

The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2, Paragraph 3 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”, Message #49 – “God’s Attributes and His Essence”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall, on September 20th, 2020.

Paragraph 3 – In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, d) the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, e) yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is f) eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit g) proceeding from the Father and the Son; 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.

d) 1st John 5: 7; Matthew 28: 19; 2nd Corinthians 13: 14; e) Exodus 3: 14; John 14: 11;

1st Corinthians 8:6; f)John 1:14,18; g)John 15:26; Gal 4: 6)

We are continuing the study of our God as being one God, undivided in His Essence and Being, even though there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, all subsisting together in this Divine Essence. Each of these Persons has, as our Confession says, the whole Divine Essence, yet that Essence is undivided. Last Sunday we saw that God in His nature is a Spirit with Infinite Perfections. These perfections are what we as Christians understand as His attributes.

1. As a Spirit, God is Invisible, yet He is a God of Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge and Power.

Psalm 147: 1-5 – “Praise the Lord!” “For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.” “The Lord builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.” “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” “He counts the number of the stars He calls them all by name.” “Great is our Lord, and mighty in power His understanding is infinite.” “The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked to the ground.”

Now, why should we praise the Lord? Because it is good to sing praises to Him, for it is pleasant. It comforts and strengthens the heart of the believer, knowing that God takes cognizance of us at every moment. He thinks upon us for our good. He, it says here is in the business of building up Jerusalem, His Church. He does this by gathering together the outcasts of Israel. That is, those persons who are rejected by upright, moral, and decent people, He will not despise them if they will turn to Him, and trust in Him for His great salvation; if they will fly to Him for refuge from men’s condemnation, if they will confess their sins to Him, and ask for His forgiveness through Christ, He will taken them in, heal their broken heart and bind up their wounds of sin.

Why would you think that He would then go on, through the Psalmist’s words, to mention how He counts the number of the stars and calls them all by name? It is to show us how great God is in His Being, that He is omniscient in regard to all that He has created, and all the details of all the stars that He has created, in that He numbers them them; indeed, He calls them all by name. This we can apply to His infinite understanding of all the people whom He has created, and His

infinitely great purposes in relation to His own people especially. You remember that when God gave the great promise of what He would do for him, He said to him – “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” “And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’” Genesis 15: 5

2. God as a Spirit is Eternal in His Being.

Psalm 90: 1 and 2 – “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.” “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”

If God consisted of parts, He could not be eternal and absolutely the first Being. This scripture declares that He has existed from everlasting to everlasting; having no beginning and no end.

“Since God is an infinite and uncreated Spirit, and free from composition in every sense, He is entirely and perfectly immutable: and since He is eternal, there can be no change of time with Him; time does not belong to Him, only to a creature, which is the measure of its duration; and began when a creature began to be, and not before; but God is before all creatures; they being made by Him, and so before time; He was the same before the day was as now, and now as He was before; even the same today, yesterday, and forever: though He is the Ancient of Days, He does not become older and older; He is no older now than He was millions of ages ago, nor will be millions of ages to come; His eternity is an everlasting and unchangeable now; He is the same, and His years shall have no end.” (Psalm 102: 27) John Gill’s Body of Divinity, P. 36)

3. All Three Persons of the Divine Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are to equated together with their Attributes as being God.

We can open up the truth about one of God’s Attributes to show forth this truth – The Essential Property that God is Light.

1st John 1: 5 – “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all.”

Now, you will notice here that God and Light are equated with each other. It is not that God has light, although that is true. It is that God is Light essentially in Himself. Light is attributed to Him. He is the Father of lights it says in James 1: 17, but James goes on to say there that with Him there is no variation, no shifting of shadow, no shadow of turning. This is speaking of His inability to be anything but straightforwardly true and righteous. He is essential pure in His nature and Being. He is essentially Righteous and Holy and Good in His Being. There is no darkness in Him at all. Which means that there is nothing of sin in God. Not one spot, not one shadow of darkness.

It is not that He is physical created light in His pure Being, because the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars were not created until the 4th day of creation. And on the 1st day of creation, He said – Let there be light, and there was light. The Lord saw that the light was good and He separated it from the darkness. But He Himself is essential Light, and was before all created light, and in the New Jerusalem, in the eternal state, it says in Revelation 21, verse 23, it says – “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it.” “The Lamb is

its light.” Which shows us that each of the Persons of the Divine Trinity is Light and the three Persons together as one Essence, One God, are pure and perfect Light.

Practical Application # 1 – 1st John 1, verses 6 and 7 – “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.” “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin.”

If we are walking in sin, walking in false doctrine, speaking falsehood, or living in any sinful practice, breaking God’s law, not guarding our thoughts, not praying to see the truth, not walking uprightly before God, we are not practicing the truth. We are walking in darkness. When we say that we have fellowship with God, when we are actually walking in the darkness of sin or error, we are not really having fellowship with Him. We are lying to ourself, and we may be lying to others. But, if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with God who is the Light. We really are walking in truth and righteousness. We are really sharing in His holiness. We really are interacting truthfully, faithfully, wisely, and lovingly, with God Himself, with all three of the Divine Persons in the Godhead, who are in their one essence, Light. The Triune God is in the Light, because each of the 3 Persons is essentially Light.

Practical Application # 2 – James 1: 13-17 – “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.” “But each one is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.” “Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” “Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.” “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”

So, James is saying that when we enter into temptation, when we fall into temptation, we must never think that God Himself who is tempting us. God cannot be tempted with evil, and therefore we can easily see that since that is the case, that He Himself is perfectly absolutely righteous in His Being and all that He does. Temptation is always our being drawn away from God and His pure and perfect light into the darkness; to be drawn away to some sinful act or object by our own flesh and its lusts and desires. We are enticed by our own desires, to think about the sin and do that sin. We ourselves move away from our fellowship with God, away from His pure and perfect Light, and we deliberately move toward and into that sin which brings about our eventual physical and eternal death.

That is, as Thomas Manton puts it – “When sin is actually accomplished, and by frequent acts strengthened, and settled into a habit”, it will bring forth, or result in, death. He says – “Death is but a modest word for damnation; the first and second death are both implied: for as the apostle showeth the supreme cause of sin, which is lust; so the last and utmost result of it, which is death; not only that which is temporal, for then the series would not be perfect, but that other death, which we are always dying, and is called death because life is neither desired, nor can it properly be said to be enjoyed.”

And so, since God is intrinsically and essentially Light in His essence, we ought to walk in that light.