

**An Introduction to
the Baptist Confession of Faith
of 1689**

Its place, value, and limitations

Preface

The design of the revision

As the well-known date (1689) in the official title of the Confession indicates, this document, and necessarily its language, is more than three-hundred years old. While the truths acknowledged are, in the main, timeless, language changes. Thus, a main purpose for this revision is an updating of the language used. Frequently occurring words with archaic spelling were updated and are *not* otherwise noted. Such would include:hath - has

doth - does	notwithstanding	unto
Verbs ending in 'eth' (i.e. believeth)	thereunto	whilst
hereupon	thereto	whence
howbeit	therein	
	thereof	

Other words which reflected either an archaic or English spelling were updated with a more modern or Americanized spelling, i.e.:

wilfully - willfully	fulfil – fulfill
innocency – innocence	intrusts - entrusts

In some cases, phrases were identified as direct biblical quotes from the King James Version. These were also updated with a quote from a modern translation (New American Standard Version, 1995).

Other archaic words which occurred less frequently are end-noted, identified with lower-case Roman numerals, for example:

'... translated into the commonⁱⁱⁱ language of every nation ...'

ⁱⁱⁱ Originally, 'vulgar.'

Another primary purpose in this revision was the formatting. Because of the frequent and lengthy compound sentence structure of the Confession, it can be difficult to follow and understand. Thus, we have formatted each paragraph into a 'block diagram.' The purpose of block diagramming is to graphically illustrate the syntax of a paragraph (Syntax refers to the interrelationships of paragraphs, sentences, phrases, clauses, and words). The block diagramming process involves the laying out of a paragraph by indenting subordinate linguistic units while maintaining the given word order. This allows the reader to more easily grasp the structure of the paragraph, its key features, and main points, so as to enhance the understanding of it.

The Confession's place in our Church

Providence Bible Church maintains that the Holy Scriptures are accepted as the only final authority and statement of absolute truth. We also regard the *London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689* as a good, though not inspired, expression of the teachings of the Word of God. Thus, we hold to the Confession as our secondary doctrinal standard under Charles Spurgeon's following disclaimer:

This little volume is not issued as an authoritative rule, or code of faith, whereby you are to be fettered, but as an assistance to you in controversy, a confirmation in faith, and a means of edification in righteousness. Here the younger members of our church will have a body of divinity in small compass, and by means of the Scriptural proofs, will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them.

Doctrinal 'exceptions' are noted by an asterisk (*) with an explanatory comment, bracket and indented, immediately following the paragraph.

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* Chapters with which we take exception until we have studied them more thoroughly

Statements with which we know we take exception: 26.4, 9

CHAPTER 1 -- Of the Holy Scriptures

6. 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;
to which nothing at any time is to be added,
whether by new revelation of the Spirit,
or traditions of men.⁹
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,¹⁰
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.¹¹

⁹ 2Ti. 3:15-17; Gal. 1: 8-9 ¹⁰ John 6:45; 1Co. 2:9-12 ¹¹ 2Co. 11:13-14; 14:26, 40

CHAPTER 3 -- Of God's Decree

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,
has chosen
in Christ
to everlasting glory,
out of His mere free grace and love;¹¹
without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving
Him to it.¹²

¹¹ Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; Rom. 8:30; 1Ti. 1:9; 1Th. 5:9 ¹² Rom. 9:13, 16; Eph. 1:6, 12

CHAPTER 5 -- Of Divine Providence

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God oftentimes leaves
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 revealⁱ to 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.¹⁵

So that whatsoever befalls any of His elect is by His appointment,

for His glory,

and their good.¹⁶

¹⁵ 2Chr. 32:25-26, 31; 2 Sam. 24:1; 2 Co. 12:7-9 ¹⁶ Rom. 8:28

CHAPTER 6 -- Of the fall of Man, Sin, and the Punishment of It

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; ³
all becoming dead in sin, ⁴
and wholly defiled
in all the faculties, and parts
of soul, and body. ⁵

³ Rom. 3:23 ⁴ Rom. 5:12 ⁵ Titus 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, ⁶
being now conceived in sin, ⁷
and by nature children of wrath, ⁸
the servants of sin,
the subjects of death, ⁹
and all other miseries,
spiritual, temporal and eternal,
unless the Lord Jesus set them free. ¹⁰

⁶ Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Co. 15:21-22, 45-49 ⁷ Ps. 51:5; Job 14:4 ⁸ Eph. 2:3

⁹ Rom. 6:20; 5:12 ¹⁰ Heb. 2:14; 1Th. 1:10

CHAPTER 8 – Of Christ the Mediator

2. The Son of God,
the second Person in the Holy Trinity,
being very and eternal God,
the brightness of the Fathers glory,
of one substance and equal with Him,
who made the world,
who upholds and governs all things He has made,
did,
when the fullness of time was come,
take upon Himself man's nature,
with all the essential properties and common infirmities of it,⁹
yet without sin;¹⁰
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;¹¹
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.¹²

⁹John 1:1, 14; Gal. 4:4 ¹⁰Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14-17; 4:15 ¹¹Luke 1:27, 31, 35

¹²Rom. 9:5; 1Ti. 2:5

CHAPTER 9 – Of Free Will

3. Man,
by his fall into a state of sin,
has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying
salvation;⁴
so
as a natural man,
being altogether
averse from that good,
and dead in sin,⁵
is not able
by his own strength
to convert himself,
or to prepare himself to it.⁶

⁴Rom. 5:6; 8:7 ⁵Eph. 2:1, 5 ⁶Titus 3:3-5; John 6:44

CHAPTER 10 -- Of Effectual Calling

1. Those whom God has predestined to life,
He is pleased
in His appointed and accepted time,
effectually
to call,¹
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;²
enlightening their minds
spiritually and savingly
to understand the things of God;³
taking away their heart of stone,
and giving to them a heart of flesh;⁴
renewing their wills,
and
by His almighty power
resolvingⁱⁱ them to that which is good,
and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ;⁵
yet so as they come most freely,
being made willing by His Grace.⁶

¹ Rom. 8:30; Rom. 11:7; Eph. 1:10-11; 2Th. 3:13-14 ² Eph. 2:1-6 ³ Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:17-18 ⁴ Ezek. 36:26 ⁵ Dt. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27; Eph. 1:19 ⁶ Ps. 110:3; Song 1:4

CHAPTER 11 -- Of Justification

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 to them,
make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf;⁸
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 any thing in them;⁹
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.¹⁰

⁸ Heb. 10:14; 1Pe. 1:18-9; Is. 53:5-6 ⁹ Rom. 8:32; 2 Co. 5:21 ¹⁰ Rom. 3:26; Eph. 1:6-7, 2:7

Chapter 15 -- Of Repentance to Life and Salvation

3. This saving repentance is an evangelical grace,⁴
whereby a person,
being
by the Holy Spirit
made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin,
does,
by faith in Christ,
humble himself for it with
godly sorrow,
detestation of it,
and self-abhorrence,⁵
praying for pardon and strength of grace,
with a purpose and endeavor,
by supplies of the Spirit,
to walk before God to all well-pleasing in all things.⁶

⁴Zech. 12:10; Acts 11:18 ⁵Ezek. 36:31; 2Co. 7:11 ⁶Ps.119:6, 128

CHAPTER 22 -- Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

1. The light of nature shows that there is a God,
 who
 has lordship and sovereignty over all;
 is just, good, and does good to all;
and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served,
 with all the heart,
 and all the soul,
 and with all the might.¹
But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself;²
and so limited by His own revealed will,
that He may not be worshipped according to
 the imaginations and devices of men,
 nor the suggestions of Satan,
 under any visible representations,
 or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.³

¹ Jer. 10:7; Mark 12:33 ² Dt. 12:32 ³ Ex. 20:4-6

5. The reading of the Scriptures,¹⁶
 preaching,
 and hearing the Word of God,¹⁷
teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs,
 singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord;¹⁸
as also the administration of baptism,¹⁹
and the Lord's Supper,²⁰
are all parts of religious worship of God,
to be performed in obedience to Him,
 with understanding,
 faith,
 reverence and godly fear;
moreover solemn humiliation with fastings,²¹
and thanksgiving upon special occasions,
ought to be used in a holy and religious manner.²²

¹⁶ 1Ti. 4:13 ¹⁷ 1Ti. 4:2; Luke 8:18 ¹⁸ Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19 ¹⁹ Mt. 28:19-20
²⁰ 1 Co. 11:26 ²¹ Esth. 4:16; Joel 2:12 ²² Ex. 15:1; Ps. 107

8. The Sabbath is then kept holy to the Lord, when men,
 after a due preparing of their hearts,
 and ordering their common affairs beforehand,
do not only observe a holy rest all the day,

from their own works, words, and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations,³⁰ but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.³¹

³⁰ Is. 58:13; Neh. 13:15-23 ³¹ Mt. 12:1-13

CHAPTER 26 -- Of the Church

13. No Church-members,
 upon any offence taken by them,
 having performed their duty required of them towards the person
 they are offended at,
ought to disturb any Church order,
or absent themselves from
 the assemblies of the church,
 or administration of any ordinances,
upon the account of such offence at any of their fellow-members;
but to wait upon Christ,
 in the further proceeding of the Church.²⁶
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²⁶ Mt. 18:15-17; Eph. 4:2-3

CHAPTER 29 -- Of Baptism

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament,
 ordained by Jesus Christ,
 to be
 to the party baptized,
 a sign
 of his fellowship with Him
 in His death and resurrection;
 of his being engrafted into Him;³
 of remission of sins;⁴
 and of his giving up to God,
 through Jesus Christ,
 to live and walk in newness of life.⁵
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³ Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:27 ⁴ Mark 1:4; Acts 26:16 ⁵ Rom. 6:2, 4

ⁱ Originally, 'discover.'

ⁱⁱ Originally, 'determining.'