

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

Chapter 1: Of the Holy Scriptures

The Perspicuity of Scripture

1.7 All things in Scripture are not alike (m) plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for Salvation, are so (n) 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.

(m) 2 Pet. 3:16; (n) Ps 19:7; 119:130

1. Some things hard to understand (2 Peter 3:16)

- a. 1 Cor. 15:29, Baptism on behalf of the dead?
- b. Rom. 7:4-6; 3:28-31, the Christian and the Law

2. Clarity in things Necessary “to be known, believed, and observed for salvation” (Ps 19:7; 119:130)

- a. God: Gen 1:1; Ex. 34:6-7
- b. Man and Sin: Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:23; 6:23
- c. Salvation in Christ: Ps 32:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:21; John 3:16
- d. Responding to the Gospel: Mark 1:14-15; Gal. 2:16

The Use of Scripture: In Relation to Its Form and Transmission

1.8 The Old Testament in (o) 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 (p) authentic; so as in all controversies of Religion the Church is finally to appeal to them (q). 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 (r) and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every Nation unto which they (s) come, that the Word of God dwelling (t) plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

(o) Rom. 3:2; (p) Isa. 8:20; (q) Acts 15:15; (r) John 5:39; (s) 1 Cor. 14:6, 9, 11-12, 24, 28; (t) Col. 3:16

1. The Autographa (The Original Writings) and the Apographa (Copies of an Original writing)

- a. Genuine Authority in both the Originals and the Copies. However, only the original texts of Scripture are inspired. (Renihan, 71)
- b. 2 Kinds of Authority: *Authoritas Verborum* (External and Accidental Authority) vs. *Authoritas Rerum* (Formal and Inward Authority). The Originals contain both kinds of authority and the Copies contain only the Formal and Inward Authority.
- c. There is a “practical univocity” between the Originals and the Copies. (Renihan, 67)

2. Regarding Variant Readings in the Ancient Copies

- a. No Material Difference between the Line reading and the Marginal reading.

3. “immediately inspired by God... providentially kept pure... therefore authentic” – therefore “the church is finally to appeal to them.”

- a. Rom. 3:2 Israel was entrusted to preserve
- b. Acts 15:15-20 Appeal to apply

4. Argument(s) for Translation

- a. 1 Cor. 14:6, 9, 11-12, 24, 28. Translation is necessary for understanding.
- b. John 5:39. Search the Scriptures to learn about Christ.
- c. Col. 3:16. Be filled with the Scripture for ministry and worship.

The Use of Scripture: In Relation to Interpretation

1.9 *The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the (u) 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.*
(u) 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Acts 15:15-16

1. The Analogy of Scripture: Scripture alone is the infallible interpreter of the Scripture

- a. Positive example: The passage, Amos 9:11-12, which speaks of the restoration of Israel being fulfilled, in Acts 15, in the expansion of God's people to include Gentiles converted to following the Jewish Messiah -Jesus Christ.
- b. Negative example: Using Col. 1:15-17 to argue against the eternal and divine nature of God the Son (Jesus). This runs contrary to other texts, which do speak of the eternal and divine nature of the Eternal Son of God (Col. 2:9; Phil. 2:6-7; John 8:58; 20:28, etc.).
- c. Look for more clear passages of Scripture to help interpret the less clear passages. (Gen. 17:10-12 compare with Gal. 5:6; 6:15)
- d. An understanding of grammar, genre, history, culture, context and the redemptive storyline of Scripture is helpful.

The Use of Scripture: In Relation to Controversies

1.10 *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 (x) Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.*

(x) Matt. 22:29, 31; Eph. 2:20; Acts 28:23

1. Controversy, a Counsel, and an appeal to Scripture - Acts 15

2. **Doctrines of Men:** this is probably in contrast to the Roman Catholic teaching that Scripture could/should be supplemented with doctrines revealed to the church by other means than Scripture (Pope, etc.).
3. **Private Spirits:** Could merely refer to an individual's beliefs or actions that did not come distinctly from Scripture, or to the Quaker view of personal revelation.
 - a. Quakers had an elevated view of the Holy Spirit's communication with the believer. The idea of "the light within" said that Christians had the same endowment of the Spirit that the Biblical authors had. The Quakers believed firmly in immediate divine inspiration (Renihan, 73).
 - b. Holy Scripture is an objective and public foundation for faith (Eph. 2:19-20; Acts 28:23). Private spirits are subjective, they sometimes do not coordinate with the Scripture and more often go beyond the teaching and requirements of Scripture.