

# Table of Contents

Editorial Introduction .....	113
<i>Thomas G. Doughby Jr.</i>	
Interview with Christopher Woznicki .....	117
The Doctrine of Scripture in the First London Baptist Confessions of 1644/1646 .....	141
<i>David H. Wenkel, PhD</i>	
Baptist Polity Inherited from Congregationalism.....	153
<i>John B. Carpenter, PhD</i>	
Fallen Humanity and Its Redemption: Mainstream Sixteenth-Century Anabaptist Views vis-à-vis Arminian Baptist and Traditional Baptist Positions .....	173
<i>Kirk R. MacGregor, PhD</i>	
Preaching the Old Testament in the New Testament: An Intertextual Method .....	189
<i>Charlie Ray III, PhD</i>	
The Bible Is Food: Metaphors, Models, and Method for Theological Interpretation of Scripture.....	203
<i>Micah Chung, PhD</i>	
A Rejection of Classical Evidentialism and an Argument for Complementary Theories of Knowledge of God in Romans 1:18–20.....	221
<i>Benjamin Kelly, ThM</i>	
<i>Jonathan K. Corrado, PhD</i>	
John Clarke: His Contributions to His Church and State .....	249
<i>Rex D. Butler, PhD</i>	
Book Reviews .....	269

## Editorial Introduction

**Thomas G. Doughty Jr.**

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In this issue of *JBTM*, scholars, pastors, and students explore the relation of Baptist life to the Great Tradition of Christianity. Historically, the *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* has focused on [Southern] *Baptist* perspectives, and this issue is no different. Our contributors in this issue, though, helpfully offer unique looks at how Baptists share common beliefs, practices, and conversations with other traditions. Further, this issue presents the opportunity for readers to see authors engage in and apply theological studies for the church. It is my hope that readers wrestle with the arguments offered herein — especially evidence or positions which are new to them — and see the breadth of vital theological exploration present in Baptist life and beyond. May the Lord bless these offerings as another issue focused primarily on “Baptists and the Christian Tradition.”

This issue begins with a written interview on the nature and benefit of Analytic Theology. Christopher Woznicki offers background, material arguments, and concrete examples demonstrating the role that Analytic Theology could play for theological inquiry. As one who has benefited personally from the analytic tradition (while not considering myself a professional philosopher proper), I am grateful for Woznicki’s encouragement that much can be gained by considering AT’s tools, questions, and strategies in systematic theology. My interview questions press him on the ability of Baptists to practice AT as well as some common points of concern from those wary of “new” methods and movements. A largely academic enterprise, AT can come across as rigid, rationalistic, or resistant to confessional foundations. As he shows throughout his exposition, though, Baptists need not trade in lively evangelicalism to participate in or learn from AT. In fact, there may be doctrinal topics and ecclesial practices, including prayer, where we would benefit from more analytic or philosophic input. The greatest fruit from Woznicki’s

interview is the multitude of footnotes and recommended resources he provides for readers to begin or dig deeper in this growing theological discipline.

Our issue contains six standard articles, the first three of which land directly on our issue theme. First, David Wenkel analyzes the two editions of the First London Baptist Confession (1644/1646) for their attention to the doctrine of Scripture. Wenkel highlights explicit and implicit treatments of Scripture throughout the distinct iterations, including specific references to how God has revealed himself and used Scripture in the church as well as the role of proof-texting for doctrinal support. Questions about early Baptists' view of the biblical canon help inform their position in the Great Tradition, while their description and theological use of Scripture demonstrates their firm commitment to the Bible's authority as God's Word.

Second and third, John Carpenter and Kirk MacGregor compare Baptist beliefs and practices with other movements. Carpenter argues that Baptist polity was inherited from Congregationalist practice (citing emphases like regenerate church membership, church covenanting, and local church autonomy together with associationism). This connection runs against something of a historical consensus in Baptist scholarship which views Baptist beginnings in English Separatism, which was distinct from American Congregationalism at least.<sup>1</sup> Carpenter's evidence from later American Congregationalists and Baptists, though, shows an uncanny family resemblance on these ecclesiological foundations. While Baptists and Congregationalists clearly clashed on many occasions, this article points to the irony of some overlapping church practices. Carpenter's comparison provokes a revisiting of the likeness between these two movements while perhaps also setting the stage for a new explanation for the proclivity of a contemporary retrieval of Puritan and Congregationalist emphases in Baptist life. MacGregor examines the theological likeness of some contemporary Baptists on the

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<sup>1</sup> B. R. White is often credited with demonstrating the lineage of the earliest Baptists from English Separatism. White's work shows some overlap in doctrinal and social concerns between Baptists and Congregationalists among English Dissenters in line with Carpenter's argument in this issue, but White also demonstrates the sharp distinction between those camps (and Dutch Anabaptists) once they began to establish themselves and interact. B. R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers* (Oxford: University Press, 1971).

issue of human fallenness shared with Anabaptist examples. Whereas historians have debated the precise material influence Dutch Anabaptists had on English Separatists who became Baptist, MacGregor's article demonstrates the diversity of doctrinal detail among both sixteenth-century Anabaptists and twenty-first century Baptists. Analyzing eight Anabaptists' views of the effects of human fallenness, MacGregor shows precedence for Classical Arminian, Traditional Baptist, and other mediating ideas among contemporary Baptists.<sup>2</sup>

The next three articles of this issue provide readers with more practical handles from a variety of disciplines. First, Charlie Ray III introduces the concept of speech act theory as a method through which to prepare sermons honoring the intertextual use of the Old Testament in the New. Ray argues convincingly that interpreting and preaching the New Testament requires the preacher to understand how the New Testament uses the Old and convey God's revelation through both. Second, Micah Chung explores the theological tool of metaphor and derives a biblical metaphor for the Bible: food. Chung's article offers theologians, Bible teachers, and preachers a lens through which to engage Scripture, hungry for the routine ingestion and fellowship of the Word of God. Third, Benjamin Kelly and Jonathan Corrado critique the use of Romans 1:18–20 to support evidentialism. Their article has implications for apologetics but also provides biblical, theological, and philosophical understandings of human individuals' intuitive knowledge of God and the implications of that knowledge for culpability.

The final article included in this issue reprises the theme of "Baptists and the Christian Tradition" by narrating the life and impact of American Baptist John Clarke. Clarke's life and ministry set the stage for one of the Baptist tradition's greatest contributions to the Great Tradition: supporting legal protection for religious liberty. Rex Butler provides this biographical essay, introducing to our readers a treasure trove of stories, quotations, and sources. I hope to provide historical, theological, and biblical introductions such as this one to readers in each issue, and I am grateful that my mentor and ministry partner could contribute the first such resource.

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<sup>2</sup> For an explanation of the moniker and thought of "Traditional Baptists," see previous issues of the *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 9 no. 2 (Fall 2012) and 10 no. 1 (Spring 2013), edited by Adam Harwood, David Allen, and Eric Hankins.

Rounding out our issue, as usual, are a number of book reviews from scholars, ministry leaders, and PhD students. Like our articles, these book reviews span various disciplines and subject matters. As this issue is released, I pray that God bring more and more thinkers and church leaders to use resources like *JBTM* to show them their place in the Great Tradition, to encourage them to continue exploring theological and biblical studies, and to bolster their ministry.

## The Doctrine of Scripture in the First London Baptist Confessions of 1644/1646

David H. Wenkel, PhD

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This study uses a social-scientific approach to describe the implicit and explicit doctrine of scripture as found in the First London Baptist Confession of 1644 and 1646.<sup>1</sup> The First London Baptist Confession of Faith came out in two editions, one in 1644 and the other in 1646 (hereafter referred to as LBC 1644 and 1646).<sup>2</sup> The Second London Baptist Confession of 1689 drew largely from the Westminster Confession of 1647 and gained even wider popularity. These were an expression of the post-1570 era of Protestant confessionalization.<sup>3</sup> Surprisingly, the two editions of the First London Baptist Confession have few references that explicitly address the doctrine of scripture. The articles that do address the doctrine of scripture are focused on how scripture should be used in the church, how it binds the conscience, and how it should be used to determine what is required for the worship of God. The First London Baptist Confession of 1644 has two articles dedicated to the topic of scripture and worship (7 and 8). But these two articles were combined in the 1646 edition in article 8.

These articles demonstrate that the First London Baptist Confession focused on *how* to use the scriptures but did not identify *what*

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<sup>1</sup> Special thanks to Bernhard U. Hermes for offering insightful corrections and comments on this paper.

<sup>2</sup> This study draws its data from the copies of the Angus Library and Archive at Regent's Park College, University of Oxford: "The Confession of Faith, of those Churches which are Commonly (though falsly) called Anabaptists," (London: 1644) and "A Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations or Churches of Christ in London, Which are Commonly (but unjustly) Called Anabaptists: The Second Impression Corrected and Enlarged," (London: Matthew Simmons, 1646).

<sup>3</sup> For introductory comments on the era of confessionalization within the context of the Reformation see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (New York: Penguin, 2003), xxiv.

scriptures are. The reference to the “Canonically Scriptures” in article 7 in the 1644 was left out of the 1646, which never explicitly mentions the “canon,” but only refers to it in concept when referencing “the holy Scriptures.” But what is the canon and what is its extent? Does the canon include the apocrypha? The salient point is that the doctrine of scripture is not so much stated in one single article as it is woven throughout, requiring a comprehensive analysis that draws all of the information together. This study focuses on internal data, rather than comparisons with external sources in order to offer a comprehensive analysis.

The social-scientific method utilized in this study uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the doctrine of scripture throughout the First London Baptist Confession.<sup>4</sup> Using this method moves between the objectification of human action and the freedom that is inherently unique to human expression. There is a sense in which these confessions of faith have their own voice in distinction from individuals or other groups.<sup>5</sup> They reflect the united voices of local churches who have sought to reflect their agreement about certain doctrines. There is a role for qualitative humanities-like interpretation as well as quantitative analysis. According to the perspective of this study, confessional documents are greater than the sum of their parts, yet they exist as objects that can be subject to mathematical analysis.

This study proceeds in three major sections, each providing propositions that describe the doctrine of scripture. The first section sketches out the relevant confessional context of the First London Baptist Confession. The second section considers explicit statements on the doctrine of scripture and the third section draws together implicit data before offering a final summary in the conclusion.

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<sup>4</sup> The dataset I created utilizes a field called a “unit of reference,” which refers to a contiguous range of scripture, whether one verse or a whole chapter. References that are non-contiguous and separated by ampersands, commas, or other markers were counted as distinct units of reference (e.g. Romans 5:6-8, 14, 17 counts as three distinct units of reference).

<sup>5</sup> On confessions having a voice in their own right see David H. Wenkel, “The Doctrine of the Extent of the Atonement Among the Early English Particular Baptists,” *Harvard Theological Review* 112.3 (2019): 360.

### The Doctrine of Scripture in Confessional Context

The London Baptist Confession of 1644 was the result of interaction between seven Particular Baptist churches. The content and structure of this document shows that they likely drew from various documents and resources.<sup>6</sup> The structure of their confession drew heavily from the non-Baptist Separatist Confession (also called “A True Confession”) of 1596, and possibly from the Aberdeen Confession (1616). It is noteworthy that the Separatist Confession of 1596 does not dedicate an article to the doctrine of scripture. However, the Aberdeen Confession includes a section on the extent of the canon and its exclusivity vis-à-vis the apocrypha, the divine inspiration of scripture, and the necessity of interpreting scripture with scripture.<sup>7</sup> This may point to the conclusion that the “True Confession” from Baptists in Amsterdam was mostly influential.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the conjecture that the Calvinistic “theology of Dort” (1618-1619) was “most dominate for the writers of the London Confession” can be taken a step further.<sup>9</sup> The First London Confession, like the Canons of Dort, is focused on addressing the topics that made the English Particular Baptists subject to ridicule from

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<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of influences on the LBC of 1646 see James Leo Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 58; James M. Renihan, “An Examination of the Possible Influence of Menno Simons’ *Foundation Book* upon the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644,” *American Baptist Quarterly* 15.3 (1996): 190-207 and Gordon L. Belyea, “Origins of the Particular Baptists,” *Themelios* 32.3 (2007): 40-67. Beth Allison Barr also draws attention to the connection between the LBC of 1646 and the Separatist Confession of 1596 (*The Acts of the Apostles: Four Centuries of Baptist Interpretation* [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009], 379).

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of Aberdeen Confession on scripture see Charles Greig McCrie, *The Confessions of the Church of Scotland: Their Evolution in History* (Edinburgh: Macniven & Wallace, 1907), 31. A copy of the Aberdeen Confession can be found in David Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland: Volume 7* (Edinburgh: The Wodrow Society, 1845), 233-242.

<sup>8</sup> For the view in which it is argued that The True Confession provided all the unique emphases of the LBC of 1644 rather than the 1616 Aberdeen Confession see Glen H. Stassen, “Anabaptist Influence in the Origin of the Particular Baptists,” *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36.4 (1962), 339 n48.

<sup>9</sup> Stanley A. Nelson states, “It was, however, the theology of Dort that was most dominate for the writers of the London Confession” in “Reflecting on Baptist Origins: The London Confession of Faith of 1644,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 29 (1994), 34.



pulpits and the press.<sup>10</sup> This polemically aimed structure *broadly* resembles the Canons of Dort's focus on engaging the polemical issues of the moment.

For comparison's sake it is helpful to consider several contemporary Protestant confessions from the pan-European area around the same timeframe, even if there is no evidence that they had any influence over the LBC of 1644 or 1646. The following three examples demonstrate that Protestant confessions from within a hundred years prior reflected a range of confessional interest devoted to the doctrine of scripture. First, The Scots Confession of 1560 article 19 on the doctrine of scripture is one of its shortest and briefly addresses its sufficiency and authority.<sup>11</sup> Second, The French Confession of Faith (1559) contains four articles on the doctrine of scripture, defining the canon, its extent and authority.<sup>12</sup> Third, The Belgic Confession of 1561 goes to even greater lengths to define a Protestant doctrine of scripture and dedicates six distinct articles to the topic. To summarize, the amount of attention given to the doctrine of scripture in Reformed confessions was somewhat dependent upon the historical impetus for the confession.

The structure and content of the First London Baptist Confession reflects its polemical context. The compression of the doctrine of scripture in the First London Baptist Confession from two articles in the 1644 to one article in the 1646 highlights the intensely contextual nature of the document and the driving forces behind its creation. Broadly speaking, although the earliest Particular Baptists advocated separatism from the Church of England, and although they sought to vigorously distinguish themselves from the Anabaptists and paedobaptists, their confession was largely an intra-Protestant matter. In fact, the First London Baptist Confession may have been a response to the Westminster Assembly's request that all Baptist dissenters explain themselves in writing.<sup>13</sup> The preface of the 1644 indicates that the confession was a response to mischaracterizations and false charges in "both in Pulpit and Print." The

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<sup>10</sup> For example, Daniel Featley, *The Dippers Dipt, or, The Anabaptists duck'd and plung'd over head and eares, at a Disputation in Southwark* (London: N.B. and Richard Royston, 1647).

<sup>11</sup> Arthur C. Cochrane, *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 166.

<sup>12</sup> Cochrane, *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century*, 144.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew C. Bingham, "English Baptists and the Struggle for Theological Authority, 1642-1646," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 68.3 (2017), 567.

apologetic purpose is indicated by the extended title on the cover of both the 1644 and 1646 editions and the “unjust” conclusion that they were “called Anabaptists.”

These seven Baptist churches in London would have shared the doctrine of scripture with the Anglicans and Presbyterians as it pertained to the extent of the canon. It was the focus on polemical issues within the Protestant sphere of London (and its surroundings) that shaped the First London Confession and directed its content, meaning that there was little need for establishing articles on the doctrine of scripture beyond how it should be used. The doctrine of scripture was simply not a matter of contention between the Protestants. Rather, like the Canons of Dort, which was also polemically focused, the internal data evidences a robust doctrine of scripture woven into its warp and woof.

### **Explicit Data on the Doctrine of Scripture**

This section describes the implicit doctrine of scripture in the First London Baptist Confession by considering the internal data from both editions. The internal data in the LBC of 1644 and 1646 comes from words, phrases, and the biblical references in the footnotes. There are strong elements of continuity between the two editions, but the data points for each are kept separate. As a whole, the 1644 edition has a total of 53 articles while 1646 edition has a total of 52 articles plus an additional special article on Christ’s divinity appearing after article 16, also for a total of 53 articles. There are discontinuities and developments between the 1644 and the 1646 editions, but their doctrine of scripture remains unchanged, as demonstrated by the following seven propositions.

*First, both editions explicitly delimit the concept of canonicity with reference to the Old and New Testaments.* In the LBC of 1644, there are references to the “New Testament” in articles 36 and 39. In the LBC of 1646, article 49 refers to the centrality of “the truth of the Old and New Testament.” A reference to the “New Testament” is also found in article 39 of the LBC of 1646 in the article describing baptism. Likewise, a reference to the “Old Testament” is found in the preface of the 1646 edition. Thus, the OT and the NT together constitute “the truth” which the church must confess as she goes on in obedience to Christ. While the list of canonical books is never explicitly defined, the confessions (especially article 7 in the 1644) leave no possibility for the “word of God” to exist outside of what was understood to be the Protestant canon. Article 7 of the LBC of

1644 captures this doctrine as it states: “The rule of this knowledge, faith, and obedience, concerning the worship and service of God, and all other Christian duties, is not mans inventions, opinions, devices, laws, constitutions, or traditions unwritten whatsoever, but only the word of God contained in the Canonical Scriptures (John 5:39; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Col 21:18, 23; Matt 15:9).”

*Second, both editions use interchangeable language for the concept of canonicity.* The 1644 edition has an explicit statement about the “canon” of Scripture while the 1646 has an implicit doctrine of canonicity. The explicit statement in the 1644 edition is found in Article 7 (as quoted above) while article 8 identifies the “Canonically Scriptures” as the “written Word” in which God has revealed Christ and his promises. The 1646 article 8 largely retains the wording from the 1644’s article 7. However, the 1646 drops the terminology of “the word of God contained in the Canonically Scriptures” and replaces it with “the Word of God contained in the holy Scriptures” (article 8). The phrase “canonical scriptures” in the 1644 was changed to the “holy Scriptures” in the 1646. This change may reflect an attempt to popularize the confession by using terminology more common among the laity. The combination of articles 7 and 8 in the 1644 into article 8 in the 1646 also broadens the scope from the knowledge of Christ to the knowledge of all things related to the worship of God.

*Third, both editions identify the divine authority of the scriptures.* The authority of the scriptures is based on their unique characteristic of being the very word of God.<sup>14</sup> In both editions, the rule and locus of authority that directs the life worship of God’s people is the canon of scripture alone. In articles 7 and 8 from the 1644 and article 8 from the 1646, the concept of inspiration is strongly present, even if the word is not. Despite the significant development in these articles, both editions utilize some reference to 2 Tim 3:15-17 with its reference to “all scripture being breathed out by God.”<sup>15</sup> Both editions of the confession explicitly reject other sources of authority

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<sup>14</sup> Broadly speaking of Reformed confessions, Yuzo Adhinarta states: “Scripture is identified as the Word of God simply because the Reformed confessions believe and teach Scripture as God’s speech” in *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Major Reformed Confessions and Catechisms of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Langham Monographs; Carlisle: Langham Partnership, 2012), 33.

<sup>15</sup> See the reference to 2 Tim 3:15 in articles 1, 7, 8 of the 1644 edition and article 8 in the 1646 edition.

concerning the worship and service of God which might bind the conscience, whether written as laws or unwritten as traditions.

*Fourth, both editions identify faith as a necessary component for understanding the scriptures.* In article 22 of both editions, faith is identified as providing the epistemological basis for understanding the scriptures. Article 22 in the 1646 states: “Faith is the gift of God wrought in the hearts of the elect by the Spirit of God: by which faith they come to know and believe the truth of the Scriptures, and the excellence of them above all other writings.” Faith begets faith. But this circularity is not a “vicious circularity” because, as article 22 explains, there must be several broad movements or aspects to this faith as it knows, believes, beholds glory, understands attributes, and sees the excellencies of Christ.<sup>16</sup>

*Fifth, both editions identify the Spirit of God as providing the power to submit to the scriptures.* Again, article 22 in both editions is most helpful here, explaining that faith is given as a “gift of God” and by “the Spirit of God.” This clarifies the role of faith by explaining that intellectual understanding of the scriptures is not based on one’s internal abilities alone, it is based on God’s grace. The Spirit of God gives people the ability to believe the scriptures through “power and fulness of the Spirit in its working and operations” (article 22 in both editions). The result of this is that the elect person is “enabled to case their souls upon this truth thus believed” (article 22 in both editions). Submitting to God’s word (or “casting one’s self upon it”) is not mere intellectual assent but the work of one’s entire being responding through the power of the Spirit.

*Sixth, both editions urge the centrality of preaching the scriptures.* The act of “prophesying” is defined internally in article 45 (1644) and article 44 (1646) as publicly teaching the word of God. The act of preaching the word of God in the congregational setting of worship provides “edification, exhortation, and comfort of the Church” (both editions). The concept of public worship is not merely a lecture or intellectual endeavor. This explanation of preaching, together with article 22, anticipates public worship as a spiritual event in which the Spirit of God is working in “power and fulness” (article 22) to enable people to understand it, submit to it, and act upon it in faith.

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<sup>16</sup> For an explanation of “vicious circularity” and inner testimony of the Holy Spirit see David H. Wenkel, “The Logic and Exegesis behind Calvin’s Doctrine of the Internal Witness of the Holy Spirit to the Authority of Scripture,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 3.2 (2011): 100.

*Seventh, both editions teach the sufficiency of scripture.* The content of articles 7 and 8 (1644) and article in 8 (1646) teach that the scriptures provide “whatsoever is needfull for us to know, beleeve, and practice.” This is the doctrine of the sufficiency of scripture—the teaching that the Bible already provides everything that the disciple of Jesus might need for holiness and godliness. This doctrine also means that there is no need for additional revelation from God. This covers the “whole duty” of a person’s life. This doctrine also applies to the needs of the congregation and questions about how it should worship God corporately. The introduction of the 1646 edition identifies Jesus Christ as their “head and lawgiver” directing emphasis to the New Testament.

### **Implicit Data on the Doctrine of Scripture**

*This section describes the implicit doctrine of scripture in the First London Baptist Confession by considering the internal data from both editions.* Besides the explicit references, there are more implicit dimensions to the doctrine of scripture that must be teased out by considering the data of the texts themselves.

*First, both editions limit the extent of the canon by not using the apocrypha or extra-canonical sources.* The definition of canonicity according to this confession is admittedly tautological: the canon is the Scriptures is the Word of God. While the extent of the canon is never defined, several points are clear from the internal data. Both editions include the Old Testament and New Testament in the canon of scripture. Neither confession draws from any apocryphal book or extra-canonical source such as the Psalms of Solomon, Sirach, 1-4 Maccabees, etc. This is an admittedly weak argument from silence, but the sheer weight of the data is remarkable: the 1644 has a total of 502 units of reference and the 1646 has a total of 444 units of reference. This means that out of over nine-hundred units of reference used to support doctrine, none of them includes a disputed source within Protestantism. This fact combined with the delimiting phrases about the word of God only being in the scriptures indicates that the apocrypha was excluded from the canon.

*Second, both editions limit the extent of the canon to the traditional Protestant list.* Out of the sixty-six books in the Protestant canon, the 1644 used a total of thirty-six biblical books and the 1646 used a total of thirty-eight books. Both confessions used the same number of New Testament books, excepting only the books of Philemon, 2 John, and 3 John. The two additions in the 1646 were 1 Samuel

and Numbers, both found in article 3 on the topic of God's decrees. With respect to the Old Testament, both confessions highly favor the Pentateuch, the wisdom books, and the major prophets of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The only minor prophet cited by both confessions is Malachi and the only historical book of the Old Testament cited is 1 Samuel (by the 1646).

*Third, both editions imply a doctrine of the theological unity of scripture through proof-texting.* The joining of certain passages together by using "with" indicates that the confessions reflect an intention to interpret scripture with scripture (*Scriptura sui interpretis*). It is important to observe that the very practice of proof-texting implies a certain warrant or source of authority.<sup>17</sup> For all of the challenges leveled at footnotes in theological treatises, it is a symbol that communicates the coinherence of "exegetical reasoning" and "dogmatic reasoning."<sup>18</sup> In practice, the proof-texting includes directives to read one biblical text alongside another by including the word "with." In both editions, there are eight prooftexts that use "with" to join different units of reference and four of these relate an Old Testament passage to a New Testament passage.<sup>19</sup> The Old Testament and the New Testament are understood to be theologically united in their testimony to Christ and in certain instances they can be read together. The use of "with" implies that different biblical books by different authors would harmoniously support the same doctrine.

*Fourth, both editions imply a doctrine of the perspicuity of scripture through proof-texting of entire chapters of scripture.* The practice of citing entire chapters from biblical books is found in both the 1644 and the 1646 edition. With the exception of books of the Bible that have only one chapter, such as Jude, the 1644 cites an entire chapter of the Bible in seven different articles, covering both the Old Testament (Genesis and Job) and the New Testament (John, 1 Corinthians, 1 Timothy, 2 Peter, Revelation).<sup>20</sup> On two occasions there are two

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<sup>17</sup> Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, *Reformed Catholicity: The Promise of Retrieval for Theology and Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 117.

<sup>18</sup> Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 130.

<sup>19</sup> In one particularly interesting example from article 14 (1646), the proof-texts include an Old Testament passage about the coming "prophet like Moses" (Deut 18:15) connected "with" a New Testament passage that quotes it (Acts 3:22, 23). This indicates that the "with" indicator in proof-texts was sometimes used for Old Testament citations in the New Testament.

<sup>20</sup> In the 1644 edition, see John 14 in article 1, Genesis 1 in article 4, Job 1 and 2 in article 19.a and 2 Peter 2 in 19b, and 1 Timothy 3 in article 36.

entire chapters cited in one unit of reference (Job 1 & 2 and Revelation 2 & 3). Additionally, there is one instance in article 35 that refers to a large section of a chapter by proof-texting in early copies as “1 Cor 12:12 to the end.” In this last citation from 1 Corinthians 12, the section on the body and its members, from verse 12 to 31, constitutes about sixty percent of the chapter by verse count. Most of these chapter proof-texts in the 1644 were removed in the revision process of the 1646 edition, but the 1646 continues this practice of citing entire chapters of scripture. The 1646 cites an entire chapter of Bible in five different articles, also covering both the Old Testament (Psalms and Ezekiel) and the New Testament (Romans and Revelation).<sup>21</sup> The proof-texting of entire chapters implies some doctrine of clarity of scripture because the citation of an entire chapter assumes that the reader is reasonably able to correlate the doctrine being supported with a rather expansive range of scripture. In other words, when an entire chapter is cited, some of the interpretative work is left to the reader as to how the scripture connects to the doctrine being established. Such work can only be done with texts that are sufficiently clear to the reader.

*Fifth, both editions reflect an implicit doctrine of New Testament priority.* Both confessions point to the presupposition that the Old Testament was best understood through the clarity of the New Testament. The prominence of this implicit doctrine in the LBC of 1644 and 1646 is striking when one considers the data. Out of the 502 units of reference to scripture in the 1644, only 71 or 14% are supported by the Old Testament. In the 1646 edition, only 80 out of 444 units of reference, or 18% of proof-texts are drawn from the Old Testament. This means that most of the time, the writers of the confession looked to the New Testament to support their doctrine. This emphasis finds more explicit teaching in the article 25 (both editions) against preparationism by the Law of Moses.<sup>22</sup> This may explain the source of the charges of denying the Old Testament, as alluded to in the introduction of the 1646 edition. However, the introduction to the 1646 edition makes it clear that they contested

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<sup>21</sup> In the 1646 edition, see Psalm 144 in article 3, Romans 3, 7, and 10 in article 34, Ezekiel 37 in article 35, Revelation 2 and 3 in article 46 and Revelation 21 in article 47.

<sup>22</sup> For the conclusion that the First London Baptist Confession holds to a soft or chastened preparationism see David H. Wenkel, “Only and Alone the Naked Soul: The Anti-Preparation Doctrine of the London Baptist Confessions of 1644/1646.” *Baptist Quarterly* 50.1 (2019): 19-29.

the charge that they denied the Old Testament. This hermeneutical principle of New Testament priority shares continuity with the later Second London Baptist Confession of 1689, which states in article 1.7, “All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all.”<sup>23</sup> While the gospel remains clear, the New Testament is given priority when it comes to interpreting that which is difficult, especially the Old Testament. This principle worked concurrently with the aforementioned point: that the scriptures should interpret the scriptures.

### Conclusion

This study offers a social-scientific description of the doctrine of scripture in the First London Baptist Confession, considering both explicit and implicit characteristics in eleven propositions. This study offers an important advancement in this area by using internal data and treating the two editions of the confession as an artifact of the humanities with quantifiable data. As a whole, the doctrine of scripture in the First London Baptist Confession occupies a space between the Canons of Dort, with its doctrine of scripture woven through, and the hearty treatment of the matter in six articles as found in the Belgic Confession of 1561. Some aspects of scripture are clearly and explicitly addressed, and some are not. As the first Calvinistic Baptist confession was edited, the topic of scripture contracted rather than expanded as articles 7 and 8 from the 1644 were compressed into article 8 in the 1646. Both of these early editions of the First London Baptist Confession celebrate the truthfulness and excellence of Scripture. Even where explicit references to inspiration are not found, the *concept* of the inspiration of Scripture is certainly woven through. This analysis of internal data such as keywords, proof-texts, and phrases point to the way in which the New Testament was given priority for doctrinal justification because of its clarity and the nature of progressive revelation.

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<sup>23</sup> Nehemiah Coxe, likely one of the co-editors of the LBC of 1689, also articulated this perspective when he wrote, “the best interpreter of the Old Testament is the Holy Spirit speaking to us in the new” in Nehemiah Coxe and John Owen, *Covenant Theology from Adam to Christ*, ed. Ronald D. Miller, James M. Renihan, and Fransisco Orozco (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2005), 36.