

Fulton Confession Of 1900

Written by Various

Editors Note:

The Fulton Confession of faith is essentially the 1689 London Confession of Faith with an added preface, footnotes for each article expressing the understanding of the ministry (of 1900), and an appendix.

For brevity's sake, contained in this article is text of the appendix, which served as additional commentary on the document.

To download the entire confession (36 pg) in PDF format, click here:

[The Fulton Confession of Faith - 1900](#) (alt+w)

A book containing the full Fulton Confession and certain other editorial notes can be purchased on the [MarchToZion Bookstore](#) .

APPENDIX TO FULTON CONVENTION

We, the undersigned elders and brethren, pursuant to a request made by brethren of Patoka Association of Primitive Baptists, now convened at Oakland City Church, in Oakland City, Indiana, on the 27th day of September, 1900. To our brethren of like precious faith everywhere:

We sincerely regret the division and strife that have been among us, and earnestly desire that we may be led to see alike, and to unite in our understanding of truth as taught in God's Word. We represent in this meeting about one hundred congregations in Indiana and Illinois.

We recommend the London Confession of Faith as an expression of Bible truth. The Articles of Faith of our churches are substantially in harmony with the doctrine and practice set forth in that instrument, and we do heartily recommend the London Confession to the household of faith everywhere. Inasmuch as there is some difference of opinion concerning the teaching of some of the articles in the London Confession of Faith, we will submit the following in the way of explaining our understanding of their teaching:

We do not believe that God has unconditionally, unlimitedly, and equally predestinated righteousness and unrighteousness. It is our belief that God has positively and effectually predestinated the eternal salvation of His people which were chosen in Christ before time.

God's purpose concerning sin does not sustain the same relation to sin that it does to holiness. While we think that God's purpose concerning sin is more than barely permissive, it is such as to exclude all chance and uncertainty, yet we hold that God is in no sense the cause of sin.

We do not believe that God requires or forbids anything in His law, and then by a power irresistible moves His creatures to act contrary to His commands. In Chapter III., Section 1 of the London Confession, we read: "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 come to pass; yet so as thereby God is neither the author of sin, nor hath fellowship with any therein, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away," etc.

In this they deny that God's attitude to sin is causative, and in the body of this Confession we insist that they maintain that God's attitude to holiness is causative. So they clearly distinguish between God's efficacious decree of holiness and His purpose concerning sin. Section 2: "Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions." Here they distinguish between the knowledge of God as an attribute of God and the decree of God as an act of God, which we believe to be Scriptural.

For God to foresee that man will yield to influences of a secondary nature does not imply that God moves man to sin, but only that He is the Permitter of sin. Webster defines "permit", to suffer, without giving authority". We use it in the sense of "not hinder". Section 3 they say:

“Others being left to act in their sins to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice.” If they had believed that God moves men to sin, they would not have said, “being left to act in their sins,” etc. We insist that we should not use language implying that God’s attitude to sin is the same as His attitude to holiness, for this tends to destroy the distinction between right and wrong. The expression, “unlimited predestination of all things”, seems to convey the idea that God’s purpose concerning sin is as unlimited and as unrestricted as it is concerning holiness; and if so, then God’s decree concerning sin would be causative, since it is causative concerning holiness, and this view would destroy all distinction between right and wrong. Chapter XVI., Section 2: “These good works, done in obedience to God’s commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God,” etc.

Section 3: “Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ; and that they may be enabled thereto, besides the graces they have already received, there is necessary an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure; yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit,” etc. They do neglect, not being forced in duty irresistibly.

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a time salvation received by the heirs of God distinct from eternal salvation, which does depend upon their obedience. The people of God receive their rewards for obedience in this life only. We believe that the ability of the Christian is the unconditional gift of God.

Besides the efficacious grace of God in the heart in regeneration, we need the company of God’s Holy Spirit to comfort, lead, and bless us, which He has promised to give to every one that will ask Him. (Luke 11:13.) The act of God necessary to our regeneration must in some sense be distinguished from His act necessary to our obedience. We are never commanded to be born again, but in hundreds of places we are called on to obey. We are passive in regeneration, but in obedience we are active. Regeneration is neither a vice or virtue; obedience is a virtue and disobedience is a vice. Regeneration is wholly independent of the will. There could be no such thing as obedience or disobedience independent of the will. Men do not neglect to be born again, but they do neglect their duty.

In Section 5, Chapter XVI., we read: “We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin, or eternal life, at the hand of God,” etc. They did not place obedience in the place of Christ, or His atonement, and so we believe it would be exceeding sinful to mention good works as essential

to these ends, yet we believe there is an important use for good works aside from these ends. In Section 2, same chapter, they say of good works: “By them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries,” etc.

We think these uses of good works Scriptural. We hold that God’s government of His people is moral. We hold, too, that conditionality is an essential element of moral government. We distinguish between God’s government of mind and His government of matter.

Section 5, Chapter III.: “God hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as condition or cause moving Him thereto.” Although the two-seed doctrine was not thought of at the time this Confession was written, yet this article clearly condemns the two-seed doctrine in all its phases.

Chapter XXXI., Section 1: “The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places [heaven and hell] for souls separated from their bodies the Scriptures acknowledge none.” Christ will resurrect the wicked by His power, exerted in His office as King through a proceeding of law, and not under the New Covenant, as the righteous will be, each to their endless reward. There is a sentiment prevailing in some parts of our beloved Zion that the wicked will be annihilated at death, and we call attention to the sentiment in this quotation on that subject. The annihilation theory is an innovation, and contrary to every Confession of Faith, and also contrary to the Scriptures.

In Chapters III., IV., and IX. the London Confession mentions the freedom of the will. We do not understand them to mean that the will is free in the sense that it is self-determining, as the Arminians hold; nor that man is capable of choosing things of which he has no knowledge, nor things above and beyond his nature; we do not understand the Confession to mean that men dead in sin are, while in that state, capable of choosing holiness, but we understand it to mean that men are capable of choosing things in harmony with their nature—things most agreeable to them. They are and must be capable of voluntary action in order to their being accountable. Liberty of will in this sense is essential to moral government, as we believe. Men before regeneration are capable of choosing things agreeable to them, as they are afterwards.

In conclusion, we love the doctrine of grace, and we believe that any view of predestination, or of the will, that will tend in any degree to apologize for sin will also tend to minimize the doctrine

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of grace. Paul says: "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Paul so preached as to make grace glitter and shine as a star of the first magnitude. He puts word upon word to lift up our ideas of God's grace, so we feel it important to oppose any view of decrees of God that will in the least excuse any sin in man, or point out mitigating circumstances for sin, because just in proportion as we excuse or apologize for sin we also belittle the doctrine of grace, so we oppose the two-seed doctrine because it seeks to find some quality in man that stands as the cause of his election to glory, while Paul speaks of God's people, "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others". We were no better in our nature or conduct than others, and this is the lesson of our experience. When low bowed before the Lord in the darkest hour of our lives, we confessed, and we knew there was nothing in us that could merit esteem, or give the Creator delight. So we oppose every feature of Arminianism as opposed to the doctrine of grace. We feel bound to contend for those principles that most exalt the doctrine of grace, and we feel sure that if we stay with those lessons that we learned in our first experience, we will expose everything that tends to minimize the doctrine of grace.