland associations in 1845 (SBC, 1845, p. 7).

Kentucky also apparently led all the individual southern states in total churches (679) and associations (38). Yet a single Baptist delegate represented Kentucky equaling one-third of one percent (.34%) of total delegates compared to Georgia's 137 delegates (47.2%) and South Carolina's 101 delegates (34.8%).

McBeth observed a mere 20 of the approximately 293 total delegates came from southern states other than Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia. Moreover, examining the sending bodies within those 3 states reveals that only a handful of associations provided the lion's share of representation.

In Georgia, for example, delegates from 3 of the approximately 13 associations represented in Augusta (Georgia, Hephzibah, and Central) swallowed up two-thirds of the total representation from Georgia associations. More disparity existed considering Virginia delegates. Only six of 33 associations sent delegates totaling 31. However, out of Virginia's 31 delegates, 22 represented the Dover Association leaving 9 to represent the remaining five associations. Less disparity in representation seems to have existed in South Carolina since approximately 9 of South Carolina's 13 existing associations had church delegates in Augusta. But even considering the South Carolina delegation, 70 of the 101 delegates came from churches in 3 South Carolina associations—Savannah River (34), Charleston (25), and Welsh Neck (11).<sup>341</sup>

Combined, only 21 delegates showed up at Augusta outside Georgia, Virginia, and South Carolina. Hence, delegates from those 3 states totaled 269. Furthermore, while 28 associations were represented in Augusta from those 3 states, one hundred and seventy-seven of the 269 delegates came from only seven associations, 61% of the entire Augusta convention. It seems R. Gardener's conclusion concerning Georgia's participation would be correct for all states represented at the Augusta convention: "the modern principle of representation was not observed" (Gardner, 1995, p. 25).

Nonetheless, writing three decades after the meeting he attended at Augusta in 1845, J. Jeter recalls the makeup of the delegates as, "A large and representative convention, from the South

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<sup>341</sup> To view representation of all the southern states, see *Appendix F* at the end of this research.

and Southwest, [that] met in Augusta at the appointed time” (Jeter, 1891, p. 235). Jeter went on to describe the delegates at large.

This Convention, on the whole, was the most remarkable body of Southern Baptists which I have seen. In numbers, intelligence, and earnest devotion to the cause of Christ, it would have been distinguished in any age and in any country (Ibid, p. 236).

But as observed above, Jeter’s own state of Virginia suffered a huge disparity of representation in Augusta. Virginia had the largest population of Baptists among all southern states in 1845, but only 6 of the approximately 33 existing associations were represented. Furthermore, Jeter’s own Dover Association had over 70% of Virginia’s representation with 22 delegates in Augusta. Only nine delegates represented the five other Virginia associations present. Thus, Jeter’s claim that a “representative convention” took place in Augusta from the south and southwest appears hollow when compared to his own home state of Virginia.

More recently, Chute, Finn, and Haykin write of the delegates, “A total of 293 delegates assembled, 273 of whom were from Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia. The number of churches and church members represented was substantial. At its inception, the Southern Baptist Convention, as the organization was to be called, had 4,126 cooperating churches with 351,951 members” (Chute, et al., 2015, p. 159).<sup>342</sup> Given the overall picture as explained above, however, Baptist representation in Augusta could hardly be viewed as either broad or substantial.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> The numbers Chute, et al cite follow McBeth on total delegates and the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* on total churches and Baptist population in the southern states in 1845 (Allen, 1958, p. 1256).

<sup>343</sup> Arguably, if one presumes that the *kind* of representation the delegates possessed concerned whether southern slave-owners ought to be able to be commissioned as Baptist missionaries by the missions board they financially supported, then it follows the 290 delegates from the southern states most certainly represented the overwhelming majority of all Baptists in the south. However, this research is concerned with the various nuances of Baptist soteriology existing in the southern states and whether the delegates in Augusta came exclusively from *strictly* Calvinistic sending bodies. See more in chapter eight.

## 6.3 The Philadelphia Confession, Southern States, and Associations Represented in 1845

### 6.3.1 Introduction

Even if it could be correctly calculated as to the exact number of Baptist delegates meeting at Augusta in 1845, as well as establishing an acceptable equity of Baptist representation throughout the south, a fundamental question remains extant; namely, what were the delegates representing? Why did the various state Baptist conventions, churches, associations, or other entities send delegates to Augusta in the first place?

As explained at the beginning of chapter seven, the purpose of the research in this section is not to examine the primary circumstances that led to the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.<sup>344</sup> Rather claims concerning the doctrinal and confessional consensus of the Augusta delegates have repeatedly surfaced among Southern Baptists. The claims often indicate the impression that Augusta's southern convention possessed a theological common denominator among the almost 300 delegates attending that went beyond slave-ownership<sup>345</sup> and represented the confessional and doctrinal consensus held by Baptists the south over, a theological consensus presumably best expressed by the *strict* Calvinism displayed best in the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (PCF) and subsequently, in the Philadelphia confessional tradition of adopting abstracts of faith reflecting confessional dependence upon and theological loyalty to the PCF.<sup>346</sup>

In 1989, Baptist historian and theologian, Timothy George, claimed of the Augusta meeting,

[I]t was unnecessary for the nascent Convention to adopt a specific theological standard because of the overwhelming doctrinal consensus which prevailed among the

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<sup>344</sup> See 7.1. However, as the brief bibliography suggests, it remains almost unanimous among historians that the issue of slave-ownership of southern Baptists is almost certain to have been the central issue that drew delegates to Augusta, Georgia in 1845 to form a southern convention.

<sup>345</sup> R. Gardner gives a sad statistical picture of the Georgia delegates and slave-ownership (Gardner, 1995, pp. 29-30). Out of 145 verified accounts, only 16 Georgia delegates owned no slaves at all. Five delegates possessed 75 and over, with two delegates owning 162 and 124 slaves each. Given the comparable figure of all Georgia slaveowners at that time was, on average, 3.4 slaves, then slave-ownership among Georgia's delegates to the southern convention was 6 times the Georgia average. As Gardner concludes, "it is clear that the Georgia men were considerably in advance of their average neighbor in terms of owning slaves" (Ibid, p. 30).

<sup>346</sup> While some individual churches adopted abstracts of faith and may occasionally be cited in this research, the main evidences will focus on Baptist associations in the southern states and their confessional adoption practices.

messengers, most of whom belonged to congregations which adhered to the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, an American adaptation of the 1689 Second London Confession” (George, 1989).<sup>347</sup>

Since what appears to be George’s first reference to the theological profile of the 293 delegates, however, it has not only been repeated by different authors,<sup>348</sup> but the claim has also become more dramatic in force. Compare, for example, George’s claim above indicating *most* of the delegates who met in 1845 at Augusta represented entities adhering to the PCF with his more potent claim a few years later:

Each of the 293 “delegates,” as they were then called, who gathered in Augusta to organize the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, belonged to congregations and associations which had adopted the Philadelphia/Charleston Confession of Faith as their own (George & George, 1996, p. 11).<sup>349</sup>

More than anyone else quoting George’s statement appears to be Florida pastor and founder of Founders Ministries, Tom Ascol.<sup>350</sup> Additionally, retired seminary professor and Baptist historian, Tom Nettles, has collaborated George’s claim that each of the approximately 290 delegates to the Augusta meeting represented a *strict* Calvinistic body that adhered to the PCF (Blount & Woodell, 2007, pp. xxiii-xxiv). Further, Baptist historian, Nathan Finn, repeated a slightly different version of George’s claim in a brief essay on the influence of the PCF (Finn, 2014).

More significantly, to illustrate the broad impact that George’s historical claim concerning the ubiquitous adoption of the PCF by Baptists who met to form the southern convention has been at the grassroots level among Baptists, observe the explanation of why one church adopted its confession:

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<sup>347</sup> Less than two years later, George’s essay was republished by Founders Journal (George, 1990-1991, pp. 7-12).

<sup>348</sup> See Longshore, 2016, p. 107. See also S. Reeves though Reeves fails to give George credit (Reeves, 2012, p. 8).

<sup>349</sup> See also George, 1999, p. 19. It obviously is one thing to claim, “most of the delegates,” and another thing entirely to claim, “each of the 293 delegates.” Failed attempts were made to contact Dr. George for documentation or clarification of his claim.

<sup>350</sup> No less than eight times does George’s claim concerning the theological and confessional profile of the Augusta delegates show up in Ascol’s publicly written and/or spoken words. See Ascol, Summer 2001, p. 7; Ascol, 1998, p. 6; Ascol, 2007, p. 19; Ascol, 1997, pp. 26-27; Ascol, 2010, p. 1; Magazine, 2012; Ascol, 2017. Founders Ministries is the largest network of *strict* Calvinists within the Southern Baptist Convention. Many present Southern Baptist leaders have been affiliated with Founders Ministries, leaders including Albert Mohler, Russell Moore, Mark Dever, Danny Akin, David Platt, Tom Nettles, and Michael Haykin, among many others. For more on Founders Ministries, see [www.founders.org](http://www.founders.org).

In order to fully express our faith to the world and to demonstrate our commitment to the heritage and mission of the Southern Baptist Convention, we do hereby adopt as our confessions of faith the Charleston Confession of Faith (also known as the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689), the confession held by the churches and all 293 delegates that established the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845... (Grace Covenant Baptist Church, 2017).<sup>351</sup>

### 6.3.2 Confessions, Southern States, and Associations in 1845

Tracing the records of every congregation represented by delegates at Augusta remains presently unreasonable to expect. Taking Georgia as an example, R. Gardner says, “Of the 73 Georgia churches represented at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), record books have been found for only 19” (Gardner, 1995, p. 26). Presumably, then, at least some church records from the other states represented are lost as well.<sup>352</sup> Hence, discovering whether each church represented embraced Philadelphia’s confession (PCF) or even if it embraced a confession at all seems entirely unproductive (not to mention impossible).

On the other hand, exploring the minutes of the associations from states represented in Augusta proves highly productive.<sup>353</sup> As the evidence examined in this research reveals, while all Baptist associations did not adopt articles of faith, most 19<sup>th</sup> century associations in the southern states did. Indeed, a rich reservoir exists for retrieval, examination, and formulating reasonable discernment concerning what seemed confessionally important to individual Baptist associations.<sup>354</sup> More significantly for our purposes here, examining those confessions to discover possible connections to earlier and more influential confessions like the PCF can

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<sup>351</sup> For more churches quoting George’s historical claim for confessional purposes, see also Riverside Baptist Church, 2017; Grace Heritage Church, 2017; Grace Baptist Church, 2017; Westside Baptist Church, 2018; New Hope Baptist Church, 2018.

<sup>352</sup> If Gardner is correct, and vast majority of the records of those Georgia Baptist churches that sent delegates to Augusta are lost, one immediately wonders how George can claim to know that “Each of the 293 “delegates” ... belonged to congregations and associations which had adopted the Philadelphia/Charleston Confession of Faith as their own.”

<sup>353</sup> The examination will not cover Maryland and DC. Maryland’s two delegates came from a church affiliated with no association at the time, while DC had no organized association. Nor will it be necessary to examine every existing Baptist association in every southern state. Indeed, given George’s claim as it has evolved through the years, and the way it is currently expressed and employed, one need only show that at least one Baptist association represented in Augusta was not confessionally dependent upon or theologically in sync with the PCF.

<sup>354</sup> In total, over 450 Baptist associations in 12 southern states have been examined in discovering confessional documents for this study.

certainly assist in gauging the association's confessional dependence upon or theological loyalty to *strict* Calvinism.

Below are records from most of the state Baptist associations represented by delegates at the 1845 Augusta meeting. The majority of evidences are taken from published minutes of the association's annual session. At times, it was necessary to depend upon secondary sources including official histories of the association commissioned by the association or histories of a certain state convention. An additional feature includes evidential records from selected state associations existing in 1845 but unable to attend the Augusta meeting. These associations exist not only in the states represented in Augusta, but also includes associations in the southern states that sent letters of sympathetic support for Augusta's agenda to form a southern convention (see chapter nine).<sup>355</sup>

### 6.3.2.1 Alabama

#### 6.3.2.1.1 Alabama Associations Represented in Augusta

Pointing to an exact date when Baptists first showed up in Alabama remains a mystery; or, as Alabama Baptist historian, W. Flynt, indicates, a "hotly disputed matter" (Flynt, 1998, p. 6). Indeed, conflict continues today as to which church, Shiloh or Flint River, is the first Baptist church on Alabama soil (Ibid). More certain is Flynt concerning the theological squabble over Calvinism. "No biblical dispute shaped early Alabama Baptists so profoundly as Calvinism" (Ibid, p. 26).

By 1845, Alabama had approximately 33 associations with 525 churches totaling over 33,000 congregants.<sup>356</sup> Ten delegates were sent to Augusta and represented 6 of approximately 33 Alabama associations in existence. In addition, four delegates represented the Board of the Alabama State Convention.

Three delegates attended from the Alabama association, an association organized in 1819 (Allen, 1958, p. 1812). While the association may have embraced the PCF earlier in its associational history, by the time of the Augusta convention, Philadelphia's confessionally *strict* Calvinism, if it

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<sup>355</sup> The latter includes those states cited by R. Howell in his request to Virginia Baptists to postpone the convention since associations in faraway states like Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Missouri possessed insufficient time to prepare (see chapter seven for full discussion).

<sup>356</sup> See *Appendix F* at the end of this research.

did exist, would have surrendered to *mild* Calvinism. The Baptists of the Alabama association officially embraced New Hampshire's Declaration of Faith (Alabama Association, 1846, pp. 13-18).<sup>357</sup> Moreover, since it was not until 1853 that J. Newton Brown published his church manual which included Brown's personal edition of New Hampshire's confession, the Baptists of Alabama association undoubtedly depended upon New Hampshire's declaration as recorded in the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (1835).<sup>358</sup> Consequently, the Alabama Association that was represented in Augusta did not confessionally hold to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism but held to articles of faith which some theologians and historians describe as displaying as much Arminianism as Calvinism.<sup>359</sup>

Three churches belonging to Alabama's Bethlehem association were represented at Augusta most probably by J.C. Jones and J.J. Sessions (SBC, 1845, p. 11). Allen states the Bethlehem association was originally organized in 1816 as the Beckbe Association (making it the second oldest Baptist association in the state) but changed its name in 1827 to the Bethlehem Association (Allen, 1958, p. 12). According to early Alabama Baptist historian, H. Holcombe, very little information existed even in 1840 about Bethlehem Baptists outside of a few years of annual

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<sup>357</sup> Technically speaking, George's historical claim alleging that each of the 293 delegates attending the Augusta meeting came from churches and associations that embraced the PCF is overturned by considering the Alabama Association's adoption of the NHC, the first association under consideration in this section. However, much evidence remains to be recorded.

<sup>358</sup> Brown added two articles to the original 16 articles, making 18 total articles, and slightly edited other parts of the original confession. Along with others, George overreaches with his claim indicating that it was "Through Brown and Pendleton's manuals, the New Hampshire Confession became widely accepted, especially among Baptists in the South, eventually displacing the Philadelphia Confession as the doctrinal standard of choice" thus indicating what George concludes was the "far-reaching influence" upon southern Baptists "in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (George & George, 1996, p. 12). While it's undoubtedly true the church manuals of both Brown (1853) and Pendleton (1867) accelerated the dissemination of the NHC, George grossly overlooks evidence that New Hampshire's declaration was already accepted even in the deep south *before* either Brown or Pendleton published their manuals (see chapter three for extensive evidence). The Alabama association's adherence to the original 16 articles of the NHC as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* attests against George.

<sup>359</sup> Surveying annual minutes of Baptist associations reveals that associations frequently changed and/or amended their confessions of faith. Some did so without any apparent indication why. Others revealed the reason why they were changing their confessions, and at times, included the theological debates within their annual minutes that led to a change or amendment. Also, when associations did change or amend their confessions, most indicate in the respective yearly minutes if they changed or amended their confessions during *that* particular year. No indication exists in the annual minutes of Alabama Association's 1846 session that they were changing and/or amending their confession. Hence, it seems reasonable to presume that the Alabama Association had embraced the NHC for some time.

minutes the oldest of which was reportedly 1824 (Holcombe, 1840, pp. 111-113). Flynt informs us of the theological struggles the association faced with Hyper-Calvinism during the Anti-missions controversy. Concerning one of the brightest young leaders in the association, James A. Butler, Flynt writes, ‘when asked to write the association’s circular in 1829, [Butler] drafted a Hyper-Calvinist document on “Special Redemption”’ (Flynt, 1998, p. 34). The association rejected the circular and, according to Flynt, later excluded Butler on charges of heresy.

Given the age of the association, one might reasonably assume the Bethlehem association’s earlier confession (presuming it had one) reflected the PCF. If so, however, by mid-century, Bethlehem Baptists had confessionally modified the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia by adopting an abstract of faith that reflected *moderate* Calvinism at best. Bethlehem’s articles of faith were 10 in number, five articles of which are listed below:

Art. 3. We believe in the doctrine of Election, that God chose his people, in Christ before the world began.

Art. 4. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

Art. 5. We believe in man's incapacity, by his own free will and ability, to recover himself from the fallen state in which he is by nature.

Art. 6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Art. 7. We believe that God's elect shall be called, justified and glorified (Bethlehem Association, 1849, p. 15).

Neither of the five articles expressly indicate *strict* Calvinism’s “definite number” chosen in an eternal covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son wherein God planned “particular redemption” to save the elect only as reflected in the PCF.<sup>360</sup> Nor is there indication of either God’s eternal decrees or a fixed, unalterable time when God would infallibly call the elect with an irresistible drawing so that the elect could not refuse to come, beliefs also indicative of Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism. Nor is there in Bethlehem’s confession the belief that the elect is so dead in trespasses and sins that they must be spiritually raised from the dead, in no less sense than Lazarus was raised physically from the dead, before they could repent and believe the gospel. In short, language indicators pointing strictly to Philadelphia’s High Calvinism are entirely absent from Bethlehem’s articles of faith. Curiously, Bethlehem Baptists had no explicit article

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<sup>360</sup> See chapter two for a full exposition of *strict* Calvinism found in the PCF.

affirming the perseverance of the saints, an article almost universally present in Baptist confessions and shorter abstracts across the south.<sup>361</sup>

In conclusion, Bethlehem Baptists adhered to a confession that *moderately* reflected Calvinism as did countless other Baptist associations throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century south but did not reflect the *strict* Calvinism reflected in the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Hence, it remains difficult to conclude Alabama's Bethlehem association qualified as a Baptist organization that "adopted the Philadelphia-Charleston Confession of Faith as their own" as George claims.<sup>362</sup>

Alabama's Cahawba Association was represented in Augusta from two member-churches with one delegate each—T. F. Curtis and E. D. King (SBC, 1845, p. 11). One of the oldest associations in Alabama, Cahawba association was organized in 1818 at the Cahawba Valley church (Allen, 1958, p. 7).<sup>363</sup>

According to the minutes of its earliest session, Cahawba Baptists adopted an "Abstract of Principles" containing 12 brief and common articles of belief widely accepted by *moderate* Calvinists (Cahawba Association, 1818, pp. 8-9). Confessing the doctrine of election, God "chose his people in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Article 3). They believed in the "doctrine of original sin" and "man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free-will and ability" (Articles 4 and 5). Furthermore, "God's elect shall be called,<sup>364</sup> regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit"; nor shall the saints ever "finally fall away" (Articles 7 and 8). While the PCF was the most influential confession at the time Cahawba Baptists

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<sup>361</sup> Arguably, however, perseverance might reasonably be implied in Article 7: "We believe that God's elect shall be... glorified."

<sup>362</sup> J.C. Jones, who's listed as one of the Alabama delegates at Augusta (SBC, 1845, p. 11), served at least two churches then a part of Bethlehem Association—Gravel Creek and Black Bluff churches. In 1852, Jones is still listed as pastor of the Gravel Creek church (Burrows, 1852, p. 24), but the Gravel Creek church is then aligned with the Pine Barren Baptist Association, an association organized two years earlier in 1850 (Allen, 1958, p. 10). [An apparent typo exists in B. Davidson's article on Pine Barren association. Davidson recorded the organization date as 1950 while the correct date is 1850 (Pine Barren Association, 1887, p. 2)]. With interest we note that the confession of faith of the Pine Barren association was, in substance, with only slight and theologically insignificant variation, the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Pine Barren Association, 1873, pp. 14-16). Consequently, Pine Barren's adherence to the original NHC may very well indicate the *shade* of Calvinism, if Calvinism at all, Jones represented in Augusta as an Alabama delegate.

<sup>363</sup> Allen updates the spelling of "Cahawba" as "Cahaba."

<sup>364</sup> Note, here that "called" is not *effectually* called as normally characteristic of the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

adopted their confession, the articles do not reflect the distinctive theological aspects of the PCF such as a “definite number” to be elected, “particular redemption,” nor the “elect” as the exclusive recipients of the gift of faith. Most *moderate* Calvinists could most probably embrace the confession as it is stated by Cahawba Baptists in 1818.

Even so, before mid-century the Cahawba association had exchanged its *moderately* Calvinistic confession of 1818 for the New Hampshire Declaration of Faith as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Entitled the “Baptist Confession of Faith,” a title reserved by many as a title of honor and recognition exclusively for the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, Cahawba Baptists published it in full in its 1843 minutes, two years before the Augusta meeting (Cahawba Baptist Association, 1843, pp. 5-6). Hence, delegates from churches in the Cahawba association could hardly be said to have adopted the PCF as their own as George’s claim indicates.

K. Hawthorn was one of the representatives from the Tuscaloosa Association (SBC, 1845, p. 11), an association organized in 1834 (Allen, 1958, p. 11).<sup>365</sup> From the beginning Tuscaloosa Baptists apparently fought over Calvinism, Campbellism, and the Anti-missions agenda, leading to what reportedly was dubbed “The Big Split” (Ibid).

Early Alabama historian, H. Holcombe, describes the fierce theological controversies over “orthodoxy” and “gross Arminianism” subsequent to a massive revival in the area that affected positively most of the area churches (Holcombe, 1840, pp. 184-185). Holcombe lays most of the schismatic blame on Alabama pastor, David Andrews, whom Holcombe indicated ruined good churches.

Before the close of this revival, David Andrews took his letter from Bethel, moved and settled among this people, and openly avowed his Arminian principles, which produced immediate distress, and which terminated in an entire split in the [Salem] church, leaving at the time only 34 decidedly orthodox, and some unconnected with either party (Ibid, p. 185).

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<sup>365</sup> H. Holcombe claims an 1833 organization date (Holcombe, 1840, pp. 182-183). The association’s official statement on its webpage sides with the encyclopedia article on 1834 as the date of origin albeit claiming it was Mar 28, 1834 contra the encyclopedia article’s Mar 7, 1834 date (Tuscaloosa County Association, n.d.).

Of the Salem church, Flynt says “a majority adopted his [i.e. Andrews’] Arminian views and excluded thirty-four strict Calvinists. Andrews converted enough Baptist churches to Arminianism that he was able to organize them into the North River Baptist Association” (Flynt, 1998, p. 28),<sup>366</sup> an association the Tuscaloosa Baptists, as late as 1849, still refused to acknowledge as Baptist at all, but belonging to an entirely different denomination (Nettles, 2005, p. 266).<sup>367</sup> An examination of North River’s confessional statement, however, hardly reveals the alleged “gross Arminianism” witnesses claim North River Baptists embraced, and surely runs counter to Nettles’ claim that we should not call them Baptists.<sup>368</sup>

Hence, the intense theological struggles over Calvinism beginning in its earliest years seems to have created a *strict* Calvinistic aura hovering over Tuscaloosa Baptists, an aura its abstract of faith would perhaps not have created by its bare confessional content alone. Containing 12 brief articles, articles that were widely used in various other associations throughout the south, five articles of Tuscaloosa association are listed below.

3. We believe in the doctrine of Election, and that God chose his people in Christ, before the foundation of the world.
4. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
5. We believe in man's incapacity, by his own free will and ability, to recover himself from the fallen state in which he is by nature.
7. We believe that God’s elect shall be called, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
8. We believe that the Saints shall be preserved in Grace, and never fall finally away (Tuscaloosa Association, 1857, p. 12).<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> Flynt describes the bitter response of Tuscaloosa Baptists when some of those who had left the association to join North River later reconsidered their decision and desired to come back (Ibid, p. 29). “All seceders must be restored to fellowship by their original churches and be rebaptized. The seceders refused, arguing that the conditions were unreasonable.”

<sup>367</sup> Even Nettles curiously refers to North River Baptists as “immersionists” rather than Baptists. “The doctrinal impression of the North River ‘immersionists’, as we might call them, (since the Tuscaloosa Association forbids our calling them Baptists), had promoted ‘error, discord, and schism’” (Ibid).

<sup>368</sup> A brief examination of North River’s confession follows below.

<sup>369</sup> Tuscaloosa Baptists embraced this same confession (with slight variation) as late as 1900 (Tuscaloosa Association, 1900, p. 15). One insignificant but nonetheless curious change exists in Article 7. In 1857, the article uses “Holy Spirit” but in 1900 the divine pronoun is “Holy Ghost.” Perhaps the editors thought for consistency’s sake it best to change the divine title in Article 7 to match the divine title in Article 1, “We believe in only one true and living God, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost,” an article *identical* in both 1857 and 1900. Why they chose to retain “Ghost” over “Spirit” remains anyone’s guest. Perhaps due to the frequent usage of “Holy Ghost” in the King James Version translation of Scripture stands behind the change.

As noted earlier in this research, the articles above as formally stated are not *strictly* Calvinistic nor do they demand a *strictly* Calvinistic interpretation. It remains not unusual for *moderate* and *mild* Calvinists to accept the doctrine of Election; the doctrine of original sin; man's incapacity by his own free will to recover himself into favor with God; the specific, unique, and non-negotiable work of the Holy Spirit in applied redemption; and perseverance of the saints. Also, note the contrast between Tuscaloosa's article on election with some other Alabama associations that appear to reflect the distinguishing aspects of the PCF on election.

For example, the Carey association was constituted in 1855 comprising Clay, Tallapoosa, and Randolph counties in Alabama (Allen, 1958, p. 7). Like Tuscaloosa's confession, most articles in its brief abstract would not be deemed *strictly* Calvinistic. Carey Baptists confessed belief in "the doctrine of original sin" (Article 4); "mans [sic] incapacity to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and ability" (Article 5), a statement almost identical to Tuscaloosa's; "that God's elect shall be called, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Article 7);<sup>370</sup> and that "the Saints shall persevere in Grace and never finally fall away" (Article 8), again almost identical.<sup>371</sup> However, Carey's article on election, while briefer than Tuscaloosa's, nonetheless reflects Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election: "We believe in the doctrine of eternal and particular election."<sup>372</sup> Indeed, confessional examples from other southern states have been documented elsewhere demonstrating the acceptance of confessional articles identical to or in linguistic substance the same as Tuscaloosa's articles by

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<sup>370</sup> Note both Carey and Tuscaloosa's article lack a focus on the *effectual* call from God. There appears to be a pattern normally observed in the Philadelphia confessional tradition that focuses on the call from God to the elect as the "effectual call" indicating God's eternal guarantee to bring His elect to full salvation as promised in the eternal covenant of redemption. If the *strict* Calvinists among the Tuscaloosa Baptists were insisting upon their confessional article which literally stated, "God's elect shall be called...by the Holy Ghost" to actually mean "God's elect shall be *effectually* called...by the Holy Ghost," one might perceive how theological disagreement could accelerate to associational division. Again, given Manly's exposition of two articles in the association's abstract as noted below, there appeared to be the working presumption by some of the *strict* Calvinists in the association that the PCF stood as the interpretative lens through which their abstract *must* be perceived.

<sup>371</sup> Documentation along with a complete copy of Carey Association's confession appears in *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

<sup>372</sup> Another example from Alabama is the Conecuh River association organized in 1827 in Pike county (Allen, 1958, p. 13). Conecuh Baptists confess the identical article on election as does the Carey association (see Appendix A). More on Alabama associations follow.

Baptist associations that, while explicitly rejecting *strict* Calvinism, were theologically comfortable with *moderate* or perhaps even *mild* Calvinism.<sup>373</sup>

Consequently, while it seems appropriate for both Carey and Conecuh Baptists to expect member churches to adhere to its article on election which reasonably reflects Philadelphia's Unconditional Election and particular redemption, Tuscaloosa's expression of election demands no such adherence. That "God chose his people in Christ, before the foundation of the world" suggests more literally biblical language taken directly from the Bible than language lifted from or reflected in the PCF.<sup>374</sup>

Even so, some leaders within the Tuscaloosa association apparently not only interpreted its articles of faith exclusively considering Philadelphia's confessional backdrop, but also insisted the PCF was the only confessional lens through which their abstract of faith could be interpreted. For example, in 1844, Alabama Baptist leader, Basil Manly (1798-1868), wrote a lengthy circular letter for the Tuscaloosa association published in the 1844 minutes expounding on 2 articles of their confession (Tuskaloosa Association, 1844). In his exposition of Article 7, Manly indicated that he could neither add to nor say better than what was already recorded in the PCF. "What we have yet to say, shall be in the words of a confession adopted by many congregations of Christians in England, baptized on their profession of faith, in 1689; adopted, also, by the

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<sup>373</sup> For other examples of associations that held articles of faith containing both identical and similar theological verbiage in Tuscaloosa's confession but definitively rejected Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism, see North Carolina's Big Ivy, Green River, and Broad River associations (chapter three). G. Paschal helpfully demonstrates the existence of at least two confessional traditions concerning the shorter "abstracts of faith" embraced by Baptists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the roots of which apparently began in North Carolina's Yadkin and Broad River associations (Paschal, 1930, pp. 153-157; 213-216). Yadkin association was organized in 1790 and embraced a brief abstract of faith that represented the Philadelphia confession. It included, for example, the brief article, "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election" (Ibid, p. 156). A decade later, the Broad River Association was born in 1800 (Ibid, p. 208). Broad River Baptists, however, did not embrace Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism, and while they desired to adopt a brief abstract of faith, they would only accept the abstract if they could remove the theologically repugnant phrases, and adopt a more theologically acceptable article. 'The Broad River was not a distinctive Separate Baptist association, but it did not accept the Articles of Faith of the Regular Baptists without modification. It rejected the article reading "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election..."' (Ibid, p. 216). The article on election Broad River proposed and adopted in 1800 was an article that can be found duplicated in many Baptist associations across the 19<sup>th</sup> century south: "We believe in the doctrine of Election through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (Ibid, p. 215). See the full discussion in chapter two.

<sup>374</sup> Compare Ephesians 1:4 (KJV): "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world..."

Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1742, and by the Charleston Baptist Association in 1767” (Tuskaloosa Association, 1844, p. 15).

T. Nettles defends Manly’s insistence upon making the PCF the non-negotiable backdrop to proper interpretation of the confessional abstracts. “Manly rightly believed that the shorter confessions used by many Baptist associations in the South were distilled versions of the Philadelphia Confession, that is also the Charleston Confession. His circular letter of 1844 demonstrates this in his exposition of article 7...” (Nettles, 2005, p. 270).<sup>375</sup> Contrarily, while Manly may have demonstrated some associations or individual Baptists viewed shorter confessions used by many associations throughout the south as “distilled versions of the Philadelphia Confession,” he failed to account for many Baptist associations existing at the time that did not accept the PCF as the lens for interpreting its abbreviated confessional abstract.<sup>376</sup> Charging dissenters with “gross Arminianism” remains a non-solution.

Since the Tuscaloosa association did not technically embrace a confession of faith the theological substance of which clearly reflected the Philadelphia confession, it seems only tentative, at best, to judge Tuscaloosa’s delegate(s) to the Augusta convention as representing an association adhering to the PCF as interpreted by its leaders.

Organized in 1836, Liberty association in Chambers County changed its name to East Liberty association in 1884 (Allen, 1958, p. 14). Liberty association was described by the Baptist State Convention of Alabama as “divided on the mission question” (Baptist State Convention of Alabama, 1837, p. 7). Liberty’s articles of faith remained consistently within the Philadelphia

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<sup>375</sup> Manly’s strict adherence to Philadelphia’s confession as the lens through which to interpret later Baptist abstracts echoes one of the reasons Separate Baptists a generation earlier had hesitated to unite with Regular Baptists in the south upon the basis of the PCF, fearing they would hold them to every jot and tittle of the PCF. Indeed, Separates refused unity in Virginia until Regulars committed in writing they would not hold them to every article in the confession. See chapter three for further discussion.

<sup>376</sup> Nettles either ignores or appears unaware that G. Paschal shows distinct confessional traditions in North Carolina concerning Baptists embracing shorter abstracts of faith (see footnote above). One might also add that insisting all brief Baptist confessions as mini-versions of the PCF could very well stand as one of the primary reasons Calvinism was such a deeply embedded and controversial issue among 19<sup>th</sup> American Baptists. Indeed, if Tuscaloosa Baptists *imposed* Philadelphia Calvinism upon its member churches, when its confession of faith did not *require* it, it remains predictable that internal organizational and theological conflict follows. That Tuscaloosa Baptists did not simply change its confession to one like the abstract of the Georgia Association or North Carolina’s Kehukee associations, both of which had clear articles reflecting *strict* Calvinism (see Appendix A for both confessions) remains inexplicable.

confessional tradition throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “We believe in the doctrine of eternal and particular election” (Liberty Baptist Association, 1836).<sup>377</sup> Thus, Liberty’s single delegate to the Augusta meeting in 1845 would have represented an association that tenaciously held to and was consistently dependent upon the PCF as its confessional inspiration.<sup>378</sup>

#### 6.3.2.1.2 Alabama Associations Unrepresented in Augusta

As observed above, at the time of the Augusta convention, Alabama had over 33,000 Baptists in approximately 525 churches affiliated with at least 33 Baptist associations. Moreover, Alabama had 14 total delegates present at Augusta. Most probably, churches from only six associations had representatives in Augusta. Had the remaining 28 associations sent delegates to Augusta, would those delegates be representing churches and associations that had adopted the Philadelphia confession as their own? An answer to this question will assist in determining the confessional profile of Alabama associations in a broader spectrum than just considering the delegating bodies that sent representatives to Augusta. Thus, scanning existing associations the state over at or around 1845, and subsequently discovering the doctrinal and confessional allegiance of selected associations, predictably offers a more accurate summary as to the status of confessionally *strict* Calvinism during the period.<sup>379</sup>

Like many other associations throughout the south during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Alabama’s Union association was rocked by the Anti-missions controversy. Organized in 1835, a plan among key leaders in the association was to organize the association upon Anti-mission principles (Allen, 1958, p. 15). The plan failed, and Union remained a missionary Baptist association. However, Union association continued to be rattled by its Anti-missions advocates through at least 1838 (Holcombe, 1840, pp. 236-240).

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<sup>377</sup> See also (East Liberty Association, 1899, p. 22).

<sup>378</sup> A final Alabama association that most probably had at least one representative in Augusta (see *Appendix F* at the end of this research), the Bethel association was organized in 1820 in Clarke County Alabama (Allen, 1958, p. 6). According to B. Davidson, the association was involved in the missionary movement from the very beginning (Ibid). After searching available annual minutes between 1848 and 1898, no abstract of faith was found for examination.

<sup>379</sup> The same question will be asked, and an answer pursued pertaining to each of the states represented at Augusta in 1845.

Union possessed a most unusual articles of faith document. Entitled “Articles of Faith and Abstract of Principles,” it mingled together what normally would be considered constitutional language concerning members of the association; how churches become members; the number of delegates each church could send; procedures for queries, etc., with only the final article (Article 18) confessing theological belief.<sup>380</sup>

18. We do now jointly engage in the strength of the Lord, and through his assistance, to keep the faith as it was once delivered to the saints; which we believe to contain the following sublime and important doctrine, viz: the being of a God, a trinity of persons in the Godhead, and that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice; the fall of Adam, the degeneracy of his posterity, corruption of human nature, and the inability of fallen man to do that which is spiritually good. The everlasting love of God to his people, elected in him before the foundation of the world, a covenant of grace with Jesus Christ, and a particular redemption by his blood; justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, pardon and reconciliation through him. Calling, regeneration and sanctification by the influence and operation of the Holy Spirit; the final perseverance of the saints in grace... (Ibid, p. 6).

Article 18 reflects many theological beliefs fully consistent with both *moderate* and *mild* Calvinism including the fall of Adam, the degeneracy of his posterity, corruption of human nature, and the inability of fallen man to do that which is spiritually good.<sup>381</sup> Nor do either *moderate* or *mild* Calvinists have serious reservations concerning justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness; pardon and reconciliation through Christ; calling, regeneration and sanctification by the influence and operation of the Holy Spirit; nor the final perseverance of the saints in grace. One theological assertion in Article 18, however, reflects the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF: “[We believe in] The everlasting love of God to his people, elected in him before the foundation of the world, a covenant of grace with Jesus Christ, and a particular redemption by his blood.” “Particular redemption” seems to be a phrase often used to denote the presence of *strict*

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<sup>380</sup> The article is long but serves as an apt example of how the presence of Calvinistic “codewords” may assist in discerning whether a confession should be judged *strictly* Calvinistic. For more on “codewords” and how to detect *strict* Calvinism in Baptist confessions, see chapter two.

<sup>381</sup> The latter belief is more apt to be expressed by *moderate* and *mild* Calvinists as the inability of fallen man to recover himself from the sinful state he is in by nature and by his own free will and ability, or something similar, rather than Union association’s wording as “the inability of fallen man to do that which is spiritually good,” wording which could imply, as some *strict* Calvinists have argued, that since total human depravity prohibits any “spiritual good” being performed by fallen creatures, and since repentance and faith are “spiritual goods,” neither can be performed by fallen men prior to regeneration.

Calvinism, especially when it is coupled with the eternal covenant of grace as it seems to be in Union's confession. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that in 1844, Alabama's Union association reflected the PCF even though it appears to have sent no delegates to the Augusta convention.<sup>382</sup>

In 1833, Coosa River Baptist Association was organized in Talladega County, Alabama (Allen, 1958, p. 8). Holcombe informs us "Four ministers were present, who were included in the churches forming the Association, namely, Sion Blythe, Joseph Hill, Philip Archer, and Wm. McCain" (Holcombe, 1840, p. 247). W. Flynt has an insightful description of the first minister in Holcombe's list, Sion Blythe. In his section on the Calvinist-Arminian divide that plagued Alabama Baptists from the very beginning of their presence in the state, he mentions Blythe.

Among Alabama Baptists, the erudite Daniel P. Bestor<sup>383</sup> and the fervent Sion Blythe best represent the Arminian strain... Blythe was one of Alabama's most successful revivalists, described as "tender, urgent, vehement." But his Calvinist contemporary, E.B. Teague, also noted what was said about many of the Sandy Creek preachers: he possessed little analytical ability, was better at winning sinners to faith in Christ than in training them in doctrine, and was "somewhat of an Arminian" (Flynt, 1998, p. 27).

Assuming Flynt's depiction of Blythe accurate, Coosa River's confession seems predictable. It contained 9 brief articles some of which are very similar to other Alabama associations including the Tuscaloosa association. However, Coosa River Baptists seemed to combine some articles other associations kept separate. Three of Coosa River's 9 articles follow.

3. We believe in the doctrine of election by grace, and that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Christ.
- 4 We believe in the doctrine of original sin, and that man is incapable of recovering himself from the fallen state he is in by his own freewill and ability.

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<sup>382</sup> Other Alabama associations existing in 1845 and sending no delegates to Augusta but appear to be *strictly* Calvinistic, embracing either full articles of faith or retaining "codewords" indicative of the PCF's *strict* Calvinism include Carey and Conecuh River associations (see above).

<sup>383</sup> Flynt claims Bestor came from Connecticut to Alabama embracing 'a strict Calvinist theology, believing that the "elect were virtually justified from everlasting.'" As he ministered on the Alabama frontier, however, "gradually his theology changed," and by life's end, one of his Calvinist friends 'accused Bestor of "verging on Arminianism'" (Ibid). It remains noteworthy that Bestor was commissioned as a delegate to Augusta representing the Board of State Convention of Alabama but, for inexplicable reasons, he was among the dozens of delegates commissioned from various church and associational bodies that were named as delegates, but did not make the Augusta meeting (Bestor's name is listed in the official tally with an asterisk denoting absence) (SBC, 1845, p. 11).

5 We believe the Saints shall persevere in grace, and never finally fall away (Coosa River Association, 1850, p. 15).

Little commentary is required on Coosa River's confession since it seems clear no allegiance to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism is present. And, presuming Sion Blythe's leadership in the association, it seems reasonable to conclude Coosa River Baptists were either *mildly* Calvinistic or held to no Calvinism at all. The "doctrine of election by grace" seems widely upheld and confessionally embraced by Baptists across the south.<sup>384</sup> However, the *strict* Calvinistic interpretation with the PCF serving as the exclusive confessional lens through which to understand the doctrine of election was often either implicitly denied or ignored completely by various Baptist bodies the south over.

The North River Baptist Association originated in 1835 growing out of controversy over Arminianism and Calvinism (Allen, 1958, p. 14). Claims were made that David Andrews, the chief leader in organizing the association, openly avowed his strictly Arminian beliefs.<sup>385</sup> However, North River's confession hardly reveals strong allegiance to the distinctives of theological Arminianism. A year after the association organized, North River's confession was published in full (North River Association, 1836, pp. 4-5).

The 12 articles appear original and not verbally dependent upon other confessions. However, like other Baptist confessions, North River's articles pledge epistemological allegiance to the Old and New Testaments as the revealed, inspired source of faith and practice (Prelude); affirms belief in one true and living triune God, the second Person of Whom becomes God in human flesh (Articles 1-3); confesses the fall of humankind from its divinely created upright state by transgressing the law and consequently falling under its penalty and remaining under its curse; affirms sinful men remain liable to eternal punishment, without means to extricate and reinstate themselves in the image and favor of God (Article 4); believes that the Holy Spirit was sent into the world to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and to abide with the children of God as their guide and comforter (Article 8); and that it remains the duty of believers to obey all his

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<sup>384</sup> As evidence unfolds, however, it will become clear a significant number of Baptist associations failed to include an article on election in their confessional abstracts.

<sup>385</sup> See section above on the Tuscaloosa association for more on Andrews.

commandments, to live soberly and righteously ever looking to Jesus; affirms that it is the believer's privilege to persevere in the ways of well-doing, through grace to glory, and to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (Article 11). The articles reveal little, if any, evidence to conclude North River Baptists embraced Arminianism.

On the other hand, one article implicitly denies one of the theological tenets of *strict* Calvinism. Article 5 affirms general atonement specifically: "We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and second Adam, did represent just as many as the first, consequently made an atonement for all men. But the benefits of the atonement, spiritually are only received by the true believer" (Ibid, p. 4). But affirming general atonement and consequently implicitly denying Limited Atonement hardly reduces to theological Arminianism as North River critics maintain.

Even more indicative that North River Baptists were not Arminian as their critics charged was their adoption of the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession. In the 1844 minutes of North River's annual session, a new confession is adopted:

33. The committee on revising the Constitution and Confession of Faith made their report, which was received, and the committee discharged.

34. *Resolved*, That an Abstract of Principles, as published in the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, be published in our present minutes, and recommended to the Churches as a substitute for the one now in use provided the Abstract proposed shall not be considered binding on any of our Churches, unless adopted by them in their Church capacity (North River Association, 1844, p. 4).

Following in the 1844 minutes is published the entire "Baptist Confession of Faith" as it appears in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Ibid, pp. 5-7). What is more, North River Baptists continued to embrace the original 16 articles of the NHC through the end of the century (North River Association, 1892, pp. 13-15).

Historian, Tom Nettles, appears entirely confused concerning the North River association. "The North River Association, under the leadership of David W. Andrews, had altered its confession on the doctrines of election and effectual calling so that the danger of susceptibility to Arminianism was very real" (Nettles, 2006, p. 138). 'A controversy between the Tuscaloosa and North River Associations reached resolution in 1849 when the North River Association adopted "such articles as generally may be assented to by the denomination"' (Nettles, 1995, p. 9). '[Basil Manly]

preached “Divine Efficiency Consistent With Human Activity” in 1849 that brought to a happy resolution the conflict’ (Nettles, 2012, p. 12).<sup>386</sup>

In response, Nettles seems to assume North River Baptists had originally confessionally embraced the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election and Effectually Call, an assumption the record above explicitly disputes. More significantly, Nettles indicates the conflict over Philadelphia Calvinism between Tuscaloosa and North River associations ended in 1849 resulting from Manly’s sermon on “Election,” and North River Baptists’ subsequent adoption of “such articles as generally may be assented to by the denomination.”<sup>387</sup>

But as the North River’s minutes indicate, in 1844, the association adopted the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* and continued embracing the same confession through at least 1892. To what articles of faith, then, does Nettles suggest North River Baptists adopted in 1849 as a direct result of Manly’s sermon, “such articles as generally may be assented to by the denomination”? Perhaps Nettles is depending upon W. Flynt in his commentary on the North River-Tuscaloosa conflict in 1849.

So brilliantly did Manly resolve the theological conflict between Calvinists and Arminians that the sermon was published and widely circulated in Alabama. The North River Association incorporated this theology in a New Abstract of Principles, ending the long division (Flynt, 1998, p. 29).

Flynt documents his claim with two articles appearing in the 1849 and 1859 editions of *The Alabama Baptist* (Ibid, p. 628). However, neither the April 27, 1849 article nor the November 17, 1859 article Flint cites mentions a “New Abstract of Principles” being adopted because of Manly’s sermon preached in 1849. In fact, if Manly preached his sermon April 8, 1849 (Nettles, 1984, p. 7), less than two weeks existed for North River Baptists to compose, recommend, and adopt a

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<sup>386</sup> Jeff Robinson uncritically follows Nettles in his comments concerning Alabama’s North River association and draws unsubstantiated conclusions concerning the conflict. “[Basil] Manly delivered the sermon [in 1849] before leaders of the Tuscaloosa and North River associations in an attempt to reconcile the two parties over the issue of Arminianism... Manly encouraged the North River Association to hold the line on the historic Reformed position on election and avoid attempting to remove the valid biblical tension between God’s absolute sovereignty and man’s responsibility 345-346.

<sup>387</sup> Apparently, Nettles is quoting from Manly’s journal at this point.

new confession, a feat while not impossible remains most improbable. More likely, Flynt misread the articles in the newspaper, a misreading that could have been prevented had Flynt cross-checked his reading with North River's minutes and learned North River Baptists had adopted the original NHC a full five years earlier in 1844.

Nor do *The Alabama Baptist* articles dispute what is recorded in North River minutes.

We find however that the North River Association has now adopted such articles as may generally be assented to by the denomination...

[...]

In relation to the whole subject we will just add, that it is gratifying to know that the North River has adopted an abstract of principles upon which many of our Associations have been organized. In this she has shown a disposition, to return to and maintain the faith of the great body of Baptists (Whitfield, 1849).

No implications seem evident from the articles that North River either acted in response to Manly's sermon or adopted a new confession of faith in 1849 that "incorporated" Manly's theology. One might possibly infer such (as Flynt apparently did); but given the explicit minutes of North River's association, such an inference would be incorrect. More revealing in the article is the description that the North River Baptists adopted a confession "upon which many of our Associations have been organized" (Ibid). Frankly, this assertion alone should have alerted Flynt that the confession North River adopted was not a "New Abstract of Principles" wherein they "incorporated" Manly's theology into it. Rather it was a confession that many other Alabama associations had adopted. Thus, Flynt seems to have drawn incorrect inferences from the articles about the North River association, and Nettles uncritically followed Flynt.<sup>388</sup>

In conclusion, North River Baptists neither embraced the PCF nor appeared to embrace the theological distinctives of Arminianism as they were accused. Rather, they seemed to be confessional Baptists who embraced mostly the same orthodox doctrines of the faith that countless other Baptists across the south embraced. Hence, like North Carolina's Broad River association, North River Baptists did not reject the doctrine of election as their adoption of the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession demonstrates. Rather, it seems more judicious

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<sup>388</sup> Consequently, as mentioned above, Robinson uncritically followed Nettles drawing incorrect inferences as well.

to conclude North River Baptists consciously rejected the Unconditional Election and Limited Atonement embedded in the Philadelphia confessional tradition and thus sought to confessionally express that rejection in a confession of faith more theologically amenably to their convictions.

The Bigbee Baptist Association was constituted as Central association (Sumter county) in 1845 and changed its name to Little Bigbee in 1852, and subsequently, the Bigbee Baptist Association the year after (Allen, 1958, pp. 6, 13). The articles of faith of Bigbee Baptists bears some literary uniqueness, reflecting originality compared to many shorter “cookie-cutter” confessions often found published in southern Baptist associations. It also remains among the shortest confessions produced by southern associations, a confession containing only 4 brief articles.

- I. We believe in one living and true God; that in the Godhead are Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- II. We believe that the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, and the New Testament is the only rule of faith and practice.
- III. We believe that the Church of God is composed of such persons as believe in Jesus Christ and have been baptized; that baptism consists in the immersion of the whole body in water; and that the Lord’s Supper should be administered to church members only.
- IV. We believe in the Doctrines of Grace taught by the United Baptists, viz: In the depravity of man; in the converting grace of God; in the resurrection of the dead; in the general judgment; in the eternal life of the righteous--in the everlasting punishment of the wicked (Bigbee Association, 1882, p. 19).

Bigbee’s articles of faith display no vagaries concerning its complete lack of theological allegiance to the PCF. Noteworthy as well in Bigbee Baptists’ confession is the use of “Doctrines of Grace,” and what they believed constituted the general content of those doctrines. Contrary to some *strict* Calvinists who seem to suggest that the term “doctrines of grace” was used by 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptists as virtually synonymous with 5 Points of Calvinism (i.e. **TULIP**),<sup>389</sup> the Bigbee association used the term perhaps in the broadest possible sense. For them the “Doctrines of grace” signified sinful human depravity, God’s converting grace, and life after death with but two possible eternal

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<sup>389</sup> For extended discussion of this issue, see chapter two.

destinations. Finally, Bigbee Baptists are among several dozen Baptist associations across the south that chose to ignore the doctrine of election in their articles of faith.<sup>390</sup>

### 6.3.2.2 Georgia

Since Augusta was the host city for the 1845 gathering that launched the southern convention, the state of Georgia would predictably be among the richest sources of delegates to attend. Indeed, Georgia delegates alone constituted almost half the conference attendees. At least 13 of approximately 29 associations were represented by delegates in Georgia. However, three of the 13 Georgia associations represented 62% of the entire Georgia delegation.

#### 6.3.2.2.1 Georgia Associations Represented in Augusta

The Georgia Association remains the oldest association in Georgia as well as one of the oldest associations in the southern states. Organized in 1784 with five churches (Allen, 1958, p. 549), the association later adopted an abstract of faith that clearly reflected the *strictly* Calvinistic confessional tradition rooted in the PCF as did North Carolina's Yadkin and Kehukee associations. The full confession is divided into two parts, the abstract of faith (8 articles) and gospel order (6 articles).<sup>391</sup> The former focuses more on doctrine proper (God, sin, salvation, afterlife), while the latter concentrates on ecclesiological issues (church membership, baptism, Lord's Supper).<sup>392</sup>

Like other Baptist confessional abstracts, some articles in Georgia's abstract could be (and were) embraced by *mild*, *moderate*, and *strict* Calvinists alike.<sup>393</sup> Indeed some articles in Georgia's abstract were embraced by those accused of embracing Arminianism.<sup>394</sup> However, some articles

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<sup>390</sup> At least 36 associations in the southern states representing thousands of Baptists and hundreds of churches followed the confessional pattern of adopting no article on election or predestination. See *Appendix G* at the end of this research.

<sup>391</sup> A complete copy of Georgia Association's confession is found in *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

<sup>392</sup> Other associations would follow Georgia in this 2-Part pattern of, a) Abstract of Faith; and b) Gospel Order.

<sup>393</sup> Georgia's abstract is no exception. Articles on the triune nature of God; the uniqueness of Scripture; justification by faith in Christ and His imputed righteousness alone; perseverance of the saints; resurrection of the body; and the eternity of heaven and hell found in Georgia's confession are all commonly embraced beliefs among the various *shades* of Calvinism, and even non-Calvinism, in Baptist associations throughout the south.

<sup>394</sup> For example, one might compare Georgia Association's articles with the articles of faith of the Chattahoochee United Baptist Association, a Georgia association organized because of churches and ministers in Georgia that were charged by the Georgia Association (among others) with embracing Arminianism. In addition to the triune nature of God and the exclusive nature of Scripture as the sole source of faith and practice, Chattahoochee United Baptists embraced the "doctrine of original sin"; "man's inability to recover himself from the fallen state which he is in by

appear to remain inadequately explainable apart from the theological backdrop of the PCF. For example, Article 4 in Georgia association's abstract of faith reads,

We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory: And that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the Father and the Son, before the world began, in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed.

Few scholars, if any, dispute the *strictly* Calvinistic language of this article and its clear connection to Philadelphia's High Calvinism. The focal point of God's redeeming love exclusively names "his people" in the "eternal election" of a "definite number" as a result of an eternal "covenant of grace" wherein the elect's salvation is infallibly secured and only they "in particular are redeemed." The *strictly* "Calvinistic codewords" in this single article remain difficult, if not almost impossible, to explain adequately apart from dependence upon and theological loyalty to the PCF.<sup>395</sup> Hence, the Georgia Association fits well T. George's claim concerning Augusta's delegates belonging to an association embracing Philadelphia's Confession of Faith.<sup>396</sup>

Other Georgia associations represented at the Augusta convention also embraced a confession reflecting the PCF. Georgia's Appalachee association was organized in 1835 and was represented in Augusta by approximately six church delegates (Allen, 1958, p. 545). Its confession contains the first 8 articles found in the Georgia Association's confession (Appalachee Association, 1847). Thus, Appalachee Baptists fit George's claim concerning Philadelphia's confession.<sup>397</sup>

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nature"; "doctrine of Election, according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth"; and even "that Saints will persevere in Grace to the end of their lives." See Chattahoochee United's full confession in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>395</sup> For more on "Calvinistic codewords" and detecting *Strict* Calvinism in confessions of faith, see chapters one and two.

<sup>396</sup> The Georgia Association amended the abstract throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century but still embraced a *strictly* Calvinistic document. "4. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people and in the eternal and particular election of a definite number of the human race to grace and glory; and that before the world began there was a covenant made between the Father and the Son, in which the salvation of the redeemed is made secure" (Georgia Association, 1886, p. 24).

<sup>397</sup> Noteworthy is Appalachee's consistency throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century embracing a *strictly Calvinistic* confession. As late as 1903, while some of the wording in the articles changed, it retained the specificity in Article 4 that clearly reflected High Calvinism (Appalachee Association, 1903, p. 3). However, four years later, Appalachee Baptists embraced a more modest Calvinistic posture. Entitled a "Summary of Belief," Article 4 reads, "We believe that God from eternity decrees or permits all things that come to pass and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events, yet so as not in any wise, to be the author or approver of sin nor to destroy the free will and responsibility of intelligent creatures" (Appalachee Association, 1907, p. 44). Its article on human depravity

Georgia's Bethel association was organized in 1832 and sent at least three delegates to Augusta (Allen, 1958, p. 547). Its abstract of faith included 12 very brief articles, many articles similar to those found in other associational confessions across the south. However, Article 3 remains indicative of Philadelphia's understanding of Unconditional Election: "We believe in the doctrine of eternal and particular election" (Bethel Association, 1839, p. 8). Hence, in 1845, the delegates would have represented an association that embraced *strictly* Calvinistic articles as abundantly found in the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

One should add, however, that Bethel Baptists appear to represent several associations throughout the south that gradually moved away from confessionally *strict* Calvinism and, before the century's end, had adopted a *moderate* or even *mild* expression of Calvinism. For example, by 1895, Bethel Baptists had forfeited the language of "eternal and particular election" and instead confessed, "We believe the doctrine of election; that it is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners" (Bethel Association, 1895, p. 12). While Bethel Baptists were confessional descendants of Philadelphia in 1845, they seem to have shifted to *moderate* or *mild* Calvinism before the century's end.

What is more, the language in Bethel's revised confession reflects a definite awareness of and linguistic dependence upon New Hampshire's confession.<sup>398</sup> Bethel's article on Scripture, for example, declares the Bible as 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," a direct quotation from the NHC. Bethel's article on the fall states, "We believe that man was created in a state of holiness under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from this holy and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners..."<sup>399</sup> Again, direct language from the NHC. Thus, it seems Bethel association stands indicative of the evidential

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similarly falls far short of Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism: "V. We believe that man was made in the image of God, but by voluntary transgression fell from a state of innocence into sin, involving both himself and all his descendants (Ibid).

<sup>398</sup> For a complete copy of New Hampshire's confession, see *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>399</sup> Laced throughout Bethel's confession is verbiage clearly either quoting from or referencing language in the NHC.

record this research has pursued; namely, before the century's end, confessionally *strict* Calvinism had waned from its associational significance in southern Baptist life.<sup>400</sup>

Georgia's Sunbury association was organized in 1818 from Georgia churches dividing from the Savannah association, an association composed of churches in both Georgia and South Carolina (Allen, 1958, p. 555). Sunbury had at least five church delegates as representatives at the Augusta convention. The confessional document upon which Sunbury Baptists cooperated illustrates the value some Baptist associations placed upon brevity as a quality in theological abstracts. For Sunbury, its confessional theology could be stated in one short article embedded in its constitution (Sunbury Association, 1823, pp. 11-12). Composed of 11 brief articles in its constitution, Article 11 addresses the membership of Sunbury Baptist Association.

It shall be composed of such Churches as hold the doctrines of human depravity— the atonement of Christ— election to eternal life— regeneration, and perseverance of the saints: — Baptism, by immersion of the person in water, and administered to none but professed believers; — And the Lord's Supper, intended for those only, who have been regularly admitted into the visible Church (Ibid).<sup>401</sup>

Only a single phrase in Sunbury's brief confessional abstract rescued it from being a generic theological statement virtually every Baptist association across the south would (and did) embrace— "election to eternal life." Arguably, those Baptists who embraced the PCF could insist "election to eternal life" clearly implies Unconditional Election. Contrarily, *moderate* and *mild* Calvinists could insist they have little problem with the phrase since they too embrace the doctrine of election according to Scripture, and since the confessional phrase neither demands a

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<sup>400</sup> For other Georgia associations that clearly held to *strictly* Calvinistic confessions and sent delegates to Augusta in 1845, see the confession of faith for Central Association that sent approximately 18 delegates to Augusta (Central Association, 1834, p. 9); Columbus Association that sent at least six delegates (Columbus Association, 1830, p. 10); Ebenezer Association that sent two delegates (Ebenezer Association, 1832, p. 9); three delegates represented Flint River, a *strictly* Calvinistic confessing body (Flint River Association, 1824, pp. 4-5); Hephzibah association sent 21 delegates (Hephzibah Association, 1834, p. 8). The Hephzibah Baptists, like the Georgia Association, sustained its confessional High Calvinism throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century; Rock Mountain association sent three delegates (Rock Mountain Association, 1839, pp. 6-7). Rock Mountain later became Stone Mountain association (Allen, 1958, p. 553); Sarepta association sent approximately eight delegates (Sarepta Association, 1819); Washington association sent six delegates (Washington Association, 1828, pp. 2-5). Washington Baptists constituted another Georgia association that held its confessionally *strict* Calvinism throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and Western association had approximately four delegates as representatives in Augusta (Western Association, 1866, p. 9).

<sup>401</sup> See also, Sunbury's confession as it remained, apart from punctuation, unchanged in 1856 (Sunbury Association, 1856, pp. 13-14).

specific interpretation of what constitutes biblical election nor theologically defines the process of election, they most probably would have little substantive objection to the confessional wording. Hence, it may be argued the undefined phrase on election and its relation to applied redemption could very well have expressed a broad swath of soteriological beliefs among Baptists, as well as potentially curbed fussy internal debates over Calvinistic issues.<sup>402</sup>

Even so, did the Sunbury association's abstract of faith reveal confessional fidelity to the PCF? Had Sunbury Baptists desired to reflect Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election, the question begs asking—Why did they not word the doctrine similarly to other confessions that undeniably reflected the PCF? “We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election” is confessional language undeniably rooted in the Philadelphia confessional tradition and therefore can be found in associational abstracts of faith in every southern state during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Some may respond by citing the desire for brevity in composing abstracts of faith. And brevity was obviously a quality Sunbury Baptists believed should characterize its confession, and consequently its abstract is among the briefest confessions one might find among 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptists. But brevity can hardly be an adequate response in Sunbury's case since there remains little quantitative difference between “election to eternal life” and “eternal particular election” so far as brevity is concerned. Contrarily, there remains a significant difference in connotation between the two phrases. Sunbury's unique phrase, “election to eternal life,” could connote neutrality and perhaps accommodation; one the other hand, “eternal particular election” is a confessional phrase widely recognized as rooted in Philadelphia's confessionally *strict* Calvinism.

Indeed, the phrase “eternal particular election” was a confessional staple of abstracts of faith allegedly reflecting Philadelphia's confession as far back as John Asplund's work at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Asplund published in the first edition of his annual register an abstract of faith he indicated was held by “Baptists in general” and “agreeable to the confession of faith” embraced and published by the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1742 (Asplund, 1791, pp. 53-54). As

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<sup>402</sup> Due to rigid associational leaders imposing one interpretative template upon loose confessional language as apparently was the case with Tuscaloosa Baptists, however, imprecise language in confessional documents does not always temper internal wrangling over theological issues in Baptist associations.

argued elsewhere,<sup>403</sup> while many of the articles in Asplund's abstract are more general in nature, and therefore would not be theologically objectionable to Baptists who were *moderate* or perhaps even *mild* Calvinists,<sup>404</sup> Article 3 in Asplund's abstract seemed so highly disputable by numerous Baptist associations across the south that they refused to accept the article as stated. "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election" (Ibid, p. 53). On the other hand, confessional verbiage that included the phrase, "eternal particular election," appeared to universally appeal to and confessionally satisfy most *strict* Calvinists who embraced the PCF. Consequently, it seems reasonable to question whether the church delegates from the Sunbury association were representing a body of Baptists that had unequivocally adopted Philadelphia's confession as its own as T. George indicated concerning all the Augusta delegates.<sup>405</sup>

#### 6.3.2.2.2 Georgia Associations Unrepresented in Augusta

As stated earlier, at least 13 of approximately 29 Georgia associations in existence at the time were represented at the 1845 Augusta convention. What were the confessional beliefs of those Baptist associations that failed to send a delegate to Augusta? Were all those Baptists

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<sup>403</sup> For extended discussion, see chapters two and three.

<sup>404</sup> For example, Article 4—"We believe in the doctrine of original sin"—was embraced by Baptists of all Calvinistic shades across the south, even those like Georgia's Chattahoochee United Baptists who were considered by others to embrace Arminian theological tendencies (see *Appendix B* at the end of this research for the full confession of Chattahoochee Baptists). Other articles in Asplund's abstract that were theologically amenable to most all shades of Calvinism include articles 1-2, 4-6, 8-12. Article 7—"We believe that God's elect shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit"—however, usually was more appreciated by *moderate* and *strict* Calvinists than *mild* Calvinists or non-Calvinists. Also, there remains much in the PCF applicable and fully acceptable to Baptists of all soteriological stripes even today. The PCF, after all, was and is a *Baptist* confession, and therefore it remains only natural for much of it to be theologically amenable to all Baptists. Rather, it seems the *strictly* Calvinistic theological aspects of the PCF—Unconditional Election and Limited Atonement—were the issues that propelled so much confessional dissent among Baptists.

<sup>405</sup> Note, however, it does not follow that *no* Sunbury church embraced the PCF, only that the official confession of Sunbury association neither embraced nor necessarily reflected the PCF. Also concerning the Sunbury association, the post-Civil War condition of the south weakened many Baptist associations so severely they dissolved; and Sunbury unfortunately was one of the casualties. It dissolved in 1866 (Allen, 1958, p. 555). Some of the former Sunbury churches, along with churches from two other associations, joined together to form the New Sunbury Association that same year (Ibid, p. 551). Interestingly, New Sunbury Baptists adopted what appears to be an exact copy of the abstract of faith and gospel order composed by the Georgia Association (New Sunbury Association, 1867, pp. 13-14). Consequently, by implication, churches in the New Sunbury Association corporately reflected the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF. Hence, it seems reasonable to assume at least *some* churches in the defunct Sunbury Association held to Philadelphia's High Calvinism albeit Sunbury's brief abstract seemed to reflect little, if any, confessional dependence upon the PCF.

confessionally connected to and in agreement with Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism? Could it be judged their articles of faith fit squarely within the Philadelphia confessional tradition?

The Chattahoochee association was organized in 1824 and remains one of Georgia's oldest Baptist associations (Allen, 1958, p. 548).<sup>406</sup> From the beginning, Chattahoochee Baptists embraced articles of faith. Recorded in the 1826 minutes, it seems clear the Chattahoochee association had adopted the abstract of faith and gospel order of the Georgia Association, an abstract that was clearly dependent upon and theologically loyal to the PCF and *strict* Calvinism.<sup>407</sup> However, like many Baptist associations across the south, the association periodically amended its confession of faith.<sup>408</sup> Thus, in 1843, Chattahoochee Baptists recorded their amended confession in the annual minutes, a confession that seems to have removed the theological affinities it earlier displayed toward the *strict* Calvinism found in the Georgia Association's abstract they had used. Containing 11 brief articles, five are listed below.

3. We believe the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's inability to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature by his own free will and holiness.
5. We believe in the doctrine of Election according to the Scriptures, viz: through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.<sup>409</sup>
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
7. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace and not finally fall away (Chattahoochee Association, 1843).<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> The Chattahoochee Association should not be confused with the Chattahoochee United Baptist Association organized in 1834.

<sup>407</sup> The 1826 minutes are hand-written, and some parts are barely legible (Chattahoochee Association, 1826). However, it remains clear Chattahoochee Baptists embraced the Georgia Association's abstract of faith.

<sup>408</sup> Written in parenthesis at the end of the final article in the abstract of faith in the 1826 minutes are the words, "Revised at the 19<sup>th</sup> session and Recorded Page 141," words obviously added later than 1826 (Ibid). The 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Chattahoochee association would have been the 1843 session.

<sup>409</sup> Note that the Chattahoochee association's article on election has switched from following the Georgia Association's *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of election reflecting the PCF and instead adopted an article on election almost identical to North Carolina's Broad River association, an association that consciously rejected Philadelphia's Unconditional Election and composed an alternative article on election (Paschal, 1930, pp. 153-157; 213-216). Broad River's alternative article on election read, "We believe in the doctrine of Election through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (Ibid, p. 215). See the full discussion in chapter two.

<sup>410</sup> No page number exists. As indicated before, the Chattahoochee United Baptist Association was considered by many Georgia Baptists as theologically oriented toward Arminianism. However, after examining its articles of faith, one is hard-pressed to demonstrate Chattahoochee United Baptists were any more confessionally oriented toward Arminian doctrine than the Chattahoochee Baptists that produced the present confession. It seems more reasonable

Whereas in 1826, Chattahoochee Baptists embraced the language of *strict* Calvinism, fully adopting the Georgia association’s abstract that clearly indicated the eternal, particular, and unconditional election displayed in the PCF; less than two decades later, the Chattahoochee association simply stated it embraced the “doctrine of election according to the Scriptures,” an election completed through the Spirit’s sanctification coupled with a sinner’s belief in the truth.<sup>411</sup> In a further edit later in the century, Chattahoochee Baptists simplified Article 5 even more: “We believe in the doctrine of Election according to the Scriptures” (Chattahoochee Association, 1885, p. 13). That Chattahoochee Baptists confessionally embraced the *strict* Calvinism reflected in the PCF in 1826 seems beyond dispute. By mid-century, however, the association had forfeited any theological allegiance it earlier had embraced toward Philadelphia’s confessionally *strict* Calvinism. *Strict* Calvinism had seemingly lost its confessional luster among Chattahoochee Baptists before the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention, and, by century’s end, became confessionally content to simply affirm the doctrine of election “according to the Scriptures.”

Georgia’s Coosa association was organized in 1836 and is reportedly the oldest association in northwest Georgia (Allen, 1958, p. 548). Coosa’s constitution, which basically is a confession of faith, is structurally like the Georgia Association’s confessional document which is divided into two sections, the “Abstract of Faith” containing 8 articles, and a section containing 6 articles entitled “As for Gospel Order.”<sup>412</sup> Coosa’s constitution has the same number of articles within each section (Coosa Association, 1855, pp. 12-13). Comparing the abstracts of the Coosa and Georgia associations is enlightening. The confessional content of 3 articles from both associations may be compared below.<sup>413</sup>

<b>Comparing Select Articles in the Abstracts of Faith in Georgia’s Coosa and Georgia Associations</b>
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to understand Chattahoochee United Baptists as anti-Philadelphia *strict* Calvinism than judging them theological Arminians.

<sup>411</sup> Compare 2Thessalonians 2:13.

<sup>412</sup> A full copy of Georgia Association’s faith statement can be found in *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

<sup>413</sup> Unlike Coosa’s abstract that included proof-texts, Georgia’s abstract did not include them. Hence, proof-texts are omitted from the articles in the chart.

Article of Faith	Coosa Association	Georgia Association
<i>Sinful Depravity</i>	Art. 3. [We believe] In the Fall of Adam, the corruption of human nature, the impotence and unwillingness of man to recover himself from his depraved state.	3d. We believe in the fall of Adam, and the imputation of his sin to his posterity. In the corruption of human nature, and the impotency of man to recover himself by his own free will — ability.
<i>Election</i>	Art. 4. [We believe] In the everlasting love of God to his people and that he chose them in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love; and that there was a covenant of grace or redemption between the Father and Son, before the world was.	4th. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory: And that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the Father and the Son, before the world began, in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed.
<i>Applied Redemption</i>	Art. 6. [We believe] That all those that were chosen in Christ will be effectually called, regenerated, converted, sanctified and supported by the spirit and power of God, so that they shall persevere in grace and not one of them be finally lost.	6th. We believe that all those who were chosen in Christ, will be effectually called, regenerated, converted, sanctified, and supported by the spirit and power of God, so that they shall persevere in grace, and not one of them be finally lost.

The article on applied redemption in both confessions appears to demonstrate that Coosa’s dependence upon the Georgia Association’s abstract goes deeper than structural similarity. Rather Coosa’s word-for-word acceptance of Georgia’s Article 6 could indicate a close theological affinity with the *strict* Calvinists of the Georgia Association. In fact, apart from insignificant wording and punctuation, six of the 8 articles in both abstracts are verbally identical. Hence, it remains clear the Coosa association intentionally used the Georgia Association’s abstract as its confessional model. If this conclusion is correct, however, what might explain the obvious differences between Coosa and Georgia associations on Articles 3 and 4? If Coosa Baptists copied virtually word-for-word 6 articles from Georgia’s abstract, why were they hesitant to copy word-for-word the remaining 2 articles?

Article 3 in both abstracts deal with human depravity, but Coosa's article eliminates key phraseology found in Georgia's. For example, Coosa removes the phrase included in Georgia's abstract indicating the Adamic transaction universally distributed to all people as a consequence of Adam's sin--"and the imputation of his sin to his posterity." While it does not follow that embracing the "imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity" as the Georgia abstract maintains necessarily implies imputed sinful guilt,<sup>414</sup> it could be that because the PCF clearly embraced the view that Adam's fall resulted in imputed sinful guilt to all, and since the Georgia abstract reflected the PCF, Coosa Baptists may have dropped the phrase from its abstract.<sup>415</sup>

More significant are the differences between the Coosa and Georgia abstracts in the article on election. Coosa intentionally dropped the language on election that specifically tied Georgia's abstract to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election. As argued throughout this research, the confessional language indicating dependence upon the PCF and found in numerous associational faith statements across the south remains unmistakable— "the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory." Rather than accepting the phrase from Georgia's abstract that linked it directly to the PCF, Coosa Baptists substituted language lifted directly from Scripture: "and that he chose them in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love."<sup>416</sup>

In addition, the Georgia abstract's confessional language on particular redemption is explicitly displayed in its interpretation of the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, the result of which only the elect's "salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed." While Coosa Baptists affirmed an eternal covenant of redemption<sup>417</sup> between the Father and Son, they

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<sup>414</sup> Arguably, it could be maintained that the phrase, "imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity," implies an inherited *sinful nature* rather than imputed *sinful guilt*, a distinction many *mild* and *non-Calvinists* maintain.

<sup>415</sup> Other differences in Article 3 between Coosa and Georgia associations seem less significant. Coosa dropped the language negating "free will" as well as inserted along with sinful man's inability to recover himself, his "unwillingness" to do so. On the other hand, that Coosa was using Georgia's abstract in a copy-paste manner seems to suggest any difference at all (i.e. apart from punctuation, etc.) that could temper the theological meaning of the article would be important to consider.

<sup>416</sup> See Ephesians 1:4 (KJV).

<sup>417</sup> One might add that while it seemed to be *strict* Calvinists who mostly spoke of an eternal covenant of redemption between the Father and Son, those who were decidedly not *strict* Calvinists at times spoke of the covenant of redemption. For example, recall that the Chattahoochee United Baptist Association was branded by many Georgia Baptists, including the Georgia Association, as embracing Arminianism. However, Article 5 in its confession reads,

intentionally removed the language indicative of Philadelphia that insisted the covenantal content and outcome was particular redemption.<sup>418</sup>

Finally, a query brought before the Coosa association sheds light on how Coosa Baptists apparently understood Articles 4 and 6 in its confession, and whether they viewed their abstract exclusively in light of their theological allegiance to the PCF. It seems in 1852 the Lookout Baptist Church submitted the following query to the Coosa association for response. It read:

Doth the 4th and 6th Articles of the Coosa Baptist Association hold forth Limited Atonement, so that a part of the human family is, and forever has been, excluded from grace and glory, according to the covenant agreement, and that the Spirit doth not strive with them to bring them to repentance so that a part of the human family is entirely left out of the covenant? (Sartain, 1936, p. 10)

In response, the Coosa association answered:

Neither the Bible nor the 4th and 6th Articles refer to, or hold forth Limited Atonement, so that a part of the human family is, and forever has been excluded from grace and glory according to the covenant agreement, so that they cannot be saved, if they would: but all who will, may participate in the benefits of the atonement according to the gospel. (Ibid, p. 43).

Coosa Baptists held to confessional Calvinism. But it seems clear they did not hold to the confessionally *strict* Calvinism of the PCF.<sup>419</sup>

In 1840, the Ellijay Baptist Association was organized in north central Georgia (Allen, 1958, p. 554). The abstract of principles upon which the association was organized contains 12 brief articles similar in content to many other Baptist associations in the south. Articles 3-7 appear almost identical to Chattahoochee's articles above:

3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

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"5. We believe in a Covenant between the Father and Son, in which all Grace is treasured up; and in the doctrine of Election, according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth..." A copy of Chattahoochee United's full confession is found in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>418</sup> It seems insurmountable to suggest these changes were either unintentional or insignificant glosses rather than planned confessional expressions indicating differences of theological belief.

<sup>419</sup> Unlike Alabama's Tuscaloosa association above, the leaders of which clearly used the PCF to determine the meaning of its abstract articles especially on election, and consequently imposed that interpretation upon others in the association, Georgia's Coosa association showed no apparent allegiance to the PCF as the interpretative template of its articles on election and redemption.

4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness.
5. We believe in the Doctrine of Election, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.<sup>420</sup>
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the merits, of Jesus Christ.
7. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and not finally fall away (Ellijay Association, 1840).

As with the Chattahoochee association and with many other Baptist associations across the south one might observe, the articles of Ellijay Baptists reveal no confessional dependence upon or theological loyalty to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism.

Georgia's Hightower association was organized in Forsyth county on November 20, 1835 (Allen, 1958, p. 550). During its first meeting, Hightower Baptists adopted a *strictly* Calvinistic abstract of faith. Article 4 echoes the Georgia Association: "We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race to grace and glory, and that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the father and the son before the world began in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed" (Baptist Hightower Association, 1835, p. 6). By 1847, Hightower Baptists had significantly altered the article on election: "We believe in the election of all God's people and that they are called and saved, according to his purpose and grace given them in Christ Jesus before the World began, as it is stated in 2d Thessalonians, 2d chapter, and thirteenth verse..." (Hightower Association, 1847, p. 7). The confessional language distinctly indicating Philadelphia's articles expressing Unconditional Election are scrubbed from Hightower's abstract.

The Mountain Baptist Association was organized in 1832 at Mud Creek church in Habersham County (Allen, 1958, p. 555). Similar articles of faith are found at Mountain association as in many other Georgia associations at the time the Southern Baptist Convention was formed. It contains 12 brief articles no article of which indicates a *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of soteriological

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<sup>420</sup> As with the Chattahoochee association's article on election, so Ellijay Baptists followed North Carolina's Broad River association, an association that consciously rejected Philadelphia's understanding of Unconditional Election and composed an alternative article on election (Paschal, 1930, pp. 153-157; 213-216). Broad River's alternative article on election read, "We believe in the doctrine of Election through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (Ibid, p. 215). See the full discussion in chapter two.

belief. Articles 3-7 state Mountain Baptists believed in the “doctrine of original sin”; “man’s impotence to recover himself from the state he is in by nature”; “doctrine of election through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth”<sup>421</sup>; and that “Saints shall persevere in grace and not finally fall away” (Mountain Association, 1838, p. 6). Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism remains absent.

### 6.3.2.3 Louisiana

At the time the invitation was published to meet in Augusta, Georgia to form a southern convention, approximately 4,000 Baptists in five associations with less than 100 churches made up the entire Baptist population of Louisiana. Thus, Louisiana held one of the smallest populations of Baptists among the southern states. Only about five associations existed at the time—Concord, Eastern Louisiana, Louisiana, Ouachita, and Mississippi River, the latter association of which had member churches on both the Mississippi and Louisiana sides of the Mississippi River.<sup>422</sup>

#### 6.3.2.3.1 Louisiana Associations Represented in Augusta

Organized two years prior to the 1845 Augusta convention (Allen, 1958, p. 879), the Mississippi River association was the only association with member churches in Louisiana to have representatives in Augusta. According to the official registry, two delegates attended the Augusta convention representing the First Baptist Church of New Orleans, a member church of the Mississippi River association—I. T. Hinton and R. Holman (SBC, 1845, p. 11).

Louisiana Baptist historian, W.E. Paxton, records that while Hinton became pastor of the New Orleans church in January 1845, four months prior to the Augusta meeting, his ministry was cut short due to an untimely death because of illness in August 1847 (Paxton, 1888, p. 124). Paxton also wrote highly of Holman, who also was a delegate representing Louisiana at the Augusta assembly: “During the summer he [Hinton] was engaged in raising funds to build a spacious and

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<sup>421</sup> Mountain’s article on election follows North Carolina’s Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the Unconditional Election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two.

<sup>422</sup> The Pearl River association organized in 1820 also had churches on both sides of the Mississippi River and will be considered under the state of Mississippi below.

well-finished meeting-house, on a well-selected piece of ground which had been chosen for the purpose. Rev. B. Holman had also devoted the summer months to the same purpose, with considerable success, as a general interest was felt throughout the denomination in favor of the enterprise” (Ibid, p. 125). Sent to the Catholic parish by the American Baptist Home Mission Society (Amant, 1948, p. 19), Holman did much to stabilize the troubled New Orleans church that had experienced difficulties for some time. Indeed, Holman was a founding member of New Orleans First Baptist Church (Greene, 1973, p. 83).

Organized in 1843, Mississippi River Baptists first embraced the original 16 articles of the *New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* edited by J. Newton Brown (Paxton, 1888, pp. 65-70). Apparently embracing the NHC was at the time a bold move since, as Paxton showed, New Hampshire’s articles “differ[ed] in some particulars from the neighboring associations, which were based upon the Philadelphia Confession of Faith” (Ibid, p. 70). Paxton’s reasoning remains insightful: “At the time, it was customary to lay great stress upon the doctrines of election and predestination, and at first the surrounding associations hesitated to hold correspondence with this body” (Ibid, pp. 70-71).<sup>423</sup> Greene similarly concludes that the Mississippi River association encountered “suspicion and opposition” from neighboring associations when they first introduced the NHC into the area. (Greene, 1973, p. 136). The Mississippi Association did not accept the Mississippi River association as “orthodox” but as “a body [not] of the same faith and order with us” (Schilling, 1908, p. 63). Greene also suggests that while prior to 1843, the Baptists of the area were more prone to have “loosely drawn” their articles of faith from the PCF, “yet each Baptist body phrased its articles to express its insights at that integral...” After the Mississippi River introduced the NHC into the associational record, Greene indicates the resistance ultimately vanished, and “the New Hampshire Confession was received subsequently with increasingly greater favor and through

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<sup>423</sup> Presumably, the *strict* Calvinists of the area would have possessed little theological appreciation for a confession of faith about which some historians and theologians characterize as displaying as much Arminianism as Calvinism. Also, that Mississippi River Baptists introduced the 1835 edition of the NHC into southern Louisiana as early as 1843 once again disputes the historical trajectory proposed by many who insist it was not until the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the NHC became disseminated in the south primarily through the church manuals by Newton (1853) and Pendleton (1867).

the intervening years has been extremely influential” (Ibid). Hence, the Mississippi River association as represented in 1845 did not embrace or reflect the PCF.

While it remains accurate to state the Mississippi River association neither embraced nor reflected the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF in 1845, it nonetheless is noteworthy that the association *changed* its articles of faith in October 1846, a year and a half *after* the southern convention was organized (Paxton, 1888, pp. 75-79). The apparent reason was not only the resistance from neighboring associations, but also dissatisfaction among some of the member churches (Ibid, p. 75). One of the Augusta delegates and pastor of the New Orleans church, Isaac Hinton, chaired the committee to draw up a new confession. Its articles overall are *moderately* Calvinistic. One article, however, seems to push the abstract into a *strictly* Calvinistic statement. Article 5 states,

We believe there is one mediator between God and man—Christ Jesus, who by the satisfaction made to the law and justice in becoming an offering for sin, hath by his most precious blood redeemed the elect from under the curse of the law, that they might be holy and without blame before him in love (Ibid, p. 76).

The plan of redemption is displayed not as a plan of salvation for all sinners; rather it is a plan to save the elect. Jesus’ blood was spilled to redeem the elect from the curse, not to redeem mankind from sin. As late as 1875, the Mississippi River association still embraced the *strictly* Calvinistic article in its confession (Mississippi River Association, 1875, pp. 16-17). However, as Greene indicated, many other Louisiana associations stuck with and continued to use the NHC, and for them to do so in light of the obstacles faced by Mississippi River Baptists indicates a stronger confessional conviction toward *moderate* and *mild* Calvinism, if Calvinism at all.

#### 6.3.2.3.2 Louisiana Associations Unrepresented in Augusta

Organized in 1818, the Louisiana Baptist Association is the oldest association in the state (Allen, 1958, p. 797). It adopted the articles of faith published by the Mississippi association (Greene, 1973, p. 104), articles that are most clearly *strictly* Calvinistic.<sup>424</sup> The fourth article states, “We believe... in the eternal, unconditional election of a definite number of the human family to grace and glory” (Mississippi Association, 1822, p. 8), an article indisputably alluding to the PCF.

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<sup>424</sup> See more on Mississippi association’s abstract in the section on Mississippi below.

As early as 1823, the abstract was amended, however. Paxton writes as a part of the 1823 annual session, ‘It was ordered by the association that the words: "In the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity [sic]," in Article 3 of the Confession of Faith be erased” but offers no explanation as to why (Paxton, 1888, p. 176). The following comparison with and without the clause clarifies the change.

Louisiana Association’s Article 3 Comparison	
Article 3 before 1823	Article 3 after 1823
3. We believe in the fall of Adam; the imputation of his sins to all his posterity; in the total depravity of human nature; and in man's inability to restore himself to the favor of God.	3. We believe in the fall of Adam; in the total depravity of human nature; and in man's inability to restore himself to the favor of God.

Why Louisiana Baptists would drop the phrase it did remains somewhat inexplicable though the phrase is held by some *strict* Calvinists to indicate the transference of *imputed sinful guilt* to all Adam’s posterity rather than *inherited sinful nature*. Apparently, no more changes took place for several years. As with other Baptist associations, the Baptists of Louisiana association were negatively affected by the anti-missions controversy throughout the 1830s.<sup>425</sup> And by the mid-1840s, the old abstract of faith had apparently come under severe fire.

In the 1845 meeting, Paxton records that “discontent” arose in the Louisiana association regarding its confession, and therefore, “the association recommended the churches to examine the Articles of Faith of the Mississippi River Association, and to send up delegates next year, instructed to vote upon the question of adopting them as a substitute for those heretofore adopted” (Ibid, p. 199). It must have been a surprise to them to learn that Mississippi River Baptists had experienced severe resistance to its articles from both inside and outside the association (see above). Hence, rather than adopt New Hampshire’s confession, the Louisiana association attempted to write its own unique confession, a confession presented in 1846 the

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<sup>425</sup> Greene mentions several factors that severely weakened the Louisiana association including the anti-missions controversy (Greene, 1973, p. 110). It suffered decline once again due to Campbellism (Ibid, p. 111).

content of which was exclusively composed of verses from the Bible (Ibid, 200-205).<sup>426</sup> Paxton attributes the decision of the Louisiana association to entertain the notion of composing a “Bible only” confession to the Campbellite influence (Ibid, p. 200).

Whatever the motive for composing an abstract of faith completely of Bible verses, Louisiana association’s newly presented articles of faith were rejected at the next year’s session in 1847 (Ibid, p. 208). Consequently, that put the old abstract back on the table, a *strictly* Calvinistic confession. However, before accepting the abstract, the Baptists of Louisiana association further amended two articles in their confession as the table below indicates, amendments that discarded elements reflecting the Philadelphia confessional tradition (Ibid, p. 208).<sup>427</sup>

Comparison of Louisiana Association’s Articles 3 and 4 in its Amended Confession of Faith (1849)	
Old Article	Amended Article
3. We believe in the fall of Adam; in the total depravity of human nature; and in man's inability to restore himself to the favor of God.	3 <sup>rd</sup> We believe in the fall of Adam and the inheritance of his sin by all his posterity; in the total depravity of human nature and man's inability to restore himself to the favor of God.
4. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people. In the eternal unconditional election of a definite number of the human family to grace and glory.	4 <sup>th</sup> We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people that he chose them in Christ, before the world began (Louisiana Association, 1849, p. 6).

Thus by 1849, Louisiana Baptists exchanged the explicit reference to Unconditional Election for a generic theological statement that God chose His people before the world began, an article *moderate* and perhaps even *mild* Calvinists could conceivably accept. Moreover, concerning article 3 on human depravity, Paxton’s commentary remains insightful: “In the third article, I suppose they use the term sin, not to mean the *personal guilt* of Adam, but only his *sinful nature*” (Ibid, *Italics* added). If Paxton is correct, Louisiana Baptists took a theological step away from the confessionally *strict* Calvinism of the PCF.<sup>428</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> A full copy of the entire confession of Bible verses composed by the Louisiana association is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>427</sup> According to Paxton, the association voted to accept the abstract as amended at its 1849 annual session (Ibid, p. 211).

<sup>428</sup> While the amendments certainly seem to temper the Louisiana association’s connection to the Philadelphia confession, due to Louisiana’s Article 6, including those who are “effectually called,” and Article 7 wherein by Christ’s

Concord association is the second oldest Baptist association in Louisiana. Formed in 1832 near Minden, it covered all northern Louisiana until 1844 when Ouachita association emerged (Allen, 1958, p. 796). T. Gayer declares the confession of faith upon which Concord Baptists established were “articles taken from the Philadelphia Confession” (Ibid).<sup>429</sup> Greene, however, questions Gayer’s claim.

Adopted at the initial meeting of the body, the articles of faith of the Concord association differed from the articles adopted by the Louisiana Association. In tone, the articles of the Concord Association were less sharply Calvinistic. This tempering probably stemmed from a reaction against the antimission and Campbellism movements and from the impact of moral disorder on the frontier (Greene, 1973, p. 118).

Were the Concord Baptists’ articles “taken from the Philadelphia Confession” as Gayer maintained? Or, were the articles “less sharply Calvinistic” as described by Greene?

Below is a comparison of relevant articles taken from both the Concord association’s confession and the Louisiana association’s confession, a *strictly* Calvinistic confession reflecting the PCF the Louisiana association adopted from the Mississippi Baptist Association’s original abstract.<sup>430</sup>

<b>Comparison of Louisiana Association’s Original Abstract and Concord Association’s Abstract</b>		
<b>Article<sup>431</sup></b>	<b>Louisiana Association</b>	<b>Concord Association</b>
<i>Sinful Depravity</i>	3. We believe in the fall of Adam; in the imputation of his sin to all his posterity. In the total depravity of human nature—and in man’s inability to restore himself to the favor of God.	3. We believe in the fall of Adam, in the total depravity of human nature, and in man’s inability to restore himself to the favor of God.
<i>Election</i>	4. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people. In the eternal unconditional election of a definite	4. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, in the doctrine of election, and the perseverance of the saints in grace.

death, He “redeemed the elect” were articles untouched in the 1849 amendments, the Louisiana association still falls within the Philadelphia confessional tradition at mid-century.

<sup>429</sup> Gayer most certainly did not intend his claim to mean articles were lifted directly from the PCF. Rather, as both argued and assumed in this research, he intended to suggest the articles “taken for the Philadelphia Confession” were in the form of an abstract *reflecting* the PCF.

<sup>430</sup> Presumably, both Gayer and Greene speak of the original abstract of faith the Louisiana association adopted from the Mississippi Baptist Association’s record. Hence, the comparison will be with the Mississippi Baptist Association abstract and the Concord Baptists’ abstract.

<sup>431</sup> Articles for Louisiana association are taken from Mississippi Baptist Association, 1822, p. 8, and Concord Association’s articles are taken from Paxton, 1888, pp. 244-245.

	number of the human family to grace and glory.	
<i>Applied Redemption</i>	6. We believe that all those who were chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world; are in time effectually called, regenerated, converted, and sanctified; and are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.	No article addressing effectual calling, regeneration, or conversion (See Article 4 above for perseverance).
<i>Christ as Mediator</i>	7. We believe there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who by the satisfaction which he made to law and justice, "in becoming an offering for sin." hath, by his most precious blood, redeemed the elect, from under the curse of the law: that they might be holy and without blame, before him in love.	6. We believe that there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, and in becoming an offering for sin hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.

Examining the articles of faith for Concord Baptists shows Greene’s assessment more accurate than Gayer’s. The Concord association unlikely received its confessional inspiration from the PCF. Concord’s article on human depravity reflects no dependence on Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinistic understanding of Total Depravity, nor does its article on election reducing Philadelphia’s “unconditional election of a definite number of the human family” to a mere belief in God’s love for his people and the doctrine of election. What is more, while Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism is expressed by Christ’s mediatorial office in redeeming only the elect, Concord Baptists explicitly maintain Christ’s death was a “ransom for all,” a confessional phrase surely more indicative of general redemption than particular redemption. In short, it can hardly be maintained by observing the confessional language of the Concord association that they embraced the Philadelphia confession as their own.

The Ouachita Baptist Association was organized in 1844 from churches dismissed for that purpose from the Concord association (Allen, 1958, p. 798.). And since Concord Baptists did not embrace the PCF, predictably the Ouachita association would not embrace it either, but might be more prone to accept the confession of its mother association. However, it did not embrace the Concord’s abstract of faith. Rather, the Ouachita association embraced the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration* as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of*

*Religious Knowledge* (Paxton, 1888, p. 294).<sup>432</sup> Thus, the Ouachita Baptists were not confessionally *strict* Calvinists and were not aligned within the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

According to D. White, the Eastern Louisiana Baptist Association was organized in 1842 and was originally a part of the Mississippi River association (Allen, 1958, p. 797). While White is correct the Eastern association was organized in 1842, he is incorrect that Eastern was a part of the Mississippi River association since Mississippi River Baptists did not organize until 1843 (see above).<sup>433</sup> The Eastern Louisiana association originally adopted articles of faith virtually identical to the Mississippi association (Paxton, 1888, pp. 49-50).<sup>434</sup> Thus, Eastern's articles were originally *strictly* Calvinistic.

#### 6.3.2.4 North Carolina

North Carolina's approximately 31 associations with 446 member churches in existence in 1845 were represented by two church delegates within the same association, the Union Baptist Association (SBC, 1845, p. 8). North Carolina's Baptist population at the time was estimated to be over 32,000.

##### 6.3.2.4.1 North Carolina Associations Represented in Augusta

The two delegates representing North Carolina at the 1845 Augusta meeting were R. McNabb<sup>435</sup> and A. J. Battle, both men of whom were actively involved in the formation of the Union Baptist Association organized just a year earlier in 1844 (Allen, 1958, p. 1018). At the opening session of the association, McNabb was elected clerk (Union Association [NC], 1844, p. 3), while both Battle and McNabb were appointed to a committee to "draw up rules and regulations for the future

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<sup>432</sup> See also Ouachita Association, 1877, pp. 11-13.

<sup>433</sup> Presumably, White meant to suggest Eastern was originally a part of the Mississippi Baptist Association which, according to Paxton, is true (Paxton, 1888, p. 45).

<sup>434</sup> According to Paxton, the articles were from Mississippi's Union Association (Ibid, p. 50). Union association undoubtedly used Mississippi association's abstract.

<sup>435</sup> The registry at the southern convention spelled McNabb's name "McNab" (SBC, 1845, p. 8), while the minutes of Union association consistently spelled his name "McNabb."

government of this Association” (Ibid, p. 4). Battle served as secretary of the Union Bible Society, a Union associational organization of which McNabb was also a member (Ibid, p. 24).

Scanning the minutes of Union association beginning in 1844 reveals no officially adopted articles of faith. In 1844, both a constitution and rules of decorum were established (Ibid, pp. 22-23). But no confession appears. In fact, scanning minutes of the Union association through 1900 revealed no official adoption of faith articles. Article 4 in Union’s constitution may explain the lack of an official faith statement. “We have one law-giver—Christ Jesus, and one statute book— the New Testament—the rule of our faith and practice” (Ibid, p. 22).

While no articles of faith apparently appear in Union association, it seems Union Baptists had no confessional reluctance to accept local churches that embraced the New Hampshire confession. The Union association accepted into its membership the Baptist church at Newborn that had adopted the original 16 articles of New Hampshire Baptists.

It being understood, that the Baptist Church at Newbern, has adopted as her summary of Doctrines, or articles of Faith, the articles adopted by the Baptist State Convention of New Hampshire, which articles are published in the Enc. of Religious knowledge, under the head of the article “Baptists,” the aforesaid articles shall be transcribed and recorded upon the pages of the Church Book of the said Baptist Church at Newbern, N. C.” (Union Baptist Association, 1849, p. 19).

Hence, while Union association may not have officially adopted articles of faith, it apparently held no associational allegiance to the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

#### 6.3.2.4.2 North Carolina Associations Unrepresented in Augusta

As indicated above, only one of approximately 31 associations in North Carolina had representatives at Augusta in 1845. Following are selected Baptist associations existing in North Carolina in 1845 but unrepresented at Augusta.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> Several North Carolina associations that held no confessional allegiance to the PCF included the Chowan, Pamlico, Sandy Creek, French Broad, Green River, and Big Ivy associations. See chapter three for more information on those associations. However, occasional overlap may be necessary.

The Tuckaseige Baptist Association was established in North Carolina November 6, 1829. It included churches from both Carolina and Georgia (Allen, 1958, p. 1013).<sup>437</sup> Tuckaseige Baptists placed its confession of faith directly within the constitution of the organization, a practice occasionally followed as one sifts through and observes 19th associational documents. The constitution was amended in 1830 and includes a preamble followed by 9 very brief articles of faith, three of which read: “Art. 3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin; Art, 4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by nature, and that justification, in the sight of God, is only obtained by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ; Art. 5. We believe, the saints shall persevere in grace, and that none of them, shall ever fall away and be lost” (Tuckaseige Association, 1830, p. 3).

What seems conspicuously absent in Tuckaseige association's articles of faith is no mention either explicit or implicit concerning the doctrine of election.<sup>438</sup> Most Baptist associations across the south contained articles that, at minimum, indicated “We believe in the doctrine of election.” And, while some may interpret the absence of the article on election as a misprint or unintended omission, such an explanation remains inadequate since, as will be shown below, other Baptist associations also specifically omitted either a mention or an article on election.<sup>439</sup> Hence, in 1845, the Tuckaseige Baptists of North Carolina can hardly be viewed as confessionally loyal to either the PCF or even Calvinism at all for that matter.

North Carolina's Tar River association was organized in 1830 by several churches that had withdrawn from the Kehukee association over anti-missionism (Allen, 1958, p. 1013). Three years later in 1833, Tar River Baptists adopted a confession of faith the 14 articles of which are made up almost entirely of biblical passages (Tar River Association, 1885, pp. 39-40). Article 4 deals

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<sup>437</sup> Some info is duplicated here on Tuckaseige association.

<sup>438</sup> A copy of the full confession is found in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>439</sup> Overall, at least 17 associations in North Carolina adopted articles of faith without composing an article addressing the doctrine of election. See *Appendix G* at the end of this research. Nor should the absence of an article on election necessarily indicate denial of the biblical doctrine of election. It could indicate, however, an attempt to dispel controversy over conflicting doctrinal issues in the association, leaving the interpretation of what constitutes biblical election to individual churches, similarly to what specifically constituted the timing of the second coming of Christ and the millennium. On the other hand, it does seem to follow from the absence of a key doctrine, like the doctrine of eternal particular election is to the confessional expression of *strict* Calvinism, that the association may, at minimum, have been confessionally neutral toward expressing a particular understanding of the doctrine of election.

with the fall and sinful human nature: “4. That as sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned, even so all are by nature dead in trespasses and sins. Rom. 5:12, Eph. 2:1.” Article 6 confesses the coming of Messiah and the atonement: “6. That the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost; and that we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have now received the atonement. —Luke 19:10. Rom. 5:11” (Ibid, p. 40). Articles 9 and 10 respectively deal with the role of the Holy Spirit in conversion and salvation by faith alone: “9. That the Holy Spirit reproveth the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; also that He hath quickened us together with Christ. —John 16:8, Eph. 2:5; 10. That by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast. —Eph. 2:8, 9” (Ibid). Tar River Baptists confessed their allegiance to election by quoting in full Ephesians 1:3-4 and 2 Thess. 2:15 as Article 11. Article 13 affirms eternal security by quoting the Apostle Peter: “That we are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. —I Peter 1:5” (Ibid). Rather than composing a theological confession, Tar River Baptists decided to confess the Bible, a strategy that appears to project neutrality toward any soteriological system. Any allusion to the PCF is missing from Tar River Baptists’ articles of faith.

North Carolina’s Three Forks association was organized November 5, 1841, and a “Calvinistic abstract of principles was adopted the next day” (Allen, 1958, p. 1013). However, as one examines the articles of faith Three Forks Baptists adopted, while the articles may be Calvinistic, they display little, if any, confessional dependence or theological loyalty to Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism. Composed of 9 brief articles, three of Three Forks’ articles are included below:

3. We believe in the Doctrine of Election by Grace.

4th. We believe in the Doctrine of Original Sin and in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by his own free will ability.

6th. We believe that sinners are called consecrated, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and that all who are thus regenerated or born again by the Spirit of God shall never fall finally away (Three Forks Association, 1841, pp. 2-3).

Stating belief in the doctrine of election by grace is hardly sufficient to establish confessional dependency or theological loyalty to the PCF. Therefore, Three Forks Baptists represent another

association in 1845 that though not sending delegates to Augusta would have not embraced the PCF as its own.

Raleigh Baptist Association was established in 1805 and constitutes one of North Carolina's oldest existing associations (Allen, 1958, p. 1011). Whatever confession Raleigh Baptists adopted or not in the earlier part of their history, by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, they had decided upon the New Hampshire confession (Raleigh Association, 1851, pp. 12-14). The source of the confession apparently was the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* edited by J. Newton Brown. Thus, Raleigh Baptists were neither confessionally dependent upon nor theologically loyal to the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia's confession.

#### 6.3.2.5 South Carolina

Nine of South Carolina's approximately 13 associations had delegates at Augusta in 1845. Additionally, at least 15 delegates represented both the state convention and other Baptist organizations. In total, over 41,000 Baptists in some 394 churches were represented by 101 delegates in Augusta. Of the nine South Carolina associations represented, three associations had the bulk of the delegates present—Savannah River (34 delegates), Charleston (25 delegates), and Welch Neck (11 delegates).

##### 6.3.2.5.1 South Carolina Associations Represented in Augusta

Savannah River association was organized in the southernmost part of the state in 1802 (Allen, 1958, p. 1235). No confession appears to be adopted in Savannah's earliest minutes.<sup>440</sup> However, in 1828, the association made it clear as to which confessional tradition it adhered. Article 4 in its constitution read:

Art. 4. Believing it to be proper, on account of a diversity of sentiments among men as to the import of scripture doctrines contained in the Old and New Testaments, to declare our belief and understanding thereof; we, therefore, receive and adopt, as expressive of our sentiments and conduct, the Confession of Faith which was adopted and published by the ministers and messengers of upwards of one hundred Baptist Churches in England and Wales in the year 1688: also the Summary of Church Discipline adopted by the Charleston Baptist Association, South Carolina" (Savannah River Association, 1828, p. 13).

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<sup>440</sup> The minutes are handwritten and at times, barely legible (Savannah River Association, 1802).

Hence, the Savannah River association was clearly confessionally dependent upon and theologically loyal to the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia's confession in its earlier history. Apparently, also there was some conflict concerning one of the articles in the Philadelphia confession concerning elect infants (Confession of Faith, 1818, Chapter 10, para. 3).<sup>441</sup> Article 4 goes on to speak of the way Savannah River Baptists understood the article on elect infants. "Agreed, that in the tenth chapter of our excellent Confession of Faith, the elect infants, mentioned as dying in infancy, are not opposed to non-elect infants, who we are humbly of opinion, never die in infancy, but to those elect infants, who, in possession of rational powers, arrive at maturity" (Ibid). In short, Savannah River Baptists seems to have believed that no non-elect person ever died in infancy but always reached maturity. Or conversely, all infants dying in infancy are elect infants.<sup>442</sup>

South Carolina's Welsh Neck<sup>443</sup> association was organized in 1832 with 19 churches from the Charleston association (Allen, 1958, p. 1235). Its faith statement remains one of the more unique statements of any abstract in the southern states. While composed of only 12 articles, each article contains a lengthy exposition (Welsh Neck Association, 1832, pp. 15-37). It reads like a theological tract or perhaps a doctrinal sermon. Little doubt exists that, like its mother association, a *strict* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrines of grace prevails. Thus, adding Welsh Neck delegates to both Savannah River and Charleston, over half South Carolina's 101 delegates came from associations within the Philadelphia confessional tradition. It is not the case that some of the other South Carolina associations represented in Augusta held to the PCF, however.

The Edgefield association was formed in 1807 in western South Carolina along the Savannah River (Allen, 1958, p. 1234). Published in Edgefield's 1824 minutes is its constitution, the first article of which was entitled "Article I. Unity of Faith," a section containing 8 numbered paragraphs each

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<sup>441</sup> See *Appendix A* at the end of this research for the relevant article in the PCF.

<sup>442</sup> Organized in 1751, and therefore the oldest association in the southern states and second oldest in America (Allen, 1958, p. 1223), little reason exists in documenting Charleston association's long, uncompromising history with the PCF. The Charleston association had at least 25 delegates at Augusta in 1845.

<sup>443</sup> Sometimes spelled "Welch Neck."

one expressing an individual article of faith (Edgefield Association, 1824, pp. 9-10). The faith articles appear to be uniquely the literary product of Edgefield Baptists as some of them are unusually worded when compared with other associational confessions in the southern states. For example, Article 2 on Scripture reads, “We take the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word and revealed will of God; and our sufficient and only rule of faith and practice. *Yet we are free to admit the exercise of human reason, on Scriptural principles, in cases for which the Scripture has not expressly provided*” (Ibid, p. 9; *Italics added*). No other abstract examined in this research addresses the role of human reason in the interpretation of Scripture. Hence, Edgefield Baptists are literarily unique in this confessional article.

Also, article 4 dealing with election has rare confessional verbiage.

We believe that all Saints are chosen in Christ Jesus to be holy and obedient according to God’s sovereign purpose and free grace before the world began: and that they all receive the effectual call of the Holy Spirit, are justified, and kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, and final glory with Christ in Heaven (Ibid).

Unlike other *strictly* Calvinistic confessions that connect election with *being in Christ*, Edgefield’s 1824 article on election of the saints in Christ is directly connected to *service and obedience*. Whether this distinction was intended or not, it seems to be present.<sup>444</sup> Apart from Article 4, no other article deals with election or predestination.

Conspicuously missing from Edgefield’s 1824 confession is a theological staple found in Baptist abstracts across the south, an article concerning human sin and moral depravity. At minimum, “We believe in the doctrine of original sin” was frequently standard confessional content, but Edgefield Baptists failed to include an article on the fall and human sin.<sup>445</sup> Even so, by 1843, the Edgefield association had changed its confession significantly. The confession is almost entirely rewritten. After a short preamble,<sup>446</sup> nine brief articles appear, four of which are listed below.<sup>447</sup>

3. We believe the doctrine of original sin.

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<sup>444</sup> Focusing on election to *service* rather than election to *salvation* seems to be an argument most often used by those with non-Calvinist theological presuppositions (Wilkin, 2012, p. 10).

<sup>445</sup> However, note below that in 1843, an article on sinful depravity was included. For purposes of comparison, copies of both the 1824 and 1843 Edgefield confessions are included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>446</sup> Apart from punctuation, the preamble is the same in both the 1824 and 1843 confessions.

<sup>447</sup> A complete copy of Edgefield’s 1843 articles is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

4. We believe in man's inability to recover himself from the fallen state in which he is by nature, by his own strength.
5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ through the everlasting love of God.
6. We believe that saints will persevere in grace to the end of their lives (Edgefield Association, 1843, no page number).

Whereas the Edgefield association did not address human depravity in 1824, it had added an article on sin by 1843. However, as was the practice of many associations across the south, some articles were theologically imprecise, as article 3 above. Thus, given Edgefield Baptists had no confessional trail by which to argue for an interpretation of moral depravity dependent upon the PCF, no connection to *strict* Calvinism's understanding of Total Depravity seems reasonable.

Even more noteworthy concerning Edgefield's confessional changes, whereas the 1824 confession had no article on human sin, and the confession published in 1843 had added one, the 1824 confession expressed an article on election, but by 1843, Edgefield's confession had dropped the article on election.

Since the doctrine of election, specifically Unconditional Election, remains one of the undeniable characteristics reflecting the Philadelphia confessional tradition, one may reasonably question how Calvinistic a confession is that contains no article of faith on election.<sup>448</sup> Whatever the case, Edgefield association appears to have had no confessional dependence upon nor theological loyalty to the PCF, and therefore Augusta delegates from Edgefield association would hardly have represented an association that had adopted Philadelphia's confession as its own.<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> Some might suggest that perhaps there was a misprint in the publication of Edgefield Association's minutes, and consequently the article on election was unintentionally left out of the confession in 1843, not necessarily an incredible suggestion. However, comparing the 1843 confession printed in that year's minutes with the confession published in the 1852 minutes reveals that apparently no such misprint took place. Edgefield's 1843 and 1852 confessions are identical (Edgefield Association, 1852, pp. 14-15).

<sup>449</sup> As the evidences unfold below, Edgefield Baptists represent what may reasonably be considered a confessional tradition in its own right; namely, adopting confessions of faith without addressing the doctrine of election. Over the course of the present research, at least 35 Baptist associations in 7 southern states were found that adopted articles of faith which possessed no article addressing election or predestination. In many ways, ignoring the doctrine of election in an associational abstract of faith may constitute the most aggressive *anti*-Calvinistic behavior in 19<sup>th</sup> century associational life. At minimum, like Kentucky's 1801 Terms of General Union, Baptist associations in the south that ignored the doctrine of election in their articles of faith de facto took the PCF off the confessional table.

South Carolina delegate to the 1845 Augusta convention, William Bullein Johnson (1782-1862), was pastor at Edgefield church in the Edgefield association, and elected in 1831 to serve as moderator of the Edgefield association, a post he held for the next 15 years (Randall, et al., 2006, p. 139). Johnson was a legendary figure in Baptist work in South Carolina, having assisted in organizing the South Carolina Baptist State Convention in 1821 (Allen, 1958, p. 709), and served as president of the state convention from 1825-1853 (King, 1964, p. 354).

Many think Johnson was also perhaps more responsible for the organization of the southern convention in Augusta than any other single individual. W. Shurden and L. Varnadoe argue “While the SBC charged a committee with the responsibility of writing the document [i.e. constitution of the southern constitution], most historians have assumed that W. B. Johnson had a major hand in the document. His name was attached to the document in the 1845 *SBC Annual*. If not the most influential Baptist of the South in the mid-nineteenth century, W. B. Johnson was surely one of the two or three most significant Southern Baptist statesmen of the era” (Shurden & Varnadoe, 2002, p. 73). Johnson was elected as the first president of the southern convention organized in 1845 (SBC, 1845, p. 11).

Even so, Johnson, who, as Edgefield’s moderator, was presumably a key figure in composing Edgefield’s confession of faith as published in the 1843 minutes, belonged to and represented, as an Augusta delegate, an association in South Carolina that adopted a confession of faith that not only had no confessional dependence upon nor theological allegiance to the PCF, but also clearly lacked an article of faith affirming its belief in the doctrine of election.<sup>450</sup> As the record shows, Edgefield Baptists apparently held no allegiance to the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

South Carolina’s Edisto association was organized in 1834 in the west central part of the state (Allen, 1958, p. 1234). L. Owens indicated that “By 1853, it had adopted articles of faith” but gave no description of the confession (Ibid). However, it appears Edisto association had embraced a

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<sup>450</sup> This fact alone should cause serious pause to anyone who presumptuously claims each delegate who met in Augusta in 1845 represented a church or association that adopted the PCF as its own. Not even the first elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention meets such a criteria.

confession by at least 1850. In its 1851 minutes, the 5<sup>th</sup> item in the order of business reads, “Read the Constitution and Confession of Faith” (Edisto Association, 1851, p. 1). Edisto’s full *Declaration of Faith* is published in the 1851 minutes (Ibid, pp. 10-11).<sup>451</sup> The confession is longer in content than many abstracts of faith during the same era, containing a preamble and 18 articles following. Like Edgefield’s articles, Edisto’s appear to be uniquely the literary product of local Baptists rather than a cut-and-paste approach many associations appeared to follow.<sup>452</sup>

Edisto’s article on the fall and human depravity appears to have no confessional dependence upon the PCF. “3. We believe that God who made all things, created man upright: but they have sought out many inventions— that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified before God (Ibid, p. 10). Moral depravity is captured by quoting Romans 3:23— “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”—while the hopelessness of the sinful human condition is captured by quoting Galatians 2:16, “...by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Article 4 simply quotes what arguably is the most popular verse in the Bible, John 3:16: “4. We believe that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (Ibid).

Indeed, most articles dealing with applied redemption in Edisto’s confession are quotations from the Bible strung together to compose the articles. Edisto’s Article 10 on election, if it could be called an article addressing election, is no different. “10. We believe that all whom the Father has given to his Son, shall come to him, and will be raised up at the last day; and that those who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him, that they may be ever with the Lord” (Ibid). The first part of Article 10 is composed of biblical phrases taken from John 6:37-39. And, while some *strict* Calvinists argue Jesus is speaking of the eternal covenant of redemption in these verses, and therefore Edisto Baptists most probably were referencing the same, this remains speculative at best since Edisto Baptists offered no interpretative template by which to judge what they

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<sup>451</sup> A copy of Edisto’s confession may be found in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>452</sup> It does not follow that Edisto did not employ other Baptist confessions by which to compose its articles, however. But if it did, the wording used by Edisto Baptists to express their articles of faith was, for the most part, their unique wording.

intended this article to refer. Nor is their scholarly unanimity that Jesus' words refer to either election or an eternal covenant of redemption.<sup>453</sup> The second half of Article 10 paraphrases parts of the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17. Thus, given the content of Edisto Baptists' articles of faith, no evidence appears to exist they were confessionally aligned with or theologically akin to the *strict* Calvinism abundantly and clearly displayed in the PCF.

The Reedy River association was organized in 1826 with 11 churches from the Saluda association dismissed for that purpose (Allen, 1958, p. 1235). Four years later, it adopted articles of faith. The confession of Reedy River Baptists appears much like many other associational confessions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century south. Composed of 12 brief articles, four articles are listed below.

3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness.
5. We believe in the doctrine of *election*; through Sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.<sup>454</sup>
7. We believe the Saints shall persevere in grace and not finally fall away (Reedy River Baptist Association, 1830, p. 15).

As observed above concerning numerous associational abstracts from the 19<sup>th</sup> century across the south, the language in these articles, apart from Article 7, do not appear to reflect the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF. The article on the fall and human depravity does not indicate either the imputed sinful guilt or total depravity explicitly stated in Philadelphia's articles. Nor does Reedy River's article on election indicate the "eternal particular election" most all interpreters find in the PCF and expressed abundantly by many other associations that intended to express its theological concurrence with Philadelphia Calvinism. Rather the Spirit's divine work, along with faith in the convicted sinner's heart, are the sovereign dual means through which election is

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<sup>453</sup> For example, see D. Allen's alternative explanation of John 6:37-40 contra *strict* Calvinists who maintain Jesus was referring to either eternal election or the covenant of redemption (Allen, 2016, pp. 696-698). G. Borchert views the passage as John's emphasis upon the tension between divine sovereignty and human free will presented throughout Scripture (Borchert, 1987, pp. 111-115). See also, Lenski, R.C.H., 1961. The interpretation of St. John's gospel, Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House; Whitacre, R.A., 1999. John, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; Bryant, B.H. & Krause, M.S., 1998. John, Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co; Ryle, J.C., 1879. Expository Thoughts on John, New York: Robert Carter & Brothers.

<sup>454</sup> Reedy River's article on election seems to follow North Carolina's Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the Unconditional Election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two.

accomplished. Hence, delegates from Reedy River association do not appear to fit the claim some historians have made that each of the 293 delegates attending the Augusta meeting to form a southern convention represented associations that had adopted the PCF as their own.

Similarly, the Saluda association, mother association to Reedy River Baptists, was organized in 1802, but apparently had no confession until 1832, two years after its daughter association adopted its confession of faith (Allen, 1958, p. 1235). The mother association virtually copied the daughter's confession since it is almost identical (Saluda Association, 1845, p. 6). Hence, in 1845, delegates representing the Saluda association--most probably, A. Rice, S. McCully, and Th. Dawson (SBC, 1845, pp. 8-9)—like its mother association, Reedy River association, did not embrace the PCF as their own.<sup>455</sup>

#### 6.3.2.5.2 South Carolina Associations Unrepresented in Augusta

Since approximately nine of 13 associations in South Carolina was most probably represented at Augusta to form the southern convention, only 4 associations have not been addressed—Bethel, Moriah, Salem, and Twelve Mile River.

One of South Carolina's oldest associations, Bethel Baptists organized in 1788 with 25 churches in the Union and Chester districts (Allen, 1958, p. 1235). No confession was found in the mid-century minutes of Bethel's annual sessions. Some evidence exists, however, concerning Bethel's early history indicating the association could generally be considered as confessionally non-compliant with the PCF. Georgia Baptist leader, Jesse Mercer, was a *strict* Calvinist who also stood with missionary Baptists against the anti-missions movement in Georgia, the "opposers of the

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<sup>455</sup> South Carolina's Tyger River association was represented in Augusta by up to five delegates (Ibid). It was organized in 1833 with 12 churches from the Spartanburg-Greenville area (Allen, 1958, p. 1236). Scanning the minutes from the 1840s to 1860s yielded no publication of its articles. However, in 1886, a copy of the "Abstract of Principles" was published in the annual minutes (Tyger River Association, 1886, pp. 5-6). The confession is almost identical to both Reedy River and Saluda associations. Thus, no confessional dependence or theological allegiance appears to be evident from Tyger River's confessional record. Also, the Broad River association was organized from churches in the Bethel association in 1800 (Allen, 1958, p. 1233) and most probably had two delegates representing South Carolina at the Augusta meeting. However, Broad River Baptists apparently never adopted a confession. Examining annual session minutes from 1818 to 1890 yielded no published articles of faith (Broad River association originally was composed of churches in both North and South Carolina).

new plans.”<sup>456</sup> In his defense of missionary principles, Mercer mentioned South Carolina’s Bethel association and the theology of the atonement for which Bethel Baptists had become known.

It seems to be taken for granted that all those venerable fathers, who founded the Baptist denomination in this state [i.e. Georgia], were as stern calvinistic preachers as are the opposers of the *new plans*. But this is altogether a mistake. Some of them were so—seemed to be set for the defence [sic] of the gospel. Of these, Silas Mercer and Jephtha Vining were the chief. Abraham Marshall was never considered a *predestinarian* preacher. To use his own figure; he used to say, he was *short legged* and could not wade in such deep water.’ He, with several others, was considered sound in the faith, though *low Calvinists*. Peter Smith and some others were thought rather *Arminian*; some quite so.

[...]

And here it may not be amiss to add, that the Baptists in the upper parts of South Carolina, in those days, comprehended mostly, it is believed, in the Bethel Association, were general provisionists. I think the most of their ministers preached what is now called *General Atonement* (Mallery, 1844, pp. 201-202; Italcis original).

If Mercer was correct, then Bethel association would have possessed a long theological heritage without loyalty to or confessional dependence upon the PCF.

Articles of faith for Bethel Baptists surfaced in 1882.<sup>457</sup> Bethel’s confession appears much like confessions from other Baptist associations during the same period. Composed of 10 brief articles, the confession presents a neutrality toward a *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrines of grace.

3. We believe in the fall of Adam, and in the imputation of his sin to his posterity, and in the corruption of human nature, and in the inability of man to recover himself from his lost state.
4. We believe the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to sinners is the only way of their justification before God.
5. We believe in the doctrine of election as taught in the Scriptures, viz: through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth unto obedience.
6. We believe in the preservation of all believers unto eternal glory.

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<sup>456</sup> For more on Mercer, see chapter three.

<sup>457</sup> Some confusion exists concerning the Bethel association. According to L. Owens, Bethel association apparently dissolved in 1878, all its churches joining the newly organized Chester association (Ibid). Owens also lists “New Bethel” association organizing in 1880 (Ibid, p. 1236). However, the 1882 minutes of the Bethel Baptist Association clearly indicate the “Third Anniversary” of the association, making it organized in 1879, not as “New Bethel” association but as “Bethel Baptist Association.”

7. We believe that good works are the proper points of faith, and furnish evidence of our justified state (Bethel Baptist Association, 1882, p. 10).

Arguably, Article 3 may imply Adam's guilt is imputed to his posterity but not necessarily since it only results in the "corruption of human nature," and therefore may only indicate that humankind since Adam inherit a *sinful nature* while not inheriting *sinful guilt*. Nor is Article 5 on election indicative of the Unconditional Election found in the PCF.<sup>458</sup> Rather election is accomplished through both divine and human means. The first part of Article 7 is literarily unique but remains unclear since it is not apparent what the composers meant by good works being the "proper points of faith." If they meant "We believe good works furnish evidence of our justified state," why not state it like that rather than compose a clumsy statement that includes a vague phrase about "proper points of faith"? Even so, overall, it remains difficult how Bethel Baptists' confession could be viewed as particularly influenced by or dependent upon the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

South Carolina's Moriah association was organized in 1815 on the northern border of the state (Allen, 1958, p. 1234). The association's articles of faith "unanimously adopted at the first session" (i.e. 1815) is published in the 1853 annual session minutes and clearly reveals a literary dependence upon and theological loyalty to the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrines of grace found in Philadelphia's confession.

Art. 3d. We believe that God, before the foundation of the world, for a purpose of his own glory, did elect a certain number of men and angels to eternal life, and that this election is particular and unconditional on the creatures part. [...]

Art. 5th. We believe that Adam fell from his state of moral rectitude, and thereby involved himself and his offspring in a state of death—both temporal and spiritual. [...]

Art. 7th. We believe that in God's own appointed time (by means which he has ordained,) the elect shall be called, justified and sanctified, and that it is impossible for them to utterly refuse the call, -- but they shall be made willing by Divine Grace, to receive the offers of mercy. [...]

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<sup>458</sup> Bethel's article on election appears to follow North Carolina's Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the unconditional election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two.

Art. 9th. We believe that those who are called, justified and sanctified by grace, shall persevere in holiness, and shall never finally fall (Moriah Association, 1853, p. 12).

Lacking in many abstracts surveyed above is present in Moriah Baptists' articles of faith; namely, a clear dependence upon and loyalty to Philadelphia's *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrine of grace. Indeed, the so-called **TULIP** is easily discernable in the articles above--Total Depravity (Article 5); Unconditional Election (Article 3); Limited Atonement (Article 3); Irresistible Grace (Article 7); Perseverance of the Saints (Article 9). Perhaps no other abstract of faith surveyed in this research captures the *strict* Calvinism in the PCF as perfectly as Moriah Baptists' confession. Though they evidently sent no delegates to Augusta in 1845, they nonetheless remarkably reflected the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

Now extinct, South Carolina's Salem association was organized with nine churches in the central part of the state the year the southern convention met in Augusta (Allen, 1958, p. 1236). Most of the churches soon joined with the Columbia association to form the Fairfield Baptist Association in 1863 (Ibid). Though the association adopted both a constitution and rules of decorum, no confession of faith apparently was drawn up (Salem Association, 1845, pp. 2-4). However, it seems reasonable to assume Salem association would neither be dependent upon nor theologically loyal to the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF since J. S. Mims was an active leader in Salem association (Ibid, p.1). Mims was a theology professor at Furman University and was well known for his staunch advocacy of New England Theology, a theological position embracing general atonement (Wills, 1999, p. 87).

The Twelve Mile River association was organized in 1829 and by 1851 had adopted articles of faith (Allen, 1958, p. 1235). The association's "Declaration of Faith and Practice" is composed of 17 articles of uneven length dealing with most of the same doctrinal emphasis commonly found in associational abstracts during the same period. Many articles are mostly scriptural phrases woven together to make sensible confessional propositions (Twelve Mile Association, 1852, pp. 10-12). For example, Article 2 reads, "That the word was made flesh, in the person of the man Christ Jesus, who is God over all, and blessed forevermore" (Ibid, p. 10). Again, Article 3, "That "all Scripture," as contained in the Holy Bible, "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for

doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (Ibid). Pertaining to human depravity, Twelve Mile River Baptists confessed that Adam was the “natural head and representative of all mankind” but unlike the PCF that insists all humankind fell with him, and therefore his guilt was imputed to them; rather Twelve Mile River Baptists confessed through his fall, all were “made sinners” as a result (Ibid).

Article 8 on election says, “That God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; fore-known unto him are all his works from the beginning; and that of course all that the Father hath given to Christ shall come unto him; and that he will raise them up at the last day, so that his sheep will hear his voice, shall never perish, become dead to the world and to sin, be made alive to and through Christ, have their life hid with Christ in God, and shall, when He who is their life shall appear, appear with him in glory” (Ibid, p. 11). Like Edisto’s article on election (see above), the Twelve Mile River’s article weaves biblical phrases together without clearly indicating what the phrases mean. What seems clear is that Twelve Mile River’s article indicates little similarity to the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election found in the PCF.<sup>459</sup>

### 6.3.2.6 Virginia

#### 6.3.2.6.1 Virginia Associations Represented in Augusta

By far, the Dover association was the most represented association at the southern convention with at least 22 of Virginia’s total 31 delegates. Organized in 1783, the Dover Baptist Association is one of the oldest associations in the southern states (Allen, 1958, p. 1461). Scanning several years of annual minutes revealed no articles of faith upon which the Dover association was organized. However, some clues assist in forming a reasonable assumption concerning the Dover association’s official confessional allegiance.

First, some who labored in the association seemed to favor the PCF. John Courtney was the second pastor of Richmond’s First Baptist Church and served from 1788 to 1824. Courtney was

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<sup>459</sup> For an associational article on election that seems undeniably dependent upon and theologically loyal to Philadelphia’s confession, see Article 3 in Moriah Baptist Association’s abstract of faith above.

reportedly a *strict* Calvinist and a prominent leader in the Dover association. “He occupied a high position in the Dover Association, and sometimes presided over that body. His preaching was doctrinal and intensely Calvinistic” (Richmond First Baptist Church, 1880, p. 120). In addition, Basil Manly, Jr. served the same church and association from 1850 to 1854 (Ibid, p. 28). He too was well-known as embracing the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia’s confession. “[Southern] seminary’s four faculty members, Boyce, Broadus, Manly, Jr., and Williams, as well as its most ardent promoter, Basil Manly, Sr., shared a common and aggressive commitment to the doctrines of grace” (Nettles, 2006, p. 136).

On the other hand, Dover association had well-known Baptist leaders who were not theologically aligned with Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism. For example, Andrew Broaddus (1770-1848) was one of the most sought-after Baptist preachers of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century; an accomplished hymnist; and a popular author and theologian (Allen, 1958, p. 193). “...Andrew Broaddus, of Caroline, was the foremost orator among Southern Baptists in the first half of our century” (Robertson, 1901, p. 434). Broaddus also served for eight years as moderator of the Dover association (Ibid). In addressing the thorny issues arising over Calvinistic doctrines, Broaddus seemed hesitant to get involved in those religious controversies. To a query on the Calvinistic doctrines of grace made to him by John A. Broadus, the esteemed professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, A. Broaddus replied March 3, 1851,<sup>460</sup> ‘I am sorry that I am so little, qualified to reply to your inquiry as to "how far Calvinism should be carried." I know but little about "isms," and desire to "know nothing among the people but Jesus Christ and him crucified." My plan has been, since I have been in the ministry, to avoid as much as possible, all controversy on religious subjects’ (Ibid, p. 89). Even so, Broaddus’ stated view of the work of Christ placed himself outside the theological parameters of Philadelphia’s pronounced doctrine of Limited Atonement. In his essay entitled, “Atonement,” after offering an exposition on the biblical words referencing the cross-work of Christ, Broaddus concluded:

These remarks on the *nature* of the atonement, lead to the question as to its *extent*. And here I take occasion to say, that a consistent and scriptural view of this subject appears to lead to the conclusion, that the atonement is *general* in its *nature* and *extent*. As

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<sup>460</sup> Robertson’s date on this entry seems incorrect. By all historical accounts, A. Broaddus died in 1848. Hence, apparently the date of 1851 is perhaps a printing error.

opening a way for the salvation of sinners, considered *as sinners*, it is general in its *nature*; and as being of sufficient value for the salvation of the world, it is general in its *extent* (Jeter, 1852, p. 109; Italics original).

Presumably, others labored in the Dover association who held views similar to or identical with Broaddus; that is, some views clearly outside the theological contours of the PCF.<sup>461</sup> Hence, with theological diversity concerning the doctrines of grace living side-by-side in the association, it seems hardly reasonable to cite the Dover association as representing those who had adopted the PCF as their own.

What is more, the Dover association apparently had a rich history of tolerating theological flexibility over at least some of the doctrines of grace. In the 1813 annual session, one church submitted a query composed of three questions about what to do if people holding to Arminian beliefs should desire to join the Baptist church, the first question of which was, “Ought their Armenian [sic] sentiments to be any bar?” (Dover Association, 1813, p. 18). Dover association’s reply offers insight concerning the approach the association pursued when theological dissent occurred concerning the doctrines of grace.

It is well known that the Baptists of Virginia, generally hold the doctrines commonly called Calvinism, and it is certainly most agreeable for brethren dwelling in the same church, to be of the same mind, but we have found from experience, that perfect coincidence of sentiments, in all points. is not to be expected, and that tenderness and gentleness has commonly succeeded best in bringing about uniformity. For this reason we have thought it best to bear with brethren, who hold some Arminian opinions, provided they give evidence of piety, and appear willing to bear with their brethren who differ from them, and not to interrupt the peace of society. There are, however, some principles which by some, are called Calvinistic, that we think all Christians ought to agree upon, viz: the total depravity of mankind, salvation by the imputed righteousness of Christ, disclaiming all reliance upon the merit of human works for salvation. &c (Ibid).

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<sup>461</sup> Broaddus’ massive influence among Baptists is well illustrated in his biographical profile composed by J. Taylor. “Few ministers received more flattering offers to settle abroad than did Elder Broaddus. If he remained in his native Caroline it was not because fields wide, pleasing and full of promise, were not opened to him. He was invited to accept the pastoral charge, or was corresponded with on the subject of accepting it, by the following churches: the First Church, Boston, in 1811 and 1812, to supply the vacancy occasioned by the death of Dr. Stillman; the First Church, Philadelphia, in 1811, to supply the place of Dr. Staughton; the First Church, Baltimore, in 1819; the New Market Street Church, Philadelphia, in 1819; the Sansom Street Church, Philadelphia, in 1824; the First Church, in Philadelphia, again in 1825; the Norfolk Church, in 1826; the First Church, in the City of New York, in 1832; the First Church, Richmond, 1833; not to mention other calls of minor importance” (Taylor, 1859, p. 244). For a helpful extended profile on Broaddus’ life and work, see Taylor’s entire entry on Andrew Broaddus (Ibid, pp. 238-277).

Far from offering a response that displayed no theological parameters at all, the Dover association nevertheless failed to cite an answer based upon the confessional backdrop of Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism concerning those who held Arminian tendencies joining their churches. Indeed, the doctrines "commonly called Calvinism" to which they viewed necessary to subscribe for membership were total depravity, the imputed righteousness of Christ, and denial of a salvation based upon human-works, doctrines almost universally believed and confessionally adopted among Baptists in the southern states. Nothing is cited as to either one's view of election or the atonement, the two doctrines evidence shows most probable to incite debate among 19<sup>th</sup> century American Baptists.

Therefore, given the theological diversity on Calvinistic issues among the leadership within the Dover association, as well as the principle they generally practiced in "bear[ing] with brethren, who hold some Arminian opinions," it seems reasonable to assume, apart from confessional evidence, that while Dover Baptists had, as associational members, churches that held to *strict* Calvinism, and perhaps even subscribing to the PCF, they ostensibly held neither theological loyalty to nor confessional dependence upon Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism.<sup>462</sup> Consequently, it remains at least questionable whether the Dover association, arguably the largest block of Virginia Baptists' representation at the 1845 Augusta convention, could reasonably be presumed as having adopted the PCF as its own.

Virginia's Albemarle association was organized October 13, 1791 by several churches in three counties in the upper northern central part of the state (Allen, 1958, p. 1460). Albemarle Baptists appeared to have had two delegates from member churches—P. P. Smith and I. S. Tinsley—in

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<sup>462</sup> Dover association's response that "we have thought it best to bear with brethren, who hold some Arminian opinions, provided they give evidence of piety..." echoes the response that Separate Baptists gave to Regular Baptists who complained about the Arminian tendencies of some of their brethren, tendencies that Regular Baptists cited as an obstacle to union between the two Baptist communities. According to Virginia Baptist historian, R. Semple, "the Regulars complained, that the Separates...kept within their communion, many who were professed Arminians" to which the Separate Baptists replied, "that if there were some among them, who leaned too much towards the Arminian system, they were generally men of exemplary piety, and great usefulness... and they conceived it better to bear with some diversity of opinion in doctrines, than to break with men, whose christian deportment, rendered them amiable in the estimation of all true lovers of genuine godliness... [and thus]... To exclude such as these from their communion, would be like tearing the limbs from the body" (Semple, 1894, pp. 74-75).

Augusta in 1845 (SBC, 1845, p. 7). While the Albemarle association had adopted both a constitution and rules of decorum, scanning the minutes from 1831 to 1879 yielded no published confession of faith. Article 4 of its 1834 constitution, however, addressed the association's expectations for member churches:

“This Association shall have power to withdraw its fellowship and correspondence from any Church or Association that is corrupt in Doctrine, or anti-christian in practice, or that tolerates and countenances immorality in life, or palpable heresy in doctrine with any of its members...” (Albemarle Association, 1831, p. 7).<sup>463</sup>

Thus, while the Albemarle association held both doctrinal and behavioral expectations for its member churches as the article makes clear, like Dover Baptists no official confession of faith appeared to be embraced by Albemarle Baptists.<sup>464</sup> Hence, with such theological flexibility within

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<sup>463</sup> In the 1879 published constitution, Albemarle's expectations for membership were amended to judging “the propriety of continuing any church in our connexion [sic] which to us shall appear to be heterodox in principle or irregular in practice” (Albemarle Baptist Association, 1879, p. 22).

<sup>464</sup> Virginia Baptist associations seem to have eventually adopted at least two schools of thought pertaining to the adoption of confessions. One school embraced adopting confessions, and the other school remained hesitant toward embracing confessions and thus appeared to display a decided neutrality toward them. Ironically, both schools may be incipiently illustrated in Virginia's General Association. Semple indicates the confessional neutrality of the second school in his report of the 1774 session of the General Association. “The question respecting a confession of faith was agitated at this session, and decided, *that each church might exercise her own discretion in adopting the confession of faith, or not*” (Semple, 1894, p. 57; Italics original). The fundamental neutrality toward confessions—that is, leaving the decision to local church autonomy—seems predictable since there was perhaps more theological dispute over the *strict* Calvinistic interpretation of election and atonement displayed in early Virginia Baptist history than any other southern state (Howell, 1857, p. 55). Semple also documents the well-known and continued divide among Baptists of the south over *strictly* Calvinistic interpretations of election and the nature and extent of the atonement, thus illustrating the second school of thought about adopting confessions and Virginia Baptists' response (Ibid, pp. 60-61). At the May 1775 session of the General Association, both the northern and southern districts met. The first query offered set the conflict in motion, a conflict which took up the entire first day. “Is salvation, by Christ, made possible for every individual of the human race?” (Ibid, p. 60). Consequently, “Every thinking man in the association felt himself seriously interested. Most of them spoke to it, more or less” (Ibid). On the “Arminian side” were some of the most capable Baptist men in Virginia. Among the “many distinguished preachers” who spoke were Samuel Harriss (Moderator of the present session); Jeremiah Walker (noted as one of Virginia's most popular preachers); and John Waller (Clerk of the present session). They all “supported the argument in favour of universal provision” (Ibid). In the end, the “Calvinistic solution” obtained “a small majority” (Ibid). Hence, while *strict* Calvinism may have obtained “a small majority,” Semple's record aptly demonstrates both theological diversity as well as the apparent neutrality Philadelphia's confession. Noteworthy also, while Virginia's Separate Baptists ultimately accepted the Philadelphia confession as terms of union with *strictly* Calvinistic Baptists, it was hardly because they accepted in toto the theological contours of Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism. R. Howell, explains: ‘The Committee decided upon a middle course. It adopted “The Philadelphia Confession of Faith,” but with such modifications and reservations as rendered it entirely unobjectionable. It was careful to affirm that, with its consent, none should be considered as obliged to embrace its teachings in all respects, and that “It should not usurp a tyrannical power over the conscience of any (Howell, 1857, p. 57; see also, Semple, 1894, pp. 68-69).”’ Far from a confessional standard by which to judge affiliation, the PCF became little more than the proverbial paper tiger.

the Albemarle association, the two delegates from member churches of the Albemarle association could hardly be cited as representing those who had adopted the PCF for themselves.

Organized in 1804 (Allen, 1958, p. 1460), Virginia's Appomattox association apparently had only one delegate representing member churches at the Augusta convention—Daniel Witt, pastor of both Sharon and Nottaway churches affiliated with Appomattox Baptists (SBC, 1845, p. 8). As with both Dover and Albemarle associations above, no confession of faith was found for Virginia's Appomattox association.<sup>465</sup> It seems to follow, that since no confessions of faith apparently were either officially recognized or adopted by Appomattox Baptists represented in Augusta, that neither the association nor the delegates' churches may be reasonably assumed to have adopted the PCF as their own.<sup>466</sup>

The Salem Union Baptist Association was organized in 1833 (Ibid, p. 1464), and most probably had two delegates at Augusta in 1845 (SBC, 1845, p. 8). In 1856, the Salem Union association united with the Columbia association and became known as the Potomac Baptist Association (Allen, 1958, p. 1464). The Salem-Potomac Baptists followed what seems to be an organizational pattern among many Virginia Baptists. While they drafted and adopted both a constitution and rules of decorum, they published no confession of faith (Potomac Association, 1856, pp. 6-7). The association did, however, embrace an article in its constitution insisting member churches subscribe to what generally is considered Baptist belief and practice.

ART. 2. Any church desirous of connexion [sic] with this body by delegates must make written application, in which she must express her acquiescence in the following declaration: that the word of God as contained in the Old and New Testaments, is the only true and proper standard of Christian faith and practice—that the Constitution and Order of the Regular Baptist churches,<sup>467</sup> concentrating all executive ecclesiastical

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<sup>465</sup> Associational minutes from 1806 to 1890 were examined.

<sup>466</sup> Since every year of the annual associational session's minutes were not examined in this inquiry, it follows as only tentative that no published confession for Virginia's associations cited in this research exists. The goal of the present research has aimed at demonstrating both a theological *divide* among Baptists of the south over *strict* Calvinism as well as a visible *decline* in *strict* Calvinism as it is linguistically expressed in associational confessions of faith. But more research into the 19<sup>th</sup> century confessional practices of Baptist association in southern states seems warranted to better understand the Calvinist-Arminian conflict in the American south.

<sup>467</sup> Some might interpret "Regular Baptist churches" in the article as referring to *strictly* Calvinistic Baptists. While sometimes "Regular Baptist" did suggest *strictly* Calvinistic Baptists, it does not always follow. David Jessee was apparently acceptable in Regular Baptist circles though he held to general redemption. "In regard to the doctrines held and preached by him [i.e. David Jessee], it may be sufficient to say, that they coincided generally with those of

authority in each separate congregation of baptized believers, are according to the word of God—and that the doctrines generally believed and taught by the great body of the Regular Baptist churches of Virginia, and of the United States, are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and tend to the unity and well being of God’s chosen people (Ibid, p. 6).

Similar to doctrinal expectations in the constitutions of both Dover and Albemarle associations, Salem-Potomac Baptists expected specific affirmation to the Bible’s fundamental role as the chief authority for faith and practice, an almost universal expectation among Baptist associations across the south in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and general consent to the beliefs of the “great body of the Regular Baptist churches of Virginia, and of the United States.” Even so, nothing in the language of the Salem-Potomac association’s constitution reveals a dependence upon or theological loyalty to the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF.<sup>468</sup>

#### 6.3.2.6.2 Virginia Associations Unrepresented in Augusta

Like Baptist associations in other states across the early 19<sup>th</sup> century south, many Virginia associations suffered under the heavy weight of the anti-missions movement.<sup>469</sup> Most associations, however, survived the conflict, and many were in existence at the time the southern convention was organized in 1845 even though no delegates apparently represented them at the historic Augusta meeting.

The Dan River association was organized in 1839 by a dozen churches from the Roanoke association (Allen, 1958, p. 1461). Though both a constitution and rules of decorum were adopted, no confession of faith appears to have been embraced or accepted (Dan River

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the Regular Baptists. His views, however, in reference to the extent of the atonement, underwent a change. In the early part of his ministry he advocated the high-toned Calvinistic view of that subject; but in the latter years of his life he supported the view now generally adopted by the Baptists, viz., that the atonement is general in its nature” (Taylor, 1859, p. 259). Presuming Taylor to be correct, it seems reasonable to infer not only did Jessee deny the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the atonement he had earlier embraced in his ministry, but also, according to Taylor, unlimited atonement apparently was the view *generally adopted* by Baptists in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>468</sup> Two other Virginia associations most likely had delegates at the Augusta meeting: Portsmouth organized in 1791 (Allen, 1958, p. 1462) had three delegates; Shiloh, organized in 1792 (Ibid, p. 1463) seemed to have sent one delegate. Like the associations cited above, while constitutions were found in both associations, no articles of faith appear to be published.

<sup>469</sup> No data is cited for associations that endured significant conflict over anti-missionism (unless, of course, the association seems to have sent delegates to the Augusta convention). For a list depicting the associations that struggled with the issue, see *Appendix F* at the end of this research.

Association, 1854, pp. 10-13).<sup>470</sup> However, since A. M. Poindexter was an active leader among Dan River Baptists, and since Poindexter's view of the atonement stood outside the theological parameters of Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism (Poindexter, 1850, pp. 185-190), it seems reasonable to assume Dan River Baptists held no confessional dependence upon or theological loyalty to the PCF.

Virginia's Rappahannock association was organized in 1843 by over 30 churches dismissed from the Dover association for that purpose (Allen, 1958, p. 1463). The association adopted a constitution and "rules of order" similar in content to other Virginia associations (Rappahannock Association, 1843, pp. 9-11). Article X addressed requirements of member churches but appears to be more relaxed concerning its expectations than some of the other Virginia associations. "This Association may receive from time to time into its connexion [sic], such regularly constituted Baptist churches as may apply for admission; and may at any time dissolve its connexion [sic] with any Church because of disorderly conduct or corrupt doctrine" (Ibid, p. 10). No indication is apparent what constituted, for them, either conduct that was "disorderly" or doctrine that was "corrupt." It may also assist in understanding the attitude Rappahannock Baptists had toward those ministers and churches that dissented from the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF to note the leadership and influence Andrew Broaddus commanded within the association (Ibid, p. 8).<sup>471</sup> Since Broaddus apparently did not embrace the PCF in its understanding of particular redemption (see above), it seems unlikely that Rappahannock Baptists would have demanded loyalty to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism from its member churches.

#### 6.3.2.7 Kentucky

At mid-century, Kentucky had approximately 38 Baptist associations in existence totaling over 61,000 members in approximately 579 churches, the second largest Baptist population in the

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<sup>470</sup> Minutes were available to examine from 1856 to 1900, but Dan River Baptists appeared to have published no confession of faith.

<sup>471</sup> The minutes of 2 other Virginia associations existing in 1845 were examined for published confessions of faith— Meherrin association organized in 1804 (Allen, 1958, p. 1864) and Western association organized in 1845 (Ibid, p. 1465). Examining available minutes from 1810-1828 for Meherrin Baptists not only failed to produce a published confession of faith, but also failed to find a published constitution and rules of decorum. Western's annual minutes were examined from 1846 to 1859 turning up a constitution and rules of decorum but no confession of faith (Western Association, 1857, pp. 3-5).

south, when a call for a southern convention was issued (see chart above). Kentucky Baptists' only delegate at the Augusta meeting was Indian missionary, Isaac McCoy (1784-1846) (SBC, 1845, p. 11). McCoy organized the American Indian Mission Association in 1842 with its home office in Louisville, Kentucky (Allen, 1958, p. 840). But the Indian mission apparently was an independent missionary society not affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention, or the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky as it began to be called in 1837 (Ibid). McCoy was a leader in Kentucky's Long Run Association as well as seems to have been a member of East Louisville Baptist Church (Long Run Association, 1845, p. 4).<sup>472</sup>

The Long Run association was organized in 1803 by two dozen churches dismissed from the Salem association for that purpose (Allen, 1958, p. 742). According to L. Crimson, Long Run Baptists adopted Philadelphia's confession albeit with some caveats attached— "excepting some things contained in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> articles, if construed so as to make God the author of sin. Also, in the 31<sup>st</sup> article, respecting the laying on of hands on newly baptized persons, that the using or not using that ceremony, be no bar to fellowship" (Ibid).<sup>473</sup> Philadelphia's articles 3 and 5 deal with God's Decree and God's Providence respectively.<sup>474</sup> Arguably, therefore, McCoy might be considered representing an association that held to the PCF, at least held to the PCF *with caveats*.

The Barren River association was organized in 1830 with 15 churches in Barren, Allen, and Monroe counties in Kentucky and Metcalf and Smith counties located across the state line in bordering Tennessee (Allen, 1958, p. 746). While anti-missions forces attempted to hijack churches, the conflict was quickly and successfully subdued (Ibid). It remains uncertain the association had a statement of faith prior to 1852. However, at the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual session (1852), Barren River Baptists adopted a faith statement. Seven brief propositions composed its Articles of Faith, two of which are listed below:

3. That man was created in a state of holiness, but by transgression fell, in consequence of which all are now sinners, and that in order to be saved we must be regenerated or

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<sup>472</sup> Isaac McCoy is clearly listed as the association's Clerk in the 1845 minutes. However, it remains uncertain *which* McCoy is listed as a messenger (and therefore a member) of the East Louisville church since the first name is smudged on the original record.

<sup>473</sup> See also, Spencer, 1886, pp. 150-151; Long Run Association, 1803, p. 2.

<sup>474</sup> For articles from Philadelphia's confession relevant to the present research, see *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

born again by the Holy Spirit; and that we must be justified, not through any works of our own, but through the merits of Christ, and that good works are the evidences that we are in that gracious state.

4. We believe in the perseverance of the Saints; that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (Barren River Association, 1887, p. 12).<sup>475</sup>

The language of Barren River's articles on applied salvation seems to clearly indicate no literary dependence upon or theological loyalty to the *strict* Calvinism found in the PCF. Also, like many other confessions found in southern states, no article deals with election or predestination. Hence, one may reasonably conclude that Barren River Baptists confessed little, if any, theological affinity with Philadelphia Calvinism.

Kentucky's Laurel River association organized in 1831 (Allen, 1958, p. 742) and adopted articles of faith. However, though its "Principles of Union" was composed of 12 brief articles, like Barren River Baptists, no article dealt with either predestination or election. Hence, Laurel River Baptists would hardly seem to have adopted the PCF as its own.

The Allen Baptist association was organized in 1841 but was first called Drake's Creek association until 1845 when the name was changed to Bay Forks Association of United Baptists (Allen, 1958, p. 738).<sup>476</sup> The association adopted a constitution, rules of decorum, and a confession of faith.

Four of Allen Baptists' 10 articles of faith are listed below:

3<sup>rd</sup>. We believe in the doctrine of election, according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the spirit.

4<sup>th</sup>. We believe all mankind are sinners by nature, and are entirely unable to recover themselves from that condition by their own natural free will or ability.

6<sup>th</sup>. We believe it to be the duty of Christ's servants to preach the Gospel according to His command, and that He, by His spirit, attends that, as well as other means, to the calling, regenerating and sanctifying of his people.

7<sup>th</sup>. We believe the Saints will persevere, through grace, to happiness and eternal glory (Bay Forks Association, 1864).<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> A copy of all 7 articles of Barren River Baptists' confession may be examined in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>476</sup> The present name is Allen Baptist Association changed from Bay Forks in 1913 (Ibid).

<sup>477</sup> Though the confession of faith in the 1864 copy of Bay Forks' minutes was extremely difficult to read, the 1899 copy was clean and when compared with the 1864, affirmed Bay Forks' confession remained the same through the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Bay Forks Association, 1899, pp. 20-21).

Allen Baptists included an article on election (Article 3), but there is no indication the association desired to express theological loyalty to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism.<sup>478</sup> Contrarily, the PCF denies the role of foreknowledge in predestination due to its insistence upon Unconditional Election. Additionally, for Allen Baptists, while humankind is universally sinner by nature, no language is present pertaining to imputed Adamic guilt as in Philadelphia's articles. As with many other confessions examined in this research, the only soteriological article in Allen association's confession having theological affinity with Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism is Article 7, the perseverance of the saints.<sup>479</sup>

The Bethel Baptist Association was organized in 1825 resulting from a split in Kentucky's Red River association over the nature of the atonement (Allen, 1958, p. 739). Kentucky Baptist historian, J. Spencer, quotes extensively from Bethel's 1826 minutes describing the circumstances that led to Bethel's organization (Spencer, 1886, pp. 607-608). Like most other Kentucky Baptist associations that followed the Terms of Union (1801),<sup>480</sup> Red River Baptists had as member churches those that embraced the PCF and those that did not but nonetheless had amenable relations with one another.

In 1816, however, a group within the association began to complain about those who held to general atonement—a "party spirit" found its way into the association (Ibid, p. 607). The conflict went on until 1825. "It now became apparent to all, that a reconciliation was hopeless" (Ibid, p. 608). With Kentucky's Red River as the dividing line, the eastern side retained the name, Red River, and the western side became the Bethel Baptist association (Ibid). Consequently, Reuben Ford was elected moderator of the new association (Bethel Association, 1825).<sup>481</sup> Bethel Baptists adopted a constitution, rules of decorum, and a confession of faith, all of which were identical to Red River's founding documents (Allen, 1958, p. 739).

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<sup>478</sup> Allen Baptists' article on election resembles North Carolina's Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the unconditional election found in the PCF. The difference from Broad River's abstract is Allen's inclusion of "foreknowledge" as a factor in understanding the doctrine of election. See the full discussion in chapter two.

<sup>479</sup> A copy of Allen association's full confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>480</sup> See chapter three for an extensive discussion of Kentucky's terms of union between Regular and Separate Baptists.

<sup>481</sup> For information on Reuben Ford, see chapter three.

Red River's Abstract of Principles (and now Bethel's) was very similar in content to many other Baptist associations across the south. The confession was composed of 12 articles, six of which are listed below:

3. We believe in the doctrine of Original Sin.
4. We believe in the doctrine of Election; and that God chose his people in Christ before the foundation of the world.
5. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from that fallen state he is in by nature of his own free will and ability.
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Christ.
7. We believe that God's Elect shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
8. We believe that the Saints shall persevere in grace and never fall finally away (Bethel Association, 1825, p. 8).

While the doctrine of election is explicitly affirmed, the sharp edges of Unconditional Election found in the PCF are absent, edges like decreeing an unchangeable "certain number" to be elect resulting from an "eternal covenant" between the Father and the Son wherein only the elect "in particular are redeemed" through the work of Christ. Nor is the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Total Depravity and Irresistible Grace found in Red River's confession. At best, Bethel Baptists adopted a *moderately* Calvinistic confession in 1825.<sup>482</sup>

By 1843, Bethel Baptists had completely rewritten its articles of faith. Composed of a preamble and 9 articles, Article 4 affirms the doctrine of election—"4. That the election taught, in the scriptures, is through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; and that none are authorized to consider themselves elected to salvation, until they repent, and believe the gospel. — 1 Peter 1-2— 2 Thes. 1-1:5" (Bethel Association, 1843, p. 10).<sup>483</sup> If Bethel's former articles expressed only a *moderate* Calvinistic understanding of election, it seems 1843's amended article on election should be perceived as *mildly* Calvinistic, if Calvinistic

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<sup>482</sup> Spencer notes that Red River's Abstract of Principles was in theological harmony with the 1801 terms of union (Ibid, p. 606). Hence, the *strict* Calvinists in Red River association were in some way using as a backdrop in reading their abstract of faith the PCF. See Tuscaloosa Baptists above for another association that had conflict led by *strict* Calvinists who insisted that Philadelphia's confession was the exclusive interpretative lens by which confessional beliefs would be gauged.

<sup>483</sup> See *Appendix B* at the end of this research for a complete copy of Bethel's confession.

at all. In short, there seems to be nothing particularly Calvinistic in affirming election to be accomplished through the Holy Spirit's work by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.<sup>484</sup> The second part of the article seems to speak to those *strict* Calvinists who had embraced a form of eternal justification (i.e. Hyper-Calvinism). Whatever the case, Bethel Baptists hardly fit the theological contours of Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism.

According to L. Crismon, Kentucky's Boone's Creek association was organized May 1823 (Allen, 1958, p. 739). However, the earliest hand-written minutes record this description: "The result of this invitation [to meet to organize a new association] was that on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of May 1822, several churches by their representation met in convention..." (Boon's Creek Association, 1822).<sup>485</sup> Immediately after the paragraph following the words above, the convention "unanimously resolved" to act, but the act is smudged beyond recognition. Presumably it was to organize the Boone's Creek association adopting a constitution which immediately follows the unanimous resolution. The preamble to the constitution reads,

We the Baptist Churches of Jesus Christ at Mount Gilead, Boggs Fork, Boon's Creek, and Hickman, Believing it to be for the Glory of God, and the prosperity of the Kingdom of the dear Redeemer, to form ourselves into an Association, to be denominated the Boon's Creek Association, and do adopt the following as the fundamental principles of our Constitution—(Ibid).

The preamble is followed by 14 articles of uneven length the content of which is mixed between theological articles and articles most usually found in rules of decorum.<sup>486</sup> Article 1 combines an affirmation in the Bible as God's Word as well the Triune nature of God, articles normally separated in other Baptist confessions. It also adds a statement on Jesus as the sole mediator between God and humankind.

Article 2 confesses universal human depravity, but leaves no impression Boone's Creek Baptists viewed sinful depravity the same as the *strictly* Calvinistic nuance of Total Depravity found in

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<sup>484</sup> Bethel's 1843 article on election resembles North Carolina's Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the unconditional election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two.

<sup>485</sup> The original spelling is "Boon's Creek." Minutes are hand-written and thus no page numbers.

<sup>486</sup> For example, Article 14 limits the number of messengers to 5.

Philadelphia's confession: "That mankind without exception, are in their natural state sinners, totally destitute of holiness, and are intirely [sic] helpless in themselves. —" (Ibid). Article 3 indicates faith is the sole instrument of sanctification and is "the Gift of God, and is ordinarily wrought in the heart by the Spirit, and with the word, heard, or read. —" (Ibid). While the PCF affirms faith as a gift, it does so in the sense that faith is a gift *only* to the elect.<sup>487</sup> No reason appears to present itself why one should assume Boone's Creek association affirmed faith as a gift *only* to God's elect.

Finally, Article 4 deals with applied redemption: "That salvation is wholly of the free and sovereign Grace of God, through the Atonement, righteousness, and mediation of Jesus Christ, by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, and the belief of the Truth, and that saints will persevere through Grace to glory—" (Ibid). Arguably, Calvinists and non-Calvinists of virtually every shade would have few, if any, reservations adopting this article. Theological dependence upon or confessional loyalty to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism seems to be absent in the wording above.<sup>488</sup>

Recorded after the 14 articles of Boone's Creek's constitution, "This Association adopts the terms of General Union as ratified at Howards Creek, Clark County, in 1801, as a Bond of Connexion [sic], between her and the United Baptist..." (Ibid). All 11 articles of Kentucky's Terms of General Union (1801) are hand-written into the minutes.<sup>489</sup> Hence, given the adoption of the 1801 terms of union between Regular and Separate Baptists by Boone's Creek, terms whereby the PCF was specifically taken off the table as a theological standard of associational cooperation, it seems to follow that Kentucky's Boone's Creek association could hardly be perceived as adopting the PCF as its own.

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<sup>487</sup> For an exposition on the PCF and faith as gift as well the entire **TULIP** in Philadelphia's confession, see chapter two.

<sup>488</sup> The exception, of course, is perseverance of the saints.

<sup>489</sup> A copy of the terms of union between Kentucky's Separate and Regular Baptists is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

Kentucky's Elkhorn association organized in 1785 had adopted the PCF as the theological basis upon which to unite (Allen, 1958, p. 740).<sup>490</sup> When first attempting to unite with Separate Baptists, they insisted everything in Philadelphia's confession must be "strictly adhered to." By 1801, however, Elkhorn had not only surrendered the demand for strict adherence to the PCF, the confession itself was removed from consideration and terms of union were adopted by which Elkhorn Baptists would unite with other Baptists (specifically Separate Baptists). A quick examination of the terms upon which Elkhorn association united reveals a glaring omission—not a single article outside Article 5 on the perseverance of the saints specifically reflects confessional dependence upon or theological loyalty to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism. And Elkhorn Baptists apparently honored the terms of union a generation later. In 1851, a Kentucky pastor wrote and presented the annual Circular Letter to the association advocating for General Atonement. The association rejected the letter.

J. W. Kenney presumed the Circular Letter. It was a plea for the theory of a General Atonement; but inasmuch as the Association had long before decided that diversity of sentiment on this subject should be no bar to communion, and inasmuch as the body did not wish "to commit itself to one side of the question by the official publication of the letter," the letter was returned to the writer with "the thanks of the body for the conscientious labor with which he had discharged the duty" assigned him (Elkhorn Association, 1883, p. 25).

Thus, the PCF was not the confessional standard by which Elkhorn Baptists judged affiliation with other Baptists in 1845. Rather since 1801, Kentucky's Terms of General Union was likely the decisive confessional criteria cited by the Elkhorn association for Baptist cooperation.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>490</sup> See chapter three for an extended discussion of the Elkhorn association and terms of union with Separate Baptists.

<sup>491</sup> Kentucky's Franklin association was organized in 1815 (Allen, 1958, p. 741), and its founding confession was the 1801 Terms of General Union (Franklin Association, 1815). Curiously, either intentionally or unintentionally, only 9 of the original 11 articles in the terms of union are published in Franklin's minutes. Articles 10 and 11 are absent: one on congregational government and the other on free and cordial correspondence respectively. Similarly, the Goshen association, organized in 1817 (Allen, 1958, p. 741), adopted the terms of union cited above (Goshen Association, 1836, p. 10). Only 7 of the 11 articles are published; however, it seems a page may have been missing. Unfortunately, there was only copy accessible for examination. Salem association was organized in 1785 (Allen, 1958, p. 742). But like Elkhorn Baptists, while it may have adopted the PCF in 1785, by 1802 Salem association "Agreed to unite with South District and Tates creek Association, on the terms they united with Elk-horn" (Salem Association, 1802, p. 2). The Terms of General Union were still published as the basis of Baptist cooperation as late as 1843 (Salem Association, 1843). Hence, in 1845, the PCF would not have been the basis of associational cooperation for Salem Baptists, Kentucky's second oldest association.

The Bracken association remains one of Kentucky's oldest associations. Organized in 1799, most of the churches were dismissed from the Elkhorn association for that purpose (Allen, 1958, p. 739). Bracken Baptists may have embraced a *strict* Calvinist confession earlier in their history. If so, however, by mid-century, they apparently had lost their confessional dependence upon Philadelphia. In its 1856 minutes are recorded their amended constitution, rules of decorum, and articles of faith (Bracken Association, 1856, pp. 10-14). Bracken's confession is *The Declaration of New Hampshire* (1833) as expressed in the original 16 articles published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Ibid, pp. 11-13). Hence, the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia's confession was apparently not in theological vogue for Bracken Baptists.

The Liberty Baptist Association was organized in 1840 when nine churches withdrew from the Green River association (Allen, 1958, p. 742). The issue was apparently anti-missionary in nature and had overtaken the Green River association. Liberty association was a "missionary Baptist association" and "prospered from the very beginning" (Ibid). Liberty Baptists adopted a constitution, rules of decorum, and articles of faith. The Articles of Faith is composed of 7 brief articles.<sup>492</sup> However, no article specifically depends upon or appears theologically loyal to the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia. Like many other associational confessions in states across the south, Liberty Baptists had no article on predestination or election. Hence, in 1845, the Liberty association could hardly be said to have adopted the PCF as its own.

### 6.3.3 The Philadelphia Confession, Associations, and Southern States Unrepresented in 1845

#### 6.3.3.1 Introduction

In addition to the southern states that had at least some representation at the 1845 Augusta assembly, Baptists in other southern states were sympathetic toward the creation of a new southern convention. However, many could not make the journey with such short notice. As Tennessee pastor and Baptist editor, R.B.C. Howell, expressed in a letter approved by the Tennessee Executive Board requesting a delay, faraway states like Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Missouri, and Mississippi had inadequate time to assemble their churches and associations, discuss the issues, appoint representatives, and make the proposed May meeting

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<sup>492</sup> A copy of Liberty's confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

(Baker, 1974, p. 28). Consequently, Baptists in some states sent letters of approval for the cause, letters that were read on the convention floor. R. Baker indicates that Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Florida sent letters “due to the fact that the short notice of the meeting prevented further representation” (Baker, 1974, p. 162). Examining the records of some of the associations in these sympathetic southern states will prove beneficial in understanding better the confessional belief of Baptists in the south during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *6.3.3.2 Selected Associations from Southern States Unrepresented in Augusta in 1845*

#### *6.3.3.2.1 Arkansas Associations*

Arkansas had approximately 11 associations with at least 65 member churches having about 2,000 total members at the time of the southern convention.<sup>493</sup> Arkansas sent no delegates but did send a letter of support. Arkansas, perhaps in some ways more than any other southern state, was rocked by the anti-missions controversy. At least 6 of the existing 11 associations were anti-missionary. E. Hinson indicates that associationism in Arkansas had an uphill climb in the state. By 1848, while at least 14 associations had been established in the state, all but 5 had a relatively short life. “The major reason some early associations folded was the opposition of “hardshells” to organization and mission efforts beyond the local congregation” (Hinson, 1979, p. 33).<sup>494</sup>

Rocky Bayou association apparently existed in 1845, but determining its early confessional record proves difficult. L. Tedford cites two dates for Rocky Bayou’s organization, either 1833 or 1840, since two accounts are found for its origin (Allen, 1958, p. 68). And the records that do exist apparently have no indication concerning founding documents including articles of faith.<sup>495</sup> Whether Rocky Bayou was organized in 1833 or 1835 remains irrelevant to the purposes here since both dates precedes the organization of the southern convention in 1845. Records are available for Rocky Bayou Baptists later in the century, however. According to the 1898 annual session minutes, Rocky Bayou had adopted the NHC as revised by J. Newton Brown in his church manual published in 1853 (Rocky Bayou Association, 1898, pp. 14-17). While it remains uncertain

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<sup>493</sup> For a complete picture of Arkansas and all the southern states both represented and unrepresented in Augusta, see *Appendix F* at the end of this research.

<sup>494</sup> See also, p. 75. By “hardshells” Hinson is pointing to the Hyper-Calvinism of the largest segment of the anti-missions movement.

<sup>495</sup> See also Hinson, 1979, p. 12 and Williams, et al., 1998, p. 19.

if Rocky Bayou Baptists had adopted the NHC by mid-century, the presence of the New Hampshire document at the end of the century potentially could indicate the direction the association was confessionally heading.<sup>496</sup>

Liberty association was organized in 1845 by several churches in Union County, Arkansas, churches formerly associated with the Saline Baptist Association (Allen, 1958, p. 67). Its abstract of faith was very similar to other abstracts adopted by associations across the south.<sup>497</sup> Liberty Baptists began with an affirmation of both the Triune God and commitment to the Bible as the Word of God and only rule of faith and practice. Article 3 on election states, “We believe in the doctrine of election as founded in the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (Liberty Association, 1898, p. 19). Similar in content to North Carolina’s Broad River confessional tradition,<sup>498</sup> Liberty Baptists connected election to the sanctification of the Holy Spirit; but rather than Broad River’s “belief of the truth,” Liberty’s article focuses on “obedience” to the truth. Moreover, Liberty adds that election is grounded in God’s foreknowledge, a factor in election the PCF seemed to explicitly reject.<sup>499</sup> In conclusion, there appears to be no literary signals in Liberty’s confession that they were confessionally loyal to or theologically dependent upon Philadelphia’s confessional traditional.

Organized in 1840, the Old Mt. Zion association merged with the Fayetteville United Baptist Association in 1860 (Allen, 1958, p. 69). No details are offered concerning either association. Nor are there records of Fayetteville United Baptists in the Arkansas archives. Hence, while the Old Mt. Zion association apparently existed in 1845, no records were available to examine.<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>496</sup> The records for Rocky Bayou association are rare. Apparently, the earliest surviving minutes in the special collections archive at Arkansas’ Quachita University, the official depository for Arkansas Baptist history, is 1878. Examined for this research were minutes existing from 1878-1899.

<sup>497</sup> Liberty’s full confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>498</sup> For a full discussion of the Broad River confessional tradition and its rejection of *strict* Calvinistic doctrines as expressed in the PCF, see chapter two.

<sup>499</sup> For evidence of Philadelphia’s apparent denial that God’s foreknowledge was a relevant factor in choosing the elect, see chapter two.

<sup>500</sup> The Arkansas association organized “about 1841 perhaps in north central Arkansas” (Allen, 1958, p. 68), is another Baptist association existing when the southern convention was organized but apparently no extant records are available. Records were available for three other Arkansas associations existing in 1845; however, the associations were anti-missional: Point Remove, Salem, and St. Francis. Mt. Vernon association lists in its 1858 minutes 10

The White River association was organized in 1840 by five churches in the northcentral part of the state (Allen, 1958, p. 68). White River's continued existence makes it one of the oldest Arkansas associations. However, like many of the other older Arkansas associations, records are lacking concerning White River Baptists. While most annual minutes are available between 1880 and 1902, only 1859 and 1876 exist prior to 1880.<sup>501</sup> In the 1881 minutes, White River published its confession of 18 articles which are substantially the same 18 articles of the NHC as published in Brown's church manual (White River Association, 1881, pp. 1-4).

#### 6.3.3.2.2 Florida Associations

The Florida association was organized in 1842 by churches withdrawing from Georgia's Ochlochnee association after it had adopted anti-missionary principles (Allen, 1958, p. 441). The sole association existing in Florida at the time of the southern convention, Florida's association had 34 member churches with approximately 1,600 total Baptists. And Florida Baptists were one of the groups that sent a letter of support to the Augusta convention that was read during the gathering.

Upon organizing, the association had adopted 14 of the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* (1833) as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Florida Association, 1846, pp. 2-3).<sup>502</sup> Hence, at the time of the Augusta meeting, the Florida association did not reflect the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF. Noteworthy is Florida's apparent reversal concerning its confession of faith. By 1850, Florida Baptists had dropped its former confession and adopted a *strictly* Calvinistic confession (Florida Association, 1850, pp. 13-14).<sup>503</sup> Composed of 12 brief articles, Article III on election seals the confession as confessionally

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Arkansas associations that were considered "anti-missionary": Buffalo; Little Red River; Little Hope; Point Remove; Salem; South Arkansas; St. Francis River; Union; Washington (Regular) and Washington, mostly lying in West Arkansas (Mt. Vernon Association, 1858, p. 19).

<sup>501</sup> All Arkansas associational records are available online (Quachita University, 2018).

<sup>502</sup> The Florida association reversed articles XI and XII (XI. Of a Gospel Church and XII. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper) and eliminated articles XIII and XIV (Of the Christian Sabbath and Of Civil Government respectively) for no explicable reason.

<sup>503</sup> See chapter three for more concerning the reasons why Florida switched confessions. The pattern throughout this research has been evidenced by a visible decline of confessional Calvinism among Baptists of the south. Florida represents an exception to the normal pattern by going from a decidedly *mild* Calvinistic confession to a *strictly* Calvinistic confession.

dependent upon and theologically loyal to the PCF: “We believe in the doctrine of eternal and particular election” (Ibid, p. 13).<sup>504</sup>

#### 6.3.3.2.3 Mississippi Associations

Mississippi Baptists sent no delegates but was represented in Augusta by a letter of support. At the time, there were approximately 27 Baptist associations with 334 churches totaling over 20,000 members. The Aberdeen association was organized in 1834 by churches in northern Mississippi (Allen, 1958, p. 879). The association’s confession is composed of 17 articles and bear some marks of literary originality (Aberdeen Association, 1869, pp. 14-15).<sup>505</sup> It begins as do other Baptist abstracts by affirming the Bible as the sole inspired authority for faith and practice as well as an explicit statement regarding the Trinity. Articles 3 and 4 confess sin’s entrance into the world via Adam’s willful fall into sin by voluntary disobedience, the consequences of which came upon “all his posterity, by ordinary generation,” consequences including the loss of “original righteousness”; becoming both “sinful and depraved”; and now possessing “no power to recover himself from his lost and ruined condition, and that unless God Himself had provided a way of salvation, that all must have been ruined and miserable forever— because all have sinned.”

Articles 5-7 repeatedly insist no salvation exists outside of Christ and faith in Him.<sup>506</sup> A unique proposition exists in Article 5 not common in other Baptist abstracts examined in this research. “We believe that God has provided a way of salvation, and has revealed it to us in the Gospel of His Son; *that this way of salvation was adopted in the eternal counsel before the world began,* and that God then chose his people in Christ, and determined on their recovery through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth (Ibid; Italics added).<sup>507</sup> Contrary to Philadelphia’s

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<sup>504</sup> G. Wills rehearses the pressure placed upon Florida Baptists by Georgia Baptists because of Florida’s adoption of the NHC (Wills, 1997, p. 110). Georgia Baptists insisted the Florida association had embraced “Arminianism” because it adopted the NHC.

<sup>505</sup> While the copy was at times difficult to decipher, comparing it with a clear copy in the 1881 minutes indicated the confession was substantially unchanged (Aberdeen Association, 1881, pp. 22-23). A copy of Aberdeen’s full confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>506</sup> To this researcher’s recall, no other Baptist abstract insisted upon almost the same truth repeated in three consecutive articles; namely, no salvation exists outside the one and only Savior, Jesus Christ.

<sup>507</sup> The author recalls no other abstract examined—either included in this research or not—with this specific interpretation of the eternal covenant of grace.

confession that indicates the content of the eternal covenant was the elect to be redeemed (Confession, 1818, Chap. 7, para 3), Aberdeen confessed that the content predetermined by the covenant was the *special plan* of salvation rather than the *specific people* of salvation.<sup>508</sup> While the article goes on to profess that “God then chose his people in Christ,” the means He uses for election include both the Holy Spirit’s work and the human response of faith. Philadelphia’s understanding of Total Depravity seems to leave no room for the human response of faith prior to regeneration; that is, “belief of the truth.” But even *after* regeneration has taken place, faith must be bestowed upon the elect as a gift “to make them willing and able to believe” (Ibid, para. 2). For Philadelphia, it is through the “grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls” (Ibid, Chap. 14, para 1).<sup>509</sup>

Aberdeen’s Article 8 affirms the role of the Holy Spirit in applied redemption. “We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person in the adorable Trinity, is the great agent in convincing man of his lost and condemned condition, and in making the gospel plan of mercy plain and acceptable to Him” (Ibid, p. 15). While the Holy Spirit convinces listeners of sin, and clarifies and makes plain and acceptable the gospel, no indication exists from the confession’s articles that the composers intended the irresistible grace found in the PCF. North Carolina’s historic Kehukee association captures Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism in its confessional abstract: “7. We believe that in God's own appointed time and way (by means which he has ordained) the elect shall be called, justified, pardoned, and sanctified; and that it is impossible they can utterly refuse the call; but shall be made willing, by divine grace, to receive the offers of mercy.”<sup>510</sup> The contrast seems clear. While Aberdeen Baptists may have been *moderately* Calvinistic, no reason exists to presume the association had adopted the PCF as its own.

The Chickasaw Baptist Association was organized in 1837 in Monroe and other border counties in Mississippi (Allen, 1958, p. 879). J. Boyd indicates an “abstract of principles” appeared in 1848

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<sup>508</sup> For relevant articles from the PCF applicable to the research presented here, see *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

<sup>509</sup> What is more, Aberdeen’s article on election possesses language resembling North Carolina’s Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article affirming the biblical doctrine of election while rejecting the unconditional election found in the PCF. See the full discussion in chapter two.

<sup>510</sup> For Kehukee’s entire confession, see *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

(Ibid). However, the abstract to which he refers is the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* (1833) as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Chickasaw Association, 1848, pp. 13-14). While some historians indicate that it was not until J. Newton Brown published his church manual in 1853 with his personally edited version of New Hampshire's confession included, followed by J. M. Pendleton's manual in 1867 (also with Newton's version of the NHC included), that the New Hampshire confession took hold among Baptists in the south. The Chickasaw association adoption of the original 16 articles, however, questions this assumption.<sup>511</sup> The association's adoption of New Hampshire's original 16 articles also questions whether Chickasaw Baptists held to the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF.<sup>512</sup>

Mississippi's Choctaw association was organized in 1834 by churches in the central-eastern part of the state (Allen, 1958, p. 879). In 1838, the association reorganized, but L. Rhodes insists it was not until 1869 that articles of faith appeared (Ibid). However, Rhodes is apparently mistaken, since Choctaw's 1840 minutes, the title page of which indicates that the present 1840 session is the "Second Anniversary Meeting," includes within its constitution an abstract of faith it claims was "Adopted December 1839, at Wahalak, Miss." (Choctaw Association, 1840, p. 10). Choctaw's confession contains 11 brief articles.<sup>513</sup> Unlike Philadelphia's insistence upon imputed sinful guilt to all Adam's posterity, Article 3 on human depravity affirms belief in "Original Sin," which effectively negates sinful humans' capability to "recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and ability" (Ibid). Choctaw Baptists composed 2 articles dealing with the doctrine of election:

4<sup>th</sup>. We believe the Doctrine of Election, according to the foreknowledge of God, and that God chose his people in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and without blame before him in love.

6<sup>th</sup>. We believe that God's Elect, "according to his foreknowledge," shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Ibid).

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<sup>511</sup> For a full discussion of the spread of New Hampshire's confession into the deep south prior to 1853, see chapter three.

<sup>512</sup> A similar conclusion follows from Mississippi's Yalobusha association, organized in 1836 (Allen, 1958, p. 880), since it too adopted the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Yalobusha Association, 1872, pp. 11-14).

<sup>513</sup> A copy of Choctaw's full confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

What remains insightful about Choctaw's doctrine of election for purposes of this research is, election is twice stated *grounded* in God's foreknowledge, a belief at least twice denied in Philadelphia's confession. In the PCF, all the redemptive blessings to come upon humankind are "all of free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them to procure it" (Confession, 1818, Chap 7, para 8).<sup>514</sup> Again, "This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, being wholly passive therein..." (Chap 10, para 2). Contrarily, Choctaw Baptists affirmed that it is according to God's foreknowledge that those who are called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Spirit are delivered. Whatever Choctaw Baptists meant to suggest concerning the relationship of divine foreknowledge and election, for them, foreknowledge played a *positive/active* role in applied redemption while in Philadelphia's confession, foreknowledge played a *negative/inactive* role. Hence, while Choctaw Baptists may have been Calvinistic to some degree, their confession indicates they were neither dependent upon nor theologically loyal to the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF.<sup>515</sup>

#### 6.3.3.2.4 Tennessee Associations

At mid-century, Tennessee had approximately 480 churches in 21 associations with 36,000+ members but had no representation in Augusta. Organized in 1786 (Allen, 1958, p. 1353), Holston Baptist Association was the first association in the state. An historical summary of the beginnings is included in the association's centennial anniversary minutes.

The Holston Association was organized at "Cherokee Meeting House" on the Fourth Saturday in October, 1786.

Seven Churches were represented by messengers in the organization, viz: Kindricks Creek, Bent Creek, Beaver Creek, Greasy Cove, Cherokee Creek, North Park of Holston, and Lower French Broad River.

A plan of Association or Articles of Faith, endorsing the Confession of Faith adopted at Philadelphia, Pa., in 1742, was adopted as the basis of the organization (Holston Association, 1885, p. 21).

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<sup>514</sup> For relevant articles from the PCF applicable to the research presented here, see *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

<sup>515</sup> Liberty association was organized in 1837 with churches from both Mississippi and Alabama (Allen, 1958, p. 879). They adopted articles of faith, twelve in number and similar in scope to Choctaw association's; but no article shows dependence upon or loyalty to the PCF (Liberty Association, 1848). A copy of Liberty's articles of faith is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

For purposes here, the final paragraph is most significant since it indicates that Holston association, when organized, adopted Philadelphia's confession. Hence, it seems to follow that Holston was a *strictly* Calvinistic Baptist association. Holston's most recent historian indicates the association both adopted and kept Philadelphia's confession throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Toomey, 1985, p. 331ff).<sup>516</sup> However, two observations demand attention.

First, some evidence exists that when Holston adopted the Philadelphia confession as the theological platform upon which to unite churches together in cooperation, it was adopted as a *general* statement not to be binding in all its parts upon those agreeing to adopt. Indeed, just such a tentative adoption took place in Virginia only three years earlier between Regular and Separate Baptists. "To prevent it [i.e. the Philadelphia confession] from usurping a tyrannical power over the consciences of any: We do not mean that every person is to be bound to the strict observance of every thing therein contained, nor do we mean to make it, in any respect, superior or equal to the scriptures, in matters of faith and practice..." (Semple, 1894, pp. 68-69).

Since the leaders organizing the Holston association were Separate Baptists, such caveats would make reasonable sense. One such leader and first moderator of the Holston association was Tidence Lane (Holston Association, 1885, p. 21), the successor to Shubal Stearns, the "father" of Separate Baptists in the south (Sparks, 2001, pp. 48-71). Lane was reportedly, at best, a *moderate* Calvinist. Lane is described by historian, J. J. Burnett as, 'much sought in counsel by the churches. He was not so hard in doctrine as some of his brethren, his doctrinal belief being a modified Calvinism" (Malone, 1933, p. 582). One who embraced the entire PCF presumably would not be described as a *modified* Calvinist.

Another Separate Baptist leader at the beginning of the Holston association was William Murphy who, according to Holston minutes, was elected Clerk when Lane was elected Moderator (Ibid). J. Sparks indicates that not only did Murphy reject the Philadelphia confession, at least in parts, but others in Holston most probably did as well. 'William Murphy categorically declared that Holston had endorsed the Confession only as "a general statement of principles" and that no one

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<sup>516</sup> Toomey even entitles Philadelphia's confession the "Holston Confession."

in the association had ever been bound to a strict observance of the precepts of the document. In fact, some old Separates in Holston may never have accepted any portion of the Confession, and it is certain that Robert Elkin never did' (Sparks, 2001, p. 193). Thus, since Holston Baptists apparently only accepted the PCF as a "general statement of principles," caution should be followed in suggesting the association was wholly dependent upon and theologically loyal to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism.

Second, some evidence also exists indicating that by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Holston Baptists had confessionally left Philadelphia's articles of faith behind. In the 1844 minutes, Holston printed the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* (1833) as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Holston Association, 1844, pp. 5-8).<sup>517</sup> The following year, a request came from Jonesborough church that the association "consider the propriety of adopting the articles of faith as [printed] in the minutes of 1844" (Holston Association, 1845).<sup>518</sup> The association's response was clear: "We recommend the adoption, and request the churches to answer next year" (Ibid). The minutes for the next several years reflect no official feedback from Holston churches. Nor does it seem, that after the association's recommendation that New Hampshire's confession be adopted in 1845, a confession of any persuasion was published as late as 1890 (Holston Association, 1890). Hence, it remains tentative, at best, to conclude that Holston Baptists were advocates of Philadelphia's confession at the time of the Augusta convention.<sup>519</sup>

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<sup>517</sup> Also published was New Hampshire's Church Covenant immediately following the confession.

<sup>518</sup> The handwritten word in the minutes looks like "spread" as in "spread on the minutes of 1844" but "spread" makes little sense to the context. Whatever the actual word, it remains obvious the intention was *printed* or *published* in the minutes of 1844.

<sup>519</sup> Holston historian, G. Toomey, seems to have concluded the association had kept Philadelphia's confession as its theological declaration since he published it in its entirety in his work on the association, even naming the confession the "Holston Confession" (Toomey, 1985, p. 332ff). But Toomey curiously fails to mention that Holston's leadership recommended the adoption of the NHC in 1844. On the other hand, Tennessee Baptist historian, A. Wardin, appears to acknowledge and accept that Holston Baptists officially adopted the new confession in 1845 upon leadership's recommendation (Albert W. Wardin, 1999, p. 98). What can be reasonably concluded is, even if the association failed to adopt New Hampshire's confession in 1845, that the NHC was officially recommended for adoption by the churches, clearly indicates Holston's leadership held little, if any, dependence upon or theological loyalty to *strict* Calvinism as confessionally expressed in the PCF.

Tennessee's Big Hatchie association was organized by 15 churches in the western part of the state covering several counties (Allen, 1958, p. 1351). According to Wardin, Big Hatchie began with articles of faith but subsequently reversed its position concerning the propriety of confessions for associations. "In an unusual move, the Big Hatchie Association removed its confession [in 1844], declaring that confessions belonged only to the churches" (Albert W. Wardin, 1999, pp. 98, 585). If Wardin is correct, then it seems Big Hatchie Baptists would not be considered as confessionally dependent upon or theologically loyal to the PCF.

Even so, Big Hatchie Baptists apparently reversed its position on associational confessions once again.<sup>520</sup> In 1872, the minutes reveal that the Big Hatchie association adopted *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as its own (Big Hatchie Association, 1872, pp. 19-23). But the version of the NHC is J. Newton Brown's edition first published in his church manual in 1853 and republished in J. M. Pendleton's church manual in 1867.<sup>521</sup> Since J. R. Graves was an active leader among Big Hatchie Baptists at that time,<sup>522</sup> and Graves was personal friends with J. M. Pendleton, predictably Big Hatchie Baptists would adopt Brown's edition of New Hampshire's confession as published in Pendleton's manual.<sup>523</sup> Once again, the evidence appears to show that another Tennessee Baptist association held little or no confessional affinity to Philadelphia's confession at the time of the Augusta convention.

Wardin indicates that the Nolachucky, Tennessee, Cumberland, Concord, and Western District associations adopted "with minor modifications" an "abstract of principles taken from the Philadelphia Association" (Albert W. Wardin, 1999, p. 98). Tennessee's Concord association was organized in 1810 and remains the oldest association in the middle part of the state (Allen, 1958,

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<sup>520</sup> Wardin alludes to Big Hatchie's 1872 reversal (Ibid).

<sup>521</sup> For a full discussion of both Brown and Pendleton's manuals and the NHC, see chapter three.

<sup>522</sup> Graves was elected Moderator at Big Hatchie's 1872 session (Ibid, p. 2).

<sup>523</sup> It remains clear that in 1872 Big Hatchie adopted not the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession but the 18 articles of New Hampshire's confession as edited and expanded by Brown and published in his church manual in 1853, and later republished in Pendleton's manual in 1867 (see chapter three for a full discussion). However, Big Hatchie association mistakenly indicated in its 1893 minutes that the association adopted the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession. Embedded in Article 3 of Big Hatchie's constitution is affirmation that the association "shall have power to exclude any church, from the union which may depart from the orthodox principles of the Gospel, either in faith or practice. We refer to the Declaration of Faith as found in the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge" (Big Hatchie Association, 1893). But unlike the 16 articles published in the encyclopedia, Big Hatchie Baptists had adopted the 18 articles as found in Brown and Pendleton's manuals.

p. 1352). In his history of Tennessee Baptists, J. Grime concludes with Wardin that Concord association apparently embraced a strongly, if not *strictly*, Calvinistic confession upon its organization. “The Articles of Faith upon which Concord Association was constituted is a strong Calvinistic document” (Grime, 1902, p. 7). Of Concord’s 10 articles, four articles follow below.

Art. 3. We believe in the doctrine of Election, and that God chose his people in Christ before the foundation of the world.

Art. 4. We believe in the doctrine of original sin, and man’s impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and ability.

Art. 6. We believe that God’s elect shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Art. 7. We believe that the saints shall persevere in grace, and never finally fall away, and that good works are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification (Ibid).<sup>524</sup>

While articles 3 and 6 together may constitute a *moderate* to *strong* understanding of election, the language used is hardly reminiscent of Philadelphia’s doctrine of Unconditional Election. In Philadelphia’s confession Unconditional Election begins with God’s eternal decree. “God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity... all things whatsoever comes to pass...” (Confession, 1818, Chap III para 1).<sup>525</sup> In this decree, God’s glory is on display as He predestines some men and angels to life while decreeing others to face the just condemnation of their sin. “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice” (Ibid, para 3). Thus, both His mercy and justice find their fullest expression in His wise and sovereign decree, an eternal decree resulting in the fixed number of elect men and angels “so certain, and definite” and “unchangeably designed,” that the number “cannot be either increased or diminished” (Ibid, para 4). Warden mentions “minor modifications” in Concord’s abstract of the Philadelphia confession. However, neither Article 3 nor 7 appear to only lack “minor modifications” when it comes to the doctrine of election. One might compare the article on election from the Georgia Association:

4<sup>th</sup>. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory: And that there was a covenant of

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<sup>524</sup> For a copy of Concord’s full confession, see *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>525</sup> See chapter two for full exposition of the PCF and **TULIP**.

grace or redemption made between the Father and the Son, before the world began, in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed.<sup>526</sup>

Few, if any, question whether the Georgia association's article reflects Philadelphia's doctrine of Unconditional Election. However, Concord's article appears to lack far too much of the verbiage required to reflect the PCF as did the Georgia Association.<sup>527</sup>

Additionally, Concord Baptists apparently possessed a history of conflict over Calvinistic issues. In the mid-1820s, a major conflict arose dividing the association into 2 groups, both retaining the name, "Concord Baptist Association." According to an historical sketch of Concord association by George Loftun,

As already shown, Concord Association was a division of the Cumberland in 1809, but in 1824 the Concord itself was divided, and another association was formed and on the East of its territory—both, according to Benedict, claiming the name Concord, and divided upon doctrine, the Calvinistic or regular party claiming to be the first and the Arminian division being the second or separate party—the two Concords, however, uniting again and called Concord Association of United Baptists, about the year 1842 (Concord Association, 1897).

Grime indicates that in 1827,<sup>528</sup> all-out war was waged by the Separates against the *strict* Calvinists in the association "and at last they succeeded in gaining sufficient strength to carry the Association by a vote of about three to one" (Ibid, p. 9). Consequently, "The majority took the Articles of Faith and expunged every vestige of Calvinism, and then proceeded to form an Association of Separate Baptists, known as Concord No. 2" (Ibid, p. 10). According to Grime, two doctrinal issues were prominent and expressed in a Circular Letter penned by the *strict* Calvinists.

1) Christ died for every individual of the human race, for Pharaoh and Judas as much as for Abraham and Paul; that sinners wade through the blood of Christ to hell, and that, although he died for all alike, yet only some of the ransomed return and come to Zion. (2) That the Almighty by his Spirit operates on every individual, and perchance some become regenerated. Universalism in its premise, Calvinism in its conclusion (Ibid).

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<sup>526</sup> See *Appendix A* at the end of this research for a full copy of Georgia Association's abstract of faith.

<sup>527</sup> Western District association was organized in 1823 (Allen, 1958, p. 1355) and adopted articles of faith almost identical to Concord (Western District Association, 1823). It added an article on the Lord's Day (Article 8) making it total 11 articles rather than Concord's 10. By 1895, Western District Baptists had softened their confessional expression of election. "We believe that the doctrines [sic] of election as taught in the Bible, is through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (Western District Association, 1895, p. 15).

<sup>528</sup> Presuming both Loftun and Grime are speaking of the same conflict, Grime disputes the 1824 date and argues the division took place in 1827 (Grime, 1902, p. 10).

W. Cathcart testifies to the same conflict over *strictly* Calvinistic doctrines that took place in the Concord association in the 1820s, conflict which also was generally disturbing Baptists the state over. “About the year 1824 the denomination, which had been harmonious and prosperous, began to meet with reverses from internal discord. The doctrine of election and the extent of the atonement became topics of bitter discussion, and resulted in a division of churches and Associations, and two non-affiliating bodies of Baptists; the seceding party were called Separate Baptists, who built up several flourishing Associations” (Cathcart, 1881, p. 1142).

Loftun goes on to suggest that “from 1824 to 1840 the Association was much disturbed by controversies over its relation to the Separates and Anti-missionaries, doctrinal and missionary questions...” (Concord Association, 1897). Thus, given the perpetual struggle over *strict* Calvinist the association experienced right up to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, a struggle so divisive the association split twice over the confessional issues, it hardly appears reasonable that Concord Baptists could be cited as embracing Philadelphia’s confession as their own.<sup>529</sup>

The Hiwassee association was organized in 1821 (Allen, 1958, p. 1353) and was thriving at the time of the Augusta convention in 1845. Hiwassee Baptists adopted articles of faith composed of 11 articles commonly found in other confessions, five articles of which are listed below.

3d. We believe in election, according, to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit in belief of the truth.<sup>530</sup>

4th. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

5th. We believe in man’s impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by his own free will ability.

6th. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

7th. We believe that the saints will persevere in grace, and never fall finally away (Hiwassee Association, 1841).

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<sup>529</sup> Daniel Parker (1781-1844), one of the key leaders in the anti-missions movement, preached in the Concord association, his preaching predictably keeping the fires over Hyper-Calvinism burning (Parker, 1820, p. 7).

<sup>530</sup> Hiwassee’s article on election follows North Carolina’s Broad River confessional tradition in composing an article *affirming* the biblical doctrine of election while *rejecting* the unconditional election found in the PCF. Hiwassee, however, added “foreknowledge” as a factor in understanding the biblical doctrine of election. See the full discussion in chapter two.

As with many other abstracts examined in this research, no article in Hiwassee's abstract pertaining to election, atonement, human depravity, or applied redemption appears confessionally dependent upon or theologically loyal to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism.<sup>531</sup> Hence, it seems to soberly follow that Hiwassee Baptists can hardly be cited as embracing confessional affinity with the PCF.<sup>532</sup>

#### 6.3.3.2.5 Missouri Associations

Missouri had approximately 352 churches with over 17,000 members in 25 associations, making Missouri one of the largest southern states without a Baptist delegation in 1845.<sup>533</sup> However, a letter of support in lieu of delegates was sent to the Augusta gathering and read from the convention floor.

Concerning Missouri Baptists in general, most of the early associations apparently followed Kentucky Baptists' strategy when, in 1801, Calvinistic Baptists who generally accepted Philadelphia's confession as their confessional standard for member affiliated churches, and Separate Baptists who had serious reservations about some parts of the PCF, came together in associational cooperation under a document entitled "Terms of General Union."<sup>534</sup> And, according to Missouri Baptist historian, R. Duncan, the terms of union was the theological working document for most early Missouri Baptists. 'Most, if not all, of the oldest associations in the state were organized upon the "terms of union" adopted by the first United Baptists of America' (Duncan, 1882, p. 254). However, when the anti-missions controversy sprang up in the 1820s, many associations refused to honor the terms, apparently choosing instead to plead the *strict* Calvinism of Philadelphia.

All the oldest associations of Missouri were organized upon the principles of the United Baptists,<sup>535</sup> and when the controversy on missions sprang up, the opposers of missions refused to continue in fellowship with those who maintained the aforesaid principles of

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<sup>531</sup> Excluding, of course, perseverance of the saints (Article 7).

<sup>532</sup> Tennessee's Ocoee association was organized in 1841 (Allen, 1958, p. 1356). "Adopted the articles of Faith of the Hiwassee Association" (Ocoee Association, 1859, p. 2).

<sup>533</sup> See *Appendix D* at the end of this research for a complete list of associations in the southern states.

<sup>534</sup> For a full discussion of the union between Separates and Regulars, see chapter three. A copy of Kentucky's Terms of General Union (1801) is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>535</sup> i.e., the Terms of General Union.

the United Baptists, all of which may be seen by reference to the preceding account of the union of the Baptists (Ibid, p. 256).

Even more, some associations organized later in the century also appeared to have member churches affiliate with each other based upon Kentucky's terms of union. For example, Missouri's Bethel association was organized in 1835 in Marion county (Allen, 1958, p. 898).<sup>536</sup> Published in Bethel's 1843 minutes are the original 11 articles of Kentucky's 1801 Terms of General Union (Bethel Association, 1843, p. 7). The 13<sup>th</sup> order of business for the session reads, "Ordered that the articles of General Union, agreed to between Elkhorn and South Kentucky Associations, or Regular and Separate Baptists, in the year 1801, be printed with the minutes, in compliance with the request of some of our churches" (Ibid, p. 4). While nothing indicates in the document that the Terms of General Union was the officially accepted confessional document for Missouri's Bethel Baptists, it seems reasonable to presume the association itself was neither dependent upon nor theologically loyal to the PCF as the theological basis for association.<sup>537</sup>

The United Missionary Baptist Association was organized in 1835 (United Missionary, 1857, p. 1).<sup>538</sup> The Abstract of Principles adopted by the association was adapted from the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as published in the 1835 edition of *The*

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<sup>536</sup> Not to be confused with an earlier Bethel association organized in 1816, the first Baptist association to be organized in the Missouri Territory, and which became anti-missionary in 1824 (Allen, 1958, p. 906). Note, though, Duncan records a different date for Bethel's anti-missions departure: "Bethel Association has not connected herself, as a body, with any missionary organization, foreign or domestic, outside of her own bounds, since the year 1821, when the correspondence was dropped with the Foreign Board of Missions" (Duncan, 1882, p. 68).

<sup>537</sup> Obviously, some of Bethel's individual member churches may have accepted the PCF partially or perhaps even entirely. But for cooperative purposes between member churches within association, it seems doubtful the association would have adopted Philadelphia's confession as a doctrinal standard while at the same time also agreeing to publish the Terms of General Union.

<sup>538</sup> The *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* curiously has no entry for this association in Missouri. The present date was deduced from the date of the minutes (1857) and the fact that it was the "Twenty-Second Anniversary" meeting of the association. No other yearly minutes for the association was available for examination. Neither historian R. Duncan nor W. Yeaman seem to document the association (Yeaman, 1899). But handwritten words on the microfiche pouch for the minutes of the association identifies the contents as "Black River Association." M. Mitchell states the Black River association was organized in 1835, including at least some of the same counties and churches that are listed in the United Missionary association's register (Allen, 1958, p. 898). Also insightful is Duncan's remark that no minutes were extant for Black River association prior to 1860 (Ibid, p. 382). On the title page of the 1860 minutes is recorded, "Minutes of the 25th Anniversary of the Black River Association of the United Missionary Baptists" (Ibid). Given there existed a window of opportunity—albeit a small window of only three years—for a name change from "United Missionary Baptists" to "Black River Association of the United Missionary Baptists," and apparently no minutes extant in between, it seems reasonable to cautiously presume that the United Missionary association and the Black River association were identical Baptist bodies.

*Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Ibid, pp. 6-8).<sup>539</sup> Since New Hampshire's original 16 articles would present no conflict with Kentucky's Terms of General Union, the United Missionary association could reasonably have adopted both. Even so, since United Missionary Baptists held to the NHC, they cannot reasonably be cited as employing the PCF as a test of associational fellowship.<sup>540</sup>

Mitchell claims Missouri's Blue River association was organized in 1843 apparently resulting from a split in the Fishing River association (Allen, 1958, p. 898). However, Blue River's historian, M. Rice, dates its history almost a full decade earlier. "From the foregoing it will be seen that the Blue River Association dates its existence from the 11th of October, 1834, and commenced its career of Christian usefulness with 10 churches and 384 members or communicants" (Rice, 1890, p. 6).<sup>541</sup> The confessional basis upon which the association first cooperated is described by Rice as "similar to those found in the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*" (Ibid, pp. 4-5). However, so far as this researcher can detect, the first edition of encyclopedia was not until 1835. Hence, unless there existed a prior edition of the encyclopedia, Rice apparently was *describing* the contents of the abstract, comparing it to the 1835 edition of the encyclopedia with which he would have been familiar at the time of his history's publication.<sup>542</sup> Even so, Rice later records that embedded in Blue River Baptists' constitution was a reference to their association's confession. Article XI from Blue River's constitution follows.

Sec. 1. The Association accepts as the expression of the faith of the churches composing the union, the confession of faith published in *Pendleton's Church Manual*; commonly known as Newberry Confession of Faith (Rice, 1890, p. 89).<sup>543</sup>

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<sup>539</sup> Curiously, only 14 of 16 articles in New Hampshire's confession are published in United Missionary's confession. Articles XIV and XV (on Civil Government and the Righteous and Wicked respectively) are expunged.

<sup>540</sup> The Wyaconda association was organized in 1844 (Allen, 1958, p. 906). It too adopted the original articles of New Hampshire's confession as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Wyaconda Association, 1853, pp. 10-13). Similar to United Missionary Baptists, Wyaconda Baptists chose to leave out one of the 16 original articles, omitting Article XIV, On Civil Government.

<sup>541</sup> Since the date published in Mitchell's encyclopedia article is 1843, it very well may be the last two numbers in the date were transposed and remained undetected through final publication.

<sup>542</sup> For an extended discussion of the 1835 edition of the New Hampshire confession, see chapter three.

<sup>543</sup> It remains inexplicable why Blue River Baptists tagged New Hampshire's confession as the "Newberry Confession of Faith." No other documents examined in this research has uncovered a corroborating statement pertaining to New Hampshire's confession.

J. M. Pendleton published his church manual first in 1867 (Pendleton, 1867). Included in the manual is a version of New Hampshire's confession as amended and expanded by J. Newton Brown (Ibid, pp. 44-61).<sup>544</sup> Pendleton explicitly and rightly attributes the confession in his manual to Brown and not New Hampshire Baptists. "The Declaration of Faith was framed many years ago by J. Newton Brown" (Ibid, p. 43).<sup>545</sup>

Interesting also is that S. M. Brown (1855-1938) was active in the Blue River association (Rice, 1890, p. 83). He pastored churches affiliated with Blue River Baptists as well as went on to become a prominent leader in Missouri Baptist life (Allen, 1958, p. 202). Brown, in his little work on the atonement, took the *strictly* Calvinistic doctrine of limited atonement to task.

'A third error in thinking of the "great salvation" has been in limiting the atonement to those who were chosen unto salvation before the foundation of the world, or those who are called "the elect." (a) This view is so palpably in the face of the plainest declaration of Scriptures that one is surprised to meet up with it' (Brown, [19\_\_], p. 56).

For Brown, to be commanded to preach the gospel to the "whole creation" plainly implies there is "a gospel" for the "whole creation." Thus, Brown concludes, "to limit the objective work of Christ for the salvation of men would be plainly in violation of an intuitive sense of impartiality which is revolting, or would seem to be, to us all" (Ibid, pp. 56-57). Indeed, Brown pronounced both Calvinists and Arminians wrong on the atonement (Ibid, pp. 89-96). Therefore, given the history of Blue River Baptists, it hardly seems reasonable to presume they would have been amenable toward adopting the PCF as the basis of affiliation between member churches.<sup>546</sup>

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<sup>544</sup> The original NHC seems to have been first published for mass distribution in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* when Brown was editor of the encyclopedia. For a full discussion on the NHC and Brown and Pendleton's manuals, see chapter three.

<sup>545</sup> Brown does not mention New Hampshire at all in his 1867 manual.

<sup>546</sup> That there existed among Missouri Baptists *strict* Calvinists who both welcomed and even adhered to the PCF, and also who were not anti-missions advocates remains beyond dispute. For example, in 1849, Missouri Baptists' first institution of higher learning was established in Liberty—William Jewel College (Allen, 1958, p. 707). Two decades later, college trustees created a theological prep school for Baptist pastors. The first article in the school's constitution read: "1. This school shall be called 'The Jeremiah Vardeman School of Theology,' in which the doctrines of Divine grace, as exhibited in the Philadelphia Baptist Confession of Faith, shall be forever taught" (Duncan, 1882, p. 857). Ironically, however, rather than embracing the *strict* Calvinistic understanding of limited atonement as presented in the PCF, Vardeman held to general redemption (Ibid, pp. 224-225).

The Concord Baptist Association was organized in 1823 in Cooper county, Missouri (Allen, 1958, p. 899). The anti-missions movement disturbed fellowship among Concord Baptists beginning in 1827 (Duncan, 1882, p. 252), and ended with the departure of a small number of members. “This schismatical body held together for several years, and then became extinct; and the old Concord Association continued its course unharmed and in great harmony” (Ibid, pp. 253-254). While the Concord association of churches united on the basis of Kentucky’s Terms of General Union (Ibid), it nonetheless published a confession in harmony with the union terms. Concord’s “Principles of Union” included 12 articles very similar in content to other Baptist confessions across the south (Concord Association, 1836).

Articles 1 and 2 affirm the Triune nature of God and the sole authority of Scripture for faith and practice respectively. Article 3 affirms Adam’s fall, and by it, all persons now fall and are “made sinners.” Article 4 confesses Christ’s imputed righteousness to us by means of faith, a faith producing good works, while Article 5 affirms perseverance of the saints.<sup>547</sup> Worthy of note is Concord’s lack of confessional belief in election of predestination. No article in Concord’s confession addresses perhaps the most significant theological factor signaling whether a statement of faith is *strictly* Calvinistic and bears confessional affinity with the PCF.

Nor may it be concluded that Concord association had no *strictly* Calvinistic churches as cooperating members of its organization. Indeed, the very church from which Concord association took its name—Concord Baptist Church—was a *strictly* Calvinistic confessing church. Duncan includes Concord church’s confession in his profile of the churches affiliated with the Concord association. Concord Baptist Church’s confession included 9 brief articles, the 4<sup>th</sup> article of which reads, “We believe the doctrine of particular election, especial calling...” (Duncan, 1882, p. 150). Unlike Concord church, however, the Concord association made no effort to hold its member churches to a particular understanding of election. Hence, Concord Baptists could hardly be cited as adopting the PCF as its own.

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<sup>547</sup> Concord’s full confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

Spring River association was organized in 1840 (Allen, 1958, p. 905). Its articles of faith is similar in both wording and theological scope to the Concord association's confession (Spring River Association, 1852, no page number). Also, like Concord, Spring River had no article on election. However, Spring River's article on human depravity seems consistent with Philadelphia's insistence that Adam's posterity sinfully "fell with him." Article 3 in Spring River's confession reads thusly: "We believe in the fall of Adam, and that all his posterity fell in him and were made sinners..."<sup>548</sup> Arguably Spring River meant to reflect the PCF at this point. Even so, with no article on election, as well as the association's alignment to Kentucky's Terms of General Union, it seems doubtful Spring River Baptists' held its member churches to the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrines of grace found in the PCF.

West Fork association was organized in 1845 by only three churches in the northern part of Missouri (Allen, 1958, p. 908). The articles of faith the association adopted displays little difference from other abstracts at the time.<sup>549</sup> Like both Concord and Spring River Baptists, West Fork Baptists lacked an article dealing with election. Add the missing article on election to the terms of union under which West Fork operated, and it seems reasonable to assume West Fork Baptists did not embrace the PCF as a theological lens through which to interpret its abstract. One unique aspect about West Fork's confession merits attention. "2. We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, (the translation made in the reign of King James) are the words of God, and the only rule of Faith and practice" (West Fork Baptist Association, 1848). No other articles from any confession examined in this research cites specifically what translation of the Bible it references as the "only rule of Faith and practice." West Fork Baptists were apparently unique in their insistence upon "King James Version" only.<sup>550</sup>

Missouri's Salt River association was organized in 1823 in Pike county (Allen, 1958, p. 905). Since Salt River Baptists were organized as "United Baptists," their confessional basis of cooperation was undoubtedly Kentucky's Terms of General Union. The association's Articles of Faith confirm

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<sup>548</sup> A copy of Spring River's confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>549</sup> A copy of West Fork's confession is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

<sup>550</sup> West Fork's article on human depravity is identical to Spring River's above, and the comments there apply also to West Fork association.

this, as it was a mixture of articles taken directly from the terms of union along with articles written by the association.<sup>551</sup> One article—Article 10—added by Salt River Baptists to the terms of union concerned the doctrine of election. “10. We believe in election by grace” (Salt River Association, 1840). While Salt River Baptists sensed the need to confess belief in the doctrine, neither did they place confessional parameters on interpreting the doctrine of election through the lens of Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism.

#### 6.4 Conclusion: *Strict* Calvinism, the Philadelphia Confession, and the Formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the purpose pursued here was not to discover either the reasons for or the need of a new convention of Baptists in the south. Rather sought was to examine the confessional evidences of the southern states to discern, if possible, the soteriological beliefs of Baptists in the south when the southern convention was organized at Augusta, Georgia in 1845. Particularly of interest to the thesis of this research was the *shade* of Calvinistic belief among Baptists and whether it seems reasonable to conclude, as do some Southern Baptist historians and theologians, represented perhaps best by T. George, that ‘each of the 293 “delegates”...who gathered in Augusta to organize the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, belonged to congregations and associations which had adopted the Philadelphia/Charleston Confession of Faith as their own” (George & George, 1996, p. 11).

As this chapter progressed, evidence was presented from the published records of associational meetings of Baptists from both the states represented in Augusta as well as states that, while not officially represented with delegates present at the Augusta meeting, nonetheless had sympathetic affinities toward organizing a southern convention. In total, confessional evidence was presented from 12 southern states and dozens of Baptist associations. The evidence seems overwhelming when the confessions from the Baptist associations examined are soteriologically compared with either the Philadelphia confession itself or from faith abstracts commonly accepted as reflecting the PCF. Not only is it false to claim that the 293 delegates who met at

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<sup>551</sup> Copies of Kentucky’s 1801 Terms of General Union and Salt River’s confession are included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

Augusta in 1845 to organize a southern convention came from churches and associations that had embraced the Philadelphia confession as their own, but also, arguably, it may even be questionable that a bare majority of the delegates who attended the Georgia meeting came from churches and associations that had embraced the Philadelphia confession as their own.

Even so, the purpose of the research in this chapter was not to gain insight into whether most Augusta delegates held to confessionally *strict* Calvinism. To demonstrate such a proposition, exhaustive research into each delegate's credentials, church, association, and entities or organizations to which each delegate was affiliated would be necessary to finalize accurate numbers. Moreover, given the confusion still surrounding the actual delegates, their identities and their churches, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, actual numbers for determining percentages seem hardly possible.

Rather the purpose of proposing the confessional evidence in this chapter was to demonstrate soteriological diversity pertaining to *shades* of Calvinistic belief expressed by theological loyalty to or confessional dependence upon the PCF among Baptists of the south when the southern convention was organized in 1845.<sup>552</sup> Happily, this proved a productive strategy since a rich archive exists for examining the history of individual associations through the common practice of published minutes of the association's annual sessions. Consequently, the confessional evidence from existing associations presented seems to decisively show that theological diversity on Calvinistic issues among Baptists in the south certainly existed in 1845, and hence most probably was present in Augusta for the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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<sup>552</sup> Assumed throughout this research is the proposition that theological loyalty to and confessional dependence upon the PCF is limited to soteriological articles in Philadelphia's confession that are *strictly* Calvinistically oriented (i.e. **TULIP**). Obviously, there is massive theological overlap between the PCF, the NHC, and most every Baptist abstract of faith examined in this research. The nature and inspiration of Scripture; the Triune nature of God; Jesus as the exclusive Mediator and only Savior; justification by faith and the imputation of Christ's righteousness; Jesus' second coming; resurrection of the dead; eternal bliss for God's saints and eternal punishment for the ungodly; and perseverance of the saints. Concerning these theological propositions, there remains virtual unanimity among all confessions composed and/or adopted by Baptists in the south as examined in this study. Also, ecclesiological articles pertaining to the ordinances of the church; church government; immersion for believers only; and close communion have virtually no disagreement. Disagreement exists, however, when it comes to the issues of applied redemption; some adopting or reflecting the *strictly* Calvinistic doctrines of the PCF on Unconditional Election, Total Depravity, Irresistible Grace, and Particular Redemption while others revising and/or "toning down" those doctrines, while still others either denying or completely ignoring them.

More specifically, numerous associations in Alabama, Louisiana, the Carolinas, and Virginia that sent delegates to the Augusta meeting apparently seems to have had no theological loyalty to or confessional dependence upon the PCF. Even Georgia, the state possessing the largest number of associations represented in Augusta that adopted *strictly* Calvinistic confessions, had significant exceptions.

In many instances, associations had adopted the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* (1833) first published on a national market in 1835 in *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* edited by J. Newton Brown.<sup>553</sup> Other associations adopted articles of faith that either followed the tradition of North Carolina's Broad River association (1800) that had rejected Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election and thus dropped the article on election from the accepted abstract of faith that stated, "We believe in eternal particular election," replacing it with "We believe in the doctrine of *Election* through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth"<sup>554</sup>; or, if not rewriting the article, the association dropped the article on election altogether. South Carolina's Edgefield association pursued the latter course by dropping the article on election from its confession of faith. That one of Edgefield association's leading men (W. B. Johnson) was elected as the first president of the southern convention at the 1845 Augusta meeting seems significant since the very association he represented apparently held no theological loyalty to or confessional dependence upon Philadelphia's confession.

Instead of rewriting articles or dropping articles from their accepted confessions, some associations appear to have avoided confessions altogether. Virginia had approximately 33 associations in 1845 with six associations represented in Augusta. However, many of Virginia associations appear to have adopted no confessions of faith, or, if they had adopted them, failed to publish them in the annual minutes. Hence, it would be unreasonable to presume those

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<sup>553</sup> See chapter three for a full discussion of the NHC.

<sup>554</sup> See the full discussion on the North Carolina's Yadkin and Broad River's confessional traditions in adopting abstracts of faith in chapter two.

associations without extant confessions would necessarily have possessed theological affinities toward the PCF.

What is more, southern states that sent no delegation yet possessed sympathies with other Baptists of the south in organizing a southern convention were examined as well. Associations in Mississippi, Florida, Arkansas, Missouri, and Tennessee were presented. And while some associations seemed to hold theological loyalty to and confessional dependence upon Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism, other associations revealed both *moderate* and *mild* Calvinism, if Calvinism at all.

In conclusion, the theological diversity pertaining to Calvinism as expressed in associational confessions found in the southern states not represented at Augusta in 1845 was very similar to the theological diversity pertaining to Calvinism as expressed in associational confessions found in the southern states that were represented at Augusta in 1845. Hence, it seems unreasonable to either claim or presume, as some historians appear to do, that *strict* Calvinism as confessionally expressed in the Philadelphia Confession of Faith was the dominating theological influence over Baptists of the south during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Nor does it seem historically viable to suggest that it was not until after 1853, when J. Newton Brown, published his church manual that included an amended and extended edition of New Hampshire's confession that Baptists in the south began to adopt it. Rather, as the evidence shows, numerous Baptist associations across the south had adopted the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.

## Chapter Seven: Baptist Confessionalism and Associations in the Southern States in the Late Nineteenth Century

### 7.1. Introduction

Confessional evidence presented in chapters four through six came from 12 southern states and dozens of Baptist associations. Dozens of Baptist associations confessionally held no allegiance to the strict Calvinism embedded in the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

In addition, as the confessions and abstracts from mid-century were examined and soteriologically compared with either the Philadelphia confession itself or faith abstracts commonly accepted as reflecting the PCF, it seems the claim that the 293 delegates who met at Augusta in 1845 to organize a southern convention came from churches and associations that had embraced the Philadelphia confession as their own must be judged as demonstrably false.

Also, the frequent claims that New Hampshire's confession did not become popular in the southern states until after it was published in J. Newton Brown's church manual in 1853 must also be forsaken in light of the evidence presented in chapter four. Forthcoming in the present chapter is unpredictable evidence that some associations still preferred and embraced the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* up through the century's end. This fact alone should temper the judgment of historians who appear to suggest that it was not until Brown's version of the NHC was published in 1853 wherein he added two articles that presumably strengthened the weak Calvinism presented in the original 1833 confession that Baptists of the south began to embrace the NHC so voluminously.

G. Wills, for example, describes both the rise of the NHC and the response of Baptists in the southern states toward it. "New Hampshire Baptists...sought to soften their Calvinist identity... They adopted a new confession in 1833 that expunged or obscured such Calvinist distinctives as human depravity, imputed righteousness, and eternal election. With later modifications back

toward Calvinism, it became the most popular Baptist confession by the early twentieth century” (Wills, 1997, p. 110). While Wills does not explicitly suggest that the “later modifications” indicating a supposed shift back toward Calvinism were Brown’s amendments and additional articles, by deduction, Brown seems to be the only one who fits Wills’ claim.<sup>555</sup>

Below are selected confessions and abstracts from Baptist associations in several states across the south from the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>556</sup> The evidences presented appear to strengthen the inference from the associational evidences presented from the first half of the century. Namely, that confessionally *strict* Calvinism as expressed either in the PCF itself, or in abstracts of faith confessionally dependent upon or theologically loyal to Philadelphia’s confessional tradition, continued to both experience rival, and therefore diverse, confessional traditions in each of the southern states considered as well as decline in loyalty to and dependence upon the Philadelphia confessional tradition throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Before the century’s end, but certainly by the century’s end, while *strict* Calvinism was far from confessionally dead among Baptists in the south, the evidences indicate it seems to have suffered a mortal wound.

## 7.2 Southern States Organizing the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845: Selected Associations and Confessions in the Latter 19<sup>th</sup> Century

### 7.2.1 Select Alabama Associations and Confessions in the Latter 19th Century

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<sup>555</sup> Curiously, Wills is aware that the original 16 articles of the NHC was published in *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* but seems to miss the proverbial writing on the wall (Ibid).

<sup>556</sup> No attempt was made to present an exhaustive collection of confessions from either every southern state or every association in any state since it would include many hundreds of Baptist associations, far too much for a single research project. Rather the selected associations from various southern states are intended to illustrate both a *diversity* of confessional soteriological belief concerning the *strict* Calvinistic doctrines reflected in the PCF as well as, in some cases, a *decline* in linguistic dependence upon and theological loyalty to the Philadelphia confessional tradition. *Diversity* of confessional soteriological belief on the *strictly* Calvinistic doctrines in the PCF may be illustrated by the two different confessional heritages of adopting abstracts of faith beginning with North Carolina’s Yadkin and Broad River associations. See chapter two for a full discussion. *Decline* in confessional dependence upon and theological loyalty to the Philadelphia confessional tradition may be amply illustrated by many associations in the south that either dropped articles concerning *strictly* Calvinistic doctrines like Unconditional Election and the doctrine of election altogether or changed the language so significantly in an article dealing with a *strictly* Calvinistic doctrine, that similarities to Philadelphia’s confession were removed. Given the hundreds of Baptist associations, more research is required to gauge more precisely how extensive the diversity was and how intensive was the decline.

When the century began, Alabama could only boast of a handful of associations and just over a hundred Baptist churches in the first century's quarter (Allen, 1958, p. 28). By 1900, there existed 80 or more associations with almost 1,800 member churches (Ibid). About 50 of those 80 associations were launched after the Southern Baptist Convention was organized in 1845.<sup>557</sup> Did the associations launched in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century embrace the Philadelphia confessional tradition, or were they more inclined to adopt abstracts of faith reflecting North Carolina's Broad River confessional tradition by distancing themselves from *strictly* Calvinistic doctrines found in the PCF? As the evidence unfolds, it appears the Philadelphia confessional tradition continued to either have less appeal or perhaps lose appeal among many Alabama Baptists.

While Alabama's Birmingham Baptist Association was established in 1833 (Allen, 1958, p. 6), it remains fascinating that Birmingham Baptists remained confessionally loyal to the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. As late as 1896, the Birmingham association continued to publish all 16 articles in their annual minutes (Birmingham Association, 1896, pp. 35-38). What is more, written into Article XV of their constitution was their commitment to the NHC: "This Association adopts as voicing its views of Religious truth the New Hampshire Confession of Faith" (Ibid, p. 34).<sup>558</sup> Again, one may note the impact the original 16 articles of the NHC made upon Baptists in the south even at the century's end.

Nor was the Birmingham association the only Baptist association in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century influenced by the original 16 articles of the NHC. Alabama's Clear Creek association was constituted by 11 churches mostly in Winston County on October 9, 1874 (Allen, 1958, p. 8). Rather than adopting the NHC as written, Clear Creek Baptists chose to use New Hampshire's original articles as a foundational model upon which to build their own confessional document entitled "Baptist Declaration of Faith" (Clear Creek Association, 1886, p. 5). The confession

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<sup>557</sup> See *Appendix F* at the end of this research.

<sup>558</sup> Though the article did not identify the NHC as the edition published in the 1835 edition of the encyclopedia, one may quickly infer such by examining the articles published in the minutes. See *Appendix C* at the end of this research for comparing different editions of the NHC.

contains 16 articles, but those articles are not identical to New Hampshire's articles. For example, Article 16 reads, "That Saints ought to wash each others feet" (Ibid, p. 7). The sixth article in New Hampshire's original confession was "On the Freeness of Salvation," an article Clear Creek Baptists inexplicably skipped entirely in its confession.<sup>559</sup> Also, in Clear Creek's version of the article entitled "Of Grace in Regeneration,"<sup>560</sup> only the first half of the original article is included.

That in order to be saved, we must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind, and is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation, by [the Holy Ghost.] **the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence is found in the holy fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God.**<sup>561</sup>

Clear Creek Baptists add a significant portion to the article on the ordinances.<sup>562</sup> While the association copies almost verbatim the entire article on Baptism and the Lord's Supper found in the original NHC, they add, at the end of the article, "and that none have a right to administer it only such as are called, qualified and come unto the hand of the Presbytery" (Ibid, p. 7), a phrase common in Baptist abstracts across the south. While the original 16 articles of the NHC were not actually adopted by Clear Creek Baptists, to deny the 1835 edition of New Hampshire's statement of faith a powerful influence upon the Clear Creek association seems most unreasonable.

Similarly, Alabama's Shelby association used the original 16 articles of the NHC as first published in the 1835 edition of Brown's encyclopedia as a model for at least some of its articles of faith. Organized in 1851, B. Davidson states the association adopted an abstract of faith but failed to identify or describe it (Allen, 1958, p. 11). In 1861, the association published in its annual minutes the "Abstract of Principles of the Shelby Association of Baptist Churches" (Shelby Association, 1861, pp. 7-8). The confession is composed of 10 brief articles, nine articles of which are very

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<sup>559</sup> See *Appendix B* at the end of this research for a complete copy of the original 16 articles of the NHC as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Also, see *Appendix C* for comparing three different editions of the NHC. Note: no indication exists that Clear Creek Baptists skipped Article 6 "On the Freeness of Salvation" because they denied that salvation was free.

<sup>560</sup> "Of Grace in Regeneration" is Article 6 in Clerk Creek's confession but, because they skipped an article, is Article VII in the original NHC.

<sup>561</sup> Clear Creek's article on regeneration ends with "Holy Ghost" and the remainder of the article found in the original article published in the 1835 edition is omitted by Clear Creek Baptists (indicated by the embolden above) (Brown, 1835, p. 191).

<sup>562</sup> "Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper" is Article XII in the original NHC while it is Article 11 in Clear Creek's confession.

much like abstracts found in other associations across the southern United States. However, article 3 on election is copied almost verbatim from “Article VIII: Of God’s Purpose of Grace” as published in the 1835 edition of the original NHC.<sup>563</sup>

While Shelby association’s article on election was influenced by the original NHC, Sulphur Springs association’s abstract of faith, which looked very much like Shelby’s confession, included an article on the freeness of the gospel obviously influenced by the NHC. Organized in 1872, Sulphur Springs Baptists’ abstract had 12 brief articles, article 7 of which is stated below:

We believe the blessings of salvation are made free to all the human family by the gospel; that it is the duty of all intelligent persons to accept them with a cordial, persistent and obedient faith, and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his or her refusal or voluntary rejection of the gospel requirements, repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which rejection involves them into condemnation without defense or excuse (Sulphur Springs Association, 1891, p. 15).

Given the way the article reads, it remains difficult to determine whether Sulphur Baptists used the 1835 edition of the NHC or Brown’s 1853 edition in his church manual.<sup>564</sup> Even so, it remains obvious Sulphur Springs Baptists appeared to hold little, if any, theological allegiance to Philadelphia’s confessional tradition. Article 3 on election simply states, “We believe in the doctrine of election, and that God chose His people in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy” (Ibid).

Contrary to the difficulty discerning whether Sulphur Springs Baptists were influenced either by J. Newton Brown’s church manual published in 1853 or the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, it remains obvious which edition of the NHC bore confessional influence on the Troy Baptist Association. Established in 1884 (Allen, 1958, p. 15), Troy Baptists adopted

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<sup>563</sup> See *Appendix C* at the end of this research for comparison differences between the original NHC and two subsequent editions of the NHC published by W. Crowell (1850) and J. Brown (1853). None of the extra verbiage included in Brown’s edition was in Shelby Baptists’ article. Rather, it stuck with the original wording of the 1835 edition of the NHC.

<sup>564</sup> See the comparison in *Appendix C* at the end of this research. Complicating the issue is, Sulphur Springs Baptists apparently pulled some verbiage from “Article III: Of the Fall of Man” and incorporated it into the article on the freeness of the gospel. While it may tilt either way, the weight of linguistic matters appears to suggest Sulphur Springs likely used Brown’s church manual published in 1853.

“Articles of Faith,” the content of which were the 16 original articles published in the 1835 encyclopedia (Troy Association, 1884, pp. 4-6).

The Cullman Baptist Association was organized in 1883 from churches lettered out from the Sulphur Springs association (Allen, 1958, p. 13). Article 11 in Cullman Baptists’ constitution states, “This association adopts the articles of faith known as the New Hampshire Confession, found in Crowell’s Church Members’ Hand-Book” (Cullman Association, 1899, p. 13). The “Articles of Christian Belief” in William Crowell’s church handbook published in 1850 are virtually identical to the original 16 articles of faith identified as *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* edited by J. Newton Brown.<sup>565</sup> Again, the original NHC carries confessional weight in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Alabama’s Judson association was organized in the southeastern region of the state in 1851 (Allen, 1958, p. 9). B. Davidson claims the association adopted articles of faith but fails to identify the articles. According to their annual session minutes, Judson Baptists adopted the original 16 articles of New Hampshire’s confession as published in the 1835 edition of Brown’s encyclopedia (Judson Association, 1861, pp. 19-24).<sup>566</sup> Three decades later, New Providence association was established in Covington, Coffee, and Crenshaw counties in 1889 (Allen, 1958, p. 14). Published as their “Articles of Faith” in 1893 is the NHC as it first appeared in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (New Providence Association, 1893, pp. 6-7). In addition, Pine Barren association organized in 1850,<sup>567</sup> was dependent upon the original 16 articles of NHC as published in 1835 (Pine Barren Association, 1887, pp. 15-17). All 16 articles are included yet some of them are slightly edited, but without any substantial change. Thus, as late as 1887, Pine Barren Baptists still depended upon the original 16 articles published in 1835.

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<sup>565</sup> Crowell, 1850, pp. 19-28; Brown, 1835, p. 191.

<sup>566</sup> While Judson Baptists used the exact language in the entire 16 articles of the original NHC, they uniquely sectioned each article by inserting numbers within the article itself for each theological assertion, and following each article, they identified key biblical proof-texts with corresponding numbers to each of the sections in the respective article. It looks very much like a catechetical tool for teaching purposes.

<sup>567</sup> B. Davison states the association organized in 1950, an obvious typo. The association organized in 1850 (Allen, 1958, p. 10).

Alabama's Montgomery association was organized in 1882, and, according to B. Davidson, adopted "abstract of principles," though like so many other associations Davidson profiles, the theological content is not mentioned in the historical profile (Allen, 1958, p. 10). Montgomery Baptists published their confession of faith in their annual minutes four years after they organized. The "Declaration of Faith of the Montgomery Baptist Association" is identical to New Hampshire's original 16 articles as it first appeared in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Montgomery Association, 1885, pp. 17-19). Montgomery Baptists chose New Hampshire's original confession rather than Brown's edition in his church manual published in 1853, presumably after Brown's edition was abundantly available in 1885.<sup>568</sup>

Given the number of Baptist associations in Alabama still using, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the original 16 articles of the NHC as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*,<sup>569</sup> and some associations using it, as did Troy Baptists, as the foundation document in organizing an association as late as 1884, it appears the impact that New Hampshire's original 16 articles had on Baptists in the south has been woefully underestimated by most of the historians consulted in this inquiry.

In addition to the impressive number of Alabama associations cited above that were still influenced by the original 16 articles of the NHC as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century, there exist many Alabama Baptist associations that were also influenced by Brown's 1853 edition in adopting the NHC as its official doctrinal statement, associations including Alabama's Big Bear Association (Big Bear Association, 1895, pp. 13-17); Calhoun County association (Calhoun Association, 1882, pp. 8-12); Marshall Missionary association (Marshall Missionary Association, 1897, pp. 7-9); Gilliam Springs association (Gilliam Springs Association, 1909, pp. 19-23); Warrior River association (Warrior

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<sup>568</sup> For more Alabama associations in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century embracing the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, see the Alabama Association (Alabama Association, 1864, pp. 21-24); Cahaba association (Cahaba Association, 1851, pp. 21-23); Unity Baptist Association (Unity Association, 1867, pp. 11-13); North River (North River Association, 1844, pp. 5-7); Zion association (Zion Association, 1859, pp. 10-12).

<sup>569</sup> Until an exhaustive examination of Alabama Baptist associations existing in the 19<sup>th</sup> has been pursued, measuring the full impact of New Hampshire's original confession will remain incomplete. Indeed, the same could be said of most all the southern states represented in this research.

River Association, 1874, pp. 14-16); Muscle Shoals association (Muscle Shoals Association, 1888, p. 20); and Mobile Baptist Association (Mobile Association, 1900, p. 2).

Most probably other Alabama associations adopted Brown's 1853 edition of the NHC, and, as with associations either influenced by or adopted in full the original 16 articles of the NHC cited above, only an exhaustive examination of Alabama's associations would reveal the impact of the NHC edition in Brown's church manual after 1853.<sup>570</sup> However, just the fact that a large number of Alabama associations either adopted the original 16 articles of the NHC or Brown's 1853 NHC edition seems to seriously question the claim that the *strict* Calvinism displayed in the Philadelphia confessional tradition was either the dominant theological posture of Baptists in the south, or even the majority theological posture of Baptists in the south, in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>571</sup>

Not all Baptist associations in Alabama that were neither confessionally loyal to nor theologically dependent upon Philadelphia's confessional tradition looked to New Hampshire's confession for doctrinal expression. As influential as New Hampshire Baptists were in expressing a mild and gentle Calvinism contra Philadelphia's *strict* doctrinal version, many associations still followed a confessional model like North Carolina's Broad River's association in adopting brief abstracts of faith.<sup>572</sup> Others like the Cedar Bluff Baptist Association followed a more liberating, literary

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<sup>570</sup> Note, little, if any, merit seems to exist in arguments by some that Brown's 1853 edition of the NHC supposedly reinserted a stronger Calvinism back into the 1853 edition which led to more acceptance by Baptists in the south. This claim appears to exist only as presumptuous assertion without evidence. See chapter four for a full discussion of the NHC.

<sup>571</sup> More evidence presented below will demonstrate this claim further. Note, also, that no inference should be made from the evidence presented here that the Philadelphia confessional tradition was absent in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century south. Indeed, Baptist associations confessionally loyal to and theologically dependent upon Philadelphia's confessional tradition expressed often in articles explicitly indicating "We believe in eternal particular election" can be found in associations across the south even in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. For examples of the Philadelphia confessional tradition still alive in Alabama in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, see Alabama's East Liberty association (East Liberty Association, 1899, p. 22); Union association (Union Association [AL], 1844, p. 5); and Tuskegee Baptist Association (Tuskegee Association, 1875, p. 6) among others. Rather, the purpose of this research is to demonstrate, on one hand, *diversity* among Baptist associations in the southern states during the 19<sup>th</sup> century concerning the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrines of grace as expressed mostly in associational confessions and abstracts of faith, and, on the other, to show *decline* among southern Baptist associations during the 19<sup>th</sup> century of their confessional loyalty to and theological dependence upon the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

<sup>572</sup> For full discussions on both North Carolina's and Kentucky's brief abstracts of faith, see chapters four and six.

approach and rather than confess “canned” articles others wrote, chose instead to compose articles they appear to have uniquely constructed.

Established in 1884 in northeast Alabama (Allen, 1958, p. 13), Cedar Bluff Baptists’ “Declaration of Faith and Practice” was composed of 16 articles, four of which are reproduced below.

V. That Adam, the natural head and representative of all mankind, fell from his state of original purity, and that by his disobedience all his posterity are made sinners.

VI. That by the obedience of Christ alone sinners are restored to the favor of God, and through His unmerited mercy receive regeneration, pardon, justification, sanctification and glorification.

VII. That those blessings are communicated by that Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, so that those who are saved are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of themselves; not of work, lest, any man should boast; not by words of righteousness which they have done, but by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

VIII. That God works all things after the counsel of His own will; foreknown unto Him are all His works from the beginning, and that of course, all that the Father hath given to Christ shall come to Him, and that He will raise them up at the last day, so that His sheep will hear. His voice shall never perish, become dead to the world and to sin, be made alive to God and when He who is their life shall come, appear with Him in glory (Cedar Bluff Association, 1893, p. 11).

For Cedar Bluff Baptists, no linguistic connection is made in Article V to Philadelphia’s *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Total Depravity. Nor is there theological dependence upon Philadelphia’s confessional tradition concerning regeneration, justification, sanctification, or any aspect of redemption applied. Arguably, Article VIII possesses language reflecting Philadelphia’s covenant of redemption in asserting “all that the Father hath given to Christ shall come to Him.” However, this remains presumptuous since the intention in the article does not necessarily reflect the PCF and the eternal covenant of redemption wherein the elect “in particular are redeemed.” Rather the article reflects Jesus’ words in John 6:37-40, a passage possessing no intrinsic ties to a supposed covenant of redemption.<sup>573</sup> What is more, the article proposes God’s foreknowledge as a major role in understanding “all that the Father hath given to Christ,” a role

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<sup>573</sup> For a scholarly exposition of John 6:37-40 that interprets Jesus’ words without alluding to a supposed covenant of redemption, see D. Allen’s work on the atonement (Allen, 2016, pp. 696-698). See also G. Borchert’s helpful commentary on 6:37-40. He views the passage as John’s emphasis upon the tension between divine sovereignty and human free will presented throughout Scripture (Borchert, 1987, pp. 111-115).

that seems to be denied in the PCF.<sup>574</sup> In short, Cedar Bluff Baptists, at most, represent *moderate* Calvinism; therefore, they reflect little allegiance to the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

The Coosa River Baptist Association was established in 1833 (Allen, 1958, p. 8).<sup>575</sup> The articles of faith Coosa River Baptists embraced reveals no confessional dependence upon or theological loyalty to Philadelphia's *strictly* Calvinistic confessional tradition. Three articles at the heart of Coosa Baptists' understanding of applied redemption state:

3. We believe in the doctrine of election by grace, and that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Christ.

4 We believe in the doctrine of original sin, and that man is incapable of recovering himself from the fallen state he is in by his own freewill and ability.

5 We believe the Saints shall persevere in grace, and never finally fall away.

Coosa Baptists' article on election stating "We believe in the doctrine of election by grace..." could fit most any Christian affirmation that the Bible teaches the doctrine of election. Philadelphia's confessional tradition held no influence for Coosa Baptists.

Alabama's Macedonia association was organized in 1880 with churches in Washington county (Allen, 1958, p. 14). The association adopted articles of faith, twelve in number, most articles of which were duplicated in abstracts from associations all over the south (Macedonia Association, 1892, pp. 10-11). Article 5 on election is particularly insightful as to whether Macedonia Baptists either confessionally depended upon or were theologically loyal to Philadelphia's confessional tradition. "We believe in the doctrine of election by grace, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth" (Ibid, p. 10). Macedonia's article on election is very similar to North Carolina's Broad River associational abstract, an abstract specifically composed by Broad River Baptists who consciously rejected the Unconditional Election in the Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>576</sup> An additional clause is added affirming the role of foreknowledge in election, a factor unappreciated in the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

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<sup>574</sup> For more on *strict* Calvinism in the PCF, see chapter two for a full discussion.

<sup>575</sup> For more on Coosa River Baptists, see chapter eight.

<sup>576</sup> For a full discussion of the Broad River association's rejection of the PCF, see chapter two.

Mt. Carmel association was organized in 1876 (Mt. Carmel Association, 1896, p. 1) and adopted articles of faith. However, Mt. Carmel Baptists apparently saw no need to confessionally affirm the doctrine of election since out of 13 articles, neither election nor predestination is addressed. They affirmed explicitly, however, the perseverance of the saints: “We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and that none of them shall finally be lost” (Ibid, p. 6). What is more, Mt. Carmel Baptists also explicitly affirmed general atonement: “We believe that Jesus Christ, by the Grace of God, tasted death for every man and through His meritorious death, the way of salvation is possible for God to have mercy upon all that come unto Him upon gospel terms” (Ibid). Thus, the Philadelphia confessional tradition is absent.

B. Davidson states Mud Creek association was organized in 1891 (Allen, 1958, p. 10). However, according to Mud Creek’s annual session minutes, 1889 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the association (Mud Creek Association, 1889, p. 1). Hence, it seems Mud Creek Baptists organized their association about 1879. In the same minutes is recorded Mud Creek’s abstract of faith. Possessing 12 brief articles, the article on election follows the Broad River confessional tradition, “We believe in the doctrine of Election through Sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth” (Ibid, p. 11). The *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election has been consciously avoided.<sup>577</sup>

Other Alabama associations that followed the Broad River confessional tradition, adopting an article on election identical or very similar to Mud Creek Baptists above include New River Baptist Association organized in 1871 (New River Association, 1871, p. 3); St. Clair association (St. Clair Association, 1899, p. 16); Tallasahatchee & Ten Island association (Tallasahatchee & Ten Island 1879, 1879, p. 19); Weogufka association (Weogufka Association, 1893, p. 19); Boiling Springs Baptist Association (Boiling Springs Association, 1875, pp. 15-16); Central association (Central Association, 1875, p. 15); Cleburne association (Cleburne Association, 1899, pp. 5-6); Harmony association (Harmony Association, 1888, pp. 10-11); Harmony Grove association (Harmony Grove Association, 1896, pp. 12-13); Sipsey Baptist Association (Sipsey Association, 1892, p. 6); and Clay

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<sup>577</sup> For more on the Broad River confessional tradition, see chapter two.

County association (Clay County Association, 1899, pp. 12-13). None of these Baptist associations embraced abstracts of faith that was either confessionally dependent upon or theologically loyal to the PCF. Rather, each of the associations above composed articles on election similar to the Broad River association, “We believe in the doctrine of Election through Sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.”

Some Alabama Baptist associations in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century embraced abstracts of faith that had articles on election indicating what arguably is a more pronounced emphasis on election, yet nevertheless would not rise to a confessional dependence upon Philadelphia’s *strictly* Calvinistic confessional tradition. In other words, the articles of faith would rise no higher than *moderate* Calvinism. For example, Bethlehem Baptists’ abstract of faith contained 10 brief articles, two articles of which follow below.

Art. 3. We believe in the doctrine of Election, that God chose his people, in Christ before the world began.

Art. 7. We believe that God's elect shall be called, justified and glorified (Bethlehem Association, 1849, p. 15).

Article 3 asserts a simple belief in the doctrine of election that took place before eternity without offering specifics about how election occurs in time. There seems to be no reason to confessionally connect this assertion to the Philadelphia confessional tradition nor the Unconditional Election specifically reflected in the PCF. Concerning Article 7, while God’s elect people are called, justified, and glorified, a key concept of *strictly* Calvinistic doctrine is missing—“effectual.” For Bethlehem Baptists, saints are not necessarily *effectually* called. Therefore, there seems to be little, if any, dependence upon the PCF. Nonetheless, since there is an explicit reference to the elect being called, justified, and glorified, a *moderate* Calvinistic abstract arguably seems to describe Bethlehem Baptists’ confession.<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> Among other Alabama associations having articles on election similar to Bethlehem Baptists and thus appear to display *moderate* Calvinism include the Newton association (Newton Association, 1896, p. 11); Providence association (Providence Association, 1875, p. 20); Southeastern association (Southeastern Association, 1892, pp. 7-8); Columbia Baptist Association (Columbia Association, 1893, pp. 15-16); Central Liberty association (Central-Liberty Association, 1898); and Elim association (Elim Association, 1904). By 1912, the Elim association had exchanged its abstract of faith for articles contained in the NHC (Elim Association, 1912, pp. 1-3).

In conclusion, Alabama possessed an incredible number of Baptist associations in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century that seemed to possess neither confessional loyalty to nor theological dependence upon the Philadelphia confessional tradition. The record thus far appears to show the broad claims that *strictly* Calvinistic Baptists confessionally and theologically domineered the south during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly the state of Alabama, are presumptuous at best.

#### 7.2.2 Select Georgia Associations and Confessions in the Latter 19th Century

No statistical summary is available in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* for the number of Georgia associations either at mid-19<sup>th</sup> century or at the turn of the century in 1900 (Allen, 1958, p. 545). However, one might gain a relatively accurate number of existing associations by totaling the number of associations organized before and after 1850 in the encyclopedia and cross-referencing the number with other statistical accounts. The result is approximately 30 Georgia Baptist associations existing in 1850,<sup>579</sup> and approximately 82 for 1900.<sup>580</sup>

The number of Georgia associations in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that had adopted articles of faith clearly reflecting confessional loyalty to and theological dependence upon the Philadelphia confessional tradition far exceeds any other southern state. Nevertheless, while many of the older Georgia associations like Georgia, Hephzibah, Sarepta, Central, Columbus, and Concord associations held tightly and unalterably to the Philadelphia confessional tradition and its *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrines of grace well into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and for some, well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>581</sup> some associations dropped their prior confessional

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<sup>579</sup> Cross-referenced volumes used to determine the approximate number of associations existing in Georgia at mid-19<sup>th</sup> century were the 1849-1851 editions of the *Southern Baptist Almanac* and *The American Baptist Register for 1852*. See *Appendix F* at the end on this research for more information on Baptist associations in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>580</sup> For purposes of research here, the estimated number of Georgia associations existing in 1900 remains approximately the same number used in the encyclopedia for 1905: 82 (Ibid). The cross-reference used to determine the approximate number of associations existing in 1900 was the 1906 special census report for religion in the United States (Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, 1910). Interestingly, the census report has the identical number of Georgia Baptist associations existing as does the Southern Baptist encyclopedia: 82 (Ibid, p. 73).

<sup>581</sup> The confessions of the associations listed here have been documented in chapter six. Also, see *Appendix A* at the end of this research for full confessions from other Georgia associations that embraced the PCF.

allegiance to the PCF and later adopted confessions more *moderately* Calvinistic, and for some, even *mild or non-Calvinistic*.

For example, Georgia's Bethel association was organized in 1832 and remains one of Georgia's oldest continuing associations (Allen, 1958, p. 547). In 1839 is published their *Abstract of Principles* composed of 12 brief articles the Prelude of which identifies the confessional profile of the association: "Held by the Baptist in general, agreeable to the confession of faith adopted by upwards of one hundred Congregations in England, published in Philadelphia, in 1742, which is a standard for the Baptist" (Bethel Association, 1839, p. 8).<sup>582</sup> The article used in Bethel's abstract of faith was used by numerous associations across the state of Georgia to confessionally express their theological allegiance to the PCF: "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election" (Ibid).

By 1883, Bethel's Article 3 had changed: "We believe in the doctrine of election, that God chose his people in Christ before the foundation of the world; that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love having predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Bethel Association, 1883, p. 11). Arguably, some would judge the article still strongly Calvinistic. However, the confessional phrase (i.e. "eternal particular election") undeniably linking the abstract of faith to the Philadelphia confessional tradition is conspicuously absent, and, in its place, is language lifted directly from Scripture not from confessional tradition. Hence, the abstract is closer to *moderate* Calvinism than to Philadelphia's High Calvinism and Unconditional Election.

Even more, by 1895, Bethel Baptists had dropped their historic abstract of faith altogether and composed a new abstract of faith inspired by New Hampshire's confession. "Article 7. We believe the doctrine of election; that it is that gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctified and saves sinners" (Bethel Association, 1895). Hence, Bethel Baptists seems to have left the Philadelphia confessional tradition behind by the century's end.

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<sup>582</sup> The abstract adopted by Bethel Baptists seems to have first been published in print by the earliest Baptist statistician, John Asplund (Asplund, 1791, pp. 53-54), and was routinely used by many *strictly* Calvinistic associations.

Another example of a Baptist association changing from a *strictly* Calvinistic confession to a more *moderate* Calvinism is Georgia's Hightower association. From its beginning, Hightower Baptists had adopted confessional language depicting the Unconditional Election found in Philadelphia's confession. In 1835, Article 4 had stated, "We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race... and that there was a covenant of grace... before the world began in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed" (Baptist Hightower Association, 1835, p. 6).<sup>583</sup> They furthermore added in Article 6, "We believe that all those chosen in Christ, will be effectually called, regenerated, converted, satisfied [sic] and supported by the spirit and power of God, so that they persevere in grace and not one of them be finally lost" (Ibid).

By 1847, however, Hightower Baptists had significantly downgraded their view on election and effectual calling. They dropped Article 6 on effectual call altogether while muting their earlier commitment to Philadelphia's eternal particular election. "We believe in the election of all God's people and that they are called and saved, according to his purpose and grace given them in Christ Jesus before the World began..." (Hightower Association, 1847, p. 7).<sup>584</sup> By quoting 2Thessalonians 2:13 as the basis of their article, it appears Hightower Baptists were following North Carolina's Broad River association in adopting an article on election that consciously rejected the Unconditional Election of the PCF.<sup>585</sup> Even so, the Hightower association was no longer confessing the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election it once had embraced.

Indeed, several Georgia associations in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had embraced articles on election that reflected no theological dependence upon or confessional loyalty to the PCF. Like Hightower and Bethel associations above, Georgia's Chattahoochee association had once

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<sup>583</sup> The article on election is virtually identical to the Georgia association's article. See *Appendix A* at the end of this research for more.

<sup>584</sup> The article concludes thusly: 'as it is stated in 2d Thessalonians, 2d chapter, and 13<sup>th</sup> verse: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.'"

<sup>585</sup> For more on Broad River and other alternative confessional traditions to the Philadelphia confessional tradition, see in chapter two.

embraced Philadelphia's confessional tradition. In their 1826 hand-written minutes is scribbled their abstract of faith, an abstract containing what appears to be an identical article on election to the Georgia association's abstract concerning election. "We believe in...the eternal election of a definite number of the human race... And that there was a covenant of grace... in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed" (Chattahoochee Association, 1826).<sup>586</sup> By 1885, Chattahoochee's article on election would dramatically go under the confessional knife: "We believe in the doctrine of election according to the Scriptures" (Chattahoochee Association, 1885, p. 13). Thus, for Chattahoochee Baptists, the Philadelphia confessional tradition was thoroughly expunged.

Other Georgia associations in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that embraced articles of faith with no theological dependency upon or confessional loyalty to the Philadelphia confessional tradition include Ellijay (Ellijay Association, 1840, p. 7), Mountain (Mountain Association, 1838, p. 6), Mountaintown (Mountaintown Association, 1886, p. 6), Mulberry (Mulberry Association, 1900, p. 8), Carrollton (Carrollton Association, 1874, p. 8), Good Samaritan (Good Samaritan Association, 1898), Jasper (Jasper Association, 1881), Liberty (Liberty Association, 1868), North Georgia (North Georgia Association, 1875), and Notla River (Notla River Association, 1894, p. 8). All of these Georgia associations without exception embraced an article on election identical in substance to North Carolina's Broad River association's abstract: "We believe in the doctrine of Election through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."<sup>587</sup> In 1800, North Carolina's Broad River association composed this article on election as a conscious alternative to Philadelphia's Unconditional Election as concisely expressed in "eternal particular election."<sup>588</sup> Moreover, add to these associations at least two Georgia associations that expressed no article on election: Gordon County (Gordon County Association, 1896, p. 9) and Coosawattee (Coosawattee Association, 1881, p. 7) associations. These associations alone seem to show a

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<sup>586</sup> No page numbers. For Georgia association's entire confession, see *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

<sup>587</sup> See *Appendix B* for Broad River's full confession. Note, some associations made slight changes by adding "according to foreknowledge" which makes the article less likely to depend upon the Philadelphia confessional tradition since the PCF twice denies God's foreknowledge a role in God's choosing the elect. See chapter two for a full discussion of *strict* Calvinism in the PCF.

<sup>588</sup> For more on Broad River and other alternative confessional traditions to the Philadelphia confessional tradition, see in chapter two.

substantial amount of confessional alternative to the Philadelphia confessional tradition even among Georgia Baptists.

Though perhaps not as emboldened as in other states like Alabama and Mississippi, several Georgia associations followed the New Hampshire confessional tradition. In addition to Bethel association (see above), Georgia's Hiwassee association embraced the NHC. Organized in 1849 with 24 churches (Allen, 1958, p. 550), Hiwassee Baptists published the NHC in their 1882 minutes (Hiwassee Association, 1882, pp. 11-14).<sup>589</sup> As did the Consolation (Consolation Association, 1895, pp. 13-16), Morganton (Morganton Association, 1894), and Piedmont (Piedmont Association, 1883, pp. 16-19) associations embrace the 18 articles of Brown's edition of the NHC published in 1853. At least one association embraced a confession obviously inspired by the NHC. Organized in 1884 (Allen, 1958, p. 555), the Miller Baptist Association adopted articles of faith laced throughout with exact phrases and sentences lifted directly from the New Hampshire confession (Miller Association, 1885).<sup>590</sup> Thus, a substantial group of Georgia Baptists in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century had followed the New Hampshire confessional tradition rather than the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

At least one Georgia association had considered the original 16 articles of the NHC as early as 1853. Organized in 1835 (Allen, 1958, p. 553), the Tallapoosa association resolved in its 1853 minutes to propose the original 16 articles of the NHC to all the member churches for consideration (Tallapoosa Association, 1853). Up until this time, the association held to an abstract of faith reflecting the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Tallapoosa's Articles 4 and 6

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<sup>589</sup> While 19 articles of the NHC are published in Hiwassee's minutes, Brown's edition in his church manual published in 1853 had only 18 articles. Neither in Pendleton's church manual (1867) nor Hiscox's church manual (1868) are 19 articles but the same 18 articles as in Brown's manual (1853). Hiscox claims he divided "the article on Baptism and the Lord's Supper, making two, and increasing the number to nineteen," but, according to Hiscox, he did so in 1890 (Hiscox, 1894, p. 542). So what source did Hiwassee Baptists use to publish 19 articles in the NHC? Apparently, it had slipped Hiscox's mind in 1894 that he had published *The Star Book on Church Polity* a full decade earlier in 1880, a volume that included the NHC wherein he had already divided the article on the Gospel Ordinances into 2 articles making 19 articles in all (Hiscox, 1880, pp. 20-25). Hence, Hiwassee Baptists evidently used Hiscox's 1880 *Star Book* as a source which included Hiscox's edition of the NHC with 19 articles.

<sup>590</sup> However, Miller Baptists kept their own literary structure and made the confessional articles from the NHC fit to their scheme. Thus, in the first "Articles of Faith" section, they had 13 articles; and in the second section entitled "Gospel Order" they had 5 articles.

on election and effectual calling respectively matched almost exactly the Georgia association’s articles on election and effectual calling (Tallapoosa Association, 1835).<sup>591</sup> While Tallapoosa Baptists did not adopt the NHC (nor does there appear in the minutes any discussion concerning it), that associational leaders recommended its adoption seems to indicate at least some confessional dissatisfaction among Tallapoosa churches with their then current articles of faith. Even so, neither did they keep the earlier confession they had embraced since their organization. Rather, the articles of faith which are published in Tallapoosa’s minutes the following year show substantial change in the 2 articles cited above (Tallapoosa Association, 1854). Note the differences in the chart below.

<b>Comparison of Two Articles in Georgia’s Tallapoosa Baptist Association’s Articles of Faith</b>	
<b>1853</b>	<b>1854</b>
4th. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the Eternal Election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and Glory: and that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the father and the Son, before the foundation of the world, in which their Salvation is secure and that they in particular are redeemed.	ART. IV. We believe in the election through everlasting love of God to His people, they being chosen in Christ before the world began.
6th. We believe that all those who were chosen in Christ, will be effectually called, regenerated, converted, sanctified, and supported by the Spirit and power of God, so that they shall persevere in grace, and not one of them finally be lost.	Art. VI. We believe in the doctrine of effectual calling, and the final perseverance of the saints in grace.

While Tallapoosa Baptists did not embrace the NHC in 1854, they certainly scrubbed much of the language in Articles 4 and 6 that connected their confession to the PCF. And, even though in Article 6 they retained the term “effectual calling,” a term commonly depicting confessional loyalty to and theological dependence upon the PCF, arguably, it seems Tallapoosa Baptists nonetheless significantly modified their former allegiance to the Philadelphia confessional tradition by stripping much of the former language that undeniably connected it to the High Calvinism in Philadelphia’s confession.

While unlike the Broad River and New Hampshire confessional traditions that appeared to avoid theological dependence upon and confessional loyalty to the Philadelphia confessional tradition, several other Georgia Baptist associations had adopted confessions in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century that

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<sup>591</sup> A full copy of the Georgia association’s confession is included in *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

were only *moderately* Calvinistic and possessed little, if any, confessional resemblance to Philadelphia's *strict* Calvinism.

For example, the Smyrna Baptist Association was organized in 1857 (Allen, 1958, p. 553). Smyrna's articles of faith are brief and 12 in number. Article 3 reads, "We believe in the doctrine of election, as taught in the Old and New Testaments" (Smyrna Association, 1873, p. 7).<sup>592</sup> Additionally, Article 7 reads, "We believe, that God's elect are called, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Ibid). Nothing in these articles appears to require either theological loyalty to or confessional dependence upon the PCF. At most, the articles reflect *moderate* Calvinism.

Organized in 1873,<sup>593</sup> the Mercer association possesses almost the same pattern as Smyrna Baptists. Article III simply states, "We believe in the doctrine of election" (Mercer Association, 1873, p. 2).<sup>594</sup> However, Mercer also has an article similar to Article 7 in Smyrna's abstract of faith as well: "We believe that God's elect shall be called, renewed, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Ibid). Once again, at most, Mercer's articles of faith are arguably only *moderate* Calvinism. Thus, it remains difficult to associate Mercer's language with the Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>595</sup>

### 7.2.3 Select Kentucky Associations and Confessions in the Latter 19th Century

Kentucky had approximately 38 associations 1850, and by the end of the century, an estimated 67 associations existed (Allen, 1958, p. 737).<sup>596</sup> Several Kentucky associations were examined in

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<sup>592</sup> Were this the only article to consider, Smyrna Baptists would easily be viewed along with the Broad River and New Hampshire confessional traditions as *mild* Calvinism or even non-Calvinism.

<sup>593</sup> A. Hinson appears mistaken in his encyclopedia article stating the association organized in 1874 (Allen, 1958, p. 551). The exact date given in Mercer's minutes is "November 1st, 1873." Also, in the minutes, "At 2P.M., the body was called to order...After receiving the Church letters and enrolling the names of delegates, the association went into permanent organization by electing R. W. Phillips, Moderator..." (Ibid).

<sup>594</sup> Several proof-texts follow each of the articles of faith.

<sup>595</sup> Other Georgia associations with confessions that arguably reveal *moderate* Calvinism rather than Philadelphia Calvinism include Noonday (Noonday Association, 1878, pp. 11-12), New Union (New Union Association, 1876), and Polk County (Polk County Association, 1894).

<sup>596</sup> See *Appendix F* at the end of this research for existing Kentucky associations at mid-century. The special census report in 1906 records that Kentucky had 77 associations in that year (Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, 1910, p. 74).

chapter eight, and, though much of the information would be relevant in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century, it will not be duplicated here.

Kentucky's Rockcastle association formed in 1871 in Rockcastle and Pulaski counties and remains active today (Allen, 1958, p. 744). Two years after Rockcastle Baptists organized, they published their confession of faith (Rockcastle Association, 1872, pp. 5-8). Composed of 18 articles, the confessional inspiration behind Rockcastle's articles of faith is Brown's edition of the NHC published in 1853. Phrases such as "truth without any mixture of error" describing the Bible (Article 1); that salvation is "wholly of grace through the mediatorial office of the Son of God" (Article 4); "that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel" (Article 6); and "that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces" (Article 8) all indicate full confessional dependence upon the New Hampshire confessional tradition. Hence, while the New Hampshire confession does not appear to be as strong in Kentucky as in other southern states like Alabama and Mississippi, Rockcastle Baptists show its presence in Kentucky.<sup>597</sup>

The Booneville Baptist Association was organized in 1871 by 14 churches in Kentucky's Lee County (Allen, 1958, p. 739). L. Crismon indicated that an element of "Hardshellism"<sup>598</sup> arose in some of the member churches in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but was checked, and the association remained missionary (Ibid). However, while extreme Calvinism may have taken root among Booneville Baptists, there seems to be no theological support for such a theology given the confessional language of Booneville's articles of faith, fourteen articles intermixed between theological content and content normally found in rules of decorum (Booneville Association, 1889, pp. 8-9). Article 2 concerning human depravity, Booneville Baptists affirmed that all humankind, "without exception, are, in their natural state, sinners, totally destitute of holiness, and are entirely helpless within themselves" (Ibid, p. 8). Nothing in the language connects the universal sinfulness Booneville Baptists confessed with the Total Depravity depicted in the

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<sup>597</sup> The Bracken association shows the presence of the original 16 articles of the NHC in Kentucky as well. See chapter eight for more information.

<sup>598</sup> "Hardshellism" is a vernacular theological term often used synonymously with Hyper-Calvinism and mostly in connection with the Anti-missions movement. Baptist theologian, B. H. Carroll, cited eight characteristics of "Hardshells" in his treatment of the Anti-missions movement among 19<sup>th</sup> century American Baptists (Carroll, 1902, pp. 189-190).

Philadelphia confession of faith. Article 3 affirms that “faith in Jesus Christ is the alone the instrument of justification” and is the “gift of God” that is “arduously wrought in the heart by the Spirit, by and with the Word heard and read” (Ibid). Like the PCF, Booneville Baptists affirmed faith as a gift of God, but, unlike the PCF, no indication exists in Booneville’s article that faith is a gift bestowed upon the elect *only*.<sup>599</sup> Article 4 combines the progression of applied redemption from the initial salvation experience through the end of life: “That salvation is wholly [sic] of the free and saving grace of God throuh [sic] the atonement of righteousness and mediation of Jesus Christ by the sanctifying Influence of the Holy Spirit and the belief of the truth and that the saints will persevere through grace to glory” (Ibid). Far from the language of the Philadelphia confessional tradition, Boonville Baptists appeared to have no confessional allegiance to Philadelphia Calvinism at all.

Kentucky’s Bay’s Fork association was first organized as the Drake’s Creek Baptist Association in 1841 and changed its name to Bay’s Fork in 1845 (Allen, 1958, p. 738).<sup>600</sup> In 1899, Bay’s Fork Baptists published their confession in the annual minutes (Bay’s Fork Association, 1899, pp. 20-21). Article 3 in Bay’s Fork’s confession concerns election. “3rd. We believe in the doctrine of election, according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the spirit” (Ibid, p. 21). Similar in construct to North Carolina’s Broad River association’s article on election, Bay’s Fork Baptists appear to focus more on the role of divine foreknowledge in confessing the doctrine of election. As argued above, however, foreknowledge seems to be negated in the PCF when considering God’s eternal election.<sup>601</sup> Hence, for Bay’s Fork Baptists, there appears to be no confessional connection to Philadelphia’s confessional tradition.

Irvine Association of Baptists was organized in 1859 in Madison County, Kentucky (Allen, 1958, p. 742). Irvine Baptists constituted the parent organization to the Booneville association discussed above (Ibid). Irvine’s articles of faith were similar in content to Bay’s Fork Baptists’ confession. Article IV on election stated, “We believe in the doctrine of Election according to the

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<sup>599</sup> For a full discussion of the PCF and *strict* Calvinism, see chapter two.

<sup>600</sup> In 1914, Bay’s Fork association changed its name again to Allen Baptist Association (Ibid).

<sup>601</sup> For full discussion, see section entitled “2.5.2 Unconditional Election and the PCF” in chapter two.

Foreknowledge of God, through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth” (Irvine Association, 1889). Once again God’s foreknowledge plays a prominent role in understanding the doctrine of election while the rest of the article is the same as North Carolina’s Broad River association. The Philadelphia confessional tradition is absent in Irvine’s articles of faith.

Several Kentucky associations adopted confessions that lacked an article specifically affirming the doctrine of election.<sup>602</sup> Bell County association was organized in 1896 (Allen, 1958, p. 739), and, while it adopted other articles similar to Baptist associations across the south, it adopted no article concerning election (Bell County Association, 1896). What is more, stated in Bell County’s minutes prior to the printed Articles of Faith is “The Articles of Faith as adopted by the Upper Cumberland Baptist Association at its August session, 1890, is adopted as the Articles of Faith of this association” (Ibid). Hence, the Upper Cumberland association, organized in 1890 (Allen, 1958, p. 745), also embraced a confession that lacked an article on election. As did the Laurel River association organized in 1831 (Ibid, p. 742), and the Freedom association organized in 1843 (Ibid, p. 741).<sup>603</sup>

Another rich confessional tradition that originated in Kentucky stems from the Terms of General Union (Terms), an 1801 confession which served as the theological basis of cooperation between Kentucky’s Regular and Separate Baptists.<sup>604</sup> The Terms was composed of 11 brief articles many of which bear much resemblance to later articles in abstracts of faith across the south.<sup>605</sup> Even more, the Terms lacked an article on the doctrine of election, and may therefore be the

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<sup>602</sup> It should not be inferred that the member churches held no doctrine of election, however. Most probably, all of them did. On the other hand, that many associations avoided articles on election does raise questions as to why they did so. No information seems forthcoming to compose a viable answer. In the associations examined in this research, no explanations were discovered as to why an individual association avoided the doctrine of election.

<sup>603</sup> For Laurel River’s and Freedom’s confession, see Laurel River Association, 1879, p. 8 and Freedom Association, 1904 respectively. For more Kentucky associations adopting confessions having no articles on the doctrine of election see Kentucky’s section in chapter eight. Note specifically the section below on North Carolina that had at least 16 associations that had confessions with no article on election.

<sup>604</sup> For a full discussion on the Terms of General Union, see chapter four.

<sup>605</sup> See *Appendix B* at the end of this research for a full copy of the Terms.

confessional inspiration behind other associations in Kentucky that chose to avoid composing an article on election in its statement of faith (see above).<sup>606</sup>

Several associations embraced the Terms as a stand-alone confession while others published both the Terms as well as a confession specifically composed by the association. As an example of the latter, Boone's Creek Baptists had its own confession composed of 14 articles after which the 11 articles of the Terms are published (Boon's Creek Association, 1822).<sup>607</sup> Organized in 1815, the Franklin association, however, appears to have adopted only the Terms as its confession of faith (Franklin Association, 1815, p. 2).<sup>608</sup> The Goshen association, organized in 1817 (Allen, 1958, p. 741), also apparently had only the Terms published as articles of faith (Goshen Association, 1836, p. 10).<sup>609</sup> Salem association was organized in 1785 and constitutes Kentucky's second oldest association, an association still active today (Allen, 1958, p. 744). Its sole confession apparently was the Terms (Salem Association, 1843).<sup>610</sup>

Accordingly, none of the Kentucky associations that adopted the Terms embraced articles of faith that were either confessionally dependent upon or theologically loyal to the Philadelphia confessional tradition. In fact, those associations that embraced only the Terms as their confession had no article on election at all. Even more, the associations that adopted the Terms as their confession implicitly *accepted* general atonement. Article 9 in the Terms states, "And that the preaching (that) Christ tasted death for every man, shall be no bar to communion."<sup>611</sup> While the article does not explicitly affirm general atonement, contrary to the PCF, it implicitly affirms general atonement not to be heterodox, an affirmation itself distancing it from the Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>612</sup>

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<sup>606</sup> Until more research into the hundreds of associational confessions in every southern state is pursued questions like these among many others will remained unanswered.

<sup>607</sup> The original spelling is "Boon's Creek." More in chapter eight on the Boone's Creek association.

<sup>608</sup> However, Franklin only adopted articles 1-9 of the Terms.

<sup>609</sup> Like Franklin above, Goshen only published the Terms partially, embracing only articles one to seven.

<sup>610</sup> Contrary to Franklin and Goshen above, Salem added an article to the Terms making 12 articles. "12<sup>th</sup> That the names of Regular and Separate be known no more amongst us so as to make any difference, and that we will be called the United Baptists of Jesus Christ" (Ibid).

<sup>611</sup> See *Appendix B* ant the end of this research.

<sup>612</sup> Some associations in the south withdrew fellowship from churches and/or other associations that denied particular redemption. The Georgia Baptist Association and Alabama's Tuscaloosa association stand as examples of

#### 7.2.4 Select Louisiana Associations and Confessions in the Latter 19th Century

Baptist growth in Louisiana got off to a slow start in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1850, Louisiana had only about five associations,<sup>613</sup> and by 1900, had grown to only 29 associations (Allen, 1958, p. 806), making Louisiana Baptists the second smallest Baptist population in the southern states at the turn of century.<sup>614</sup> The Philadelphia confessional tradition had roots in early Louisiana Baptist work. The Louisiana association was organized in 1818 and remains the oldest Baptist organization in the state (Allen, 1958, p. 797). W. Paxton states Louisiana Baptists organized upon the Articles of Faith composed by the Mississippi Baptist Association, articles clearly in the Philadelphia confessional tradition (Paxton, 1888, p. 172). The articles explicitly affirm the “eternal, unconditional election of a definite number” (Article 4) of humankind to eternal life while ensuring “all those who were chosen” in eternity past would most certainly “in time” be “effectually called, regenerated, sanctified and kept” by God’s power through faith to persevere (Article 6) (Ibid, p. 173). Furthermore, it was through the “satisfaction” the “Man Christ Jesus” made in “becoming an offering for sin” that through his “most precious blood” He “redeemed the elect” (Article 7) (Ibid).<sup>615</sup>

Even so, according to Paxton, by 1845, because “Some discontent having arisen in regard to the Articles of Faith” the association took up the question of replacing their confession (Ibid, p. 199).<sup>616</sup> Though not recorded in the 1845 minutes, apparently a “Committee on the Abstract of Faith” was appointed and reported the next annual meeting recommending a confession composed entirely of Scripture verses (pp. 200-205).<sup>617</sup> The association failed to adopt the newly

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withdrawing fellowship over “Arminianism” when the apparent reason seems to have been an affirmation of general atonement.

<sup>613</sup> See *Appendix F* at the end of this research.

<sup>614</sup> Only Florida was smaller at 23 Baptist associations in 1899 (Allen, 1958, p. 455). Note also, the US census special report cites Louisiana having 30 Baptist associations in 1906 (Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, 1910, p. 76).

<sup>615</sup> The Articles of Faith of the Mississippi association that the Louisiana association also adopted could depict neither more clearly nor strongly nor, for that matter, more concisely its confessional dependence upon and theological loyalty to the PCF. Few, if any, would challenge this conclusion. Thus, in many ways, Louisiana’s original articles serve as a relatively accurate confessional rule by which to measure the strength of Philadelphia Calvinism reflected in other associational abstracts of faith.

<sup>616</sup> For more on Louisiana’s procedure in adopting a new confession, see section “8.2.3 Louisiana” in chapter eight.

<sup>617</sup> See also, Louisiana’s 1846 annual minutes (Louisiana Association, 1846, pp. 4-6).

composed Scriptural confession, but 2 articles in the original confession were significantly amended (p. 208). However, neither amended article scrubbed Philadelphia's fingerprints upon the confession. The association left untouched Article 7 which explicitly indicated definite atonement. Thus, Louisiana association remained in the Philadelphia confessional tradition in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Other confessional traditions also had a long and rich history in Louisiana. The original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession as first published in the 1835 apparently first showed up in Louisiana's Mississippi River association when it organized in 1843 (Allen, 1958, p. 879). The neighboring Mississippi association had put so much pressure on the Mississippi River association, dubbing them "another denomination" because they adopted "Arminian" articles of faith, that Mississippi River Baptists dropped the NHC and embraced *strictly* Calvinistic articles of faith. Mississippi River Baptists still embraced articles of faith agreeable to the Philadelphia confessional tradition as late as 1875 (Mississippi River Association, 1875, pp. 16-17).<sup>618</sup>

Unlike Mississippi River Baptists, Louisiana's Ouachita association, which was organized in 1844 (Allen, 1958, p. 798), had embraced the original 16 articles of the NHC as early as 1856 (Ouachita Association, 1856, pp. 10-12) and still embraced the same confession in 1877 (Ouachita Association, 1877, pp. 11-13). Organized in 1849, the Grand Cane association adopted the original 16 articles of the New Hampshire confession (Grand Cane Association, 1854, pp. 14-16),<sup>619</sup> as did the Palestine Baptist Association presumably organized in 1870 in Winn Parish, Louisiana (Palestine Association, 1893, pp. 8-11).<sup>620</sup> Big Creek association was not organized until later in the century in 1871, its territory spanning three Louisiana parishes (Allen, 1958, p. 796). Even so, Big Creek Baptists bypassed later editions of the NHC and adopted the original 16 articles first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Big Creek Association,

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<sup>618</sup> See chapter eight for more on the Mississippi River association.

<sup>619</sup> The Grand Cane later became the Desoto Parish association (Allen, 1958, p. 797).

<sup>620</sup> Palestine association is not listed in the Southern Baptist encyclopedia, and the date therefore was inferred from the title page of the 1893 minutes (Ibid). Palestine association is listed in the special report for the US census in 1906 (Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, 1910, p. 74).

1873, pp. 5-6). Thus, the confessional tradition of the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession was still very much alive in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Louisiana's Bayou Macon association was organized in 1855 by six churches in the northeastern part of the state (Allen, 1958, p. 796). Bayou Macon Baptists adopted a freestyle confession reflecting a bit of literary originality. Composed of 12 articles with proof-texts following each article, 2 articles (without proof-texts) are reproduced below.

Art. 5. We believe that God has set forth His Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world [sic]; and where the Gospel is preached it is the duty of all men; to repent and believe in Jesus Christ that they may be saved; and if they do not their rejection of the gospel is occasioned by their love of sin and aversion to holiness.

Art. 6. —We believe that Election is the sovereign exercise of the eternal love by which God hath, according to His infinite wisdom, chosen His people in Christ, before the world was, and hath predestined them unto the adoption of children, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; and doth keep them by His power, through faith, unto salvation (Bayou Macon Association, 1875, pp. 11-12).

Article 5 most probably indicates a belief in general atonement since neither the PCF nor any associational abstract within the Philadelphia confessional tradition examined in the present research frames the death of Jesus as propitiating for the sins of the whole world.<sup>621</sup> Rather, the Philadelphia confessional tradition commonly indicates Christ's cross-work was designed for the elect only so that "they in particular are redeemed."<sup>622</sup> Article 6 on election interweaves phrases together from several Bible verses and is reminiscent of North Carolina's Broad River association's article on election. The Philadelphia confessional tradition appears to hold no claims on Bayou Macon Baptists.

Nor was the Philadelphia confession the inspiration behind Central association, an association organized in 1860 (Central Association, 1860) and had adopted 12 articles of faith identical to

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<sup>621</sup> The biblical text reflected in the article is 1 John 2:2, a text routinely cited by advocates of general atonement contra particular redemptionists: "and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (NASB).

<sup>622</sup> See, for example, the original articles of the Louisiana association above.

Bayou Macon Baptists' articles. Central retained those same articles through the end of the century (Central Association, 1898).

Louisiana's Concord association was organized in 1832 making it the second oldest association in Louisiana (Allen, 1958, p. 796). T. Gayer claims "The articles of faith adopted were taken from the Philadelphia Confession," though it had added Foot-washing as a Gospel Ordinance that later dropped out of use (Ibid). Paxton records Concord's full confession upon which it organized, and while it has some characteristics of the Philadelphia confessional tradition, it remains difficult to avoid the conclusion that Gayer somewhat stretched his depiction of Concord's confessional sources. Concerning election, Concord confessed in Article 4, "We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, in the doctrine of election, and the perseverance of the saints in grace" (Paxton, 1888, p. 245). While one might rightly claim that both the everlasting love of God to His people and the doctrine of election are abundantly taught in the PCF, it remains simplistic at best and misguided at worst to conclude that Philadelphia's confession was therefore the confessional inspiration behind either of those notions.

One could compare, for example, Louisiana's original article on election to Concord's 1832 article on election to illustrate the gravity of Gayer's suggesting Concord took its articles from the PCF. Louisiana association's Article 4 states, "We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people; in the eternal, unconditional election of a definite number of the human family to grace and glory" and is reinforced by Article 6: "We believe that all those who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world are in time effectually called, regenerated, converted and sanctified, and are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (Paxton, 1888, p. 173). What is more, Louisiana Baptists specifically reflected the PCF on particular redemption: "7. We believe... the Man Christ Jesus... hath by his most precious blood redeemed the elect..." (Ibid). On the other hand, Concord Baptists suggest, or, at minimum, imply Jesus' death was designed as a general atonement: "6. We believe that there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all..." (Ibid, p. 245). Hence, Gayer's attribution of the PCF as the confessional source for Concord Baptists seems contrary to the evidence.

Even so, by 1872, Concord Baptists left little doubt whether the Philadelphia confessional tradition remained the inspirational source of their abstract of faith. Concord's 1872 article on election follows other associations in the south that, like North Carolina's Broad River association, consciously chose to alternatively affirm the doctrine of election in terms not indicative of the Philadelphia confessional tradition. "We believe the doctrine of election according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (Concord Association, 1886). Additionally, while Concord Baptists only suggested general atonement in their 1832 article by Jesus giving "himself a ransom for all..." they leave no doubt as to their meaning in 1886:

Art. 6. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and also the son of man: that he was crucified, buried, and arose from the dead, and ascended up into Heaven, and that he is the propitiation of our sins, and also for the sins of the world (Ibid).<sup>623</sup>

Thus, if Gayer was correct, and Concord Baptists took their 1832 articles of faith from the PCF, it seems reasonably clear that by 1886, the Concord association had distanced itself from the confessionally *strict* Calvinism in Philadelphia's confession.

Bethlehem Baptist Association was organized in 1878 by 22 churches in Louisiana's Lincoln Parish (Allen, 1958, p. 796). Composed of 10 brief articles followed by proof-texts for each, Article 5 in Bethlehem's confession states, "We believe the doctrine of election according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (Bethlehem Association, 1887, p. 18). The article is identical to Concord's article above. Indeed, the confessional content of Bethlehem's entire "Abstract of Faith" is virtually identical to Concord's confession. Hence, Bethlehem too followed a confessional tradition neither confessionally dependent upon nor theologically loyal to the PCF.

Organized in 1895, the Paxton Baptist Association adopted articles of faith in its first annual meeting (Paxton Association, 1895, p. 4).<sup>624</sup> Paxton Baptists clearly affirmed general atonement.

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<sup>623</sup> Proof-texts follow this article and all articles in Concord's confession.

<sup>624</sup> The Southern Baptist encyclopedia has no listing for the Paxton association. Nor does the special report of the US census in 1906. Presumably, either the association either changed names or possibly only lasted a very short time. The first annual minutes are clearly identifiable, however.

Article 5 states, “We believe that God has sent forth His Son to be the propitiator for the sins of the whole world...” (Ibid). Article 6 concerning the doctrine of election is almost identical to Bayou Macon’s article on election (see above). Red River Baptist Association confesses the same articles on general atonement and the doctrine of election (Red River Association, 1848, p. 15). As did the Shady Grove association organized in 1885 in Winn Parish (Allen, 1958, p. 799). They too adopted identical articles on general atonement and election reflecting language outside of, and in some ways, contrary to the Philadelphia confessional tradition (Shady Grove Association, 1891, p. 12).

#### 7.2.5 Select North Carolina Associations and Confessions in the Latter 19th Century

North Carolina was among the most fertile southern states for Baptist growth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1900,<sup>625</sup> approximately 56 associations with over 1,600 member churches existed in North Carolina (Allen, 1958, p. 1006).<sup>626</sup> Most scholars attribute the expansion of Baptist faith in North Carolina as well as to other southern states to the arrival of the Separate Baptists at Sandy Creek in 1750.<sup>627</sup>

The Philadelphia confessional tradition had held a seat at the Baptist table in North Carolina for generations by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Baptist associations still wed to the old *strictly* Calvinistic faith in understanding the doctrines of grace could be located albeit they seem to be more difficult to find in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>628</sup> Even so, an enormous associational Baptist network existed in North Carolina during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that held neither confessional dependence upon nor theological loyalty to the PCF.

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<sup>625</sup> See *Appendix F* at the end of this research for more on North Carolina associations.

<sup>626</sup> The US census special report cited 52 Baptist associations in the state in 1906 (Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, 1910, pp. 76-77).

<sup>627</sup> For a full discussion of Separate Baptists, see chapter four.

<sup>628</sup> For example, organized in 1786 (Allen, 1958, p. 1014), North Carolina’s Yadkin association is and remains one of the oldest associations in the south. It held tenaciously to an abstract of faith clearly based upon the PCF (Ibid). G. Paschal indicates the abstract was most probably identical to the abstract of faith published by early Baptist statistician, John Asplund, in his first edition of the universal Baptist register (Asplund, 1791, pp. 53-54), and subsequently used by many *strictly* Calvinistic associations in the south (Paschal, 1930, p. 216).

The original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* had carved a confessional path into North Carolina Baptists' associational life. In 1806, the Chowan association was organized by 18 churches dismissed from the Kehukee association for that purpose a few months earlier (Allen, 1958, p. 1009). Chowan Baptists adopted their mother association's abstract of faith which was indisputably a *strictly* Calvinistic confession based upon the PCF (Delke, 1882, p. VII). By 1849, Chowan Baptists had adopted a new confession, "A Declaration of Religious Principles held by the Churches composing the Chowan Association of North Carolina, adopted May 19, 1849" (Ibid, p. 90). The Philadelphia confessional tradition had vanished and was replaced by the original 16 articles of the NHC (pp. 90-95).<sup>629</sup>

Organized in 1758 (Allen, 1958, p. 1012), it was North Carolina's first Baptist association as well as the first Separate Baptist association in the south.<sup>630</sup> In 1816, Sandy Creek association adopted what most probably was its first confession of faith, a confession that most likely followed the Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>631</sup> Granting that Sandy Creek association clearly embraced the Philadelphia confessional tradition in 1816, less than two decades later, evidence surfaces indicating the association had been theologically frustrated with the "Principles of Faith" the association adopted in 1816. At Sandy Creek's 1836 annual session, a motion was made and passed to set up a three-person committee to "draw up Articles of the Faith of Baptists, and present them to our next Association" (Sandy Creek Association, 1836, p. 6). They apparently debated it for almost a decade, because no new confession was adopted in the immediate years after 1836.<sup>632</sup> However, confessional satisfaction soon came for the association. In 1845, Sandy Creek association "Resolved, therefore, That we adopt the following Sixteen Articles, with the

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<sup>629</sup> Changes were made to the NHC the only significant change of which was the addition of an extra article, "Article 12: Of Church Independence" making Chowan's confession 17 articles rather than 16 (Ibid, p. 94). Other changes, one of which was most likely a mistaken reading of the original when copying the confession, were two articles Chowan Baptists retitled. Article 6 was changed from "Freeness of Salvation" to "Fullness of Salvation," and the NHC's title of Article 11 changed from "Gospel Church" to Chowan's "Church of Christ."

<sup>630</sup> For more on Sandy Creek, see chapters two and three.

<sup>631</sup> It remains disputable just how strongly Calvinistic Sandy Creek's confession was. For more on Sandy Creek's confession, see *Appendix A* at the end of this research.

<sup>632</sup> The 1816 articles show back up in the 1838 minutes but with no commentary as to why or vote to reembrace the confession.

Scripture References, as the Faith of this Association” recommending it “to the different Churches for their adoption” (Sandy Creek Association, 1845, p. 9). The 16 articles Sandy Creek adopted was essentially New Hampshire’s original 16 articles published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* edited by J. Newton Brown. However, strongly Sandy Creek Baptists were confessionally dependent upon and theologically loyal to the PCF in 1816, they clearly had abandoned their earlier Calvinistic abstract of faith for one that some theologians indicate depicted as much Arminianism as it did Calvinism (James Leo Garrett, 2009, p. 132).<sup>633</sup>

Additionally, several North Carolina associations also embraced J. Newton Brown’s edition of the NHC as published in his 1853 church manual. The Atlantic association established in 1884 (Allen, 1958, p. 1014) adopted Brown’s edition of the NHC (Atlantic Association, 1884, pp. 7-10); as did the Buncombe association organized in 1882 (Buncombe County Association, 1883, pp. 1, 15); and the Neuse association at the century’s turn (Neuse Association, 1899, p. 17), and the Johnston County association a bit after the century’s turn (Johnston County Association, 1903, p. 15).

Thus, New Hampshire’s confessional tradition had a long rich history in North Carolina beginning before mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and continuing into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the NHC was neither the only confessional alternative to the PCF nor the broadest or most numerous alternative to the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

Perhaps the most influential alternative confessional tradition to the PCF originates in North Carolina’s Broad River association established in 1800 (Allen, 1958, p. 1015). According to Broad River historian, J. Logan, fourteen churches were dismissed from Bethel association to organize the Broad River association (Logan, 1887, p. 2).<sup>634</sup> Logan records the “SYSTEM OF BROAD RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION” (Ibid, pp. 13-17) which included the parameters on the authority of the association; rules of decorum which guided the etiquette of the delegates from member

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<sup>633</sup> Other North Carolina associations that embraced the original 16 articles of the NHC in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century include the Raleigh association (Raleigh Association, 1851, pp. 11-14) and the Pamlico association (Pamlico Baptist Association, 1851, pp. 5-7).

<sup>634</sup> Logan claims he depended upon Benedict for the 14 churches and later changes the number to 16 after finding additional information (Ibid, p. 10). H. Stroupe follows Benedict (Ibid). Paschal follows Logan (Paschal, 1930, p. 208).

churches while in session; and Broad River's Abstract of Principles, a theological document upon which Broad River member churches agreed to cooperate. Broad River's abstract of faith is very similar to the abstract of faith published by early Baptist statistician, John Asplund, in his first edition of the universal Baptist register (Asplund, 1791, pp. 53-54), and subsequently used by many *strictly* Calvinistic associations in the south, including North Carolina's Yadkin association (Paschal, 1930, p. 216).<sup>635</sup> However, there exist substantial differences. Asplund's abstract's article on election reflects specific ties to the Philadelphia confession's understanding of Unconditional Election. Article 3 states, "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election" and is reinforced by a second article, "7. We believe that God's elect shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit."<sup>636</sup> However, while most of Broad River's articles are essentially the same as Asplund's articles, Broad River Baptists completely changed Article 3 on election and entirely dropped Article 7. Paschal explains why.

The "Abstract of Articles of Faith," [in Asplund's register] uses several of these articles to support this Doctrine of Election which was not acceptable to many Baptists, in particular the Separate Baptists, who in the organization of their associations and in declaring their principles repudiated the Doctrine of Election in the strongest terms. The Broad River was not a distinctive Separate Baptist association, but it did not accept the Articles of Faith of the Regular Baptists without modification. It rejected the article reading "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election," which they found among the Articles of Faith in the Model System offered them..." (Ibid, p. 216).<sup>637</sup>

Thus, because Broad River Baptists rejected the article that read, "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election," an article depicting the Philadelphia confessional tradition's affirmation of Unconditional Election, they substituted an article on election scrubbed of a *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of election. "5. We believe in the doctrine of *Election* through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," an affirmation of the biblical truth of election

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<sup>635</sup> See also, Young, 1968, p. 10.

<sup>636</sup> For Asplund's entire abstract of faith, see *Appendix A* and the end of this research.

<sup>637</sup> J. Young confirms Paschal's account: 'it will be recalled, the doctrine of "eternal particular election" was repudiated' by Broad River Baptists (Young, 1968, p. 27).

without the pompous interpretation imposed upon it by preconceived theological positions found in many previous confessions (Logan, 1887, p. 17).<sup>638</sup>

Consequently, Broad River's article on election began showing up in other associations in North Carolina and continued throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>639</sup> Associations include Friendship (Friendship Association, 1868); Kings Mountain (King's Mountain Association, 1871, p. 2); Sandy Run (Sandy Run Association, 1890, p. 10); South Fork (Graham, 1901, p. 6); and Tennessee River (Smiley, 1893, p. 15). In addition, out of the 12 southern states examined in this research, only one state (Missouri) failed to have an association that yielded the Broad River article on election.<sup>640</sup>

Several Baptist associations in North Carolina adopted confessions that displayed a freestyle literary expression in their written articles, articles demonstrating no confessional dependence upon or theological loyalty to the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Brier Creek association organized in 1822 (Allen, 1958, p. 1008) simply confessed on the doctrine of election, "We believe the doctrine of election to be a scriptural doctrine" (Brier Creek Association, 1850), while Elkin Baptists, organized in 1879, even more concisely states, "We believe in the doctrine of election by grace" (Elkin Association, 1885, p. 12).<sup>641</sup>

Unpredictably, one of the broadest confessional communities in North Carolina during the 19<sup>th</sup> century was made up of associations that adopted confessions of faith conspicuously absent of any mention of election or predestination in the articles of faith.<sup>642</sup> At least 16 North Carolina associations examined for this research embraced articles of faith apart from affirming the

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<sup>638</sup> Undoubtedly there were individual member churches in the Broad River association that embraced the PCF. Yet, for cooperative purposes as an association, Broad River Baptists took the PCF off the table so to speak when it came to cooperative efforts. Churches were free to be *strictly* Calvinistic, but it was agreed the association was not.

<sup>639</sup> For North Carolina associations earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that followed the Broad River confessional tradition, see the section in chapter eight entitled "8.2.4 North Carolina."

<sup>640</sup> Since only 21 Missouri associations were examined for articles of faith for this research, it remains probable Broad River's article will show up when all the associations are thoroughly researched.

<sup>641</sup> North Carolina's Stone Mountain association duplicated Elkin's article (Gregory, 1976, p. 5) as did the Three Forks association (Three Forks Association, 1841, p. 3). Additionally, Mountain Union association simply confessed at the century's closing threshold, "We believe in the doctrine of election by grace" (Mountain Union Association, 1894).

<sup>642</sup> See Kentucky associations above.

doctrine of election.<sup>643</sup> Nor were these associational confessions exceptional in the content of the other articles. That is, the articles in these 16 associations that addressed other theological and ecclesial subjects normally addressed in Baptist abstracts of faith read very much like articles in other Baptist associations across the south. They were all trinitarian; all embraced the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice; all had strong statements on human depravity; all affirmed justification through Christ alone; all affirmed the perseverance of the saints. The only remarkable difference between these 16 associational confessions and other Baptist abstracts of faith was the absence of the doctrine of election. The question begs an answer, then. Namely, how confessionally Calvinistic would an associational abstract of faith be that failed to affirm or even mention the doctrine of election? Hence, it seems to follow that the presence of these confessional associations alone should inspire caution to those who claim Baptists in the south predominately embraced *strict* Calvinism during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>644</sup>

Included also in North Carolina was a sizable network of Baptist associations that apparently either possessed little interest in publishing their articles of faith in their annual associational minutes or were vigorously anti-confessional.<sup>645</sup> Illustrative of the latter, Union II association was organized in Henderson County in 1848 and apparently only survived a few years before remerging with Salem association from whence it had earlier departed (Allen, 1958, p. 1018). Union Baptists were vocally anti-confessional. In 1854, Union's 5<sup>th</sup> article in its constitution stated,

That the Association disdains all human creeds or confessions of faith, drawn up by uninspired men, as bonds of union and communion, and declares that the Bible alone is

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<sup>643</sup> Alleghany and Grayson association (Alleghany and Grayson Association, 1897, p. 8); Ashe association (Ashe Association, 1898, p. 18); Brushy Mountain (Brushy Mountain Association, 1876, p. 7); Caldwell association (Caldwell Association, 1885, p. 3); Catawba River (Catawba River Association, 1827, p. 7); French Broad (French Broad Association, 1847, p. 3); Green River (Green River Association, 1862, pp. 5-6); Jefferson (Jefferson Association, 1848, pp. 5-6); Lewis Fork (Lewis Fork Association, 1849, p. 5); Liberty association (Liberty Association, 1868, pp. 14-15); Lower Creek (Lower Creek Association, 1854, p. 7); Salem association (Salem United Association, 1839, no page number); Stony Fork (Stony Fork Association, 1860, p. 8); Taylorsville association (Taylorsville Association, 1858, p. 6); Tuckasiege association (Tuckasiege Association, 1829, p. 3); and United association (United Association, 1860, p. 13).

<sup>644</sup> As the evidence shows below, North Carolina was not the only state with Baptist associations that adopted abstracts of faith failing to affirm the doctrine of election.

<sup>645</sup> Out of 61 North Carolina associations examined for articles of faith for purposes of this research, fifteen associations yielded no published confessions. However, since not every year's minutes was available for observation, it does not follow the associations had no published confessions.

its platform and the only rule by which it will be governed yet is willing to exhibit to the world an abstract as an exponent of its doctrinal views for the removing of false aspersions which are unjustly thrown at us, and for the information of others not acquainted with our tenets, but for no other purpose (Union II Association, 1854, p. 7).

Additionally, though Union Baptists expressed strongly their objection to creedal statements, Articles 6 and 7 of their constitution while, seemingly out of place, offer insight into the theological affinities of Union churches.

6<sup>th</sup>. This association will encourage a sound Ministry, such as exhibit Christ a whole Savior, have made salvation possible to every human being on the terms of the gospel, which is freely offered unto all.

7<sup>th</sup>. That this association will discountenance and repudiate the doctrine of unconditional election, and reprobation (Union II Association, 1854, p. 7).<sup>646</sup>

Article 6 seems to affirm general atonement while Article 7 denies Philadelphia's confessional tradition on election. Stroupe incorrectly concludes Union association "specifically repudiated the doctrine of election" (Allen, 1958, p. 1018). Rather, as the constitution makes clear, they repudiated *unconditional* election and its theological concomitant, *reprobation*. In this, Union Baptists were following Big Ivy Baptists who, in their articles of faith specifically denied the Unconditional Election of Philadelphia's confession. The final article in Big Ivy's abstract of faith states,

16. None of the above-named articles shall be so construed as to hold with Particular and Eternal Election and Reprobation, or so as to make God partial, either directly or indirectly, so as to injure any of the children of men (Young, 1968, p. 27).

Thus, for both Big Ivy and Union Baptists, it seems their denial was not the doctrine of election, but the understanding of election as reflected in the Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>647</sup>

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<sup>646</sup> Union Baptists had associational precedent for including in their constitution articles affirming general atonement and denying the Unconditional Election of the Philadelphia confessional tradition. The Big Ivy, French Broad, and Roan Mountain associations had earlier adopted articles in their constitutions almost identical to Union Baptists' (Young, 1968, pp. 36-49). Hence, at least 4 North Carolina associations apparently affirmed general atonement and specifically rejected the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election in Philadelphia's confession not in their articles of faith rather in their constitution.

<sup>647</sup> It may be that the Big Ivy association was the original confessional inspiration for the dozens of associations across the south that failed to include an article on election in their confessions of faith. Young details the circumstances arising in the organization of Big Ivy Baptists, including the conflict in the association with *strict* Calvinists over election. See chapter four, "Division and Decline" in Young, 1968, pp. 23-34.

The Western association was organized in 1875 (Western Association, 1879, p. 1),<sup>648</sup> and like Union II association, Western Baptists were vocally anti-confessional. Article IX in its constitution states, “The Scriptures, the Word of God, shall be a sufficient rule of faith, doctrine and practice, &c., of this Association, and the traditions of man, where they have neither precept nor example in the Scriptures to justify them, shall be rejected” (Ibid, p. 9). Other associations made no statement either for or against confessions but apparently did not publish them in their annual meeting minutes.

#### 7.2.6 Select South Carolina Associations and Confessions in the Latter 19th Century

At mid-century, approximately 11 Baptist associations existed in South Carolina,<sup>649</sup> but by 1900, South Carolina had more than tripled that number with a total of 35 Baptist associations (Allen, 1958, p. 1231).<sup>650</sup> The presence of the Philadelphia confessional tradition in the state of South Carolina remains legendary. The Charleston association was organized in 1751, making it not only the oldest association in the state but also the second oldest association in America (Allen, 1958, p. 1233). Charleston Baptists preceded the Separate Baptists in the south who came in 1755. The Charleston association was on the ground in Kingdom work over two decades before The American Revolutionary War (1775-1783).<sup>651</sup>

Charleston Baptists officially embraced Philadelphia’s confession approximately 16 years after they first organized. On the title page of Charleston’s Fourth Edition of the confession is recorded, “A CONFESSION OF FAITH PUT FORTH BY THE ELDERS AND BRETHREN OF MANY CONGREGATIONS OF CHRISTIANS, (Baptized upon profession of their faith,) IN LONDON AND THE COUNTRY, *Adopted by the Baptist Association of Philadelphia September 25, 1742, and by the Charleston, in 1767*” (Association, 1850). Only with minor edits and additions, Charleston Baptists

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<sup>648</sup> The date of organization is inferred from the first page. The Southern Baptist encyclopedia had no listing for this association.

<sup>649</sup> Investigations for this research led to estimating 13 associations in existence in 1845. See *Appendix F* at the end of this research for more information on South Carolina associations at mid-century.

<sup>650</sup> The special report by the US Census tallied a total of 38 Baptist associations in 1906 (Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, 1910, pp. 77-78).

<sup>651</sup> For more on Charleston Baptists’ early years, see chapters three and four.

followed the Philadelphia Baptist Association in adopting the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith. Predictably, the Charleston association possessed a bold confessional influence upon other South Carolina associations. Following Charleston Baptists' confessional loyalty to and theological dependence upon the PCF were several associations including the Savannah River (Savannah River Association, 1802)<sup>652</sup>; Welsh Neck (Welsh Neck Association, 1832, pp. 2-37); and Moriah association (Moriah Association, 1859, p. 12).<sup>653</sup> Hence, the Philadelphia confessional tradition was well embedded in South Carolina and had been for generations. However, other confessional traditions also had a presence.<sup>654</sup>

The Orangeburg Baptist Association was organized in 1870 by churches from both the Charleston and Edisto associations (Allen, 1958, p. 1234). While there seems to be no doctrinal conflict that led to the dismissal of the churches from neither the Charleston or Edisto association, Orangeburg Baptists chose to abandon the Philadelphia confessional tradition and follow the 1853 edition of the New Hampshire confession as edited by J. Newton Brown. In the 1871 minutes, Orangeburg Baptists printed the 18 articles of faith as published in Brown's 1853 church manual, adopting it as the associational confession (Orangeburg Association, 1871). Hence, while it appears its influence may not have been as concentrated in South Carolina as in some other south states like North Carolina, Mississippi and Alabama, the NHC had made its way into South Carolina Baptists' confessional tradition.

Several Baptist associations in South Carolina seemed to follow a free-style approach in composing their abstracts of faith, especially the article presumably dealing with the doctrine of

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<sup>652</sup> Note: On Savannah River association's leading church, Savannah First Baptist Church, W. Cathcart claims without documentation that "The church has adopted the New Hampshire Confession of Faith and the covenant attached to it" (Cathcart, 1881, p. 1081). If correct, the Savannah River association was undoubtedly moving away from the PCF.

<sup>653</sup> In examining associations in South Carolina, it was particularly difficult to find associations with published confessions. In Savannah River, Welsh Neck, and Charleston associations no published confessions were found in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>654</sup> For more associations in South Carolina that held traditions other than the Philadelphia confessional tradition, see chapter eight.

election.<sup>655</sup> For example, the Edisto association, organized in 1834 in the western part of the state (Allen, 1958, p. 1234), formulated its article presumably affirming election,

We believe that all whom the Father has given to His son, shall come to him, and will be raised up at the last day; and that those who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him, that they may be ever with the Lord (Edisto Association, 1851, p. 10).<sup>656</sup>

Even if one assumed Edisto Baptists and other associations that embraced the wording of this article as an expression of the doctrine of election, it does not follow they were reflecting the Philadelphia confessional tradition since the Philadelphia confession does not use this specific language to present the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of doctrine of Unconditional Election.<sup>657</sup> While the PCF addresses the eternal covenant of redemption wherein the Father and Son agree on redeeming the elect, it remains unclear Edisto and the other associations that used this particular language were necessarily addressing applied redemption as it relates to the elect (see above). Rather they appear to more reflect the words of Jesus (John 6:37-39) and the Apostle Paul (1 Thessalonians 4: 15-17) in Scripture than the specific confessional language of Unconditional Election found in the Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>658</sup> Hence, for Edisto and

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<sup>655</sup> Given the wording of article, however, it remains uncertain Edisto and the associations following were dealing with election. Edisto Baptists were paraphrasing the words of Jesus in John 6 coupled with the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. For a scholarly exposition of John 6:37-40 that interprets Jesus' words without alluding to a supposed covenant of redemption or the doctrine of election, see D. Allen's work on the atonement (Allen, 2016, pp. 696-698). See also the helpful commentary by New Testament scholar, Gerald Borchert (Borchert, 1987, pp. 111-115).

<sup>656</sup> At least three other South Carolina associations had articles in their confessions very similar, if not identical to, Edisto's article possibly addressing the doctrine of election: Twelve Mile River (Twelve Mile River Association, 1896, pp. 17-18); Colleton association (Colleton Association, 1880, pp. 12-13); and Aiken association (Aiken Association, 1891, pp. 6-7).

<sup>657</sup> See chapter two for a full discussion of the PCF and *strict* Calvinism.

<sup>658</sup> Attempting to find Unconditional Election behind most every affirmation of the doctrine of election seems tempting to some interpreters. What is ignored too often is that the clear language of Unconditional Election possesses a long, rich history in the Philadelphia confessional tradition such that, in many ways, it remains *prima facie* within the articles of faith. "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election" unmistakably reflects the Philadelphia confessional tradition. As does the "unconditional election" of a "definite number of the human race" resulting from an "eternal covenant between the Father and the Son" wherein the elect "in particular are redeemed." When this confessional language was abundantly available to 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptists, language unmistakably identifying the confessors with the PCF, yet they chose to use language either vague or non-committal toward one theological position on the doctrine of election or another, it seems unreasonable, at minimum, to nevertheless assume that the PCF is the confessional inspiration behind the association's abstract of faith.

other associations with similar articles it appears they were following more a literary freestyle approach in composing their articles of faith.<sup>659</sup>

South Carolina's Union County association was established in 1876 by churches from both the Broad River and Bethel associations (Allen, 1958, p. 1235). While L. Owens states that "the association adopted articles of faith" upon organizing, he fails to profile the confessional tradition Union Baptists followed (Ibid). Union Baptists adopted as articles of faith 7 brief articles, articles also bearing a certain freestyle composure about them. Unlike Edisto and other associations above that did not specifically mention election, Union Baptists explicitly mentions "elected to everlasting life" in the context of applied redemption. Article 2 states,

That by the grace of God, the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and belief in the truth, we are regenerated—made heirs of God—elected into everlasting life; and that such persons will never finally fall into a state of sin and condemnation" (Union County Association, 1876, p. 11).<sup>660</sup>

What appears unique in Union's article on election, especially compared with articles in other Baptist abstracts of faith reflecting the Philadelphia confessional tradition, is not only how eternal election incorporates the influences of the Spirit and human belief contra the PCF that insists election is decreed in eternity as a result of the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, but also the explicit indication that the act of human faith *precedes* regeneration, an *ordo salutis* the Philadelphia confessional tradition seems to deny.<sup>661</sup> Union Baptists were apparently content to confess that those who were graciously regenerate as a result of the influence of the Holy Spirit and human belief were made heirs of God, elected to everlasting life, and would never finally fall away. Hence, Union Baptists' abstract of faith does not appear to reflect the Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>662</sup>

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<sup>659</sup> Other articles in Edisto also bore a freestyle literary composure about them. Article 3 on human depravity, for example, states God "created man upright; but they have sought out many inventions— that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified before God"; while Article 4 is a paraphrase of John 3:16 (Ibid). Again, no confessional dependence upon nor theological loyalty to the PCF is present.

<sup>660</sup> Following this and all articles are several proof-texts.

<sup>661</sup> See chapter two for a full discussion of the PCF and *strict* Calvinism.

<sup>662</sup> South Carolina's Reedy River association organized in 1826 (Allen, 1958, p. 1235) had the exact article on election as did Union Baptists (Reedy River Association, n.d., p. 12).

Another confessional tradition that appeared to have established itself among South Carolina Baptists was the Broad River tradition originating in North Carolina's Broad River association in 1800.<sup>663</sup> The Saluda association was established in 1802, and therefore was one of South Carolina's oldest associations (Allen, 1958, p. 1235). L. Owens contends Saluda Baptists adopted articles of faith in 1832 (Ibid), but no articles were found for that year. However, faith articles were found in Saluda's 1845 annual associational minutes. Composed of 12 brief articles similar to North Carolina's Broad River associational confession, Article 3 is copied below.

3. We believe in the doctrine of Election, and that God chose his people in Christ, before the foundation of the World through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (Saluda Association, 1845, p. 6).

While Saluda Baptists added a phrase acknowledging God chose His people before the foundation of the world, the language Saluda Baptists employed reflects more the language of the Bible than it does language found in the Philadelphia confession of faith.<sup>664</sup> Like Broad River Baptists, Saluda Baptists seemed to have distanced themselves from the Philadelphia confessional tradition in their articles of faith.

Organized in 1833 in the Greenville and Spartanburg region by 12 churches, the Tyger River association thrived until 1875 when it dissolved, and the churches became a part of the newly established Spartanburg association (Allen, 1958, p. 1236). A decade later, another Tyger River association arose in the same district that was African American (Tyger River Association, 1886). The Abstract of Principles for the second Tyger River association was composed of 12 short articles, one of which is duplicated below.

5. We believe in the doctrine of Election, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth (Tyger River Association, 1886, p. 8).<sup>665</sup>

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<sup>663</sup> For more on Broad River and other alternative confessional traditions to the Philadelphia confessional tradition, see chapter two. Note: when Broad River Baptists organized in 1800, member churches were in both North and South Carolina forming a union of churches from both states. While North Carolina's churches were dismissed in 1851 to the King's Mountain association (Allen, 1958, p. 1015), South Carolina's churches continued on as the Broad River Baptist Association still active to the current date (Allen, 1958, p. 1233).

<sup>664</sup> See Ephesians 1:4.

<sup>665</sup> Few African American Baptist associations were examined in this research not because their confessional witness was irrelevant to the thesis. Rather, there existed overall only a tiny fraction of African American Baptist associations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century compared to the hundreds of White Baptist associations. Hence, no effort was pursued in

Tyger River Baptists appears to have followed verbatim North Carolina’s Broad River association in confessing election in terms distinct from the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Indeed all 12 articles of Tyger River association are virtually identical to Broad River’s 1800 abstract.<sup>666</sup> Hence, Broad River’s confessional tradition was alive in South Carolina even among African American Baptists.<sup>667</sup>

Finally, like in neighboring North Carolina, Baptists associations in South Carolina also were represented by the confessional tradition of adopting articles of faith without expressing a specific article on the doctrine of election. While both the Edgefield and Abbeville associations published articles of faith, neither adopted an article of faith dealing with the doctrine of election.<sup>668</sup> Abbeville association was organized in 1869 by 12 churches dismissed from the Edgefield association (Allen, 1958, p. 1232). The association “adopted articles of faith in 1870” according to L. Owens (Ibid), but Owens leaves the theological profile of Abbeville Baptists out of consideration. Composed of 10 brief articles,<sup>669</sup> little is addressed in Abbeville’s confession not similarly addressed in other abstracts of faith across the south. Note, however, the way Abbeville amended Article 5 in comparison to Edgefield’s Article 5.

<b>Edgefield</b> (Edgefield Association, 1852, p. 15)	<b>Abbeville</b> (Abbeville Association, 1870)
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selecting state associations to exclude African American Baptists. Indeed, an examination exclusively of African American Baptist associations’ articles of faith to be compared to the results of mostly White associations could yield even more productive insight into confessional comparisons among Baptists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>666</sup> Only minor differences of no significance exist such as a punctuation mark and capitals on two terms. Other than those, Tyger River copied Broad River’s abstract of faith exactly.

<sup>667</sup> Insightfully, the Tumbling Shoals Baptist Association was also an African American association (Ibid). Tumbling Shoals Baptists embraced 12 articles of faith almost identical to Tyger River’s articles with the exception of an additional phrase in the article on election: “3. We believe in the doctrine of Election, and that God chose His people in Christ before the foundation of the world through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (Tumbling Shoals Association, 1888, p. 15). Even so, like Saluda Baptists (see above), adding a clause reflecting biblical language on the doctrine of election (i.e. Ephesians 1:4) did not imply confessional loyalty to or theological dependence upon the Philadelphia confessional tradition by these African American Baptists.

<sup>668</sup> For the Edgefield association, see chapter eight.

<sup>669</sup> Being a child of the Edgefield association, one might expect Abbeville Baptists to take the confession of their mother-association and adopt it as their own exactly as Edgefield had composed it. However, while Abbeville’s confession is similar to Edgefield in significant ways, it has distinctive phrases original to the Abbeville association. It also possesses 10 articles while Edgefield had only nine articles. Both are alike, however, in lacking an article on election.

5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ through the everlasting love of God.	5. We believe that, through the sovereign and everlasting love of God, sinners are justified in his sight by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, received by faith in his Divine sacrifice.
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Both Edgefield association and its child, Abbeville association, express justification and the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ in unique ways compared to other Baptist associations, but neither Edgefield nor Abbeville Baptists seem to reflect the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

#### 7.2.7 Select Virginia Associations and Confessions in the Latter 19th Century

Approximately 82,000 Baptists in over 500 member churches divided into 33 associations existed in Virginia at mid-century,<sup>670</sup> while an estimated 24 associations made up of almost 1,000 churches existed by 1900 (Allen, 1958, p. 1457). Predictably, the Philadelphia confessional tradition was present in Virginia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>671</sup> Moreover, like South Carolina, New Hampshire’s confession seemed to hold less appeal to Virginia Baptists compared to other southern states like North Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi. Yet associations did exist in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century that embraced the NHC.

The Clinch Valley Regular Baptist Association was organized in 1856 by churches in Lee, Scott, and Washington counties (Allen, 1958, p. 1461). At Clinch Valley’s 17<sup>th</sup> annual session, the association published its adopted confession in the annual minutes, a confession composed of the 18 articles of Brown’s edition of the NHC as published in his church manual in 1853 (Clinch Valley Association, 1873, pp. 9-16).<sup>672</sup> Thus, while apparently scarce, the New Hampshire confessional tradition nonetheless had a presence in Virginia.

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<sup>670</sup> See *Appendix F* at the end of this research. Note also that the state of Virginia was divided into 2 states in 1863—Virginia and West Virginia. Hence, while it appears associational organizations declined in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at least 11 former Virginia associations became associations in West Virginia (Ibid, p. 1465).

<sup>671</sup> For example, the Hebron association was organized in 1857 (Allen, 1958, p. 1464). The minutes indicates articles of faith were unanimously adopted, seven articles in total (Hebron Association, 1857, p. 3). Article 7 states, “We hold and maintain the doctrine of total depravity of human nature; predestination, eternal, personal and unconditional election, effectual calling, and the final perseverance of the saints” (Ibid, p. 7).

<sup>672</sup> While some paraphrasing exists, it remains clear Clinch Valley used the NHC as its confession. Note also proof-texts were included after each article.

Organized in 1856, the Potomac association was the result of a merger between the Columbia and Salem Union associations (Allen, 1958, p. 1463). Potomac Baptists became a mother association to at least 2 other Baptist associations in Virginia (Ibid). Andrew Broaddus was very influential among Potomac Baptists, and his presence and influence among them remains a hint as to whether Potomac Baptists adopted articles of faith reflecting the Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>673</sup> Moreover, while the Potomac association apparently failed to have published an abstract of faith, Article 2 in Potomac's constitution offer another hint as to the stance the association adopted on doctrinal matters for cooperation purposes.

Any church desirous of connexion [sic] with this body by delegates must make written application, in which she must express her acquiescence in the following declaration: that the word of God as contained in the Old and New Testaments, is the only true and proper standard of Christian faith and practice—that the Constitution and Order of the Regular Baptist churches, concentrating all executive ecclesiastical authority in each separate congregation of baptized believers, are according to the word of God—and that the doctrines generally believed and taught by the great body of the Regular Baptists of Virginia, and of the United States, are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and tend to the unity and well being of God's chosen people (Potomac Association, 1856, p. 6).

According to Potomac Baptists' constitution, three requirements were demanded of its member churches, two requirements of which are specific while one requirement is general: 1) the Bible remains the sole authority for faith and practice; 2) the autonomy of the local church is scriptural; 3) doctrines generally believed and taught by Regular Baptists are biblically validated. Potomac Baptists demanded of its member churches to accept biblical authority in spiritual, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical matters. Less specifically, member churches were also required to accept beliefs generally taught by Regular Baptists in America as biblically sound. No indication is offered in either the constitution or minutes to suggest what belief may not be considered *generally taught* by most Regular Baptists. In short, this doctrinal requirement has no linguistic relation to articles of faith normally found in the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

Just over the threshold of entering the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Virginia's Holeston association was organized (Holeston Association, 1908, p. 1). In the first session held in Grayson County, Virginia in 1908,

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<sup>673</sup> As observed elsewhere, Broaddus was well-known for his advocacy of general atonement, a doctrine incompatible with Philadelphia's explicit affirmation of particular redemption.

Holeston Baptists adopted a constitution, rules of decorum, and articles of faith (Ibid, p. 3). Holeston’s Articles of Faith contained 9 brief articles, two articles of which are reproduced below.

- 3. We believe in the doctrine of election by grace.
- 5. We believe that sinners are called, converted, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and that all who are thus regenerated and born again by the Spirit of God, shall never fall finally away (Ibid, p. 7).<sup>674</sup>

Holeston’s article on election was reproduced by several associations in North Carolina (see above) and, as argued previously, the article holds no resemblance to the Philadelphia confessional tradition. What is more, Holeston’s Article 5 addressing applied redemption looks very much like the parallel article in many *moderately* Calvinistic confessions of faith, and in some instances, *strictly* Calvinistic articles of faith. Note the two articles side-by-side.

Carey Baptist Association	Holeston Baptist Association
6. We believe that God’s elect shall he called, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and that the saints shall persevere in grace and never finally fall away. <sup>675</sup>	5. We believe that sinners are called, converted, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and that all who are thus regenerated and born again by the Spirit of God, shall never fall finally away.

While the focus of Carey Baptists is the calling, regeneration, etc. of God’s *elect*, Holeston association speaks of God calling, regenerating, etc. *sinners*. Whereas Carey does reflect Philadelphia’s language focusing on God’s elect, Holeston Baptists clearly have sinners generally in view.<sup>676</sup>

By far, Virginia yielded fewer published confessions of faith than any other southern state. No reason seems forthcoming for why this may be so. One may be tempted to suggest that because the Separate Baptist influence was so embedded earlier in Virginia’s Baptist associations, and since it appears to be accepted by all authorities that Separate Baptists held an instinctive

<sup>674</sup> Holeston’s minutes indicated it was adopting the “Articles of Faith of the Mountain Union Baptist association” (Ibid, p. 3). Hence, North Carolina’s Mountain Union association had the same articles as did the Holston (see above).

<sup>675</sup> See *Appendix A* at the end of this research for similar articles.

<sup>676</sup> Virginia’s Mountain District Baptists had earlier adopted the identical two articles on election and applied redemption, and therefore may have been the confessional inspiration for both Mountain Union and Holeston associational articles of faith (Mountain District Association, 1852, pp. 12-13).

resistance toward embracing confessions of faith, that the reason may lie in that direction. However, as tempting as it is, it seems to carry no more than speculative insight.

### 7.3 Southern States Sympathetic to Organizing the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845: Selected Associations and Confessions in the Latter 19<sup>th</sup> Century

#### 7.3.1 Introduction

States and the selected Baptist associations chosen for examination in this section remain consistent with the thrust of the research project. Examined for published articles of faith have been selected Baptist associations from states both represented by delegates at the inauguration of the new southern convention at Augusta, Georgia in 1845 as well states without associational representation but nonetheless expressing sympathy for a new southern convention of Baptists. In this final section, summaries are recorded for articles of faith found in selected Baptist associations in southern states without representation at the Augusta meeting during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>677</sup>

#### 7.3.2 Southern States and Selected Associations

At mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the state of Arkansas had less than a dozen Baptist associations, but by 1900, it had quadrupled the number with 47 associations possessing over 1,300 churches and 70,000 plus members (Allen, 1958, p. 80). The Fayetteville Baptist Association was organized in 1871 with four churches in Washington county (Ibid, p. 69). As with many of the associations established in Arkansas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, limitation exists concerning Fayetteville's records.<sup>678</sup> Yet printed in the association's 1903 minutes is the "Articles of Christian Belief" as first published in William Crowell's church manual in 1850 (Fayetteville Association, 1903, pp. 17-20).<sup>679</sup> While not identified by Crowell, the articles appear to be original 16 articles of the NHC as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.<sup>680</sup> Noted earlier was W.

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<sup>677</sup> Due to a small sampling of associations in the state of Florida, no data is included in this survey and examination.

<sup>678</sup> The official depository for Arkansas Baptist history is the Ouachita University. Four records for Fayetteville Baptists exist in the Special Collections archives, records from 1897-1903.

<sup>679</sup> See also Crowell, 1850, pp. 19-28.

<sup>680</sup> The articles in Crowell's manual possess slight but insignificant edits from the original 16 articles in the 1835 edition of the encyclopedia. See *Appendix C* at the end of this research for side-by-side comparisons.

McGlothlin's indication of Crowell's 1850 confession as perhaps as close to the original New Hampshire confession as we might historically get. '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' (McGlothlin, 1911, p. 301). But McGlothlin apparently overlooked the earlier publication of the 16 articles in the 1835 encyclopedia (Brown, 1835, p. 191). How would one know if Fayetteville Baptists used Crowell's manual and not the 1835 encyclopedia edition? One clue is found in Article II, "Of the True God." Fayetteville Baptists confessed that the one true and living God was "revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit..." (Ibid, p. 17). The 1835 original NHC uses in the same article, "Holy Ghost," while Crowell changed it to "Holy Spirit."<sup>681</sup> Another hint Fayetteville Baptists used Crowell's manual is found in Article IV, "The Way of Salvation. In the 1835 original, the "mediatorial offices" of the Son of God remains uncapitalized whereas in Crowell's manual, it reads "Mediatorial Offices,"; Fayetteville Baptists also capitalizes the terms.

The most convincing indication, however, that Fayetteville association employed Crowell's manual as the inspiration for its confession is found in Article IX, "Of the Perseverance of the Saints" (Ibid, p. 18). Fayetteville's relevant phrase concerns the "grand mark" of "real believers" that "distinguishes them from mere professors." Crowell has the exact phrase in his manual, including the term, "mere professors." However, in the 1835 edition of the NHC in the encyclopedia of religious knowledge, the original term is "superficial professors."<sup>682</sup> Hence, Fayetteville Baptists took virtually word-for-word of their confession from Crowell's 1850 church manual.<sup>683</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> Interestingly, J. Brown retained the original's "Holy Ghost" in his 1953 church manual, while Crowell changed it.

<sup>682</sup> Since McGlothlin overlooked the 1835 edition of the NHC in the encyclopedia of religious knowledge, assuming Crowell possessed the original 1833 NHC, he wrongly indicates Brown edited "mere professors" to "superficial professors" (McGlothlin, 1911, p. 305). Both W. Lumpkin (Lumpkin, 1969, p. 365) and B. Leonard (Lumpkin, 2011, p. 382) seem to uncritically follow McGlothlin. Yet Brown was actually retaining the original 1833 NHC with "superficial professors."

<sup>683</sup> For other slight differences in Crowell's edition, see *Appendix C* at the end of this research.

While the original NHC as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* appears to have been less popular in Arkansas,<sup>684</sup> Brown's 1853 edition of New Hampshire's confession was extremely popular. Benton County Baptists organized an association in 1885 with 19 churches (Allen, 1958, p. 65). In Benton County's minutes after the turn of the century is published its confession of faith. Containing 18 articles, the confessional substance is almost identical to Brown's edition of the NHC in his 1853 church manual (Benton County Association, 1905). Organized only a few years earlier than Benton County association, Big Creek association launched in 1874 (Ibid). It too embraced the 18 articles of Brown's edition of the NHC (Big Creek Association, 1900, pp. 3-7).<sup>685</sup>

The Caroline association was organized in 1853 by five churches in Lonoke and Prairie counties, Arkansas (Allen, 1958, p. 66). Caroline Baptists' articles of faith uniquely claim to be "Abridged From Pendleton's Church Manual" (Caroline Association, 1898, p. 25).<sup>686</sup> Concerning the Fall of Mankind, Caroline Baptists confess in Article 3, "We believe that man once holy fell by voluntary transgression from that happy state, and is now utterly void of holiness" (Ibid). They believed "sinners are saved by grace alone" (article 4) and "justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ" (article 5) (Ibid). Article 6 proclaims "salvation is free to all who will accept the gospel" followed by insisting "repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are the duties of everyone who hears the Gospel" (article 8) (Ibid). Finally, in Article 9, "We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, by which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners" (Ibid). If Caroline Baptists believed that the NHC as published in Pendleton's church manual echoed confessional allegiance to the Philadelphia confessional tradition, they surely washed it out in their abstract of Brown's 1853 edition of the NHC.<sup>687</sup> Concord association, organized in 1870

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<sup>684</sup> Out of 51 associations examined in Arkansas, Fayetteville was the only association found possessing a confession based on the original 16 articles of the NHC.

<sup>685</sup> Among many other Baptist associations in Arkansas that embraced Brown's version of the NHC as published in his 1853 church manual include the Blue Mountain association (Blue Mountain Baptist Association, 1899, pp. 9-12); Caddo River (Caddo River Association, 1898, pp. 10-13); Springtown (Springtown Baptist Association, 1877, pp. 6-8); Texarkana (Texarkana Baptist Association, 1897, pp. 8-10); and White River among many others (White River Association, 1881, pp. 1-4). At least 20 associations examined in this research embraced Brown's edition of the NHC.

<sup>686</sup> Pendleton attributed the confession to J. Newton Brown (Pendleton, 1867, pp. 42-61).

<sup>687</sup> Russellville (Russellville Association, 1910, p. 5), Spring River (Spring River Association, 1887, pp. 10-11), and Trace River (Trace River Association, 1889, p. 3) associations all connect their confessions with Pendleton's church manual.

(Allen, 1958, p. 68), also adopted a confession very similar to Caroline's and therefore could be considered an abridgment of the New Hampshire confession edition in Pendleton's manual as well (Concord Association, 1879, p. 7).<sup>688</sup>

Arkansas' Little Red River association was organized in 1872 (Allen, 1958, p. 67). It adopted articles of faith very similar to other associations across the south (Little Red River Association, 1886, pp. 14-15). Composed of 10 brief articles, it affirmed the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice (article 1); proclaimed the Trinity (article 2); affirmed the doctrine of original sin and human incapacity to save themselves (articles 3 and 4); sinners justified only by Christ's righteousness and perseverance of the saints (articles 5 and 6). Following associations in North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Alabama, no article on election exists in Little Red River's confession. However, within a decade, the Little Red River association had embraced the New Hampshire confession as published in Brown's church manual (Little Red River Association, 1896, pp. 7-10).

As popular as the New Hampshire confession may have been, other confessional traditions appear in Arkansas associations the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Big Fork association was probably organized in 1886 (Big Fork Association, 1889, p. 1).<sup>689</sup> Composed of 12 brief articles, Big Fork Baptists seemed to follow the confessional pattern of North Carolina's Broad River association in its expression of the doctrine of election. "Art 4. We believe in Election through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (Ibid, p. 11).<sup>690</sup> Article 5 states belief in the final resurrection, and then curiously breaking normal order, follows the resurrection with a statement affirming the saints will "never finally fall away and be lost" (Ibid). Even so, Big Fork Baptists appear to have held no confessional allegiance to the PCF.

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<sup>688</sup> The Missionary Baptist Association of Madison County was organized in 1887 (Allen, 1958, p. 69) (L. Tedford only lists Madison County Baptist Association, presumably the same association). Madison County Baptists' confession has many identical articles in their abstract of faith perhaps indicating another abbreviated version of the NHC as published in Pendleton's church manual in 1867 (Madison County Association, 1898, p. 10).

<sup>689</sup> The Big Fork association is inexplicably missing in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*. Curiously, neither does either Hinson (Hinson, 1979) or Williams (Williams, et al., 1998) list the association in his respective index. The Special Archives at Ouachita University, however, possess minutes for the Big Fork association from 1889-1896. The organization date is inferred from the title page of Big Fork's 1889 minutes: "Third Annual Meeting."

<sup>690</sup> For a full discussion of the Broad River confessional tradition, see chapter two.

Several other Arkansas associations follow the Broad River confession's article on election,<sup>691</sup> though some associations intentionally add that they believe the doctrine of election to be "founded in the foreknowledge of God" as did the Buckville association (Buckville Association, 1896, p. 9), an association organized in 1890 (Allen, 1958, p. 66). Focusing on the doctrine of election according to God's foreknowledge is an expression specifically avoided by explicit language in the Philadelphia confession.<sup>692</sup> Hence, the confessional abstracts with articles on election that suggest God's choosing the elect as founded on His foreknowledge seem to strongly suggest a confessional allegiance to a tradition other than the Philadelphia tradition.

The Dardanelle (Dardaneele Association, 1875, p. 5), Greenbrier (Greenbrier Association, 1899, p. 1), Liberty (Liberty Association, 1898, p. 19), Howard County (Howard County Association, 1893, p. 2), Judson (Judson Association, 1898, p. 10), Pine Bluff (Pine Bluff Association, 1898, pp. 10-11), Red River (Red River Association, 1883, p. 10), South Western (South Western Association, 1892, p. 12), and Union (Searcy) (Union Association (Searcy), 1900, p. 15) associations represent Arkansas Baptists who, along with Buckville Baptists mentioned above, grounded their understanding of the doctrine of election in God's divine foreknowledge. With only slight variance, they confessed in unison, "We believe in the doctrine of election, as founded in the foreknowledge of God, through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and belief of the truth" (Judson Association, 1898, p. 10).

In addition, some Arkansas associations dropped the article on election completely from their abstract of faith. Neither the Stateline association (Stateline Association, 1879, pp. 6-7) nor the Stevens Creek association (Stevens Creek Association, 1891, pp. 5-6) adopted articles dealing with election in its abstract of faith. Furthermore, while the Current River and Mount Zion associations<sup>693</sup> both lack an article on election, they both have explicit endorsements of general

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<sup>691</sup> Among other associations with articles on election very similar, and in some case, identical to North Carolina's Broad River association's article on election includes Ouachita association (Ouachita Association, 1877, p. 7); Pee Dee association (Pee Dee Association, 1895, p. 2); and United (United Association, 1882, p. 6).

<sup>692</sup> For a full discussion of Unconditional Election in the PCF, see chapter two.

<sup>693</sup> The Current River association was organized in 1881 (Allen, 1958, p. 66), while the Mount Zion was organized in 1852 (Allen, 1958, p. 67).

atonement. “4. We believe that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man; through his meritorious death the way of salvation is made possible, for God to have mercy on all that come unto him, upon gospel terms” (Mount Zion Association, 1897, p. 19).<sup>694</sup>

The examination of several associations in Arkansas failed to produce a published confession.<sup>695</sup> More enlightening, out of over 50 Baptist associations examined in Arkansas not a single association appears to have followed the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Perhaps the closest to Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism is Arkansas’ Union association (Southwest) (Union Association (Southwest), 1889, p. 13). Apparently, there existed four different associations named Union Baptist Association beginning in 1841 and the last being organized in 1879 (Allen, 1958, p. 70). Moreover, L. Tedford claims Union (Southwest) association became and remained “Landmark” Baptist (Ibid). Union (Southwest)’s Abstract of Principles is composed of 12 brief articles many of which are very similar to articles elsewhere across the south. Two articles express Union (Southwest) association’s belief concerning the doctrine of election:

3. We believe that God hath chosen us In Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.

7. We believe that God's elect shall be called, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Ibid).

The language in Article 3 reflects biblical language but not necessarily confessional language. However, Article 7 reflects confessional language of some abstracts within the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Yet no focus exists on the call from God being an “effectual” call as plainly indicated in the PCF.<sup>696</sup> Thus, while Union (Southwest)’s confession is Calvinistic, it seems to rise no higher than *moderate* Calvinism. And, as argued throughout this research, *moderate* Calvinism is not the same as the *strict* Calvinism of the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

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<sup>694</sup> Barring insignificant punctuation marks, Current River association adopted the identical article on general atonement (Current River Association, 1881, p. 9).

<sup>695</sup> Cadrone, Clear Creek, Eleven Point River, Fourche Valley, Friendship, General Association of Southeast Arkansas, Spring, Valley, State Corner, Western Arkansas and Indian Territory, Bentonville, and White River Valley are among those associations examined but yielded no confession.

<sup>696</sup> For a full discussion of the doctrine of election and effectual call in the PCF, see chapter two.

In Arkansas' neighboring state of Missouri, several confessional traditions may be observed.<sup>697</sup>

Missouri's Linn County Baptist Association was organized in 1872 from churches dismissed for that purpose from the North Grand River association (Allen, 1958, p. 902). M. Mitchell states Linn County Baptists adopted the NHC (Ibid). However, Missouri Baptist historian, R. Duncan, not only identifies which edition of the NHC Linn County Baptists adopted, but also states that Linn County association adopted "The constitution and rules of decorum of the mother association," North Grand River association, and the confession was "the New Hampshire confession as found in the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge" (Duncan, 1882, p. 460). Thus, both Grand River and Linn County Baptists adopted the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. What is more, Duncan states the Wyaconda association, organized in 1844 (Allen, 1958, p. 906), also adopted the original 16 articles of the NHC (Duncan, 1882, p. 541), as did the Tebo association (Ibid, p. 630) organized in 1855 (Allen, 1958, p. 905). Duncan, however, failed to mention both the Lamine association (Lamine Association, 1887, p. 35) and United association (United Association, 1857, pp. 6-8) as also adopting the identical confession.

Hence, a significant number of Missouri Baptists were still embracing the 1835 edition of the NHC in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And, these associations stand in distinction from several other associations that adopted Brown's edition of the NHC as first published in his church manual in 1853, associations including Barry County (Barry County Association, 1897, pp. 13-16); Blue River (Rice, 1890, p. 89); Nevada (Nevada Association, 1871); and Polk County Baptists (Haines, 1897, pp. 294-309). In total then, Missouri seems to have possessed an incredible number of Baptists who had embraced New Hampshire's confessional tradition.<sup>698</sup>

Some Missouri Baptist associations followed more of a literary freestyle approach in composing their confessions. While Audrain Baptists adopted articles of faith similarly to Kentucky's 1801

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<sup>697</sup> However, out of 21 associations examined, no association appeared to follow the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

<sup>698</sup> The Meramec association organized in 1870 (Allen, 1958, p. 902) adopted articles of faith, while not identical to the NHC, nonetheless seems clearly inspired by it (Merrimac Association, 1870, pp. 9-11).

Terms of General Union (Audrain Association, 1884, p. 4),<sup>699</sup> as did Bethel (Bethel Association, 1856, p. 3) and Salt River (Salt River Association, 1852, p. 8), unlike Kentucky's Terms of General Union, all three associations included an article on the doctrine of election. Yet their articles yield no resemblance to Philadelphia's confession. Audrain and Salt River Baptists simply confessed, "We believe in election by grace" (Ibid), as did Bethel Baptists, with Bethel association adding the phrase, "...given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (Ibid).

Another confessional thread that appears to run through the fabric of Missouri associations was the tendency of several Baptist bodies to adopt articles of faith without addressing the doctrine of election. Missouri associations adopting confessions very similar to other associational abstracts of faith across the south yet fail to compose an article on election include Bourbois (Bourbois Association, 1858, p. 7), Concord (Concord Association, 1864, pp. 6-8), Rock Prairie (Rock Prairie Association, 1872, pp. 2-3), Spring River (Spring River Association, 1852, p. 2), and West Fork (West Fork Baptist Association, 1848) associations. In addition, not only did the Antioch association organized in 1848 (Allen, 1958, p. 906) fail to include an article addressing the doctrine of election, Antioch Baptists explicitly indicated they affirmed general atonement. "We believe that Jesus Christ, the second Adam, and the representative of all that believe, by His death and resurrection, made it possible for all to be saved" (Antioch Association, 1874, p. 2). Thus, a significant number of Missouri Baptists chose to adopt confessions without dealing the doctrine of election.

Tennessee had some 450 churches in approximately 18 associations at mid-century but had increased to 51 associations with over 1,500 churches by 1900 (Allen, 1958, p. 1371). Even in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, some Tennessee Baptists still clung to the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Among them were the Beech River association (Beech River Association, 1881, pp. 2-3) which was organized in 1871 (Allen, 1958, p. 1351); and the New River association (New River Association, 1897, pp. 16-19), organized in Scott County in 1886 (Allen, 1958, p. 1354). In

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<sup>699</sup> A copy of Kentucky's Terms is included in *Appendix B* at the end of this research.

addition, the Big Hatchie, Beulah, and Sevier associations adopted confessions almost identical to Brown's edition of the NHC as published in his church manual in 1853.<sup>700</sup> New Hampshire's confessional tradition apparently was widely followed in Tennessee in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Organized in 1873 (Allen, 1958, p. 1356), Providence association adopted articles of faith like those of North Carolina's Broad River association especially concerning the article on election. "We believe in election according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through Sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (Providence Association, 1873).<sup>701</sup> Hiwassee Baptists' article on election was identical to Providence's article on election (Hiwassee Association, 1841).<sup>702</sup> Moreover, like Providence, Central association's confession followed closely Broad River's article on election but included an additional phrase "and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (Central Association, 1898). Liberty and Ducktown association's article on election followed Broad River's article on election exactly (Liberty and Ducktown Association, 1885, p. 7).<sup>703</sup>

At mid-century, Mississippi had a Baptist population of approximately 20,000 members belonging to over 300 churches in 27 associations,<sup>704</sup> while by 1900, 55 associations made up of almost 1,600 Baptist churches with over 100,000 members filled every corner the of the state (Allen, 1958, p. 893). Like most other southern states, different confessional traditions existed among Mississippi Baptists. The Philadelphia confessional tradition continued an enduring heritage in the state beginning with the Mississippi association at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>705</sup> Like the Mississippi association, other Baptist associations held on to their *strictly* Calvinistic articles of faith throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with some new Baptist associations organizing upon the

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<sup>700</sup> See, Big Hatchie Association, 1872, pp. 19-23; Beulah Association, 1895, pp. 19-20; Sevier Association, 1886, pp. 6-10.

<sup>701</sup> Broad River's article did not mention foreknowledge. See *Appendix B* at the end of this research for Broad River's full confession.

<sup>702</sup> Though perhaps due to a typo, Hiwassee has "'in' belief of the truth" rather than "'and' belief of the truth." Nor does Hiwassee capitalize "S" in sanctification. Moreover, the Ocoee association, organized in 1841 (Allen, 1958, p. 1356), "Adopted the Articles of Faith of the Hiwassee Association" (Ocoee Baptist Association, 1859).

<sup>703</sup> However, Liberty and Ducktown's article on Scripture is clearly dependent upon the NHC (Ibid).

<sup>704</sup> See *Appendix F* at the end of this research for more on Mississippi at mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>705</sup> For more on the Mississippi association and other associations in the state, see chapter nine.

Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>706</sup> Even so, Mississippi Baptists were not confessionally monolithic.

For example, some Mississippi associations adopted articles of faith more *moderately* Calvinistic than associations like the Mississippi Baptist Association or the Carey association (Carey Association, 1885, pp. 12-13) mentioned above with articles of faith clearly reflecting the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of Unconditional Election found in the PCF. The Chester association was organized in 1892 by several churches in Choctaw and surrounding counties (Allen, 1958, p. 879). Articles of faith were adopted and subsequently published in 1893. Composed of 13 brief articles, two articles of which dealt with the doctrine of election in eternity and applied redemption in time. The side-by-side chart below clearly reveals the differences between Chester’s two articles and parallel articles on election and applied redemption in the Mississippi and Carey associations.<sup>707</sup>

<i>Article of Faith</i>	<b>Chester Association</b>	<b>Carey Association</b>	<b>Mississippi Association</b>
<i>Election</i>	3. We believe in the doctrine of election and that God chose His people in Christ before the foundation of the world.	IV. We believe in the everlasting love of God to His people, in the eternal, unconditional election of a definite number of the human family to grace and glory.	4. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people. In the eternal unconditional election of a definite number of the human family grace and glory.
<i>Applied Redemption</i>	7. We believe that God’s Elect shall be called, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost (Chester Association, 1893).	VI. We believe all those who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world are, in time, effectually called, regenerated, converted and sanctified; and are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.	6. We believe all those who were chosen in Christ, before the foundation of thy world; are in time effectually called, regenerated, converted, and sanctified; and are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.
<i>Particular Redemption</i>	N/A	VII. We believe there is one Mediator between God and man—the man Christ Jesus, who... hath, by His most precious blood, redeemed the elect from the curse	7. We believe there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who... hath, by his most precious blood, redeemed the

<sup>706</sup> For example, see Carey Association, 1885, pp. 12-13; Copiah Association, 1891, pp. 17-18; McGee's Creek Association, 1881, pp. 5-6.

<sup>707</sup> No proof-texts, if any, are included for articles.

		of the law that they might be holy and without blame before him in love (Carey Association, 1885, pp. 12-13).	elect, from the curse of the law: that they might be holy and without blame, before him in love (Mississippi Association, 1822, pp. 7-10).
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While arguably it may be Calvinistic for Chester Baptists to confess that God’s elect is called, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, it does not follow that they reflect the Unconditional Election of the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Note the language present in both Carey and Mississippi associations that accurately reflects Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism. They both explicitly use the term, “unconditional election” in conjunction with the “definite number” of the elect presented in the PCF. While both Carey and Mississippi specifically speak of the elect “in time” being “effectually called” Chester Baptists fail to use this specific language lifted from the PCF.

Finally, though both Carey and Mississippi Baptists specifically connect the death of Jesus with “redeeming the elect,” Chester Baptists composed no article affirming particular redemption. Hence, the Chester association adopted articles of faith that were, at most, only *moderately* Calvinistic, and arguably only *mildly* Calvinistic. Either way, it seems obvious Chester Baptists had little, if any, confessional dependence upon or theological loyalty to the Philadelphia confessional tradition.<sup>708</sup>

The New Hampshire confessional tradition possessed a significant Baptist following in Mississippi during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Chickasaw association was organized in 1837 in Monroe County, Mississippi (Allen, 1958, p. 879). Chickasaw Baptists adopted the original 16 articles of New Hampshire’s confession as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Chickasaw Association, 1848, pp. 13-14).<sup>709</sup> Mississippi’s Cold Water association was first organized in 1841 as the "North Mississippi Baptist Association," but the

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<sup>708</sup> Several other Baptist associations adopted articles of faith like the Chester association and therefore would be considered *moderately* or *mildly* Calvinistic confessions but not reflecting the *strict* Calvinism within the Philadelphia confessional tradition. See, Liberty (Liberty Association, 1891, p. 3); Louisville ( Louisville Association, 1853, p. 12); Southeastern (Southeastern Association, 1891, p. 6); and Zion (Zion Association, 1844, p. 5).

<sup>709</sup> For more on Mississippi’s Chickasaw association, see chapter nine.

name was changed the following year to “Coldwater Baptist Association” without explanation (Leavell & Bailey, 1904, p. 601).<sup>710</sup> Cold Water’s confession was the original 16 articles of New Hampshire’s confession (Cold Water Association, 1854, pp. 15-17).

The Yalobusha association was organized in 1836 at Troy, Mississippi (Leavell & Bailey, 1904, p. 566).<sup>711</sup> Almost a generation after they first organized, Yalobusha Baptists still preferred, as their confessional expression, the original 16 articles of New Hampshire’s confession of faith as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Yalobusha Association, 1872, pp. 11-14). Also, both the Sunflower and Tallahatchie Baptist associations were organized in 1870 (Allen, 1958, pp. 877-878), and both associations still preferred the 1835 edition of the NHC as their expression of faith as the century’s end drew near.<sup>712</sup> Thus, the New Hampshire confessional tradition possessed a strong presence in Mississippi in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>713</sup>

Mississippi’s Calhoun association was organized in 1875 by churches from the Yalobusha and Chickasaw associations (Allen, 1958, p. 874). L. Rhodes rightly affirms articles of faith were adopted in 1882 but does not describe the confessional profile (Ibid). However, published in Calhoun’s 1882 minutes is Calhoun’s confession. Composed of 11 brief articles (with proof-texts), the content deals with most of the same issues as found in other Baptist abstracts across the south—biblical authority; Trinity; human depravity; exclusivity of salvation in Christ alone; perseverance; last judgement; etc. Two articles are particularly relevant for purposes here and are reproduced below (without proof-texts).

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<sup>710</sup> Leavell and Bailey state “The Coldwater Association is one of the oldest and strongest of the Associations in the northern part of the State” (Ibid). Yet the Southern Baptist encyclopedia has no listing. Nor does R. McLemore have more than two bare mentions of the association in his history on Mississippi Baptists (McLemore, 1971, p. 153; 191). Confusingly, Leavell and Bailey spell the name as both “Cold Water” and Coldwater” while McLemore uses only “Coldwater.” The title page of the minutes indicates “Cold Water” to be the correct rendering. More significantly, the first article in the association’s constitution states, “This association shall be called the Cold Water Baptist Association...” (Cold Water Association, 1854, p. 14).

<sup>711</sup> Neither did the Southern Baptist encyclopedia have the Yalobusha association listed.

<sup>712</sup> See, Sunflower Association, 1887, pp. 10-12 and Tallahatchie Association, 1880, pp. 17-19.

<sup>713</sup> Less than half of Mississippi’s associations were examined for this research. However, all six associations yielding articles of faith within the New Hampshire confessional tradition were dependent upon and confessionally loyal to the original 16 articles of New Hampshire’s confession as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. No editions of Brown’s 18 articles as published in his 1853 church manual were uncovered. Hence, more research into Mississippi Baptists confessional tradition is surely justified.

Art. 5. We believe that God has set forth his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and where the gospel is preached, it is the duty of all men to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, that they may be saved, and if they do not, their rejection of the gospel is occasioned by their love of sin and aversion to holiness.

Art. 6. We believe election is the sovereign exercise of that external love by which God hath, according to his infinite wisdom, chosen his people in Christ before the world was, and hath predestined them unto the adoption of children through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth and doth keep them, by his power unto salvation.

Article 5 seems clearly to refer to general atonement rather than the particular redemption evident within the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Nor does Article 6 yield the language of the Unconditional Election so prominent in the PCF. Rather Calhoun Baptists affirmed God's sovereignty over the election process ultimately using as means to accomplish His sovereign purposes both the influence of His Spirit coupled with human belief in the truth. The *strictly* Calvinistic language indicative of the doctrine of Unconditional Election found in Philadelphia's confession remains absent. No "definite number" so firmly fixed that it cannot be changed. No eternal covenant whereby the elect is chosen, and only they "in particular are redeemed" by the Son's covenant death for them. Rather, the language Calhoun Baptists chose is more consistent with biblical phrases interwoven together than reflective of the PCF.<sup>714</sup> Moreover, the means through which election proceeds—"sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth"—reflects North Carolina's Broad River tradition, a tradition that originated by rejecting the Unconditional Election of the PCF.<sup>715</sup>

Confessional language in other Mississippi associations similarly reflected the Broad River confessional tradition. For example, Mississippi's Bethlehem association was organized in 1852 by churches in Clarke and Lauderdale counties (Allen, 1958, p. 879). Bethlehem Baptists' Articles of Faith contained 10 short articles, articles found in many other associational Baptist abstracts in other southern states. Article 3 on the doctrine of election states, "We believe in the doctrine of Election, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (Bethlehem Association, 1889, p. 13).

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<sup>714</sup> Compare Ephesians 1:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

<sup>715</sup> For a full discussion of the Broad River confessional tradition, see chapter two.

Contra Philadelphia's confession that at least twice seems to deny God's election is based in any way upon divine foreknowledge,<sup>716</sup> Bethlehem's article on election fits more the path of the Broad River confessional tradition. In addition, the Tippah association also favors Broad River's understanding in its article on election. Organized in 1860 in northern Mississippi,<sup>717</sup> Tippah Baptists' confession was composed of 11 articles, Article 5 on election stating, "We believe in the doctrine of Election, that God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth" (Tippah Association, 1869). Like Bethlehem's confession, Tippah association's articles of faith has no language reminiscent of the PCF.<sup>718</sup>

#### 7.4 Conclusion

Baptists in the southern states during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century continue to be both diverse in their confessional allegiance to *strict* Calvinism as expressed in the Philadelphia confessional tradition as well as indicate a steady decline in their overall enthusiasm in wrangling over confessions of faith. At least a full 40 Baptist associations across the southern states had neglected to so much as mention the doctrine of election in their articles of faith.<sup>719</sup> Nor did they apparently do so because they were theologically leaning toward "Arminianism" since they almost always confessed the doctrine of perseverance as well. In short, Baptists in the south at the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century held no overwhelming dependence upon or theological loyalty to the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

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<sup>716</sup> See, for example, Chapter 8, Paragraph 8 where the PCF states that eternal redemption "effectually applies" to the elect "without any condition foreseen in them, to procure it" (Confession of Faith, 1818, pp. 31-32). Also, see Chapter 10, Paragraph 2 concerning God's effectual call to the elect: "This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, co-working with his special grace; the creature being wholly passive therein..." (Ibid, p. 34). Hence, with such clear language from the PCF that denies foreknowledge a role in eternal redemption as it is applied in time, it seems far from reasonable to conclude Bethlehem Baptists reflected the Philadelphia confessional tradition in its article on the doctrine of election.

<sup>717</sup> See Leavell & Bailey, 1904, pp. 910-911. Again, no listing of Tippah association is found in the Southern Baptist encyclopedia.

<sup>718</sup> Tippah's Article 6 is rare in Baptist abstracts and shows some literary originality from Tippah Baptists: "We believe that the Holy Spirit accompanies the word of God in the salvation of man in answer to the prayers of Christians" (Ibid).

<sup>719</sup> See *Appendix G* at the end of this research.

## Chapter Eight: Confessional Calvinism in Baptist Associations Among the Southern States in the 19th Century: Summarizing the Research and Final Conclusion

*“Some of our brethren glory in holding the old theology. I do not know exactly what they mean by it, but I will say this. There is not a man in this house who holds the old theology of one hundred years ago. There is not a human being in the Baptist denomination to-day who dares take his stand on “The Philadelphia Confession” and preach that boldly...Let the preacher stand up and take the Philadelphia Confession—the damnation of infants, implied if not positively asserted—the old predestinarian Calvinism! Brethren, there is not a man of you who will stand up and preach that fairly and squarely” (Fox, November 11-13, 1884).*

### 8.1 Introduction

The trajectory of this research has focused neither on the qualitative truth of Calvinism as a soteriological notion nor on whether Calvinism quantitatively made up the majoritarian theological position among Baptists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century south. Whether Baptists embraced Calvinism—and in some cases, even the *strictest* forms of Calvinism—is a matter not up for historical dispute. They did. Nor has the research focused on whether Calvinism as a theological system remains a valid inference from biblical revelation, or if it falls short as a commendable belief system for Baptists today even though Baptists have historically confessed it. While these questions are surely important ones, biblical scholars and systematic theologians are more appropriately tasked with offering suitable answers to the truth or falsity of Calvinism as a biblical-worldview position.

Rather the thrust pursued in the research above concerns the confessional expression of soteriological belief of Baptists in the south during the 19<sup>th</sup> century specifically gauging the intensity of the Calvinism displayed in officially adopted and published confessions and abstracts of faith by local Baptist associations in the southern states. As the evidence unfolded, the primary

sources of which were confessions and abstracts of faith published in the annual session minutes of local Baptist associations, a pattern emerges that suggests not only were Baptists more confessionally *diverse* in their published documents concerning the intensity of their theological loyalty to the Calvinistic understanding of the so-called “doctrines of grace,” a confessional diversity that seems to challenge the conclusions of many that suggest Baptists were all but monolithic in their emboldened acceptance of Calvinism, but also suggests a measurable *decline* among southern Baptists in their confessional dependence upon and theological loyalty to the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.

## 8.2 Summary of the Evidence Examined and Final Conclusion

Beginning in chapter two, a discussion on what constitutes Calvinism set the foundation for what the examination of the historical documents might show. *Strict* Calvinism was mainly to be judged by the widely accepted mnemonic device, **TULIP**. Where the **TULIP** was present, so was *strict* Calvinism. However, because many nuances of Calvinism are recognized both in scholarly circles as well as the masses, it was conceded that *moderate* and even *mild* Calvinism also could be present. Finally, in judging confessions of faith, the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (PCF) was acknowledged as the “King of Confessionally *Strict* Calvinism” and would serve as the standard in judging the presence of *strict* Calvinism in confessional documents.

The evidential trail followed in chapter three with Baptist beginnings in America and the rise of Separate Baptists. As the evidence showed, Baptists fought over Calvinistic doctrine from the very beginning of the first Baptist church organized on colonial soil. What is more, from the very moment Separates arrived in North Carolina in 1755, their presence stirred concern in the Particular Baptist community who had preceded them. Mostly because of Separates’ disorderly mannerisms; tolerance of “Arminian” preachers; and stubborn hesitance in adopting written confessions of faith, Particulars remained suspicious of this new breed of Baptists.

By 1787, after several unsuccessful attempts at merging together their respective faiths, unity finally came with concessions on both sides in Virginia and North Carolina. Separate Baptists conceded to a written confession as a basis of unity—the PCF in abstract form. On the other

hand, Regular Baptists conceded to caveats Separates possessed—*unspecified caveats*—of the confession. Some have viewed the compromise as most favorable to the Regular Baptists. They finally got Separate Baptists to agree to a *strictly* Calvinistic confession of faith as a basis of unity, consequently showing Separates were as Calvinistic as were Regulars. However, because the caveats to which Regular Baptists agreed were *unspecified*, it hardly could be viewed as a victory for Regular Baptists when they could not doctrinally hold Separates to any specified article in the confession. Thus, the very diluted Calvinism—some would say, outright Arminianism—of many Separate Baptists remained in some important ways unchecked by the union.

The merger of Separate and Regular Baptists in Kentucky ended quite differently, however. For over 20 years, attempts were made to merge Separates and Regulars only to become even more divided after each attempt. Success finally came, however, in 1801 with the Terms of General Union. Unlike Virginia Separates and Regulars who had united—with caveats—upon an abstract of faith agreeable to the Philadelphia confession, Kentucky's terms of union was an abstract of faith containing 11 brief articles, articles completely scrubbed of both resemblance and acknowledgement of the PCF. Not only was the Unconditional Election in the PCF not affirmed, the doctrine of election was not mentioned at all in any of the 11 articles. What is more, the doctrine of general redemption that heretofore had been theologically castigated by Regular Baptists as either heresy or, at minimum, heterodoxy, was specifically accepted as “no bar to communion.” Kentucky Baptists, as a whole, accepted the terms of union. Thus, confessionally *strict* Calvinism among Baptists of the south entered the 19<sup>th</sup> century with an historic compromise, a compromise that set-in motion both confessional *diversity* among Baptists of the south, as well as confessional *decline* in adherence to and dependence upon the Philadelphia confessional tradition so prominent in Baptist life beginning with the first Baptist association in America, the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1707.

Nor were Kentucky Baptists the only southern state to put in motion a confessional challenge to Philadelphia's *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrines of grace at the threshold into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1800, North Carolina's Broad River association was organized on the same *strictly* Calvinistic plan as North Carolina's Yadkin association organized a decade earlier with a single

difference between them. The abstract of faith embraced by Yadkin Baptists was *strictly* Calvinistic, one article of which was, “We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election.” A second article read, “We believe God’s elect shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

Since the Broad River Baptists were made up of churches that embraced *strictly* Calvinistic, *moderately* Calvinistic, and even *non-Calvinistic* soteriology, they refused to embrace the abstract of faith as Yadkin Baptists had accepted. Rather, they rewrote the first article on election and dropped the second article altogether. “We believe in the doctrine of *Election* through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” was the way they confessed their understanding of election. They chose to reflect the biblical language of the Scriptures (cp. 2 Thess. 2:13) rather than the theological language of the Philadelphia confession. As detailed in the research above., in total, no less than 72 Baptist associations across the south followed Broad River’s confessional approach by affirming the doctrine of election in almost the same terms as did they in contrast to the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

Thus, like Kentucky Baptists, North Carolina’s Broad River Baptists stand as an historic challenge to confessionally *strict* Calvinism among Baptists of the south as they entered the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a challenge that set-in motion both confessional *diversity* among Baptists of the south as well as confessional *decline* in adherence to and dependence upon the Philadelphia confessional tradition so prominent among earlier Baptists.

Chapter four, however, demonstrates that one of the greatest challenges to *strict* Calvinism expressed by the Philadelphia confessional tradition would not come until some 30 years later in the tiny state of New Hampshire. In 1833, New Hampshire Baptists adopted as their newly composed confession of faith what would later be judged by some the most widely adopted and influential confession in the history of American Baptists. *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* (NHC) was born. Two years later, the NHC was made available to the masses outside New Hampshire through its publication in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Though most scholars have dismissed its earlier distribution before J. Newton

Brown's version of the NHC was included in his 1853 church manual, the research included above examined no less than 40 Baptist associations across the south that had adopted the original 16 articles of the NHC as published in the encyclopedia. Indeed, the original 16 articles of the NHC was published abroad a full decade before Brown published his manual in 1853. Add to the mass dissemination of the original 16 articles of the NHC in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, another 51 Baptist associations across the south that held to or were confessionally dependent upon Brown's edition of the NHC (18 articles) in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Consequently, one might better understand the formidable challenge to the Philadelphia confessional tradition that was concurrently was taking place across the south beginning as early as 1800. Kentucky's terms of union spread into Tennessee and Missouri. Broad River's confessional tradition may be found in every southern state save one, while the New Hampshire confessional tradition may be found in all 12 southern states examined in this research.

Chapter five additionally discusses alongside these three influential confessional traditions at least two other confessional patterns that emerged from the associational evidences assembled above. Thirty-five associations cited in the research above followed what might be called a "freestyle" approach to composing confessions. These associations, while at times may appear to have been familiar with some of the more popular confessions like the NHC, they nonetheless displayed a literary originality in the way they worded their articles, and their articles neither reflected the language of the PCF nor the *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrines of grace.

At least 40 Baptist associations were uncovered that had composed and adopted confessions of faith that were very similar in article content as other abstracts of faith, yet with a single difference—*no article is included addressing the doctrine of election or predestination*. Since no definitive evidence surfaced from either the primary or secondary sources examined in this research, no theory was offered as to potentially *why* the associations chose to ignore the doctrine of election. However, at minimum, it seems reasonable to assume, in absence of evidence, the associations adopted no article on the doctrine of election because they viewed

the doctrine of election as a doctrine they felt no obligation to confessionally address one way or another. If so, given the doctrine of election (i.e. Unconditional Election) remains the chief characteristic for discerning the presence of the Philadelphia confessional tradition, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that an abstract of faith that fails to address the doctrine of election would exist as a confessional alternative to not an adherent of the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

Chapter six offers a significant as well as unique look into the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. Most historical analysis revolves around either the demographic aspects of the delegates from nine southern states who met May 8-12, 1845 to form a new southern convention, or the reasons why Baptists in the south desired a new convention. While some of these details are discussed in the chapter, the major concern revolves around the confessional profile of the Baptist associations represented at Augusta. The evidence points to a clear affirmation of the overall trajectory of the research presented in this project. Namely, the Baptist delegates who met in Augusta in 1845 to form the southern convention represented associations that were confessionally *diverse* in their adherence to the *strict* Calvinism found in the Philadelphia confessional tradition. Consequently, those historians who frequently claim that “each of the delegates” meeting at Augusta in 1845 to form the southern convention had adopted the PCF as their own should reconsider their conclusions in light of the evidence presented in chapter six.

Chapter seven follows a similar pattern as chapter three through five offering more compelling evidence from the associations themselves that Baptists were not monolithically *strict* Calvinists, at least so far as their public confessions adopted by the local Baptist associations were concerned. In addition, evidence indicates that acceptance and use of the original 16 articles of the NHC as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* was far from dead by the century’s end.

In conclusion, after examining over 400 Baptist associations in 12 southern states during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the empirical evidence appears insurmountable that confessionally *strict* Calvinism as

expressed in the Philadelphia confessional tradition among Baptist associations not only entered the 19<sup>th</sup> century seriously challenged by confessional alternatives to Philadelphia's allegiance to a *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of the doctrines of grace, but also shows measurable *decline* in confessional Calvinism as the century progressed on. While confessionally *strict* Calvinism was by no means dead by the 19<sup>th</sup> century's end, it seems not too much to suggest that, given reasonable inferences from the associational confessions assembled in the research above, *strict* Calvinism was, at minimum, on life support for its confessional survival by the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## Appendices

## Appendix A: Selected Baptist Confessions and Abstracts from Baptist Associations in the Nineteenth Century Reflecting the *Strict* Calvinism in the Philadelphia Confessional Tradition

The confessions in this appendix are widely recognized as *strictly* Calvinistic confessions, reflecting, in many ways and in abstract form, the standard model of American Calvinistic confessions, The Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742).<sup>720</sup> The purpose of compiling Calvinistic confessions and abstracts is to show evidential support to the main thesis of this research regarding the *diversity* of confessional traditions as alternatives to the Philadelphia confessional tradition as well as the *decline* among Baptist associations of the south during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in confessional dependence upon and theological loyalty to the Philadelphia confession before the century's end.

By comparing the Philadelphia confession and its abstracts to later confessions after 1800 like Kentucky's General Terms of Union (1801); North Carolina's Broad River associational abstract of faith (1800); The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith (1833), and other associational and church confessions from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it becomes clear that confessionally-driven *strict* Calvinism was losing ground among American Baptists generally and southern Baptists particularly before the century's end, and perhaps as early as the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 1.1 The Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742)<sup>721</sup>

#### Chapter 3

#### Of God's Decree

1. God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken way, but rather

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<sup>720</sup> The abbreviated list of *strict* Calvinistic abstracts in this compilation should by no means be considered indicative of the number or scarcity of abstracts of short Baptist confessions displaying theological loyalty to *strict* Calvinism. Many more could have been added; but adding to the list would contribute little in contrasting *strict* confessional Calvinism with *moderate*, *mild*, and *non-Calvinistic* confessions listed in *Appendix B*.

<sup>721</sup> Though not composed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, The Philadelphia Confession of Faith (PCF) is considered by many to be the most influential Baptist confession in America, especially in the southern United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Lumpkin, 1969, p. 352). While it served as the "standard of doctrine" prior to 1742, it wasn't until then—September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1742 (McGlothlin, 1911, p. 221)—that the Philadelphia Baptist Association officially adopted it (Lumpkin, 2011, pp. 364-365). McGlothlin informs us the PCF is "an exact reprint of the Assembly Confession of 1689," with the addition of two articles "taken verbatim from Keach's Confession": one on hymn-singing and the other detailing the laying on of hands (Ibid, pp. 222-223). Because the confession is comparatively long (over 15,000 words), and since the confession is abundantly available for review in various venues and publications, only the articles considered applicable to the present research will be published in this Appendix.

established; in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree. (Isa. 46:10; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:15, 18; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11; Num. 23:19; Eph. 1:3-5)

2. Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions. (Acts 15:18; Rom. 9:11, 13, 16, 18)

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice. (I Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:34; Eph. 1:5, 6; Rom. 9:22, 23; Jude 4)

4. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished. (2 Tim. 2:19; John 13:18)

5. Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto. (Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; Rom. 8:30; 2 Tim. 1:9; I Thess. 5:9; Rom. 9:13, 16; Eph. 2:5, 12)

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only. (1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Thess. 5:9, 10; Rom. 8:30; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:5; John 10:26, 17:9, 6:64)

7. The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel. (1 Thess. 1:4, 5; 2 Pet. 1:10; Eph. 1:6; Rom. 11:33; Rom. 11:5, 6, 20; Luke 10:20).

## **Chapter 4**

### **Of Creation**

1. In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world, and all things

therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good. (John 1:2, 3; Heb. 1:2; Job 26:13; Rom. 1:20; Col. 1:16; Gen. 1:31)

2. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, rendering them fit unto that life to God for which they were created; being made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change. (Gen. 1:27; Gen. 2:7; Eccles. 7:29; Gen. 1:26; Rom. 2:14, 15; Gen. 3:6)

3. Besides the law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which whilst they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures. (Gen. 2:17; Gen. 1:26, 28)

## **Chapter 5**

### **Of Divine Providence**

1. God the good Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will; to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy. (Heb. 1:3; Job 38:11; Isa. 46:10, 11; Ps. 135:6; Matt. 10:29-31; Eph. 1:11)

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without his providence; yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently. (Acts 2:23; Prov. 16:33; Gen. 8:22)

3. God, in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure. (Acts 27:31, 44; Isa. 55:10, 11; Hosea 1:7; Rom. 4:19-21; Dan. 3:27)

4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin. (Rom. 11:32-34; 2 Sam. 24:1, 1 Chron. 21:1; 2 Kings 19:28; Ps. 76:10; Gen. 1:20; Isa. 10:6, 7, 12; Ps. 1:21; 1 John 2:16)

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness

of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends. So that whatsoever befalls any of his elect is by his appointment, for his glory, and their good. (2 Chron. 32:25, 26, 31; 2 Cor. 12:7-9; Rom. 8:28)

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as the righteous judge, for former sin doth blind and harden; from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, under those means which God useth for the softening of others. (Rom. 1;24-26, 28, 11:7, 8; Deut. 29:4; Matt. 13:12; Deut. 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12, 13; Ps. 81:11, 12; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Exod. 8:15, 32; Isa. 6:9, 10; 1 Pet. 2:7, 8)

7. As the providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a more special manner it taketh care of his church, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof. (1 Tim. 4:10; Amos 9:8, 9; Isa. 43:3-5)

## **Chapter 6**

### **Of the Fall of Man, Of Sin, And of the Punishment Thereof**

1. Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof, yet he did not long abide in this honour; Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, then by her seducing Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit, which God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory. (Gen. 2:16, 17; Gen. 3:12,13; 2 Cor. 11:3)

2. Our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them whereby death came upon all: all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. (Rom. 3:23; Rom 5:12, etc; Tit. 1:15; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-19)

3. They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free. (Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22, 45, 49; Ps. 51:5; Job 14:4; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 6:20, 5:12; Heb. 2:14, 15; 1 Thess. 1:10)

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. (Rom. 8:7; Col. 1:21; James 1:14, 15; Matt. 15:19)

5. The corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and the first motions thereof, are truly and properly sin. (Rom. 7:18,23; Eccles. 7:20; 1 John 1:8; Rom. 7:23-25; Gal. 5:17)

## **Chapter 7**

### **Of God's Covenant**

1. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to him as their creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant. (Luke 17:10; Job 35:7,8)

2. Moreover, man having brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace, wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe. (Gen. 2:17; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 3:20, 21; Rom. 8:3; Mark 16:15, 16; John 3:16; Ezek. 36:26, 27; John 6:44, 45; Ps. 110:3)

3. This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament; and it is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect; and it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality, man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of innocency. (Gen. 3:15; Heb. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 11:6, 13; Rom. 4:1, 2, &c.; Acts 4:12; John 8:56)

## **Chapter 8**

### **Of Christ the Mediator**

1. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man; the prophet, priest, and king; head and saviour of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified. (Isa. 42:1; 1 Pet. 1:19, 20; Acts 3:22; Heb. 5:5, 6; Ps. 2:6; Luke 1:33; Eph. 1:22, 23; Heb. 1:2; Acts 17:31; Isa. 53:10; John 17:6; Rom. 8:30)

2. The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with him who made the world, who upholdeth and governeth all things he hath made, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her: and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; and so was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures; so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man. (John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14, 16, 17, 4:15; Matt. 1:22, 23; Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 2:5)

3. The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of mediator and surety; which office he took not upon himself, but was thereunto called by his Father; who also put all power and judgment in his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same. (Ps. 45:7; Acts 10:38; John 3:34; Col. 2:3; Col. 1:19; Heb. 7:26; John 1:14; Heb. 7:22; Heb. 5:5; John 5:22, 27; Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36)

4. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which that he might discharge he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us; enduring most grievous sorrows in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, yet saw no corruption: on the third day he arose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered, with which he also ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world. (Ps. 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:5-10; John 10:18; Gal 4:4; Matt. 3:15; Gal. 3:13; Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21; Matt. 26:37, 38; Luke 22:44; Matt. 27:46; Acts 13:37; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; John 20:25, 27; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; Acts 10:42; Rom. 14:9, 10; Acts 1:11; 2 Pet. 2:4)

5. The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him. (Heb. 9:14, 10:14; Rom. 3:25, 26; John 17:2; Heb. 9:15)

6. Although the price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof were communicated to the elect in all ages, successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices wherein he was revealed, and signified to be the seed which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain

from the foundation of the world, being the same yesterday, and to-day and forever. (1 Cor. 4:10; Heb. 4:2; 1 Pet. 1:10, 11; Rev. 13:8; Heb. 13:8)

7. Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture, attributed to the person denominated by the other nature. (John 3:13; Acts 20:28)

8. To all those for whom Christ hath obtained eternal redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them; uniting them to himself by his Spirit, revealing unto them, in and by his Word, the mystery of salvation, persuading them to believe and obey, governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit, and overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation; and all of free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them to procure it. (John 6:37, 10:15, 16, 17:9; Rom. 5:10; John 17:6; Eph. 1:9; 1 John 5:20; Rom. 8:9, 14; Ps. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25, 26; John 3:8; Eph. 1:8)

9. This office of mediator between God and man is proper only to Christ, who is the prophet, priest, and king of the church of God; and may not be either in whole, or any part thereof, transferred from him to any other. (Tim. 2:5)

10. This number and order of offices is necessary; for in respect of our ignorance, we stand in need of his prophetic office; and in respect of our alienation from God, and imperfection of the best of our services, we need his priestly office to reconcile us and present us acceptable unto God; and in respect to our averseness and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue and security from our spiritual adversaries, we need his kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom. (John 1:18; Col. 1:21; Gal. 5:17; John 16:8; Ps. 110:3; Luke 1:74, 75)

## **Chapter 9**

### **Of Free Will**

1. God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any necessity of nature determined to do good or evil. (Matt. 17:12; James 1:14; Deut. 30:19)

2. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God, but yet was unstable, so that he might fall from it. (Eccles. 7:29; Gen. 3:6)

3. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead

in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto. (Rom. 5:6, 8:7; Eph. 2:1, 5; Tit. 3:3-5; John 6:44)

4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that by reason of his remaining corruptions, he doth not perfectly, nor only will, that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil. (Col. 1:13; John 8:36; Phil. 2:13; Rom. 7:15, 18, 19, 21, 23)

5. This will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory only. (Eph. 4:13)

## **Chapter 10**

### **Of Effectual Calling**

1. Those whom God hath predestinated unto life, he is pleased in his appointed, and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace. (Rom. 8:30, 11:7; Eph. 1:10, 11; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14; Eph. 2:1-6; Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:17, 18; Ezek. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27; Eph. 1:19; Ps. 110:3; Cant. 1:4)

2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature, being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit; he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead. (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 2:8; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:5; John 5:25; Eph. 1:19, 20)

3. Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit; who worketh when, and where, and how he pleases; so also are all elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word. (John 3:3, 5, 6; John 3:8)

4. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither will nor can truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men that receive not the Christian religion be saved; be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess. (Matt. 22:14, 13:20, 21; Heb 6:4, 5; John 6:44, 45, 65; 1 John 2:24, 25; Acts 4:12; John 4:22, 17:3)

## **Chapter 11**

### **Of Justification**

1. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in his death for their whole and sole righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God. (Rom. 3:24, 8:30; Rom. 4:5-8; Eph. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:30, 31; Rom. 5:17-19; Phil. 3:8, 9; Eph. 2:8-10; John 1:12; Rom. 5:17)

2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love. (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 5:6; James 2:17, 22, 26)

3. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of himself in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf; yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners. (Heb. 10:14; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Isa. 53:5, 6; Rom. 8:32; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 3:26; Eph. 1:6, 7, 2:7)

4. God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in time due actually apply Christ unto them. (Gal. 3:8; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Tim. 2:6; Rom. 4:25; Col. 1:21, 22; Tit. 3:4-7)

5. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified, and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure; and in that condition they have not usually the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance. (Matt. 6:12; 1 John 1:7, 9; John 10:28; Ps. 89:31-33; Ps. 32:5; Ps. 51; Matt. 26:75)

6. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament. (Gal. 3:9; Rom. 4:22-24)

## **Chapter 12**

### **Of Adoption**

All those that are justified, God vouchsafed, in and for the sake of his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a Father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation. (Eph. 1:5;

Gal. 4:4, 5; John 1:12; Rom. 8:17; 2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 3:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18; Ps. 103:13; Prov. 14:26; 1 Pet. 5:7; Heb. 12:6; Isa. 54:8, 9; Lam. 3:31; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 1:14, 6:12)

## **Chapter 13**

### **Of Sanctification**

1. They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also farther sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. (Acts 20:32; Rom. 6:5, 6; John 17:17; Eph. 3:16-19; 1 Thess. 5:21-23; Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:24; Col. 1:11; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14)

2. This sanctification is throughout the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. (1 Thess. 5:23; Rom. 7:18, 23; Gal. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:11)

3. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in His Word hath prescribed them. (Rom. 7:23; Rom. 6:14; Eph. 4:15, 16; 2 Cor. 3:18, 7:1)

## **Chapter 14**

### **Of Saving Faith**

1. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word; by which also, and by the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, prayer, and other means appointed of God, it is increased and strengthened. (2 Cor. 4:13; Eph. 2:8; Rom. 10:14, 17; Luke 17:5; 1 Pet. 2:2; Acts 20:32)

2. By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word for the authority of God himself, and also apprehendeth an excellency therein above all other writings and all things in the world, as it bears forth the glory of God in his attributes, the excellency of Christ in his nature and offices, and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in his workings and operations: and so is enabled to cast his soul upon the truth thus believed; and also acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come; but the principal acts of saving faith have immediate relation to Christ,

accepting, receiving, and resting upon him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace. (Acts 24:14; Ps. 19:7-10, 119:72; 2 Tim. 1:12; John 15:14; Isa. 66:2; Heb. 11:13; John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Gal. 2:20; Acts 15:11)

3. This faith, although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or strong, yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it, as is all other saving grace, from the faith and common grace of temporary believers; and therefore, though it may be many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith. (Heb. 5:13, 14; Matt. 6:30; Rom. 4:19, 20; 2 Pet. 1:1; Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:4, 5; Heb. 6:11, 12; Col. 2:2; Heb. 12:2)

## **Chapter 15**

### **Of Repentance Unto Life and Salvation**

1. Such of the elect as are converted at riper years, having sometime lived in the state of nature, and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, God in their effectual calling giveth them repentance unto life. (Titus 3:2-5)

2. Whereas there is none that doth good and sinneth not, and the best of men may, through the power and deceitfulness of their corruption dwelling in them, with the prevalency of temptation, fall into great sins and provocations; God hath, in the covenant of grace, mercifully provided that believers so sinning and falling be renewed through repentance unto salvation. (Eccles. 7:20; Luke 22:31, 32)

3. This saving repentance is an evangelical grace, whereby a person, being by the Holy Spirit made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth, by faith in Christ, humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-aborrancy, praying for pardon and strength of grace, with a purpose and endeavour, by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things. (Zech. 12:10; Acts 11:18; Ezek. 36:31; 2 Cor. 7:11; Ps. 119:6, 128)

4. As repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, upon the account of the body of death, and the motions thereof, so it is every man's duty to repent of his particular known sins particularly. (Luke 19:8; 1 Tim. 1:13, 15)

5. Such is the provision which God hath made through Christ in the covenant of grace for the preservation of believers unto salvation; that although there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; yet there is no sin so great that it shall bring damnation on them that repent; which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary. (Rom. 6:23; Isa. 1:16-18, 55:7)

## **Chapter 16**

### **Of Good Works**

1. Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his Holy Word, and not such as without the warrant thereof are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intentions. (Mic. 6:8; Heb. 13:21; Matt. 15:9; Isa. 29:13)

2. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that having their fruit unto holiness they may have the end eternal life. (James 2:18, 22; Ps. 116:12, 13; 1 John 2:3, 5; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Matt. 5:16; 1 Tim. 6:1; 1 Pet. 2:15; Phil. 1:11; Eph. 2:10; Rom. 6:22)

3. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ; and that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is necessary an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; yet they are not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them. (John 15:4, 5; 2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:13; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 6:11, 12; Isa. 64:7)

4. They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do. (Job 9:2, 3; Gal. 5:17; Luke 17:10)

5. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants; and because as they are good they proceed from his Spirit, and as they are wrought by us they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's punishment. (Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 4:6; Gal. 5:22, 23; Isa. 64:6; Ps. 143:2)

6. Yet notwithstanding the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him; not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreprouvable in God's sight, but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections. (Eph. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:5; Matt. 25:21, 23; Heb. 6:10)

7. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God, and yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to

God. (2 Kings 10:30; 1 Kings 21:27, 29; Gen. 4:5; Heb. 11:4, 6; 1 Cor. 13:1; Matt. 6:2, 5; Amos 5:21, 22; Rom. 9:16; Tit. 3:5; Job 21:14, 15; Matt. 25:41-43)

## **Chapter 17**

### **Of The Perseverance of the Saints**

1. Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence he still begets and nourisheth in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon; notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet he is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraven upon the palm of his hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity. (John 10:28, 29; Phil. 1:6; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 John 2:19; Ps. 89:31, 32; 1 Cor. 11:32; Mal. 3:6)

2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with him, the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof. (Rom. 8:30, 9:11, 16; Rom. 5:9, 10; John 14:19; Heb. 6:17, 18; 1 John 3:9; Jer. 32:40)

3. And though they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves, yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end. (Matt. 26:70, 72, 74; Isa. 64:5, 9; Eph. 4:30; Ps. 51:10, 12; Ps. 32:3, 4; 2 Sam. 12:14; Luke 22:32, 61, 62)

## **Chapter 18**

### **Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation**

1. Although temporary believers, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God and state of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly

assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed. (Job 8:13, 14; Matt. 7:22, 23; 1 John 2:3, 3:14, 18, 19, 21, 24, 5:13; Rom. 5:2, 5)

2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel; and also upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit unto which promises are made, and on the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God; and, as a fruit thereof, keeping the heart both humble and holy. (Heb. 6:11, 19; Heb. 6:17, 18; 2 Pet. 1:4, 5, 10, 11; Rom. 8:15, 16; 1 John 3:1-3)

3. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of means, attain thereunto: and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; -so far is it from inclining men to looseness. (Isa. 50:10; Ps. 88; Ps. 77:1-12; 1 John 4:13; Heb. 6:11, 12; Rom. 5:1, 2, 5, 14:17; Ps. 119:32; Rom. 6:1,2; Tit. 2:11, 12, 14)

4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light, yet are they never destitute of the seed of God and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which, in the meantime, they are preserved from utter despair. (Cant. 5:2, 3, 6; Ps. 51:8, 12, 14; Ps. 116:11; 77:7, 8, 31:22; Ps. 30:7; 1 John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Ps. 42:5, 11; Lam. 3:26-31)

[...]

## **Chapter 20**

### **Of the Gospel, and of the Extent of the Grace Thereof**

1. The covenant of works being broken by sin, and made unprofitable unto life, God was pleased to give forth the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling the elect, and begetting in them faith and repentance; in this promise the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and [is] therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners. (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 13:8)

2. This promise of Christ, and salvation by him, is revealed only by the Word of God; neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace

by him, so much as in a general or obscure way; much less that men destitute of the revelation of Him by the promise or gospel, should be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance. (Rom. 1:17; Rom. 10:14,15,17; Prov. 29:18; Isa. 25:7; 60:2, 3)

3. The revelation of the gospel unto sinners, made in divers times and by sundry parts, with the addition of promises and precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the nations and persons to whom it is granted, is merely of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God; not being annexed by virtue of any promise to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received without it, which none ever did make, or can do so; and therefore in all ages, the preaching of the gospel has been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent or straitening of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God. (Ps. 147:20; Acts 16:7; Rom. 1:18-32)

4. Although the gospel be the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and is, as such, abundantly sufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in trespasses may be born again, quickened or regenerated, there is moreover necessary an effectual insuperable work of the Holy Spirit upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life; without which no other means will effect their conversion unto God. (Ps. 110:3; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 1:19, 20; John 6:44; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6) (The Philadelphia Confession of Faith, 1742)

### **1.2 The John Asplund Abstract of Faith (1791)**

*An abstract of principles held by the Baptists in general, agreeable to the confession of faith adopted by upwards of one hundred congregations in England, and published in Philadelphia, 1742; which is a standard for the Baptists.*

1. WE believe in one only true and living God; and that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
2. We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election.
4. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
5. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will ability.
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Christ.
7. We believe that God's elect shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
8. We believe that the saints shall persevere in grace, and never fall finally away.

9. We believe that baptism and the Lord's supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the subjects of these ordinances—And we believe that the true mode of baptism is by immersion.

10. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment.

11. We believe the punishment of the wicked will be everlasting, and the joys of the righteous will be eternal.

12. We believe that no ministers have a right to the administration of the ordinances, only such are regularly called, and come under imposition of hands by the presbytery, &c. &c (Asplund, 1791, pp. 53-54; *Italics original*)<sup>722</sup>

### **1.3 The Kehukee Baptist Association (1769)**

#### Articles of Faith

1. We believe in the being of God, as almighty, eternal, unchangeable, of infinite wisdom, power, justice, holiness, goodness, mercy, and truth: and that this God has revealed himself in his word, under the characters of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

2. We believe that Almighty God has made known his mind and will to the children of men in his word; which word we believe to be of divine authority, and contains all things necessary to be known for the salvation of men and women. The same is comprehended or contained in the books of the Old and New Testament, as are commonly received.

3. We believe that God, before the foundation of the world, for a purpose of his own glory, did elect a certain number of men and angels to eternal life; and that this election is particular, eternal, and unconditional on the creature's part.

4. We believe that when God made man at first, he was perfect, holy, and upright, able to keep the law, but liable to fall, and that he stood as a federal head, or representative of all his natural offspring, and that they were to be partakers of the benefits of his obedience, or exposed to the misery which sprang from his disobedience.

5. We believe that Adam fell from this state of moral rectitude, and that he involved himself and all his natural offspring in a state of death; and for that original transgression, we all are both filthy and guilty in the sight of an holy God.

6. We also believe that it is utterly out of the power of men, as fallen creatures, to keep the law of God perfectly, repent of their sins truly, or believe in Christ, except they be drawn by the holy spirit.

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<sup>722</sup> While Asplund did not write the abstract, it historically was first published by him as a model abstract of faith based upon and “agreeable to” the PCF.

7. We believe that in God's own appointed time and way (by means which he has ordained) the elect shall be called, justified, pardoned, and sanctified; and that it is impossible they can utterly refuse the call; but shall be made willing, by divine grace, to receive the offers of mercy.
8. We believe that justification in the sight of God is only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, received and applied by faith alone.
9. We believe in like manner, that God's elect shall not only be called, and justified, but that they shall be converted, born again, and changed by the effectual working of God's holy spirit.
10. We believe that such as are converted, justified, and called by his grace, shall persevere in holiness, and never fall finally away.
11. We believe it to be a duty incumbent on all God's people, to walk religiously in good works; not in the old covenant way of seeking life, and the favor of the Lord by it; but only as a duty from a principle of love.
12. We believe baptism and the Lord's Supper are Gospel ordinances, both belonging to the converted, or true believers; and that persons who were sprinkled, or dipped, whilst in unbelief, were not regularly baptized according to God's word, and that such ought to be baptized after they are savingly converted into the faith of Christ.
13. We believe that every church is independent in matters of discipline; and that associations, councils, and conferences of several ministers or churches, are not to impose on the churches the keeping, holding, or maintaining any principle or practice contrary to the church's judgment.
14. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, and a general judgment.
15. We believe the punishment of the wicked is everlasting, and the joys of the righteous are eternal.
16. We believe that no minister has a right to the administration of the ordinances, only such as are regularly called, and come under imposition of hands by the Presbytery.
17. Lastly, we do believe that, for the mutual comfort, union, and satisfaction of the several churches of the aforesaid faith and order, we ought to meet in an association way; wherein each church ought to represent their case by their delegates, and attend as often as is necessary to advise with the several churches in conference; and that the decision of matters in such associations, not to be imposed, or in any wise binding on the churches without their consent, but only to sit and act as an advisory council (Burkitt & Read, 1850, pp. 51-54).<sup>723</sup>

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<sup>723</sup> One of the earliest Baptist associations made up of both Regular and Separate Baptist churches (Allen, 1958, p. 1016). This confession has often been cited as a model expressing *strict* Calvinism. It has definite language lifted directly from the PCF making it an undeniable expression of *strict* Calvinism. The Kehukee confession, along with the Georgia Association confession (see below) constitute appropriate models by which to judge *strict* Calvinistic

## 1.4 The Georgia Association (1784)

### The Abstract of Faith and Gospel Order (1790)

We, the churches of Jesus Christ, who have been regularly baptized upon a profession of our Edith, are convinced, from a series of experience, of the necessity of a combination of churches; and of maintaining a correspondence, for the preserving of a federal union amongst all the churches of the same faith and order.

And as we are convinced, that there are a number of Baptist churches, who differ from us in faith and practice; and that it is impossible to have communion where there is no union, we think it our duty, to set forth a concise declaration of the faith and order, upon which we intend to associate, which is as follows:

1st. We believe in one only true and living God; and that there is a trinity of persons in the Godhead — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and yet, there are not three Gods, but one God.

2d. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

3d. We believe in the fall of Adam, and the imputation of his sin to his posterity. In the corruption of human nature, and the impotency of man to recover himself by his own free will — ability.

4th. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people, and the eternal election of a definite number of the human race, to grace and glory: And that there was a covenant of grace or redemption made between the Father and the Son, before the world began, in which their salvation is secure, and that they in particular are redeemed.

5th. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them.

6th. We believe that all those who were chosen in Christ, will be effectually called, regenerated, converted, sanctified, and supported by the spirit and power of God, so that they shall persevere in grace, and not one of them be finally lost.

7th. We believe that good works are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, and that they only justify us in the sight of men and angels, and are evidences of our gracious state.

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abstracts based upon the PCF. Article 3 depicting a “certain number” elected upon an “unconditional” basis; Adam being our “federal head” whereby we partake in the “original transgression” and therefore share in the guilt of original sin (Articles 4 & 5); a focus on “effectual” call so strong that, “it is impossible they can utterly refuse the call” and therefore “shall be made willing” to “receive the offers of mercy” (Article 7) undoubtedly reflect the **I** in **TULIP** of *strict* Calvinism. Few would question whether the PCF is behind the articles in this confession.

8th. We believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a general judgement; and the happiness of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.

And as for Gospel order:

1st. We believe that the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful persons, who have gained christian fellowship with each other, and have given themselves up to the Lord, and to one another, and have agreed to keep up a Godly discipline, agreeably to the rules of the Gospel.

2nd. We believe that Jesus Christ is the great head of his Church, and only law giver, and that the government is with the body, and is the privilege of each individual; and that the discipline of the church is intended for the reclaiming of those christians, who may be disorderly, either in principle or practice; and must be faithfully kept up, for God's glory, and the peace and unity of the churches.

3rd. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's supper, are ordinances of the Lord, and are to be continued till his second coming.

4th. We believe that true believers in Jesus Christ are the only subjects of baptism, and that dipping is the mode.

5th. We believe that none but regular baptized church members have a right to communion at the Lord's table.

6th. We believe that it is the duty of every heaven-born soul to become a member of the visible Church, to make a public profession of his faith, to be legally baptized, so as to have a right to, and to partake of the Lord's supper at every legal opportunity, through the whole course of his life. (Mercer, 1838, pp. 24-26).<sup>724</sup>

## **1.5 Carey Baptist Association (1855)**

### **Abstract of Principles**

1. We believe In only one true and living God, and there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father. Son and Holy Ghost.

2. We believe that the Scriptures or the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

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<sup>724</sup> Organized in 1784, the Georgia Association was the first association organized in the state (Allen, 1958, p. 549). Apparently, it was organized without a confession but, according to the preamble, the confession became necessary because some churches began to embrace doctrines unlike most of the churches at the time (almost certainly the allusion in the preamble is toward Jeremiah Walker (1746-1792) and the division his party stirred up in the association). More in the main body on Walker. The confession is *moderately* Calvinistic except for Article 4 with its focus on a "certain number" to be elected and the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son solely for securing the redemption of an elect people, two themes frequently addressed in High Calvinism.

3. We believe in the doctrine of eternal and particular election.
4. We believe In the doctrine of original sin and the Impotency of man to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by his own free will and ability.
5. We believe that sinners are Justified In the sight of God only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.
6. We believe that God’s elect shall he called, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and that the saints shall persevere in grace and never finally fall away.
7. We believe that baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects of the ordinances, and that Immersion only is baptism.
8. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and a general Judgment, and that the punishment of the wicked shall be everlasting; and the joys of the righteous will be eternal.
9. We believe that no minister has a right to administer the ordinances, only such as are called of God, and have come under the imposition of hands of a presbytery and are in fellowship in the churches of which they are members (Carey Baptist Association, 1886, pp. 13-14).<sup>725</sup>

### **1.6 Conecuh River Baptist Association (1827)**

#### Abstract of Principles (1828)

1. We believe in One only true and living God and there are three persons in Him; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
2. We believe the scriptures of the old and new testament are the word of God and the only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of eternal and particular election.
4. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
5. We believe in mans [sic] incapacity to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and ability.
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.
7. We believe that God's elect shall be called, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost.
8. We believe the Saints shall persevere in Grace and never finally fall away.

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<sup>725</sup> The Carey association comprised Clay, Tallapoosa, and Randolph counties in Alabama (Allen, 1958, p. 7). Most articles in this brief abstract would not be deemed *strictly* Calvinistic. However, the wording of Article 3 concerning the “doctrine of eternal and particular election” seems to push this confession into the *strict* Calvinistic category.

9. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ and that true believers are the only subjects of these ordinances and that the true and only mode of Baptism is by immersion.

10. We believe that the punishment of the wicked will be everlasting and the joys of the righteous will be eternal.

11. We believe that no ministers have a right to the administration of the ordinances, only such as are regularly called and come under the imposition of hands by the presbytery (Hill, 1828, p. 4).<sup>726</sup>

### **1.7 Sandy Creek Baptist Association (1758)**

Principles of Faith of The Sandy Creek Association (1816)

Art. I. We believe that there is only one true and living God; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, equal in essence, power and glory; and yet there are not three Gods but one God.

II. That Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, and only rule of faith and practice.

III. That Adam fell from his original state of purity, and that his sin is imputed to his posterity; that human nature is corrupt, and that man, of his own free will and ability, is impotent to regain the state in which he was primarily placed.

IV. We believe in election from eternity, effectual calling by the Holy Spirit of God, and justification in his sight only by imputation of Christ's righteousness. And we believe that they who are thus elected, effectually called, and justified, will persevere through grace to the end, that none of them be lost.

V. We believe that there will be a resurrection from the dead, and a general or universal judgment, and that the happiness of the righteous and punishment of the wicked will be eternal.

VI. That the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful persons, who have obtained fellowship with each other, and have given themselves up to the Lord and one another; having agreed to keep up a godly discipline, according to the rules of the Gospel.

VII. That Jesus Christ is the great head of the church, and that the government thereof is with the body.

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<sup>726</sup> The Conecuh River association was organized in 1827 in Pike county, Alabama (Allen, 1958, p. 13). It eventually became a Primitive Baptist association and has since become extinct. Again, while most of the articles cannot reasonably be interpreted as *strictly* Calvinistic, Article 3 expressing "particular election" pushes this confession into the category.

VIII. That baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Lord, and to be continued by his church until his second coming.

IX. That true believers are the only fit subjects of baptism, and that immersion is the only mode.

X. That the church has no right to admit any but regular baptized church members to communion at the Lord's table (Lumpkin, 2011, pp. 374-375).<sup>727</sup>

## 1.8 The Ketocton Baptist Association (1766)

### A Summary of the Leading Principles

FIRST — We believe there is one living and true God; that He is self-existent and independent, in whom all power, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness and truth centre; who is omniscient and

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<sup>727</sup> Sandy Creek association was organized in 1758 by Shubal Stearns as the first Separate Baptist association in the south and, by many accounts, the third Baptist association in America (Allen, 1958, p. 1012). Given Separate Baptists' well-known aversion to writing confessions, it remains unsurprising the association apparently existed from 1758 until 1816 before composing articles of belief. According to Lumpkin, their decision to publish a confession in 1816 was largely attributable to the influence of Luther Rice (Lumpkin, 2011, p. 374). Some unfortunately interpret the 1816 confession as indicative of the strongly Calvinistic history originating from the very start of the Sandy Creek association (Ascol, 2001, p. 9). However, such an inference from a confession composed over a half century after the organization was established presumes far too much. First, Sandy Creek had no confession in 1758. If it did, the chief complaint raised against Separates by Regular Baptists prior to merging together would have been entirely moot. Second, the old Sandy Creek association was effectively gutted immediately after the Battle of Alamance in 1771. Some 1,500 families migrated out of the area within two years after Alamance (Allen, 1958, p. 1012). Thus, even Sandy Creek church was decimated, declining from over 600 members before the Battle of Alamance to 14 members afterward. Other churches disbanded. Some survived. Even so, whatever theological trajectory the original association entertained, it does not follow the Sandy Creek association of 1816 was the same association with the same theological sentiments of 1758. Third, while the 1816 confession displays a Calvinistic slant, the confession overall rises to but a shade beyond *moderate* Calvinism. Indeed, there is a case to be made for *moderate* Calvinism. Nothing exists in Article IV concerning a "certain number" being elected as in the Kehukee and Georgia associational confessions, for example. Nor is there any hint of a covenant of redemption whereby the elect was given to the Son; consequently, the Son covenants to redeem the elect by dying for them. In short, the stiff "particularity" motif so common in *strict* Calvinism is noticeably absent, or, at best, *weak* in the Sandy Creek confession. Fourth, even were one to grant *strict* Calvinism in play at the Sandy Creek association in the 1816 confession, within two decades, the association had become uneasy with their confession. In 1836, a motion was made and passed to set up a three-person committee to "draw up Articles of the Faith of Baptists, and present them to our next Association" sandy creek (Sandy Creek Association, 1836, p. 6). No minutes are apparently extant for 1837. Interestingly, whatever debate ensued, the association appended the 1816 confession to the 1838 minutes (Sandy Creek Association, 1838, pp. pp. 6-7; 9-10). We may surmise that since the debate on the articles was seemingly a wash, they decided to keep the 1816 confession. If so, the satisfaction with the original confession wore off quickly. In 1845, Sandy Creek association "Resolved, therefore, That we adopt the following Sixteen Articles, with the Scripture References, as the Faith of this Association" recommending it "to the different Churches for their adoption" (Sandy Creek Association, 1845, p. 9). The 16 articles are, almost verbatim, the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* (1833) as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Hence, either way, *strict* Calvinism was not the theological trajectory of Sandy Creek association by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

omnipresent — the Almighty Creator of all things that do exist, visible and invisible; who upholds and governs all things by His providential hand, according to the council of His own will.

SECONDLY — That in the Divine Essence there are (according to the Scriptures) three persons, or subsistences, distinguished by the relative names of Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that each subsistence possesses proper Deity — that the work of creation is ascribed to them — divine worship is addressed to each of them; each of them are called by the same divine names — and in the name of the three in one the New Testament ordinances are to be administered.

THIRDLY — That the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God; that they were given by divine inspiration, and that this system of divine revelation comprehends everything necessary for us to know concerning God and the direction of our obedience to Him. By this divine book God hath made revelation of His gracious design in saving poor sinners, and pointed out the way through the mediation of the Lord Jesus, that by the instrumentality of this sacred word, stubborn and obstinate sinners are brought into the obedience of faith, and the incorrigible left without excuse; and that by this word of the Lord all men shall be judged in the last day.

FOURTHLY — That man was created upright, free from sin, and possessed with holiness of nature; that he fell from that innocent state in which he was created, by transgressing God's command, by which he became morally dead, and subjected himself to bodily and an eternal death — and as a public head, involved his unborn progeny in the like ruin; for all descending from him by ordinary generation, are born in a state of pollution, and under the dominion of sin, and guilty before God.

FIFTHLY — That in eternity, God out of His own good pleasure chose a certain number of Adam's progeny to eternal life, and that He did not leave the accomplishment of His decrees to accident or chance, but decreed all the means to bring about the event; therefore they are chosen to salvation through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Their calling was decreed in the purpose of election: It is said, when called, that they are called according to His purpose and grace given in Christ Jesus before the world began, and all in order to manifest the glory of His grace.

SIXTHLY — That the covenant of redemption was between the Father and the Son — that the elect were given by the Father to the Son, to be by Him redeemed and finally saved; and that the Son, as head and representative of His people, engaged to perform everything necessary or requisite to carry their complete salvation into effect. It is called in scripture, a well ordered covenant in all things, and sure.

SEVENTHLY — That in the fulness of time, the Son of God was manifested by taking human nature into union with His divine person, in which capacity He wrought out a righteousness for the justification of His people; yielding a perfect and spotless obedience to all the requisitions of the divine law, and submitted Himself to a shameful and ignominious death on the cross, as an atonement for their sins, and reconciliation of their souls to God.

EIGHTHLY — That those that are redeemed by Christ, are in due time called to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus — embracing Him as the only way to God, and saviour of poor sinners. This effectual calling is accomplished by the agency of the Holy Ghost operating in a free, irresistible and unfrustrable manner, by which the understanding is enlightened, and the will subjected to Christ. Hence the scriptures testify that they are made willing in the day of His power. This internal change, or new birth in the soul, is wholly ascribed to the power of God; for it is said of the regenerate: They are begotten of God, quickened of God, born of God — all expressive that it is the Lord's work, and He is entitled to the praise.

NINTHLY — All that are effectually called by efficacious grace, are freely justified of God. The perfect obedience, or in other words, the righteousness of Christ being imputed to them, their sins are pardoned, and their persons accepted in God's beloved Son. Such are taken under the care of the great Shepherd of souls, and rests on the infallible promises and power of God, which has engaged to protect them under all their trials; to succour them when tempted; to supply all their wants, and withhold no good thing from them; to continue the good work of grace begun in them, and crown the end of their faith in the complete salvation of their souls.

TENTHLY — That being bought with the precious blood of Christ, and called by rich grace, it becomes a bounden duty to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, although justified by grace, to which our works can add nothing — yet by good works the declarative glory of God is manifested, and the genuineness of faith proven, which, while others behold, they may be led to glorify God, who is in heaven. And,

LASTLY — That God will guide men and angels in the last day, by Jesus Christ: That when Christ appears in the clouds of Heaven with the sound of the trumpet, the dead saints shall be raised incorruptible and reunited to their souls; then shall they, together with the living saints, be caught up to meet the Lord in the air — and so shall they be forever with the Lord. The wicked will be raised likewise in that sinful state in which they died; and never having been regenerated and qualified by grace for the kingdom of Heaven, will be sentenced to unspeakable torments, for ever and ever, from which there will be no recovery to endless duration (Fristoe, 1808, pp. 13-15).<sup>728</sup>

### **1.9 The Hephzibah Baptist Association (1771)**

Constitution, Articles of Faith and Decorum for the Hephzibah Baptist Association<sup>729</sup>

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<sup>728</sup> Now extinct, the Kettocton association was the first Baptist association organized in Virginia in 1766 (Allen, 1958, p. 1464). It prospered over time gaining churches in four states and spawned at least four sister associations. It was decimated by the anti-missions movement, later becoming a Primitive Baptist Association. The articles beg few comments since *strict* Calvinism is obviously expressed.

<sup>729</sup> Only the Preamble and Articles of Faith are reproduced.

*Whereas*, it has been found expedient for the churches of Jesus Christ within convenient distance of each other to be in some way associated, in order to promote mutual piety and secure unity of faith, harmony of feeling and concert of action in religious enterprises;

We, therefore, messengers of the following churches, to-wit (the names of all the churches of the Association are here recited), do hereby set forth the following articles as the basis on which the said churches propose to associate:

#### AS FOR THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL.

1. We believe in the only true and living God, and that there is a trinity of persons in the God-head, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; and yet that there are not three Gods, but one.
2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, and they are the only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the fall of Adam and in the imputation of his sin to his posterity, in the corruption of human nature, and in the inability of man to recover himself from his lost estate.
4. We believe in the everlasting love of God to His people, and in the eternal and particular election of a definite number of the human race to grace and glory, and that before the world began there was a covenant made between the Father and the Son, in which the salvation of the redeemed and elect is made secure.
5. We believe that the righteousness of Christ imputed to sinners is the only ground of their justification before God.
6. We believe that the spirit and power of God will effectually call, regenerate, support and sanctify those who were chosen in Christ, so that they will persevere in grace, and so that not one of them will finally be lost.
7. We believe that good works are the fruit of faith; that they follow justification, and are evidences of a gracious state.
8. We believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment, and that the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.

#### AS FOR GOSPEL ORDER.

1. We believe that a Gospel Church is a congregation of baptized believers, associated in solemn covenant to maintain public worship, to preach the gospel in its purity and entirety to the whole world, and to duly administer the ordinances.
2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Great Head of the Church, and its only law-giver; that the administration of the laws on earth is vested in each church for itself, an equal share in the administration being the privilege of each member, and that discipline is intended for the purity

of the church and for the reclaiming of those members who may be disorderly, either in principle or practice, and should be faithfully kept up for the glory of God.

3. We believe that baptism in water and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, are His only ordinances, and are to be continued until His second coming.

4. We believe that baptism and immersion are equivalent terms, and that regular baptism is the immersion of a professed believer in Jesus Christ in water by an administrator who has himself been immersed on a profession of his faith, and is at the time of administering the ordinance properly authorized by a church composed of baptized believers.

5. We believe that none but regularly baptized church members have a right to commune at the Lord's Table.

6. We believe that it is the duty of every heaven-born soul to make a public profession of his faith, to be legally baptized, to become a member of a visible church, and to partake of the Lord's Supper at every legal opportunity in the whole course of his life (Kilpatrick, 1894, pp. 158-159).<sup>730</sup>

### **1.10 Mississippi Baptist Association (1806)**

#### Articles of Faith

1. We believe in one true and living God; and that there are a trinity of persons in the Godhead-the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in essence, equal in power and glory.

2. We believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God, are of Divine authority, and the only rule of faith and practice.

3. We believe in the fall of Adam; in the imputation of his sin to all his posterity; in the total depravity of human nature; and in man's inability to restore himself to the favor of God.

4. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people; in the eternal unconditional election of a definite number of the human family to grace and glory.

5. We believe that sinners are only justified in the sight of God, by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is unto all and upon all them that believe.

6. We believe all those who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world are, in time, effectually called regenerated, converted, and sanctified; and are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.

7. We believe there is one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ, who by the satisfaction which he made to law and justice, "in becoming an offering for sin," hath, by his

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<sup>730</sup> Organized in 1794, Georgia's Hephzibah association is the second oldest association in the state (Allen, 1958, p. 549). The articles of faith are very similar in substance to the Georgia Association's confession. The fourth and sixth articles of Gospel Doctrine establish *strict* Calvinism as the theological backdrop of the composers.

most precious blood, redeemed the elect from under the curse of the law, that they might be holy and without blame before him in love.

8. We believe good works are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, are evidences of a gracious state, and that it is the duty of all believers to perform them from a principle of love.

9. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment, and that the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal (Nesom, 1993, p. 20).<sup>731</sup>

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<sup>731</sup> The Articles of Faith were drawn up and adopted at the very beginning of the organization in 1806 (Allen, 1958, p. 876). It began with six churches in southwestern Mississippi. In 1820, several churches were dismissed from which two associations were formed—Pearl River and Union Baptist associations. While some of the articles could (and do) express *moderate* and perhaps *mild* Calvinism, Article 4 particularly, and Article 6 less so display *strict* Calvinism.

## Appendix B: Selected Baptist Confessions and Abstracts from Baptist Associations in the Nineteenth Century Reflecting a *Moderate* to *Mild* Calvinistic Confessional Tradition

The miscellaneous confessions published in this appendix were composed and/or officially adopted by Baptist associations within southern state Baptist conventions (some fall outside the southern United States). The lists of confessions published in this research are not exhaustive but representative.<sup>732</sup> Rather, in conjunction with providing evidentiary documents to sustain the research in this project, the overall purpose of this confessional compilation is to demonstrate the vast number of Baptist confessions adopted by state associations representing hundreds of Baptist churches, and thousands—perhaps even millions—of Baptist Christians in 19<sup>th</sup> America that expressed little, if any, theological loyalty to *strict* Calvinism as reflected in the Philadelphia confessional tradition. While *Appendix A* lists several confessions displaying commitment to *strict* Calvinism, the confessions in this appendix display, in varied strengths, visible commitment to either *moderate* Calvinism, *mild* Calvinism,<sup>733</sup> or perhaps an obvious neutrality toward any soteriological position (i.e. Calvinistic or Arminian) at all.<sup>734</sup> Some confessions listed appear influenced by other confessions, with some of them being longer and others very brief.<sup>735</sup>

### 1. The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith (NHC)

#### 1.1 The NHC: J. Brown's Church Manual (1853)

##### 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 center of Christian union., and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

##### II. Of the True God

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<sup>732</sup> To attempt an exhaustive survey of 19<sup>th</sup> century American Baptist confessions, including a theological analysis of the entire compilation, would take this research far beyond its stated parameters. However, our goal here is: a) to compile sufficient confessional evidence to raise questions concerning the oft-repeated historical assertion that the Baptists in America (particularly the American south) were virtually united on *strict* Calvinism during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it was not until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Calvinism began to wane among Baptists; and b) to inspire others toward research more exhaustive in nature to better understand 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptist confessions.

<sup>733</sup> For example, as the reader will note, the only article some confessions in this compilation expressed that would be particularly Calvinistic is the **P** in **TULIP** (i.e. perseverance of the saints). Basically, this is “one-point Calvinism,” and by all estimates, can barely be considered Calvinism, if Calvinism at all.

<sup>734</sup> Some confessions in this compilation appear intentionally designed to contain language lifted directly from Scripture in its entirety, thus confessing Scriptural language rather than theological language. Perhaps the goal was to defang debate, so to speak, and keep for focus off polemical theology and on the Word of God.

<sup>735</sup> The most prominent confessional models for Baptists seems to be the Philadelphia confessional tradition, the New Hampshire confessional tradition, and the Broad River confessional tradition. However, other patterns emerge as well. For example, several associations followed a confessional tradition that adopted no article on election. Some of those confessions are included here.

We believe 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 Ghost; 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 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, positively inclined to evil; and 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 by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having 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 secures to such as believe in him is justification; that justification includes 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 faith in the Redeemer's blood; 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 Freeness 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, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation

### **VII. Of Grace in Regeneration**

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension 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 appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life

### **VIII. Of Repentance and Faith**

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 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 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 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.

#### **X. Of Sanctification**

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 Perseverance of the 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 superficial 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 scriptural officers are bishops or 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 the Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Saviour, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite 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 it 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 the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

### **XVI. Of the 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 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 impenitence 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 the 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 (Brown, 1853).<sup>736</sup>

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<sup>736</sup> Without Proof-texts, and as amended by J. Newton Brown in 1853 (arguably the most cited version since 1833). The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith (NHC) became the "go-to" confession for churches and associations all over America after it was first published in 1833. Indeed, within less than two decades, the NHC had dug its way into the deep south, influencing the entire state of Mississippi Baptists with its *mild* form of Calvinism, if one could call it Calvinism at all. Mississippi Baptist historians, Leavell and Bailey, records an 1849 meeting of the Pearl River Baptist Association the purpose of which was to settle conflict over doctrine and adopt a unified confession of faith. Their description remains insightful: "The Minutes of the Pearl River Association of 1849 speak of the meeting- of the convention as satisfactory, and the articles of faith adopted are given in their records. The Mount Pisgah Association adopted about the same declaration. They are in keeping with the New Hampshire declaration of faith. The articles of all the associations and churches of the State are about the same, and are the New Hampshire confession either in substance or form" (Leavell & Bailey, 1904). A year earlier, Mississippi's Chickasaw Association had met, and after ten years of existence and another "abstract of principles," the association "unanimously resolved" to adopt the articles of faith as found in the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," which was the declaration of faith, published by the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire' (Leavell & Bailey, 1904, p. 499). Thus, the NHC was displacing the old Philadelphia confession. Many subsequent confessions independently composed by individual churches and committees from various associations reflect, at times, exact language lifted from the NHC, some confessions of which are included in this compilation. The first confession adopted for convention-wide purposes in 1925 by the Southern Baptist Convention was a self-described edition and rewording of the NHC. However, prior to adopting an amended version of the NHC in 1925, Southern Baptists officially began promoting the NHC 25 years earlier. *Baptists Why and Why Not* edited by J. M. Frost appeared in 1900 published by Southern Baptists' denominational publishing arm of the convention. Twenty-five essays were included, plus a confession of faith. Frost wrote in the Introduction, in answering what Baptists believed the Bible teaches, "These questions are basal, and have their answer, so far as

## 1.2 The NHC: Original 1833 Version as Published in the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (1835)

*The following brief Declaration of Faith, with the Church Covenant, was recently published by the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire, and is believed to express, with little variation, the general sentiments of the body in the United States.*

**I. Of the Scriptures.** —We believe 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.** —That there is one, and only one, true and living God, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness; worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

**III. Of the Fall of Man.**—That man was created in a state of 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, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defence, or excuse.

**IV. Of the Way of Salvation.** —That the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the law by his personal obedience, and made atonement for our sins by his death; being risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

**V. Of Justification.**—That the great Gospel blessing, which Christ of his fulness bestows on such as believe in Him, is justification; that justification consists in 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; 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 Freeness of Salvation.** —That the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the

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Baptists are concerned, in the Declaration of Faith printed at the close of this volume, and of most general use among Baptist churches of this country" (Frost, 1900, p. 14). The declaration about which Frost alluded is the revised NHC found in J. Brown's church manual (1853) and printed in full at the back of the volume published by the Sunday School Board (Ibid, pp. 429-428).

Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, except his own voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ; which refusal will subject him to an aggravated condemnation.

**VII. Of Grace in Regeneration.** —That in order to be saved, we must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind, and is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence is found in the holy fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God.

**VIII. Of God's Purpose of Grace.**—That election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he 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 wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, 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 ascertained by its effects in all who believe the Gospel; is the foundation of Christian assurance ; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves, demands and deserves our utmost diligence.

**IX. Of the Perseverance of Saints.** —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 superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

**X. Harmony of the Law and Gospel.**—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 fulfil 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.

**XI. Of a Gospel Church**—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 officers are bishops or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

**XII. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.**—That Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its purifying power; 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 use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

**XIII. Of the Christian Sabbath.** —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

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.

**XIV. Of Civil Government.** —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 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.

**XV. Of the Righteous and the Wicked.** —That there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such 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 impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

**XVI. Of the World to come.** —That the end of this 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 (Brown, 1835, p. 191)<sup>737</sup>

### **1.3 The NHC: Original Draft Submitted by Ira Pearson to the Executive Board of the New Hampshire Baptist Convention June 26, 1832<sup>738</sup>**

*A Declaration of the views of the Christian Doctrine of the Church of Christ in [New Hampshire]*

We believe that the scriptures of the old and New Testaments were written by men divinely inspired, and that they are a perfect rule of faith and practice, (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17) and that among other things, they teach the following truths, viz.

I. That there is one only living and true God, infinite in every natural and moral excellence, and that he has revealed himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in essence, each possessing every divine perfection. Mark 12:32; John 17:3; 1 Tim. 2:5; Job 2:7; 1 Tim. 1.17;

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<sup>737</sup> J. Newton Brown served as editor of 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. In the preface, Brown indicates it was the first year the volume was published (Brown, 1835, p. vi). The encyclopedia continued to be published after Brown's death in 1868. As late as the 1876 edition, Brown was still credited as editor but with an additional editor, Geo. P. Tyler, who "Revised and Corrected to Date" the current volume. Brown's preface remains intact as well as the NHC published exactly as it had been published in the original 1835 edition. Baptists all over the United States were introduced to the NHC via the encyclopedia which was published two decades before Brown published his church manual in 1853 with an amended version of the original 1833 NHC.

<sup>738</sup> Ira Pearson (1791-1882) was one of three original committee members appointed by the Executive Board of the New Hampshire Baptist Convention in 1830 to draft a confession of faith (Hurlin, et al., 1902, p. 55). Hurlin relates that in 1831 when two other committee members dropped off the committee, the board tasked Pearson to finish the work. Charles MacDonald cites evidence he uncovered in his impressive research into the NHC (unfortunately one of the few doctoral dissertations covering the NHC) to substantiate his claim of publishing an exact copy of the finished first draft of the confession Pearson allegedly submitted to the board on June 26, 1832 (MacDonald, May 1939, pp. 80-82). The Pearson draft of the New Hampshire Confession as recorded in MacDonald's research is what follows (excluding the Church Covenant).

Psalms 147:5; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 5:7; John 1:1-14; 5:23; Compare 1 Kings 8:39 with John 2:24-25 and 1 Cor. 2:10.<sup>739</sup>

II. That man has ever been under moral obligation to obey the divine Law; but by voluntarily transgressing that law, he has fallen into a state of condemnation and become altogether sinful and unholy. Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:6-7, 11; Matt. 12:37, 39; Rom. 5:12; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10, 18.

III. That the only way of man's recovery from this state is by repentance for sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has made a perfect atonement by the sacrifice of himself, and who freely invites all to look unto him and be saved, so that those who perish, perish in consequence of rejecting the free offers of pardon. Luke 29:46, 47 [sic]; Acts 3:19; 16:31; Mark 16:16; Acts 4:12; Rom. 3:24, 25; John 7:37; 6:40; Rev. 22:17; John 3:19.

III [sic]. That regeneration, or the renewing of the heart, is the work of the Holy Spirit, effected in accordance with the purpose of God the Father which he purposed in Christ Jesus before the world was, and in perfect consistency with the free agency of man. John 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:9; Eph. 1:1-4.

V. That nothing will separate true believers from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, so as to prevent their final salvation. Rom. 8:35, 38, 39; 1 Peter 1:5; John 10: 28, 29.

VI. That Baptism viz. immersion of the person in water, in the name of the Trinity, and the Lord's Supper, are gospel ordinances, and are to be administered to professed believers only; and that none have a right to the latter till they have received the former. Matt. 3:5-12; 18:19; Luke 3:7, 8; Acts 2:39, 41, 42; 8:12, 36, 39; 10: 47, 48; Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21.

VII. That there will be a resurrection both of the just and unjust, and that God hath appointed a day in which (really says "will") He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, and will reward every man according to the deeds done in the body, when impenitent wicked sinners shall go away into everlasting punishment as the just reward of their deeds, and the righteous be received into life eternal. Dan. 12:2; John 5:20, 29; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 15; Rev. 20:12; Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:9, 10.

## **2. Baptist Confessions and Abstracts of Faith in Various Southern State Associations and Churches**

### **2.1 Alabama<sup>740</sup>**

#### **2.1.1 North River United Baptist Association (1835)**

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<sup>739</sup> The punctuation and biblical reference citations were, in part, updated for easier reading.

<sup>740</sup> Though some confessions compiled in *Appendix B* come from other states to indicate the breadth of *less than strict* Calvinistic confessionalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for research purposes, most of the confessions compiled in *Appendix B* originated from Baptists in states represented at the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.

WE believe the scriptures, comprising the Old and New Testaments, are the Word of God and that all Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, - and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work; that they may be infallibly true—furnish the only true and unerring standard of faith and practice for individual Churches. We believe that among the abundant truths which they contain, the following are important:

Art 1. We believe that there is one God.

Art. 2. We believe that there are three that bear record in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

Art. 3. We believe the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and is called Emanuel which being interpreted is, God with us.

Art. 4. We believe that God created man upright, but he abode not in honor, but transgressed the law given him, fell under its penalty, and his posterity has been and still is under its curse-, and by reason of actual transgression, superadded to his fallen nature is liable to eternal punishment; and from the dire calamities which sin has subjected him to, he, of himself, has no means by which to extricate himself and reinstate himself in the image and favor of God.

Art. 5. We believe that Jesus Christ, the son of God, did make an atonement for all men in general but the benefits of the atonement specially are only received by the true believer.

Art. 6. We believe, notwithstanding our fallen and ruined condition that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish; but have eternal life; that he himself bore our sins in his own body on the cross,- that he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification, ascended into Heaven; where, as the Mediator, and High Priest of our profession, he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Art. 7. We believe that in view of all these provisions, richly and abundantly furnished in the Gospel, in which are included his revealed will, and the preaching of the Gospel by men of like passions with ourselves, God commands all men every where to repent and believe the Gospel, promising salvation to such as obey, and threatening damnation to such as believe not, love not, and obey not, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Art, 8. We believe that the Holy Ghost, which is the comforter, has been sent into the world to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and to abide with the children of God as their guide and comforter.

Art.9. We believe it is the duty of all men every where to repent and believe the Gospel: and of all who do, to be immersed in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,- and that faith, repentance and baptism are prerequisite to church membership. And all who have complied with the above requisitions, and are orderly members have a right to commune together when opportunity offers.

Art. 10. We believe it the duty of the disciples of Christ to obey all his commandments, and follow on to know the Lord, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world ever looking to Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith, and give none occasion of offence, neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor to the Church of God. Their privilege is, to persevere in the ways of well doing, through grace to glory, to grow in grace & the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, ever bearing in mind, that our Lord hath said, without me ye can do nothing.

Art. 11. We believe that there will be a resurrection both of the just & unjust, & a general judgment after the re-union of soul and body; and judgment in righteousness will exalt & introduce the righteous into life ever lasting in Heaven; while it shall sentence the wicked into eternal banishment from God, and consign them to the lake where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

The foregoing declaration is not intended to lord it over God's heritage, - but regarding the New Testament as containing the law of the Lord, we would judge of every case, either of doctrine, government or discipline, by that law, and that alone.<sup>741</sup>

### **2.1.2 Central Baptist Association (1845)**

#### Articles of Faith With Proof Texts

Art. I. We believe in one true and living God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost— three in one. 1st John v, 7. Matt, iii, 15-17. John xiv, 16. Matt. XXVIII, 19.

Art. II. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God. and the only rule of faith and practice. 2nd Timothy III, 16-17. 2d Peter i, 19-20-21.

Art. III. We believe in the doctrine of original sin- That Adam disobeyed God, and that all mankind have inherited a sinful nature from Adam. Gen. iii, 1-7. Psalms Li, 5. Rom. v, 12. Eph. ii, 1.

Art. IV. We believe in man's inability to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by himself alone. Zach. iv, 6. John vi, 44. 1st Cor. XI, 14. Rom, VIII, 7-8.

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<sup>741</sup> Clerk, 1843, pp. 7-8. North River association's confession has no leanings toward *strict* Calvinism or any Calvinism for that matter. In fact, the North River association began over a dispute between Calvinists and the organizer of the New River association, David Andrews, one purported to accept "Arminian principles" (Allen, 1958, p. 14). While Art. 5 affirms general atonement, it remains insufficient to judge the confession as Arminian. Also, Art. 10 could be interpreted as a weak statement on perseverance of the saints: "We believe it the duty of the disciples of Christ to obey all his commandments, and follow on to know the Lord, to live soberly, righteously, and godly... Their privilege is, to persevere in the ways of well doing..." It should be noted, however, that, according to Wayne Flynt, as the result of a "masterful" sermon in 1849 by Basil Manly, Sr. on divine sovereignty and free will, New River association drew up an abstract of principles incorporating Manly's perspective into their faith statement (Flynt, 1998, p. 29). By 1855, the NHC was appearing in their minutes as the statement of faith (North River Association, 1855, pp. 10-11). Whatever the nature of the theological dissent, this association was not Arminian. Nor was it *strictly* Calvinistic.

Art. V. We believe in the doctrine of election by grace, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. Rom. xi, 4-7. 2d Thess. ii, 13. 1st Peter i, 2

Art. VI. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. Acts xiii, 39. Rom. iv, 11-23-23-24-25. Gal, ii, 16.

Art. VII. We believe in the preservation of saints. Psalms xxvii, 23-24-28. Micah vii, 8. John v, 24 and x, 28. Rom. viii, 35-39. 1st Peter- i. 3 5.

Art. viii. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are sacraments of Jesus Christ, of perpetual obligation, and that none but true believers are fit subjects of the sacraments. John i, 33. Matt, in, 13 17. Matt, xxviii, 19-20. Acts I, 22, and ii, 41. Matt, xxvi, 6 30. 1st Cor. xi, 23-26.

Art. IX. We believe in one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, and immersion only is baptism. Eph. iv, 5. Rom. vi, 4-G. Col. ii, 12. Acts viii, 38-39. Mark i, 9.

Art. X. We believe that no one is qualified to preach, administer the sacraments of the Gospel, except he be called of Gol, as was Aaron, is set apart by, and is in good standing with the church of which he is a member, and come under the hands of a Presbytery. Mark in, 14. Acts xiv, 23. 1st Tim. n, 7, and V, 22. Heb. v, 4. John iv, 2. Acts vii, 38.

Art. XI. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and the general judgment. John V, 28 29. Rev. xx, 12-13. Acts xxiv, 15.

Art. XII. We believe the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal. Matt, xxv, 46. Rev. vii, 15 16. Col. in, 4. Ist Thess. iv, 17. 2d Thess. i, 7-9. Rev. xx, 10, 14, 15. Matt, xxv, 41, 43.<sup>742</sup>

### 2.1.3 The Cedar Bluff Baptist Association

#### Declaration of Faith and Practice

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<sup>742</sup> Brewer, 1875, p. 15. Central's confession is concise but hardly unclear. It reveals no strong predestinarian theology and confesses a Calvinistically weak version of Adam's fall and the consequences. "That Adam disobeyed God, and that all mankind have inherited a sinful nature from Adam." Most non-Calvinistic Southern Baptists would most likely embrace this statement since it only affirms the inheritance of an Adamic sinful *nature* and not, as the Philadelphia confession, the imputation of Adamic sinful *guilt*. Additionally, the PCF *denies* divine foreknowledge is connected to His decree of predestination. "Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions" (Chapter 3: Of God's Decree, Para. 2). Again, in saving the elect, He procured all the means in eternity to effectually save them in time "without any condition foreseen in them to procure it" (Chapter 8: Christ the Mediator, Para. 8; see also, Chapter 10, Of Effectual Calling, Para. 2). Contrarily, Central's confession speaks of election being according to God's foreknowledge: "We believe in the doctrine of election of election by grace, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..." Focusing on foreknowledge in speaking of predestination is much more a non-Calvinist practice than a Calvinistic one.

Article 1. We believe that there are three that bear record in Heaven: The Father, Word and Holy Ghost; and that these three are one, the only living and true God, the Creator and Preserver of all men of the Universe.

II. We believe the word was made flesh in the person of the man Christ Jesus, who is God over all, and blessed evermore.

III. That all Scriptures as contained in the Holy Bible is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

IV. That the law and testimony as set forth in the Scriptures is the only rule of faith and practice to Christians in their spiritual concerns, and in their conduct as individuals and as members of the churches.

V. That Adam, the natural head and representative of all mankind, fell from his state of original purity, and that by his disobedience all his posterity are made sinners.

VI. That by the obedience of Christ alone sinners are restored to the favor of God, and through His unmerited mercy receive regeneration, pardon, justification, sanctification and glorification.

VII. That those blessings are communicated by that Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, so that those who are saved are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of themselves; not of work, lest, any man should boast; not by words of righteousness which they have done, but by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

VIII. That God works all things after the counsel of His own will; foreknown unto Him are all His works from the beginning, and that of course, all that the Father hath given to Christ shall come to Him, and that He will raise them up at the last day, so that His sheep will hear. His voice shall never perish, become dead to the world and to sin, be made alive to God and when He who is their life shall come, appear with Him in glory.

IX. We believe that believers should obey the commandments of Christ, and maintain good work for necessary uses.

X. That sinners of the vilest character may obtain salvation through Christ without money and without price.

XI. That there will be a resurrection of the dead and a general judgment, according to the decision of which, the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous to life eternal.

XII. That God has instituted a church on earth, existing in distinct bodies, the only scriptural members of which are the faithful in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, who are immersed in water in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and who have given themselves to the Lord and to one another in the church relation by the will of God their voluntary consent.

XIII. That each church of Jesus Christ is independent of all authority but that of her head, and that she has under Him the exclusive power of managing all her concerns of judging of the qualifications of her own members for the offices they are to fill, and of choosing her own officers in conformity with the direction of the Word of God.

XIV. That the officers of the churches are pastors and deacons only.

XV. That scriptural baptism is an ordinance of the Gospel and consists in immersing the body of a disciple of the Lord Jesus in water upon a profession of his faith in Christ.

XVI. That the Lord's supper is a standing ordinance in the Church of Christ, consisting in a believing participation of bread and wine, to be observed in commemoration of the suffering and death of Christ, and to show forth His death until He comes the second time (Cedar Bluff Association, 1893, pp. 13-14).<sup>743</sup>

#### **2.1.4 East Alabama Baptist Convention (1856)<sup>744</sup>**

##### Declaration of Principles

I. God as revealed in the divinely inspired Scriptures is the infinite, supreme, eternal Governor of the universe, perfect in wisdom, inflexible in justice and truth, irresistible in power, immutably holy and good; delighting in mercy; meriting all confidence, obedience and love.

II. Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is in the covenant of redemption, the heir of all things, and to Him has been given the heathen for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. All power in heaven and on earth was given to Him. He is the Head over all things to the Church. All enemies are to be put under His feet, and the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and his anointed.

III. By the appointment of the Father, Jesus Christ took upon Him our nature, yet without sin: honored the Holy Law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; after his death he rose again for our justification, up on high sat down on the right hand of the majesty, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. As he went up, so will he return, and those who wait for his glorious appearing shall be like him; shall see him as he is, and shall appear with him in glory, while to those who denied and rejected him, he shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God—obey not his Gospel, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

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<sup>743</sup> The Cedar Bluff association was organized in 1874 and later changed its name to the Lookout Mountain association in 1928 (Allen, 1958, p. 13). The confession seems uniquely the work of the association and appears to have no extensive use by other associations. It bears no resemblance to the PCF and most probably could have been adopted by most *moderate* and *mild* Calvinists.

<sup>744</sup> The East Alabama convention is one of several conventions Alabama Baptists organized that did not survive (Flynt, 1998, p. 61).

IV. To reveal and render efficient these truths to man, in the enlightenment of his mind, the quickening of his conscience, the conversion and regeneration of his soul; to give repentance and remission of sins; as a witness, a teacher, a sealer, a sanctifier, a comforter, the Holy Spirit has descended and takes the things which are his and shows them unto us.

V. As a means of grace, and to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation as the special instrumentality appointed for converting men, God commissioned men to go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. They, who preach the Gospel, the Lord has ordained, shall live of the Gospel. An adequate pecuniary compensation is not a duty of charity, but it is right that every person pay something to the support of the minister. The Gospel under the influence of the Holy Spirit is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, and a savor of death unto death to every one that rejects it.

VI. Those who repent and believe, and those only, are to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and associate by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, and constituted a visible Church of Christ. Each church is a separate, complete, distinct, independent body; accountable only to Christ, and can do any thing which any number of churches can do. The independence of the churches is the surest preservative of doctrinal purity and religious liberty.

VII: The Old and New Testaments are divinely inspired; and reveal the true principles for the direction and guidance and control of human conduct, and the principles by which men are finally to be judged; are the only rule of faith and practice, every individual must take them in prayerful reliance on the Holy Spirit to determine for himself what doctrines he ought to believe and promote, and no earthly power, civil or ecclesiastical, has any right to molest him in the peaceable exercise of that privilege.

VIII. While christians are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and by grace we are saved and justified by faith, yet faith without works is dead. Faith is made perfect through works— exhibits itself by its fruit. Meritoriousness is not ascribed to any thing that man can do in securing God's favor, yet we are required to honor Him with our substance—to trust in Him and do good; to give to the poor—to be self-denying—to consecrate property and body, soul and spirit to Him. These are among the obligations of church-membership—guilt is incurred by neglecting or violating them. Peculiar blessings are promised on compliance and obedience.

IX. Giving is taught by precept and example in both Testaments. In both, it is commanded and enforced as a duty. In both it is regarded as a Christian grace, as an exalted privilege. Self denial, subjection of self to the principle of love, soul consecration, are all learned from our exemplar. Active, grateful, prayerful, intelligent, beneficence, checks covetousness which is idolatry,

parsimoniousness, love of the world, promotes a sense of stewardship and gives consistency and efficiency, a more ardent love and purer zeal, and more supreme devotion to Christ.<sup>745</sup>

### **2.1.5 New River Baptist Association (1871)**

#### Articles of Faith

1st. We believe there is one only living and true God; and there are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one.

2nd. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, and the only true rule of faith and practice.

3rd. We believe in the doctrine of human depravity, that it disables man from keeping the Law for life; and that man's recovery and final salvation depends entirely upon the provision which Christ has made, and offered, upon the condition of faith.

4th. We believe in the doctrine of election, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of Truth.

6th. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the merits of Jesus Christ.

6th. We believe that saints shall persevere in grace, and not one of them finally fall away.

7th. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and general judgement, and that the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.<sup>746</sup>

### **2.1.6 Mud Creek Baptist Association (1871)**

#### Abstract of Principles

1. We believe I one true and living God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three in one.

2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, and the only true rule of faith and practice.

3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

4. We believe in a man's inability to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by his own free will and holiness.

5. We believe in the doctrine of election, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of truth.

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<sup>745</sup> Bullington, 1857, pp. 9-10. East Alabama Baptist Convention's confession reveals nothing particularly *strictly* Calvinistic about it. Nor does either the PCF or NHC seem to be the model used in composing it.

<sup>746</sup> Clerk, 1871, p. 10. The confession displays no theological dependence upon *strict* Calvinism. It speaks of faith as a *condition* of salvation rather than a gift given to the elect, purchased and procured by Jesus' death. Also evident on election is the Broad River influence.

6. We believe sinners are justified in the sight of God only by the merits Jesus Christ.
7. We believe the Saints will persevere in grace and not finally fall away.
8. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and the true believers are the only proper subjects, and do conscientiously believe that the true mode of Baptism is immersion.
9. We believe in the resurrection and the general judgment.
10. We believe the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.
11. We believe that no minister has a right to the administration of the ordinances, only such as have been called of God, and regularly baptized and approved by the church, and come under the imposition of hand by presbytery.
12. We believe that none but believers have a right to the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.<sup>747</sup>

### **2.1.7 North Alabama Baptist Association (1892)**

#### Confession of Faith

1. We believe in only one true and living God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and these three are one—1 John, 5:7; 1 Timothy, 2:5.
2. We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, and the New Testament the rule of faith and practice. —2 Timothy, 3:16; Mathew, 9:13; Hebrews, 10:9.
3. We believe that by one man sin entered the world and death by sin, and so death passeth upon all men, for all have sinned—Romans, 5:12, 21.
4. We believe that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man, and that through his meritorious death the way of salvation is made possible for God to have mercy upon all that come unto him upon Gospel terms—Hebrew 2:9; I John, 2:2; 4:10.
5. We believe that being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. —Romans 5:1.
6. We believe that the Saints will preserve in grace, and that none of them will be finally lost. — Mark, 16:16; John, 10:29; Romans, 8:38, 39; 1 John 3:9.

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<sup>747</sup> Clerk, 1889, p. 11. Mud Creek association's confession displays no necessary Calvinistic lingo outside Article 7. A purely neutral confession so far as *strict* Calvinism is concerned. Follows Broad River confessional tradition.

7. We believe there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a general and universal judgment, according to the decision of which the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment and the righteous to life eternal. —Mathew, 25:46, John, 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:12, 13.

8. We believe that the visible Church of Christ is a Congregation of faithful Baptised men and women who have obtained fellowship with each other, and given themselves to the Lord, and one another, having agreed to Keep up a godly discipline according to the rules of the gospel. — Mathew, 10:18; Acts, 2:4; Ephesians, 1:2; Romans, 6:3, 4; 2 Corinth, 8:5.

9. We believe that Jesus Christ is the great head of the Church, and the government thereof is with the body. —Acts, 14:23; 1 Corinth, 14:29.

10. We believe that water Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by Christ, and should be continued until his second coming, and that washing the Saint's feet is a duty that should be practiced by the church. —Mark, 16:15; 1 Corinth, 11:23, 24, 25.

11. We believe that true believers are the only fit subjects of Baptism, and that immersion is the only - scriptural mode. — Acts, 2:41, 10:47; Romans, 6:4.

12. We believe that none but regularly baptised members have a right to commune at the Lord's table. —Mathew, 23:26; Acts, 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16.

13. We believe that the Lord's day ought to be observed and set apart for the worship of God, and no worldly business ought to be transacted thereon, works of piety and necessity excepted. —Genesis, 2:2; Ex. 20:10; Luke, 11:5.<sup>748</sup>

### **2.1.8 Cleburne Baptist Association (1899)**

#### CONFESSION OF FAITH

We believe in the full and complete inspiration of the Bible; the eternal fatherhood of God; the absolute divinity of Jesus Christ; the real personality of the Holy Spirit; the total depravity of all men; and the just and eternal condemnation of all unbelievers.

We believe in salvation by grace alone, regeneration by the Holy Spirit as its foundation, repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ as its medium, and justification, assurance and eternal preservation as its results.

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<sup>748</sup> Clerk, 1892, p. 7. North Alabama's association represents one of the few African-American Baptist associations' confessions uncovered in this research. The confession not only possesses no Calvinistic articles, it explicitly affirms an article contrary to *strict* Calvinism: "We believe that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man, and that through his meritorious death the way of salvation is made possible for God to have mercy upon all that come unto him upon Gospel terms."

We believe in sanctification only in the imputed righteousness of Christ and that such sanctification is present and complete. We believe in the election of grace, and that the preaching of the gospel is God's means of saving the elect.

We believe in the second coming of Christ, when the saints shall be freed from sin, and the wicked shall be punished, and that the preaching of the gospel will hasten his coming.

We believe the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath, and that it should be religiously observed, for God's honor, the world's good and the saints' spiritual enjoyment.

We believe that Jesus Christ established his church during His public ministry, and that from then until now there have been in the world churches modeled after that pattern; that they are independent, self-governing bodies of baptized believers, associated in covenant under the law of Christ for the praise of God. the preaching of the gospel, the maintenance of the ordinances and the edification of the saints. That their scriptural officers are pastors and deacons who are divinely called and publicly set apart to their special works.

We believe that baptism is a positive ordinance of Jesus Christ committed to scriptural churches, to be performed by authorized administrators in the name of the Holy Trinity; that it consists in an entire immersion in water, of a believer to typify the death and resurrection of Christ, and the death to sin and resurrection to a new life of the one baptized; that it is a prerequisite to church membership and that church membership is a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, an ordinance of Christ in which, by the use of unleavened bread, and the pure juice of grapes we call to remembrance this death of our risen Lord.

We believe that Christians should obey the laws of their country, but we also believe in the eternal divorcement of church and state, and in an untrammelled liberty of conscience.

We believe in an aggressive publication of the gospel, a life of unselfish consecration and of exemplary piety among those claiming to be the children of God.<sup>749</sup>

### **2.1.9 Macedonia Baptist Association (1880)**

#### ARTICLES OF FAITH—PROOF TEXTS.

Article 1. We believe in one true and living God—the Father, Son and Holy Ghost—three in one.  
1 John 5:7; Matt. 3:15-17; John 14:16; Matt. 28:19.

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<sup>749</sup> Clerk, 1899, pp. 5-6. Cleburne's confession is almost silent concerning any language traditionally attributed to *strict* Calvinism. The lone exception may be the second proposition in paragraph 3: "We believe in the election of grace, and that the preaching of the gospel is God's means of saving the elect." However, the statement itself, including the biblical term often used to describe God's faith community (i.e. the "elect"), remains insufficient to deem this confession *moderate* Calvinism much less *strict* Calvinism.

Art. 2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

Art. 3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin; that Adam disobeyed God, and that all mankind have inherited a sinful nature from Adam. Gen. 3:1-7; Psalms 51:5; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1.

Art. 4. We believe in man's inability to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by himself alone. Zech. 4:6; John 6:44; 1 Cor. 11:14; Rom. 8:7, 8.

Art. 5. We believe in the doctrine of election by grace, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. Rom. 11 :4-7; 2 Thess. 2; 13; 1 Peter 1 :2.

Art. 6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:11, 12, 23-25; Gal. 2:16.

Art 7. We believe in the preservation of saints. Psalms 37:23, 24:28; Micah 7;8; John 5:24 and 10:28; Rom. 8:35-49; 1 Peter 1:3-5.

Art. 8 We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, of perpetual obligation, and that none but true believers are fit subjects of the ordinances. John 1:33; Matt. 3:13-17 and 28:19,20; Acts 1:22 and 2:41; Matt 6:26-29; 11 Cor. 1:2.3-26.

Art 9. We believe in one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, and immersion only is baptism. Eph. 4:5; Rom. 6:4-6; Col. 2:12; Acts 3:38,39; Matt. 3:15.

Art. 10. We believe that no one is qualified to preach, administer the ordinances of the gospel, except he be called of God, as was Aaron, is set apart by, and is in good standing with the church of which he is a member, and come under the hands of the Presbytery. Mark 3:14; Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 2:7 and 5:22; Heb. 5:4; John 4:2; Acts 8:28.

Art. 11. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and the general judgment John 5:28,29; Rev. 20:12,13; Acts 2:15.

A.RT. 12. We believe the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal. Matt. 26:46; Rev. 7:15,16; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 5:7; Matt. 25:41-43 (Macedonia Baptist Association, 1892, pp. 10-11).

### **2.1.10 Mount Carmel Baptist Association (1876)**

#### ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. We believe in one only true and living God, Father, Word and Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

2. We believe that the Scriptures of the New and Old Testament are the word of God and the only rule of faith and practice.

3. We believe that by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all, for all have sinned.
4. We believe that Jesus Christ, by the Grace of God, tasted death for every man and through His meritorious death, the way of salvation is possible for God to have mercy upon all that come unto Him upon gospel terms.
5. We believe that being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
6. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and that none of them shall finally be lost.
7. We believe there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a general and universal Judgement and that the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.
8. We believe that the visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men and women who have obtained fellowship of each other and given themselves to the Lord and one another, having agreed to keep up a Godly discipline according to gospel rules.
9. We believe that Jesus Christ is the great head of the church, and the government thereof, is with the body.
10. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper, are ordinances of the gospel, to be continued until His second coming.
11. We believe that true believers are the only fit subjects for baptism, and that immersion is the only gospel mode.
12. We believe that none but regular baptized members have a right to commune at the Lord's table.
13. We believe that the Lord's Day should be observed and set apart for the worship of God and that no work should be done thereon, except works of piety (Mt. Carmel Association, 1896, p. 6).<sup>750</sup>

#### **2.1.11 St. Clair Baptist Association (formerly Cahaba Valley Association, 1867)**

##### ABSTRACT OF PRINCIPLES

- Art. 1. We believe in one only true and living God—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, three in one.
2. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, and the only true rule of faith and practice.

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<sup>750</sup> Article 4 in Mount Carmel's confession explicitly affirms general redemption contra Limited Atonement. No article on the doctrine of election.

5. We believe in the doctrine of original sin; of the depravity of human nature; of man's inability to recover himself from his fallen condition by his own free will and holiness.
4. We believe in the doctrine of election according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.
- .5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by merits of Jesus Christ, and that good works are the external evidences of the Christian's justified state.
6. We believe that the saints shall persevere through grace, being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, and not finally fall away.
7. We believe the Church of Christ to be a congregation of baptized believers, scripturally organized for the maintenance of the worship of God and the ordinances and duties of his house.
8. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, to be kept up by his Church until his second coming, and that true believers are the only scriptural subjects of baptism, and that immersion only is baptism, and that none but baptized believers have a right to the Lord's Supper.<sup>751</sup>
9. We believe in a Divine call to the ministry, and that no man has a right to administer the ordinances of the church only such as have been called of God, regularly baptized, approved by the church, and come under the imposition of hands by a presbytery.
10. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and a general judgement.
11. We believe that the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal (St. Clair Association, 1899, p. 16).

### **2.1.12 Cahaba Baptist Association**

Abstract Articles of Faith Adopted by the Cahaba Baptist Association (1832)

- Art. 1. We believe in only one true and living God, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.
- Art. 2. We believe that the Scriptures comprising the Old and New Testament, are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.
- Art. 3. We believe in the doctrine of election, and that God chose his people in Christ, before the foundation of the world.
- Art 4. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
- Art. 5. We believe in Man's incapacity, by his own free will and ability, to recover himself from the fallen state in which he is by nature.

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<sup>751</sup> Broad River influence.

Art. 6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, by the imputed righteousness of Christ only.

Art 7. We believe that God's elect shall be called, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Art. 8. We believe that the saints shall be preserved in Grace, and never fall finally away.

Art. 9. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only subjects of Baptism, and that by immersion is the Apostolic mode.

Art. 10. We believe in the resurrection of the Dead, and in the General Judgement; and that the facility of the Righteous, and punishment of the Wicked will be eternal.

Art. 11 We believe that no minister has any right to administer the ordinances of the Gospel, but one who is regularly baptised, called, and comes under the imposition of the hands of a presbytery.

Art. 12. We believe that none but regularly baptised members have a right to commune at the Lord's table (Cahaba Association, 1832, p. 8).

### **2.1.13 Bigbee Baptist Association (1845)**

#### Articles of Faith

I. We believe in one living and true God; that in the Godhead are Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

II. We believe that the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, and the New Testament is the only rule of faith and practice.

III. We believe that the Church of God is composed of such persons as believe in Jesus Christ and have been baptized; that baptism consists in the immersion of the whole body in water; and that the Lord's Supper should be administered to church members only.

IV. We believe in the Doctrines of Grace taught by the United Baptists, viz: In the depravity of man; in the converting grace of God; in the resurrection of the dead; in the general judgment; in the eternal life of the righteous--in the everlasting punishment of the wicked (Bigbee Association, 1882, p. 19).

## **2.2 Georgia**

### **2.2.1 Bethel Association (1832)**

#### Articles of Faith of the Bethel Baptist Association

ARTICLE I. We believe 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.

ART. 2. We believe there is one true and living God, and only one, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of the Universe, revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection.

ART. 3. We believe that man was created in a state of holiness under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from this holy and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners and under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

ART. 4. We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through faith in the Son of God.

ART. 5. We believe that justification consists in the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness, and not any works of righteousness which we have done but solely through Christ's redemption and righteousness.

ART. 6. We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all people by the gospel; that all are invited to Christ; that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him.

ART. 7. We believe the doctrine of election; that it is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners.

ART. 8. We believe in "the perseverance of the saints;" that all these who are truly regenerated and born again will ultimately be saved in heaven; that a special providence watches over their welfare, and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

ART. 9. We believe that a gospel church of Christ is a congregation of immersed believers in Christ, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; that its only proper officers are bishops or pastors, and deacons.

ART. 10. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's Supper.

ART: 11. We believe that Communion is a church ordinance; that such only are entitled to partake of it as have given a credible evidence of faith in Christ and have been legally baptized.

ART.12. We believe in a general judgement and the resurrection of the dead and the end of this world; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead from the grave to a 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 man in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.<sup>752</sup>

### **2.2.2 The Chattahoochee United Baptist Association**

#### Abstract of Principles<sup>753</sup>

1. We believe in one only true and living God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, and only Law-Giver, and that there are three persons in the God Head, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and these three are one.
2. We believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of GOD, and only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's inability to recover himself from the fallen state which he is in by nature, by his own strength.
5. We believe in a Covenant between the Father and Son, in which all Grace is treasured up; and in the doctrine of Election, according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth according to 1st Peter, 1st chapter, 2d verse; and 2d Thessalonians 2d chapter, 13th verse: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth " But that Election should not be so construed as to make God the author of sin either directly or indirectly. Nor on the other hand do we believe the creature can do any thing meritorious in his salvation.
6. We believe that good works are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification; that they are the evidences of faith, and absolutely necessary to justification before men.
7. We believe in a general Judgment, when all shall be judged according to their work; that the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.
8. We believe that Saints will persevere in Grace to the end of their lives.
9. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are standing ordinances of the Church of Christ, and that immersion only is Baptism, and believers the only subjects.
10. We believe that no Minister has a right to administer the ordinances of the Lord's house, except such as are called of God, approved by the Churches, and regularly ordained.

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<sup>752</sup> Howell, 1895, p. 255. Bethel association's confession displays no commitment to *strict* Calvinistic theology. It does seem to display some dependence upon or at least awareness of the NHC.

<sup>753</sup> Also known as The Sharon Confession of Faith (Chattahoochee United Association, 1848, p. 2).

11. We believe that men by nature are so morally depraved that they will not come to God for life and salvation, and but for the influences of the Holy Spirit none would ever come to him.

12. We hold that it is the command of God to his people, to publish His Word, and promulgate the Gospel of Christ to all nations, making known to the human family the plan of redemption through the atonement of Christ; and we believe it is the duty of every rational descendant of Adam, to whom the Gospel message of reconciliation is addressed, to exercise repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>754</sup>

### **2.2.3 Harmony Baptist Association (1864)**

#### Articles of Faith

I. We believe in one only True and Living God, the Father, Word and Holy Ghost, and these three are one. Deut. vi, 4; 1st John v. 7; 2nd Cor. xiii; 14 Matt, xxiii. L9.

II. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God given to us by inspiration of God (2d Tim. iii 16.) and the New Testament is the only hook of discipline to govern the Church of God; and that Jesus Christ is the head and only lawgiver. Heb. ix, 14-17; Eph. i, 22; Matt. xvii. 5.

III. We believe in the doctrine of election, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. 1st. Peter i, 2-5; 2d Thess. ii, 13.

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<sup>754</sup> Chattahoochee United Baptist Association, 1848, p. 4. The Chattahoochee association is judged almost universally to be Arminian-oriented. Initially established and subsequently led by Georgia Baptist pastor, Cyrus White, in its earliest years, the Chattahoochee association was the ultimate result of White and his church being excluded from Georgia's Ocmulgee Association. White wrote and published a small book (tract) entitled *The Scriptural View of the Atonement* wherein he denied Limited Atonement and promoted universal provision. Consequently, a campaign led by *strict* Calvinist, Jesse Mercer, resulted in White's exclusion. Up until the controversy over White's public rejection of Limited Atonement, he was actively involved in Georgia Baptist affairs, preaching all over the state as an agent of the convention, and had been a key leader in the formation of the Georgia Baptist Convention in 1822 (Boykin, 1881, p. 105). Free Will Baptists frequently cite both the Chattahoochee association and White as a part of their spiritual beginnings in Georgia (more on Cyrus White in the main section). Strangely, the confession reflects no Arminian sentiments. Articles 1-4 are routinely found in numerous confessional abstracts, some of which are deemed *strictly* Calvinistic. It remains true, however, that Articles 3 and 4 are sufficiently ambiguous as to uphold a broad understanding of human depravity. The Covenant of Redemption in Article 5 is found mainly in *strictly* Calvinistic confessions albeit with a clearer expression of the covenant's nature. *Strict* Calvinists often give details concerning the content of the covenant of redemption which invariably includes the Father giving the elect to the Son in consequence of the Son's sacrificial death for the elect alone (Wills, 1997, p. 171; footnote 22). However, the doctrine of election is tempered by God's foreknowledge which is not characteristic of *strictly* Calvinistic confessions like the PCF. In addition, election is qualified as to not make God to be the author of sin. Article 8 is an explicit affirmation of the perseverance of the saints. Interestingly, Chattahoochee's Article 6 on the nature of good works follows closely Georgia Association's Article 7 on good works, and in parts is identical in wording. In short, one is hard-pressed to make this confession theologically sympathetic Arminian sentiments.

IV. We believe that all men are sinners by nature, children of wrath, even dead in trespasses and sin (Eph. ii, 13; Rom. v, 12), and unable to recover themselves from the fallen state they are in by their own ability. Rom. v, 6; John vi.44: Phil, ii, 13.

V. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by God's grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. ii, 8; 1st John i, .5; Rev. i 5; Rom. V, 1.

VI. We believe in the preservation and final salvation of all God's children. 1st Peter i, 5; John vi. 18-40, and x. 28, 29; 1st John iii, 2; Col. iii, 4.

VII. We believe that Baptism is an ordinance from God, enjoined upon true believers in Jesus Christ only, commanded by Christ to be kept by His Church; and that immersion only is Scriptural Baptism. John 1, 6, 33; Matt. xxviii, 19; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. xi, 2; Rom. vi, 4, 5; Col. ii, 12.

VIII. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ as an ordinance to be observed by His church till He comes and that no person has a right to participate in this ordinance only those who have been Scripturally Baptized and sustained an accredited membership in the church. Matt. xxvi, 26, 27, et seq.; Mark, xvi, 22 et seq.; Acts, ii, 42; 1st Cor. v, 11 et seq.

IX. We believe that the visible Church of God is composed of Baptized believers covenanted together and to keep the Commandments and ordinances of the Lord as He delivered them to us, acknowledging no head nor law-giver but Christ. Acts ii. 41, 42 and 47 and v, 14, and xviii, 8; 2d Cor. viii, 5; Eph. i, 22, 23; Col. i, 18.

X. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and a general judgment, and that the righteous will enter into eternal life and the wicked will enter into everlasting punishment, Matt. xxv. 4:5; Acts xxiv, 15, and xvii, 31; Rev. xx, 12 et seq.; 1st Cor XV, 21 et seq.

XI. We believe that no person has a right to administer the ordinances of the Church, only those who are chosen by the Church and Scripturally set apart to that office. Acts vi, 5; xiii, 2, 3.

XII. We believe that all infants that die as such are saved through the atoning merits of Christ, without any works that man can perform. 2d Sam. xii, 23; Matt, xix, 13, 14; Rom. v, 14.<sup>755</sup>

## **2.2.4 The Ellijay Baptist Association (1840)**

### **Abstract of Principles**

We now, as the representatives of our Churches, do unite in forming an Association to be known by the name of "The Ellijay Baptist Association." Our object in forming this Union, is to promote concord and brotherly love, by endeavoring to keep up the unity of spirit in the bonds of peace, but as Christians are unhappily divided in sentiment, we feel it our duty in the fear of God to set

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<sup>755</sup> Burton, 1892, p. 11. Harmony's confession shows little to no theological loyalty to *strict* Calvinism. Note also the uniqueness of Article XII pertaining to infants dying in infancy.

forth declaration of those things which we most confidently believe, are according to sound Doctrine, as may be seen in the articles following:

Art. 1. We believe in one only true and living God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

2. We believe that the Scripture of the Old and New Testament, are the word of God, and the only true rule of faith and practice.

3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness.

5. We believe in the Doctrine of Election, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.

6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the merits, of Jesus Christ.

7. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and not finally fall away.

8 We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper, are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects; and conscientiously do believe, the true mode is immersion.

9. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and general judgement.

10. We believe the joys of the righteous and punishment of the wicked will be Eternal.

11. We believe that none have a right to administer these ordinances but Ministers of the Gospel, regularly ordained to that office.

12. We believe that none has a right to the administration of this, but those who have been legally baptized or immersed (Ellijay Association, 1840, p. 7).

### **2.2.5 Mountaintown Baptist Association (1885)**

#### Articles of Faith

1. We believe in one God, revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being.

2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old Testament and of the New were written by the inspiration of God, and are the only rule of faith and practice.

3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin, total depravity, and of man's inability to restore himself to the favor of God.

4. We believe that God chose His people in Christ before the foundation of the world, and they are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto complete salvation.
5. We believe that sinners are justified only by the imputed righteousness of Christ.
6. We believe that the gospel is God's appointed means of calling sinners to a knowledge of the truth; and, as He has commanded it to be preached to every creature, all are required to obey.
7. We believe that good works are the fruits of faith, and the only external evidence of regeneration, and that all believers will abound therein from motives of gratitude and love.
8. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, the just and the unjust, and in the general judgment, at which the incorrigibly wicked will be adjudged to eternal punishment and the justified to eternal life.
9. We believe that a visible Church of Christ is composed of faithful persons only, who have covenanted to maintain a discipline conforming to the rules of the New Testament Scripture.
10. We believe that Jesus Christ is the only law giver of the Church and that the government is with the Church, all members having equal rights therein.
11. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances of the Church, and are to be continued until the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mountaintown Baptist Association, 1927, p. 9).

### **2.2.6 Chattahoochee Baptist Association (1824)**

#### **Abstract of Principles (1885)**

1. We believe in one only True and Living God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Three in One.
2. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God and the only rule of Faith and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of Original Sin.
4. We believe in man's inability to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness.
5. We believe in the doctrine of Election according to the Scriptures.
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
7. We believe the saints shall persevere in Grace, and not finally fall away.
8. We believe that Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, are ordinances of the Gospel, and that true, believers are the only subjects of Baptism, and that Immersion is the mode, and that baptized believers are the only proper communicants at the Lord's Supper.

9. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and a general judgment.
10. We believe that the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.
11. We believe that no minister has a right to administer the ordinances save such as have been called of God, and regularly baptized and approved of by the churches and came under the imposition of hands by a Presbytery (Chattahoochee Baptist Association, 1885).<sup>756</sup>

## **2.3 Kentucky**

### **2.3.1 Confessional Terms of Union between Kentucky Separate and Regular Baptists**

#### Terms of General Union (1801)

We the committee of Elkhorn and South Kentucky Associations, do agree to unite on the following plan:

1. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the infallible Word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.
2. That there is one only true God, and in the Godhead, or divine essence, there are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. That by nature we are fallen and depraved creatures.
4. That Salvation, regeneration, sanctification, and justification are by the life, death resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.
5. That the saints will finally persevere through grace to glory.
6. That Believer's baptism by immersion is necessary to receiving the Lord's Supper.
7. That the salvation of the righteous and punishment of the wicked will be eternal.
8. That it is our duty to be tender and affectionate to each other, and study the happiness of the children of God in general; and to be engaged singly to promote the honor of God.
9. And that the preaching (that) Christ tasted death for every man, shall be no bar to communion.
10. And that each may keep their associational and church government as to them seem best.

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<sup>756</sup> Georgia's Chattahoochee association was organized in 1824 as a confessionally *strict* Calvinistic association having articles of faith reflecting the PCF. However, by 1843, the association had adopted the present confession (with a few slight differences) which bears no resemblance to Philadelphia's *High* Calvinism. For more on the Chattahoochee association, see chapter three in the research.

11. And that free correspondence and communion be kept between the churches thus united (Lumpkin, 1961, pp. 145-146).<sup>757</sup>

### **2.3.2 Barren River Baptist Association**

#### Articles of Faith

1. We believe that the Bible was written by men divinely inspired that God is its Author, and that it is the standard by which all actions, creeds and opinions should be tried.
2. That there is only one true and living God: revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. That man was created in a state of holiness, but by transgression fell, in consequence of which all are now sinners, and that in order to be saved we must be regenerated or born again by the Holy Spirit; and that we must be justified, not through any works of our own, but through the merits of Christ, and that good works are the evidences that we are in that gracious state.
4. We believe in the perseverance of the Saints; that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.
5. That a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptised believers, who are governed by the laws of Christ, and who observe his ordinance, and that its only proper officers are Bishops, or Pastors and Deacons.
6. That Christian Baptism is the Immersion of a believer in water, and that it is prerequisite to the privileges of the church relations and the Lord's Supper.
7. That there will be a general resurrection of the dead, and a general lodgment, and that the wicked will then go away into endless punishment, but the righteous will enter into life eternal.

*Adopted, 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session, July 1852*

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<sup>757</sup> Attempts were made as early as 1785 to unite Regular and Separate Baptists but had failed. According to Lumpkin, after the "Great Revival in Kentucky" in 1800, a renewed sense of unity prevailed (Ibid). 'In 1801 [Thomas John Chilton] wrote the "Terms of General Union," upon which all the Baptists of Kentucky were united under the name of United Baptists' (Cathcart, 1881, p. 418). The brief confession is often catalogued under different names— "Terms of Union," Terms of General Union," "General Terms of Union." Spencer claims "a literal copy of the instrument" bears the following title, "TERMS OF UNION BETWEEN THE ELKHORN AND SOUTH KENTUCKY, OR SEPARATE ASSOCIATIONS" (Spencer, 1886, p. 546). Furthermore, when one compares the numerous brief abstracts of faith found throughout the associations in the southern states, and the amazing similarities many of those abstracts have with Kentucky's terms of union, one must conclude that many historians have underestimated the significant influence the terms of union apparently had among Baptists outside the state of Kentucky.

### **2.3.3 Bay Forks Association of United Baptists (formerly Drake's Creek association)<sup>758</sup>**

#### Articles of Faith

1st. We believe in one only true and living God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, equal in power and glory, yet one essence.

2nd. We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, and only rule of faith and practice.

3rd. We believe in the doctrine of election, according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the spirit.

4th. We believe all mankind are sinners by nature, and are entirely unable to recover themselves from that condition by their own natural free will or ability.

5th. We believe that sinners are justified by the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed unto them by faith.

6th. We believe it to be the duty of Christ's servants to preach the Gospel according to His command, and that He, by His spirit, attends that, as well as other means, to the calling, regenerating and sanctifying of his people.

7th. We believe the Saints will persevere, through grace, to happiness and eternal glory.

8th. We believe baptism to be an ordinance of Jesus Christ, and immersion only valid, and true believers the only proper subjects; and that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the house of God, and the former entitles to the latter.

9th. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, just and unjust, and that eternal life awaits the righteous, and everlasting misery the wicked.

10th. We believe no ministers have a right to an administrator of the ordinances, except such as have been called and come under the imposition of hands by the Presbytery (Bay Forks Association, 1864).

### **2.3.4 Bethel Baptist Association**

#### Abstract of Principles

We believe that the Holy Bible is the word of God; that it was written by men divinely inspired; that it is the only sufficient and perfect rule of faith and practice; that among others, it teaches the following important truths:

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<sup>758</sup> In 1913, the name was changed to Allen Baptist Association (Allen, 1958, p. 738).

1. That there is only one living and true God infinite in every perfection, and that He has revealed himself as the Father, the Word, and Holy Spirit. — See first John, 5c and 7 v [sic].
2. That man was created holy but by willfully violating the law of his Maker, he fell from that state: that by nature there is no holiness in us; we are all inclined to evil, and as all have sinned, all are children of wrath, justly exposed to death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. — Eccl 7-29— Eph. 2-3.
3. That the only way of deliverance from this state of guilt and condemnation, is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who assumed our nature, and whom God has set forth, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; having so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. — See First John 8-15— Rom. 3-20.
4. That the election taught, in the scriptures, is through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; and that none are authorized to consider themselves elected to salvation, until they repent, and believe the gospel. — 1 Peter 1-2- 2 Thes. 1-1:5.
5. That the Redeemer, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man; that he is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe; and that based on the provision made in the atonement, all men every where are commanded to repent of their sins, and believe on the Lord Jesus. — Heb. 2-9—Acts—17-30.
6. That the influence of the Spirit of God is coextensive with the proclamation of the Gospel. — John 16-8 Mat. 28—20.
7. That Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the ordinances of Jesus Christ; that baptism is immersion in water; that believers are the only proper subjects; and that none have the right to the Lord's supper until they are baptized. —Mat. 28—19-20—Acts 2—27-40.
8. That according to the examples of the Apostles and earliest Christians, sanctioned by the repeated presence of Christ himself after his resurrection, the first day of the week is to be observed as the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath.
9. That there will be a general resurrection, and a final judgment; and that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment; and the righteous into eternal life—Mat.25—16—Acts 17—31 (Bethel Association, 1843, pp. 9-10).

### **2.3.5 Liberty Baptist Association**

#### Articles of Faith (1840)

We believe that the Holy Bible is the word of God; that it was written by men divinely inspired: that it is the only sufficient and perfect rule of faith and practice; and that among others, it teaches the following important truths:

1. That there is only one living and true God, infinite in every perfection, and that he has revealed himself as the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.
2. That man was created holy, but by willfully violating the law of his maker, he fell from that state: that by nature there is in us no holiness: we are all inclined to evil; and as all have sinned, all are children of wrath, justly exposed to death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.
3. That the only deliverance from this state of guilt and condemnation is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who assumed our nature, (sin excepted,) and “who God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, having so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
4. That Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ—that Christian Baptism is immersion in water, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—that none have a right to the Lord’s Supper until they are baptised.
5. That according to the examples of the Apostles and earliest Christians, sanctioned by the repeated presence of Christ himself, after his resurrection, the first day of the week is to be observed as the Lord’s Day, or Christian Sabbath.
6. That Jesus Christ has established the ministry of the word—that it is the duty of ministers, so far as they have opportunity, to preach the gospel to every creature, and that they should be sustained in their labors by the churches— “for the laborer is worthy of his hire.”
7. That there will be a general resurrection and a final judgment, and that the wicked will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal (Liberty Baptist Association, 1840, pp. 5-6).

## **2.4 North Carolina**

### **2.4.1 Broad River Baptist Association (1800)**

1. We believe in one only true and living God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three in one.
2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness.
5. We believe in the doctrine of *Election* through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the merits of Jesus Christ.
7. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and not finally fall away.
8. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects, and conscientiously do believe the true mode is immersion.
9. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and general judgment.
10. We believe that the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.
11. We believe that no minister has a right to the administration of the ordinances, only such as has been called of God, as was Aaron, and regularly baptized and approved of by the Church, and come under the imposition of hands by the Presbytery.
12. We believe that none but believers have a right to the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Logan, 1887, p. 17).<sup>759</sup>

#### **2.4.2 French Broad Baptist Association (1807)**

##### ASSOCIATION COVENANT

- Article 1. We believe in the only living and true God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one in substance, and equal in power and glory.
2. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, and the only rule of Faith and practice.
  3. We believe in the doctrine of Original Sin.
  4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by his own free will and ability.
  5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.
  6. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and that they never shall fall finally away.

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<sup>759</sup> Noteworthy is Broad River association because its associational “plan” of union became a pattern for associations after it. According to G. Paschal, Broad River consciously rejected the abstract of principles based upon the PCF which was popular at the time and chose instead to compose an article on election that was not theologically offensive to Separate Baptists who rejected the unconditional election of the PCF. Hence, Article 5: “We believe in the doctrine of *Election* through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” See Paschal, 1930, pp. 215-216. Baptists associations across the south followed Broad River and embraced a confessional expression of election similar to theirs.

7. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by Christ and that true believers are the only proper subjects thereof.
8. We believe that the true mode of Baptism is by immersion.
9. We believe that no person has a right to administer the ordinances but such as are regularly called and qualified thereunto.
10. We believe that no man should be ordained to the Ministry without the unanimous voice of the Church to which he belongs.
11. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general Judgment; that the punishment of the wicked shall be everlasting; and the joys of the righteous eternal.
12. We, the members of the French Broad Baptist Association, agreeing to the above articles of Faith, do for and in behalf of the churches whom we represent, covenant, agree, and give ourselves up to each other, in church and christian fellowship, in order to keep up the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, and to assist each other in all matters of distress, and to pray for each other's prosperity (French Broad Association, 1994, pp. 3-4).<sup>760</sup>

### **2.4.3 The Big Ivy Association (1827)**

#### Articles of Faith

1. We believe in one only true and living God; and notwithstanding there are three that bear record in heaven—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost — yet there is but one in substance, equal in power and glory, and can not be divided, either in principle or practice, and not liable to change.
2. We believe the Old and New Testaments is the word of God, and a sufficiency is therein contained for our instruction, and they are the only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of Original sin, and that all mankind, since the fall are by nature the children of Wrath, one as much as another.
4. We believe in man's impotency, or inability to recover himself out of the fallen state he is in, therefore a Saviour is absolutely needed.
5. We believe that sinners are Justified in the sight of God only by the imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>760</sup> What remains striking about French Broad's confession is the absence of any statement concerning election and predestination in an abstract of faith adopted by southern Baptists in 1807. Philadelphia and Charleston's confessional influence, particularly the *strict* Calvinistic doctrines concerning total depravity, unconditional election, and irresistible grace, appear nowhere in these articles.

6. We believe in the Perseverance of the Saints in grace—that they are born again, or adopted into the family of Heaven—that they become equal heirs with Jesus Christ, and that He will raise them up at the last day.
7. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are gospel Ordinances and true believers the proper subjects, and we admit of no other knowingly.
8. We believe that the true mode of Baptism is to baptize or immerse a person, by their own consent, once in water, back foremost, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
9. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and of a General Judgment, where all will be judged according to the deeds done in the body.
10. We believe the punishment of the wicked will be Everlasting and the joys of the righteous will be Eternal after death.
11. We believe washing one another's feet is a command of Christ left with His disciples, and ought to be practiced by His followers.
12. We believe that no one has a right to administer the Ordinances but such as are legally called and qualified thereunto.
13. We believe it is the duty of all church members to attend their church meetings, and it is the duty of the church to deal with them for neglecting the same.
14. We believe it is the duty of all church members to contribute to the support of the gospel and defraying all reasonable expenses of the church, never neglecting the poor, according to their several abilities.
15. We believe that any doctrine that goes to encourage or indulge people in their sins, or cause them to settle down on anything short of saving faith in Christ, for salvation, is erroneous, and all such doctrines will be rejected by us.
16. None of the above-named articles shall be so construed as to hold with Particular and Eternal Election and Reprobation, or so as to make God partial, either directly or indirectly, so as to injure any of the children of men (Ammons, 1907, pp. 13-14).<sup>761</sup>

#### **2.4.4 Green River Baptist Association**

##### Association Covenant

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<sup>761</sup> The Big Ivy Baptist Association split from the French Broad association over *strict* Calvinism 1827 (Ibid, 10-13). The articles have Calvinistic tendencies but reflect a total rejection of *strict* Calvinism and the “eternal particular election” as found in the PCF and abstracts of faith reflecting the PCF.

Article 1. We believe in one only living and true God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these are one in substance, and equal in power and glory.

2. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

3 We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

4. We believe in a man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by his own free will and ability.

5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only through the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

6. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and that they never shall finally fall away.

7. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects thereof.

8. We believe immersion is the only Scriptural mode of baptism.

9. We believe that no person has a right to administer the ordinances but such as are regularly called and qualified thereto.

10. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment; that the punishment of the wicked shall be everlasting, and the joys of the righteous eternal.

11. We, the members of the Green River Baptist Association, agreeing to the above Articles of Faith, do for and in behalf of the churches which we represent, covenant and agree, and give ourselves up to each other in church and christian fellowship, in order to keep up the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, and to assist each other in all matters of distress, and to pray for each other's prosperity (Green River Baptist Association, 1845, p. 13).<sup>762</sup>

#### **2.4.5 United Baptist Association**

##### Abstract of Principles

1. We believe in one only true and living God, and that there are three persons in the God-head, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

2. We believe that the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

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<sup>762</sup> Green River Baptists are among many Baptist associations across the 19<sup>th</sup> century south that possessed no article on the doctrine of election.

3. We believe in the impotency of man to recover himself from the fallen state which he is in, by his own ability.
4. We believe that salvation is by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
5. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by Jesus Christ, and should be practiced by all true believers.
6. We believe the only true mode is by immersion, and that true believers are the only subjects.
7. We believe in the final perseverance of saints in grace to glory.
8. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment.
9. We believe that the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will both be eternal (United Association, 1860, p. 13).

#### **2.4.6 Friendship Baptist Association**

##### Articles of Faith

1. We believe in one only living and true God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one.
2. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God and the only true rule of word and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's incompetency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, and that justification in the sight of God is only obtained by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
5. We believe in the doctrine of election through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.
6. We believe that saints shall persevere in grace, and that none of them shall ever fall away and be lost.
7. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and a general judgement, and that the punishment of the wicked and joys of the righteous shall be eternal.
8. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects thereof.
9. We believe the only true mode of Baptism is Immersion.
10. We believe that none have a right to administer the ordinances but Ministers of the Gospel regularly ordained to that office (Smiley, 1893, pp. 14-15).

## **2.4.7 Salem United Baptist Association**

### Association Covenant

Article I. We believe in one only living and true God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one in substance, and equal in power and glory.

II. We believe the Scriptures of Old and New Testament are the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

III. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

IV. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by his own free will and ability.

V. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

VI. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and that they never finally fall away.

VII. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are ordinances instituted by Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects thereof.

VIII. We believe the true mode of baptism is by immersion.

IX. We believe that no person has a right to administer the ordinance, but such as are regularly called and qualified thereunto.

X. We believe that no man should be ordained to the ministry, without the unanimous voice of the church to which he belongs.

XI. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and general judgment; that the punishment of the wicked shall be everlasting, and the joys of the righteous eternal.

XII. We, the members of the Salem Baptist Association, agree in to the above articles of faith, do for and in behalf of the churches which we represent, covenant, agree, and give ourselves up to each other in church and christian fellowship, in order to keep up the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, and to assist each other in all matters of distress, and to pray for each others prosperity (Salem United Association, 1839, p. 4).<sup>763</sup>

## **2.4.8 Stony Fork Baptist Association (1860)**

### ABSTRACT OF PRINCIPLES.

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<sup>763</sup> Salem United held no article on the doctrine of election.

1st. We believe in one only true and living God, and that there are three persons in the God-head, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these three are one.

2nd. We believe that the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

3rd. We believe in the impotency of man to recover himself from the fallen state which he is in, by his own ability.

4th. We believe that salvation is only by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

5th. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by Jesus Christ, and should be practiced by all true believers.

6th. We believe that the only true mode of baptism is by immersion, and that true believers are the only subjects.

7th. We believe in the final perseverance of the saints in grace to glory.

8th. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and general judgment.

9th. We believe that the happiness of the righteous, and the punishment of the unrighteous, will both be eternal (Stony Fork Association, 1860, p. 8).

#### **2.4.9 Pilot Mountain Baptist Association (1885)**

##### CONFESSION OF FAITH

Whereas, We are living in a day of doubt and disbelief and irreligion, we see [?] that it is time for Baptists to re-affirm their faith in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian system. These we conceive to be the historic doctrines contained in the Philadelphia Confession and other formal statements, which may be simply set forth as follows:

1. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God; that it was written by Holy men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and that it has supreme authority in ail matters of faith and conduct.

2. We believe in God the Father, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, measureless in power. We rejoice that he concerns himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that he hears and answers prayer, and that he saves from sin and death those who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

3. We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, miraculous in his birth, sinless in his life, and making atonement for sin by his vicarious death. We believe in his bodily resurrection, in his ascension in to Heaven, in his perpetual intercession for his people, and in his personal and visible return to the earth according to his promise.

4. We believe in the Holy Spirit, who came forth from God to convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify and comfort those who believe in Jesus the Christ.

5. We believe that all the race are by nature and by choice sinners before God, and that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life; and we therefore believe that those who accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord are saved and will at last be admitted to his presence with exceeding joy, while those who reject the Saviour will be turned into darkness forever and ever.

6. We believe in the church of the living God, the ground and pillar of the truth, as the institution of which Christ is the head, and through which he works his righteous will in preaching the gospel in all the world and in teaching his people to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded. We further believe that each church, which is composed of believers baptized on a credible profession of faith and voluntarily associated together for worship and work, is independent and autonomous and essentially free from any outside authority, whether ecclesiastical or political and that therefore church and state, as having different functions, must be kept separate, each fulfilling its duties free from the dictation or patronage of the other (Pilot Mountain Baptist Church, 1885, pp. 7-8).<sup>764</sup>

#### **2.4.10 Tuckaseige Baptist Association (1829)**

*The Constitution As amended at Franklin, 1830, is as follows, viz:*

As the communion of saints, so the communion of Churches is a desirable blessing; to obtain and to promote which, ought to be the study and endeavor of all the people of God. Although Churches, formed on the Gospel plan, are independent of each other with regard to power, yet not so, strictly speaking, with regard to Communion; for, as saints in general have a right to share in each other's gifts and graces, so have Churches in this joint capacity.

We therefore, as the representatives of our respective Churches, do now unite in forming an Association, to be known by the name of the Tuckaseige Baptist Association. Our object in forming this Union is, to promote concord and brotherly love, by endeavoring to keep up the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. But, as Christians are unhappily divided in sentiment, we feel it our duty, in the fear of God, to set forth a Declaration of those things which we most confidently believe, are according to sound doctrine, as may be seen in the Articles following, viz:

Art. 1. We believe in one only living and true God; and that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and, that these three are one.

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<sup>764</sup> Pilot Mountain Baptists claimed the articles they confessed were the "historic doctrines contained in the Philadelphia Confession and other formal statements." Apparently, they did not believe the *strictly* Calvinistic doctrines of total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, and irresistible grace were the essential theological elements of the PCF.

Art. 2. We believe, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, are the word of God, and the only rule of Faith and Practice.

Art. 3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

Art. 4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by nature, and that justification, in the sight of God, is only obtained by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Art. 5. We believe, the saints shall persevere in grace, and that none of them, shall ever fall away and be lost.

Art. 6. We believe, in the resurrection of the dead, and a general Judgment; that the punishment of the wicked, and the joys of the righteous, will be eternal.

Art. 7. We believe, that Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are ordinances instituted by Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects thereof.

Art. 8. We believe, the true mode of Baptism is, by Immersion.

Art. 9. We believe, that none have a right to administer the ordinances, but ministers of the Gospel, regularly ordained to that office.<sup>765</sup>

#### **2.4.11 Tar River Baptist Association (1833)**

##### Articles of Faith

Adopted by the Tar River Association, October 1833

We Believe: —

1. That God made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth; also, that there are three that bear record in heaven—the Father the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one — Acts 17:24, I John 5:7.

2. That in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; also that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. —John 1:1, 14.

3. That in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; that He created man in His own image- that He saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good. —Gen. 1:1, 27. 31.

4. That as sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned, even so all are by nature dead in trespasses and sins. Rom. 5:12, Eph. 2:1.

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<sup>765</sup> Tuckaseige Baptists confession adopted in 1830 conspicuously lacks an article, implicitly or explicitly, affirming the doctrine of election.

5. That all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the will of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. — 1 Tim. 3:16-17.
6. That the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost; and that we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have now received the atonement. —Luke 19:10. Rom. 5:11.
7. That God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. —Acts 17:30, Mark 16:16.
8. That there is one Lord, one faith and one baptism; and that 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. —Eph. 4:5, Rom. 6:4.
9. That the Holy Spirit reproveth the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; also that He hath quickened us together with Christ. —John 16:8, Eph. 2:5.
10. That by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast. —Eph. 2:8, 9.
11. That God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; that He hath chosen us from the beginning unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. —Eph. 1:3- 4; II Thess. 2:15.
12. That we are justified by faith that works by love. Rom. 5:1.
13. That we are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. —I Peter 1:5.
14. That there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, who shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. —Acts 24:15, John 5:25 (Tar River Association, 1885, pp. 39-40).<sup>766</sup>

#### **2.4.12 Taylorsville Baptist Association (1851)**

##### ABSTRACT OF PRINCIPLES

1st. We believe in only one true and living God—and that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

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<sup>766</sup> Tar River Baptists chose to adopt a confession of Scriptural content rather than theological propositions based upon Scripture.

2nd. We believe that the old and new Testaments are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

3rd. We believe in the impotency of man to recover himself from the fallen state which he is in by his own ability,

4th. We believe that salvation is by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

5th. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by Jesus Christ, and should be practiced by all true believers.

6th. We believe the only true mode is by immersion, and that true believers are the only subjects.

7th. We believe in the final perseverance of saints in grace to glory.

8th. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment.

9th. We believe that the happiness of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, will both be eternal (Taylorsville Baptist Association, 1853, p. 6).<sup>767</sup>

#### **2.4.13 United Baptist Association (1859)**

##### Abstract of Principles

1st. We believe in one only true and living God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

2nd. We believe that the Old and New Testaments are the words of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

3rd. We believe in the impotency of man to recover himself from the fallen state which he is in, by his own ability.

4th. We believe that salvation is by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

5th. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by Jesus Christ, and should be practiced by ail true believers.

6th. We believe the only true mode is by immersion, and that true believers are the only subjects.

7th. We believe in the final perseverance of the saints in grace to glory.

8th. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment.

9th. We believe that the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked, will both be eternal (United Baptist Association, 1869, p. 9).<sup>768</sup>

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<sup>767</sup> An article on election is absent.

<sup>768</sup> An article on election is absent.

## **2.4.14 Stone Mountain Baptist Association (1839)**

### Articles of Faith

1st. We believe in one only true and living God; Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

2nd. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Words of God, and the only rule of Faith and Practice.

3rd. We believe in the doctrine of Election by Grace.

4th. We believe in the doctrine of Original Sin, and in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will or ability.

5th. We believe that sinners are called, converted, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and that all who are thus regenerated and born again by the Spirit of God, shall never fall finally away.

6th. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

7th. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only subjects of these ordinances; and we believe the only true mode of Baptism is by immersion.

8th. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and a general judgment, and that the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.

9th. We believe that no minister has a right to administer the ordinances of the gospel, except such as are regularly called, and come under the imposition of hands of the Presbytery (Gregory, 1976, p. 5).<sup>769</sup>

## **2.5 South Carolina**

### **2.5.1 Edgefield Baptist Association**

#### Articles of Faith (1843)

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<sup>769</sup> While Stone Mountain association chose to include an article on election, like many other Baptist associations across the 19<sup>th</sup> century south, they chose to express their belief in election in the barest possible language—"We believe in the doctrine of Election by Grace." Arguably, not only could Calvinists of every theological shade agree with such a general proposition on election, but also few, if any, theological Arminians would dispute the article. The PCF could hardly be the interpretative backdrop for Stone Mountain's confessional heritage.

While this association acknowledges the rights of private judgment, and utterly disclaims a spirit of intolerance and persecution, in every shape, against any who may hold opinions different from its own, it is notwithstanding, considered certain, that unity of faith and practice is essential to the peace and good order of every particular Church of Christ, or Association of Churches; this body, therefore, cordially expresses its approval and strict adherence to the principles which have distinguished the Baptist Denomination in general, in the United States more particularly.

1. We believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God and the only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's inability to recover himself from the fallen state in which he is by nature, by his own strength.
5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ through the everlasting love of God.
6. We believe that saints will persevere in grace to the end of their lives.
7. We believe that Immersion and the Lord's Supper are standing ordinances of the Lord's house, and that true believers are the only proper subjects.
8. We believe in the resurrection of the body, and a general judgment, and in eternal rewards and punishments.
9. We believe that no Minister has a right to administer the ordinances of the Lord's house, except such as are called by God, approved by the Churches, and regularly Ordained (Edgefield Association, 1843, no page numbers).<sup>770</sup>

#### Article I: Of the Unity of Faith (1824)

While this association acknowledges the rights of private judgment and utterly disclaims a spirit of intolerance and persecution in every shape, against any who may hold opinions different from its own, it is notwithstanding considered certain, that unity of faith and practice are essential to the peace and good order of every particular church of Christ, or Association of churches. This body, therefore, cordially expresses its warm approval, and strict adherence to the principles which have distinguished the Baptist denomination in general in the United States:

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<sup>770</sup> Undoubtedly, W. B. Johnson, the first president of the Southern Baptist Convention organized in 1845, had a hand in composing the confession. Johnson was longtime pastor in the Edgefield association as well as served as moderator of the association. He also assisted in forming the South Carolina Baptist State Convention. The articles bear no linguistic dependency upon nor theological loyalty to the *strict* Calvinism in Philadelphia's confession. As with many other associational confessions in the southern states during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Edgefield Baptists embraced no article on election in 1843 as they did in 1824.

More particularly:

1. We acknowledge and take the only living and true God; one God in three persons. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be our God.
2. We take the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word and revealed will of God; and our sufficient and only rule of faith and practice. Yet we are free to admit the exercise of human reason, on Scriptural principles, in cases for which the Scripture has not expressly provided.
3. We take the Lord Jesus Christ to be our only Mediator with God, and by the offices and relations toward the Godhead, and towards men, which He sustains both actively and passively, our all-sufficient and only Saviour: And we look for justification and acceptance with God through His righteousness alone, as apprehended by faith.
4. We believe that all Saints are chosen in Christ Jesus to be holy and obedient according to God's sovereign purpose and free grace before the world began: and that they all receive the effectual call of the Holy Spirit, are justified, and kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, and final glory with Christ in Heaven.
5. We believe that there will be a resurrection of the body, and a general judgement of both the quick and the dead. We believe in the life everlasting, in which the righteous are happy, and the wicked are miserable.
6. We believe that there will be a perpetual succession of ministers of the Gospel until the end of the world, called and qualified, and sent forth by the Holy Spirit. We acknowledge it to be the privilege and duty of such, when sanctioned by the churches and ordained by the imposition of clerical hands, to teach and administer the ordinances, and to announce free and full salvation by faith in Christ to every human creature, as far as possible: And we hold it to be the duty of christians, and of all men, to contribute in a scriptural and reasonable way, toward the support of God's ministers, and the promotion of Christ's Kingdom among men.
7. We receive water baptism, and the Lord's Supper, as perpetual ordinances in the church on earth. The former, to be administered by immersion only, on a credible profession of faith, as the door to membership in the visible church: and the latter, after baptism, as a token of remembrance and love to Christ.
8. We believe that the churches of Christ are mutually independent of each other, and that the congregational form of church government should be inviolably preserved: yet being convinced of the utility of friendly intercourse and pious councils, on the principles of reciprocal advantage and christian love: we hold it to be a duty of the churches pay respect, on these principles, to the

advice of the Association, and to make reasonable contributions to the interests of the union (Edgefield Association, 1824, pp. 9-10).<sup>771</sup>

### 2.5.2 Edisto Baptist Association (1834)

#### Declaration of Faith

Whereas, it is necessary for a mutual understanding of the churches in this body— for the satisfaction of the associations with whom we may correspond, and for general information to those who may desire, to know any thing of us, that there should be some general principles laid down, by which it may be known on what grounds we are associated— we therefore, the Edisto Baptist Association, do declare the following views of the gospel upon which we are united:

1. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain the revelation of God's will to man, and constitute the obligatory rules for man in all his relations as a creature and a member of society.
2. We believe that the Scriptures reveal the existence of one living and true God subsisting in three distinct persons, known by the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that these three are one in essence, possessing equal attributes.
3. We believe that God who made all things, created man upright: but they have sought out many inventions— that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified before God.
4. We believe that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.
5. We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal only begotten Son of God, was made flesh; that he was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered, bled, died, was buried, rose again, and is now at the right hand of his Father, making intercession for his people, and will come again a second time, without a sin offering, unto salvation.
6. We believe that Jesus Christ, in his perfect work, magnified and made honorable the divine law; is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth, that God might be just,

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<sup>771</sup> Edgefield Baptists had an earlier confession that contained an article on election (Article 4). However, even then the statement on election did not specifically display the *strict* Calvinism of the PCF where a “definite number” of men and angels were chosen that could not be “added to” or “subtracted from.” Nor was an eternal covenant of redemption confessed wherein only the elect was redeemed in particular through Jesus’ death. They did, however, confess in the earlier article on election, “they all [i.e. the elect] receive the *effectual* call of the Holy Spirit...” (emphasis added). Abstracts of faith following Philadelphia’s confessional tradition usually qualify the call of God as an *effectual* call.

and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, and that whosoever will may come, and take of the water of life freely.

7. We believe in the regeneration of the soul by the Spirit of God, in its sanctification by his Word, and in the eternal glorification of soul and body after the judgment day.

8. We believe that the salvation of the sinner is by grace, through faith, and not of works.

9. We believe that good works are to be maintained for necessary purposes, since God has before ordained that his people should walk in them.

10. We believe that all whom the Father has given to his Son, shall come to him, and will be raised up at the last day; and that those who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him, that they may be ever with the Lord.

11. We believe that there will be a general resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment, the result of which will be a final reward to all men according to the deeds done in the body, and that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.

12. We believe the the preaching of the gospel in an ordinance of God, and should be liberally supported by his people.

13. We believe that Baptism is an ordinance of the gospel, and consists in the immersion of the body of a believer in water, upon Ins profession of faith in Christ Jesus.

14. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ, to be observed by his followers in their collective capacity, to the end of time, according to his express command— Do this in remembrance of me—and that none but those who have been baptized upon a profession of their faith are scripturally entitled to participate in that ordinance.

15. We believe that it is the duty of all baptized believers to unite together in the church relation.

16. We believe that each of these churches is independent in point of government of each other, though they should be united in harmony and love, and in common effort for mutual benefit, and the promotion of the cause of God.

17. We believe that the officers of Christ's church are Bishops and Deacons. By Bishops we understand Elders, pastors having the spiritual charge of a church. By Deacons we understand those who have charge of the temporalities of the church.

18. We believe that civil government is an ordinance of God, and that we should give it our support.<sup>772</sup>

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<sup>772</sup> Nothing in Edisto's confession necessarily points to the PCF as the confessional inspiration. While some might argue Article 10 implies a *strictly* Calvinistic understanding of election—"We believe that all whom the Father has given to his Son, shall come to him, and will be raised up at the last day; and that those who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him, that they may be ever with the Lord"—nothing necessarily follows from an article that simply quotes

## 2.6 Mississippi

### 2.6.1 Aberdeen Baptist Association

1. We believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the words of God, and the only Rule of Faith and Practice.
2. We believe the scriptures teach that there is but one living and true God; that there are three persons in this one God — 'the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and that this triune God is the only object of all religions worship and adoration, and that all worship paid to anything else, in the name of God, is idolatry and abomination in His sight.
3. We believe that God created man holy and happy; that he sinned and fell from that condition; that by the fall he lost his original righteousness, and became both sinful and depraved, and as a natural consequence, all his posterity, by ordinary generation, are involved in all the consequences of his fall.
4. We believe that man, by nature, has no power to recover himself from his lost and ruined condition, and that unless God Himself had provided a way of salvation, that all must have been ruined and miserable forever— because all have sinned.
5. We believe that God has provided a way of salvation, and has revealed it to us in the Gospel of His Son; that this way of salvation was adopted in the eternal counsel before the world began, and that God then chose his people in Christ, and determined on their recovery through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.
6. We believe that fallen man has nothing and can do nothing of himself to recommend him to the favorable notice of the Divine Being, and that all his hope of pardon, sanctification, justification, and redemption, is derived alone through the merits of Christ.
7. We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is the only between mediator between God and man; that He first became our surety, and in the fullness of time, our sacrifice, and that the only efficacious plea that He makes before the throne in our behalf, is built upon His own sacrifice, and perfect righteousness before God.
8. We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person in the adorable Trinity, is the great agent in convincing man of his lost and condemned condition, and in making the gospel plan of mercy plain and acceptable to Him.
9. We believe that all who are sanctified by the spirit are fully justified by the righteousness of Christ, which is in all, and upon all them that believe.

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Scriptural passages without also including specific commentary. Article 10 is a compilation of phrases lifted from John 6:37-39 and nothing more.

10. We believe that all who are called to be Saints, through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth, shall be eternally saved.

11. We believe that Christian Churches are composed of believers in Christ, who give evidence of a change of heart, and have been regularly baptized.

12. We believe that the government of a church is not left in the hands of anyone man, or number of men, distinct from the body, but is left with the whole church.

13. We believe that the first day of the week, called the Lord's Day, is sanctified, or set apart, for the public worship of God, and that it is the duty of christians to abstain, on that day, from all unnecessary visiting, trifling conversation, or labor, except so much as may be devoted to works of necessity and mercy.

14. We believe, as God has appointed the preaching of the gospel for the edification of the church and the advancement of His kingdom, that it is the duty of church members to contribute to the support of the ministry, as God, in his Providence, may give them ability.

15. We believe that Jesus Christ has appointed two positive institutions or ordinances, to be observed in His churches, viz; Baptism and the Lord's Supper. That baptism is immersion and in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that believers alone are capable of rightly receiving this ordinance; that baptism precedes the Lord's Supper, and none but baptized believers have any right to this ordinance; and none but regularly baptized ministers have any right to administer them.

16. We believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust; that the just will rise to everlasting life, and the unjust to everlasting shame and contempt.

17. Finally, we believe that the gospel, with all its obligations, privileges, and blessings, has been committed to the churches, and it is especially enjoined to make it known to every creature, while a risen and ascended Savior pledges His presence unto the end of the world (Aberdeen Association, 1869, pp. 14-15).

### **2.6.2 Choctaw Baptist Association**

1<sup>st</sup>. *Our Faith.* – We believe in one true and living God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one.

2d. We believe that the Scripture of the Old and New Testament is the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

3d. We believe the doctrine of Original Sin, and of Man's incapacity to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and ability.

4<sup>th</sup>. We believe the Doctrine of Election, according to the foreknowledge of God, and that God chose his people in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and without blame before him in love.

5<sup>th</sup>. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them.

6<sup>th</sup>. We believe that God's Elect, "according to his foreknowledge," shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

7<sup>th</sup>. We believe Saints shall persevere in grace, and never fall finally away.

8<sup>th</sup>. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, that true believers are the only subjects; and that nothing is Baptism but immersion.

9<sup>th</sup>. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, and in general judgment; as [sic] also that the punishment of the wicked and the joys of the righteous will be eternal.

10<sup>th</sup>. We believe that no Ministers have a Scriptural right to administer the ordinances of Jesus Christ, but such as have been regularly baptized, called, and passed under the hands of the Presbytery.

11<sup>th</sup>. We believe that none but regularly baptized church members have a right to commune at the supper of the Lord (Choctaw Association, 1840, p. 10).

### **2.6.3 Liberty Baptist Association (1837)**

#### Articles of Faith

Art. 1<sup>st</sup>. We believe in only one true and living God, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.

Art. 2<sup>nd</sup>. We believe that the Scriptures, comprising the Old and New Testament, are the word of God, and the only rule of Faith and Practice.

Art. 3<sup>rd</sup>. We believe in the doctrine of Election, and that God chose his people in Christ before the foundation of the world.

Art. 4<sup>th</sup>. We believe in the doctrine of Original Sin.

Art. 5<sup>th</sup>. We believe in man's incapacity by his own free will and ability, to recover himself from the fallen state in which he is by nature.

Art. 6<sup>th</sup>. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, by the imputed righteousness of Christ only.

Art. 7<sup>th</sup>. We believe that God's elect shall be called, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Art. 8<sup>th</sup>. We believe that the Saints shall be preserved in Grace, and never fall finally away.

Art. 9<sup>th</sup>. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only subjects of Baptism, and that by Immersion is the only mode.

Art. 10<sup>th</sup>. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and in the general Judgment, and that the felicity of the righteous and punishment of the wicked will be Eternal.

Art. 11<sup>th</sup>. We believe that no minister has any right to administer the ordinances of the Gospel, but one who is regularly Baptised, called and comes under the imposition of the hands of a Presbytery.

Art. 12<sup>th</sup>. We believe that none but regularly baptised members have a right to commune at the Lord's table (Liberty Baptist Association, 1848).

## **2.7 Tennessee**

### **2.7.1 Concord Association (1810)**

#### Abstract of Principles of Concord Association

Article 1. We believe in one only true and living God, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.

Art. 2. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

Art. 3. We believe in the doctrine of Election, and that God chose his people in Christ before the foundation of the world.

Art. 4. We believe in the doctrine of original sin, and man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and ability.

Art. 5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the righteousness of Christ imparted to them.

Art. 6. We believe that God's elect shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Art. 7. We believe that the saints shall persevere in grace, and never finally fall away, and that good works are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification.

Art. 8. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects, and that the only proper mode of Baptism is immersion.

Art. 9. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the general judgment, and that the punishment of the wicked and the joy of the righteous shall be eternal.

Art. 10. We believe that ministers have no right to administer the ordinances, only such as are regularly baptized and come under the imposition of hands by the presbytery (Grime, 1902, pp. 15-16).

### **2.7.2 Hiwassee Baptist Association (1821)**

#### Abstract of Principles

Art. 1<sup>st</sup>. We believe in one only true and living God; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

2d. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, are the word of God, and the only rules of saving knowledge.

3d. We believe in election, according, to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit in belief of the truth.

4<sup>th</sup>. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

5<sup>th</sup>. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in, by his own free will ability.

6<sup>th</sup>. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

7<sup>th</sup>. We believe that the saints will persevere in grace, and never fall finally away.

8<sup>th</sup>. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper, are ordinances of the church of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects of the ordinances, and the true Apostolic mode is by *Immersion*.

9<sup>th</sup>. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and jeneral [sic] Judgment.

10<sup>th</sup>. We believe that the punishment of the wicked will be everlasting, and the joys of the righteous eternal.

11<sup>th</sup>. We Believe [sic] that no Minister has a right to the administration of the ordinances of the church, only such as are regularly called, and come under the imposition of hands by a presbytery (Hiwassee Association, 1841, no page number).

## **2.8 Missouri**

### **2.8.1 Concord Baptist Association**

Principles of Union,  
Adopted by Concord Baptist Association

Article 1. We believe in one only true and living God, and that there are a trinity of persons on the God head, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and yet there are not three Gods—but one God only.

Art. 2. We believe that the scriptures of the old and new Testament are the words of God and the only rule of faith and practice.

Art. 3. We believe in the fall of Adam, and that by his transgression all his posterity fell and were made sinners. We believe in the corruption of human nature, and the impotency of man to recover himself by his own free will and ability.

Art. 4. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by the imputed righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and that good works are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, and are the evidences of our gracious state.

Art. 5. We believe that the saints shall persevere in grace, and not one of them be finally lost.

Art. 6. We believe there will be a resurrection of the dead, general and universal judgement, and the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be Eternal.

Art. 7. We believe the visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful (persons) who have given themselves up to the Lord, and one another having agreed to keep up a Godly discipline according to the rules of the gospel.

Art. 8. We believe that Jesus Christ is the great head of the church, and that the Government thereof is with the body.

Art. 9. We believe that Water Baptism and the Lord's supper are the ordinances of the gospel and are to be continued until his second coming.

Art. 10. We believe that true believers are the only subjects of Baptism, and that immersion is the only mode.

Art. 11. We believe none but regularly Baptised members have a right to commune at the Lord's table.

Art. 12. We believe that the Lord's day ought to be observed and set apart for the worship of God, and that no work or worldly business ought to be done or transacted thereon—works of piety and necessity excepted (Concord Association, 1836).<sup>773</sup>

### **2.8.2 Salt River Baptist Association (1823)**

1. We believe in one only true and living God, and that there are three offices of the Godhead, the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

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<sup>773</sup> No page numbers.

2. The scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.
3. That by nature we are fallen and depraved creatures.
4. That salvation, regeneration, justification, and sanctification, are only by the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the operation of the Holy Ghost.
5. That all the saints will finally persevere through grace to glory.
6. That believer's baptism is only immersion, and is necessary to the receiving of the Lord's Supper.
7. That the salvation of the righteous and punishment of the wicked will be eternal.
8. That no minister has a right to administer the Ordinances, until he legally comes under the imposition of hands.
- [9.] That it is our duty to be tender one towards another, and study generally the happiness of God's people at large, and endeavor to promote the honor and glory of God.
10. We believe in election by grace.
11. It is our duty to commune with all orderly Baptists only.
12. That each church has a right to keep up its own government, as to [sic] it may seem best (Salt River Baptist Association, 1840).

### **2.8.3 Spring River Baptist Association (1840)**

#### Articles of Faith

- ART. 1. We believe in one only true and living God, the Father, Word and Holy Ghost, and these three are one.
2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.
  3. We believe in the fall of Adam, and that all his posterity fell in him and were made sinners; We believe that mankind by nature are corrupt and unable to recover himself by his own free will and ability.
  4. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and that good works are the fruits of faith which follow after justification, and are the evidences of our gracious state.
  5. We believe the saints will all persevere, and not one of them finally be lost.

6. We believe there will be a resurrection of the human body, and a general judgment, and that the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.
7. We believe the Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful persons.
8. We believe that Jesus Christ is the great head of the church, and that the government thereof is with the body.
9. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's supper are the ordinances of the gospel, and should be continued till his second coming.
10. We believe that immersion is the only gospel mode of baptism, and that true believers are the only fit and proper subjects thereof.
11. We believe none but regularly baptised persons have a right to commune at the Lord's table (Spring River Association, 1852, no page number).

#### **2.8.4 West Fork Baptist Association (1845)**

##### Articles of Faith

- ART. 1. We believe in one only true and living God, the Father, word and Holy Ghost, and these three are one.
2. We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, (the translation made in the reign of King James) are the words of God, and the only rule of Faith and practice.
  3. We believe in the fall of Adam, and that all his posterity fell in him and were made sinners; we believe in the impotency of man to recover himself by his own free will and ability.
  4. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them through faith; that good works are the fruits of faith and follow after justification, and are the evidences of our gracious state.
  5. We believe that the Saints shall persevere in grace unto the end, and not one of them be finally lost.
  6. We believe that water Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the gospel, and are to be continued until his second coming.
  7. We believe that true believers are the only fit subjects, and immersion the only gospel mode of Baptism.
  8. We believe that the first day of the week ought to be observed and set apart for the worship of God, and that no work or worldly business ought to be done or transacted thereon—works of piety and necessity excepted.

9. We believe there will be a resurrection of the dead and a general judgment, and that the happiness of the righteous, and the torment of the wicked will be eternal (West Fork Baptist Association, 1848).

## **2.9 Arkansas**

### **2.9.1 Liberty Association (1845)**

ARTICLE I. We believe in one true and living God, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost.

ART. II. WE believe that the Scriptures, composing the Old and New Testaments, are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

ART. III. We believe in the doctrine of election as founded in the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

ART. IV. We believe in the doctrine of original sin by the fall of Adam.

ART. V. We believe in man's incapacity, by his own free will and ability, to recover himself from the fallen state by which he is in nature.

ART. VI. We believe that sinners are justified, in the sight of God, by the imputed righteousness of Christ only.

ART. VII. We believe that saints shall be preserved in grace, and never fall finally away.

ART. VIII. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only subjects of baptism, and that immersion is the apostolic mode.

ART. IX. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and in the general judgment; and that the felicity of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.

ART. X. We believe that no minister has any right to administer the ordinances of the Gospel but one who is regularly baptized, called and comes under the imposition of the hands of a presbytery.

ART. XI. We believe that none but regularly baptized members have a right to commune at the Lord's table.

ART. XII. We believe that the Lord's day should be observed as a day of rest and religious devotion (Liberty Association, 1898, p. 19).

## **2.10 Virginia**

### **2.6.1 Mountain Union Baptist Association (1867)**

ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. We believe in one only true and living God, Father, Son and Ghost, and these three are one.
2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God and the only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of election by grace.
4. We believe in the doctrine of original sin, and in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and ability.
5. We believe that sinners are called, converted, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and that all who are thus regenerated born again by the Spirit of God, shall never fall finally away.
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.
7. We believe that Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Feet Washing are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the objects of those ordinances; and we believe the only true mode baptism is by immersion.
8. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and a general judgement; and that the joys of the righteous, and the punishment of wicked will be eternal.
9. We believe that no minister has a right to administer the ordinances of the Gospel, except such as are regularly called and come to the imposition of hands by the Presbytery (Mountain Union Baptist Association, 1876, p. 61).

Appendix C: The New Hampshire Confession: Comparing Editions

NHC: Editions	<i>Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (1835)</i> (Brown, 1835, p. 191)	<b>Crowell's Church Manual (1850)</b> (Crowell, 1850, pp. 19-28)	<b>Brown's Church Manual (1853)</b> (Brown, 1853, pp. 5-22)
<b>Article I: Of the Scriptures</b>	We believe 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.	We believe 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.	<b>I. Of the Scriptures</b> We believe <b>that</b> 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.
<b>Article II: Of the True God</b>	That there is one, and only one, true and living God, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness; worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.	That there is one, and only one, true and living God, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness; worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of 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.	<b>II. Of the True God</b> [We believe] that there is one, and only one, <u>living and true</u> God, [an infinite, intelligent Spirit,] whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; [1] inexpressibly glorious in holiness, [2 and] worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; [3] <b>that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons</b> , the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; [4] equal in every divine perfection, [5] and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption [6].
<b>Article III: Of the Fall of Man</b>	That man was created in a state of 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, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defence, or excuse.	That man was created in a state of 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, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defence[,] or excuse.	<b>III. Of the Fall of Man</b> [We believe] that man was created in [a state of] holiness, under the law of his Maker; [1] but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; [2] in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, [3] 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,] [positively inclined to evil;] and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defence or excuse.
<b>Article IV: Of the Way of Salvation</b>	That the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the law by his personal obedience, and made atonement for our sins by his death; being risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in	That the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the <b>Mediatorial Offices</b> of the Son of God, who took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the law by his personal obedience, and made atonement for our sins by his death; being risen from the dead[,] he is now enthroned in	<b>IV. Of the Way of Salvation</b> [We believe] that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; [1] who [by the appointment of the Father, freely] took upon him our nature, yet without sin; [3] honored the divine law by his personal obedience, [4] and by his death made a full atonement for our sins;

	heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Saviour.	heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Saviour.	[ <sup>5</sup> ] [being] [that having] risen from the dead[,] he is now enthroned in heaven; [ <sup>6</sup> ] 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. [ <sup>7</sup> ]
<b>Article V: Of Justification</b>	That the great Gospel blessing, which Christ of his fulness bestows on such as believe in Him, is justification; that justification consists in 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; hat [sic] it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.	That the great Gospel blessing[,] which Christ of his fulness bestows on such as believe in Him, is Justification; that Justification consists in 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; 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.	<b>V. Of Justification</b> [We believe] that the great gospel blessing[,] which Christ [ <sup>1</sup> ] [bestows on] [secures to] such as believe in him is Justification; [ <sup>2</sup> ] that Justification [consists in] [includes] the pardon of sin[,] and the promise of eternal life[,] on principles of righteousness; [ <sup>4</sup> ] that it is bestowed[,] not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through [his own redemption and righteousness] [faith in the Redeemer's blood;] <sup>5</sup> by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; <sup>6</sup> ]; 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.
<b>Article VI: Of the Freeness of Salvation</b>	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 and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, except his own voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ; which refusal will subject him to an aggravated condemnation.	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 and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, except his own voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ; which refusal will subject him to an aggravated condemnation.	<b>VI. Of the Freeness of Salvation</b> [We believe] that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; [ <sup>1</sup> ] that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent[,] and obedient faith; [ <sup>2</sup> ] and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, [except] [but] his own [voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ] [inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel]; [ <sup>3</sup> ] which [refusal will subject] [rejection involves] him [to] [in] an aggravated condemnation.[ <sup>4</sup> ]
<b>Article VII: Of Grace in Regeneration</b>	That in order to be saved, we must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind, and is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence is found in the holy fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God.	That in order to be saved, we must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind [,] and is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence is found in the holy fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God.	<b>VII. Of Grace in Regeneration</b> [We believe] that[,] in order to be saved, [we] [sinners] must be regenerated[,] or born again; [ <sup>1</sup> ] that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; [ <sup>2</sup> ] [and] [that it] is effected[,] in a manner above our comprehension [or calculation], by the power of the Holy Spirit [in connection with divine truth <sup>3</sup> ], so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; [ <sup>4</sup> ] and that its proper evidence [is found][appears] in the holy fruit[s] [which we bring forth to the glory of God.] [of repentance and faith and newness of life. <sup>5</sup> ]
<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>VIII. Of Repentance and Faith</b> 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.
<b>Article VIII: Of God's Purpose of Grace</b>	That election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he 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 wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, 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 ascertained by its effects in all who believe the gospel; is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves, demands and deserves our utmost diligence.	That Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connexion with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, 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 ascertained by its effects in all who believe the gospel; is the foundation of Christian assurance: and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves, demands and deserves our utmost diligence.	<b>IX: Of God's Purpose of Grace</b> [We believe] that Election is the [gracious] [eternal] purpose of God, according to which he [graciously] regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; [1] that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; [2] that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely [free,] wise, holy, and unchangeable; [3] that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, [love,] prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; [4] that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; [5] that it [is] [may be] ascertained by its effects in all who [truly] believe the gospel; [6 that it] is the foundation of Christian assurance; [7] and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves[,] demands and deserves the utmost diligence.
N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>X. Sanctification</b> 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.
<b>Article IX: Of the Perseverance of Saints</b>	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 superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.	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 [superficial] [mere] professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.	<b>XI. Of the Perseverance of Saints</b> [We believe] that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; [1] that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; [2] that a special Providence watches over their welfare; [3] and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. [4]
<b>Article X: Harmony of</b>	That the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and	That the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and	<b>XII. Of the Harmony of the Law and the Gospel</b>

<p><b>the Law and Gospel</b></p>	<p>good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfil 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.</p>	<p>good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfil 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.</p>	<p><b>We believe</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>Article XI: Of a Gospel Church</b></p>	<p>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 officers are bishops or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.</p>	<p>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 officers are Bishops or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.</p>	<p><b>XIII. Of A Gospel Church</b> 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 <b>scriptural</b> officers are Bishops, or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.</p>
<p><b>Article XII: Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper</b></p>	<p>That Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its purifying power; 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 use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.</p>	<p>That Christian Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in a crucified, buried, and risen <b>Saviour</b>, with its purifying power; 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 use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by a solemn self-examination.</p>	<p><b>XIV. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper</b> <b>We believe</b> that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and <b>Holy Ghost</b>; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in <b>the</b> crucified, buried, and risen <b>Saviour</b>, <b>with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life</b>; a that it is prerequisite 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.</p>
<p><b>Article XIII: Of the Christian Sabbath</b></p>	<p>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 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.</p>	<p>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 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.</p>	<p><b>XV. Of the Christian Sabbath</b> <b>We believe</b> 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 that remaineth for the people of God.</p>
<p><b>Article XIV: Of Civil Government</b></p>	<p>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 in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who</p>	<p>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 in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who</p>	<p><b>XVI. Of Civil Government</b> <b>We believe</b> 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</p>

	is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.	is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.	of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.
<b>Article XV: Of the Righteous and the Wicked</b>	That there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such 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 impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.	That there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such 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 impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.	<b>XVII. Of the Righteous and the Wicked</b> <b>We believe</b> that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such 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 impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.
<b>Article XVI: Of the World to Come</b>	That the end of this 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.	That the end of this 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.	<b>XVIII. Of the World to Come</b> <b>We believe</b> 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 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.
	<b>COLOR KEY</b> <u>Green</u> = Original (1835) <u>Blue</u> = Changes in Crowell (1850) <u>Red</u> = Brown's edits (1853) <u>Purple</u> = Dropped words from Original (1835) <u>Gold</u> = word reversal		

Appendix F: Southern States Associational Representation in Augusta, Georgia, May 8-12, 1845: Formation of the Southern Baptist Convention<sup>774</sup>

STATE-BY-STATE ASSOCIATIONS IN 1845	REPRESENTATION IN AUGUSTA	TOTAL DELEGATES
<b>Alabama: 33 Associations</b>		
<b>Alabama (3)</b> , <i>Antioch</i> , <sup>775</sup> <b>Bethlehem (2)</b> , <b>Bethel (1)</b> , <sup>776</sup> Bigbee, <sup>777</sup> Birmingham, Beulah, <i>Buttehatcha</i> , <b>Cahawba (2)</b> , Canaan, Central (Coosa), Coosa River, <i>Choctaw</i> , <i>Conecuh River</i> , Chattahoochee River, Dekalb, Ebenezer, <i>Flint River</i> , <b>Liberty (Chambers Co.) (1)</b> , <sup>778</sup> Liberty (Etowah Co.), <sup>779</sup> Madison-Liberty, <sup>780</sup> Muscle Shoals, <sup>781</sup> <i>Mulberry</i> , North River, <i>Pilgrim's Rest</i> , Richland, <i>Salem-Troy</i> , <b>Tuscaloosa (1)</b> , Tallasahatchie, Tallapoosa, <i>Union</i> , <sup>782</sup> Walker, West Cullman	Ten delegates represented 6 of approximately 33 Alabama associations in existence in 1845. <sup>783</sup> In addition, four delegates represented the Board of the Alabama State Convention. At the time, Alabama had approximately 525 churches with over 33,000 members.	14
<b>Georgia: 29 Associations</b>		137
<b>Appalachee (6)</b> , <b>Bethel (3)</b> , <b>Central (18)</b> , Chattahoochee, Chestatee, <b>Columbus (6)</b> , Coosa, <b>Ebenezer (2)</b> , Ellijay, <b>Flint River (3)</b> , <b>Georgia (46)</b> , <b>Hepzibah (21)</b> , Hightower,	Thirteen of approximately 29 associations were represented by delegates from Georgia. Additional delegates represented the Executive Committee of the Georgia State Convention, Penfield's Men's	

<sup>774</sup> Associations cited in chart mainly taken from the two-volume set of *The Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* and cross-referenced with the 1849-1851 editions of the *Southern Baptist Almanac*, and *The American Baptist Register for 1852*. Delegates are based upon figures cited and sourced in the body of the research. Exact tallies in each category are notoriously difficult to determine since, as has been noted elsewhere in the research, duplicate names of delegates appear throughout the 1845 reported minutes.

<sup>775</sup> All associations here and below listed in *italics* indicate, when possible, that the association either officially declared themselves anti-missions or had significant internal conflict over the anti-missions controversy.

<sup>776</sup> Organized in 1838 (Allen, 1958, p. 12). Confusion exists, however. Whereas the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* lists only one Bethel association in Alabama during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Allen, 1958, p. 6), Holcombe lists two Bethel associations, distinguishing Bethel association from Bethel (Coosa County) association (Holcombe, 1840, p. 155; 235)

<sup>777</sup> Constituted as Central association (Sumter county) in 1845 and changed to Little Bigbee in 1852 and Bigbee Baptist Association in 1853 (Allen, 1958, pp. 6, 13).

<sup>778</sup> Organized in 1836, *Liberty* association in Chambers County changed its name to East Liberty association in 1884 (Allen, 1958, p. 14). *Liberty* association was described by the Baptist State Convention of Alabama as "divided on the mission question" (Baptist State Convention of Alabama, 1837, p. 7).

<sup>779</sup> Liberty association in Etowah County changed names to Cherokee County Baptist Association in 1844 (Allen, 1958, p. 14).

<sup>780</sup> Organized as Liberty association in Madison county in 1838 due to anti-missions having taken over Flint River Baptists (Allen, 1958, p. 13). Liberty (Madison co.) changed its name to North Liberty in 1884 (Ibid, p. 14).

<sup>781</sup> Muscle Shoals association was constituted as Big Ben of Tennessee River Association in 1820 and later changed to Muscle Shoals (Allen, 1958, p. 10). Muscle Shoals Baptists apparently had serious contention over Campbellism, affecting its commitment to missions and benevolent societies (Shackleford, 1891, pp. 25-27).

<sup>782</sup> Name changed to Pickens association in 1924 (Allen, 1958, p. 10).

<sup>783</sup> Representation here and following includes both delegates sent by individual churches aligned with a state association and delegates sent to represent the association and/or state convention as an organization distinct from a member church. Note, however, since state conventions rarely adopted confessions of faith, only the associations remain relevant to confessional conclusions regarding the delegates.

Houston, Middle, Mountain, Notla River, <i>Ochmulgee, Ochlochnee, Piedmont, Rehobeth, Rock Mountain (3),<sup>784</sup> Sarepta (8), Sunbury (5), Tallapoosa, Tugalo, Yellow River, Washington (6), Western (4)</i>	missionary society, Mercer Institute, and the Executive Committee of the Georgia Association.	
<b>Kentucky: 38 Associations</b>		1
Allen, Baptist, Barron River, Bethel, Boone's Creek, Bracken, <i>Campbell County, Concord, Cumberland River, Daviess County, Drake's Creek, Elkhorn, Franklin, Freedom, Gasper River, Goshen, Green River, Greenup, Laurel River, Liberty, Little River, Little Bethel, Long Run, Middle District, North Bend, North Concord, Russell Creek, Salem, South Concord, South Cumberland,<sup>785</sup> South District, South Kentucky,<sup>786</sup> South Union, Sulphur Fork, Tate's Creek, Ten Mile, Union, West Union</i>	One delegate from Kentucky attended the Augusta meeting but no indication appears to exist he officially represented Kentucky Baptists or any society, association, or church in Kentucky. Kentucky had the 2 <sup>nd</sup> largest Baptist population of the southern states with approximately 61,000 members in 679 churches.	
<b>Louisiana: 5 Associations</b>		2
Concord, Eastern Louisiana, Louisiana, <b>Mississippi River (2),<sup>787</sup> Quachita</b>	Two delegates attended the Augusta meeting from First Baptist Church, New Orleans which was affiliated with the Mississippi River association.	
<b>North Carolina: 31 Associations</b>		2
Abbott's Creek Union, Beulah, Bethel, Big Ivy, Brier Creek, Broad River, Cape Fear, Catawba River, Chowan, Country Line, Eastern, Flat River, French Broad, Green River, Goshen, Holston, <i>Kehukee, Lewis Fork, Liberty, Mountain,<sup>788</sup> Neuse I, Pee Dee I, Raleigh, Roanoke I, Salem, Sandy Creek, Tar River, Three Forks, Tuckasiege, Union I (2), Yadkin<sup>789</sup></i>	North Carolina's approximately 31 associations with 446 member churches in existence in 1845 were represented by 2 church delegates within the same association. The Baptist population at the time was estimated to be over 32,000.	
<b>South Carolina: 13 Associations</b>		101

<sup>784</sup> First known as Rock Mountain later named Stone Mountain association (Allen, 1958, p. 553). In 1839, 12 churches withdrew from Yellow River association to organize Rock Mountain citing the anti-mission atmosphere of Yellow River Baptists as the cause.

<sup>785</sup> Merged with North Concord association to become Russell County association in 1916 (Allen, 1958, p. 744).

<sup>786</sup> Called South Kentucky from 1845-1955 and changed to Casey County association (Allen, 1958, pp. 737-738).

<sup>787</sup> Organized in 1843 as the Mississippi Baptist Association by churches along the River in southeastern Mississippi and southwestern Louisiana (Allen, 1958, p. 879).

<sup>788</sup> The Mountain association was organized in 1799 with churches from Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee (Allen, 1958, p. 1464). It officially declared itself anti-mission in 1836 and ceased correspondence with missionary Baptists. According to G. Paschal, Mountain Baptists were the first in western North Carolina to declare openly to be anti-missionary Baptists (Paschal, 1930, p. 163).

<sup>789</sup> The Yadkin association was organized in 1790 from North Carolina churches formerly belonging to Virginia's Strawberry association composed of both North Carolina and Virginia churches (Allen, 1958, p. 1018).

Bethel, <b>Broad River (2)</b> , <b>Charleston, (25)</b> , <sup>790</sup> <b>Edgefield (2)</b> , <b>Edisto (1)</b> , Moriah, <b>Reedy River (2)</b> , <b>Saluda (3)</b> , Salem, <b>Savannah River (34)</b> , Twelve Mile River, <b>Tyger River (5)</b> , <b>Welsh Neck (11)</b>	Nine of 13 associations had delegates in Augusta. Additionally, at least 15 delegates represented both the state convention and other Baptist organizations. In total, 41,000 Baptists in 394 churches were represented by 101 delegates in Augusta.	
<b>Virginia: 33 Associations</b>		31
Accomac, <b>Albemarle (2)</b> , <b>Appomattox (1)</b> , <i>Chappawamsick</i> , <i>Columbia</i> , <sup>791</sup> Concord, Dan River, <b>Dover (22)</b> , <i>Ebenezer</i> , Goshen, Greenbrier, <sup>792</sup> James River, <i>Ketocton</i> , Lebanon, <i>Mayo</i> , Meherrin, <i>Middle District</i> , <i>New River</i> , Orange, <i>Pig River</i> , <b>Portsmouth (3)</b> , Rapidann, Rappahannock, <i>Roanoke</i> , <b>Salem Union (2)</b> , Salisbury, <b>Shiloh (1)</b> , Strawberry, Teay's Valley, Union, <i>Washington</i> , Western Virginia, Valley	Almost 82,000 Baptists in 536 churches existed in Virginia making it the largest population of Baptists in the southern states. Delegates from churches in 6 of the approximately 33 associations attended the Augusta meeting in 1845, with 22 of Virginia's 31 delegates representing the Dover association.	
<b>Maryland: 2 Associations</b>		2
<i>Baltimore</i> , Maryland Union <sup>793</sup>	Two delegates from the Calvert Street church in Baltimore attended the Augusta convention. However, at the time, the church belonged to no association. Hence, the two delegates represented only their home church in Maryland.	
<b>Arkansas: 11 Associations</b>		0
Arkansas, <i>Buffalo</i> , <sup>794</sup> Liberty, Old Mt. Zion, <sup>795</sup> <i>Point Remove</i> , Rocky Bayou, <i>Salem</i> , <i>Saline</i> , <i>St. Francis</i> , White River, <i>Washington County</i>	Approximately 11 associations with 65+ member churches having 2,000+ total members existed at the time. Arkansas sent no delegates but did send a letter of support. Noteworthy also, 6 of the	

<sup>790</sup> Charleston association is listed in the Baptist encyclopedia as an "extinct" association in North Carolina (Allen, 1958, p. 1015) since in the beginning of its history, many North Carolina churches were associated with the Charleston association due to no Baptist association in North Carolina. Of course, the Charleston Association has a perpetual existence in South Carolina and remains the oldest southern association followed by Separate Baptists' Sandy Creek association in North Carolina.

<sup>791</sup> Virginia associations in *italics* are associations that apparently either officially declared themselves anti-missionary (Ebenezer, Ketocton, Mayo, New River, Pig River, Washington) or held significant splits in the association over the missionary question (Roanoke, Columbia, Middle District) (Allen, 1836, p. 147).

<sup>792</sup> According to W. Hackley, the Greenbrier association was formed in 1801 from the New River association (Allen, 1958, p. 1464). He goes on to confusingly assert, "It became a Primitive Baptist association" leaving the reader to wonder whether he meant Greenbrier became Primitive Baptist or New River. According to the 1836 edition of the Baptist Register, however, Hackley was apparently referring to the New River association becoming Primitive Baptist (Allen, 1836, p. 147). More curiously, no entry for Greenbrier association is listed in the encyclopedia, yet appeared to become a thriving association, at least for a time (Semple, 1894, pp. 325-327).

<sup>793</sup> The encyclopedia lists no associations in existence at the time. The two associations listed are from the 1849 almanac (Tennessee Publication Society, 1849, p. 15).

<sup>794</sup> The *Buffalo* association became "Hardshell" and therefore considered anti-missionary (Allen, 1958, p. 68); thus, all Arkansas associations listed in *italics* are described in the encyclopedia as anti-missionary (Ibid, pp. 65-70).

<sup>795</sup> Organized in 1840, Old Mt. Zion merged with the Fayetteville United Baptist Association in 1860 (Allen, 1958, p. 69).

	existing 11 associations were anti-missionary. Arkansas perhaps more than other southern states was rocked by the anti-missions controversy.	
<b>Florida: 1 Association</b>		0
Florida	Florida had 34 member churches in one association having approximately 1,600 total Baptists; the association sent a letter of support that was read during the convention.	
<b>Mississippi: 27 Associations</b>		0
Aberdeen, Bethany, Bethel, Buttyhatchie, Central, Columbus, <sup>796</sup> Chickasaw, Choctaw, DeSoto, Ebenezer, <i>Leaf River</i> , Liberty, Loocasoon, Louisville, <sup>797</sup> Mississippi, Mount Pisgah, New Hope, Panola, Pearl River, <sup>798</sup> Primitive, Tallahatchie, <sup>799</sup> Tombigbee, Union, Yazoo, Yalobusha, Zion, Zion's Rest	Mississippi sent no delegates but was represented in Augusta by a letter of support. At the time, there were approximately 27 associations with 334 churches totaling over 20,000 members.	
<b>Tennessee: 21 Associations</b>		0
Big Hatchie, <i>Caney Fork</i> , <sup>800</sup> Central, Concord, Cumberland, <sup>801</sup> Duck River, East Tennessee, Elk River, <sup>802</sup> Hiwassee, Holston, <sup>803</sup> Knox County, Mulberry Gap, Nolachucky, Northern, Ocoee, Powell's Valley, Salem, Stockton Valley, Sweetwater, Western District, Tennessee	Approximately 480 churches in 21 associations with 36,000+ members had no representation in Augusta.	
<b>Missouri: 25 Associations</b>		0
Bethel, Black River, Blue River, Cape Girardeau, Concord, <i>Cuivre</i> , <i>Fishing River</i> , <sup>804</sup> Franklin, Little Bon Femme, <sup>805</sup> Macon, Miller County, <sup>806</sup> <i>Mount Pleasant</i> , <i>Mount Zion</i>	Missouri had 352 churches with over 17,000 members in 25 associations, making Missouri the one of the largest southern states without a delegation in 1845. However, a letter of support in	

<sup>796</sup> Organized in 1837, name was changed to Lowndes association in 1920 (Allen, 1958, p. 876).

<sup>797</sup> Organized in 1838, Louisville's name changed to Winston association in 1920 (Allen, 1958, p. 878). In 1892, the Chester association was formed from churches dismissed for that purpose (Ibid).

<sup>798</sup> Organized in 1820, name was changed in 1920 to Marion association (Allen, 1958, p. 876).

<sup>799</sup> Organized in 1841 in northern Mississippi (Allen, 1958, p. 881), and not to be confused with another Tallahatchie organized in 1920 (Ibid, p. 878).

<sup>800</sup> Caney Fork became anti-missionary and vanished about 1850 (Allen, 1958, p. 1356).

<sup>801</sup> Cumberland association was apparently organized in 1796, but apparently fell off the radar for many years. When it showed back up with organizational minutes, it claimed it started in 1870 (Allen, 1958, p. 1352).

<sup>802</sup> Elk River was organized in 1808, was subsequently and significantly affected by Campbellism, becoming the occasion for organizing the Duck River association in 1826 (Allen, 1958, p. 1356).

<sup>803</sup> Originally organized in 1786 with churches from both Tennessee and Virginia, the Holston association dismissed Virginia churches in 1811 to organize the Washington association in Virginia (Allen, 1958, p. 1464). The Holston Baptists continued in Tennessee.

<sup>804</sup> Fishing River was organized in 1823 and became anti-missionary indicated as such with *italics* (as all other Missouri associations in *italics* (Allen, 1958, p. 906).

<sup>805</sup> The Little Bonne Femme association organized in 1838 because of anti-missions position of *Salem* (Allen, 1958, p. 907).

<sup>806</sup> Organized as the Osage River association in 1844 (Allen, 1958, p. 902).

<i>(Regular)</i> , North Grand River, North Liberty, <i>Osage</i> , Platte River, Saint–Louis, <sup>807</sup> <i>Salem</i> , Saline, Salt River, Spring River, <i>Two River Old School</i> , West Fork, <sup>808</sup> Wyaconda	lieu of delegates was sent to the Augusta gathering and read from the convention floor.	
<b>Total Associations: 270</b>	<b>Associations Represented: 36</b>	<b>Delegates: 290</b>

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<sup>807</sup> Second oldest association organized in 1817. By 1840, name was changed to Missouri United Baptist Association, and in 1853 changed again to St. Louis Baptist Association (Allen, 1958, p. 904).

<sup>808</sup> West Fork organized in 1845 but depleted of churches in 1859, 1869, and 1901 by formation other associations (Allen, 1958, p. 908).

Appendix G: Comprehensive Confessional Profile of Selected Baptist Associations in the Southern States during the 19th Century

Confessional Profile	States	AL	AR	FL	GA	KY	LA	MS	MO	NC	SC	TN	VA	Totals
ONHC (1833)		14	1	1	0	1	5	5	7	4	0	2	0	40
NHC (1853)		9	20	0	6	1	0	0	5	4	1	4	1	51
Broad River		16	9	1	15	2	6	2	0	9	4	5	3	72
Freestyle		6	2	1	1	3	1	2	3	6	7	1	2	35
No Election		4	4	0	2	5	0	0	6	17	2	0	0	40
Terms of Union		0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Moderate Calvinism		18	1	2	6	1	1	7	0	1	0	0	0	37
PCF		14	0	4	54	3	2	7	0	4	5	1	2	96
No Confession		3	10	0	0	1	0	1	1	15	2	1	14	48
<b>Totals</b>		<b>84</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>424</b>

**ONHC (1833)** = Original 16 articles of the NHC first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.

**NHC (1833)** = The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith as amended and expanded by J. Newton Brown in his church manual published in 1853.

**Broad River (1800)** = Associational articles of faith following North Carolina’s Broad River Baptists who consciously rejected the Unconditional Election in the PCF.

**Freestyle** = Associational articles of faith composed from multiple influences, whether identifiable or not, while displaying at least some literary originality (e.g. some “freestyle” confessions were composed entirely of Bible verses). All “freestyle” confessions in this chart reflect either *mild* or *moderate* Calvinism.

**No Election** = Articles of faith having no article addressing the doctrine of election.

**Terms of Union (1801)** = Articles of faith either similar or identical to Kentucky’s 1801 Terms of General Union. Note: the terms of union failed to address the doctrine of election as well but are not included in the confessional profile above.

**Moderate Calvinism** = Articles of faith while affirming election before the foundation of the world and God’s call to the elect in time, language is absent pertaining to “effectual” call and “eternal particular election.” See *Appendix B* for numerous examples.

**PCF** = Articles of faith possessing either explicit language affirming the PCF as the confessional guide to the association, or abstracts of faith containing affirmations of the doctrine of Unconditional Election expressed in the PCF. Words and phrases like “eternal particular election”; “effectually called”; “certain number;” the elect “in particular are redeemed;” “impossible” for the elect to resist the call of God, among others fit into this profile. See *Appendix A* for several examples.

**No Confession** = No published confessions were found in the records of these associations. One should not infer the associations examined in this category either possessed or published no articles of faith since not every record of these associations was available for examination. Hence, the conclusion is only tentative that these associations neither published nor adopted articles of faith.

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