The Three One

'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' Genesis 1:1
SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Isaiah 42:1–7

God. Who can describe him! Guess at him by his works—but alas, we know them not. If I was qualified to speak at large of the magnitude, the motions, the regularities and order of the heavenly bodies, many of which, taken singly, are probably hundreds or thousands of times larger than the globe we live on—if I could help you to judge of their immense distances from each other and from us—if, to come lower, I could assist you to number the sand upon the seashore and the drops of water in the ocean, every one of which is as much the effect of divine power and the object of his providential care as the sun in the firmament—if I could give you a view of that great family in heaven and earth from the highest angel to the meanest worm, which all derive their being from him and could not subsist a single moment without him—this might give some assistance to help you to conceive of his greatness, his wisdom and goodness. The consideration of those things is very useful in its proper place to those who have leisure and abilities for it, but these are not the direct subjects of the gospel ministry. Such knowledge of God as is attainable from his works will neither break a hard heart nor heal a wounded conscience. I will rather speak of him as he has revealed himself in Scripture in a way more suited to sinners—the Lord Jehovah: Father, Word and Holy Spirit. The God who in the fullness of time was in Christ reconciling sinners to himself—he in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. The work of creation is ascribed to each of the glorious three: to the Word or Son (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16); to the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:24–25 compared with 1:16). Let us always keep in view the God of the Scriptures as the Three One—the Covenant God whose glory and grace is revealed to sinners in the person of Jesus Christ.

FOR MEDITATION: Although he is 'the high and lofty One' who inhabits eternity, he promises also to dwell with him who is 'of a contrite and humble spirit' (Isaiah 57:15).

He knows our hearts

'What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men).' 1 Kings 8:38–39
SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Jeremiah 17:5–10

The Lord gave Israel to understand from first to last, and especially when he was affording them signal mercies, that he knew them and knew what returns they would make to him. He knew them, and long experience taught them to know themselves. Therefore it was often sounded in their ears, *Not for your own sakes* [Ezekiel 36:32]. The song of Moses was published with this view before they entered Canaan, that the grant might be known to be wholly of grace. The most glorious day perhaps ever seen by Israel was at the dedication of the first temple. The Lord had wrought wonderfully for them, subdued their enemies, given them rest, plenty riches, a king who was the wisest of men. The temple, built by divine direction, was finished in all its beauty and glory; the people, to appearance, all of one heart and mind; the sacrifices immense, the congregation innumerable, the glory of the Lord in view filling the house in token of his favour and acceptance. Yet the Lord then saw a day coming, which they were little aware of, when Israel would be delivered up into the hands of their enemies and their temple destroyed—not one stone left upon another. The prayer of Solomon upon this occasion was doubtless pronounced under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, and gives throughout a prophetic intimation of the changes that would take place.

FOR MEDITATION: *Take heed to thyself*, for there the principal danger lies. The world and the devil will undoubtedly spread all their snares, and join all their force against thee, but thy principal danger lies at home. As nothing from without entering into a man defileth him, so it may be said that nothing from without that befalleth a man can either hurt or hinder him in his spiritual progress unless he himself become one of the party. Thou that art devoted to God, take heed of thyself.[34]

SERMON: 1 KINGS 8:38–39 [1/6]