

**Emmaus Essentials**  
**The London Baptist Confession of 1689**  
**Introducing the Confession (Part 3)**  
**Created**  
**For Distribution the Week of 11/17/2013**

**Recommended Resources for this Course**

We will be studying through the London Baptist Confession together over the next several months. The main resource that you will need is a copy of the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. There are a number of options:

- 1) You can download a PDF copy from our website by clicking [here](#). This is a copy of The Baptist Confession of Faith 1689 - Update English with notes by Peter Masters, used by permission. The updated English and the notes are helpful for those going through the confession for the first time.
- 2) You can purchase the same resource mentioned above but in booklet form - the only difference is in the format. [Amazon](#)
- 3) You can order a really nice bound version of The Baptist Confession of Faith & The Baptist Catechism, published by Solid Ground Christian Books. This is a really nice and well laid out version. The English is not updated, like the Peter Masters version mentioned above, and so the reading can be a little more challenging if you are not used to it. I like the Old English, and I really like the quality of this book (not to mention that the forward is written by my professor down at Westminster), and so I recommend it to you. (Looks like they are out of print, but they are taking orders.) [Solid Ground Books](#)
- 4) If you really want to spend some time studying the Confession I would recommend a commentary on the Confession by Sam Waldron called, 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith, a Modern Exposition. [Solid Ground Books](#), [Amazon](#)

**Recommended Resources for the Introductory Lessons**

1) For an overview of the history of the London Baptist Confession please see the article [CONFESSING THE FAITH IN 1644 AND 1689](#) by Dr. Renihan. This would be worth reading to help gain an understanding of what we are handling here before we move on. I would also encourage you to spend some time browsing the rest of the Reformed Reader website. Great stuff there.

**I. Introduction**

- A. A Reminder About the Resources

**II. Purpose of this Lesson**

- A. To understand something of the historical setting and purpose for which the confession was written.

**III. Historical Matters—Confessing the Faith in 1644 and 1689**

- A. The Baptist Confessions
  1. 7 Particular Baptist Churches, London 1644
    - a. "A Warning for England, Especially London" - Featly
      - i. Claims that what happened with the Anabaptists in Germany would happen with the Particular Baptists in London.
  2. The 1644 confession was formulated to counter the mudslinging of Featly and others.

- a. The confession was written to prove that the Particular Baptists were not heretics and were in fact very similar to the Puritans around them.
- b. The Particular Baptists sought to make use of existing confessions to make this point.
- c. The WCF had not been produced by 1644
- d. Most of the 1644 was taken from the True Confession of 1596
- e. Much was taken from *The Marrow of Theology* by William Ames
- f. By publication they wanted to make their beliefs known to a wide audience.
- g. The writers of the confession used their names so as to make it clear that this is what they truly believed. There was a lot on the line.
- h. Upon reading the 1644 Confession, Featly, who was a self-appointed heresy hunter, acknowledged that the 1644 was orthodox. Featly did not believe that they were telling the truth, however.
- i. These were professional theologians who were looking for something wrong, and they found nothing of importance (or surprising), by their own admission.
- j. A 1646 edition was issued by the Particular Baptists in response to Featly's 6 criticisms. They even dropped the language against state support of ministers, and altered the language of Baptism.
  - i. In so doing, the Baptists were carrying out their original purpose - to demonstrate agreement, where there was agreement.

### 3. The Second London Confession

#### a. Family Tree

i. 1647/48 Westminster Confession Published

ii. 1658 Savoy Declaration - Owen and Goodwin altered the WCF to fit congregational polity and nuances of covenant theology. Savoy is the child of the WCF with an emphasis on polity - Platform of polity added to Savoy.

#### a) Savoy Declaration

b) The Savoy Declaration was a declaration and statement of faith prepared in 1658 by a conference of English Congregationalists who met at Savoy Palace, London. Its full title is A Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practiced in the Congregational Churches in England. The declaration consisted of three parts: a preface, a confession of faith, and a platform of discipline. In matters of doctrine it was primarily a restatement (with some modifications) of the Presbyterian [Westminster Confession](#) (1646), but was specifically adapted to suit Congregational polity. The committee responsible for the declaration included [Thomas Goodwin](#), [John Owen](#), Philip Nye, William Bridge, Joseph Caryl and William Greenhill.

c) With respect to the WCF, the Savoy Declaration altered chapters 25 and 26, deleted chapters 30 and 31, inserted a new chapter 20, "Of the Gospel, and of the Extent of the Grace thereof," and added a platform of Congregational polity in the preface titled "Of the Institution of Churches, and the Order Appointed in them by Jesus Christ." The Savoy Declaration was designed to encourage agreement on important matters between

churches; but, true to the nature of Congregational polity, it was not intended to be a legal or corporate instrument, as was the Westminster Confession.

- iii. Second London Confession is a combination of WCF and Savoy - accepted in 1689, though probably not printed then.
- iv. Second London brought to the US and printed as the Philadelphia Confession 1742.
- v. So, the Second London is the grandchild of the WCF. WCF to the Savoy to the Second London.
- vi. William Collins and Nehemiah Cox were the men behind the 1677/1689

b. Implications

- i. No substantial difference between First and Second Baptist Confessions, though such accusations exist.
  - a) The editors of both confessions used the same methodology - they found the best Paedobaptist documents and "baptized" them.
  - b) The writings of the men who edited the first are clearly committed to the same theology (covenant theology) as that communicated in the second LBC.
  - c) The same churches issued both the first and second confession. 1644 - 1677/89. Should we imagine that these men and these churches abandoned what they issued 33 years earlier?
  - d) The preface of the second states strongly that the substance between the two is the same.
  - e) The first London Confession was publicly examined and criticized by the most critical men of the day. Never do they criticize the covenant theology, belief concerning the first day Sabbath, or the Law of God, showing that the Baptists were in agreement with the Paedo-baptist on these points.

**IV. Implications**

- A. This is our heritage
  - 1. We are Reformed
  - 2. We are Baptists
- B. We share many similarities with Reformed Presbyterians (at least the ones who are truly Reformed and truly confessional).
- C. Clarity concerning doctrine is needed as much today as in the 17th Century.
  - 1. The spirit of our Reformed Baptist forefathers was not divisive against brothers in Christ who disagreed with the on non-essential points of doctrine. They wrote the Firsts and Second London Confession for the purpose of maintaining unity wherever possible.