

1689 London Baptist Confession Outline and Notes:

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Symbolics Class IRBS (2006)

Interpretive Layers of the Confession:

- I. One Confession
- II. Thirty-two chapters
- III. Multiple paragraphs
- IV. Sentences and semicolons (with prooftexts)
- V. Individual words
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- VI. Biblical, historical, theological, and philosophical underpinnings

Organizing principle of the Confession: The first paragraph is a broad outline of the chapter. The remaining paragraphs flesh out that paragraph.

Ch. 1: Of the Holy Scriptures

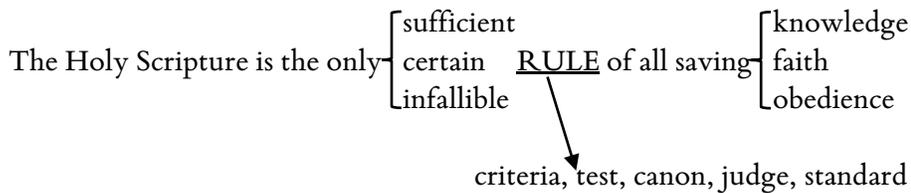
- 1.1 - General and Special Revelation
- 1.2 - The Content and Inspiration of Scripture
- 1.3 - Denial of the Apocrypha
- 1.4 - The Authority of Scripture
- 1.5 - The Testimony of the church & the Holy Spirit in Interpreting, Understanding, & Believing Scripture
- 1.6 - The Sufficiency of Scripture
- 1.7 - The Perspicuity of Scripture
- 1.8 - Scripture as Final Authority in Church Controversies and the Translation of Scripture Into Languages
- 1.9 - The Analogy of Faith
- 1.10 - Scripture as the Judge of All Controversies and Sola Scriptura

I. *General and Special Revelation* (§ 1)

§ 1 A. *The first sentence* (added by the LBC)

The rest is virtually identical to Savoy and WCF (they begin: “Although the light of nature...”)

First sentence outlined:



First sentence discussed

inerrancy {

- “only” = unique status to Scripture (not apocrypha, new revelations, traditions)
- “sufficient” = Scripture has all teaching on saving knowledge, faith, and obedience
- “certain” = *does not err* (exactly as represented, wholly trustworthy, nothing misleading, that which is sure)
- “infallible” = *it cannot err*

Saving Knowledge. What we need to know God.

~ It is not saying it tells us about everything in the world.

Saving Faith. How we convert to God (ch. 14)

Saving Obedience. Repentance and sanctification

B. The rest of 1.1. The Necessity of Scripture

1. Natural Revelation.

- b. Types
 - i. The light of nature
 - ii. The works of creation and providence
- c. It's reality and trustworthiness
- d. Tells us about God
 - i. His goodness
 - ii. His wisdom
 - iii. His power
- e. Leaves us inexcusable
- f. It is insufficient to save

2. Supernatural Revelation

- a. Types
 - i. Non-written ("sundry times, divers manners;" e.g. prophets, Apostles, direct contact)
 - ii. Written (inscriptured)
- b. Its reality and importance
 - i. Declares his will to the church
 - ii. Preserves, propagates the truth
 - iii. Establishment and comfort of the church against
 - The corruption of the *flesh*
 - The malice of *Satan*
 - The *world*
- c. Revelation comes progressively:



- d. Written form is not necessary to be saved however...
- e. Complete commitment to inspired Scripture. It is necessary now to bring us to God because the former ways have ceased.

3. Consequences of the Necessity of Scripture

- a. God's will (with regard to para. 1) is wholly committed to writing.
- b. Does not negate generation revelation as continuing
- c. Does not mean Scripture only speaks about salvation
- d. Refutes tradition (Rome), inner life (Quakers, Charismatics) and others who would change salvation.

II. *Definition of Scripture* (§ 2-3)

- § 2 A. Scripture defined extensively (size) (the canon)
- B. Scripture defined intensively (not size) (“inspired” or “God-breathed”)
- § 3 C. Scripture defined exclusively (does not include the apocrypha)

III. *Properties of Scripture (Authority, perfection, perspicuity)* (§ 4-7)

A. Authority of Scripture

- § 4 1. Source
 - a. Not the testimony of any man or church
 - b. But wholly upon God (who is truth itself). He is its author.
 - c. We receive it because it is the Word of God.
- § 5 2. **Proof of authority** (its nature)
 - a. Evidence: internal and external to the Scripture (but it is not God’s word because of evidence):
 - i. External: Testimony of the church
 - ii. Internal: Heavenliness of the matter
 - iii. Efficacy of the doctrine
 - iv. Majesty of the style
 - v. Consent of all the parts
 - vi. Scope of the whole
 - vii. The full discovery it makes of the only way to man’s salvation
 - viii. Other incomparable excellencies and perfections
 - b. The necessary function of Divine evidence (i.e. the Holy Spirit bearing witness to us)

§ 6 B. **Perfection or Sufficiency of Scripture** (its nature)

- 1. All we need FOR God’s glory, man’s salvation, faith and life is expressly or implicitly in Scripture.
 - a. Nothing is to be added (“new revelations” “traditions of men”)
 - Ancient charismatics
 - Rome
 - b. (Nothing is to be subtracted—not in LBC, but implied)
- 2. “Good and necessary consequences” (WCF) is changed to “necessarily contained in.” This is a rejection of “good” not “necessary” (relates especially to infant baptism).
- 3. Need for spiritual illumination for saving understanding
- 4. Light of nature, logic, reason, prudence, wisdom for “circumstances” as opposed to “elements” (see ch. 22.5) of worship, government of the church, common to human actions and societies.

§ 7 C. **Perspicuity** (Clarity) of Scripture (its nature)

- 1. Scripture is diverse, it is not all equally clear.
- 2. The things necessary to be known, believed and observed *for salvation* are clear.
 - a. Not only the learned, but the unlearned can know them *through ordinary means*
 - b. It doesn’t mean people won’t misinterpret them (see III.A.2.b.; III.B.3.).

IV. *The Use of Scripture (Transmission, Interpretation, Controversies)* (§ 8-10)

§ 8 A. **Form and Transmission**

- 1. Originals (Hebrew OT; Greek NT) and copies

- a. Originals were immediately inspired by God (gives them authority)
- b. Copies are authentic, but are nevertheless, copies (and have errors via human transmission)
- c. All controversies of religion must make final appeal to Scripture (not tradition, etc.)
- 2. We do not speak those languages and we have the right and duty to translate them
 - a. So that the word may dwell in all peoples
 - b. So they may all know how to properly worship God
 - c. So that we may all have hope and comfort

§ 9 B. Infallible Rule of Interpretation

- 1. Analogy of faith (Scripture interprets Scripture)
- 2. Single sense of Scripture (this teaches that there is a real, objective original intent)

§ 10 C. Controversies

- 1. Scripture is the supreme judge in controversy (see IV.A.1.c.)
 - a. Not tradition (not even the Reformed tradition)
 - b. Not councils
 - c. Not great commentators
 - d. Not personal, private spirits
 - e. Not the Confession
- 2. Scripture is the test of all other sources of “truth” as it regards matters of salvation, faith, and life

Ch. 2: Of God and the Holy Trinity

2.1 – God’s Nature and His Attributes

2.2 – God’s Relationship to Creation

2.3 – God’s Tri-unity

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Changes in 1689

Ch. 2.1 in the 1689 and changes from previous Confessions			
1689 2.1	Savoy (1658)	WCF	1644
<p>The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of Himself, infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, and withal most just and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.</p>	<p>There is but one only living and true God; who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure Spirit, invisible, without body, parts or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.</p>	<p>There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.</p>	<p>The Lord our God is but one God, whose subsistence is in himself; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but himself, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; who is in himself most holy, every way infinite, in greatness, wisdom, power, love; merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; who giveth being, moving, and preservation to all creatures.</p>

§ 1 B. All additions come from 1644 § 1-3

1. 1st changes: personalizes the statements about God
2. 2nd change: introduces “subsistence”
3. 3rd change: prepares for para 3—incomprehensibility
4. 4th change: immortality of God

- 5. 5th change: infinite as attribute
- § 2 6. 1st change: “creatures” (attempt to bring consistency)
- § 3 7. 1644 change: adds many historical philosophical terms:
 - a. *Persona* (person)
 - b. *Prosopon* (face, expression)
 - c. *Substantia* (substance)
 - d. *Ousia* (either *substantia* or *essentia*—essence)
 - e. *Hupostasis* (similar to persona/substantia)
 - f. *Subsistentia* (substance, individual example of an essence)
 - g. *Essentia* (essence, whatness of a being)
 - h. *Naturae* (genus of a thing)

II. One True God: His Identity (§ 1)

§ 1 A. God’s self-existence/self-knowledge (aseity, from *a se*, from himself)

B. God’s attributes

- 1. Without passions (his *simplicity*—uncompounded, uncomposite nature), but not without emotions (love, wrath, etc.)
 - a. Attributes are self-moved; not externally moved.
 - b. Affection vs. passion

§ 2 C. God’s external relations

- 1. God’s aseity (see above)
 - a. Independence. God is alone in life, glory, goodness, blessedness
 - i. God does not lack
 - ii. God’s self-existence gives his creatures glory
 - iii. Consequent dominion is his.
 - b. Omniscience
 - i. Infinite
 - ii. Infallible
 - iii. Independent
 - c. Wholly omnipotent
 - d. Lordship and its attendants

} God is wisdom & knowledge

§ 3 D. God’s internal relations

- 1. God is three subsistences
 - a. Words of Scripture: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
 - b. Said of one, said of all
 - c. Distinct properties and relationships
 - i. Nicaea
 - ii. Athanasian
 - iii. Chalcedon
- 2. Importance (last clause) on THIS doctrine as all our foundation