

THE BAPTIST CONFESSION
OF FAITH 1689

A
CONFESSION
OF FAITH

Put forth by the elders and brethren
of many congregations of Christians
(*baptized upon profession of their faith*)
in London and the country.

*With the heart man believeth unto righteousness,
and with the mouth confession is made
unto salvation, Rom. 10:10.*

Search the Scriptures, John 5:39.



THE BANNER OF TRUTH TRUST

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This Confession was first printed in London for Benjamin Harris,
'to be sold at his shop at the Stationers Arms in Sweetings Rents,
in Cornhill, near the Royal Exchange, 1677.'

Only minor alterations to spelling, punctuation and proof texts
have been made by the editors of this Pocket Puritan gift edition.

FOREWORD

IN England during the 1630s and 1640s Congregationalists and Baptists of Calvinistic persuasion emerged from the Church of England. Their early existence was marked by repeated cycles of persecution at the hands of the established religion of Crown and Parliament. The infamous Clarendon Code was adopted in the 1660s to crush all dissent from the official religion of the State. Periods of rigorous application and intervals of relaxation of these coercive acts haunted Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists alike.

Presbyterians and Congregationalists suffered less than did Baptists under this harassment. No little reason for their relative success in resisting government tyranny was their united front of doctrinal agreement. All Presbyterians stood by their Westminster Confession of 1646. Congregationalists adopted virtually the same articles of faith in the Savoy Confession of 1658. Feeling their substantial unity with paedobaptists suffering under the same cruel injustice, Calvinistic Baptists met to publish

their substantial harmony with them in doctrine.

A circular letter was sent to Particular Baptist churches in England and Wales asking each assembly to send representatives to a meeting in London in 1677. A confession consciously modelled after the Westminster Confession of Faith was approved and published. It has ever since borne the name of the Second London Confession. The First London Confession had been issued by seven Baptist congregations in London in 1644. That first document had been drawn up to distinguish newly organized Calvinistic Baptists from the Arminian Baptists and the Anabaptists. Because this second London Confession was drawn up in dark hours of oppression, it was issued anonymously.

A preface to the original publication of 1677 says in part:

It is now many years since divers of us . . . did conceive ourselves under a necessity of publishing a Confession of our Faith, for the information and satisfaction of those that did not thoroughly understand what our principles were, or had entertained prejudices against our

[6] *Pocket Puritans*

Association. For years the Association appealed to the Confession, formally adopting it in 1742. The first edition of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith was printed by Benjamin Franklin in 1743. Under this name the 1689 Confession became the definitive doctrinal statement of Calvinistic Baptists throughout the colonial and early United States periods. Associations in Virginia (1766), Rhode Island (1767), South Carolina (1767), Kentucky (1785), and Tennessee (1788) adopted the Confession. It came to be known in America as *The Baptist Confession*.

Familiarity with the Confession and its doctrines declined in the latter half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. But since God has remarkably revived biblical Calvinism among Baptists in recent years, interest in this historic Confession has been renewed.

In this edition care has been taken to be faithful to the original edition of 1677. Changes have been made in spelling and punctuation to suit modern usage.

The words of C. H. Spurgeon are an appropriate conclusion to this introduction:

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.

Be not ashamed of your faith; remember it is the ancient gospel of martyrs, confessors, reformers and saints. Above all, it is the truth of God, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

Let your lives adorn your faith, let your example adorn your creed. Above all live in Christ Jesus, and walk in Him, giving credence to no teaching but that which is manifestly approved of Him, and owned by the Holy Spirit. Cleave fast to the Word of God which is here mapped out for you.

WALTER C. CHANTRY
Wisconsin,
May 2012

CONTENTS

1.	Of the Holy Scriptures	25
2.	Of God and of the Holy Trinity	32
3.	Of God's Decree	35
4.	Of Creation	39
5.	Of Divine Providence	41
6.	Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof	45
7.	Of God's Covenant	48
8.	Of Christ the Mediator	50
9.	Of Free Will	57
10.	Of Effectual Calling	59
11.	Of Justification	62
12.	Of Adoption	65
13.	Of Sanctification	66
14.	Of Saving Faith	68
15.	Of Repentance unto Life and Salvation	70
16.	Of Good Works	72
17.	Of the Perseverance of the Saints	76

18.	Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation	79
19.	Of the Law of God	82
20.	Of the Gospel and of the Extent of the Grace Thereof	86
21.	Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience	89
22.	Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day	92
23.	Of Lawful Oaths and Vows	97
24.	Of the Civil Magistrate	99
25.	Of Marriage	101
26.	Of the Church	103
27.	Of the Communion of Saints	111
28.	Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper	113
29.	Of Baptism	114
30.	Of the Lord's Supper	116
31.	Of the State of Man after Death and of the Resurrection of the Dead	120
32.	Of the Last Judgment	122

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Chapter 1 *Of the Holy Scriptures*

THE Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience,¹ although 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; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary unto salvation.² Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His church;³ 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.⁴

¹ *2 Tim.* 3:15-17; *Isa.* 8:20; *Luke* 16:29, 31; *Eph.* 2:20.

² *Rom.* 1:19-21; 2:14,15; *Psa.* 19:1-3.

³ *Heb.* 1:1.

⁴ *Prov.* 22:19-21; *Rom.* 15:4; *2 Pet.* 1:19,20.

2. Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:

Of the Old Testament

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Of the New Testament

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, To Titus, To Philemon, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the First and Second Epistles of Peter, the First, Second, and Third Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, the Revelation. All of which are given by the inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.⁵

⁵ *2 Tim.* 3:16.

3. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon or rule of the Scripture, and, therefore, are of no authority to the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings.⁶

⁶ *Luke* 24:27, 44; *Rom.* 3:2.