

1689 London Baptist Confession Outline and Notes:

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Symbolics Class IRBS (2006)

Interpretive Layers of the Confession:

- I. One Confession
- II. Thirty-two chapters
- III. Multiple paragraphs
- IV. Sentences and semicolons (with prooftexts)
- V. Individual words
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- VI. Biblical, historical, theological, and philosophical underpinnings

Organizing principle of the Confession: The first paragraph is a broad outline of the chapter. The remaining paragraphs flesh out that paragraph.

Ch. 1: Of the Holy Scriptures

- 1.1 - General and Special Revelation
- 1.2 - The Content and Inspiration of Scripture
- 1.3 - Denial of the Apocrypha
- 1.4 - The Authority of Scripture
- 1.5 - The Testimony of the church & the Holy Spirit in Interpreting, Understanding, & Believing Scripture
- 1.6 - The Sufficiency of Scripture
- 1.7 - The Perspicuity of Scripture
- 1.8 - Scripture as Final Authority in Church Controversies and the Translation of Scripture Into Languages
- 1.9 - The Analogy of Faith
- 1.10 - Scripture as the Judge of All Controversies and Sola Scriptura

I. General and Special Revelation (§ 1.1)

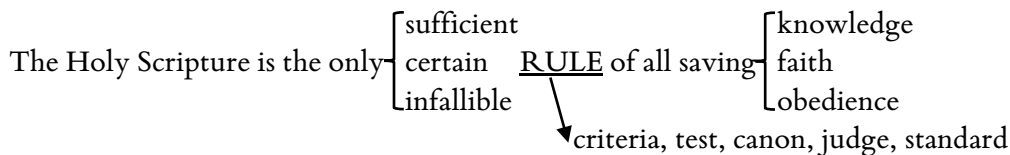
1.1 The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible ¹ rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, although the ² light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation. ³ 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 ⁴ 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.

[1] [2 Timothy 3:15-17](#); [Isaiah 8:20](#); [Luke 16:29, 31](#); [Ephesians 2:20](#); [2] [Romans 1:19-21](#); [Romans 2:14, 15](#); [Psalms 19:1-3](#); [3] [Hebrews 1:1](#); [4] [Proverbs 22:19-21](#); [Romans 15:4](#); [2 Peter 1:19, 20](#)

§ 1 A. The first sentence (added by the LBC)

The rest is virtually identical to Savoy and WCF (they begin: “Although the light of nature...”)

First sentence outlined:



First sentence discussed

inerrancy { “only” = unique status to Scripture (not apocrypha, new revelations, traditions)
“sufficient” = Scripture has all teaching on saving knowledge, faith, and obedience
“certain” = *does not err* (exactly as represented, wholly trustworthy, nothing misleading, that which is sure)
“infallible” = *it cannot err*

Saving Knowledge. What we need to know God.

~ It is not saying it tells us about everything in the world.

Saving Faith. How we convert to God (ch. 14)

Saving Obedience. Repentance and sanctification

B. The rest of 1.1. The Necessity of Scripture

1. Natural Revelation.

- b. Types
 - i. The light of nature
 - ii. The works of creation and providence
- c. It’s reality and trustworthiness
- d. Tells us about God
 - i. His goodness
 - ii. His wisdom
 - iii. His power
- e. Leaves us inexcusable
- f. It is insufficient to save

2. Supernatural Revelation

- a. Types
 - i. Non-written (“sundry times, divers manners;” e.g. prophets, Apostles, direct contact)
 - ii. Written (inscripturated)
- b. Its reality and importance
 - i. Declares his will to the church
 - ii. Preserves, propagates the truth
 - iii. Establishment and comfort of the church against
 - The corruption of the *flesh*
 - The malice of *Satan*
 - The *world*
- c. Revelation comes progressively:



- d. Written form is not necessary to be saved however...
- e. Complete commitment to inspired Scripture. It is necessary now to bring us to God because the former ways have ceased.

3. Consequences of the Necessity of Scripture

- a. God’s will (with regard to para. 1) is wholly committed to writing.

- b. Does not negate generation revelation as continuing
- c. Does not mean Scripture only speaks about salvation
- d. Refutes tradition (Rome), inner life (Quakers, Charismatics) and others who would change salvation.

II. Definition of Scripture (§ 1.2-3)

1.2. 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, 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 ⁵ inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.

[5] [2 Timothy 3:16](#)

1.3. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of ⁶ 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] [Luke 24:27, 44](#); [Romans 3:2](#)

- § 2 A. Scripture defined extensively (size) (the canon)
- B. Scripture defined intensively (not size) (“inspired” or “God-breathed”)
- § 3 C. Scripture defined exclusively (does not include the apocrypha)

III. Properties of Scripture (Authority, perfection, perspicuity) (§ 1.4-7)

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 ⁷ God who is truth itself, the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

[7] [2 Peter 1:19-21](#); [2 Timothy 3:16](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:13](#); [1 John 5:9](#)

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 style, 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 man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet not withstanding, our ⁸ full persuasion 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.

[8] [John 16:13, 14](#); [1 Corinthians 2:10-12](#); [1 John 2:20, 27](#)

1.6 The whole counsel of God concerning all things ⁹ necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the ¹⁰ inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ¹¹ ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

[9] [2 Timothy 3:15-17](#); [Galatians 1:8,9](#); [10] [John 6:45](#); [1 Corinthians 2:9-12](#); [11] [1 Corinthians 11:13, 14](#); [1 Corinthians 14:26, 40](#)

1.7 All things in Scripture are not alike ¹² plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so ¹³ 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.

[12] [2 Peter 3:16](#); [13] [Psalms 19:7](#); [Psalms 119:130](#)

A. Authority of Scripture

- § 4 1. Source
- a. Not the testimony of any man or church
 - b. But wholly upon God (who is truth itself). He is its author.
 - c. We receive it because it is the Word of God.
- § 5 2. **Proof of authority** (its nature)
- a. Evidence: internal and external to the Scripture (but it is not God's word because of evidence):
 - i. External: Testimony of the church
 - ii. Internal: Heavenliness of the matter
 - iii. Efficacy of the doctrine
 - iv. Majesty of the style
 - v. Consent of all the parts
 - vi. Scope of the whole
 - vii. The full discovery it makes of the only way to man's salvation
 - viii. Other incomparable excellencies and perfections
 - b. The necessary function of Divine evidence (i.e. the Holy Spirit bearing witness to us)
- § 6 B. **Perfection or Sufficiency of Scripture** (its nature)
1. All we need FOR God's glory, man's salvation, faith and life is expressly or implicitly in Scripture.
 - a. Nothing is to be added ("new revelations" "traditions of men")

Ancient charismatics Rome
 - b. (Nothing is to be subtracted—not in LBC, but implied)
 2. "Good and necessary consequences" (WCF) is changed to "necessarily contained in." This is a rejection of "good" not "necessary" (relates especially to infant baptism).
 3. Need for spiritual illumination for saving understanding
 4. Light of nature, logic, reason, prudence, wisdom for "circumstances" as opposed to "elements" (see ch. 22.5) of worship, government of the church, common to human actions and societies.
- § 7 C. **Perspicuity** (Clarity) of Scripture (its nature)
1. Scripture is diverse, it is not all equally clear.
 2. The things necessary to be known, believed and observed *for salvation* are clear.
 - a. Not only the learned, but the unlearned can know them *through ordinary means*
 - b. It doesn't mean people won't misinterpret them (see III.A.2.b.; III.B.3.).

IV. *The Use of Scripture (Transmission, Interpretation, Controversies)* (§ 1.8-10)

1.8 *The Old Testament in ¹⁴ 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 ¹⁵ authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them ¹⁶. 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 ¹⁷ and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they ¹⁸ come, that the Word of God dwelling ¹⁹ plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope*

[14] [Romans 3:2](#); [15] [Isaiah 8:20](#); [16] [Acts 15:15](#); [17] [John 5:39](#); [18] [1 Corinthians 14:6, 9, 11, 12, 24, 28](#); [19] [Colossians 3:16](#)

1.9 *The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the ²⁰ 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.*

[20] [2 Peter 1:20, 21](#); [Acts 15:15, 16](#)

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 which²¹ Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.*

[21] [Matthew 22:29, 31, 32](#); [Ephesians 2:20](#); [Acts 28:23](#)

§ 8 A. Form and Transmission

1. Originals (Hebrew OT; Greek NT) and copies
 - a. Originals were immediately inspired by God (gives them authority)
 - b. Copies are authentic, but are nevertheless, copies (and have errors via human transmission)
 - c. All controversies of religion must make final appeal to Scripture (not tradition, etc.)
2. We do not speak those languages and we have the right and duty to translate them
 - a. So that the word may dwell in all peoples
 - b. So they may all know how to properly worship God
 - c. So that we may all have hope and comfort

§ 9 B. Infallible Rule of Interpretation

1. Analogy of faith (Scripture interprets Scripture)
2. Single sense of Scripture (this teaches that there is a real, objective original intent)

§ 10 C. Controversies

1. Scripture is the supreme judge in controversy (see IV.A.1.c.)
 - a. Not tradition (not even the Reformed tradition)
 - b. Not councils
 - c. Not great commentators
 - d. Not personal, private spirits
 - e. Not the Confession
2. Scripture is the test of all other sources of “truth” as it regards matters of salvation, faith, and life

Ch. 2: Of God and the Holy Trinity

2.1 – God’s Nature and His Attributes

2.2 – God’s Relationship to Creation

2.3 – God’s Tri-unity

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Changes in 1689

Ch. 2.1 in the 1689 and changes from previous Confessions			
1689 2.1	Savoy (1658)	WCF	1644
<p>The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of Himself, infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, and withal most just and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.</p>	<p>There is but one only living and true God; who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure Spirit, invisible, without body, parts or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.</p>	<p>There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.</p>	<p>The Lord our God is but one God, whose subsistence is in himself; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but himself, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; who is in himself most holy, every way infinite, in greatness, wisdom, power, love; merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; who giveth being, moving, and preservation to all creatures.</p>

§ 1 B. All additions come from 1644 § 1-3

1. 1st changes: personalizes the statements about God
2. 2nd change: introduces “subsistence”
3. 3rd change: prepares for para 3—incomprehensibility
4. 4th change: immortality of God
5. 5th change: infinite as attribute

- § 2 6. 1st change: “creatures” (attempt to bring consistency)
- § 3 7. 1644 change: adds many historical philosophical terms:
 - a. *Persona* (person)
 - b. *Prosopon* (face, expression)
 - c. *Substantia* (substance)
 - d. *Ousia* (either *substantia* or *essentia*—essence)
 - e. *Hupostasis* (similar to *persona/substantia*)
 - f. *Subsistentia* (substance, individual example of an essence)
 - g. *Essentia* (essence, whatness of a being)
 - h. *Naturae* (genus of a thing)

II. One True God: His Identity (§ 2.1)

2.1 *The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; ¹ whose subsistence is in and of Himself, ² infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; ³ a most pure spirit, ⁴ invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; ⁵ who is immutable, ⁶ immense, ⁷ eternal, ⁸ incomprehensible, almighty, ⁹ every way infinite, most holy, ¹⁰ most wise, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, ¹¹ for His own glory; ¹² most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, ¹³ and withal most just and terrible in His judgments, ¹⁴ hating all sin, ¹⁵ and who will by no means clear the guilty.*¹⁶

[1] [1 Cor. 8:4, 6](#); [Deut. 6:4](#) [2] [Jer. 10:10](#); [Isa. 48:12](#) [3] [Exod. 3:14](#) [4] [John 4:24](#) [5] [1 Tim. 1:17](#); [Deut. 4:15, 16](#) [6] [Mal. 3:6](#) [7] [1 Kings 8:27](#); [Jer. 23:23](#) [8] [Ps. 90:2](#) [9] [Gen. 17:1](#) [10] [Isa. 6:3](#) [11] [Ps. 115:3](#); [Isa. 46:10](#) [12] [Prov. 16:4](#); [Rom. 11:36](#) [13] [Exod. 34:6, 7](#); [Heb. 11:6](#) [14] [Neh. 9:32, 33](#) [15] [Ps. 5:5, 6](#) [16] [Exod. 34:7](#); [Nahum 1:2, 3](#)

A. God’s self-existence/self-knowledge (aseity, from *a se*, from himself)

B. God’s attributes

1. Without passions (his *simplicity*—uncompounded, uncomposite nature), but not without emotions (love, wrath, etc.)
 - a. Attributes are self-moved; not externally moved.
 - b. Affection vs. passion

III. God’s External Relations (§ 2.2)

2.2 *God, having all life, ¹⁷ glory, ¹⁸ goodness, ¹⁹ blessedness, in and of Himself, is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creature which He hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, ²⁰ but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, ²¹ and He hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever Himself pleases; ²² in His sight all things are open and manifest, ²³ His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent or uncertain; ²⁴ He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, ²⁵ and in all His commands; to Him is due from angels and men, whatsoever worship, ²⁶ service, or obedience, as creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever He is further pleased to require of them.*

[17] [John 5:26](#) [18] [Ps. 148:13](#) [19] [Ps. 119:68](#) [20] [Job 22:2, 3](#) [21] [Rom. 11:34-36](#) [22] [Dan. 4:25, 34, 35](#) [23] [Heb. 4:13](#) [24] [Ezek. 11:5](#); [Acts 15:18](#) [25] [Ps. 145:17](#) [26] [Rev. 5:12-14](#)

A. God’s aseity (see above). Independence. God is alone in life, glory, goodness, blessedness

1. God does not lack
2. God’s self-existence gives his creatures glory
3. Consequent dominion is his.

B. Omniscience

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Infinite ii. Infallible iii. Independent | } | God is wisdom & knowledge |
|---|---|---------------------------|

- C. God's Omnipotence
- D. God's Lordship and its attendants

IV. God's Internal Relations: (Tri-Unity) (§ 2.3)

2.3 *In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, ²⁷ of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided: ²⁸ the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; ²⁹ the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; ³⁰ all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on Him.*

*[27] [1 John 5:7](#); [Matt. 28:19](#); [2 Cor. 13:14](#) [28] [Exod. 3:14](#); [John 14:11](#); [1 Cor. 8:6](#) [29] [John 1:14, 18](#)
[30] [John 15:26](#); [Gal. 4:6](#)*

- A. God is three subsistences
 - 1. Words of Scripture: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
 - 2. Said of one, said of all
 - 3. Distinct properties and relationships
 - a. Nicaea
 - b. Athanasian
 - c. Chalcedon
- B. Importance (last clause) on THIS doctrine as all our foundation

Ch. 3: Of God Decree

- 3.1 – God’s Decree is Universal
- 3.2 – God’s Decree is Unconditional
- 3.3 – God’s Decree is Selective
- 3.4 – God’s decree is Specific
- 3.5 – God’s Decree is Gracious
- 3.6 – God’s Decree and its Means
- 3.7 – God’s Decree is Praiseworthy

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Ch. 3 follows logically from God as he exists as One and Three (ch. 2) to his internal work in determining in eternity past all that would take place in time (ch. 3), to his external work of creating the universe (ch. 4), to his providence over that creation (ch. 5). The confession is moving from Heaven to Earth as it develops a systematic way of thinking about God and his world.
- B. The decree of God, the focus of this chapter, was briefly introduced in 2.2 when it discussed how God is “most free” and “the decree and providence of God.” Also, 3.6 and its discussion of God’s Decree and its Means will be addressed in more detail in later chapters.
- C. In this chapter, we discuss God’s decree and moves from the general to specific.

II. Reality and Extent of God’s Decree: Universal (§ 3.1)

3.1 God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; ¹ yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; ² nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established; ³ in which appears His wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.⁴

[1] [Isa. 46:10](#); [Eph. 1:11](#); [Heb. 6:17](#); [Rom. 9:15, 18](#) [2] [James 1:13](#); [1 John 1:5](#) [3] [Acts 4:27, 28](#); [John 19:11](#) [4] [Num. 23:19](#); [Eph. 1:3-5](#)

- A. God’s decree is real (addition “in himself” is covenantal, trinitarian language)
- B. God’s decree extends to all things
 - 1. Everything that happens fits into God’s specific decree. With God, there are no contingencies or variables
 - 2. Yet, God is not the author of sin
 - 3. Rather, by his decree and because he is not his creation, the liberty and contingency of second causes is established.
 - a. Humans (angels, and higher level beasts) have true liberty (freewill, properly defined) (See ch. 9)
 - b. Humans (angels, and higher level beasts) are responsible for their actions.
 - c. It is through these “second causes” that we can uphold both the universal divine decree and understand the problem of evil.
 - 4. This demonstrates God’s wisdom and power.

III. God’s Decree is not Conditional (§ 3.2)

3.2 Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, ⁵ yet hath He not decreed anything, because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.⁶

[5] [Acts 15:18](#) [6] [Rom. 9:11, 13, 16, 18](#)

IV. *God's Creatures and the Decree* (§ 3.3-5)

3.3 By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, ⁷ to the praise of His glorious grace; ⁸ others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice.⁹

[7] [1 Tim. 5:21](#); [Matt. 25:34](#) [8] [Eph. 1:5, 6](#) [9] [Rom. 9:22, 23](#); [Jude 4](#)

3.4 These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.¹⁰

[10] [2 Tim. 2:19](#); [John 13:18](#)

3.5 Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love,¹¹ without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto.¹²

[11] [Eph. 1:4, 9, 11](#); [Rom. 8:30](#); [2 Tim. 1:9](#); [1 Thess. 5:9](#) [12] [Rom. 9:13, 16](#); [Eph. 2:5, 12](#)

3.6 As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so He hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto;¹³ wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ,¹⁴ are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified,¹⁵ and kept by His power through faith unto salvation;¹⁶ neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.¹⁷

[13] [1 Pet. 1:2, 2](#); [Thess. 2:13](#) [14] [1 Thess. 5:9, 10](#) [15] [Rom. 8:30](#); [2 Thess. 2:13](#) [16] [1 Pet. 1:5](#) [17] [John 10:26, 17:9, 6:64](#)

3.7 The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election;¹⁸ so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise,¹⁹ reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility,²⁰ diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.²¹

[18] [1 Thess. 1:4, 5](#); [2 Pet. 1:10](#) [19] [Eph. 1:6](#); [Rom. 11:33](#) [20] [Rom. 11:5, 6, 20](#) [21] [Luke 10:20](#)

§ 3 A. Election is in Christ and for God's glory

1. Both men and angels
2. Preterition (lit. "to pass by"; i.e. they are left in their sin)
3. Because of God's decree (reprobation), which is not based on their elect status, but their sin.

§ 4 B. Fixed number

1. The number cannot be changed

§ 5 2. Unconditional

§ 6 C. Order of Salvation

1. In eternity past (*pactum salutis* in the Covenant of Redemption)
 - a. *Infralapsarian* (the decree to elect first has sin in mind)
 - b. *Supralapsarian* (the decree to elect comes prior to sin in mind)
2. In time (*historia salutis*)
 - a. Elect, effectually called, faith, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance
 - b. These are chs. 10-14.

V. *How to Handle the Doctrine of the Decree* (§ 3.7)

The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election;¹⁸ so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise,¹⁹ reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility,²⁰ diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.²¹

[18] [1 Thess. 1:4, 5](#); [2 Pet. 1:10](#) [19] [Eph. 1:6](#); [Rom. 11:33](#) [20] [Rom. 11:5, 6, 20](#) [21] [Luke 10:20](#)

- A. This doctrine is given to lead the elect to certainty of their salvation as they learn to love and obey God's law (anti-hypercalvinism)
- B. A humbling doctrine for all who obey the gospel

Ch. 4: Of Creation

- 4.1 – God’s Decree of Creation
- 4.2 – God’s Creation of Mankind
- 4.3 – God’s Command in Creation

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The doctrine of creation in ch. 4 is a logical progression from the focus on God’s decree in ch. 3. We are moving from heaven (God) to earth (creation). God’s work of creation is done by decree and should logically be understood as the first of God’s decrees. Ch. 5 will deal with the other major aspect of God’s decree which is divine providence.
- B. LBC drops “out of nothing” from Savoy/WCF. They are not denying creation *ex nihilo* or active creation (*creatio active*), but are contemplating creation passive creation (*creatio passive*), i.e. the coming to be of the world as created order.
- C. Splits WCF 2 into two paragraphs.
- D. Adds a Godward focus to § 3.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF CREATION (§ 4.1)

In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, ¹ for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, ² wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.³
[1] [John 1:2, 3](#); [Heb. 1:2](#); [Job 26:13](#) [2] [Rom. 1:20](#) [3] [Col. 1:16](#); [Gen. 1:31](#)

- A. Persons acting – Trinitarian.
- B. Purpose of creation:
 - 1. Not a lack or need.
 - 2. Rather, to manifest God’s Glory (eternal power, wisdom, goodness)
 - a. Not by adding to it
 - b. By reflecting it
- C. Act of
 - 1. Extent: The world and all therein.
 - 2. Time: six days
 - 3. Result: very good. (Satan had to have fallen after day 7)

III. GOD AND MAN (§ 4.2)

After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female,⁴ with reasonable and immortal souls,⁵ rendering them fit unto that life to God for which they were created; being made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness;⁶ having the law of God written in their hearts,⁷ and power to fulfill it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change.⁸
[4] [Gen. 1:27](#) [5] [Gen. 2:7](#) [6] [Eccles. 7:29](#); [Gen. 1:26](#) [7] [Rom. 2:14, 15](#) [8] [Gen. 3:6](#)

- A. Time: “After”; man is the culmination
- B. Act: God creation man
 - 1. “Man” is male and female
 - 2. “Man” is reasonable
 - 3. “Man” has a soul/spirit (an invisible part that goes with the visible body)
- C. Purpose: “Life to God”
- D. Image of God: Defined in moral terms

1. Knowledge
 2. Righteousness
 3. Holiness
- E.** The Law of God
1. Identified. Law of Nature and Moral law (10 Commds.)
 2. Natural ability (“power to fulfill it”; does not speak to spiritual ability)
 3. Probation: possibility of transgressing (two wills of God)

IV. POSITIVE LAW (§ 4.3)

Besides the law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil,⁹ which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.¹⁰
[9] [Gen. 2:17](#) [10] [Gen. 1:26, 28](#)

- A.** Positive law is a law given directly via revelation; rather than a law written on the heart.
1. External commandment.
 2. Present result.
 - a. Enjoyed communion with God and were happy
 - b. Had perfect dominion over the creatures

Ch. 5: Of Divine Providence

- 5.1 – God’s the Good Creator of All Things
- 5.2 – God, the First Cause
- 5.3 – Providence and Means
- 5.4 – First and Secondary Causes
- 5.6 – Leaving to Temptations
- 5.6 – Providence and the Wicked
- 5.7 – Providence and the Church

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Definition.

1. Etymology. “Providence” from *pro* “ahead” + *videre* “to see.” It literally means to see ahead (like foreknowledge).
2. The word means to go before hand.
3. A fuller definition would be “Divine providence is the governance of God by which He, with wisdom and love, cares for and directs all things in the universe. The doctrine of divine providence asserts that God is in complete control of all things. He is sovereign over the universe as a whole (Psalm 103:19), the physical world (Matthew 5:45), the affairs of nations (Psalm 66:7), human destiny (Galatians 1:15), human successes and failures (Luke 1:52), and the protection of His people (Psalm 4:8).”
4. The difference between sovereignty and providence is the difference between the decree (ch. 3) and governance (ch. 5).

B. After having discussed creation, we are now ready to see how God deals with his creation in space and time. This is the doctrine of divine providence.

II. DOCTRINE STATED (§ 5.1)

1. *God the good Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom does uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things,¹ from the greatest even to the least,² by His most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will; to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy.³*
[1] [Heb. 1:3](#); [Job 38:11](#); [Isa. 46:10, 11](#); [Ps. 135:6](#) [2] [Matt. 10:29-31](#) [3] [Eph. 1:11](#)

A. The Personhood of God (Godhead) as opposed to fate or karma or chance.

1. God’s attributes,
2. including goodness (no dualism).

B. The Act of ...

1. Basis – “Most wise and holy providence”
2. Four-fold act:
 - a. Uphold
 - b. Direct
 - c. Dispose

- d. Govern
- 3. Aim: to bring glory to God
- 4. Fundamental: the Creator/creature distinction
- C. Basis of providence:
 - 1. Foreknowledge
 - 2. Council of his will

III. FIRST VS. SECOND CAUSES (§ 5.2)

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly;⁴ so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without His providence;⁵ yet by the same providence He ordered them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.⁶

[4] [Acts 2:23](#) [5] [Prov. 16:33](#) [6] [Gen. 8:22](#)

- A. First cause = the decree of God
- B. Second causes
 - 1. Also the decree of God
 - 2. But such that things work:
 - a. Necessarily (such as laws of nature)
 - b. Freely (such as creatures with wills)
 - c. Contingently (if/then; such as weather)

IV. ORDINARY PROVIDENCE (§ 5.3)

3. God, in his ordinary providence makes use of means,⁷ yet is free to work without,⁸ above,⁹ and against them¹⁰ at His pleasure.

[7] [Acts 27:31, 44](#); [Isa. 55:10, 11](#) [8] [Hosea 1:7](#) [9] [Rom. 4:19-21](#) [10] [Dan. 3:27](#)

- A. Use of means
- B. Suspension of means (miracles)

V. MYSTERY OF PROVIDENCE - THE EXISTENCE OF SIN (§ 5.4)

4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in His providence, that His determinate counsel extends itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men;¹¹ and that not by a bare permission, which also He most wisely and powerfully binds, and otherwise orders and governs,¹² in a manifold dispensation to His most holy ends;¹³ yet so, as the sinfulness of their acts proceeds only from the creatures, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.¹⁴

[11] [Rom. 11:32-34](#); [2 Sam. 24:1](#); [1 Chron. 21:1](#) [12] [2 Kings 19:28](#); [Ps. 76:10](#) [13] [Gen. 1:20](#); [Isa. 10:6, 7, 12](#) [14] [Ps. 1:21](#); [1 John 2:16](#)

- A. Ontological problem of divine causality (see Isa 10)
- B. Dispensational problem – why decree sin?
- C. Psychological problem – How could it arise in God
 - 1. Source is in God (the decree)
 - 2. Source is outside of God (the action/sin)

VI. THE ELECT (HIS WAYS WITH HIS FRIENDS) (§ 5.5)

5. *The most wise, righteous, and gracious God does often times leave for a season His own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon Himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends.¹⁵ So that whatsoever befalls any of His elect is by His appointment, for His glory, and their good.¹⁶*

[15] [2 Chron. 32:25, 26, 31](#); [2 Cor. 12:7-9](#) [16] [Rom. 8:28](#)

A. He leaves them to themselves ... sometimes

1. Chastisement/humility
2. Dependence
3. Mortification

B. Genesis 50:20. By his appointment, for his glory, for their good

VII. THE ENEMIES/REPROBATE (GOD'S WAYS WITH THEM) (§ 5.6)

6. *As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as the righteous judge, for former sin does blind and harden;¹⁷ from them He not only withhold His grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon their hearts;¹⁸ but sometimes also withdraws the gifts which they had,¹⁹ and exposes them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin;²⁰ and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan,²¹ whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, under those means which God uses for the softening of others.²²*

[17] [Rom. 1:24-26, 28, 11:7, 8](#) [18] [Deut. 29:4](#) [19] [Matt. 13:12](#) [20] [Deut. 2:30](#); [2 Kings 8:12, 13](#) [21] [Ps. 81:11, 12](#); [2 Thess. 2:10-12](#) [22] [Exod. 8:15, 32](#); [Isa. 6:9, 10](#); [1 Pet. 2:7, 8](#)

A. Identifies – wicked and ungodly men

B. What does he do? Withholds grace

C. Withdrawals gifts (i.e. Christian ministers)

D. Gives them to lusts

1. The world
2. The flesh
3. The devil

E. Result ...

1. Further hardening of some
2. Softening of other

VIII. MYSTERY OF PROVIDENCE AND THE CHURCH (§ 5.7)

7. *As the providence of God does in general reach to all creatures, so after a more special manner it takes care of His church, and disposes of all things to the good thereof.²³*

[23] [1 Tim. 4:10](#); [Amos 9:8, 9](#); [Isa. 43:3-5](#)