

## Emmaus Essentials

### The London Baptist Confession of 1689

#### Chapter 2 - Of God and The Holy Trinity (Part 1)

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#### I. Introduction

A. Chapter 2 of the Confession - Of God and of The Holy Trinity

B. Introduce and Welcome Dr. Renihan

1. I've asked Dr. Renihan to join us for this episode, in part, because Chapter 2 of the confession is his favorite chapter. Dr. Renihan, would you mind explaining why this chapter tops the list for you?

a. Dr. Renihan

#### II. Paragraph 1

A. Read the Paragraph

B. Compare the LBC with the WCF and Savoy

1. In preparation for this episode I went back and compared the LBC with the WCF and the Savoy and was reminded that the LBC differs significantly from the other two confessions in this chapter in general, and in this paragraph in particular - and that can be a bit surprising at first. What are we to make of that? Are we to imagine that the Baptists differed in some way from the Presbyterians and Independents of the 17th century in regard to their view of God?

a. Dr. Renihan

C. General Outline of Paragraph 1

1. In the last episode of Emmaus Essentials we discussed the fact that in most of the chapters of the confession the first paragraph serves as a kind of *introductory paragraph*, or a general overview paragraph - and that seems to be the case here. The basic doctrine presented here in paragraph 1 will be fleshed out in the following paragraphs.

2. Dr. Renihan, would you be willing to outline paragraph one for us before I ask you some specific questions about it?

a. Dr. Renihan

D. Questions About Paragraph 1

1. Subsistence is probably a new word for a lot of people. What does this word mean, and why is it used?

a. Dr. Renihan

2. When talking with others about the confession I've noticed that some people are surprised to hear that God "is a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, [and without] parts..." What is the confession saying here, and why do you think that people are surprised by this doctrine?

a. Dr. Renihan

3. The confession also states that God is "without passions". What is that all about? Aren't passions a good thing?

a. Dr. Renihan

4. The Confession goes on to say that God "[dwells] in the light which no man can approach unto..." What is meant by this? Is the confession saying that we are not able to approach God? Isn't this contrary to what we know to be true in the gospel?

a. Dr. Renihan

5. And then the confession follows with a rather extensive listing of the attributes of God. The confession lays out a whole string of adjectives in an attempt to describe the character of God to us. For me, this is the portion of the paragraph that gets me all worked up when I read it. It's truly beautiful. And I think you've

emphasized this before, Dr. Renihan, that it seems as if the framers of the confession are straining to find words in the English language that are big enough and deep enough to do justice to reality of who God is. I don't think that we have the time to define and thoroughly consider each and every attribute, but Dr. Renihan, would you be willing to highlight a few of the attributes that stand out to you as most significant and seem as if they might need further explanation?

a. Dr. Renihan

6. Half way through the listing of the attributes of God there is a bit of a break, and the point is made that God "[works] all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will." Why is this a significant statement at this point in the confession?

a. Dr. Renihan

7. And then there is a purpose statement, if you will. All of this is "for His own glory." Would you be willing to comment on the significance of this statement?

a. Dr. Renihan

8. The confession is careful to emphasize two realities here at the end of chapter one; that God "is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him", we rejoice in that teaching, of course - but the second truth emphasized is the reality that God is also "most just and terrible in His judgements, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty." The first truth is a comfort to us, especially when we consider it in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But the second truth is heavy. It's a truth that most Christians don't like to talk about much. On the one hand, it should be a difficult thing for us to talk about, don't you think? But on the other hand, it is important that this truth be stated clearly. Dr. Renihan, would you expand upon that a bit?

a. Dr. Renihan