

Opening comment: The catholicity of this entire chapter.

Chapter 2 - Of God, and of the Holy Trinity

I. There is but one only, (a) living, and true God, (b) who is infinite in being and perfection, (c) a most pure spirit, (d), invisible, (e) without body, parts, (f) or passions; (g) immutable, (h) immense, (i) eternal, (j) incomprehensible, (k) almighty, (l) most wise, (m) most holy, (n) most free, (o) most absolute; (p) working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, (q) for His own glory; (r) most loving (s), gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; (t) the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; (u) and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, (v) hating all sin, (w) and who will by no means clear the guilty. (x)

a. Deut 6:4; 1 Cor 8:4, 6. • b. Jer 10:10; 1 Thes 1:9. • c. Job 11:7-9; 26:14. • d. John 4:24. • e. 1 Tim 1:17. • f. Deut 4:15-16; John 4:24 with Luke 24:39. • g. Acts 14:11, 15. • h. Mal 3:6; James 1:17. • i. 1 Kings 8:27; Jer 23:23-24. • j. Psalms 90:2; 1 Tim 1:17. • k. Psalm 145:3. • l. Gen 17:1; Rev 4:8. • m. Rom 16:27. • n. Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8. • o. Psalm 115:3. • p. Exod 3:14. • q. Eph 1:11. • r. Prov 16:4; Rom 11:36. • s. 1 John 4:8, 16. • t. Exod 34:6-7. • u. Heb 11:6. • v. Neh 9:32-33. • w. Psalm 5:5-6. • x. Exod 34:7; Nahum 1:2-3.

II. God hath all life, (a) glory, (b) goodness, (c) blessedness, (d) in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, (e) nor deriving any glory from them, (f) 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; (g) and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth. (h) In his sight all things are open and manifest; (i) his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature; (j) so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. (k) He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. (l) To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, he is pleased to require of them. (m)

a. John 5:26. • b. Acts 7:2. • c. Psalm 119:68. • d. Rom 9:5; 1 Tim 6:15. • e. Acts 17:24-25. • f. Job 22:2-3. • g. Rom 11:36. • h. Dan 4:25, 35; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 4:11. • i. Heb 4:13. • j. Psalm 147:5; Rom 11:33-34. • k. Ezek 11:5; Acts 15:18. • l. Psalm 145:17; Rom 7:12. • m. Rev 5:12-14.

Robert Letham: “WCF 2.2 is a towering declaration of the supremacy of God over all his creation. He has all life, glory, goodness, and blessedness in and of himself...He is all-sufficient, the sole foundation of all being. He needs nothing outside himself, whereas we depend utterly on him. His sovereignty over all he has made will come to expression in WCF 3 onward, on the decrees of God and their outworking in creation, providence, and grace.”

Robert Rayburn: “The counterpoise of immanence is transcendence. God is with us, to be sure, but he is at the same time far above us and past our finding out. He inhabits eternity and dwells in unapproachable light. He has determined beforehand everything that comes to pass, tragedy and triumph alike. He is possessed of an implacable, immutable, and holy will. He is the judge of all the earth who keeps an exact record of every human life. Accordingly, he will, on the Great Day, conduct a thorough examination of each life in keeping with that record and dispense reward and punishment accordingly.

The living God in all three of his persons is the Creator of heaven and earth, the author and Lord of human history, the destroyer of his enemies, and the Sovereign Judge who will cast the wicked and impenitent into hell.

That side of the biblical revelation of God is in eclipse in the American church today—one might almost say in total eclipse. Immanence is in; transcendence is out. Virtually every development in the liturgical life of American evangelicalism (including that of the Reformed and Presbyterian type) expresses a triumphant immanence at the expense of the biblical and historically Christian emphasis on the majesty of Almighty God. Surely you are witnesses of this.

We must ask what all this will mean for the next generation of Christians. That we have adopted the custom of such a culture is bad enough, and dangerous enough. But what will become of our children if we do not, by our actions, communicate reverence for, even the fear of the God we also love? No one is likely to take the living God seriously if it doesn't appear that his own people take him seriously!

...We were made for immanence, for a family relationship with God who is present with us in our daily life, but we were also made for transcendence and need just as much that dimension of our faith and experience. We were made to feel awestruck before the glory of God. We were made to wonder at his infinity. We were made to tremble before the majesty of his justice, his power that beggars the imagination, the unfettered sovereignty of his rule, and, indeed, his implacable wrath. His saving work is intended to make us people who tremble at his Word and fall on our faces before him. It is our deepest privilege to be known and loved by the Almighty and to love and revere him in return. We were made to lift our eyes far above ourselves...

The great danger of this is that, without an effective counterpoise, without all that effectively bears witness to the transcendence of the living God, very soon much of Christian truth is going to seem simply incomprehensible to more and more people, Christians included. Indeed, all indications are that it already is. Without the fear of God, the reality of divine judgment, and the unconditional requirement that all nations submit to the Lord Christ, there can be no gospel."

III. 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. (a) The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; (b) the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. (c)

a. Mat 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 John 5:7. • b. John 1:14, 18. • c. John 15:26; Gal 4:6.

Letham: "Its brevity demonstrates the divine's acceptance of the Council of Constantinople's resolution to the fourth-century Trinitarian controversy. As the the reference to the *filioque* indicates, this acceptance is firmly in the tradition of the Western church."