

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2, Paragraph 3 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”, Message # 51 – “Love and Wrath in God”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall, on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 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) 1<sup>st</sup> John 5: 7;    Matthew 28: 19;    2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13: 14;    e) Exodus 3: 14;    John 14: 11;  
1<sup>st</sup> 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 3 Persons has, as our Confession states, the whole Divine Essence, yet that Essence is undivided. Last Sunday we saw that God in His nature is a Spirit existing as pure and Perfect Love. His Essence, it says here in Paragraph 3, is distinguished by several peculiar relative properties. These properties or perfections are what we as Christians generally understand as His attributes. The relative properties which are distinguished in God are His Attributes. They are equated with each other in His Essence because God is One God, but because we are finite in our understanding, must be distinguished from each other if we are even to begin to comprehend what our God is like.

Such are the attributes of God’s love and His wrath, or we could speak of them as His mercy and His Justice. These are all one in His essence, but we must learn to distinguish them so that we will understand Him better.

**1. Let’s look first at one of the Essential Properties or Attributes of God, that the He is Love.**

**1<sup>st</sup> John 4: 7-11** – “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.” “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

**Also, verse 16** – “And we have known and believed the love that God has for us.” “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.”

What wonderful verses these! John first gives us the practical application of exhorting us to love one another, because Christian love is of God; that is, it is from Him directly poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Love is the lead and primary gift of the Spirit,

produced by the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and we exhibit love as a fruit of the Spirit. Everyone who loves with this special grace, other brethren and other people, is born of God and knows God. He who does not love (that is, as it is defined in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13) does not know God. And then this explanation – “For God is love”. That is, God is love in His holy Essence and Being.

Love is set forth in the everlasting gospel of Christ. Listen to Samuel Eyles Pierce in his commentary on 1<sup>st</sup> John 4: 16 – “Christ is the Pearl of inestimable value which is hidden, treasured up and contained in this Cabinet.” (that is – the gospel) “The Holy Ghost unlocks it, and shews us Christ the glorious Mediator, who is the power of God, and the wisdom of God: hereby we are brought to the knowledge of the Father in Him; and by the word and by the Spirit we are led to scriptural views and apprehensions of what He is in Christ to us – of what His heart is towards us – of the love wherewith he loves us; yea, that He is love, and nothing but love, to us in the Son of his love; and this knowledge is the foundation of the whole of our faith this great and incomprehensible mystery of grace. (P. 136)

He goes on to say on P. 137 – “Our knowledge that is love – that He hath manifested the same to us; yet it is only so to our faith.” “Our knowledge that God is love – That He hath manifested His love to us in Christ, must originate out of ourselves entirely: it must spring from the word of revelation: it must go beyond all act, gifts and graces of the same: it must be known as it is in God Himself; it being from this love, all the grace of god flows forth towards us.” “God is pleased so to speak of His love to us, and set it before us in the Scriptures as to give us to understand that His love is to us inherent in Himself; and that the bringing us to the knowledge of this exceeds in blessedness, all the gifts of it; and all our enjoyments of it; yea all the communion we can ever have with God in it even Heaven and Glory.” “This hath led me many years past to say, I had rather know God’s love than enjoy it.” “There can be no knowing and believing the love that God hath to us, but there must be an enjoyment of the same; yet the real spiritual knowledge of the subject infinitely exceeds the enjoyment of the same, be it either on earth or in heaven.”

**Practical Application:** If God is love and He demonstrated that love in the giving of His Son for us, then we should be learning by His grace to give ourselves, and our life, in service to Him by means of loving the brethren.

**1<sup>st</sup> John 3: 16** – “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us.” “And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” How is this done? Well the practical outworking is given to us in verse 17 – “But whoever has this world’s goods and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”

Well, it does not. But as we think about God’s love in the giving of His dear Son, His Son’s love for us sinful creatures, then we can learn to lay down our lives for the brethren. Ah, this is the importance of being able to see God’s Essence and Attributes as being the same. For God is love and those who are going to minister for God cannot shut up their heart from their brother if God has not shut up His heart from them.

**2. Can love and wrath be together in God at the same time? The Answer is Yes.**

**Hebrews 12: 28, 29** - “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” “For our God is a consuming fire.

We see here that God is wrath; that is, that He is a consuming fire in His Essence and Being toward all things sinful, toward all people who are outside of Christ and who hold to their own works-righteousness, and who will not repent. The apostle Paul has been talking in this chapter about the New Testament, New Covenant kingdom of Christ to which all believers in this age have come to. In verse 18 he says that we have not come to a mountain which may be touched and that burned with fire, but we have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God; that is, Christ’s universal Church in both heaven and on the earth. Sinful people will not escape from God’s wrath and his judgment of them, which is most certainly coming, if they do not pursue peace with all men, and the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, as it says in verse 14. Since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, he says we are to have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. And how does he want to bring us to this holy attitude that we will have when we consider God and when we worship Him? It is by our understanding that our God is a consuming fire. This is what God is in His Essence in terms of His Holiness and Justice. He is a consuming fire in that He hates all sin and must punish it wherever He finds it.