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Biblical Preaching & Reverent Worship

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CLASS #01

The legitimacy and use of Confessions

INTRODUCTION

- What is Systematic Theology all about?
- Why is it especially important for a Pastor/Teacher?
- Is Systematic Theology helpful for the whole Church?

Rom.12:2 "Do not be conformed to this world,but be transformed by the **renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
"renewal" ἀνακαίνωσις anakaínōsis = renovation, complete change for the better. (Strong's Lexicon G342)

2 Pet.3:18 "But grow in the grace and **knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."
"knowledge" γνῶσις, gno'-sis = the deeper more perfect and enlarged knowledge of the faith, such as belongs to the more advanced. (Strong's Lexicon G1108)

- Why The Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (2LCF).
  1. Its Systematic Structure.
  2. Its Biblical and Historical faithfulness.
  3. Its broad recognition & acceptance among Baptist churches.

Read this: *Need for Baptists to use confessions of faith.*
https://www.particularbaptistbooks.com/pillarsoftruthintro

I. The legitimacy of confessions.

1 Tim.3:15: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the **pillar** and **ground** of the **truth**.
pillar = refers to a column which supports a building.
ground = refers to the base of foundation of a structure.
truth = refers to the revelation which God has given to men.

- Q. What is the designed purpose of the Church?
  A. To preserve the truth in purity, to defend it against error, against the attacks of its enemies, and then to commit it undiluted and unadulterated to future Generations of Christians
- Has the Church historically understood that written confessions of faith were necessary to fulfilling this duty?

A) Objection #1 – Confessions undermine the Bible's Authority.

- Why is it naïve to believe the Church is wholly executing its duty by simply proclaiming it believes the Bible?
  Example #1 = Jehovah Wittnesses
  Example #2 = Arius (Council of Nicea 325 AD).

- Does the 2LCF claim itself equal with the Bible's Authority?

2LCF 1:1 "The Holy scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience."

2LCF 1:6 "The whole counsel of God concerning all things 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.

B) Objection #2 – Confessions violate Liberty of Conscious.
Example #1 – Rebel to all Authority.
Example #2 – Misunderstanding of the Confession

- Does the 2LCF demand it can bind one's conscious?

2LCF 21:2 "God Alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and Commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word, or not contained in it. So that to believe such doctrines or obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true Liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy Liberty of conscience and reason also."

II. The uses of confessions.

1. A confession is a useful means for the public affirmation and defense of truth.

2 Tim.1:13 "Hold fast **the form** of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." ὑποτύπωσις hupŏtupōsis 'the form' = an example, pattern

Jude 3 "it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should **earnestly contend** for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." ἐπαγωνίζομαι epagōnízomai = to contend

Phil.1:27 "…stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;…"

- What are two ways a confession of faith and systematic theology helps fulfill these Scriptural commands?
  First – Public Definition
  Second – Public Congregational Instruction.

2. A confession serves as a public standard of fellowship and discipline.

Eph.4:3 "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

- What are two ways a confession of faith help maintain unity and peace?
  First – Church Fellowship / Ecclesiastical Fellowship
  Matt.12:25 "Every…house divided against itself cannot stand"
  Second – Church Discipline.
  Rom.16:17 "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

3. A confession serves as a concise standard by which to evaluate ministers.

2 Tim.2:2 "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

III. Concluding observations.

1. Modern Christianity is a flood of doctrinal relativism.

- Why is doctrinal relativism?

2. Church's integrity in the balances.

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Rev. Douglas W. Barger at:

pastor@crbc.faith