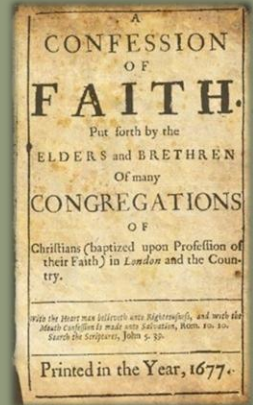


SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH



CHAPTER 2 OF GOD AND THE HOLY TRINITY



1

One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

- The doctrine of God in the LCF follows the same doctrine of God passed down from Christians throughout Church History
- It is orthodox (traditionally approved) and catholic (universal)
- The way we speak and think about God should always be in awe and humility
- We should always remember that our knowledge is finite
- We should seek to be a careful with our language as possible when we contemplate our Father

2



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When contemplating God, we speak in human terms, all of which are inadequate to convey the full sense of the glory of God. If we employ human categories to describe God, we must seek to remove from them all earthly limitations and instead make them as glorious as possible. To put this another way, it is inappropriate to reason from humanity to God. We are made in His image and likeness, but He is not made in our image.

James Renihan, *To the Judicious and Impartial Reader*, p. 84.

3

“

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, ^p hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

2LCF 2.1

4

God Is

- *Subsistence* – Manner of being
 - God's being is from Himself
 - He did not come into existence because He is
 - Exodus 3:13–14 (ESV) - ¹³Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"
¹⁴God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "
- Because God is infinite, only God can comprehend Himself
- This is a truth we must receive by faith

5



DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

6

A Most Pure Spirit

- John 4:24 (ESV) – God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.
- This is not a reference to the Holy Spirit, but that God Himself is a Spirit
- He does not have visible manifestations
- He is invisible
- Colossians 1:15 (ESV) - He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

7

Divine Simplicity

- He is without body
 - Scripture uses anthropomorphism to describe God's body parts (e.g., Genesis 6:8; Isaiah 51:9)
 - *Anthropomorphism* - the attribution of physical human properties to a non-human entity (animals in Zootopia)
- He is without parts
 - Humans are made up of body, mind, and spirit
 - Parts of us can change (like our attitude or behavior) and we would still be us
 - God is His attributes
 - God cannot cease to be Wise, Loving, Holy, etc.

8

Divine Simplicity

- He is without passions
 - Does God suffer when we suffer?
 - Modern English by Founders says, “changing emotions” or “emotions” (maybe not the best terminology)
 - This is the doctrine of divine impassibility
 - God does not experience changing states of emotion, nor can God suffer modification or loss because of things happening in Creation
 - Malachi 3:6 (ESV) - For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.
 - Think of the difference between our God and the Greek Zeus

9

Divine Simplicity

- He is without passions
 - Does this mean that God is apathetic toward us?
 - God is infinite and perfect in every way
 - Example: God is infinitely and unchangingly loving, because God is love itself; therefore, His love never changes but is always perfect
 - God is maximally alive eternally
 - God’s impassibility is our hope

10



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That whatsoever is in God, is God Himself, from this Name Jehovah, He is an Absolute Being, nothing but Himself: This is the difference between God and any Creature. A man hath Wisdom, now the Wisdom of a man is one, and the Esteem of the man is another thing, but it is not so with God, whatsoever you can say of God, is God, the Wisdom of God, is God; the Mercy of God, is God; the Justice of God, is God Himself: and so all the Attributes: we conceive of the Attributes as if they were distinct from the Being; when we say, God is wise, as if God were one thing, and Wisdom were another, but certainly if we would apprehend God as in Himself, we cannot apprehend him so...

Jeremiah Burroughs, *An Exposition with Practical Observations* (London: Peter Cole, 1651), 273-274.

11



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Understanding

God thus doth help us to see God in his glory as much as any way whatsoever, and few people apprehend this, but look upon God as a creature, and so they think God is some excellent thing that hath so many Excellencies in him; but to understand, that all that is said of God, is God Himself, and therefore it is all but one being in God; it doth appear divers to us, Wisdom, Mercy, Justice, Power, Life, Holiness, and Faithfulness appears many things to us, but in God all is but one Excellency.

Jeremiah Burroughs, *An Exposition with Practical Observations* (London: Peter Cole, 1651), 273-274.

12

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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, ^p hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.**

2LCF 2.1



THE CREATOR AND HIS CREATURES

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God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself, is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creature which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, and he hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth; in his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain; he is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands; to him is due from angels and men, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, as creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever he is further pleased to require of them.

2LCF; 2.2

15

God is Self-Sufficient

- In Him is all life, all things glorious, all things good and blessed
- God does not need anything from us. Why not?
- He is perfect and the greatest of all beings
- All things flow from Him, through Him, and for Him
- What could we possibly offer Him?
- “not standing in need of any creature which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them”

16

Sovereign Dominion

- Because God is the source of all existence and needs nothing from us, He has *sovereignty* over all His creatures
 - *Sovereignty* is God's right and power to do whatever He pleases
 - *Providence* is the way in which God brings about whatever He pleases
- This is not something He is given, but is intrinsic to Him
- He can do whatever He pleases with His Creation
- Psalm 115:1-3 (ESV)

Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory,
for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!
² Why should the nations say,
"Where is their God?"
³ Our God is in the heavens;
he does all that he pleases.
- Does this bother you?

17

His Goodness

- Though He does as He pleases, He always acts according to His character
- "God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself"
- Romans 8:28 (ESV) - And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
- "in his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain; he is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands"

18

Give Him His Due

- “to him is due from angels and men, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, as creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever he is further pleased to require of them.”
- Revelation 4:11 (ESV)

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.”

19



A GREAT MYSTERY: THE TRIUNE GOD

20

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In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him.

2LCF; 2.3

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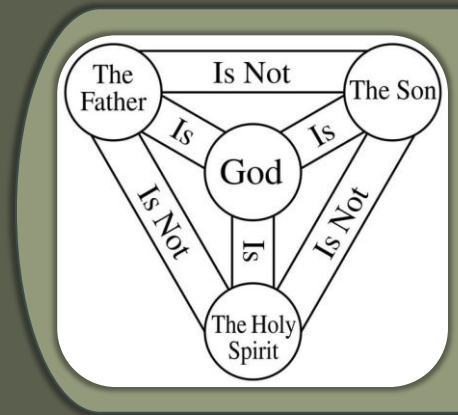
Three Subsistences, One Essence

- *Subsistence* – Manner of being
 - Subsistence from 2.1 is telling us what God is (a self-subsisting being)
 - Three subsistences here is telling us who God is (Three in One)
- *Essence* – That which makes a thing a thing; that which makes God to be God
 - Man's essence is humanity
 - God's essence is divinity/deity
 - There is only ONE essence of God
- The one essence of God (this divinity) has three modes of subsistence:
 - The Father
 - The Word (or Son)
 - The Holy Spirit

22

Three Subsistences, One Essence

- Each person of the Trinity is a real and distinct entity (a subsistence)
- Each subsistence is eternal and uncreated; they subsist in themselves
- They share in the single divine essence of God
- This divine nature (the essence of God) is NOT divided among the three subsistences, but the fullness of divinity belongs equally to all three



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Contrast Essences

- Man's essence is humanity
 - We can share in essence, but we are finite
 - No one can subsist in our essence
 - Our essence is divided, individual, and separate
- God's essence is divinity/deity
 - There is only one divine essence because there cannot be more than one
 - That divine essence is infinite in which there can be three subsistences
- If the divinity (essence) of God subsists in three equal and eternal modes, to be God is to be Triune
 - The Triune is One and the One is Triune

24

Begotten from the Father

- Jesus Christ is eternally begotten of the Father
 - This doctrine is called “eternal generation”
- This does not mean that God created Jesus or that Jesus had a beginning
- Begottenness does not mean that Jesus is a lesser subistence of the Trinity than the Father or is in second place (though we call Him the second person of the Trinity)
- Eternal generation is how God **communicates** to us His Son
- Only God can reveal God to us and God reveals His Son to mankind

25

The Holy Spirit

- “the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son”
- The Holy Spirit is sent by both the Father and the Son
 - John 15:26 (ESV) - “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.
- This phrase in the confession is found in the Nicene Creed and is called the *filioque* (Latin for “and the Son”)
- This doctrine is one of the reasons that the Eastern Orthodox Church split from the Roman Catholic Church in 1054 AD
- The Church in the East rejected the filioque and the Western Church did not

26

God's Communication

- “which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him.”
- The Father speaks to us directly through His Son
- His Spirit dwells within us as believers
- To deny the Trinity is to not be a Christian because this doctrine is at the core of our salvation, being, and doctrine