

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 1 – “Of the Holy Scriptures”, Message # 2 –
“The Light of Nature Not Sufficient”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School
Class, by Pastor Paul Rendall on June 23rd, 2019.**

Paragraph 1 – The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience⁽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; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and 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⁽³⁾; and afterward 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 Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.⁽⁴⁾

1) 2nd Timothy 3: 15-17; Isaiah 8: 20; Luke 16: 29 and 31; Ephesians 2 :20; 2) Romans 1: 19-21; 2: 14-15;

Psalms 19: 1-3; 3) Hebrews 1: 1 4) Proverbs 22: 19-21; Romans 15: 4; 2nd Peter 1:1 9-20

Deuteronomy 29: 29 – “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

What are the secret things which belong to the Lord? They are the things in regard to His decrees, and His providential ordering of all things, which He chooses not to reveal to men, for holy and wise reasons. There are also things which are mysteries; things which He wisely conceals from men for a time, perhaps even a long time, and then reveals them later, in the time of His choosing. But the things of the Scriptures have been revealed to men, and because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in fulfilling the law, and breaking down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, they belong to us, and to our children forever, as well. This is something that we should always glory in, and always thank the Lord that He has given us so much to look into, in the Scriptures, for it is all placed there for our good.

Last week we began to see that the Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. The Scriptures are sufficient because in themselves they are enough for each and every person to know about God and to come to know God. God has, through the apostles and prophets placed in them everything that He thought necessary to be said to fallen sinful mankind, so that people might be saved and have eternal life. The saving knowledge of the gospel is there; that which creates faith is there in connection with God's saving purpose and the working of the Holy Spirit, and so, the Holy Scriptures are an infallible rule to guide and direct all mankind in knowing their duty to God and towards people around them. This morning we want to think together about the truth of the light of nature in relation to the Scriptures. The question that we need to ask ourselves, and to have the answer for, to give to others is this: Is the light of nature sufficient to give that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary unto salvation. And the answer is, that no, it is not.

Isaiah 8: 19 and 20 – “And when they say to you, ‘Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people seek their God?” “Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?” “To the law and to the testimony!” “If they do not speak according to this

word, it is because there is no light in them.” The NAS and the ESV say – “To the law (the teaching) and to the testimony!” “If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. They have no dawn of saving light and grace which each man must have if they are to see and to receive spiritual things. If people who claim to have secret knowledge or claim to know things which we think might be of value to us, they are really trying to deceive us; having already deceived themselves. If they do not speak according to God’s word, they do not really have anything of value to communicate to us. They may actually deceive us and thus cause us great grief in the final analysis. Why is it that we should not seek for saving knowledge, or even personal knowledge of things, from the occult, from mediums, spiritists, and wizards? Because it is called seeking the dead on behalf of the living. The Light of Nature might lead us to falsely believe that they might have something valuable in knowledge to give to us. But it is not so at all. Demons are eternally dead in their sins. There is no redemption for them through Christ. We should seek to God’s law and His testimony found in the Scriptures.

1. The Light of Nature – A Definition

What then is the light of nature? The light of nature is that light of reason and understanding which we are created with; fallen as we are, in Adam. All people are given what they have been given by God in terms of their spirit and mind and body, and as such, according to the way that God made them, they are able to think and reason according to that natural ability which God has given. Therefore, by the light of nature they are able to see and to behold that which God has created, and to think about it, and to make deductions, and to draw conclusions, which may or may not be correct according God and His written word the Scriptures. God expects all men to use the light of nature within them to draw right conclusions about Himself; that He is good and wise and all-powerful.

2. God expects all men to use the light of Nature which they have been given.

Acts Chapter 17, verses 26-28 – “And He (that is – God) has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’”

Now, you can see here that God has made from one blood, that is the blood of Adam, the first man, every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth. He ordained not globalism as is being promoted today by many false and sinful politicians, but nations of men to dwell on the fact of the earth. He has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of the dwellings – Why? So that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him. That is – Using the light of reason that God has given to them. This is a good picture of what all people are like before they come to saving faith in Jesus Christ, before they see how great their need is for something more than the light of nature. They need saving transforming light which is given by the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the purpose and plan of God, to see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; to see just how loving and kind God really is, to have given us Christ and the gospel.

Unsaved, unregenerate, sinful people ought to be told that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him. That is a good thing for them to do. It is the reasonable thing to do; it is what God expects a person to do with the light of nature that has been given to them. But you and I need to see that even with all of their groping that men will

not find God merely because they are groping. They will only find Him if He illumines their darkness, and opens their heart to respond to the gospel and the truth of the Scriptures.

John Gill says – “if haply they might feel after him, and find him”; which shows, that though it is possible for men, by a contemplation of the perfections of God, visible in the works of creation and providence, so to find God, as to know that there is one, and that there is but one God, who has made all things; and so as to be convinced of the vanity and falsehood of all other gods, and to see the folly, wickedness, and weakness of idolatrous worship; yet, at the same time, it very strongly intimates, how dim and obscure the light of nature is; since those, who have nothing else to direct them, are like persons in the dark, who “feel” and grope about after God, whom they cannot see; and after all their search and groping, there is only an “haply”, a peradventure, a may be, that they find him:

2. By the Light of Nature God expects men to reason from the natural to the spiritual.

Psalms 19: 1-6 – “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” “Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge.” “There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.” “Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world.” “In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race.” “Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.”

Here we are told that the heavens which God has made, and the stars which He has placed in the heavens, declare His glory, and they show forth His handiwork. They are a day unto day revelation of God’s glory and they are meant to speak to all men of His power and His glory. They pour forth speech in their visual witness, and every night they are there to reveal knowledge about God. There is no place on the planet where their voice, their voice of speaking of God’s glory, is not seen. But what does David mean when he says that there is no place where their voice is not heard? I believe that God expects us to learn to reason from the natural to the spiritual. It is one of His means of common grace, that His glory is declared in the physical creation. But it is also meant to cause us to think about our need to have a spiritual understanding of God through hearing the gospel.

Because verse 4 says – “Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” Do you remember where these words are quoted in the New Testament? They are found in Romans chapter 10, and verse 16-18 – “But they have not all obeyed the gospel.” “For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our report?” “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” “But I say, have they not heard?” “Yes indeed: “Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” In other words, Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is using these verses to show that the gospel had gone forth to the Jews and now was going out to all the ends of the earth, and their words to the ends of the world, which it continues to do through faithful preachers of the word of God, the Scriptures.