

THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF
FAITH
II. OF GOD & THE HOLY TRINITY

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC

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I. ONE GOD ONLY

There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will; for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal, most just, and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

I. ONE GOD ONLY

Issues:

- There is but one God.
 - One divine *being*, not one divine *person*. There is but one first cause, and one Supreme Being (Dt. 4:35; 6:4; Isa. 43:10; I Tim. 2:5).
 - “I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me.” (Dt. 32:39).
 - “we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one” (I Cor. 8:4)
 - He is the only living and true God, distinguishing him from idols and fictitious notions of deity.
 - God is a most pure spirit: an incorporeal, immaterial, and invisible Being, “without body, parts, or passions.”
 - References to God’s *hands* or *eyes* are *anthropomorphisms*.
 - He is possessed of all possible perfections. *Attributes* are essential properties of God’s nature.
 - Distinguished between communicable and incommunicable attributes.
 - The Confession emphasizes attributes pertaining to God’s infinity, transcendence, power, goodness, mercy, and righteousness.

2. ASEITY OF GOD

God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsel, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.

2. ASEITY OF GOD

Issues:

- God does not derive his being from any other source: he alone is *self-existent*.
 - “I am, that I am” (Ex. 3:14).
- God is dependent on no other being: possessing all life, glory, and blessedness in himself. (Acts 17:28).
- God’s glory is underived, but only manifested in the creature.
- As the eternal and almighty God, he is sovereign over all things.
 - Nothing is dependent or contingent, but all things flow from his perfect, inscrutable will.
 - He is the first cause and the ultimate end of all things.
 - “For from him, and through him, and to him are all things. To him be glory. Amen” (Rom. 11:36).
- There are not surprises to God, who has a perfect understanding of himself and all things.
- As the author of all being, he has a claim to all obedience and service.

3. THE TRINITY

In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 5:7; Mt. 3:16-17; 28-19; 2 Cor. 13:14). The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father (Jn. 1:14, 18); the Holy Spirit eternal proceeding from the Father and the Son (Jn. 15:26; Gal. 4:6).

3. THE TRINITY

Issues:

- Three persons in the one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - Not a contradiction, but a mystery.
- Each of these persons is truly God.
- Personal properties of the three divine persons.
- Eternal Subordination of the Son?
- There is one divine being and one divine will.
- All possessing and receiving the same glory.