

An Exposition of the 2nd (1689) London Baptist Confession
Chapter 1: Of the Holy Scriptures

1.4 *The Authority of the Holy Scripture for which it ought to be believed dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon (g) God (who is truth it self) the Author thereof; therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.*

(g) 2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:9.

1. **The principle of Authority**

- a. Authority is the foundation of epistemology. All truth claims are grounded in an authority. What is true? Who says?... Biblical epistemology = listening to the right authority.
- b. Sola Scriptura & *norma normans* (the rule that rules), vs *norma normata* (a rule that is ruled).
- c. Good (virtuous) circularity, bad (vicious) circularity, and the inevitability of epistemic circularity.

2. **Authority comes from authorship...** *"The Authority of the Holy Scripture for which it ought to be believed **dependeth** not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but **wholly upon God** (who is truth it self) **the Author** thereof; therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.*

- a. The Bible is inspired/ breathed out by God. God is the author. (2 Peter 1:19-21, 2 Timothy 3:16).
- b. Divine authorship guarantees the trustworthiness of the scriptures. (Num 23:19, Titus 1:2, Heb 6:18)
- c. Divine authorship makes the scriptures the highest standard to appeal to (Heb 6:13,
- d. Being the word of God and the highest standard to appeal to, the Word of God exercises lawful authority over the thoughts and actions of men.
 - i. Not authoritative only for professing Christians
 - ii. The authority which all people, everywhere, are subject to (Matt 28:18-20)

3. **The authority of scripture does not depend on lesser authorities ...** *The Authority of the Holy Scripture for which it ought to be believed **dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or Church...**"*

- a. Not dependent upon the testimony of men (1 John 5:9)
 - i. Not dependent on logic or human reasoning
 - ii. Not dependent upon additional evidence (God and his word are not on trial)
- b. Not dependent on the church
 - i. Against Rome
 - ii. The church does not give authority to the Word, it acknowledges the authority of the Word and submits to it.

1.5 *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 stile, 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 mans salvation, and many other incomparable Excellencies, and intire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence it self to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding; our (h) full perswasion, 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.*

(h) John 16:13-14; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20-27.

4. The reality and value of external evidence... *"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 many other incomparable Excellencies... are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence it self to be the Word of God "*

a. The church does and should testify to the authority of scripture.

i. Contrary to Roman Catholicism, the scriptures do not depend on the church for their authority.

ii. Men are not obligated to believe because "the church said so". This testimony is insufficient for establishing authority.

b. Side note: Other outside proofs (manuscript evidence, history, archaeology, science, philosophy, various apologetics techniques) often do testify to the authority of scripture. But contrary to evidentialists, the scriptures do not depend on such proofs for authority/validity. Such evidence alone is insufficient.

5. The reality and value of internal evidence... *We may be moved and induced by... the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the Doctrine, and the Majesty of the stile, 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 mans salvation, and many other incomparable Excellencies, and intire perfections thereof are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence it self to be the Word of God ..."*

a. The heavenliness of the matter

b. The efficacy of the doctrine

c. The majesty of the style

d. The consent of all the parts

e. The scope of the whole

f. The discovery (disclosure) of the only way of salvation

g. And many other excellencies all abundantly prove it to be the Word of God.

6. The necessity and function of divine evidence... *"...yet notwithstanding; our full perswasion, 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.*

a. External & internal evidence are insufficient for full persuasion and assurance of the authority of scripture

b. A full conviction and persuasion results only from the internal work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:10-16)

c. The Spirit does this work by and with the Word (Ephesians 1:13, Rom 10:17)