

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”,  
Message # 24 – “The Wisdom of the Wise”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School  
Class, by Pastor Paul Rendall on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017.**

**Chapter 2 – Of God and the Holy Trinity, Paragraph 1 -**

The Lord our God is but (a)one only living and true God; whose (b)subsistence is in and of Himself, (c)infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; (d)a most pure spirit, (e) invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is (f)immutable, (g)immense, (h)eternal, incomprehensible, (i)almighty, every way infinite, (k)most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; (l)working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, (m)for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; (n)the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just (o)and terrible in his judgments, (p)hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the (q)guilty.

**1. Holding fast to Christ and not boasting in men is the Wisdom of God**

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1: 10-19** – “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND BRING TO NOTHING THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRUDENT."

**Verses 30 and 31** – “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--that, as it is written, "HE WHO GLORIES, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD.”

**Daniel Whedon says:** Christ is our Sophia; our substitute for the Greek philosophy.

**He says on verse 17 – Not in wisdom of words** – “Not hereby meaning skill in speech; nor, as Olshausen, “word-wisdom;” nor philosophical discourse; but wisdom or philosophy which is the subject of words or discourse by philosophers. This will appear in our progress. The Greek word here rendered wisdom, σοφία, sophia, is the last half of the word φιλοσοφία, philosophia, philosophy; and means throughout this chapter precisely the same thing, except that the former signified wisdom, and the latter, signifying love of wisdom, was the more modest profession for a sage to make. Both terms mean that system of thought, originated by the intellect of deep thinkers, which assumes to decide on the origin of all things, the existence of God, and the nature and destiny of man. The systems were admired for their profundity, and men divided into sects and schools following different leaders of thought, just as the Corinthian Christians were following different leaders. That such is the meaning of the word here is plain from 1Corinthians 1: 22, where the sophia is expressly affirmed to be that which was the object of the search of the Greeks. In its best form this sophia was the nearest approach to true religion that the unaided reason of man could attain. Yet, source of pride and partisanship as it was to the intellectual Gentile world, the apostle triumphs in declining a similar homage from the Church, and in abasing sophia to the bottom, and placing the cross at the summit. Not but that there was a value and a grandeur positively in the Greek sophia. It was only as it came in competition with the cross, as a substitute for the Gospel, as a means of enlightenment and salvation to men, that it was to be abased; just as all things belonging to mere man must be abased before that which is truly of God. Hence the sophia, with all of its human nobility, power, and pretension, must all be trampled in the dust when the triumphs of the cross

were approaching. Socrates and Plato were illustrious men; their philosophies were a noble product; but when they come into collision with Christ and his cross into what nothingness must they not sink!”

You can see here that the apostle Paul is linking the boasting in the teaching abilities of certain Christian men with the wisdom of the world. He knew that Christ had sent him to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. He says that God will destroy the wisdom of the wise; those who boast in men. To be perfectly joined together in the same mind what do you need to focus on? Not men and their abilities, but Christ and Him crucified. It is Christ who became for us wisdom from God.

**John Gill says:** “**I am of Paul;** he had been instrumental in their conversion: he had baptized some of them, and first laid the foundation of a Gospel church among them; was a solid, brave, and bold preacher of the Gospel, and was set for the defense of it; wherefore he was the minister for them, and they were desirous of being called and distinguished by his name: but there was another party that said,

**and I of Apollos;** in opposition to Paul, whom they despised, as a man whose aspect was mean; his bodily presence weak, made no figure in the pulpit; his speech low and contemptible; his discourses plain, not having that flow of words, and accuracy of expression, as Apollos had; who was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, who coming to Corinth after the Apostle Paul, many were taken with his way of preaching; he was the preacher for them, and they chose to be called after him, and in distinction from others: whilst another company of them said,

**and I of Cephas;** or Peter, in opposition both to Paul and Apollos; who with them were new upstart ministers, in comparison of Peter, who was with Christ from the beginning, and saw his miracles, and heard his doctrines; and, besides, had the apostleship and Gospel of the circumcision, on which account they highly valued him; for these must be supposed to be the converted Jews among them, who still retained a regard to the ceremonies of the law; wherefore they fixed on Peter as their minister, and to be called by his name: but others said,

“**and I of Christ;** which some take to be the words of the apostle, declaring who he was of, and for, and belonged unto; intimating that they, as he, should call no man father, or master, on earth, or be called by any other name than that of Christ. Others consider them as the words of the Corinthians, a small part of them who were very mean and contemptible, and therefore mentioned last, who chose to be known and called by no other name than that of Christians; but I rather think that these design a faction and party, to be condemned as the others. These were for Christ, in opposition to Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, and any other ministers of the word. They were for Christ without his ministers; they were wiser than their teachers; they were above being under any ministrations and ordinances; as the others attributed too much to the ministers of the Gospel, these detracted too much from them, and denied them to be of any use and service. Some persons may be, in such sense, for Christ, as to be blame worthy; as when they use his name to deceive men, or divide his interest.”

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3: 1-8** – “And I brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.” “I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal.” “For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” “For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal?” “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?” “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” “So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.” “Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.”

When some said that they were of Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, were they not carnal?

**Gill says again:** They were not carnal in the sense that they were in a carnal state, as unregenerate men are; but they had carnal conceptions of things. They were not in the flesh, in a state of nature, yet the flesh was in them, and not only lusted against the Spirit, but was very predominant in them, and carried them captive, so that they were denominated from it: even babes in Christ.

**2. The Wisdom of God is to understand that all truly wise and spiritual men are yours, for you belong to Christ.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3: 18-23** - “Let no one deceive himself.” “If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.” “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” “For it is written, ‘He catches the wise in their own craftiness’; and again, ‘The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.’” “Therefore let no one glory in men.” “For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come – all are yours.” “And you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”

Everything which men try to do in their craftiness to play down the significance of Christ and the gospel will come to utter failure. They will be utterly disappointed that their schemes of wisdom and knowledge flowing from their own fallen minds trying to impose upon the truth of God, and suppress the true knowledge and wisdom of God have failed to bring them what they hoped for – a salvation and a religion of their own making. They will perish if they do not believe in Christ who is God’s wisdom.