

Sabbath School
WCF 1.1 (1): The Light of Nature
Date: 2/23/20

WCF 1.1

Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable[1]; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation[2]; therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. How doth it appear that there is a God?

A. The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God; but his word and Spirit only do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 9. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

§1. Introduction

A. Introduction to WCF 1 Of Holy Scripture – Scripture as the Foundation for Theology

B. Subject of WCF 1.1: The Necessity of Scripture for Salvation

§2. Definition of the Light of Nature and Natural Theology

A. What is light?

Light as cognitive *principium*, or a source of knowledge

B. What is the Light of Nature?

1. Three Lights – Three Sights

The Three Lights Corresponding to the States of Man (Nature, Grace, Glory)

The State of Nature further divided into Innocent and Fallen

(1) Light of Nature —-> Sight of God by Nature (Natural Theology)

(2) Light of Grace (or Faith) —-> Sight of God by Faith (Supernatural Theology)

(3) Light of Glory ----> Sight of God in Glory (Beatific Theology)

2. Agreements and Disagreements between Natural, Supernatural, and Beatific Theology

3. The Light of Nature Distinguished from the Works of Creation and Providence

C. Innate and Acquired Natural Theology

D. Natural Theology Proved from Scripture (Rm. 2.14-15; Ps. 19.1-3, Rm. 1.19-20, Rm. 1.32)

§3. The Proper Use, Abuse, and Insufficiency of the Light of Nature

A. Right Uses of the Light of Nature

(1) Demonstrating the Existence, Goodness, Wisdom, and Power of God

(2) Natural Law

(3) Handmaid to Theology

B. Abuse of the Light of Nature

C. The Insufficiency of the Light of Nature