

## An Exposition of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (1689) London Baptist Confession

### Chapter 4: Of Creation<sup>1</sup>

#### The Doctrine of Creation

4.1 *In the beginning it pleased God the Father, (a) Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of (b) his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world, and all things therein, (c) whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.*

(a) John 1:2-3; Heb. 1:2; Job 26:13; (b) Rom. 1:20; (c) Col. 1:16; Gen. 2:1-2

1. In the Beginning... (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1)

- WCF and Savoy place this phrase after “goodness” and before “create”
- Mirroring the text of Scripture and emphasizing the temporal nature of creation

2. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... to create... (The Triune God and Creation)

- The Spirit hovers, the Son speaks, the Father governs (Job 26:13; 33:4; Gen. 1:2; John 1:2-3; Heb. 1:2)
- Appropriations: works that belong to certain persons of the Trinity, because these persons are associated in Scripture with these actions in specific ways.

3. For the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness... (Rom. 1:20; Gen. 1:31; Psalm 19:1-6)

- These qualities correspond to each person of the Trinity without denying the doctrine of divine simplicity.

4. To create or make the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible...

- WCF and Savoy read, “To create or make of nothing, the world...”
- Baptist Catechism Q12 “What is the work of creation?” A. The work of creation is God’s making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.”
- Primary (of nothing) and Secondary (of something) creation (Heb. 11:3; John 1:3; Gen. 1:20; 2:19)
- The world and all things therein = the whole created order, not just earth (Acts. 17:24)
- visible and invisible (Col. 1:16)

5. In the space of six days, and all very good. (Gen. 2:1-2)

- No consensus on the exact period of time that had passed since the creation event
- Belief in an ancient (old) earth was not a view held by Puritan theologians
- Not a dualistic creation, but it was a mutable creation

#### The Creation of Man

4.2 *After God had made all other creatures, he created (d) man, male and female, with (e) reasonable and immortal souls, rendering them fit unto that life to God for which they were created; being (f) made after the*

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the content for this handout is taken from *To the Judicious and Impartial Reader* by James Renihan, (Cape Coral: Founder’s Press, 2022).

*image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God (g) written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was (h) subject to change.*

(d) Gen. 1:27; (e) Gen. 2:7; (f) Ecc. 7:29; Gen. 1:26; (g) Rom. 2:14-15; (h) Gen. 3:6

1. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls...

- Mankind is the crown of creation (Gen. 1:26-31); made from the dust of earth (Gen. 2:7, 18-25)
- Male and female are foundational for how we understand God's design for humanity and marriage. (Mark 10:6-9)
- The characteristics of "reasonable and Immortal" distinguish mankind from the rest of creation.

2. Rendering them fit unto that life to God, for which they were created...

- added to LBC, not in WCF or Savoy (a modifying clause)
- Emphasizes the Godward purpose of mankind

4. Being made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness...

- Image of God in Mankind (Ecc. 7:29; Gen. 1:26) (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10)
- Spiritual and immortal, understanding and will, habits and qualities of the soul

5. Having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change.

- Natural Law or Eternal or Moral Law (Rom. 2:14-15)
- The ability and mutability of mankind (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:6-7)

### **Positive Law**

*4.3 Besides the law written in their hearts, they received (i) a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which whilst they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion (k) over the creatures.*

(i) Gen. 6:17; 3:8-10 (k) Gen. 1:26-28

1. Besides the law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil...

- LBC separates this section out of paragraph two in WCF to make a third section under the chapter of Creation. This distinction is foundational for the argument concerning baptism (see LBC 28.1).
- Positive Law: "an added commandment, given by revelation, differing from moral or natural law... for a particular purpose and/or time" (TTJAIR, 142)
- The reward of obedience and the wages of disobedience (Gen. 2:15-17; Gen. 3:8-10; Gen. 6:17)
- Common examples of Positive Law in Scripture are circumcision and baptism (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Gen. 17:9-14; Gal. 5:6; 6:15)

2. Which whilst they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures. (Gen. 1:26-28)