

A detailed photograph of the Westwerk (west front) of Westminster Abbey in London. The image shows the large rose window, the central tower with its spire, and the intricate Gothic architecture of the facade. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

**Foundations for
Christian Living, A
Study in the
Westminster
Confession of Faith**

Review: Considering Creeds and Confessions¹

Why do we use creeds and confessions?

- A. They are Useful Summaries of the Teaching of Scripture on Key Points.
- B. They are Intended to do Two Things:
 - 1. To Assist the Church in instructing the saints in the Faith (efficiently and sufficiently)
 - 2. To Unite the Church in Communal Praise – to remind us of Who our God is, What He has done, What He is doing, and What He will do so that we can Praise Him in Unison.

¹ See Carl Trueman, *The Creedal Imperative*

Review: Considering Creeds and Confessions¹

Anti-Creedalism Considered: No Creed but Christ; No Book but the Bible

1. Public Creedalism and Private/Hidden Creedalism
2. Acknowledging a Tradition and Submitting it to Scripture v. Refusing to Acknowledge a Tradition or Refusing to Submit One's Tradition to Scripture

¹ See Carl Trueman, *The Creedal Imperative*

Review: The Starting Point - The Holy Word

I. The Scriptures are the ONLY FOUNDATION for Faith and Life – Including Our Understanding of the Revelation of God

II. General and Special Revelation

A. General – The Revelation of God in the Created Order and in the Historical Orderings of Life (Providence)

1. Content: (1) the Goodness of God; (2) the Wisdom of God; (3) Power of God
2. Result: Man is Without Excuse
3. Insufficiency: Neither Creation nor Providence Provide Knowledge of Salvation

Review: The Starting Point - The Holy Word

B. Special – God reveals Himself and declares His Will

1. Previous Methods: Varied
2. Timing: Varied
3. Current Time/ Current Method – committing it wholly to writing (The Holy Scriptures – the 66 Books of the OT &NT) alone. There is no other special revelation.

Review: The Holy Word

III. The Authority of Scripture and Our Assurance of Its Authority – Why Do We Believe and Obey It? (1.4 & 1.5)

A. External Human Witness.

B. Internal Witness.

C. **The Sure and Certain Witness.** RATHER: Its Authority, and our Full Persuasion and Assurance that it is authoritative, Rests on two inseparable things:

1. God is its Author (1.4), and
2. The Holy Spirit's witness in our hearts that this Word IS God's Authoritative Word and that it IS Infallibly True.

Review: The Holy Word

The Scope of Scripture – To what does it speak?

All things necessary for (1) God's glory; (2) man's salvation; (3) man's faith; and (4) man's life

Review: The Holy Word

V. The Clarity (Perspicuity) of Scriptures

- A. **Not Everything in Scripture is Equally Clear - even with the Illumination of the Spirit.**
- B. **Rather “those thing necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation,” are so clear in one place or another in Scripture that the unlearned may have a sufficient understanding of them for salvation. Deut. 29:29 – “The Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”**

Review: The Holy Word

The Handling of the Word

- **The Bible should be translated into the Common Languages** – because few speak the original languages, but all believers are to “read and search” the Scriptures, those original texts should be translated into every language.
- **The Final authority of all Christian Controversies is the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture (1.10)** and the only infallible rule of interpreting Scripture is Scripture itself – the more clear interprets the less clear.

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing

“... Christianity is not primarily about lifestyle change; it is about knowing God.”

~ Michael Reeves, “Delighting in the Trinity”

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

To know and grow to enjoy him is what we are saved for”—
Michael Reeves

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing

Psa. 27:4 One thing have I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to inquire in his temple.

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy 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 Ghost: The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternal proceeding from the Father and the Son.

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

One God, Three Persons

Hints from the beginning – Gen. 1:26, Hosea 1:7, Psalm 110 – Matthew 22:41-46

Gen. 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

New Testament Clarity

Jesus Baptism

Matt. 3:16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

New Testament Clarity - The Great Commission

Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

- The Trinity and the Law of Non-Contradiction
- God is one in essence, but 3 in person
- Three subsistences, not 3 distinct essences
- subsisting within this one essence are 3 distinct personae... and *the distinction is not in their essence*

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

The Trinity is a Relevant Doctrine, Contra Kant & Others

“The doctrine of the Trinity, taken literally, has no practical relevance at all, even if we think we understand it, and it is even more clearly irrelevant if we realize that it transcends all our concepts.” ~ Immanuel Kant

We lose the essence of God and his beauty when we lose the doctrine of the trinity

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

What was God doing before he created the world?

John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit were loving one another

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

John 17:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

God revealed as Father

- Carried Israel as a father carries his son – Deut. 1:31
- Psalm 103:13 “As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him
- The grace of our Lord Jesus, the love of God [the father] and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit – benediction in 2 Corinthians

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

The Father loving the Son John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

The Son loving the Father

Jesus says in John 14:31 “the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me”

they love each other through a 3rd person the Holy Spirit

God is personal and Relational - Because God has always been in loving relationship as Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

God revealed as Father

- Jesus, Taught us to pray, “Our Father....”
- it is only when we see that God rules his creation as a kind and loving Father that we will be moved to delight in his providence. ~ Reeves

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity – Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit makes the Father's love known to the Son (and the world)

Matthew 3:16 he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Holy Trinity*

- The Father is “none”
- The Son is eternally begotten of the father
- The Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father & the Son

Jesus says, “But when the Helper comes, (*the helper is the Holy Spirit in this context*) whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. John 15:26

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Aseity of the Triune God*

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.

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Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Aseity of the Triune God*

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.

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Aseity of the Triune God*

Acts 17:24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

No creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Heb. 4:13

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Character of the Triune God*

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.

Knowing God Part 1: What's He like, What's He done, and What's He doing – *The Character of the Triune God*

- God is One
- God is a Spirit
- God is Without Limits (Infinite)
 - Infinite in Space
 - Infinite in Time
- God is Immutable (Unchangeable)
- God is Absolute (and we are not, God is absolutely not us and not like us in some exceedingly significant ways –and even this word absolute fails to do justice to the *Creator/Creation distinction*)
- God is a God of Profound Love, Grace and Justice