

An Exposition of the 2nd (1689) London Baptist Confession

Chapter 1: Of the Holy Scriptures

1.1 *The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible (a) rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience; although the light (b) 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. (c) 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 (d) 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.*

(a) 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29,31; Ephesians 2:20.

(b) Romans 1:19-21; 2:14-15; Psalm 19:1-3.

(c) Hebrews 1:1.

(d) Proverbs 22:19-21; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19-20

1. The principle of knowing

- a. Epistemology & ontology... because of what we are, we are in need of revelation in order to know anything.
- b. The scriptures (God's special revelation to us) are the foundational epistemological basis of Christian theology. If we know anything about God and how we are to relate to Him, it is revealed in His word.
- c. A primary issue: True theology must be erected on the word of God (even with respect to secondary matters)

2. Two categories of revelation

- a. General Revelation - That which is known about God by all people through what we see in the world.
- b. Special Revelation - That which God specifically reveals to particular people in a particular way.
- c. An important nuance: Common Grace vs General Revelation

3. The content & purpose of General Revelation... *"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"*

- a. Works of creation (Romans 1:18-21, Psalm 19:1-4, Romans 11:36) & providence (Acts 17:26-27)
- b. The light of nature (Romans 2:14-15)
- c. Bears the full authority of God which is equal to that in the scriptures.
- d. Proves that God exists, that He is good, wise, and powerful (and therefore worthy to be worshipped)
- e. Renders all of humanity culpable and without excuse for not worshipping God.

4. **The insufficiency of general revelation...** *"yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation"*

- a. It is entirely insufficient for salvation (no one can be saved by general revelation alone)
- b. Note: The light of nature is also insufficient to care for the soul and govern a people due to the noetic effects of the fall.

5. **The reality and purpose of special revelation...** *"Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church"*

- a. Since general revelation does not save, God revealed Himself to give the knowledge of Himself that is necessary for salvation.
- b. This revelation came at different times and in various ways (direct, through prophets, angelic messengers, dreams, visions, etc.) and has been progressive throughout redemptive history.
- c. Note: the revelation was to "the church"... that is, the elect of God in all ages.

6. **The culmination of special revelation: the written scriptures...** *"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."*

- a. The former way: Immediate revelation... Now: mediate revelation (Hebrews 1:1-2, Romans 15:4, Eph 1:17)
- b. The revelation of Christ is the climax of redemptive history and God's plan to save His people
- c. The written scriptures give us an advantage (2 Peter 1:3-4, 19-20)
- d. This makes the scriptures of absolute necessity for salvation and tells us that their primary purpose is concerning the salvation of God's people.