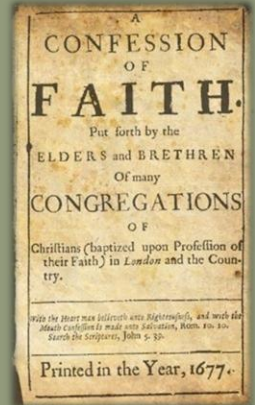


SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH



CHAPTER 1 OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES



1



PSALM 19

2

Why Begin with Scripture?

- “The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience” – 1.1
- This line was added by the Baptists and is not in the WCF or SD
- *Sufficient* – Nothing else needs to accompany scripture
- *Certain* (inerrant) – Nothing is misleading or erroneous in scripture
- *Infallible* – The Bible cannot err (be wrong)

3

Sufficient, Certain, and Infallible for What?

- “The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience” – 2LCF 1.1
- *Rule* – A criterion, test, standard
- Rule for 3 things:
 1. *All Saving Knowledge* – the doctrine necessary to know God as savior
 - This saving knowledge is simple and clear in scripture
 2. *Faith* – Our trust in the Gospel
 3. *Obedience* – Our surrendering to God in repentance and living our lives according to Christ’s commands

4

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2 Timothy 3:14–17 (ESV)

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

5

Sola Scriptura

- *Sola scriptura* – Scripture Alone
- Scripture is the ultimate authority
- This is speaking against both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England



6

Three-Legged Stool?

- The Roman Catholic Church teaches that they have three forms of authority:
 - Holy Scripture
 - Church Tradition
 - The Teaching Magisterium (Pope and the Bishops)
- In their view all three work together
- They do not contradict one another
- The tradition of the church and the Magisterium are also infallible rules of the Christian faith
 - That means they cannot be wrong or the whole system falls apart



7

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But the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully in accord with a divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.

It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, Sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.

-Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum); Chapter 2.10

8

Sola Ecclesia?



- What happens when Church traditions and teachings are not found in scripture or contradict scripture?
- What happens when the RCC goes beyond scripture to make rules of faith (e.g., transubstantiation, Marian Dogmas, the celibacy of the priesthood)?
- Think of it like the US Government and the Constitution
 - Which is the ultimate rule of our country?
 - See <https://michaeljkruger.com/is-the-church-over-the-bible-or-the-bible-over-the-church/>
- If the Tradition and Magisterium are *infallible*, nothing they make dogma can ever be taken back
- In the Reformation, *Sola Scriptura* teaches there can only be one source of authority, and it is that which comes directly from God and is unchanging

9

Is Tradition Bad?

- Does that make all tradition bad?
- What about creeds and confessions?
 - Should we not just “teach what is in the Bible”?
 - Why even study this confession instead of doing a Bible study?
- Are there any other authorities than scripture?
 - Yes, but these other authorities submit to the Bible

10

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2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

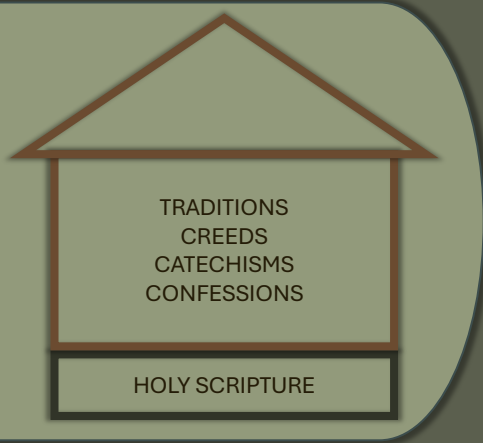
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Titus 2:1 (ESV)

But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

12



- Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei
 - "The Church reformed, always reforming according to the Word of God."
- Our doctrines are (supposed to be) built upon the entire Bible
 - These tools that we write are summaries of what we believe the Bible teaches
- Our practices/traditions must be informed by the Word
- New/Immature Christians need a biblical foundation and not just a doctrinal foundation

13



IS THE BIBLE NECESSARY?

14

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The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience **although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation.** Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare (that) his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

-2LCF 1.1

15

Types of Revelation

- General Revelation
 - Truth about God we can perceive through nature and reason
 - Psalm 19:1-6 – “The heavens declare the glory of God...”
 - “Creation is intrinsically doxological.” – James Renihan, *To the Judicious and Impartial Reader*, 38.
- Specific Revelation
 - Truth which God reveals to us miraculously
 - Psalm 19:7-14
- Can we know God or saving grace through general revelation?

16

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*Romans 1:18–23 (ESV)**¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.**¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.**²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*

17

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*Romans 10:14–17 (ESV)**¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?**¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

18

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The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare (that) his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

-2LCF 1.1

19

The Bible is a Closed Gift of God

- God has revealed Himself in various times and ways throughout history
- God has chosen to write down His Word for our benefit
 - To preserve truth and help us to spread it
 - To aid us against the flesh, Satan, and the world
 - This is one of the many reasons we can call the reading of scripture a “means of grace”
- Scripture is final and complete
 - With the completion of scripture, God no longer gives this sort of specific revelation
 - God's will for salvation has been completed in Christ, the Prophet and Mediator
 - God has spoken to us face-to-face through Christ

20

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Hebrews 1:1–4 (ESV)

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

21



WHAT IS SCRIPTURE?

22

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Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:

Of the Old Testament

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Of the New Testament

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude, Revelation.

All of which are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

2LCF; 1.2

23

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The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon or rule of the Scripture, and, therefore, are of no authority to the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings.

2LCF; 1.3

24

Scriptural Authority

- Where does the authority of scripture originate?
 - In its inspiration
- It is authoritative because it is inspired and written by God
- Scripture does not receive its existence or authority from the Church
- It is the Word (both written and Living) which creates the Church and gives authority to the Church
 - The Church (ekklesia) is made up of those who believe the Gospel and are united to Christ in baptism
 - The Scriptures lay out the rules of the Church

25

Scriptural Authority

- Holy Scripture is Scripture because it is from God and its traits are inherent to itself
- The Church recognizes scripture
- How does the Church recognize scripture?

26

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We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church of God to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

2LCF; 1.5

27

Only by the Holy Spirit

- How could mankind ever declare what is Holy Scripture apart from the Spirit of God?
- It would only be the opinion of man apart from the Holy Spirit
- It is the Holy Spirit who inspires the written Word and the Holy Spirit who illuminates us to the Word

28

Who Wrote the Bible?

- Man wrote while being inspired by the Holy Spirit
- 2 Peter 1:21 (ESV) – “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. ”
- Men wrote the Bible with their own personalities, minds, and styles, yet they wrote exactly what the Spirit of God willed for them to write
- In other words, they wrote the Bible of their own will, yet according to the will of the Spirit
- Our believing in Jesus happens in a similar manner (more on that later...)

29



COMPLETENESS OF SCRIPTURE

30

“

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

2LCF; 1.6

31

Nothing Else Needed

- The whole counsel of God is either:
 - *Expressly set down* – Clearly stated in scripture (e.g., Justified by faith, all have sinned)
 - *Or necessarily contained* – Theological concepts derived from scripture that are necessary for salvation though they are not plainly stated (e.g., The Holy Trinity)
- There is no new revelation or traditions that add to the scriptures as they have been given

32

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The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

2LCF; 1.6

33

Scripture is Sufficient, We are Not

- While sinful man can read the Bible and understand what is written, they cannot understand the divine nature nor believe it for salvation
- 1 Corinthians 1:18 – “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”
- This means that man is *unable* to believe the Word of God of his own power or will
- The Spirit of God must illuminate the truth to us
- We must be taught by God to know His Word
 - This is a fulfillment of the New Covenant promises

34

“

*Jeremiah 31:31–34 (ESV)**The New Covenant*

³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

35

“

John 6:43–47 (ESV)

⁴³ Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me — ⁴⁶ not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

36

“

Matthew 16:14–17 (ESV)

¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

37

“

1 Corinthians 2:14–16 (ESV)

¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶ “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

38

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The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ.

Baptist Faith and Message 2000; Chapter 2

39

“

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, **and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.**

2LCF; 1.6

40



PERSPICUITY OF SCRIPTURE

41

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All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.

2LCF; 1.7

42

Plain and Simple

- *Perspicuity* – the quality of being clear, lucid, and easy to understand
- Does this mean that everything is easy to understand in scripture?
 - No, only those things that are necessary to be understood, believed, and observed for salvation
- Theological Triage is a way of prioritizing which doctrines are essential for salvation, the Church, and so forth
 - One way of triaging doctrine is whether or not that doctrine is plainly and simply stated in scripture
- This is an important doctrine that helps remind us that not all hills are worth dying on, but some are

43



THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES AND TRANSLATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

44

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The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

2LCF; 1.8

45

The Original Languages

- The text was inspired when it was written in both Hebrew (Old testament) and Greek (New Testament)
- The pages which the Bible were originally written on are called the *autographs*
- God has providentially preserved the manuscripts of the Bible in its original languages
 - There are approximately 5,600 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament remaining
 - There is no other document of antiquity which has that many manuscripts and copies
 - The closest second is Homer's *Iliad* with 643
- When it comes to biblical controversies within the Church, we should appeal to the original languages first

46

“

The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

2LCF; 1.8

47



THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

48

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The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly.

49



SCRIPTURE: THE FINAL JUDGE

50

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The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.