

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 1 – “Of the Holy Scriptures”, Message # 7 –
“The Scriptures Bring Comfort”, Presented in the Adult Sunday
School Class, by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 4th, 2019.**

Paragraph 1 – The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience⁽¹⁾, although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary unto salvation⁽²⁾. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that, His will, unto his church⁽³⁾; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God’s revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.⁽⁴⁾

1) 2nd Timothy 3: 15-17; Isaiah 8: 20; Luke 16: 29 and 31; Ephesians 2 :20; 2) Romans 1: 19-21; 2: 14-15; Psalm 19: 1-3; 3) Hebrews 1: 1 4) Proverbs 22: 19-21; Romans 15: 4; 2nd Peter 1:1 9-20

Today we want to take up where we left off last week; speaking about this Proposition of Truth:

God, in preserving the truth in the Scriptures, establishes and comforts Christ’s church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world.

And so we saw last week that –

1st of all – The Scriptures are designed by God to be a great means of comfort to them as they abide in them and meditate upon them day by day. I opened up

Romans 15: 4 – “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” And –

Joshua 1: 8 and 9 – “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.” “For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have good success.” “Have I not commanded you?” “Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord Your God is with you wherever you go.”

Today, we want to build upon what we studied last Sunday by further thinking how –

2. The Scriptures comfort and encourage the People of God in regard to salvation and patience.

Salvation – Isaiah 40: 1-9 – “Comfort, yes, comfort My people!, says your God.” “Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.” “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” “Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; the glory of the LORD shall be

revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” “The voice said, ‘Cry out!’” “And he said, ‘What shall I cry?’” “All flesh is grass, And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.” “The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass.” “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.” “O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’”

How does the prophet Isaiah comfort the people of God? He speaks comfort to them through the word of God which was delivered to him, and which is Inscripturated for us now in this Old Testament book of Isaiah. He was to proclaim and to cry out to her that her warfare was ended; that is, Israel’s trying to fight their battles in their own strength and according to their own wisdom. That strategy had brought them into captivity literally. Instead, they were to believe the voice of one crying in the wilderness; John the Baptist who would come as the forerunner of Christ. He is prophetically described for us here in his ministry, standing literally in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming the glory of Christ and the need of all people to repent of their sins and believe in the gospel.

But there is a metaphorical spiritual application which is appropriate here as well. Christ was going to come and He would make straight in the desert, the barren and sinful waste places of men’s hearts, a highway for our God; that is a way of salvation for sinful, fallen men, so that they might come to God by faith in Jesus Christ, so that they might receive from the Lord’s hand justification; a double debt-paying ransom for all of their sins. That is, that the redemption that Christ would render unto God would not only be His fulfilling all righteousness in the place of those who would believe in Him, but it would also be His suffering in the place of all of the sinners who would trust in Him, so that they would receive a full pardon, the forgiveness of all of their sins, on the basis of His perfect and finished work of righteousness and sufferings on their behalf.

Patience – Isaiah 40: 27-31 – “Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: ‘My way is hidden from the LORD, And my just claim is passed over by my God?’” “Have you not known?” “Have you not heard?” “The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.” “He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.”

Sometimes, when a saint is suffering for righteousness, they might think that God is not listening to their prayers, and that their just claim, their having done righteously in His sight, is being passed over by God. They are too weak to continue to hold fast the truth and to righteousness, they think. But each of us needs to remember that God does not grow faint nor weary. His understanding is unsearchable and infinite. He is faithful, and based upon the promises of His word, he will act to uphold His people and renew their strength as they wait upon Him, trusting in his word, the Scriptures.

Psalms 119: 81 and 82 – “My soul faints for Your salvation.” “But I hope in Your word.” “My eyes fail from searching Your word, saying, ‘When will You comfort me?’” “For I have become like a wineskin smoke, yet I do not forget Your statutes.”

This is particularly applicable to those times when a Christian is under Satanic attack, and when they are feeling the strength of their indwelling remaining corruption, and the overwhelming pull of the world. The soul faints for deliverance from the oppression of these enemies and longs to be comforted by the Lord's presence and power coming to them to give them power and renewed life. There must be this holding fast to the statutes of God's word; a hoping in God's word, a searching until our eyes fail, looking for the comfort of the Lord by His grace to sustain us.

3. God, in preserving the Truth in the Scriptures expects you to apply your heart to them, for it is a pleasant thing if you will keep them within you.

Proverbs 22: 17-21 – “Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge; For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you; Let them all be fixed upon your lips, so that your trust may be in the LORD; I have instructed you today, even you.” “Have I not written to you excellent things of counsels and knowledge, that I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth, that you may answer words of truth to those who send to you?”

There is a certainty of the words of truth. God has placed this certainty there. The word of God does not change. It cannot be added to, or anything taken away from them. But we are told here that we are to apply our heart to the knowledge of God which is given to us from a godly father, even Solomon in his wisdom. He says that it is a pleasant thing if you are to keep these words of the Bible within us. There are many excellent things of counsels and knowledge in the Scriptures. Their words are there so that your trust may be in the Lord. This is how God instructs men in all generation; by His word. This is how He instructs us today, even us. And so we are taught here, that it will be a pleasant thing if we keep them within us, and let them be fixed upon our lips, so that our trust may be in Christ, the Lord. And so the commandment to each of us here today is that we would incline our ear and hear these words of the wise, and apply our hearts to the knowledge that we will discover, as we look into them. This will be pleasing to you, God says, and we know that it will be pleasing to Him when He sees you abiding in His word and that you can give an answer to those who ask you about them, and that you can also give an answer to God who has sent you to teach others, as it says in the great commission – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations....”