

The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2, Paragraph 3 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”, Message # 59 – “Our Knowledge of the Father”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall, on December 20th, 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)

We have thought about the fact that –

A. The Fatherhood of God is Primary

Last week we looked at the glory of the father from Ephesians 1: 15-21 and we thought together about the importance of prayer to the Father of glory, that He might give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

B. I also want to set forth to you the truth that the Fatherhood of God is unique.

1st Corinthians 8: 1-13 – “Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge.” “Knowledge puffs up but love edifies.” “And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing as he ought to know.” “But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.” “Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.” “For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.” “

We see here the importance of the knowledge of the one God in three blessed Persons when it comes to the whole subject of how we use the knowledge of God and His word, that we have. We all have knowledge. We have that knowledge canonized in the Bible, and so we can have confidence that our knowledge will do us in good stead when it comes to our conscience in relation to things of this world that we partake of; in this case, the eating of meat that was sacrificed to idols. There were many brethren who were strong in knowledge at Corinth; many who knew that an idol was nothing in the world, and that there was only one true God.

For them, and for us also, who may be strong in knowledge, we have to consider very practically in our minds whether what we will do with our knowledge will lead others whose consciences are weak, will do, who are looking at what we are doing. They, in this case of eating meats sacrificed to idols, might be emboldened to eat, and thus defile their conscience. We should not

do this to prove a point concerning our liberty to do it. Yes, an idol is nothing, and eating meat offered to an idol would not defile you because your conscience is strong. But it would defile them, and so you ought not to deliberately go about to set an example before them, that will lead them to imitate you, and they be defiled. Don't let your liberty become a stumbling block to those who are weak. (verse 9) Because of your knowledge, should the weak brother perish? That is, not that he would perish eternally, but that his clear conscience perish and be defiled; so much so, that he questions whether he is a true Christian at all. His confidence that he is doing the right thing is destroyed, and he will often wonder why he cannot do what you the stronger Christian are doing.

But I want you to notice that this is how all true Christians ought to see the Father in our mind's eye and in our heart of hearts. There is only one God the Father, of whom are all things. All things originate with the Father's purpose and plan, and all things that we eat were created by Him for our being able to eat them; meats included. And what should our response be? That we are for Him. That is, we were created by Him and now that we have come to know Him, we live our lives for Him. We love God and are known by God, and we love the brethren, even the weakest of them, in regard to their conscience, and we will deliberately cause them to stumble by our flaunting our liberty before them.

We see the Trinity in verse 6 – The Father of whom are all things, the Son –the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and the Holy Spirit (even though not specifically mentioned by name here) proceeding from the Father and the Son, “through whom we live”. For it is the Spirit who causes those believing in the Lord Jesus, to be born again, to be able to see and enter the kingdom of God, and to live, spiritually speaking.

C. The Fatherhood of God is Transcendent

James 1: 17 – “Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”

Scott Swain says – “Because the fatherhood of God is primary, first in the order of being and first in the order of meaning, and because the fatherhood of God is unique, determined by God's fatherhood alone and not by any external standard of fatherhood, the fatherhood of God transcends all creaturely limitations. Unlike the fatherhood of creatures, the fatherhood of God is not dependent, not composite, not changing, not limited, and not temporal. It is self-existent, simple, immutable, infinite, and eternal. God's radiant fatherhood is “above” all other forms of fatherhood; He is “the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change” (James 1:17). The preceding discussion helps us appreciate why there is a family resemblance between God's fatherhood and creaturely forms of fatherhood—the latter are patterned after the former. It also helps us appreciate why there can be no one-to-one comparison between God's Fatherhood and creaturely forms of fatherhood—God's Fatherhood is unique and transcendent.” Swain, Scott. *The Trinity* (Short Studies in Systematic Theology) (p. 62).