

LECTURES
ON THE
WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH
FOR
LAYMEN

SECOND IN SERIES

OF GOD, AND OF THE HOLY TRINITY

By

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OF GOD, AND OF THE HOLY TRINITY

The second chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith

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(Recorded by transcription)

I do not know where, even in the larger denominations, you would find a group of men gathered together like this because of their interest in the doctrines. It is encouraging. This is our Presbyterian heritage. The history of the Presbyterian church shows not only that it had ministers who were trained, but it had laymen who loved the Word of God, who knew the Word of God, and who were capable of discernment; capable of deep doctrinal appreciation of the Word of God.

The topic assigned to me, the second chapter of the Confession of Faith, is one that might occupy many, many hours. In fact it does occupy many hours in the lecture room in Systematic Theology and related subjects. We cannot remain here many hours tonight, therefore, the best thing to do is, first, to read this chapter with a few explanatory remarks about certain phrases which might be obscure. Then we shall discuss three outstanding topics that are within the subject matter of the chapter. The chapter consists of three paragraphs, the first of which reads: "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 living, 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." We have in this paragraph the attributes of God in manifold form.

I shall suggest for the purposes of this evening's discussion that we summarize this paragraph by the magnificent definition of God and His attributes as given in Westminster Shorter Catechism. We shall not have time to exhaust that Shorter definition but it will be at least shorter, by way of summary, than this magnificent paragraph which I have read. "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."

Paragraph 2 reads as follows: "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 course we should say in Modern English, “He alone is the 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, and 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.”

This paragraph carries us deep into the profound truths of the Christian faith. It speaks to us of the sovereignty of God, of His eternal being, and of His relationship to this world both in time and space. I should love to dwell upon this paragraph for many hours but we can only briefly take up, as our second sub-topic, the discussion of the relation of God to the world He has created.

The third paragraph speaks of the Eternal Trinity. “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 Spirit. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.” Here we have the doctrine of the Trinity which we shall briefly summarize and illustrate in our third sub-topic.

I. WHAT IS GOD?

The first paragraph of the chapter is summarized in the definition of God in the Westminster Shorter Catechism. We have in fact several questions in the catechism on the being and nature of God, for example, “Are there more gods than one? Ans. There is but one only, the living and true God.” Then we have that great question which we love to repeat, which we believe was definitely guided by the Holy Spirit and is derived wholly from the Scripture—“What is God? Ans. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.” That statement is the summary of not only the first paragraph of Chapter II in its entirety, but a summary of much that is also found in the second paragraph; a summary of those attributes of God which we shall have time to discuss only in part in this evening’s program.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

First of all, “God is a Spirit.” When we say that God is a Spirit, we mean that He is a personal Being. God is not an idea; God is a Being. There are many categories in our thinking. There is the category of physical or material being, space-occupying entities, the things that are made of atoms,—at least we suppose that they are made of atoms until we get a better theory,—material substances. God is *not* a material substance. We have bodies. Our bodies are material substances. God does not have bodily existence. God is a Spirit, a personal Being. He is a Person, conscious of being Himself and self-determining. “God is a Spirit” means just that. It does not mean that God is an attitude nor that He is an atmosphere, nor that God is personification. You have heard unbelievers say that God is like Santa Claus or that God is like Uncle Sam, a personification. Millikan, a great scientific man who speaks on religion in a purely modernistic sense, spoke at the University of Illinois some years ago. He believes in some kind of God. In no sense is he a hypocrite. He said, “When we were children we believed in Santa Claus. It was a beautiful childish faith. Then when we became older, we looked at the chimney, we became skeptical, and we didn’t believe that a great stout man could climb down that little narrow chimney; and so we didn’t believe in Santa Claus any more. Now that we are still older and have children of our own, we believe in Santa Claus again,—not as in actual existence but as a beautiful myth.” “So,” he said, “that is how we ought to believe in God,—as a beautiful story, a beautiful myth.” Millikan sought to promote interest in religion in that way. There are many people who, without being hypocrites, assume that faith in God is a faith in a beautiful myth. However, we are reminded of Peter’s word, “not as following cunningly devised fables;” that is exactly the word, not following “sophisticated myths.”

God is our heavenly Father; a personal Being without physical properties, without bodily existence, but a Person. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His specified attributes.

Let us briefly glance at these three magnificent words, “infinite, eternal, and unchangeable.” God is an infinite Spirit in His attributes of being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. When we say that God is infinite, we must get it very clearly into our minds that God is not the universe which He has made. God is not I, and I am not God, nor a part of God, nor an aspect of God. It is the Bible that tells us that God created a world, and that the world is distinctly *other* than God. God controls it completely. It exists because of His continued providence but God is not the totality of the universe. Now, of course, to some of you that seems just elementary truth,—“Why, of course, we always knew that!” But you’d be surprised how many people

think that when we say “God is infinite,” we mean that He is “the All.” God is not the universe. He created the universe. God is infinite in specified relationships.

When we say that God is infinite in His being, we mean that He always existed. We do not mean that He is all the being that exists, but that He has always been. To some of us that is a problem. I well remember how, while yet a small lad, the problem came to me,— “How could God be eternal?” (Many of these little people in our churches do a lot more thinking than we give them credit for.) I was out fishing. With my fish-pole I was standing on a little log bridge. The mosquitoes were biting. Though just a little fellow, I loved the Lord and I believed in Christ as my personal Saviour. The problem somehow came to me, “How is it that God always is? If God made everything, then who made God?” The question goes back and back and back, to no end, but I can remember settling it for myself right there. I just thought of the text—”Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief”—then I said, “That is what I say!” I didn’t express it in any long words but I said, “Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.” That wasn’t a complete answer but it satisfied for the time being. I committed it to the Lord.

God is eternal; put it this way,—*if anything now exists, something had to be eternal*. Nothing comes from nothing, and the very fact that something does now exist compels you to believe in something that is eternal. Whichever way you take it, atheists, or pantheists, or Christian Bible believers, *something is eternal*. Now, which is easiest, since you’ve got to believe that something is eternal ? Is it easier to believe that this universe is eternal ? Is it easier to believe in an unconscious intelligence as eternal ? It is far more rational, simple, reasonable to believe in the eternal God than it is to believe in anything else as eternal. Thus the eternity of God becomes, not a problem, but it becomes an answer to a very fundamental problem. Here we have a universe on our hands. No one can deny that. Now something must be eternal and God is the most simple and the most reasonable answer.

God is infinite in His being, infinite in His wisdom, infinite in His power, and so in all the rest of those attributes which we have listed. The infinitude of God means that He is infinite in certain specified attributes and relationships, and not that He is the Totality.

God is infinite, eternal, and *unchangeable*. When we say that God is unchangeable, do we mean that God never does anything? Do we mean that God doesn’t know what goes on in the world ? Some people try to make it out that way. No, when we say that God is unchangeable we refer to the fact that He is *always consistent* in His *character*. We do not mean that God never acts or experiences anything. We have in

Chapter II the phrase “He is . . . without . . . passions.” That is to say that He does not suffer in His Eternal Being as men do in the flesh, not that He doesn’t know what goes on in the world.

The Bible is distinct from pagan philosophy. In pagan philosophy Aristotle presented an “Unmoved Mover,” which of course is a contradiction. You try to move something without moving and see what happens to you. Well, you just contradict yourself, that is all. The Unmoved Mover was the best that Aristotle could do. He was a polytheist at that. The God of the Bible does things; the God of the Bible makes promises and fulfills those promises. The God of the Bible predicts the future long in advance and then in the fulness of time He brings his Son into the world, as He said He would. The God of the Bible has predicted the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In the fulness of time He is going to come. He is “the Father of compassionate feelings,” II Cor. 1:3. He is infinite, eternal, and *unchangeable* in His specified *attributes*.

In connection with the infinitude of God, His eternity, and His immutability we should also bring in the thought of His *omnipresence*. God is everywhere. The old word is “immensity,” and this word occurs in this chapter. However, the word in our modern English conveys a false impression, though it was not intended to do so by the writers of the Westminster Confession. To us that which is immense, is big; that which is big is relative in size. That is not the omnipresence of God. The omnipresence of God simply means that He is everywhere. He is not partly here or partly there. We should not think of this word “immensity” as though God fills space, in the sense that part of Him is here, and that a part of Him is there. That is not the meaning. God is not a space-occupying Person. He is a personal being, but not a material being. He is not a fluid filling all space.

I like to think of the omnipresence of God this way: Everything in all space is *immediately in His presence*; it is easy for me to grasp the thought that way. Everything on my working table is in my presence for all practical purposes. Now I know that my hands have to move, of course, and my eyes have to shift their focus, but for all practical purposes everything that is on my desk is in my presence. Space is no problem. I have things *right there* in my immediate presence. Every person in this room for all practical purposes is immediately in my presence.

Augustine used the illustration of a voice filling the room. Forget about your modern physics and the air-waves and the vibrations; just think of the voice as an undivided thing. Each person in this room hears my *whole voice*. If there were twice as many people packed in the place, they would also, each individual, hear my entire voice.

We should never allow ourselves to think that of the Lord as though part of Him were here and a part of Him there. *God* is here; God is *totally present* in this room. God is totally present with my loved ones in New York, and with your loved ones at home, in the sense that everything is immediately in His presence. That is not difficult to grasp. It avoids the difficulties of relative bigness.

God is a Person and everything is immediately before Him. He doesn't have to get up and go anywhere. Of course you know that when the Bible says that God came down to see the wickedness of man, that is a figure of speech, an anthropomorphism. In the context it is perfectly obvious that Moses didn't mean that God got up, walked over and climbed down, No! It's just a way of expressing the thought that God took cognizance of what was going on. When we say the Holy Spirit *came* on the day of Pentecost, or when Isaiah said, "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down"—Isaiah knew that God was here, but he was praying that God would *manifest* Himself. The Holy Spirit is universally present but *He manifested* Himself on the day of Pentecost. So that omnipresence of God is consistent with special "goings" and "comings" of the Spirit in the sense of manifestations.

God is a personal being, infinite, eternal, and unchanging in His *wisdom*. This refers to the omniscience of the Lord. God knows everything as this chapter expresses it. He is not dependent upon evidence which must be presented to Him. He knows. He has all knowledge. Some of the writers, Jonathan Edwards, and Boettner along with him, have argued that what God knows He knows upon evidence. Since He made the worlds, He figures that it must be so-and-so because He made it. They say He couldn't know a free act. Well, I would like to ask them how they know what God can't know? The Westminster Confession makes it perfectly plain that God's knowledge is simply and absolutely complete, and always is, and always was complete. God has *all the knowledge there is at all times*.

Some devout people mix you up right at that point. They say, "if God always has complete knowledge, then how could He know what happens from day to day?" They go on to argue, "If God knows that today is today and not tomorrow anymore, then He has added something to His knowledge." That is a tricky sort of an argument, I think. *He always knew what He was going to know when it became today*. "If God doesn't know the difference between yesterday and tomorrow, He doesn't know what we know," says A. E. Taylor. There *is* a difference between yesterday and tomorrow, and God knows it. Before Christ came, it was true that He was going to come; and now it is true that He has come, and that He is coming again. God's omniscience is always complete, and always perfect, and it always includes the knowledge

of just what is going on right now. God's knowledge is not static. He knows the future *just as perfectly* as He knows the past and the present, but He knows the future as future as long as it is really future, and the past *as past*. God has at all times all the knowledge that there is or could be.

Infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, in His wisdom, and in His *power*. I do not suppose that any of you Christian men have any problems about the omnipotence of God, and yet there are supposedly very wise and learned men in the world who get all mixed up about the omnipotence of God. God has all the power that there is or could be. Some would seek to argue that if God has all power, that means that He can contradict Himself. He has power to make right wrong, good evil, and false true. You have heard about the little girl who prayed that Boston might be made the capital of Maine. Her mother asked her why she prayed that way. She said, "Why, that is what I put down on my geography paper." You have heard about the little boy who said, "Can God make a stone so big that He can't lift it?" When we say that God is omnipotent, we are talking in the realm of power. How much power would it take to make a lie true? Ask yourself this. How many horsepower would it take to make 2 plus 2 equal 5? A million horse-power? An atom-bomb? Ten atom-bombs, to blast the multiplication tables so 2 plus 2 would equal 5? That just isn't in the realm of power. It is outside of the very word "power." We are not contradicting truth as the attribute of God when we say that He has all the power there is or could be. God is the truth, and God is not going to destroy Himself.

Aside from that argument which does confuse some people, there is another question brought up by unbelievers and by some confused people who love the Lord. They try to say that God doesn't quite have all power. Even so good a man as Biederwolfe in a book on prayer says that he would rather think that God didn't quite have all power, than to give up some other doctrines that were dear to him. John Stuart Mill said that if there is a good God, He could not tolerate evil if He had the power to stop it. He doesn't stop it, so therefore He is not omnipotent,—therefore God must be limited; finite in His power. H. G. Wells, the noted British novelist, taught the same thing. Brightman of Boston teaches a finite God. He pleads with people, "God is doing the best He can, you must help Him out. God is struggling along with humanity; a finite God."

You can, of course, see the fallacy of the assumption that if God is almighty, He would have to stop all evil instantly. The assumption that what ought not to *be*, ought not to *be permitted*. There are many things that ought not to be, but nevertheless ought to be permitted for discipli-

nary reasons. God has the power to do what power can do, but He has the wisdom to permit some evil things for a time. Always remember that the parable of the wheat and the tares is a parable that describes God's omnipotence in His dealing with the world. God can say, "Let both grow together until the harvest." The reapers are not men, but the angels, the field is not the church but "the world"; and the harvest is not church discipline but "the end of this age." God has power enough to say that these things which ought not to be, ought to be tolerated for a time in order that a lesson may be taught. Read the 9th chapter of Romans (I wish we had time to go all through that).

I have had the privilege of some acquaintance with Prof. Brightman of Boston University. It is an Arminian Institution, and his view is Arminianism gone to seed. I have seen Brightman and his assistant Bertocci dealing with a crowd of scoffing, sneering, ridiculing atheists. It just breaks your heart to think that they had nothing better that they could say. Brightman and Bertocci were pleading with those atheists to have some kind of faith in some kind of God. They were arguing, "Don't blame God, He can't help it; He is doing the best He can. You should enlist on God's side." We are living among heathen today. The knowledge of the God of the Bible is at a very low ebb among people in this land of ours. In a talk with Brightman one time I said, "Dr. Brightman, I am a Calvinist; I don't agree with you in regard to your finite God." He spoke very earnestly and said, "Well, Mr. Buswell, one reason why I believe God is not omnipotent,"—and he spoke really with emotion in his voice,—"*is that evolution took so long. Think of the ages and ages, and all the time that it took.*" He was just borne down with the idea of time. I waited until he finished and then I said, "It seems to me that you are arguing in a circle, because if God is omnipotent, then the question how much time He takes is *perfectly irrelevant*. If He chooses to take a million years, it is His business. If He is omnipotent, then the question of how long He takes is just out of the picture." Of course, I didn't have time to tell him that evolution was all wrong anyway. But the very question, how long God takes is irrelevant; if God is almighty, then it is perfectly reasonable for Him to take a thousand years; to save one soul, if He chooses to do so. Do you know what He said? "I never thought of that!" It had never occurred to him.

Another point: if the reason for evil is that God is not almighty, still this finite God has had eternity to try to overcome evil, and He hasn't done any better job of it than this. That would prove that evil is greater than God. I said that to Prof. Samuel Hamilton one time, (another one of the believers in a finite God) and do you know what he said? He said that he wasn't skilled in dialectic and he couldn't answer my argument.

Dewey started to teach, people used to think that there were some eternal verities. People used to think that there was some purpose in the universe. “For instance,” he said, “there is the sun that gives light, and we have eyes to see the light, and people used to think there was some purpose in that arrangement. They used to think that the reason for education was to instill these eternal verities and to point out the purpose that there is in the universe.” “But,” Kilpatrick said, “Now John Dewey has changed all that. He has shown us that there are no eternal verities, and by adopting Darwinian evolution he has shown that there is no purpose in the universe, except our purpose, and we work that out for ourselves. He has delivered education from eternal verities and from cosmic purpose.” It was just about the most blatant blasphemy that one could imagine, and it was so open. Of course, they were among friends (there were about a thousand people there), and I don’t know whether I was the only spy, but they spoke very frankly and openly. “There is no purpose in the universe.”

Eternal truths are always going to be true because God is God. There are eternal verities, and there is a purpose in God’s creation. Through Jesus Christ His purpose is being worked out.

So much then for the attributes of God, and oh, how much we have skipped over!

II. GODS RELATION TO THE UNIVERSE

Briefly, God’s relationship to the universe which He has made. We have already touched upon the theme. I do not wish to bring in a lot of things that are not of vital and direct interest, but I am sure that you are conscious of the fact that there are differences of opinion among Bible teachers, and among people who really believe the Bible, in regard to God’s relationship to the world. Let me briefly state the way I understand this paragraph, and then we shall pass on to the doctrine of the Trinity. I take the story of Genesis in the most simple possible way,—here’s this world; God made it. He did not create it out of previously existing materials. He made it, not out of anything. He created it. This world stands, God knows it, and God runs it. We believe not only in His creative power, but in His providence, “His most holy, wise and powerful, preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions.”

Thomas Aquinas has come right along into Protestant theology. Thomas loved the Lord. That was before the Protestant Reformation. There are many good things in Thomas, but Thomas lugged Aristotle with all his paganism right along into Roman Catholic theology; and then when the Protestant Reformation came, altogether too much of Thomas Aquinas just came along in. Thomas is affected by Aristotle’s

Unmoved Mover, Aristotle's mathematical absolute, Aristotle's god who has no relationships.

The Epistle to the Hebrews gives the true Biblical view. It is the epistle in which you find the expression—"Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever." The Epistle to the Hebrews is the epistle in which you find His sovereignty perhaps most vividly expressed. Yet in Hebrews the temporal sufferings of Christ are most prominent. The Eternal Son of God actually came into this world, the Second Person of the Trinity. He was born of the virgin Mary. He lived, He died, He arose again. He perfected Himself. How could He perfect Himself if He was already perfect? That is no problem. He is perfect at every moment of time, yet He did in the process of time exactly what He had always intended to do. Therefore He perfected Himself. This does not imply in the least that He ever was in any sense imperfect. When the fulness of time came He did what He intended to do. He took on flesh and blood; He lived; He suffered; He died; He rose again. "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." The God of the Bible is related to the affairs of today and tomorrow, the actual time sequences in which we find ourselves. It is difficult sometimes to answer the problem for those to whom the problem has never come up. To me it seems utterly unnecessary that it ever should come up in Christian theology except, as I say, that Thomas Aquinas has dragged in Aristotle and a conception of God which is contrary to the Bible. God governs this world. He is related to it by creation and by providence. What then is His immutability? His immutability, His changelessness is His *self-consistency*. Whenever a sinner repents there is rejoicing in the presence of God. If ever a child of God goes astray for a time, it grieves the Father's heart. Whenever a sinner repents, He rejoices. He is always the same in His relationship to this world which He has created.

III. DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

Now briefly, the doctrine of *the Trinity*. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons of one substance, power and glory: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The phrase "eternally begotten of the Father" was intended to deny that Christ is a created being, and to affirm that He is the same in substance, equal in power and glory with the Father. The whole background of this phrase is the insistence of Athanasius that Christ is the same in substance, not merely similar in substance, but the same in substance with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of the word "proceeding" in the history of the doctrine is again partly negative. It was intended to deny that the Holy Spirit is a created being. Instead, it is to affirm that He is eternal in His

relationship with the Father and the Son. The three persons of the Trinity are the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

As we have it in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the sum and substance of it all is, “There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.” That is clear and concise, and those words are for the church down through all generations until Jesus comes, and on into eternity, “the same in substance, equal in power and glory.”

All those passages of Scripture that seem to refer to some subordination in the relationship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit refer to temporary offices of the Son or of the Holy Spirit. In the time of His humiliation Christ said, “The Father is greater than I,” but He said also in the same context, “All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.” There are Scriptures which indicate that the Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself. It is not His purpose to speak of Himself primarily, but He witnesses to the Son. This is an economic subordination, that is to say, subordination of function; but never does the Scripture indicate any subordination of essential being.

Equality of the persons of the Trinity may well be illustrated by military affairs. I remember when I was in military training before I was commissioned as a Chaplain, I had to go through regular drill in the Chaplains training school; we had to learn to do “squads east and west.” We were told to salute officers. We were told to give a snappy salute, look the officer right in the eye, and say to yourself (not out loud), “I am just as good a man as you are!” It is a matter of office work and function, not personal inferiority. We recognize an officer for his office. We *hope* he is an able man also. You have heard about the private who said, “I never can get promoted in this company.” “Well, why not?” “Because when the captain was my office boy, I had to fire him.” The subordination of office is one thing; the subordination of essential being is an entirely different thing. Throughout the Scriptures the Trinity, the Tri-Unity of God is presented as absolutely equal, “the same in substance, equal in power and glory.”

Just a word or two about illustrations. There are many illustrations of three in one. They won’t get us very far. Sometimes if the illustrations are pressed too far, they would lead us into a heresy. Watch the illustrations and don’t press them beyond what is intended. St. Patrick went to Ireland and took a shamrock leaf. (St. Patrick, you know, was a Protestant and not under Rome—you agree with that, don’t you?) He took a shamrock leaf. “What’s this?” he asked. “A shamrock leaf.” Then he picked off one and asked, “What’s this?” “A shamrock leaf.” Shamrock is practically the shape of clover. Each individual leaf is a

shamrock leaf and yet the whole is a shamrock leaf. Now, of course, that does not carry you very far; it merely shows that there is something in one sense, three, and in another sense, *one*.

There are some illustrations from psychology—just illustrations which may carry us little deeper. James Orr in his book, *The Christian View of God and the World* pointed out that even in a single individual there are different centers of consciousness. You hold an argument with yourself and *you* wonder just what the outcome will be—there are different nuclei of consciousness in one normal individual. And nobody knows enough to deny that one infinite person may subsist as three infinite persons without contradiction. We don't say that three equals one, but we say that one personal God is also three persons.

In the realm of thought, different thoughts may be identical. If I should take this man's thought about some particular object, and this other man's thought, and this other man's thought, the three would equal *one*, practically speaking; all three have the same thought. Three thoughts equal one thought; and yet there are three different thoughts. Now that is not an explanation, but just an illustration.

In the realm of personality and personal relationships, there are cases when one subsists as three, without any contradiction. There is such a thing as corporate personality. When a group of individual persons are fused together by a purpose—there is something more there than the sum of the individuals. The Lord Jesus Christ in His high priestly prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John prays “that they may be one as we are one.” Now do not take that out of the context or beyond its intended meaning, but He does illustrate the ideal unity of Christians by the perfect ontological unity of the Trinity, “that they may be one as we are one.” You see from one side that individual personality is complex, and from the other side that individual persons are capable of unity. However, those are just illustrations.

Think what it means to be a child of God. It does not mean that we are infinite in our attributes. No, we are finite; we are created, but it does mean that we are taken into the fellowship of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us; that we should be called the Sons of God,” and such we are.

God Almighty made us in His image. We are not almighty, but we are made to appreciate His power. The God of all goodness has redeemed us from sin that we might show forth His praises, who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. We are not perfect, and yet we are to show forth His praises. God, our heavenly Father through the Lord Jesus Christ and through regeneration by the Holy Spirit has made us His children. All this chapter on the doctrine of God implies

something about the conduct of the Christian life. We cannot be the same men as we go about our business from day to day; we are children of God! This infinite, perfect, omnipotent, omniscient, all-loving, all-wise God has taken us into His family. The attributes of God should be shown forth in the *godliness* of men who are brought by the blood of Jesus Christ.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This is the second in a series of LECTURES ON THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH FOR LAYMEN. These lectures are given for the Evangelical Presbyterian Training Association. The series will be continued through the entire Westminster Confession of Faith and will be published as soon as possible after the lectures are given,

The first in the series was *The Holy Scriptures* by Dr. Allan A. MacRae, President of Faith Theological Seminary, Wilmington, Delaware.

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