

Unsettled questions from several weeks ago:

6. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

- a. Worship elements that are to be ordered by prudence and wisdom:¹
 - a. Dress for worship
 - b. Building architecture
 - c. Chairs or pews
- b. Worship service patterns are reasoned from Scripture
 - a. Invocations
 - b. Benedictions
 - c. Baptisms
- c. Governance of the church
 - a. Scriptural allusions
 - b. Presbyterian governance and Scriptural application
 - i. Pastoral sin
 - ii. Biblical accountability
 - iii. Biblical calling

1. There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal, most just, and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

2. God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures 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, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is 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 all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.

¹ John Frame, "The Regulative Principle." Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Institute for Christian Worship, April 2004. <http://www.sbts.edu/documents/icw/theregulativeprinciple.pdf> (last accessed Nov 23, 2010).

1. The One True God

- a. God's Incommunicable Nature
 - i. Eternal-distinct from us
 - ii. Almighty-Omnipotent in power
 - iii. Self-sufficient-non-contingent being
 - iv. Sovereign dominion-sole lordship over all²
 - v. Omniscient-knowing all, simultaneously
 - vi. Two misconceptions to avoid
 1. "Without Passion" or impassibility
 2. God's immutability
 - vii. Worthy of worship-God's uniqueness demands our worship of him alone
 1. Only true and living God
 2. Majestic
- b. God's Communicable Nature
 - i. We reflect limitedly God's nature
 1. Loving
 2. Gracious, forgiving & merciful [See end quote]
 3. Good [See end quote]
 4. Pure in judgments
 - ii. Humans intimate God's nature (ex. parents)
- c. Important theological implications of God's attributes
 - i. *Creator & creature distinctions*
 - ii. *Imago Dei*
 - iii. *Worship*

3. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

2. The Triune God-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—One in nature, three in persons

- a. The logic and incomprehensibility of the Trinity
 - i. The Trinity is a basic, biblical summary or description of the three distinct persons of the godhead; Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit; who all share the same nature.
 - ii. A biblical antinomy (three persons, one nature and being)
 - iii. The Trinity and God's nature
 1. God is inexplicable
 2. Revealed from Scripture, not natural revelation
 3. Limited analogies
 - a. Clover-3 leaves, one clover
 - b. Egg-shell, yoke, egg whites; one egg
 - c. Only three people in universe; one human race
 4. An unfathomable mystery

² John Frame has produced an entire series of systematic theologies based on the essential framework of God's lordship, called Lordship Theology.

- b. Unbiblical formulations of the Trinity
 - i. *Modalism or Sabellianism*
 - ii. *Subordinationism*
 - iii. *Arianism*
- C. Clarifying language about God in Scripture
 - i. God termed in the Bible and in our theological speech
 - 1. In NT God=God the Father [e.g. 2 Cor. 5:5; 1 Cor. 2:12; Eph. 1:17]
 - ii. We talk about God and mean the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- d. Answering common objections to the reality of the Trinity
 - i. Does Jesus pray to himself or does God die?
 - 1. Jesus prays to God the Father, called God in most of the NT
 - 2. God the Father and God the Spirit cannot die.
 - ii. The Trinity is not in Scripture
 - 1. Term Trinity is absent, idea is very present
 - a. Old Testament speaks of God's unity (e.g. Deut. 6:4)
 - b. OT has some allusions to a plurality of persons (Gen. 1:26, Gen 3:22, and Gen 11:7)
 - c. OT contains allusions to deity beyond God (Is 9 and Psalms)
 - 2. New Testament's progressive revelation of the Trinity
 - a. The Trinity is a NT revelation
 - b. Trinity is a clear example of progressive revelation
 - c. The Trinity at major points of Jesus Christ's life/ministry
 - i. Birth: Matthew 1:18-25
 - ii. Baptism: Mark 1:9-11
 - iii. Temptation: Luke 4:1-13
 - iv. Resurrection & Ascension: John 14:15-27
 - d. Invoked in NT greetings, blessings, and baptism
 - e. *Classicus locus* in Ephesians 1
- e. The truth of the Trinity and the Christian life—Evangelism as a case example
 - i. We are calling people to believe in and worship a triune God.
 - 1. *People are called to God through God the Holy Spirit:*
 - 2. *God the Father is reconciled to us through God the Son:*
 - 3. *God the Son is our high priest:*
 - ii. Apologetic point: Love originates in the Trinity.
 - 1. God's eternal, loving relationship within the godhead
 - 2. The triune God is our ultimate example of love

- iii. The Trinity and witness:
 - 1. Spirit's work on the human heart [John 16:13]
 - 2. God the Son's offering to God the Father
 - 3. The Trinity operates in evangelism toward the same goal
- iv. The Trinity preserves God's utter uniqueness:

3. Bibliography on God's Attributes and the Trinity

Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology. With a Complete Textual Index*. Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1959.

Bray, Gerald Lewis. *The Doctrine of God*. Contours of Christian theology. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Calvin, Jean, and Henry Beveridge. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I. Grand Rapids, Mich: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 2001.

Charnock, Stephen, and William Symington. *The Existence and Attributes of God: Two Volumes in One*. Grand Rapid, Mich: Baker Books, 2000.

Edgar, Brian. *The Message of the Trinity: Life in God*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Pink, Arthur Walkington. *The Essential Arthur W. Pink Collection*. Peabody, MA: [Prince Pr, 2002.

Packer, J. I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1973.

Trevethan, Thomas L. *The Beauty of God's Holiness*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

4. End Quotes

- a. "Divine grace is the sovereign and saving favor of God exercised in the bestowment of blessings upon those who have no merit in them and for which no compensation is demanded from them. Nay, more: it is the favor of God shown to those who not only have no positive deserts of their own, but who are thoroughly ill-deserving and hell-deserving. It is completely unmerited and unsought, and is altogether unattracted by anything in or from or by the objects upon which it is bestowed. Grace can neither be bought, earned, nor won by the creature. If it could be, it would cease to be grace. When a thing is said to be of "grace" we mean that the recipient has no claim upon it, that it was in nowise due him. It comes to him as pure charity and, at first, unasked and undesired."—A.W. Pink
- b. "Gratitude is the return justly required from the objects of His beneficence; yet it is often withheld from our great Benefactor simply because His goodness is so constant and so abundant. It is lightly esteemed because it is exercised toward us in the common course of events. It is not felt because we daily experience it."—A.W. Pink