

The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2, Paragraph 3 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”, Message #48 – “God is Pure Spirit”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall, on September 6th, 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)

I want to continue on, today, looking at God’s Oneness; that is, the Simplicity and Unity of His Essence and Being. I want to establish this truth by our thinking together about the fact that our Confession states that God is of one substance, essence and power; that each of the Persons of the Divine Trinity has the whole Divine Essence, yet the essence is undivided. God is one Spirit, Infinite, and undivided. This is why He is Simple. He has no parts, and even His Persons are not divided from each other in their essence.

Let’s begin by thinking together of **Job Chapter 11, verse 7** – “Can you search out the deep things of God?” Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?” The King James says – “Canst Thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” Zophar goes on to say in verses 8 and 9 that God in His nature, God in His ways, is – “higher than heaven – what can you do?” “Deeper than Sheol – what can you know?” “Their measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.”

Even though what Zophar said to Job was true in the sense that we cannot find God out unto perfection, it does not forbid us from searching and inquiring after Him. John Gill says this – “Even though we cannot have adequate ideas of God, yet we should endeavour to get the best we can, and frame the best conceptions of Him we are able; that so we may serve and worship Him, honor and glorify Him, in the best manner.”

1. God in His nature, in His Holy Essence, is a Spirit with infinite Perfections. These perfections theologians call His attributes.

A. Theologically speaking when we say that God is Spirit, or a Spirit, it means that He has intrinsically in Himself Life and Personality. God alone in His life is Unlimited. God in His life is infinitely superior as a Spirit to the life of the spirits whom He creates. God alone has life intrinsically in Himself.

John 5: 26 – “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself.”

John 5: 17-27 - “But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’ “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.’ “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father.” “He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” “Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.” “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.”

Only God has Unoriginated Life – 1st John 1: 2 – “The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us...”

As Greg Nichols tells us in His Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, page 192 – “Only God has ideal and immutable life, *“immortality”* (1st Timothy 6: 16) Further – only God has unlimited vivacity, namely, infinite ability to act on His own initiative.” “This is God’s Omnipotence.”

B. I will speak to you more about Personality in God when I will speak to you more particularly about the Trinity – The Tri-Personality of God. Suffice it for now to say that the Scriptures represent God as a Personal Being. By this theologians mean the power of His self-consciousness and of self-determination. Augustus Strong says in His *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, P. 297 – “God, as personal, is in the highest degree self-conscious and self-determining.” “The rise in our own minds of the idea of God, as personal, depends largely upon our recognition of personality in ourselves.” “Those who deny spirit in man place a bar in the way of the recognition of this attribute in God.”

He also says later – “Observe that personality needs to be accompanied by life – the power of self-consciousness and self-determination needs to be accompanied by activity – in order to make up our total idea of God as Spirit. Only this personality of God gives proper meaning to His punishments or to His forgiveness.”

2. The Scriptural Evidence for God being Spirit: What we should believe, and the implications of it to our faith.

John 4: 24 – “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Here is the plain declaration, that God is Spirit. And He as a Spirit who is infinitely great and unique in His holiness, has nothing essentially compatible, with a physical body. He is perfect in all of His attributes and in all of His ways. He is Omnipresent and Omniscient, He is pure and holy. He is the Creator of all things, but He Himself is uncreated and eternal. He is non-material, invisible to human eyes; having no bodily parts. He is the great God who sees

everything, hears everything, and does everything, according to the counsel of His own will. To worship such a God as our God is, requires that we must worship Him with a reverent spirit, realizing that He is the Creator and we are the creature. He is unchangeable in His Being, and we need to respect this truth, and not think that we can change Him by anything that we do or say. He learns nothing from us, He understands all things perfectly without us, and we have a great deal to learn from Him.

Our Confession in chapter 2, Paragraph 1 states – “The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of Himself, infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will for His own glory...”

It is evident that as a most pure Spirit that God is unchangeable in His Being.

Malachi 3: 6 and 7 – “For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.” “Yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them.” “Return to Me, and I will return to You, says the Lord of hosts.”

So, we need to see the correlation between God’s being a God who does not change, and because of that we are not consumed by Him. In other words, it is on account of His being able to perfectly see our sins and our sinfulness, and yet He is still able to be perfectly faithful to His own righteous character, that is the reason that we are not immediately consumed for our sins. It is because He is a pure and perfect Spirit that He knew that through Christ He could show mercy. The reason that He does not consume us immediately is because of His perfect faithfulness to His own plan for the redemption of elect sinners. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives. He is faithful to his own righteous character; faithful to uphold perfect justice in relation to all the creatures that He has created; all the men that He has made. He sees all of what our sins deserve in terms of punishment, but yet, for Christ’s sake, He will give space to all men everywhere to repent, and those sinners who return to Him, seeking for mercy and grace, will find it. Romans 3: 26 – “To demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who faith in Jesus.

3. As a Spirit God is Invisible, yet He instructs all people and all nations. He is a God of Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge and Power.

Psalm 94: 8-15 – “Understand, you senseless among the people; and you fools, when will you be wise?” “He who planted the ear, shall He not hear?” “He who formed the eye, shall He not see?” “He who instructs the nations, shall He not correct, He who teaches man knowledge?” “The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are futile.” “Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O Lord, and teach out of Your law, that You may give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit is dug for the wicked.” For the Lord will not cast off His people, nor will He forsake His inheritance.” “But judgment will return to righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow it.”

So, you see that there were many people among the Old Testament people of God who did not understand. In verse 7 it says that they said – “The Lord does not see, nor does the God of Jacob understand.” And they needed to be reprovved for their false conceptions of God, even as many people need to be reprovved today. If God formed the eye does He not see? He most certainly does, and that absolutely perfectly.

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?

4. 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.”

“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)

Next Week –

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