

The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”,
Message # 37 – “God – Independent and All Sufficient”, Presented
in the Adult Sunday School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall,
on May 21st, 2017.

Paragraph 2 – God, having all (r) life, (s) glory, (t) goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself, is alone in and unto himself all sufficient, not (u) standing in need of any creature 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, (x) of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, and He hath most sovereign (y) dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever Himself pleaseth; in his sight (z) all things are open and manifest, His knowledge is (a) infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent or uncertain; He is most holy in all his counsels, in (b) all his works, and in all his commands; to him is due (c) from angels and men, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, as creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever He is further pleased to require of them.

(r) John 5: 26; (s) Psalm 148:13; (t) Psalm 119: 68; (u) Job 22:2-3; (x) Rom 11: 34-36; (y) Dan 4: 25, 34-35;

(z) Hebrews 4:13; (a) Ezekiel 11: 5; Acts 15: 18; (b) Psalm 145:17; (c) Rev 5:12-14

1. God has all Life in Himself, and this is why He alone is all-sufficient in Himself.

John 5: 26, 27 – “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.”

God has life in Himself which is derived from nothing outside of Himself. His is an uncaused existence. This is called by theologians – His Aseity. He is intrinsically life, and the source of all physical life and spiritual eternal life, as these come from Him; derivatively from His essence of Being, and from Himself alone comes all life which we see in this world, or in the Universe. It is not as though the Son is any way inferior to the Father when it says that the Father “has granted the Son to have life in Himself.” It is simply that as a Man and our Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ would be granted to have this same life in His glorious Person. But when it says that the Father has life in Himself, the Lord Jesus is asserting God the Father’s total independence from anything that He has created.

Psalm 36: 9 – “For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.”

John Gill says: “**For with thee is the fountain of life**”,.... “Or “lives”: God himself is the fountain of living waters; this is a reason proving the happiness of those that trust in the Lord, and that they shall enjoy the above things; because with God the object of their trust is the fountain of life; not only of natural life, from whom they have it, and by whom it is supported, but of spiritual life, being quickened by him when dead in sin, by virtue of which they live by faith on Christ, and also of eternal life; and the phrase denotes, that life is originally in God as in its fountain, and that both the fulness of it is with him, and the freeness of it in the communication of it to others, as well as its continuance and duration.”

Jeremiah 17: 12 and 13 – “A glorious high throne from the beginning Is the place of our sanctuary.” “O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You shall be ashamed.” “Those who depart from Me Shall be written in the earth, Because they have forsaken the LORD, The fountain of living waters.” “Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; Save me, and I shall be saved, For You are my praise.”

The sanctuary of the temple at Jerusalem, the place of the Jews sanctuary, was a glorious high throne from its beginning because God dwelt there by His presence and blessing. It is apparent from these verses, however, that God dwells in this high and holy place of heaven (the place of His sanctuary, and

ours through prayer). He is pictured here (anthropomorphically) as sitting on a throne there, ruling over all men and providentially ordering all things after the counsel of His own will; the picture of being all-sufficient, and having all power to accomplish every design that He has. All those who depart from Him, and all who forsake Him shall be ashamed. They shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.” This is the reason that we need to be converted to Christ. They is why we need to be healed from all of our sinful thoughts and all of our self-sufficient motions in our thoughts. Because in pursuing them and tolerating them we are forsaking the fountain of living waters.

2. God is Independent in and of Himself.

He derives nothing from all of His creatures and all of His Creation. He is not dependent upon them for anything, and does not need anything that they can give to Him.

Job 22: 1 and 2 – “Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: ‘Can a man be profitable to God, though he who is wise may be profitable to himself?’ ‘Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous?’ ‘Or is it gain to Him that you make your ways blameless?’”

Joseph Caryl says – “God is absolutely independent and Perfect in Himself.” “If there be an impossibility that man should be profitable to God, then God is Self-Sufficient and altogether Independent, in reference to man: He that cannot receive any addition is perfect in Himself, and He that is self-sufficient, needs not: to receive any addition from another, is an argument of imperfection.” “And seeing God neither receives, nor can receive anything from another, He must needs be perfect in Himself.

Psalms 50: 7-15 – “Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you; I am God, your God!” “I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices Or your burnt offerings, which are continually before Me.” “I will not take a bull from your house, nor goats out of your folds.” “For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.” “I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.” “If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness.” “Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” “Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.” “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”

Joseph Benson says – “I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, &c. — This is not the principal matter of my charge against thee, that thou hast neglected sacrifices, which thou shouldst have offered; for, although thou hast often omitted thy duty even in that respect, yet I have greater things than these to charge thee with. I will take no bullock, &c. — Be not so foolish as to imagine that thou dost lay any obligations upon me by thy sacrifices, or that I required them because I had need of them, or took any pleasure or satisfaction in them for their own sakes. Every beast of the forest is mine — I could command or dispose of them at my pleasure, without thy leave or assistance; and the cattle, &c. — Which feed upon innumerable hills, or in valleys and fields. I know all the fowls, &c. — Where they are, and whence I could easily fetch them when I please; and not only tame and domestic fowls, but even such as are wild and fly up and down upon mountains; which, though out of man’s reach, are at my command. If I were hungry — If I wanted or desired anything, which I do not, being the all-sufficient God; I would not tell thee — That thou mightest supply my wants. For the world is mine, &c. — And all those creatures wherewith it is replenished. Will I eat the flesh of bulls? — If I did want anything, hast thou such gross and carnal conceptions of me as to suppose that I need or delight in the blood of brute creatures?”

Acts 17: 22-25 – “Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.’ “Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.” “Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.”

You can see here in preaching to the men in Athens, Paul speaks to them in very basic terms about God, so that He can show them their sin of idolatry. He tells them that even though they were very religious, they had not come to know God, and that God who made the world, is not worshiped with men's hands, the idols that they make will not bring them to know God since God is spirit and He does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is He worshiped with the things that men might make. He does not need anything, since He give to all life, breath, and all things. We can give Him nothing that will bring us into His favor, since there is nothing that He needs.

Dr. James Renihan says – “God needs nothing and takes nothing from His creatures, but only gives to them.” “At the beginning of the statement in Paragraph 2 of Chapter 2 of our Confession, we read that God has ‘all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself.” “His life, glory, goodness, and blessedness are imperfectible – they cannot increase to a greater level of perfection.” “Blessedness here must be understood as happiness.” “God exists eternally in perfect bliss.” “He has always and will always enjoy this personal delight.” “His joy cannot decrease, nor will it increase – it is perfect.” “He has all blessedness.”