

THE 1689 BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH

God and the Holy Trinity (3)

A. Introduction

1. Two things we are commanded to do as elders are to watch and to hold.

We are to watch what we believe, to make sure we are believing what God's Word says.

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." (1 Timothy 4:16)

We are to hold firmly to the truths taught in God's Word.

"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." (Titus 1:9)

It is vital we do these two things, not just for our own sake, but also for the members of this church and in fact those who live in the community God has placed us in.

To help us to watch and to hold, we are spending our elders' meeting working through the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith a paragraph or so at a time.

2. In Chapter 2, the Confession is dealing with the subject of God.

Beginning with who God is and what He is like, it encourages us to behold our God in His existence and His being; to see His glory in His greatness, His love and His justice.

In the second paragraph the focus turns to God in His relationship to His creation.

"God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself, is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not 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, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, and He hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever Himself pleases; 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, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, as creatures they owe unto the Creator, and whatever He is further pleased to require of them."

B. God does not need us

1. He is all sufficient in and of Himself.

"God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself, is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient."

"For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself." (John 5:26)

"Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendour is above the earth and the heavens." (Psalm 148:13)

"You are good and you do good." (Psalm 119:68)

2. He does not need us for anything.

"...not 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."

"Can a man be of benefit to God? Can even a wise man benefit him? What pleasure would it give the Almighty if you were righteous? What would he gain if your ways were blameless? (Job 22:2-3)

God does not depend upon us for anything or in any way.

When we give God glory, we are not adding to God's glory, but rather ascribing, telling Him, what He is.

But remarkably, God reveals His glory in us and gives glory to us, by making us in His image.

C. God can do whatever He pleases with us

1. He is the source of all things, the sustainer of all things, and the goal of all things.

"He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things."

We exist because of Him and for Him.

"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory for ever! Amen."
(Romans 11:36)

2. He has the right to do whatever He pleases with what He has made in accordance with His purpose for them.

"...and He hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever Himself pleases."

"His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No-one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?" (Daniel 4:34-35)

"Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him." (Psalm 115:3)

He can do this because He knows all things and this knowledge is not dependent on us.

"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."

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." (Hebrews 4:13)

3. Whatever God decrees, does and commands is good, wise and holy.

"He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands."

"The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving towards all he has made." (Psalm 145:17)

4. The only right response is for us to worship Him, to serve Him, and to obey Him because He is God and we are not.

"To Him is due 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."

We owe God everything; He does not owe us anything.

We are dependent on God; He is not dependent upon us.

E. How then shall we lead?

1. We must faithfully serve Him as elders whether God blesses our ministry in this church and community or not.

It is our duty.

He is our God to whom we owe all our worship, love and obedience.

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever!” (Revelation 5:13)

2. We must recognise that any blessing God gives us is Him showing grace to us.

There is no requirement for Him to reward us with any fruit for our service, though He may be pleased to do so.